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ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION:
A CASE STUDY OF THE
ALBERTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

by C. D. ^{Douglas}RADKE, B. A. Hon.

A thesis submitted to Carleton University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
Public Administration

School of Public Administration
Carleton University
Ottawa, Canada
April, 1971

The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies acceptance of the thesis
"Administrative Decentralization: A Case Study
of the Alberta Department of Agriculture"

submitted by C. D. Radke, B.A. Hons.
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degree of Master of Arts in Public Administration.

.....
Thesis Supervisor

.....
Director, School of Public
Administration

Carleton University

Date: April 21, 1971

ABSTRACT

The organization of the Alberta Department of Agriculture has been compared to a specific concept of administrative decentralization, with special attention given to the Department's field organization (known as Regionalization). Although administrative decentralization was not the original intent, the implementation of Regionalization has resulted in a change in the character of the Department whereby it now more closely approximates a decentralized model.

Because centralization and decentralization are not mutually exclusive, the concept of balance is introduced, and the Department is placed on a continuum with centralization on the extreme left and decentralization on the extreme right. The study concludes that while the Department is not centralized, it lies to the left of what might be considered the "proper area of balance". General recommendations are made which would allow the Department to be placed within that proper area of balance.

PREFACE

This is an internal study, or one which concentrates on the inner operations of an organization. It is thus one of examining a specific organizational arrangement to see if its operation conforms to accepted understandings of organizational theory. The study has been conducted within the confines of a model, which means that evaluation has taken place by means of comparing the organization to such a model, and critical comments are thus unfair insofar as they relate to a model which was not intended at the time the field organization was designed.

If the operations of the Alberta Department of Agriculture's field organization, or "regionalization" are compared to the original definition of purpose for implementation, critical comments can be few, for it seems clear that implementation has achieved all or most of the original organizational goals. In spite of this, it is my contention that all the original organizational goals -- and much more -- could have been achieved through administrative decentralization. Any critical comments contained herein are therefore the result of this bias.

The study covers the period from 1965 up to December 31, 1970. As the Department is by no means static, there have undoubtedly been many things that have happened since

that date that might leave this thesis in the position of being out-of-date before it is submitted. Unfortunately, unless one chooses a cut-off date, one could never complete the study.

One objective of a study such as this should be to contribute to the information available on Canadian Public Administration. Other than infrequent Royal Commissions, case studies in public administration have been largely concentrated on the federal public service, to the detriment of the study of the provincial services. This is even more true of studies of individual departments within provincial governments, and if one searches for information pertaining to specific aspects of public administration as they relate to the provinces, such as administrative decentralization, the point is brought home with even more force.

C. R. Tindall's study of the Ontario Department Field Offices published in the Summer, 1968 issue of Canadian Public Administration is a welcome addition to the small number of studies available. It is hoped that this study of regionalization within the Alberta Department of Agriculture will be another such addition.

Many people have assisted in this project. Rather than listing some of them, thereby risking the omission of others, I mention none, and extend thanks to all collectively. The Alberta Department of Agriculture deserves

special mention, however, as its rather blind faith in my objectivity provided me the opportunity to peruse its files and inconvenience its personnel, thus making the study possible. I make no attempt to shift any responsibility for any errors of fact or analysis in the final product to any of those who assisted.

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INTRODUCTION

Others, notably David E. Lilienthal¹ and Peter Drucker², have clarified and identified the advantages of decentralization in operation, and the more detailed explanation of these advantages can be left to them. The purpose of this study is not to question these advantages, but to examine the practical problems of, first, determining the extent to which an organization is already decentralized, and second, deciding whether or not it should be further decentralized.

In the study of the Alberta Department of Agriculture that follows, the reader will be able to notice several factors that are features of a centralized organization and several that are features of a decentralized organization. Of the latter, the field organization, called "regionalization", is perhaps the most indicative of a movement towards administrative decentralization, and its existence suggests its use as a possible vehicle to promote further decentralization within the Department as a whole. In reading the study, then, it is hoped that the reader will keep the following questions in mind: "To what extent is the Alberta

¹TVA: Democracy on the March, Chicago, Quadrangle Books Inc., 1966 (first edition 1944).

²Concept of the Corporation, New York, The John Day Co., 1946.

Department of Agriculture decentralized, and to what extent does "regionalization" contribute to that decentralization?"

Chapter I is an overview of the literature with respect to administrative decentralization, the purpose being to provide the background for the specifics that follow. Administrative decentralization is a concept of considerable complexity, especially when its use includes the complexities of organizing for field operations. Nonetheless, when properly implemented, administrative decentralization can provide certain distinct advantages not normally found within a centralized organization. These advantages should be summarized briefly to introduce a study of the topic:

1. The burden of responsibility carried by one man or by one group of executives can be reduced. Top executives can then devote more time to the more important aspects of their function, viz. that of reviewing and formulating basic policy.

2. Administrative decentralization can produce faster decisions at the operational level and can prevent delays caused by the necessity of referring problems up the administrative hierarchy.

3. Objectives can be better formulated to take into account the needs and problems of the local situation, and to provide a better mechanism for adapting organizational purposes and objectives to changing circumstances.

4. A greater supply of administrative competence within the organization can be brought about through the more effective training and development of executives at the lower

levels.

5. Communication systems can be improved by clearly defining responsibilities, goals, and policies.

6. Administrative decentralization can create a better social climate within the organization and can provide more meaningful jobs through the encouragement of participation in, and commitment to, the decisions being made. Decentralization, through participation, can bring forth many ideas and much new information which may not otherwise be available and it can make the task of implementation by lower executives easier and more effective because they themselves have participated in the making of the decision. Participation is also ". . . perhaps the most effective way to make sure that the policies of the organization are completely understood, not only in their letter but also in their intent."³

³J. A. Litterer, The Analysis of Organizations, New York, John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1965, p. 391.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION?

The term decentralization is used to refer to a particular pattern or distribution of organizational or political authority. When the patterns of political authority are referred to, the label most often attached is "political decentralization"; when we speak of the distribution of authority within a specific organization, we are more concerned with "administrative decentralization". While in Public Administration the distinction between the two is not easy to make because the distinction between "politics" and "administration" is not easy to make, we can broadly separate them by considering the jurisdiction of the decision-making authority involved. Within the political environment of decision-making, a decision made through the exercise of legitimate authority is binding on the entire society.¹ Within the organizational environment, decisions made through the exercise of legitimate authority are binding only on the members of that organization.

Thus political decentralization refers to a societal

¹See Charles F. Andrain, Political Life and Social Change, Belmont, Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1970, pp. 16-17. Professor Andrain's point is that ". . . to understand the nature of politics, we need to make a distinction between policies binding on the whole society and decisions binding on only a part of society." Politics is therefore "the process by which binding policies are made and carried out for a society."

pattern whereby power and authority exist and are exercised by local or subordinate bodies having some degree of self-direction. The authority of these bodies may stem from a source independent of, or a delegation from, a superior body, but whatever the source the decision made is binding on all segments of the particular society. Administrative decentralization refers to an organizational pattern whereby power and authority are exercised by a sub-unit or sub-units of an organization as a result of delegation by, or the forbearance of, the organization itself, which can exercise authority only over the members of that organization.

The Canadian political system is an example of political decentralization because there are levels of government, not necessarily a part of the central or national government, that possess to varying degrees the power of self-direction, and that can make binding decisions on that part of Canadian society contained within specified boundaries or jurisdictions. Such boundaries are defined either by the B. N. A. Act, by statute, or by tradition. The Research Branch of the Canada Department of Agriculture is an example of administrative decentralization because, as a sub-unit of the Department, it has considerable power of self-direction as a result of the delegation by the Department of part of its own legitimate authority, or as a result of the forbearance of the Department in allowing the Branch to exercise that part of its authority. Its boundaries are defined by membership in the Branch.

Administrative decentralization thus refers to the ". . . delegation of power and authority to act and to make decisions from superior to subordinate in a hierarchy of a single level of government."² It is usually thought of as taking three main forms: 1) the transference of power and authority to make decisions from a central control body in a particular level of government to the sub-units of that government, e.g. from the Public Service Commission or Treasury Board to the departments;³ 2) a decentralization based on the relationships between all departments of a particular level of government at the field level, or on a geographical basis, such as the French prefectoral system; or 3) a transference of power and authority to make decisions within sub-units of a particular department or agency of that single level of government.⁴ It is with the latter that this study will concern itself, and the discussion which follows

²R. A. Richards, "On Administrative Decentralization", Public Administration (Australia), 2 (1962), p. 56.

³Such was the main recommendation, for example, made by the Glassco Royal Commission on Government Organization.

⁴Some writers have identified this type of decentralization as one which stands apart from the definition of administrative decentralization as given above, and have called it "deconcentration". See A. W. MacMahon, Delegation and Autonomy, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1961, p. 25: "The phrase is intended to cover the varied situations in which ministries, departments or other agencies, at whatever level of self-government, vest considerable discretion in sub-units within themselves, which they control by the power of appointment and removal. These sub-units are formed partly on a functional and partly on a territorial basis." Brian C. Smith also refers to deconcentration in his book Field Administration, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.

uses administrative decentralization as synonymous with this meaning.

A. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Administrative decentralization necessarily involves delegation of authority, and "[o]ne can therefore speak of an organization as being decentralized whenever power and authority to act and make decisions have been delegated from superior to subordinate in the organizational hierarchy in respect of the more important operational sectors of the organization."⁵ Power and authority can be distinguished, the definition turning on the formal role of the actor. Thus authority means ". . . the capacity to evoke compliance in others on the basis of formal position and of any psychological inducements, rewards, or sanctions that may accompany formal position,"⁶ and power refers to the situation "[w]hen formal position is not necessarily involved, but when extensive sanctions are available"⁷ It is useful also to distinguish the capacity to evoke compliance without relying on formal role or any sanctions available. This will be referred to as "influence".⁸

⁵Richards, op. cit., p. 56.

⁶Robert V. Presthus, "Authority in Organizations", in S. Mailick and E. H. Van Ness (eds.), Concepts and Issues in Administrative Behaviour, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962, p. 123.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

In speaking of formal organizations, authority is the only one of the three that is normally formally delegated. Accordingly, when referring to delegation, we will be referring to authority, and power and influence will be used in a more specific instance to refer to the informal or more subjective elements of the formal structure.

The essence of delegation is the clear definition of responsibilities, together with the granting of authority commensurate to perform those responsibilities. As Brech says,

the whole purpose of the delegation is to apportion to the manager concerned a share in the management process and that process entails of its essence decision and instruction to govern the work of others. To withhold the authority for decision is to withhold also the delegation of responsibility. The main questions for consideration arise in relation to what responsibilities are to be delegated, which will automatically determine the extent of the authority to be given.⁹

Delegation is successful or unsuccessful for reasons other than the success or failure to adequately define responsibilities. The reasons why some managers have difficulty delegating and why subordinates often avoid the responsibility that results from that delegation have been summed up clearly by W. H. Newman,¹⁰ who points out that the reasons for reluctance to delegate include:

(1) the "I can do it better myself" fallacy;

⁹E. F. L. Brech, Organization: The Framework of Management, London, Longmans, 1965, p. 74.

¹⁰W. H. Newman, "Overcoming Obstacles to Effective Delegation", in J. A. Litterer (ed.), Organizations, Structure and Behaviour, New York, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1963, pp. 118-121.

(2) lack of ability to direct, or more precisely, to think ahead, to formulate objectives, and to communicate these to subordinates;

(3) lack of confidence in the ability of subordinates;

(4) lack of selective controls which give warning of impending difficulties. Because ultimate responsibility still resides with the superior, even though delegation has taken place, the executive will be reluctant to delegate unless he has confidence in his control and information systems;

(5) temperamental aversion to taking a chance. Willms adds two more reasons, one being that delegation may impair the uniformity of decision and treatment that is essential to good and just government; the other, which although uncommon does occur, being the desire of executives to dominate and control.¹¹

The mere fact of delegation does not mean, however, that those to whom authority is delegated will accept that authority. Subordinates may avoid responsibility for any one or combination of the following reasons:

(1) they may find it easier to "ask the boss";

(2) they may fear criticism for mistakes;

(3) they may lack the necessary information and resources to do a good job;

(4) they may already have more work than they can do;

¹¹A. M. Willms, "Administrative Decentralization", in A. M. Willms and W. D. K. Kernaghan (eds.), Public Administration in Canada: Selected Readings, Toronto, Methuen Publications, 1968, pp. 135-6.

- (5) self-confidence may be lacking;
- (6) positive incentives may be inadequate.

One more aspect of authority should be understood insofar as it affects administrative decentralization and the delegation of authority -- the question of legitimacy. The granting of authority, in itself, will not ensure its effective use, nor will it ensure that the orders, requests, directives, and so on issued under that authority will be obeyed, nor will it ensure its continued existence. Authority must be accepted as valid before it can be exercised; this acceptance, or "legitimacy" depends on a number of factors, of which legitimation by formal role is only one. Others include legitimation on the basis of the expertise which the decision-maker possesses; legitimation by rapport, or the personal relationships existing between superior and subordinate; or legitimation based on a generalized deference to authority (socially acceptable behaviour).¹²

Barnard spoke indirectly of legitimation, saying that the necessity to establish authority on the assent of the individual is inescapable. For example, an individual will not accept a communication as authoritative unless it is understood, unless it is not inconsistent with the purposes of the organization, unless it is compatible with his personal interests as a whole, and unless he can physically and mentally comply with it.¹³ In this sense, authority can be

¹²See Presthus, op. cit., pp. 125-135.

¹³See C. I. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1938, Ch. 12.

viewed as flowing up the hierarchy instead of down, from subordinate to superior. Delegation thus becomes a matter of creating or establishing legitimacy at lower levels in the organization.

We now have two ways of viewing delegation: the legalistic sense of authority moving down the organization, and Barnard's view that authority stems from the bottom of the organization, with delegation occurring presumably by shifting the level of legitimacy. While the niceties of the two ways of viewing authority are not central to the understanding of administrative decentralization, what is essential is that authority, in the sense of the capacity to act, make decisions, and evoke compliance, resides at a lower level in the organizational hierarchy in a decentralized system than in a centralized system.

B. SPECIALISTS AND GENERALISTS

Closely related to, but not synonymous with, the problem of delegation, is the question of functional experts versus generalist administrators. This controversy has raged for decades, and no substantial agreement as to the primacy of the one over the other has yet been reached. Indeed to seek to justify such a primacy is a frustrating and perhaps self-defeating exercise because both are clearly essential to the effective functioning of any organization.

As society becomes more complex and as government increasingly involves itself in a positive role, the need for

expert knowledge on particular topics becomes increasingly important, and the natural tendency is to divide government administration into functional classes. Such are the reasons why separate departments of agriculture, health, education, and so on are established, for one of the greatest advantages of bureaucratic organization is the expertise which can be developed and brought to bear on a particular problem. In such technical fields, the need for specialists in sub-disciplines becomes apparent as well.

In hierarchical organizations, the man at the top is of necessity a generalist due to the need to co-ordinate and integrate specialties in such a way as to achieve a general objective which demands the application of specific knowledge of more than one discipline or sub-discipline. As an individual rises nearer the apex of the organization, he becomes increasingly the "generalist administrator" and less a functional expert, as a result of the fact that it is no longer possible in this age of specialization to be an expert in all the fields with which he must be concerned, and because "organizational" and "administrative" concerns form more and more a part of his function. Thus the generalist administrator ". . . is the man whose function it is to weigh all these factors [technical, financial, organizational, political], to adjust the technically desirable to the organizationally possible and the financially viable, taking account of what public opinion will stand and balancing the

interests of affected groups."¹⁴

To deny the desirability of such a phenomenon, or even its inevitability, is difficult if not impossible. The essential point to be understood is that the existence of generalist administrators and functional experts always creates organizational tension and conflict, or at least the potential for such conflict and tension. In the organization the generalist administrator is faced with accepting the responsibility for a series of programs based upon a specialized discipline about which he knows little. He is faced with directing and controlling a foreign discipline; he must often meet day to day crises without the help or understanding of his staff specialists; he may be forced by the limitations of resources to assign priorities among programs with which functional experts will disagree, because the specialists know by reason of their expertise that their program should receive a higher priority. In short, the specialist can legitimately ask these questions: "If an administrator is to administer something, why is not a high degree of knowledge on the particular topic a prerequisite -- why should I accept direction from one who is not knowledgeable in my field? How can such a man evaluate my performance?"¹⁵

But experts have their limitations as well. The specialist may find it difficult to give sufficient weight to

¹⁴F. F. Ridley (ed.), Specialists and Generalists, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1968, p. 190.

¹⁵See ibid., p. 206 et passim.

factors other than technical, to appreciate the viewpoint of specialists in fields other than his own, to give enough importance to political or financial factors, and so on.

MacMahon points out the nature of the problem:

On the one hand, unless adequate channels exist for the special objectives and the intent, knowledge and skills that they involve, the total result is impoverished. On the other hand, unless there are means for attending to the relationships and measuring and insisting upon a total performance, it is difficult to achieve a full realization of the objectives in terms of a composite responsibility.¹⁶

Delegation of authority can provide one answer, but only if the ultimate objective, as well as the sub-objectives upon which subject-matter specialities bear, are clearly defined. That this is not always easy to do within a hierarchy is a truism, and we find that the whole problem is even more complicated when decentralization and delegation occur on an area or geographical basis. This aspect will be discussed more fully in the following section.

C. FUNCTION AND AREA

In an organization where contact with clientele spread over a large area is a necessity, a field service of some type becomes a necessity, and adds a further complication to the concept of decentralization. Fesler's comments are apt, and worth repeating at length:

¹⁶MacMahon, op. cit., p. 29. For a brief, but excellent, discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of "experts" who have become "generalist administrators", see D. V. Smiley, "Equipping the Functional Specialist for Administrative Responsibilities in the Public Service", Canadian Public Administration, 3 (1960), pp. 171-178.

Once the necessity of a field service is recognized, a Pandora's box of troubles is opened. There is the problem of demarcation of field service areas and location of area headquarters. There is the problem of whether and how the field service is to be used to centralize or decentralize authority. Still more complex is the fusing of the areal organization with the functional organization at the capital. All these are being wrestled with constantly by individual agencies intent primarily on effective discharge of their specialized responsibilities. Beyond such intra-agency difficulties lies the challenge to coordinate the activities of all functional agencies as they bear on each section of the country.¹⁷

Once the necessity for field offices has been recognized, the next step is to determine the number and size of field office areas and draw the boundaries for those areas. Fesler suggests six main considerations in the demarcation of field service areas, these being delineated according to:¹⁸

(1) the span of control, or the number of people a superior can effectively supervise;

(2) the nature, multiplicity, and grouping of the objects of administration. For example, if the object of administration is water, a natural area such as a watershed or river system may suggest itself;

(3) the prospective workload of the field offices. The workload should be equal among areas so that the burden on staff is substantially the same, yet of a size appropriate for the most effective organization of specialist, generalist, and administrative staff;

¹⁷J. W. Fesler, Area and Administration, Birmingham, University of Alabama Press, 1949, p. 50.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 50-60.

(4) the location of other agencies and interests whose work affects the function of the field service organization. For example, an agricultural area might best centre around the dominant town where farmers both sell their produce and purchase necessities;

(5) administrative convenience, including such factors as travel costs and conveniences, availability of staff housing and office space, communication and transportation facilities, and so on;

(6) political factors, such as the desire to locate a government office in a member's constituency for the effect on local business it might have, or the desire to provide patronage benefits with regard to prospective appointees. The practical drawing of boundaries will of necessity involve consideration of all these factors and the final result is nearly always a result of compromise among two or more of these factors, such as a reconciliation of natural physical, social, or economic areas with administrative convenience.

The resulting areal delineation sets the framework for the field operations to be carried on within it, but choices as to the organization of operations immediately present themselves. The two most troublesome problems of choice revolve around the relationship of the field office to headquarters and around the co-ordination that is to occur within the region. These two problems are of such significance as to deserve separate treatment.

1) The Relationship Between Field and Headquarters

Field organization can be used to promote either centralization or decentralization. If the field organization operates without substantial delegation of authority, it can effectively promote the existence of a centralized organization; if effective delegation of authority takes place between headquarters and the region, a decentralized organization can result.

Four factors have to be analyzed to determine whether or not a centralized or decentralized pattern exists.¹⁹ The first has to do with the principle of administrative responsibility. Because an agency, departmental, or sub-departmental head is responsible for the operation of a particular program, he may hesitate to delegate discretion to officials in the field for fear of losing control over it. Important in this reasoning is the assumption that field officials are less easily controlled by political and overhead agencies than are officials stationed at headquarters.

The second factor to be analyzed is administrative in character, and includes such things as stability of the organization and its policies, the competence of field personnel, and the need for speed, economy, and uniformity in operations. Most of these have been referred to in the section on delegation, but one point should receive special

¹⁹See J. W. Fesler, "Field Organization", in F. Morstein-Marx (ed.), Elements of Public Administration, New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946, pp. 270-275.

emphasis. If the organization has not clarified its objectives and established some stability in policy, decentralization will result only in confusion and problems at the field level. Indeed some writers claim that centralization must take place in order to establish the essential uniformity of outlook and administrative competence that must exist before decentralization can be successful.²⁰ The need for uniformity is one that must be critically examined, for as Willms points out,

Public servants claim that uniformity is essential for fairness to everyone. In fact, uniformity often has other motives. It constitutes a ready reason or excuse or justification. . . . Moreover, uniformity gives the appearance of justice having been done, while in fact there are very few problems that are identical and the same answer to similar problems is seldom the right answer. Lastly, uniformity is easy to enforce because even the most junior clerk can recognize its virtue. There is no doubt that public servants must strive for consistency in their decisions and relations with the public. But the emphasis should be on decisions and actions consistent with governmental, departmental and branch policy -- today's policy -- rather than consistency with yesterday's transactions.²¹

Third, and perhaps most important in the study of the degree to which an agency decentralizes, are the functional factors. Here the most important questions requiring answers are "How great a variety of distinct functions does the agency have? How essential is technical specialization in the

²⁰See for example, P. Selznick, Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation, New York, Row Peterson and Co., 1957, and F. C. Mosher (ed.), Governmental Reorganizations: Cases and Commentary, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1967, p. 102.

²¹Willms, op. cit., p. 135.

agency's work? Does the function require . . . uniformity or diversity among regions and localities?"²² The variety of functions affects the departmental pattern, for if it administers a number of separable functions, each division may insist on a different pattern for setting up their field offices, and it is possible that one division, disagreeing on the urgency and extent of decentralization, may act as a drag on the decentralization of the total department. Where decisions have to be made on the basis of extremely technical analysis, it may not be feasible to decentralize because of the cost of providing staff at field locations. The need for uniformity, as mentioned before, has great bearing, as when equity requires uniformity in the case of tax returns, or when privileges and penalties are being dispensed or rights are being affected. "Since administrative decisions often involve general elements of judgment, this degree of uniformity cannot be assured under a decentralized system permitting each field agent to reach independent conclusions on the cases arising in his district."²³

The fourth set of factors bearing on the decentralization question has to do with the external considerations. These are concerned with the necessity for "grass-roots participation", collaboration with other provincial and federal governmental and private agencies, as well as the need to

²²Fesler, "Field Operations", p. 273.

²³Ibid., p. 274.

adapt operations to political pressures. The first usually acts to reinforce decentralizing tendencies, while the latter two usually tend to reinforce centralization.

Whether or not field operations are decentralized, several problems arise in the relationships not only between field and headquarters, but also within regions, including conflict between functional experts and general administrators, the lines of command between the two, and controls over the field organization. After considering these kinds of problems, basically two alternatives are available -- an integrated field service, where the regional director is responsible for all functions performed within his area, or a functional field service, where each division directly controls the different functions performed in the field. This is the dilemma referred to as the question of "function versus area". It is a dilemma because each alternative carries with it certain advantages and disadvantages which the other does not have.

2) Co-ordination Within the Region

(a) Field Services by Function

Each division has an institutional and professional pride for its part of the departmental program, and would like to see that part performed in the most efficient and effective way possible. When part of its program is carried on by personnel in the field, the divisional responsibility is best promoted by assuring that such personnel are selected, supervised, and evaluated by the division responsible for that

function, on the basis of the technical expertise relating to that function. The natural tendency is for the division to advocate the setting up of its own field service to directly control the performance of its functions in the field. This will be true especially where the divisions in a department are strong, where there is no real joint or over-all departmental objective, or where the sheer size of the administrative task acts as a deterrent to areal co-ordination.²⁴

Where several such field services are being carried out in a region, the obvious need is that of co-ordination. In this case, the general co-ordinator is not usually assigned "line" responsibilities, but is expected to perform an office-manager function and to co-ordinate the various field activities through voluntary co-operation of field supervisors.

The major defect of this type of intra-regional organization lies in the problems encountered in achieving a total or areal objective, for as Millet says,

The objective of administration . . . is more than the performance of many different specialties. There is usually a goal which can be achieved only by the successful blending of these specialties . . . the specialties must be expected to contribute to the common objective. If each were to go its own way, the result would more likely be chaos than administration.²⁵

Neither is Millet pleased with the efforts of office-manager personnel who have as their prime function that of co-ordination. The problem here lies in the process of

²⁴See ibid., p. 277.

²⁵D. Millet, "The Case for Integration", in D. C. Rowat (ed.), Basic Issues in Public Administration, New York, Macmillan, 1961, pp. 154-155.

co-ordination, and he suggests the general administrator as an alternative:

Co-ordination is a loosely used expression. Its basic weakness is that it refers to a technique, a means, and only by association to an objective, or end. The purpose of general supervision, as I have already suggested, is to accomplish the mission entrusted to the organization as a whole. In other words, the administrative head is expected to see ~~that~~ the parts add up to the total job to be performed. But in truth this can be done without the general administrator. What cannot be done is this. The parts, the specialties, must add up to the total job with the least possible cost in the use of our resources, of men and materials. The objective of co-ordination, of general administration, is the highest possible degree of efficiency realizable, the maximum of output to input.²⁶

Considerations of defects, then, lead us to the other alternative, that of integration.

(b) Integrated Field Services

The region may be so organized as to hold the regional director responsible for all activities performed within his region. This has the very important advantage of permitting the region to concentrate on the departmental objective for the region, and to ensure ~~that~~ all services are consistent with the department's objectives and with each other. This is even more important when it is remembered that such services must remain sufficiently flexible in their relationship to each other that they can be adapted to the needs peculiar to that region.

In such a system, the role of the regional director is

²⁶Ibid. (Italics his.)

of tremendous importance,²⁷ for he must have the bona fide responsibility for the successful conduct of field activities, and he must be held accountable for any failure to achieve objectives. He must report to a deputy or assistant in charge of field operations, or his judgment and opinion will never carry enough weight with the functional divisions with whom he has to negotiate. Unless the chief administrator ". . . has on his immediate staff a deputy or an assistant who consistently represents to him the 'case' for decentralized operations through integrated field offices, his decisions will almost certainly reflect some functional bias."²⁸

As in the functional organization of field offices, the pattern of formal authority, power, and influence is complex. In the functional organization, representatives in the field report to their specialist divisions, and it is the regional director who must achieve co-ordination through voluntary means and through whatever power and influence at his disposal. In the integrated organization it is the functional divisions who must exercise power and influence rather than authority, and thus must sell their program on its merits rather than imposing it.

A real problem arises from the fact that whatever the regional director's formal authority, such authority is limited by reason of the impossibility of being expert in all fields.

²⁷See M. G. Goodrick, "Integration vs. Decentralization", in Rowat, op. cit., pp. 162-163.

²⁸Ibid., p. 163.

Conflict over the extent to which the regional director is subject to instruction from functional divisions at headquarters is inevitable, for the need to transmit technical guidance as well as general administrative orders from headquarters makes itself clear.

Complete autonomy for the integrated field service and the regional director is never attainable, not can it be said to be desirable. In view of this fact, says Fesler, there are two choices in the design of lines of command between field and headquarters.²⁹ The first is to ensure that all major orders to field personnel are channelled through the administrative hierarchy to the regional director who in turn ensures that they are carried out by the functional specialists in the field, who would accept only advice from the functional divisions at headquarters. The other alternative is that suggested by Millet and MacMahon,³⁰ or "dual supervision". Under this system the regional director would have general supervisory or administrative authority over the functional experts while the functional divisions would retain the authority to give technical instructions and to evaluate from a technical point of view the performance of the specialists. In other words, the field specialists would look to the regional director for orders on what to do and to the functional divisions at headquarters for orders on how to do it.

²⁹Fesler, "Field Organization", pp. 277-278.

³⁰Millet, "The Case for Integration", pp. 158-163, and MacMahon, op. cit., pp. 28-42.

While integration of field services is preferable where the gearing together of functions to achieve an over-all goal is a necessity, it is important to realize that integration can be oversold. Goodrick's cautions are worth noting:

There are some agencies in which the several functions carried on in the field are of such different types, and affect such completely different groups of clients, that there is no need or justification for integration. Some of the resistance to integration stems from the fact that efforts have sometimes been made to introduce integration where it serves no real purpose.³¹

Goodrick's last sentence quoted above serves to introduce another danger he feels inherent in integration -- that such a policy may actually serve to promote centralization rather than decentralization, which an integrated field service is supposed to typify. If the head of the functional division has little operational control over his specialists in the field, he will be reluctant to delegate any more authority or control over the functions for which he still feels responsible. He may be able to argue successfully that the need for uniformity and the technical skills required make it necessary that functions be tightly controlled from headquarters.

D. CONTROLS

Enough has been said throughout the preceding sections to point out a fundamental problem of decentralization -- that

³¹Goodrick, op. cit., p. 162.

of control. Whatever its merits, decentralization can be carried too far -- to the point where each unit or region has devised policies totally inconsistent with the mission of the department, where different standards of service exist when uniformity should exist, where relative autonomy results in a parochial outlook which can identify solutions for local problems, but which unfortunately contribute to the worsening of the provincial or national problem. Somehow the organization must operate as a co-ordinated whole, and the necessity for controls immediately suggests itself.

Richards explains the problem in another way. After noting that decentralization can result in an improvement in the definition of purpose because of a more realistic appreciation of the interaction between policy and operations, because of greater flexibility, and because of a reduction of insulation of policy from the work situation, he points out:

But this improvement is based on an important premise, that of coherence of administrative purpose, an assurance that there is but one purpose and not several major purposes seen in the projection upwards of the effects of the decisions taken by the several authorities in the exercise of their delegated authority. Successful decentralization from this point of view cannot, then, be just a matter of delegating authority. . . . It does not help much to overcome insulation of workers from the central point of decision if the new point of decision is itself insulated from higher levels where occupants of administrative positions may have greater experience, wider vision, or access to knowledge of influences on decisions of which lower levels may not be aware.³²

One way to prevent fragmentation of purpose is to enforce standardization and uniformity through rules, regulations,

³²Richards, op. cit., p. 63.

or the performance of essential services at headquarters. Although this can assist decentralization, it is to some extent a centralizing feature. Another way is through effective communications.

Communications delay and distortion will not be solved by decentralization, and in many ways it may aggravate such occurrence. But as skill in communications is one feature of managerial skill, decentralization can help, through developing executives, in better use of communications channels. Such executive development can also shift the focus of attention from the area below the point of decision to that area above the point of decision. To the extent that coherence in purpose is a matter of communications, executive development can provide that coherence in purpose which diminishes the size of the control problem. Essential to the solution to the control problem, therefore, is executive development which should include developing skills in communication, supervisory training activities, frequent conferences among administrative personnel, the interchange of personnel among divisions and regions, and other devices to promote coherence of purpose and the understanding of that purpose. Once coherence of purpose is established, senior executives are better able to delegate without misgivings.

Control through accounting and statistical methods still remains essential, as the entire organization must be supervised, but control of operations ". . . changes from detailed direction of operations to watching the various

indicators that are set up, and taking action through responsible members of the administration to whom authority has been delegated."³³ The necessity for clearly defined objectives, responsibilities and policies must be emphasized, for it is impossible to measure success if objectives (and hence success) cannot be defined. Such managerial techniques as management by objectives and planning-programming-budgeting are clearly useful here.

E. THE CENTRALIZATION-DECENTRALIZATION DICHOTOMY

One point yet remains to be made with regard to administrative decentralization, and that pertains to the common error of looking at decentralization as opposed to or versus centralization, as if one always occurred without the other. Such dichotomization often prevents analysts from examining organizations to see where they lie on the continuum between the two poles, and often results in a hardening of doctrine because of the apparent necessity of looking at centralization and decentralization as the only two alternatives. It is more likely that different forces within an organization will reveal different orientations towards the two ends of the spectrum, and that the interaction of these forces constitutes the character of the organization as a whole.³⁴

³³Ibid., p. 71.

³⁴For an excellent treatment of this and other problems of understanding conceptually the term decentralization, see J. W. Fesler, "Approaches to the Understanding of Decentralization", Journal of Politics, 27 (1965), pp. 536-566.

Kruisinga clearly explains the point:

The management process is at the same time centralized and decentralized. Decentralized in the delegation of decision-making powers, centralized in the exercise of control over policies and activities to assure that results will be satisfactory. The solution of this problem in any given situation involves the evaluation of two opposite forces active in the organization, viz. the gains in operational productivity and moral [sic] against the costs of the means of control. The net result of these opposite forces in the actual organization, as it grows and develops, is an equilibrium that assures uniformity, speed and high quality of decisions all down the line.³⁵

For purposes of organizational analysis, this means that the study of administrative decentralization within a particular organization must involve the study of competing centralizing and decentralizing forces and their measurement. The required methodology is more properly discussed in Chapter II.

³⁵H. J. Kruisinga, The Balance Between Centralization and Decentralization in Managerial Control, Leiden, H. E. Stenfert Kroese N. V., 1954, p. 5.

CHAPTER II

DETERMINING THE EXTENT OF DECENTRALIZATION

A. GENERAL METHODOLOGY

As later chapters will show, the existence within the Alberta Department of Agriculture of a well-defined concept of field organization with formal provision for co-ordination at the field level suggests some degree of administrative decentralization. But, as Chapter I has shown, field organization can be an effective instrument for both centralization and decentralization. A major problem, then, is to determine whether or not "regionalization" is being used for purposes of centralization or decentralization.

What methodology can be used to make such a determination? David B. Truman, in his pioneering study of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 1940, suggests that there are four basic indicators with which to be concerned,¹ each, however, having its particular limitations. The first criterion may be that of the existence of a unitary or integrated field organization with co-ordinating points at the field level. However, because the position of the field co-ordinator may not be as strong in reality as it appears on paper, ". . . the presence of a field co-ordinator on an organization chart may

¹D. B. Truman, Administrative Decentralization, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1940, Ch. 4.

be misleading and may not at all indicate the existence of decentralized authority."² Moreover, it is possible to have decentralization of authority within multiple or functional field organizations. Thus, this criterion cannot be used exclusively.

Two other criteria are seemingly quite obviously useful, but suffer from serious limitations: the frequency with which field offices refer matters to headquarters for decision, and the number and specificity of general regulations under which field agents work. The former has three problems associated with it, including the requirements of a "small army of clerks and interviewers", the qualitative judgment required in distinguishing types of decisions relayed to headquarters, and the difficulty of evaluating cases in which questions are decided in headquarters and action is taken in the field as opposed to those in which both decision and action originate at headquarters. The latter criterion also requires the monumental accumulation of quantitative data.

A fourth criterion listed by Truman is the provision for formal appeal from decisions of field officials, on the assumption that such provision limits the actual authority of field officials. This too is of limited usefulness, for the decision-making ability of the field man may be so limited as to render appeal provisions unnecessary, or they may be used so infrequently that their establishment has little meaning.

²Ibid., p. 57.

In his study, Truman recognized such limitations, concluded that none of his criteria was by itself entirely adequate, and proceeded to use them in combination. To the extent that Truman's analysis was largely subjective, based on interviews and observations³ and not on the monumental accumulation of quantitative data which would require, as he puts it, a small army of clerks and interviewers, it was a study using a "second-best" methodology rather than an "ideal" one.⁴

Due to limitations of resources and time, this study is also of the "second-best" variety, based on interviews and observations, supplemented by the administering of a rather simple questionnaire. The author has been employed with the Alberta Department of Agriculture from June of 1968, and is thus relatively familiar with the organization and philosophy of the department. An important aspect of the methodology is therefore one of "participant-observation".⁵ In the spring of 1970, authorization was given by the deputy minister for

³Ibid., preface, p. x.

⁴In social science research, difficulties of quantification frequently necessitate "second-best" alternatives. Economists have had perhaps the greatest success in attempting to evaluate "objectively" various social phenomena, but even economists recognize the necessity of accepting second-best alternatives. See R. A. Musgrave, "Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Theory of Public Finance", Journal of Economic Literature (September, 1969), pp. 797-806.

⁵As the position held did not lend itself to direct participation in field-headquarters relationships, a term which might better describe this aspect is "semi-detached observation".

the study of the department's regionalization concept as a thesis topic, subject to the approval and direction of the School of Public Administration at Carleton University. The author was given access to any files that might be considered useful, and was authorized to interview any personnel who could provide assistance.

Document and file review took place during the spring and summer of 1970, and interviews were held with all division directors, some branch heads, and a substantial portion of the field staff (including all Regional Agriculturists) during June and July of 1970. These interviews were of a highly unstructured nature, using open-ended questions designed to bring forth the broadest possible response and opinion under the following general headings:

- (a) lines of communication and authority;
- (b) regional co-ordination of divisional programs;
- (c) terms of reference of various field personnel;
- (d) location of decision-making powers;
- (e) planning in the region and in the department;
- (f) the relationship of the Regional Agriculturist to the personnel of his own and other divisions in the field;
- (g) the general feeling on the part of staff as to whether or not the experiment has been successful.

As a result of this preliminary research, it seemed apparent that there were some differences existing with regard to the opinions of field and headquarters personnel concerning the extent to which field operations are and should be decentralized. It was decided to test this impression through

the use of a simple questionnaire, hoping to quantify these subjective opinions in a way which might tell us something about the extent of actual decentralization and the possibilities of further decentralizing.

To do this, it was necessary to set up a hypothesis and to select a suitable framework within which to pose the questions.

The existence of a formal structure in the field suggests decentralization, as Truman has already noted, and thus the existence of regionalization suggests decentralization in the Alberta Department of Agriculture. This we can take as our positive hypothesis. The negative, or null hypothesis would then be that the department is centralized. One way of proving the validity of the positive hypothesis is to disprove the null hypothesis, so that a questionnaire can be constructed to include extremes that would point to a highly centralized organization if such extremes were chosen by a large proportion of respondents.

Administrative theory tells us that highly centralized organizations restrict the freedom of the individual to act, resulting in frustration, loss of initiative, and poor morale. The Dimocks point out that "[t]he centralization and pulling upward of all decision-making chokes off the contribution of the work group and negates morale and motivation."⁶ While

⁶M. E. Dimock and G. O. Dimock, Public Administration, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1964, p. 249.

morale is the function of many variables, including monetary rewards, job security, congenial work groups, interesting work, and so on,⁷ it should be possible to isolate certain features of centralized organizations which have an adverse effect on employee morale. If this is true, it should then be possible to identify centralization by measuring morale as it pertains to those features. An examination of features common to both centralized organizations and poor morale suggests at least three: too many and too restrictive regulations, insufficient authority, and inflexibility. In the questionnaire that was administered,⁸ questions 1 to 7 attempt to measure morale as reflected by employees' opinions on these features in the Alberta Department of Agriculture. If a substantial number of respondents (especially those in the field) are of the opinion that rules and regulations hamper performance, that there are too many regulations, that formal roles are too confining, and that delegated authority is insufficient to allow one's best performance, we would have one indication that the organization is centralized, despite what appears on the organization chart. If respondents answer differently than this, it would be one indication that the organization is not highly centralized (i.e. it is

⁷For a more complete treatment of these variables, see W. S. Sayre, "Morale and Discipline", in F. Morstein-Marx, op. cit., Ch. 21; M. E. and G. O. Dimock, op. cit., Ch. 16; and P. C. Bartholomew, An Outline of Public Administration, New Jersey, Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1967, Ch. 18.

⁸See Appendix I.

decentralized to some extent). More will be said of these questions in Section C., below.

But morale is only one indicator of centralization or decentralization. Others include the provision and adequacy of specialist assistance, appeal systems, speed of communication and decision-making, external centralizing or decentralizing factors, supporting philosophy, administrative competence, and so on. With the exception of external centralizing factors, the results of a questionnaire can reflect these aspects as well, hence the inclusion of questions 8-13, 15-21, and 23.

To obtain maximum usefulness, a questionnaire should be designed within a suitable theoretical framework. Before considering this aspect of the questionnaire, we must digress for a moment to discuss the "Richards Model", for the methodology is put into perspective by an examination of a classification scheme and methodology suggested by R. A. Richards. We will return to the questionnaire in Section C.

B. THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS -- THE RICHARDS MODEL

An organization is composed of centralizing and decentralizing features, presumably because such patterns assist the executives of the organization to ensure that its goals are achieved. If in Barnard's terms, the functions of the executive are 1) to formulate and define purposes for the enterprise, 2) to provide a system of communication, and 3) to

promote the securing of essential efforts,⁹ then both centralizing and decentralizing features must somehow contribute to the performance of these functions. As centralization and decentralization both provide certain advantages, our task in examining a particular organization might be to determine what features of the organization represent centralizing forces, what features represent decentralizing forces, how each contributes to the performance of the executive functions, and whether or not those functions might be better performed through the use of the opposite pattern.

Such is the approach¹⁰ implied by R. A. Richards' article, "On Administrative Decentralization" in the 1962 volume of Public Administration (Australia). After listing Barnard's "executive functions", he proposes to ". . . examine activities in an enterprise in general terms under each of these three heads in turn, and to study the effects of decentralization on these activities" (p. 60). After doing so, Richards finds that there are advantages of centralization as well as of decentralization, and that under decentralization, several problems arise that are not normally found under a centralized operation. These advantages and problems can be

⁹Barnard, op. cit., Ch. 15.

¹⁰The Richards approach was chosen because it suggests a more detailed and comprehensive methodology than Truman's, and because it makes explicit the necessity of avoiding using centralization and decentralization as mutually exclusive. While Richards does not seem in favor of using the concept of "balance", his model does allow it to be applied. We will introduce "balance" in Chapter V.

summarized as follows:¹¹

Advantages of Centralization

- C1. Unified control of organizational purpose (1)
- C2. Accountability definitely located (1)
- C3. Fewer co-ordination problems (1,2)
- C4. Economy in the use of specialists (1)
- C5. Economy in the use of skilled administrators (2)
- C6. Decisions taken by administrative staff with long experience; therefore likely to be correct (3)

Advantages of Decentralization

- D1. Better adaptation of purpose to work problems (1,3)
- D2. Flexibility of adaptation of purpose to local public needs (1,3)
- D3. Development of administrative skills (2)
- D4. Quick decisions for workers; fewer costly delays (2,3)
- D5. More efficient use of administrative time (3)
- D6. Improved morale (3)

Problems to be faced under Decentralization [actions needed to improve decentralized undertakings]

- P1. Standardization where appropriate to help control purpose (1)
- P2. Solution of a greater number of co-ordination problems (1)
- P3. Action to overcoming [sic.] remoteness of local administrators from top of organization (2)
- P4. A dominant and persistently expressed management philosophy favoring decentralization (2)
- P5. Development of administrative skill at lower levels of the hierarchy (2)
- P6. Establishment of good control systems (3)

Obviously, an ideal arrangement would be one where both sets of advantages are present and where all problems have been adequately met. Assuming this to be so, Richards sets out to devise a set of criteria with which we can establish whether the organization has gained both sets of advantages.

As he has defined decentralization in terms of both structure and action, Richards emphasizes that such criteria

¹¹Richards, op. cit., pp. 72-73. Numbers in brackets refer to Barnard's executive functions.

must measure both. In order to determine the extent of decentralization within an organization, then, one must answer the question "What are the formal organizational arrangements in force to ensure that effective authority to act and make decisions resides at low levels in the enterprise?"¹² In order to look at the organization in terms of action, the question that must be asked is "What steps are being taken to overcome the problems inherent in decentralized operations, or to regain the advantages of centralized operations?"¹³

To answer these questions, says Richards, we need to look at various factors coming under these broad headings, which can be isolated as:¹⁴

- (1) Structural, or Formal Organizational Patterns
 - (a) the extent of delegation under the major operating and auxiliary subdivisions of the enterprise.
 - (b) the extent of provision of specialist assistance at key levels to make delegation effective.
 - (c) the extent of standardization.
 - (d) provision for appeals from lower decisions.
 - (e) an analysis of factors external to the organization tending to have a centralizing or decentralizing influence.
- (2) Steps being taken to regain advantages of centralized operations (action)
 - (f) evidence of an active supporting philosophy among senior administrators.
 - (g) specific formal action to obtain and maintain a high degree of competence in administrative personnel.
 - (h) specific formal support for speed in communication including adequate management control systems.

¹²Ibid., p. 75.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., see pp. 75-76.

Under (1), factors (a) and (b) point to effective decentralization; factors (c) and (d) point to centralization. Under (2), all factors, given (f), favor decentralization.

C. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

With Professor Richards' model adequately reviewed, the questionnaire can now be explained in further detail. While questions 1 to 7, as already explained, serve as a rough measure of centralization as reflected by morale, it is to be noted that they are also to serve other purposes.

Under Richards' first set of criteria, relating to formal organizational arrangements promoting decentralization, nine questions were asked. Questions 5, 6, 7 and 12 were intended to measure individual attitudes toward the extent of delegation. Numbers 5 and 6 asked the question directly, inquiring as to whether or not the individual and field personnel generally had sufficient, insufficient, or more than sufficient authority to do their best job. Question 7 asked the same question indirectly by attempting to discover the degree of freedom given to a subordinate in the performance of his job. Question 12 referred to the finality of the decision made by a subordinate.

Questions 8, 9, 10, and 11 were supposed to measure the need for, and the adequacy of provision of specialist assistance at all levels of the organization.

The extent of standardization was approached through questions 1 to 3, attempting to measure indirectly the number

and restrictiveness of rules and regulations. To the extent that centralization can be promoted through restricting activities by rules and regulations, it was assumed that negative answers versus positive answers would say something about the restrictions imposed by such rules and regulations as the department has in use. This would in turn say something, if only indirectly, about departmental tendencies to centralization through standardization. Question 4, it was hoped, would tell us something about how restrictive or otherwise individuals felt their formal role to be, on the assumption that employees of a centralized organization would feel themselves confined by their formal role.

Formal appeal systems are generally a restriction on effective delegation, and suggest a negation of decentralizing devices. The existence of success of formal appeals, as measured by question 13, especially those which go over the head of the immediate superior, would suggest no real, or at least incomplete, delegation. Question 12 also relates to this reality of delegation.

Turning to Richards' second set of criteria, the existence or non-existence of supporting philosophy of the personnel involved should be shown in the results of questions 14 and 23. If a decentralized region exists, one would expect a field member's loyalties to be at least as intense towards his region as to his division (question 14). If consultation always takes place, senior officials should not fear some administrative policy decisions being made by field staff, so

that answers to question 23 should provide some idea of the extent of the supporting philosophy of the senior management. It should also tell us something about the preference for a functional, as opposed to an integrated, field organization.

While administrative competence is clearly not described only in terms of formal management training, questions 15 and 16, dealing with the extent and usefulness of the training received by staff, should assist in measuring at least one aspect of such competence.

Speed in communications reinforces decentralization, and the answers to questions 18 through 21 may provide clues with regard to communications involving information and decision both between the region and headquarters, and within regions.

Questions 17 and 22, though not directly related to any of Richards' criteria, purport to examine the extent to which coherence of purpose is achieved through the gaining of varied experience in different parts of the organization and the extent to which informal consultation takes place. Both relate to the achievement of awareness of overall purpose.

The questionnaire was designed to enable the identification of differences between field and headquarters, between different levels of management, and between divisions of the department. To promote a high rate of return, it was necessary to assure anonymity; respondents were therefore asked not to sign their name, and a promise was made to destroy all raw data after

analysis was completed. These attempts to promote a high return superficially prevent analysis of the differences between regions, for to ask field personnel to identify their region is to allow for the possibility of identifying individuals in a particular region. Fortunately, it was possible to overcome this problem by noting the postmarks on the incoming envelopes.

Three hundred and twenty-seven usable questionnaires of a total of 540 sent out were returned, representing a response of 60.6%. The analysis of the most useful results is presented throughout Chapter V.

D. A WORD ON QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires suffer from many limitations, chief of which are the impossibility of providing wide enough choices to allow every situation to be adequately commented on and the difficulty in avoiding misunderstandings in the use of words. A questionnaire, admittedly subjective in attempting to measure aspects of an organization as reflected in the opinions and attitudes of its members, provides only a generalized picture of the organization. While such a picture is useful, it does not allow details to be fully examined, and thus must be only a supplement to observation and interviews.

CHAPTER III

THE STUDY ENVIRONMENT

A. EXTERNAL

The outstanding feature of Alberta politics has been the dominance of one party in provincial elections, a situation which lead C. B. MacPherson to dub Alberta politics a "quasi-party system".¹ Albertans rejected traditional parties in 1921, electing the United Farmers of Alberta by a decisive majority. The UFA ruled until 1935, when the hardships of the depression, combined with the appealing theories of C. H. Douglas and the fundamentalist approach of William Aberhart induced Albertans to replace the UFA with the Social Credit Party. Social Credit has been in power ever since, and in 1970 commands fifty-five of the sixty-five seats of the Alberta legislature.

In recent years, it has been difficult, though not impossible,² to discover many traces of the radicalism and

¹C. B. MacPherson, Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit and the Party System, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968 (first edition 1953).

²In 1962, John Saywell, in the 1962 Canadian Annual Review, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, was able to point out that, "Traces of the old orthodoxy could occasionally be detected, as on February 21 [of the February 15 to April 5 session] when the Municipal Affairs Minister warned that sex education in the schools could be a Communist-inspired plot to destroy the West and hinted darkly at some mysterious connection between the international money system and Communism." (p. 66.)

unorthodox economic theory that brought Social Credit to power and sustained it for many years afterwards. The party now provides fairly orthodox cabinet government, and even as long ago as 1950 was regarded as one of Canada's conservative parties.³ The fundamentalist orientation of the party has been less apparent since the resignation of Mr. Manning in 1968, and when the cabinet formed by the new leader and premier, Mr. Strom, did not include A. J. Hooke,⁴ who was the last remaining member of Aberhart's original government and staunch exponent of social credit theory, the break with the unorthodox past appeared complete. In 1970, the government broke with its pay-as-you-go policy and went into direct borrowing for capital purposes.

Although Social Credit has been subjected to its share of scandals, alleged conflicts of interest, indiscretions, and so on,⁵ and despite a slightly anti-intellectual flavour,⁶ the party has retained the loyalty of Alberta's

³See S. M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967 (first edition 1950), p. 279. John Porter, in The Vertical Mosaic, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1970, adds at p. 378: "Most of its goals were obstructed by disallowance and judicial decisions, and with the return of prosperity during and after World War II it became a traditional conservative party making occasional fanfares of Christian fundamentalism."

⁴Mr. Hooke recently announced plans to revive Social Credit federally. See "Hooke will spread Social Credit policy federally," The Edmonton Journal, November 26, 1970, p. 55.

⁵See Arthur Hailey, "Ordeal by Rumour: The Skeletons in Manning's Cabinet", Macleans Magazine, November 16, 1964, pp. 15-20.

⁶See L. Hertzman, "Alberta and the Intellectuals", Culture, 27 (June, 1966), pp. 163-175.

electors. This has been largely due to its outstanding record of good management and good administration, although it has undoubtedly been assisted by the dominance of the rural voter.⁷ In the 1967 election,

The government in essence rested its case on the assertion that it has provided the "people of Alberta with the best standard of education, health and welfare and the most advanced program of public works in Canada". And, the government added, it had spent more money per capita than any other provincial government and yet taxed the least. This last claim was very difficult to challenge.⁸

Nineteen sixty-seven also marked the publication of E. C. Manning's White Paper on Human Resource Development, and the government's more explicit move into social development as opposed to large investments in capital projects such as roads and public works. This trend has been followed up by the new premier, Mr. Strom, and expenditures on education, health, and welfare were expected in 1970 to amount to almost 50% of the record one billion dollar budget,⁹ education alone accounting for nearly one-third.

⁷See J. A. Long, "Maldistribution in Western Provincial Legislatures: The Case of Alberta", Canadian Journal of Political Science, 2 (1969), pp. 345-355. For the next election, to be held probably in 1971, a redistribution of Alberta seats will be in effect. Ten more seats will be added to the 65-seat house, and urban seats will for the first time outnumber rural seats, 38 to 37.

⁸R. E. Baird, "Alberta", in J. Saywell (ed.), 1967 Canadian Annual Review, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968, p. 184.

⁹Government of Alberta, Treasury Department, Estimates of Revenue and Amounts to be voted for the Public Service of Alberta for the Fiscal Year April 1st, 1970, to March 31, 1971, Edmonton, Queen's Printer, 1970.

Opposition parties have never found Alberta particularly fruitful, but in recent years, the provincial Progressive Conservative Party has gained strength, particularly in the urban areas, and now holds all ten of the opposition seats in the legislature. Led by a young, dynamic, Peter Lougheed, the party is considered by many observers to have an excellent chance of at least increasing its share of the seats quite substantially in the next election, likely to be held in 1971. Three factors appear to justify optimism on the part of Conservative supporters. First, Mr. Strom does not have the personal appeal and charm that served Mr. Manning so well in his tenure as leader and premier. Second, the Conservatives appear to have a greater appeal in the urban constituencies (ten more will be added for the next election) and among the younger segment of the population, and are said to be effectively organizing in the rural areas. And third, the Conservatives have been handed an issue with which to attack the government on its strongest base -- sound administration. It has been discovered that the W. A. C. Bennett Dam, built with the blessings of the Alberta government, is producing some adverse effects on the economy of the Peace River and Athabasca areas due to changed river flow and flooding patterns in the area. Both the Conservatives and the local newspapers¹⁰ are

¹⁰See the series of articles in The Edmonton Journal by Barry Craig, especially "The disaster Alberta thought was a favour", September 6, 1970, p. 5; "Peace River delta may be dying because of Alberta's indifference", September 9, 1970, p. 5; and "Action on delta -- four years after warning", September 10, 1970, p. 5.

presenting a plausible case that the problem could have been avoided through sound planning and effective administration, in effect taking advantage of the "ecology issue" that is as strong in Alberta as anywhere. While the government is countering with a new "pollution department" to be established at the next sitting of the legislature,¹¹ there can be little doubt that the problem has been costly politically.

The government has been assisted in maintaining its good record of efficient administration by the existence of a sound economy, and has been able to avoid higher taxes¹² by virtue of buoyant revenues from the oil and gas industry. In 1970, revenues collected by the Mines and Minerals Department were expected to be approximately one-quarter of the province's revenue, second only to those collected by the Treasury Department, and indicative of the importance of the oil and mining industry in Alberta. Table I shows the relative importance of various sectors of the Alberta economy during the last two years.

The population of the province as of January 1, 1970 is estimated at 1,584,000, a growth rate of 22% per decade and second only to British Columbia with 26%. According to the 1966 census, there were 333,158 families, including 233,252 urban, 60,905 rural farm, and 37,001 rural non-farm

¹¹"Department to control pollution being set up", The Edmonton Journal, October 24, 1970, p. 23.

¹²For example, Alberta is now the only province in Canada without a provincial sales tax.

TABLE 1

ALBERTA ECONOMY (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

	1968	1969
Manufacturing shipments	1,528	1,622
Farm cash income	750	723*
Mineral production	1,080	1,193
Capital investment	1,821	1,931
Value of construction	1,537	1,352
Housing starts (urban centres)	17,317 units	20,521 units
Retail sales	2,028	2,199

Source: Financial Post, April 12, 1969, p. P-9 and May 9, 1970, p. P-7.

*First nine months of 1969.

families.¹³ Like many of Canada's other provinces, Alberta is rapidly becoming urbanized. Kasahara pointed out in 1963 that

The accelerating pace of metropolitization was particularly impressive in the province of Alberta, bustling with the vitality of recent oil-field developments; both Edmonton and Calgary nearly doubled their populations in ten years [1951-1961].¹⁴

Edmonton and Calgary, both with populations approximating 400,000, today contain over half of the province's total population.

Despite the increasingly urbanized population and economy of the province, agriculture continues to play an important role in the province's economy, although in recent

¹³"Alberta's Economy in Brief", Financial Post, May 9, 1970, p. P-7.

¹⁴y. Kasahara, "A Profile of Canada's Metropolitan Centres", in B. R. Blishen, F. E. Jones, K. D. Naegle, and J. Porter (eds.), Canadian Society: Sociological Perspectives, Toronto, Macmillan Co., 1968, p. 68.

years it has clearly been diminishing in importance. Table 2 shows the place of agriculture as a per cent of the net value of production in Alberta for selected years.

TABLE 2
NET VALUE OF ALBERTA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION
AS % OF TOTAL ALBERTA PRODUCTION* AND OF
CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

Year	% of total Alberta Production	% of the agricultural industry in Canada
1945	53.0	16.8
1955	26.3	18.7
1965	21.0	18.7
1968	19.7	21.8

Source: Alberta Government, Department of Agriculture, "Proceedings of October 21, 1969 Planning Conference", mimeo, p. 5.

*Total net value added for Alberta=Total value production-cost of materials, supplies, fuel and electricity. Includes cost of labor, taxes, depreciation, capital, rents, and profits.

The same structural changes occurring in Canadian agriculture as a result of increasing industrialization are also occurring in Alberta. John Porter's brief description of those changes for Canada can be usefully applied to Alberta:

Most notable among the changes which have been taking place in agriculture are: the increasing size of farms; increasing mechanization; the reduction in the proportion of farm labour which comes from unpaid family help; the higher proportion in the older rather than the younger age groups in the farming population; the increasing trend, particularly in Ontario and Quebec, to combining farm work with non-farm work, and the increasing tendency for some of those who remain on farms to be wholly engaged in other industries.¹⁵

¹⁵Porter, op. cit., p. 141. For a more complete and

Two indicators of this change for Alberta can be population change and the age of farm operators. From 1961 to 1970, while Alberta's population increased by 19.88%, its urban population increased by 33.10% and its rural population declined by 2.93%.¹⁶ In 1966, 57.4% of Alberta farm operators were over forty-four years of age, as opposed to 55.1% only five years previously.¹⁷ In addition, those employed in agriculture, as a percentage of the total Alberta labor force, decreased 9.95% between 1951 and 1961 and an additional 5.19% between 1961 and 1966.¹⁸

Although there is much evidence to suggest that the urban and non-agricultural voice is becoming increasingly strong in the formulation of government policy, influence on agricultural policy is still almost the exclusive reserve of Alberta farmers and farm leaders, particularly when innovation becomes necessary. The Alberta Hog Producers Marketing Board was the catalyst in the development of the Department of Agriculture's new marketing policy, farm

up-to-date account of the Canadian agricultural situation, see Government of Canada, Canadian Agriculture in the Seventies: Report of the Federal Task Force on Agriculture, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, December, 1969. For further information on the Alberta scene, see Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd., Tradition and Transition, Edmonton, December, 1970.

¹⁶Government of Alberta, Department of Agriculture and Human Resources Development Authority, 1970-75 Federal-Provincial ARDA Agreement Proposal: Appendix, mimeo, July 1, 1970, p. 27.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 30.

leaders played a part in organizing a series of meetings called "Direction '70" designed to provide producers with more relevant marketing information in view of the recent wheat crisis, and farm groups regularly present briefs to the Cabinet. Perhaps the most influential man outside of government with regard to agricultural policy has been Paul Babey, president of the 30,000 member Unifarm organization until December of 1970. It seems likely that his successor, Mr. Lea, will be equally influential because of the strength and vitality of the organization.¹⁹

The Federal Government, by virtue of Section 95 of the B. N. A. Act, also influences Alberta agriculture in direct as well as indirect ways. Under the Health of Animals Act, the Federal Government directly participates in the control and prevention of livestock diseases; it has provided research stations at Lethbridge, Lacombe, and Beaverlodge; the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation and the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development agreements have had an impact on Alberta, as have had the various subsidizing, farm credit, and income maintenance schemes.

Provincial-federal co-operation has been good, and as has been said of other evolving areas of Canadian federalism,²⁰ understanding, agreement, and collaboration ha

¹⁹More is said of Unifarm in Ch. 5, under the section entitled "External Centralizing and Decentralizing Influences".

²⁰See D. V. Smiley, "Public Administration and Canadian Federalism", in J. P. Meekison (ed.), Canadian Federalism: Myth or Reality?, Toronto, Methuen Publications, 1968, pp. 271-287.

been achieved to a large extent by specialists and administrators of both governments who have a common appreciation of the problems and goals involved, and who have membership in the same professional group. Despite this, however, problems of co-ordination and co-operation do occur, a fact which led the Federal Task Force on Agriculture to point out that,

Due to the complexity and fragmentation of Federal Government departments and agencies concerned with agriculture, as well as the problems of federal-provincial co-ordination, no structure of authority and responsibility exists for integrating and co-ordinating government activities.²¹

B. INTERNAL

In 1968 the Alberta government administrative structure employed some 39,600 people in its departmental services, institutions of higher education, government enterprises, and the workmen's compensation board, third in number after Ontario and Quebec, up from the 1960 figure of 20,801 employees,²² and representing a monthly payroll of over \$18,000,000.²³ The Department of Agriculture, with approximately 1200 employees, was in 1970 to be the ninth largest spender of public funds at \$21,751,230.²⁴ Table 3

²¹Canada, Task Force Report, p. 278.

²²1960 figure does not include the workmen's compensation board.

²³Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Provincial Government Employment October-December, 1968, catalogue no. 72-007, p. 8. British Columbia figures not available.

²⁴Alberta, Estimates 1970-71, pp. 6-7.

shows the proportion of estimated expenditures of the Department compared to the total government budget for selected years. It is interesting to note that at a time when the importance of agriculture in the economy of the province has been declining, the proportion of government expenditure made directly by the Department of Agriculture has remained fairly constant, and even increased in the period 1967-68 to 1970-71.²⁵

As the government strives to maintain its image of sound and progressive administration, departmental reorganizations have been occurring at a bewildering pace. In accordance with Mr. Manning's White Paper on Human Resource Development, the Public Welfare Department was recently reorganized and renamed "Social Development". Also as a result of the White Paper, the ARDA Branch was transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Human Resources Development Authority, itself a direct result of the White Paper. The Health Department is apparently going through some adjustment pains with the appointment of a new Minister replacing Dr. Ross. A new department, taking Water Resources from the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Health from the Health Department, is scheduled to be set up at the

²⁵The increase for the period 1967-68 to 1970-71 can be explained by the increasing activity under the Federal-Provincial ARDA agreements and by costs associated with the building of the consolidated laboratory, with the improvement of facilities at the agricultural and vocational colleges, and with the reorganization of the Department. 1967 was also an election year.

TABLE 3

ESTIMATED DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE EXPENDITURES
AS PROPORTION OF TOTAL ALBERTA BUDGET

	1959-60	1964-65 ^b	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68 ^c	1968-69 ^c	1969-70 ^c	1970-71 ^c
	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)
Total estimated expenditure (Income + Capital)	304,676	414,440	493,783	668,026	818,829	875,674	964,312	1,133,512
Department of Agriculture Estimated Expenditures								
Income	4,582	5,843	6,504	8,393	11,043	15,225	15,962	16,625
Capital	<u>2,147</u>	<u>2,392</u>	<u>2,972</u>	<u>3,906</u>	<u>6,656</u>	<u>8,345</u>	<u>8,412</u>	<u>5,126</u>
Total	6,727 ^a	8,235	9,416	12,299	17,699	23,570	24,374	21,751
Expenditure by Department of Agriculture as per cent of total	2.2%	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	2.2%	2.7%	2.5%	1.9%

Source: Government of Alberta, Treasury Department, Estimates.

^aIncludes Civil Defence (\$437,000).

^bARDA expenditures began 1962-63.

^cDoes not include 4-H expenditures (transferred to the Department of Youth).

next sitting of the legislature, and will be assigned the environmental improvement function.²⁶ Changes affecting the Attorney-General's Department and the Provincial Secretary's Department are also contemplated.

The Department of Agriculture went through its reorganization in 1966, after the retirement of the former Deputy-Minister, Mr. Putnam, and the appointment of Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, former head of the Veterinary Services Branch, as the new Deputy in 1965. The reorganization, which became effective April 1, 1966, was an explicit recognition of the changing nature of agriculture and the increasing need for the efficient application of specialized knowledge to the problems of agriculture:

In keeping with the changes in the agricultural industry, which is both a science and a business, action was commenced to reorganize the Department in a more businesslike manner to provide the services demanded of it.²⁷

A committee of three senior members of the Department was named May 10, 1965 to study the organization of the Department, with the following general terms of reference:

- 1) To examine [the] present organization of the Department of Agriculture and its ability to function effectively in today's agricultural atmosphere of "science" and "business" in attaining the overall goal of the Department, and
- 2) If deemed desirable, to recommend alternative plans of organization which may assist the

²⁶Government of Alberta, Office of the Premier, Press Release, October 24, 1970.

²⁷Government of Alberta, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report 1965, Edmonton, Queen's Printer, 1966, p. 6.

Department to fulfill its obligations to the agricultural industry and to the public at large.²⁸

The committee was directed to consider several specific areas which were felt to be indicative of the need for departmental adjustment, first in importance being the relatively large span of control of the Deputy, who prior to 1966, had up to fifteen branch heads reporting to him. The Deputy's workload was also burdensome because of a large number of routine requirements of other departments, especially those of Audit and Public Works; because of the workload, public relations activities and the news releases from the Minister's and Deputy's offices were handled inadequately. Some duplication of activities was apparent, and it was felt that inter-branch communications could be improved. This was especially important in view of the fact that the necessity for emphasis on specialization called for greater co-operation and unification of Department effort. Two minor problems, stemming from the nature of the existing organization, were also to be considered: confusion existed as a result of the variety of existing titles, and personnel were scattered throughout a number of buildings, limiting any informal co-ordination that might take place through the normal course of events.

The committee presented two alternatives for organization. The first suggested that an executive committee of six be set up, consisting of the Deputy Minister and the

²⁸R. H. McMillan, S. S. Graham, A. M. Wilson, Report Re: Department Reorganization, exact date unknown.

heads of five major divisions: animal production, crop production, education, resources, and agribusiness. The second alternative suggested three divisions: production, education, and resources but was favored by no one because the Department was believed to be too diverse and complex to be adequately managed by three divisions. Both plans included an executive committee concept, such committee to be "concerned with overall policy matters, assessing and charting the direction of the Department". As well, it was to confer with Federal and Provincial personnel and to coordinate such interrelationships. Both plans also included the appointment of an administrative secretary to relieve the Deputy of the more routine aspects of his duties, and to be an extension of the Deputy's office with regard to administrative matters.

The organizational pattern finally chosen closely resembled the first alternative, except that seven divisions were set up, called the Plant Industry Division, the Animal Industry Division, the Program Development Division, the Extension and Colleges Division, the Water Resources Division, the Agricultural Economics Division, and the Veterinary Services Division. The personnel and accounting functions were designated as staff arms of the Deputy's office, and although the establishment of the recommended position of Executive Secretary was deferred for two years, the appointment was made in 1968. The organization remains basically the same in 1970, although adjustments have occurred and are

contemplated in the near future. Diagram I summarizes the present organization of the Department. Numerous boards, committees, and other relationships with the universities, clientele, other departments, and other governments have been omitted in the interests of brevity. The Department's field organization will be examined in detail in the following chapter.

The former Field Crops Branch, headed by the Field Crops Commissioner, became the Plant Industry Division, consisting of five branches including a Crop Improvement Branch, a Weed Control Branch, a Soils Branch, a Crop Protection and Pest Control Branch, and a Horticulture Branch. Apiculture was also included under Plant Industry Division. In 1970 the Division remains basically the same, except that the Crop Improvement Branch has become the Field Crops Branch, and the Weed Control Branch is now called the Weed Control and Municipal Programs Branch to give explicit recognition of that Branch's role with regard to municipal governments and agricultural service boards. The Division's objectives are clearly summed up as follows:

The purpose and function of the Plant Industry Division is to direct and encourage, by education, incentives, and regulation, all aspects of crop and horticultural production within physical, economic, and human resource possibilities. This includes conservation and use of farmlands, the control of weeds, crop diseases, insect pests and all interrelationships.²⁹

²⁹Alberta Government, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report 1969, p. 12.

DIAGRAM 1

ORGANIZATION OF THE ALBERTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, 1970

The new Animal Industry Division brought together the former Poultry, Livestock, and Dairy Branches under one Director. Little organizational change has occurred to 1970, except that the regulatory services were isolated and placed under a supervisor of livestock regulatory services in 1968. The Division as a whole sees its objective as being "to promote and direct the orderly development of the livestock, dairy, and poultry industries through policies of licensing, inspection and extension education."³⁰

The amalgamation of the Farm Purchase Board and the Farm Economic Branch resulted in the creation of the Agricultural Economics Division, under which were the Board and five branches. The branches were the Farm Management Branch, the Production Research Branch, the Statistics Branch, the Rural Development Research Branch, and the Marketing Branch. The Rural Development Research Branch was transferred to the Human Resources Development Authority in 1968 as a result of the transfer of ARDA, and further reorganizations took place in 1969 with the appointment of a new Director, Mr. J. Pankratz.³¹ In 1969 the Marketing Branch, which had remained largely undeveloped until the appointment of a permanent head in 1967, was amalgamated with the Statistics Branch to form

³⁰Alberta Department of Agriculture, Executive Committee Minutes, March 23, 1970. A development which will be closely associated with Animal Industry Division occurred in 1969 when the Milk Control Act was revised, providing that the Milk Control Board, formerly reporting to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, now reports to the Minister of Agriculture.

³¹Mr. Pankratz was replaced by Mr. J. Clark in 1970.

the Marketing and Statistics Branch. A Systems Design and Data Analysis Branch, intended to supply the information systems design and analysis requirements for the Department, and a Resource Economics Branch carved out of the Production Research Branch, have also been added, and changes have taken place in the Farm Management Branch. While the Division has not played the role in the Department that it could have, largely due to lack of direction and attacks of internal dissension since the move of its original Director to the Canada Department of Agriculture in 1968, its general objectives are given as that of increasing "the economic and social well-being of farm families by providing services for the establishment and maintenance of competitive and viable farming operations and related business enterprises."³²

The Veterinary Services Branch, which became the Veterinary Services Division, remained largely unchanged internally, except for the addition of the Fur Farms Branch. Two other major subdivisions were and remain today the Field Services Branch, responsible for communicable disease control, herd health programs, and various inspection and regulatory services, and the Laboratory Services Branch, which provides analytic and diagnostic service for farmers, veterinarians, other Divisions of the Department, and other departments of the Alberta government. The Division operates laboratories at Edmonton (part of the Consolidated Agriculture and Wildlife

³²Alberta Department of Agriculture, Executive Committee Minutes, March 23, 1970.

Laboratory) and Lethbridge, and was instrumental in achieving a rather novel approach to the provision of veterinary services in the Peace River area. The veterinary hospital at Fairview was a joint project of the Alberta government and the Peace River Livestock Co-operative, with the co-operative raising the money for the \$311,000 project on the strength of the government's promise to purchase the facilities over a five-year period.³³ The Division sees its objectives as two-fold: "In the interests of economic production to protect, maintain, and improve the health of Alberta's livestock and to protect human health."³⁴

The Program Development Division was an entirely new Division established in 1966 to develop new agricultural programs and to administer other programs not readily identified with a specific commodity area or discipline of the other six Divisions. In 1966 the branches under the division included the Agricultural Products Marketing Council, the Resource Conservation and Utilization Committee, and ARDA (formerly under the Agricultural Extension Branch). The Director was until 1968 the Official Trustee and Colonization Manager of the United, Lethbridge Northern, and Macleod Irrigation Districts, when the Irrigation Act 1968 provided for the transfer of such duties to boards of directors of the districts

³³See "Veterinary hospital to be opened", The Edmonton Journal, May 27, 1970, p. 16.

³⁴Alberta Department of Agriculture, Executive Committee Minutes, March 23, 1970.

themselves. The Irrigation Secretariat, also provided for in the 1968 Act to assist districts in administering the Act, was assigned to the Division for development and received branch status with the appointment of a manager in August of 1968. In 1967, a Municipal Agricultural Programs Branch was established to improve co-ordination of departmental services provided to local governments, and has since been given added responsibility for agricultural societies and agricultural manpower programs. The ARDA Branch, administering the Federal-Provincial Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development agreements, was transferred to the Human Resources Development Authority in 1968, and although strong indirect ties continued until 1970, the Branch is now effectively separated from the Division and to a great extent from the Department. Further reductions in the size of the Division may occur in 1971, as it appears that the Resource Conservation and Utilization Committee may become an integral part of the new environmental improvement department. However, new duties are regularly being added, as for example, the responsibility for co-ordinating the Department's new emphasis on agricultural marketing.

Aside from direct administration of programs, an important function of the Program Development Division is that of a "departmental services" nature, performing an advisory, policy review, and co-ordinating function for the Department generally. More completely defined, the Division's objectives include the following:

The Program Development Division is responsible for (a) developing selected new agricultural programs to meet changing conditions, (b) administering programs that are not readily or solely identified with the specific disciplines of other Divisions, and (c) co-ordinating administrative programs of a Departmental scope, so as to assist in the achievement of the objectives of the Department as a whole. The Division also assumes special staff and advisory functions in such areas as management development, co-ordination of Departmental research and planning, as well as other interdepartmental and intergovernmental programs.³⁵

With the appointment of a new Director in 1970, it seems likely that the latter functions of the Division will increase in emphasis. The new Director, Mr. Thomson, sees his division as "the conscience and communications centre of the Alberta Department of Agriculture",³⁶ and believes it should be a "gathering place for 'signals' from our clients, our staff, and outside agencies."³⁷

The Extension and Colleges Division was formed in 1966 by bringing together a number of branches having as their chief function the dissemination of information or the provision of formal and informal education. The Division thus consisted of the District Agriculturist Branch, the Home Economics Branch, The Agricultural Engineering Branch, and the Radio and Information Branch (including the publications and visual aids section), as well as the Agricultural and Vocational Colleges at Olds, Vermilion and Fairview. The

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Quoted in "Agriculture field being perused", The Edmonton Journal, December 3, 1970, p. 57.

³⁷Ibid.

responsibility for 4-H programs went to the newly established Department of Youth in 1966, and ARDA went to Program Development. A Rural Leadership Training section was added in 1967. Responsibility for Agricultural Manpower and Agricultural Societies was later transferred to Program Development.

On July 1, 1970, a new Director of the Extension and Colleges Division, Mr. C. J. McAndrews, formerly the Director of the Program Development Division, was appointed. As a result of a series of staff consultations throughout the Province, a wide-ranging reorganization is scheduled to go into effect January 1, 1971.³⁸ The field staff of this Division are the most numerous of the divisions, and have perhaps the most direct impact on the clientele of the Department. It is also the staff of this Division that play the most important part in the Department's field organization, their function being to "help people help themselves through programs of continuing education to achieve their economic and social goals."³⁹

The reorganization of 1966 brought together ". . . the disciplines with 'water' as the most active common denominator"⁴⁰ to form the Water Resources Division, combining the

³⁸Further details are provided in Chapter VI. Diagram 1 does not illustrate the proposed reorganization. See Appendix V.

³⁹Alberta Department of Agriculture, Executive Committee Minutes, March 23, 1970.

⁴⁰Government of Alberta, Department of Agriculture, 1966 Annual Report, p. 217.

Colonization Branch and the Water Resources Branch and designating former sections as Branches. An Internal Administration and an External Administration Branch were to be responsible for administrative services, and seven others, including Development Planning, Design and Construction, Hydrology, Engineering Materials, Land Development, Agrohydrology, and Soils, Geology, and Groundwater were referred to as "specialty" branches. A Land Management Branch and the Lethbridge Northern Colonization Manager also reported to the Water Resources Division in 1966. Since 1966 the Development Planning and Engineering Materials Branch have merged, and a Maintenance section has been added. The Division's goals have been defined in the following way: "In [the] social and economic environment which society may from time to time determine for itself, the Division's objective is to ensure that water is not a deficient ingredient."⁴¹

The Water Resources Division is the only division that could, because of its concern with the multi-purpose use of water, regard agriculture as only part of a broader function. Because of this, and because a substantial portion of its professional staff are engineers rather than agriculturists, the Division is rather less an integrated part of the Department than the other divisions, and Water Resources staff occasionally suggest that the Division should either be a department of itself or be less closely associated with the

⁴¹Alberta Department of Agriculture, Executive Committee Minutes, March 23, 1970.

Department of Agriculture. It has been successful in retaining a larger degree of autonomy than the other divisions; thus although the Department has centralized its accounting and duplicating function, Water Resources accounting remains completely within the Division, and the Division maintains its own duplicating facilities. As mentioned previously, it is anticipated that the Division will move to the new environmental improvement department being established in 1971. It is to Water Resources that the opposition and the newspapers are assigning much of the blame for the Athabasca delta problem.

As the Department's reorganization was carried out close to the time of the appointment of a new Minister, Mr. Strom, in 1962, and a new Deputy in 1965, the staff of the Department had been expecting changes. This atmosphere, combined with the leadership of the new Deputy and the extensive participation of senior staff in the actual design of the new structure, has made it possible to accomplish the reorganization without any major lingering problems or conflicts. While some problems of integration occurred because of the long history and tradition of relative autonomy of some branches, as for example, the dairy, poultry and livestock branches of the Animal Industry Division, most Divisions in 1970 are relatively unified or making progress toward that objective, and the concept itself has been well accepted.

The organization of the Department does not represent organization by any one of Gulick's principles of purpose,

process, clientele, or place;⁴² rather it is a combination of the first three that has been used, with the common denominator of subject matter or commodity playing an important role. Thus the Animal Industry Division is composed primarily of personnel whose expertise lies in animal science, the Plant Industry Division consists primarily of people trained in plant science, and so on. Only the Program Development Division and the Extension and Colleges Division appear to be basically inter-disciplinary in nature. However, while most of the personnel in the Extension and Colleges Division are generalists by nature, a specialization in extension education is an appropriate common denominator. The Agricultural Economics Division works with all disciplines, but a major requirement for its personnel is a knowledge of or expertise in agricultural economics.

While organization by disciplines has resulted in a timely emphasis on subject-matter expertise, and an increasing professionalization of staff, it has resulted in some specialist bias and conflict and some difficulties with regard to jurisdictional rivalry and co-ordination. The Executive Committee, consisting of the Deputy-Minister, the Executive Secretary, and the seven division directors has, however, gone a long way in solving some of these problems, although its large size may limit its effectiveness to some

⁴²See L. Gulick, "Notes on the Theory of Organization", in L. Gulick and L. F. Urwick (eds.), Papers on the Science of Administration, New York, Institute of Public Administration, 1937, p. 15.

extent.

Generally speaking, the reorganization has solved many of the former problems of the organization. The Deputy has a smaller span of control, and more executives are considering the active review and formulation of broad policy as an integral part of their jobs. The integration that has occurred has provided greater unification of efforts and greater communication between directly related branches. The Deputy's work load has been lessened with the appointment of the Executive Secretary and an increase in staff for the personnel and accounting functions. In 1970, only two divisions were not physically located in the Agriculture Building.

The Department puts a high priority on efficient administration and sound planning, and recent years have shown an increase in the emphasis put on management training for divisional administrators. The Department is in the midst of introducing a "management by commitment"⁴³ philosophy throughout all Division. Planning conferences involving most senior staff from both headquarters and the field are becoming a regular occurrence, and annual conferences serve both to plan and to explain new policies and developments.⁴⁴ A planning schedule, based on the management by commitment

⁴³A version of Management by Objectives.

⁴⁴The 1970 Annual Conference, held at the MacDonald Hotel September 14 and 15, dealt with the Department's new emphasis on agricultural marketing both from an "explanation" and a "planning" viewpoint.

concept, has been formalized and is now being implemented.⁴⁵

The Department is by no means static, and over the years has had a number of "firsts" in Canada or in the West. Among the most notable in Canada are an agricultural research trust, swine and turkey health programs, laboratory services consolidation in one building, brucellosis restricted areas, brand inspection, a rural development training program, the PRIME programme of the Water Resources Division, and others. The Department was first in the West to provide agricultural and vocational colleges and regional veterinary laboratories, in setting up a regional field organization, in developing a horticultural station and tree nursery, and numerous others.⁴⁶

The industry which the Department serves is one of the most progressive and well-developed in Canada, and is steadily gaining a larger share of the agricultural industry in Canada.⁴⁷ It is also a diversified industry, a phenomenon which served it well during the recent wheat crisis. Compared to Saskatchewan, whose agricultural industry is substantially less diversified, Alberta agriculture is more flexible and adaptable. Alberta farmers' production is roughly half crops and half livestock, while Saskatchewan production is mainly

⁴⁵Memorandum dated December 1, 1970 from Dr. E. E. Balantyne to All Department of Agriculture Professional Staff, Re: Alberta Department of Agriculture Planning Schedule. See Appendix II.

⁴⁶Government of Alberta, Department of Agriculture (compiled by G. L. Godel), Know Your Department, mimeo, June, 1970, p. 34.

⁴⁷See Table 2.

crops, so that in 1969 when Saskatchewan farmers found their gross farm income down by 20%, Alberta's gross farm income fell by only 8.9%.⁴⁸ Although it is difficult to define to what extent this is a direct result of the Department's efforts, the Department did encourage diversification, and staff members feel some measure of pride that, at least to some extent, their efforts have resulted in the wheat crisis having a lesser impact on their clientele.

⁴⁸Figures by H. H. Bryce, Statistician, Agricultural Economics Division, Alberta Department of Agriculture, quoted in "Mixed farming helps Alberta", The Edmonton Journal, August 8, 1970, p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIELD ORGANIZATION¹

A. DEVELOPMENT AND INTENT

Associated with, but not strictly a part of, the Department's reorganization was the development of a concept of field organization known as "regionalization". The idea had been discussed and considered for some time prior to 1965, and some branches had been using six roughly defined administrative zones for selected purposes. The Extension Branch and the Field Crops Branch had designated regions for purposes of Agricultural Service Board² and seed cleaning

¹The description and analysis in this chapter applies mainly to the Plant Industry, Animal Industry, Extension and Colleges, Agricultural Economics, and Program Development Divisions, and generalizations should not be taken to apply with equal force to the Water Resources Division, which has its own and fairly distinct field organization, or to the Veterinary Services Division, which with the exception of laboratory staff, has very few personnel in the field. At the same time it should be noted that the three agricultural and vocational colleges are not really a major part of "regionalization" in that they all operate relatively autonomously and are limited in the extent that they form an integral part of the programs of a region.

²Agricultural Service Boards are set up as advisory bodies to local governments, or to the Minister of Municipal Affairs in the case of improvement districts, and the Minister of Agriculture in matters of mutual concern. Their main duties include advising on the organizing and directing of weed control and soil and water conservation programs; assisting in the control of livestock disease; advising with respect to and assisting in proper land utilization; and in general promoting and developing agricultural programs to meet the needs of the district. See The Agricultural Service Board Act, R. S. A., 1955, c. 9.

plant meetings and conferences, and for dealing effectively with larger numbers of farm people at one time, especially when the particular aspect or problem being discussed was one that was common to more than one district agriculturist's district. Moreover, there were some specialist personnel who were at the time already stationed throughout the Province on a basis approximating regionalism, notably the agricultural engineers, and plant and animal industry officers.

The early regions were quite imprecise, in some cases overlapping, and in other cases excluding entire districts or parts of districts. Policies with regard to attendance at regional meetings, and the organization and methodology of the meetings themselves were ill-defined and showed no uniformity or similarity. Despite these shortcomings, however, the practice of regional meetings was generally regarded as providing distinct advantages, working well for such things as agricultural chemical meetings and agricultural engineering problems. As a result, an attempt was made in 1963 to standardize the regions in such a way that all sections of the Department could use them to advantage.³

By 1965 the concept was receiving increasing attention, and on August 30 of that year two committees were set up by the Department Branch Heads Committee to consider the idea in greater detail.⁴ At the Department's annual conference in

³See Memorandum, W. Lobay to F. S. Goddard, September 14, 1964.

⁴Memorandum, A. M. Wilson, Field Crops Commissioner, to S. S. Graham, Director of Extension, October 26, 1965.

1965 it was discussed among the complete staff of the Department. For these reasons, that year can be regarded as the formal beginnings of regionalization.

In essence the maturing of the idea was a result of the changing nature of the agricultural industry and the recognition by the Department that the satisfaction of the needs of its clientele could only be achieved through a restructuring of its field service. Throughout the development of the concept, several considerations seem to have played a major part. First, the increasing complexity of farm problems and the resultant demand for detailed information on specific problems meant that the district agriculturist could not perform his most effective role without adequate provision for subject-matter support. Such support could be supplied by specialists located within a region, who would be more than subject-matter specialists; by location and experience they would be conversant with the needs of a particular area and would be in closer contact with other Departmental field staff. Such specialists would also be in a better position to keep abreast of new developments in the universities and research stations in Alberta and in the periodical literature, and to provide for the dissemination of information relating to these developments. The location of specialists in the region would mean less demand on headquarters personnel, leaving them more time to plan and co-ordinate provincial programs. Although more staff would have to be added, greater economy and efficiency in their use would be achieved through

savings in travel time and expense. The importance placed on this aspect of regionalization is illustrated by the remarks of the Deputy-Minister:

Technical knowledge in agriculture doubles every ten years and the top priority in this Department's responsibilities is to get this out to those in agriculture so the industry can use new information and techniques that are practical and applicable to continued progress and development. In this regard and an integral part of it, one has to consider that the number of commercial farmers is decreasing and one estimate is that by 1980 the total will be closer to 35,000 rather than the 70,000 in 1961. This means more emphasis on management, technical knowledge, mechanization, use of credit, etc. and all [this] fits into my concept that "agriculture is a business and a science". . . . To us, all of these changes mean more demands on our Department for information in depth to meet these changes, especially by the 30% who produce 80% or so of the agricultural production.⁵

Secondly, the Alberta boundaries embrace a variety of climatic and soil conditions, resulting in a variety of types of farming throughout the Province.⁶ It follows, then, that the needs in different areas of the Province will differ, and that the programs offered by the Department in these areas should take the differences into account. While such recognition did exist prior to regionalization, it was felt that a regional approach would serve to emphasize the point.

Third, an emphasis on a philosophy which embodied

⁵Memorandum, Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, Deputy-Minister, to A. Locke, Regional Editor, The Family Herald, February 24, 1967.

⁶The irrigated areas of the south with its specialty crops can be contrasted sharply with the mixed farming and grey wooded soils of the northeast, and the climatic conditions of the Peace River area.

planning from the identified need of the clientele, and the further development of local advisory bodies⁷ meant that co-ordination of such efforts could not be handled adequately from headquarters and that assistance in this regard would be required from field personnel. Thus in terms of administrative convenience, both from the Department's viewpoint and from the viewpoint of clientele, a regional organization seemed to be a logical development.

With these considerations in mind, the two committees set up on August 30, 1965 met as one and presented a preliminary report, recommending regionalization, on November 26, 1965. To complete the report, the committee met again on January 3, 1966 to consider the advisability of selecting six or seven regions, to recommend the location of a central office for each region, and to recommend a means of co-ordinating personnel and extension and agricultural service board programs within a region.⁸ After considerable discussion and some

⁷It was expected that advisory committees under the Agricultural Service Board Act would have a "reciprocal advisory capacity in that regional meetings should consider total agricultural programs for the area". Memorandum, A. M. Wilson, Field Crops Commissioner, and S. S. Graham, Director of Extension, to Department Personnel, March 28, 1966. Presently, co-operation and co-ordination between service board, agribusiness, and farm groups at the district level is to be achieved through district advisory committees, of which there were 22 by the spring of 1969. See Minutes of Extension Advisory Committee, March 6 and 7, 1969. Other special purpose bodies such as local advisory committees for purposes of ARDA (now no longer part of the Department) and the farm adjustment program have also been established.

⁸Regions and Regional Office Committee Report, January 10, 1966.

revision, a final draft of its recommendations was presented to the Department's Executive Committee on June 10, and on June 20 was forwarded to the Minister, from whom approval in principle was received June 28, 1966.⁹

The report which received the Minister's approval suggested that seven regions be established, identified by the number of service boards, district agriculturist's districts, municipalities and farms, and by regional centre. However, the delineation of the regional boundaries had not been an easy task. A more complete understanding of the factors taken into consideration can be gathered from the suggestion of one of the committee's members:

Criteria for regions might be: (in order of importance)

1. Workload
 - (a) farm population density
 - (b) number of D. A.'s
 - (c) distances and road conditions
2. Soil types and climatic conditions
3. Type of farming
4. County boundaries
5. Location of attractive centres for employee residence
6. Location of other specialists in A. D. A. and outside of A. D. A.¹⁰

As noted by Fesler in 1949,¹¹ the actual delineation of regional boundaries of necessity must be a compromise between one or more of these factors, and so it was in the

⁹See Memorandum, Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, Deputy-Minister, to Hon. H. E. Strom, Minister of Agriculture, September 14, 1966.

¹⁰Memorandum, Dr. G. R. Purnell, Director, Farm Economics Branch, to A. M. Wilson, Field Crops Commissioner, November 10, 1965.

¹¹See Chapter I, supra.

delineation of the Department's boundaries. Natural boundaries such as those based on soil zones were clearly not satisfactory¹² because of the irregular location of those zones.¹³ While the Province contains variations in farm size and type,¹⁴ they can only be used to designate regions in an approximate manner, and it seems likely that administrative considerations had to be determining features in the actual drawing of the boundaries. The final delineation thus appears to be based on some commonality of type of agriculture (including degree of agricultural development, specialist assistance required, and farm density) combined with considerations of workload, existing municipal and district agriculturist boundaries, travel time, proximity to federal research stations and provincial agricultural and vocational colleges, housing and other facilities for staff.¹⁵

The map¹⁶ included in this chapter shows the regional

¹²The Water Resources Division did not designate their regions according to those set out for the rest of the Department, as the division found the "natural" boundaries identified by the Provinces watersheds to be relatively satisfactory for its purposes. Accordingly, Water Resources works with four regions, based on watersheds. For an outline of the distribution of water resources in Alberta, see University of Alberta, Department of Geography, and Government of Alberta, Atlas of Alberta, Edmonton, University of Alberta Press, 1969, pp. 22-27, especially p. 26, "drainage stations".

¹³See ibid., p. 34.

¹⁴See ibid., pp. 68-69.

¹⁵See Regions and regional Offices Report, November 26, 1965.

¹⁶By permission of the Surveys Branch, Alberta Department of Highways.

boundaries within the Province as they exist in 1970, compared to census districts and agricultural districts. Table 4 shows selected statistics illustrating the differences between the regions, and Table 5 shows the distribution of workload as anticipated in 1966. Region 3, the East Central Region, has not as yet been activated due to budgetary limitations. The workload of that region is being shared as of 1968 by the Southwest Region (two D. A. districts), the West Central Region (three districts), and the Northeast Region (one district).¹⁷

The naming of the regional centres, for the most part, provided few difficulties.¹⁸ Lethbridge, Edmonton, and Calgary¹⁹ were natural trade centres, and Lethbridge had the added advantage of a federal research station nearby.

¹⁷Memoranda, C. A. Cheshire, Head, D. A. Branch, to S. S. Graham, Director, Extension and Colleges Division, February 16, 1970 and November 29, 1968.

¹⁸The Water Resources regional offices are Lethbridge, Calgary, Edmonton, and Peace River. Peace River was chosen over Fairview because of the existence of better communication facilities (i.e. an air strip), the need for communication with other government departments already located in Peace River, and because the staff accommodation situation appeared to be improving. See Memorandum, R. E. Bailey, Director of Water Resources, to Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, Deputy-Minister, Department of Water Resources [sic.], October 13, 1966.

¹⁹Some objections were voiced by the staff of the Calgary regional staff with regard to location of the new office as part of the Land Titles and Provincial Office Building which the Government of Alberta proposed to build in downtown Calgary. It was felt that such a location would be inconvenient for the clientele. See Memorandum, Calgary Regional Staff to A. M. Wilson, Director of the Plant Industry Division, January 5, 1967. However, in view of the government's policy of consolidating provincial offices where possible in one building, the Regional Office is now located in the heart of downtown Calgary.

PROVINCE OF
ALBERTA
CANADA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1970

- COLOURED AREAS DENOTE AGRICULTURAL REGIONS
AGRICULTURAL REPORTING AREAS (ARA) ———
CENSUS DIVISIONS (CD) - - -
AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS
- REGIONAL AGRICULTURIST
 - DISTRICT AGRICULTURIST
 - DISTRICT HOME ECONOMIST
 - DISTRICT FARM ECONOMIST
 - AGRICULTURAL AND VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

TABLE 5
ANTICIPATED DISTRIBUTION OF WORKLOAD BY REGION, 1966

	1	2	3	Region 4	5	6	7
Agricultural Service Boards	10	5	7	7	8	9	8
District Agricul- turst districts	7	4-5	6-7	7	9	9	6
Number of farms (1961)	11,889	7,208	8,500*	12,593	12,742	12,878	8,885

Source: Regions and Regional Office Committee Report, June, 1966.

*approximate.

Fairview was chosen over Peace River because the Agricultural and Vocational College was already located there; the location of a college at Vermilion was also a determining feature in the selection of that centre. Region 3 had presented some problems because it included no large trade centre that was centrally located. Despite strong representations from the City of Camrose, Stettler was chosen as the most suitable and, when the budgetary position allows (probably in 1971 or 1972), the Regional Office will be located there. For the West Central Region, Lacombe had originally been chosen because of its proximity to the federal research station, but Red Deer was eventually designated the regional headquarters because of its established position as a trade centre, its better possibilities for attracting and holding staff, its communications facilities (radio and TV station), and because some

specialists were already located in that city.²⁰

These boundaries and regional centres were largely the result of the recommendations of the first committees set up on August 30, 1965. After regionalization was approved in principle by the Minister in June of 1966, those committees were dissolved and a new committee was immediately set up to provide recommendations with respect to the "operational" aspects of regionalization, including staff complements, position classifications, space requirements, development priorities, and other items affecting the estimates.²¹ That committee met on August 26, 1966, and produced their report on September 12, 1966.

The report recommended that specialized agricultural service personnel be located at the regional headquarters and that the location of those headquarters be named as above; that exceptions to the regional scheme be recognized for temporary projects (i.e. ARDA and water resources projects); that regional offices be staffed to provide specialized services with respect to extension, 4-H, livestock, crops and soils, economics, agricultural engineering, water resources, dairy, poultry, and ARDA; that such regional personnel be progressively assigned to regional headquarters because of the

²⁰Memorandum, W. H. T. Mead, Director of Animal Industry Division, to A. M. Wilson, Chairman, Committee on Regionalization, April 22, 1966. See also Memorandum, R. D. Price, District Agriculturist, Red Deer, to S. S. Graham, Director of Extension and Colleges, April 1, 1966.

²¹Alberta Department of Agriculture, Executive Committee Minutes, June 20, 1966.

difficulties involved in assigning a full complement of staff in any one year; and that "special interest" personnel serve one or more regions where a complete complement of staff was not essential for each region. The committee also suggested broad terms of reference for the regional co-ordinators,²² considered space requirements and estimates for the Department of Public Works, and suggested that the northern and southern regions be given development priority in view of the time and distances from Edmonton.²³

These broad recommendations were accepted by the Executive Committee and approved by the Minister on September 14, 1966. A general priority schedule was drawn up, with priority given to completing regionalization at Fairview and Lethbridge, and with the activation of Region 3 (Stettler) scheduled to take place after all other staffing was complete.²⁴ From this point, the committee concerned itself

²²The titles suggested included Regional Extension Co-ordinator, Regional Co-ordinator, Senior Regional Agrologist, Senior Agriculturist, and Senior Agriculturist and Regional Co-ordinator.

²³Report on Staff and Space Requirements for Regional Offices, September, 1966.

²⁴A fairly ambitious schedule of new building was established, including construction of separate regional headquarters at Fairview, Vermilion, Lethbridge, and Stettler. Due to costs and other limitations, such objectives were not realized, and in 1970 the only regional offices in relatively new and modern buildings are the offices at Calgary and Vermilion. Neither building is a special regional building; the Calgary office is located in the provincial office building for that city, and the Vermilion office is part of a new building located on the campus of the agricultural and vocational college. See Memorandum, Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, Deputy-Minister, to A. M. Wilson, Chairman, Regionalization Committee, September 19, 1966.

largely with details of arranging and providing space and facilities for staff, and with defining the policies relating to the functioning of the regions. By May 29, 1967, it was considered that policy had been established and the committee was to remain dormant with the appointment of two persons to take charge of architectural details and to act as contacts with the Department of Public Works.²⁵

By 1970, the staffing program for the regions was nearly complete, with the exception of the East Central (Stettler) region which remains unactivated. The Calgary and Vermilion regions are missing a poultry specialist; the Edmonton office is missing a regional plant industry supervisor and a regional economist; Red Deer is awaiting a livestock supervisor and a plant industry supervisor. The Lethbridge office is fully staffed, as is the Vermilion office.²⁶ All activated regions are functioning, or beginning to function, as co-ordinated units representing a regional outlook

²⁵Alberta Department of Agriculture, Executive Committee Minutes, May 29, 1967.

²⁶As of September 1, 1970. A full complement of "specialist" staff would include a dairy specialist, a livestock supervisor, a poultry specialist, a regional farm economist, a regional engineer, and a plant industry supervisor. Personnel concerned with divisional inspection, regulatory, and technical duties would include dairy and poultry fieldmen and inspectors, brand inspectors, farm management technicians, and so on, located according to need. Fairview has an apiculture fieldman. Water Resources personnel have been excluded from this definition of a full complement of regional staff because that division's regions do not coincide with the Department's and because the Lethbridge office is the only office that can be described as being fully operational. Although some divisions call their representatives "supervisors" and some call them "specialists", the word specialist is used in this study to denote both.

and producing plans on a regional basis.

All activated regions have Regional Agriculturists, and much of the character of the field organization and its relationship to headquarters can be discerned by way of an examination of the role of the Regional Agriculturist. Before doing so, however, it seems necessary to make two general comments on features having a bearing on the development of the field organization itself. One has to do with the "definition of purpose", and the second, almost inextricably related, can be viewed as "the choice between function and area".

It seems clear that the original recognition of the need for regionalizing the field services did not include any recognition of the need for decentralization in the sense in which the word is used throughout this study, i.e. a concept within which the extensive delegation of authority is an essential element. The materials, reports, and memoranda of the period of time when the concept was being discussed make no mention of delegation of authority or decision-making. Reasons given for implementing the regional concept allude only vaguely to the kinds of advantages that can accrue from decentralization;²⁷ when the advantages of recognizing differences between

²⁷See Introduction, supra. Nor did many people in the field expect such advantages. A survey taken by a staff member in 1967 as part of his Master's work revealed that out of multiple responses from 54 district agriculturists to a question pertaining to the impact of regionalization, the answer "Regional planning, decentralized decision-making" was chosen only 7 times out of a total of 108. See J. Calpas, Summary: A Study of Current Problems and Trends Relating to Agricultural Extension in Alberta, September 26, 1967, p. 7.

regions were spelled out, it was always done in the context of allowing provincial (i.e. headquarters-designed) programs to be modified to fit the particular region -- little mention was apparently made of the possibilities that new programs, designed for one region only, would be an advantageous result. Little mention was made of the possibilities that the concept could result in faster decisions and communications, that effective development of lower-level executives would occur, or that participation in the decision-making process within the Department would provide a better organizational climate as well as improve the service being provided the public.

The preoccupation with the necessity for providing specialist assistance on a geographical basis led to the virtual neglect of any advantages that might at the same time come from the decentralization of decision-making on a geographical basis, and it was not until the Department came to consider the functions of regional co-ordinators that they received increased attention. In short, the original definition of purpose for regionalization was to decentralize availability of information, i.e. specialist assistance, rather than to decentralize decision-making or to delegate authority.

There are now, however, certain indications that suggest that the original intention is being modified as a result of the actual operation of the regionalization concept.²⁸ But what is significant is that the design of the regional organization

²⁸To be discussed in detail in later sections of this chapter, and in Chapter V, infra.

continues to be wed to the original definition of purpose. That purpose, so defined, means that if the question of the choice between function and area is considered at all, there can be only one answer.

As defined in Chapter I, the choice between function and area is essentially the choice between an integrated field service, where the regional director is responsible for all functions performed within his area, and a functional field service, where each division directly controls the different functions performed in the field. In the case of the Alberta Department of Agriculture, the recent re-organization of the department on the basis of discipline or specialization, combined with a view of field service organization that emphasized geographical accessibility to that specialization, led naturally to the choice of a "functional" field organization.²⁹ Accordingly, the personnel of divisions in the field, with the exception of the district agriculturists, report not to the Regional Agriculturist, but to their respective divisions at headquarters. While this situation suggests a lack of delegation on the part of the headquarters division, and therefore

²⁹Note that in this context, the use of the word "functional" to describe the choice is itself an anomaly, for a major portion of the role of the divisional specialists or supervisors is to act as support or backup to the people performing the "extension function" (the district agriculturists), and to perform that function themselves in certain defined circumstances. To the extent, then, that these personnel perform an extension function, the field organization is not organization by function but, consistent with the organization of the Department as a whole, organization by discipline. If we were to modify the descriptive phrase, it might read "disciplinal field organization".

inclines one to seek an explanation by way of the reasons outlined by Newman,³⁰ such an explanation would be at best only a partial answer. The more complete answer is that which notes Newman's explanation but emphasizes the way in which purpose was defined.

Stemming from the Department's original definition of purpose, it is a reasonable justification for a functional field organization to note that the selection, supervision, and evaluation of specialist personnel in the field is best done by specialists in the Departmental division that they represent, particularly when any proposed regional co-ordinator would of necessity be or become a generalist. Moreover, field personnel of most divisions were expected to perform a dual role -- as backup or support to the district agriculturists, and as supervisor of the division's operational programs in the region.³¹ These types of programs, whether or not authority is delegated, remain the responsibility of the division, and for this reason delegation of control to the field organization at a time when the entire concept was imprecise and the staff inexperienced could easily be regarded as sheer folly which

³⁰See Chapter I, Section A, supra.

³¹For example, the job description for a regional livestock supervisor, after listing "extension" duties, adds the conduct of, ". . . as headquarters specialists may require, certain local service to Departmental livestock program such as: listing of superior breeding stock for sale; the Record of Performance programs in beef cattle, sheep and swine; the artificial insemination regulations and policy; the feeder association policy; investigation of situations relative to herd law areas; liaison with the brand inspection service in his region."

would result in the deterioration of the programs. To this can be added the problems of co-ordinating programs that cross regional boundaries.³²

Uniformity in the application of these programs, especially those involving regulation, was also an important factor guiding the Department in its choice between function and area. One further reinforcement to that choice was the relative strength of the headquarters divisions in the Departmental structure compared to the weakness of the field voice at the time; each Division did and continues to perform relatively autonomously within the Departmental organization. No one division cared to have its programs controlled by personnel of another division, as might appear to be the case as a result of the decision to assign the regional co-ordinator to the Extension and Colleges Division.

All this adds up to a natural and logical choice of a functional field organization,³³ and there can be little doubt that within the confines of the purpose of regionalization as originally defined, and in the light of the confusion and

³²This is further complicated where specialists' districts do not conform to regional boundaries. For example, poultry specialists' districts are largely defined in practice by the poultry population.

³³Agreement was not necessarily complete. Some members of the Extension and Colleges Division pointed out that the lines of authority meant that if any conflict occurred in the specialists' role, the Division for whom the specialist worked would receive priority and not the extension function. This point was made as late as May, 1967. See Alberta Department of Agriculture, Extension Advisory Committee (D.A. III's) Minutes, May 18, 1967.

inexperience that would inevitably mark the first few years of its operation, the functional choice was the correct one. The question to be answered thus becomes "Is such a choice still relevant in view of the modification of the concept of regionalization arising out of its actual operation?" To this we will return in Chapter VI.

B. THE REGIONAL AGRICULTURIST

As soon as the concept of providing more specialist staff at the field level was accepted and boundaries began to take shape, it became obvious that some kind of co-ordinating activity would be necessary at the regional level. Accordingly, the first report of the Regions and Regional Office Committee pointed out "That ultimately, if not now, the principle of naming a co-ordinator for a regions [sic.] should be established." By the time of the September, 1966 report, the duties of such an officer had been further developed to include:

- 1) To initiate an agricultural program for a region.
- 2) To co-ordinate the various regional services and to supervise the District Agriculturist and District Home Economist programs within the framework of Department policies.
- 3) To maintain liaison between the Division representatives within the region.
- 4) To carry out the work of District Agriculturist in the district as time permits.

Discussions prior to this report had established the point that as many of the divisional representatives would be performing, at least to some extent, an extension function, the co-ordinator should be someone skilled in extension methodology. The position of senior District Agriculturist, for example, was

considered seriously as late as April of 1966:

It was the opinion of the Committee that co-ordination of effort in each region be cleared through a senior District Agriculturist, who would act as co-ordinator for the region. He would continue to be responsible for extension services within his own district but would be given a permanent assistant.³⁴

But as work continued on defining and delineating the role of the co-ordinator, it came to have a broader content. A draft of November 16, 1966, while including the district agriculturist's duties, also included such things as representing the Department or a division on a regional basis when any division is not represented; maintaining liaison with research stations, universities, and agribusiness; and representing and acting for the Department on a regional basis with regard to interdivisional policies or programs.³⁵ There was at least one objection to this draft:

Mr. Graham's suggested outline gets into considerably more detail than our original draft. I think it deviates from the original draft in at least one important aspect. I refer to item 3 of his draft where I would delete the word "extension" in the first sentence. As worded this implies to me that the whole effort of the regional staff is directed toward extension. While this is largely true, I visualize duties for our regional officers in the area of Branch or Division program development or regulation that may not be looked upon as extension. I do not think deletion of the word "extension" in that clause weakens the intent of

³⁴Memorandum, A. M. Wilson, Field Crops Commissioner and S. S. Graham, Director of Extension, to Department Personnel, April 7, 1966.

³⁵Memorandum, S. S. Graham, Director, Extension and Colleges Division, to A. M. Wilson, W. H. T. Mead, G. R. Purnell, C. A. Cheshire, November 16, 1966.

the position and more adequately implies an overall agricultural policy.³⁶

By 1967, the title of the position was established as "Regional Agriculturist" to illustrate the broader nature of the job, and to emphasize that it was not merely an Extension and Colleges Division position.³⁷ A clarifying document released on October 30, 1968 proclaimed that "Regional Agriculturist assesses overall needs of the agricultural community within the region and plans and co-ordinates programs inter-divisionally to meet those needs."³⁸

The early emphasis on the "senior district agriculturist" nature of the position, and the fact that the Regional Agriculturists were placed within the Extension and Colleges Division for purposes of convenient administration, combined to produce some confusion on the part of the staff of other divisions:

³⁶Memorandum, W. H. T. Mead, Director, Animal Industry Division, to A. M. Wilson, Director, Plant Industry Division, November 22, 1966. The clause in the question read "To initiate, promote, and co-ordinate an overall agricultural extension program for the region. . . ."

³⁷Confirmed by the Deputy-Minister at the Department's 1968 Annual Conference.

³⁸Terms of Reference, Regional Personnel (O. G. Bratvold, October 17, 1968). At times the co-ordination of such interdivisional programs in the field is a particular problem because of apparent duplication at the headquarters level. The administration of the Agricultural Service Board program, which is shared between the Plant Industry Division and the Program Development Division, has been and continues to be a source of confusion. Field staff complain that they do not know where the jurisdiction of one division ends and where the other begins.

I have been advised from several sources that the understanding of regionalization, responsibilities, authorities, and functions of the Regional Agriculturist have not been well distributed throughout the rank and file of the Department. One rather unfortunate impression amongst personnel is that the regional concept [sic.] and the position of the Regional Agriculturist was [sic.] invented and developed by the Extension Division.³⁹

Definitive action was taken quickly. Four days after the above revelation, the Executive Committee agreed that the Deputy-Minister would prepare an item for the Departmental Newsletter that would point out that regionalization was planned and developed by the Department and not just the Extension and Colleges Division.⁴⁰ By the fall of 1968 two comprehensive documents had been prepared and distributed to staff to ensure that the concept was well understood: the "Terms of Reference, Regional Personnel", and a document entitled "Lines of Communication; A Document Relating to Planning, Policy, and Management in the Alberta Department of Agriculture".⁴¹

Not all the confusion, however, can be attributed to these causes, for the liberal but largely undefined use of the word "co-ordination" was undoubtedly a factor as well. The Regional Agriculturist was not to have authority over any personnel of divisions other than the one in which he was located,

³⁹Memorandum, C. J. McAndrews, Director, Program Development Division, to Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, Deputy-Minister, March 7, 1968.

⁴⁰Alberta Department of Agriculture, Executive Committee Minutes, March 11, 1968.

⁴¹Released December 16, 1968.

but he was to "co-ordinate" such personnel. In the absence of a specific definition for the word,⁴² the comments of Selznick are probably apt:

"Co-ordination" is another term whose meaning will be derived from the procedures which are established for its effectuation. Like "unity", this is a word which is often used vaguely in order to avoid making real objectives explicit. It is an honorific which must grace all administrative programs. But co-ordination involves control; and it is precisely the concrete lines of authority implied in any given system of co-ordination which constitute its meaning. Co-ordination may range from the mere circularization of ideas through the definition of jurisdiction all the way to the most thoroughgoing "Gleichschaltung".⁴³

The meaning of the word as defined in practice appeared to remove any aspects of control, yet the responsibilities assigned to the Regional Agriculturist suggest the necessity for some control being exercised if the co-ordinating function was to be performed effectively. At any rate, they seemed to suggest more than the "mere circularization of ideas".

There appear to be two other factors that have operated to restrict the role of the Regional Agriculturist -- the specification of qualifications and the delineation of supervisory powers with regard to the Extension and Colleges Division itself. When memoranda were released advertizing the positions, they could be construed in such a way as to

⁴²The document which was released December 16, 1968 included definitions for a number of terms, of which "Co-ordination" was not one.

⁴³P. Selznick, TVA and the Grass Roots: A Study in Sociology of Formal Organization, New York, Harper and Row, 1966 (first edition 1949), p. 64.

discourage applications from anyone who did not have extensive experience as a district agriculturist. The first advertisement, released January 27, 1967, and referring to the Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, and Vermilion offices, probably did not convey this bias,⁴⁴ but subsequent advertisements confused the point. The release of July 23, 1968 advertizing the Fairview office specified qualifications to include a BSc. in Agriculture and a Master's degree in Extension Education or equivalent combination of education and experience, and "A minimum of five years outstanding performance as a District Agriculturist in charge of an office or similar experience and qualifications."⁴⁵ The release of August 21, 1968 referring to the Lethbridge office was specified in a similar manner.⁴⁶

This had two results. First, it tended to reinforce the opinion of those who, by observation, had concluded that the position was essentially an "Extension Division" position. Second, it precluded any further thought being given to an integrated field organization. It could be forcefully pointed out once more that as the "generalist" appointed was not qualified to supervise the "specialist" of the divisions, it was not

⁴⁴In accordance with an Executive Committee ruling January 23, 1967.

⁴⁵The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of August 7, 1968 show that there was to be a correction sent out with respect to the five-year D.A. requirement that had appeared on a circular for the Calgary office. It seems fair to assume that the phrase "or similar qualifications and experience" would be the nature of the correction.

⁴⁶All present Regional Agriculturists were formerly district agriculturists.

practical to delegate authority for operational programs to the Regional Agriculturists. While it may be useful to speculate that it could also mean that divisions could be reluctant to delegate to their own personnel in the field because of the possible influence of the Regional Agriculturist, there is no evidence to support such a belief.

The second factor restricting the Regional Agriculturist's role came when his supervisory authority was confined to district agriculturists, despite an Executive Committee ruling that he was to supervise all the field personnel of the Extension Division (excluding Colleges staff).⁴⁷

Internal politics within the Extension and Colleges Division apparently operated to keep the district home economists and the agricultural engineers on a relatively autonomous basis, reporting back to their branches in Edmonton,⁴⁸ for job descriptions of the Regional Agriculturists now read "To co-ordinate the work of extension personnel; to supervise District Agriculturists regarding administration, programs, and policies, and to evaluate extension programs for the region." Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that the Regional Agriculturists'

⁴⁷On December 5, 1966, the Executive Committee approved a draft of the Regional Agriculturists' terms of reference with the amendment "to supervise Extension personnel" replacing "to supervise D. A.'s".

⁴⁸See Memorandum, S. S. Graham, Director, Extension and Colleges Division to Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, Deputy-Minister, December 15, 1966. "Our staff feel that we are not ready to impose supervision of the District Home Economists by the Regional Agriculturists at the present time. They did, however, agree that programs and activities should be co-ordinated by the Regional Agriculturists".

authority with respect to the district agriculturists is itself limited.⁴⁹

Other direct authority given to the Regional Agriculturist includes the authority to call meetings for discussion and planning, and to expect that regional specialists will attend and co-operate in the overall regional program.⁵⁰ On a regional basis he is responsible for developing and co-ordinating a broad plan for the region; for relationships with other agencies both private and public; for training programs for district agriculturists; and for looking after administrative supplies and services for the region.

The past year has seen increasing attempts to build up the status of the Regional Agriculturist, and to prepare him to play a larger role in direct Departmental administration. He is now in charge of regional office management, and is being asked occasionally to present reports and plans directly to the Executive Committee. Two of the most important developments in this regard have been the increased role of the Regional Agriculturist in Department planning, and the program

⁴⁹A ruling set out in the August 10, 1967 minutes of the Extension Advisory Committee (D.A. III Committee) points out that Regional Agriculturists must respect the autonomy of D.A.'s, and that "Regional Agriculturists should recommend changes when the standard of an office falls below normal but they should not dictate the change." During the meeting of Regional Agriculturists held June 10-13, 1968, it was held that "Divisions requesting D.A.'s to attend a function should clear their request through Extension Headquarters in Edmonton."

⁵⁰This point was restated by the Executive Committee on April 17, 1970. In response to the question, "What authority has Regional Agriculturist to designate from specialists?", it was agreed that specialists were expected to co-operate when requested. See Minutes, item 1 (e).

initiated in January of 1970 whereby each Regional Agriculturist spent a week in the Deputy-Minister's office experiencing the kinds of problems that have to be dealt with at that level, and gaining an overall view of the Department. Another recent development that augurs well for the future was the way in which a change in the Animal Industry Division's Record of Performance program came about. In this case, a modification which required the services of the district agriculturists was instituted only after the approval of the Regional Agriculturists was gained.⁵¹

In 1967 and 1968, however, the newly appointed Regional Agriculturist found himself with a job that was difficult, if not impossible to perform. The nature of his authority meant that his only weapons in dealing with field personnel other than the district agriculturists were persuasion, reason, advice, leadership, and perhaps the occasional flash of temper. His recommendations were suspect because he appeared to be a member of a rival division, and as a former district agriculturist was supposed to be biased in favor of the extension function as opposed to other divisional functions. He was a co-ordinator who might or might not be listened to, and he was a designer of programs and priorities with little or no power to implement, no budget to divide according to priorities, and virtually no direct control over personnel policies. Moreover, he found that his own lines of communication and authority

⁵¹Interview, W. H. T. Mead, Director, Animal Industry Division, May 29, 1970.

within the Extension and Colleges Division involved at least two people in headquarters before he reached the Director of that Division; and he found his freedom of action constrained by rules which implied a lack of faith in his personal integrity.⁵² Furthermore, the district agriculturists he supervised could not be blamed if they got the impression that the Regional Agriculturist was merely another level of bureaucracy imposed between them and an already complicated hierarchy at Edmonton.

The divisional specialists were not without their problems. As some of them were former district agriculturists without any apparent extensive academic specialization, their very qualifications were subject to question.⁵³ They were to perform a dual role, as support for district agriculturists and as supervisors of a divisional program, a situation which resulted in some conflict. While their duties and lines of authority were designed to give priority to divisional programs, they were faced with the tendency on the part of some district agriculturists to regard them as the people to perform the entire extension function in subject-matter areas in

⁵²A memorandum from the Extension and Colleges Division dated May 13, 1968, pointed out that "4. Copies of all general memorandums from Regional Agriculturists to District Extension offices should be sent to the Head of the Branch; 5. All regional training sessions or notifications to call District or regional personnel together must be cleared with the D. A. Branch Head; 6. Authority to leave the Region must be cleared with the D. A. Branch Head. . . ."

⁵³See Alberta Department of Agriculture, Regional Agriculturists' Minutes, August 29, 1968.

which the district agriculturist had no competence or no interest. On the other hand, a district agriculturist with some interest in the specialist's area might be inclined to overwork the specialist and ignore other areas. On top of this he might find himself invited to a regional meeting on a day when he had already more to do than he could possibly accomplish.

Conflicts between the Regional Agriculturists and the regional specialists or between the district agriculturists and the regional specialists were usually handled at the regional level. If a solution could not be found through compromise, a mutual appreciation of goals, and an appeal to professional ethics, it would be referred by the Regional Agriculturist to the division level where it would be either settled between directors or referred to the Executive Committee for decision.

Further examination of the specialists' role leads to another observation with regard to the nature of the field organization. As discussed in Chapter I, the field organization can be used to promote either centralization or decentralization, and decentralization can take place by way of both functional and integrated field organizations. With the beginnings of regional operations, most branches either discovered the usefulness of delegation, or were forced to delegate by the exigencies of the moment.⁵⁴ Such delegation went not to

⁵⁴One rather striking exception is the District Home Economist Branch. Interviews with field staff showed unanimity

the Regional Agriculturist, but rather, consistent with the choice between function and area, to the regional specialists. Thus, the livestock supervisors and regional economists, for example, seem to have a fairly free hand to modify provincial programs to conform to regional differences so long as the change does not step out of the bounds of provincial policy, and so long as the question of finances is not involved.⁵⁵

Much of the success that regionalization has had to date has been the result of excellent co-operation of specialists and other divisional personnel with the district agriculturists and the Regional Agriculturists. Although the first tangible results of the implementation of the concept are only now beginning to appear, at least six can be listed:

1. Programs are appearing that have been especially designed for the region, by regional personnel, to meet the peculiar needs of the region. Thus the Peace River region initiated a cow-calf study to form the basis of an increased

of belief that the DHE Branch remains one of the most highly centralized of all sections of the Department. Most regional personnel, including a number of district home economists, felt that these personnel could become an integral part of the regional approach but were prevented from doing so because of tight control from headquarters.

⁵⁵Other specialists apparently have varying degrees of delegated authority depending upon the region within which interviews are conducted. The document released October 30, 1968 pointed out that "Prior to committing himself to regional programs each supervisor [specialist] should consult with his Administrative Head to determine limitations of time and finances that may affect the extent of his involvement." Terms of Reference, Regional Personnel, October 30, 1968, p. 3.

emphasis on livestock as an alternative to a crop program which is susceptible to the peculiar climate of the region. The Lethbridge region is studying in depth the possibilities of grain corn as a production alternative for an area seemingly suitable for its production. Other regional staffs are viewing their area from a broader viewpoint when particular programs are considered.

2. Some innovation is occurring. In the Calgary region a marketing extension program was provided for the farmers of that region some time before it came to be applied on a provincial basis.

3. Speed of communication and decision-making appears to have improved.⁵⁶

4. Some of the senior personnel in headquarters have been relieved of the more routine matters of field administration. At the same time, this has provided a greater opportunity for the development of administrative competence in the field.

5. It has provided an improved career pattern in the field, as both regional specialists and regional agriculturists have higher classifications than district agriculturists.⁵⁷

6. It appears that most regions have witnessed an improvement in morale, partly as a result of loyalty that has arisen from regional identification, partly as a result of the

⁵⁶See Chapter V, infra.

⁵⁷With the exception of a small number of D.A.'s known as senior D.A.'s or "extension specialists". The career pattern of district home economists has not improved to the extent that that of other personnel has.

support and encouragement that the Regional Agriculturist can provide as a "buffer" between the field and headquarters, and partly as a result of the Regional Agriculturist's role in clarifying and explaining Department policy.

Despite the problems of the field organization, many of which are to be expected whenever a new concept is implemented and which can be corrected fairly painlessly through time, the regions have begun to function as wholes. The Regional Agriculturist has tended to use his influence to advantage wherever possible and his authority sparingly. As he came to be accepted both by headquarters and field alike as performing a useful and necessary function, his opinion began to carry more weight and his power has increased. There can be little doubt that as he is increasingly accepted, i.e. gains legitimacy, he will be in a better position to perform his major duty; co-ordination. The question that should be asked on this point is, however, "Can he be expected to perform that duty as well as is possible and perhaps necessary, without greater authority over regional specialists, no matter how well established and durable his legitimacy becomes?" Like the question posed in the first section of this chapter, we will return to it in Chapter VI.

C. THE ROLE OF THE REGION IN PLANNING AND POLICY FORMULATION

If the Department can be said to have a "bureaucratic ideology" in Downs' sense of the phrase,⁵⁸ it is surely a

⁵⁸Bureaucratic ideology is defined as "a verbal image of

commitment to the "grass-roots" doctrine. That portion of the good society to which it is committed (i.e. its public or "administrative constituency") is quite obviously and quite naturally the agricultural community and industry. The chief means of constructing, maintaining, and enhancing or, to put it more clearly, serving that portion of the good society relevant to the Department is through a philosophy of grass-roots involvement and participation.⁵⁹ As Downs points out, a bureaucratic ideology can serve at least four functions: first, it can use ideology to influence outsiders to support the bureau, or at least refrain from attacking it. Associated with this function is the development of legitimacy or support within the public it serves. Second, it can be a method of developing goal consensus among the bureau's own members.

that portion of the good society relevant to the functions of the bureau concerned, plus the chief means of constructing that portion." Further, "Ideologies are developed by top-level officials because they are efficient means of communicating with certain groups both inside and outside their bureaus." A. Downs, Inside Bureaucracy, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1967, p. 237. See also P. Selznick, TVA and the Grass Roots. On the topic of administrative constituency, see F. E. Rourke, Bureaucracy, Politics, and Public Policy, Boston, Little, Brown, and Co., 1969.

⁵⁹Selznick would differentiate the two words "involvement" and "participation" by using the former to refer to citizen inclusion in activities where no policy determination occurs. The latter would refer to inclusion where substantive decisions are taken, or where the citizen directly takes a hand in the workings of his government. While the line between the two is very difficult to draw, it would seem that both situations exist at the local level in Alberta. Agricultural Service Boards, and the Farm Adjustment Committees set up to consider farm adjustment and consolidation applications, would be examples of "participation". Local advisory committees would be classified under "involvement". See P. Selznick, TVA and the Grass Roots, Ch. VII.

Third, it can be a selective recruiting device to attract potential members who will contribute to stronger goal consensus and repel those with adverse goals. Finally, it can frequently be used as decision criteria when other criteria of choice are unavailable or not understood.⁶⁰

Observation leads one to the belief that the Department's grass-roots philosophy is performing each of these functions in varying degrees. But the philosophy serves another function which is perhaps just as useful for purposes of analysis, and which allows us to tie the concept of bureaucratic ideology into a study of administrative decentralization. For the fact that this philosophy is shared by both headquarters personnel and field personnel serves as an extremely strong source of legitimacy for the regional organization, and thus can be identified as a "decentralizing tendency" which can lead to the kind of "balance" between centralization and decentralization spoken of by Kruisinga.⁶¹

Nowhere is the bureaucratic ideology of the Department more evident than in the process of planning and policy formulation. This process, in which the regions are becoming increasingly important, is itself an illustration of the importance of the ideology, and an explanation for the growing

⁶⁰Downs, op. cit., Ch. XIX.

⁶¹See Ch. I, supra. "Balance" will be implied throughout the discussion in Chapter V, and it is only necessary at this point to draw the reader's attention to the fact that the Department's ideology, and the planning process that stems from it, can be placed on the "decentralizing factors" side of the scale.

tendency of the regionalization concept to approach decentralization in practice.

Basic to the grass-roots philosophy and indeed basic to regionalization is the belief that the Department can best perform its function through the persistent and sustained attention to the needs and aspirations of the people for whom its programs are designed. On this basis, then, the district agriculturist, being the closest and most effective contact with the farm population and thus being the person best qualified to identify both expressed and unexpressed needs and aspirations, is the foremost "planner" in the Department, at least for the "extension" function.⁶² District agriculturists have always had a fair degree of autonomy in this respect, although some control was exercised from Edmonton. Working with local farmers, farm groups, and advisory committees throughout the year provided the district agriculturist with the necessary information with regard to district needs. Twice per year program planning meetings would be held to discuss and formulate district plans and to request assistance from the divisions responsible for operational extension programs in the various subject-matter areas. After the various divisions involved either accepted, modified, or rejected the requests for extension assistance, the district plans were

⁶²For other functions, such as regulatory and direct assistance programs requiring provincial application, planning is done at the division or departmental level. Although the needs and aspirations as identified by the district agriculturist clearly play a large part and are seriously considered, interest group input, particularly on the part of commodity groups, is very important.

compiled and distributed to all concerned personnel.

With the development of the regional concept, it was felt that the Department would be able to develop "regional plans" which would be based on a broader view of the needs of a particular area of the Province.⁶³ Until 1969 it was difficult to say that the regional plan was anything more than the compilation of the several district plans, with provision for the insertion of the co-ordinating efforts of the Regional Agriculturist where proposed programs involved two or more districts in his region. In that year, however, changes were introduced in the planning process that resulted in the development of what can be more reasonably called regional plans.

The general nature of the process can be understood from the following excerpt from a proposal made by the Extension and Colleges Division on September 4, 1969. It is quoted at length because it outlines both the general nature of the process which with few exceptions was to become the established procedure, and because it outlines the ideology which is widely accepted throughout the Department.

That at least once a year (probably in the Spring ahead of Budgeting, and possibly ahead of [the Alberta Agricultural Co-ordinating Committee]), we bring Regional staff including Regional Agriculturists, Regional Extension Engineers and Economists in to a Department meeting of our Executive Committee, Heads of Branches and Program Supervisors

⁶³The job description of the Regional Agriculturist authorizes him "To develop, initiate, promote, and co-ordinate agricultural programs for the region within the framework of departmental policy." The twice-yearly meetings are still a part of the regional planning process.

to formulate and develop a Provincial Program based on developed or developing district and regional programs.

Thus we would be able to say with some truth and conviction that our Provincial Agricultural Programs are based and initiated at the grass roots level, through the District offices, from there through the Regional Offices of the Department and finally considered and fitted into our Provincial Agricultural Programs and Policies.

We will then truly have planning and communications from farm and rural families, through our District Offices and County Officials through our Regional Offices and officers to incorporate our planning into policy development at the Provincial level.⁶⁴

Spurred by the necessity to formulate proposals for the impending ARDA negotiations with the federal government, the Department called a conference (to be based largely on the proposal outlined above) for October 21, 1969. Two important achievements can be claimed for that conference: the emergence of regional plans and the regional input to provincial policy, and the reinforcement of regional identifications. One other credit will emerge at the conclusion of this section.

⁶⁴So far as it is possible to conclude from observation, the Department has not formally considered whether or not policy based on such philosophy can be inadequate from the point of view of a broader conception of society's goals, nor has it recognized explicitly that the grass-roots doctrine can have dual significance: "It may result in the perversion of policy determined through representative institutions; and at the same time, this fact offers a tool for ensuring the responsibility of public agencies to their client publics." Selznick, TVA and the Grass Roots, p. 265 (emphasis supplied). It is, however, unlikely that the doctrine in this case could ever have the consequences that it did in the case of the TVA, because of the tendency of the Department to consult with a variety of interest groups, primarily on the provincial level, and because the extreme kind of decentralization existing with regard to the TVA is not a feature of the Alberta Department of Agriculture.

The regional plans were the result of detailed though hurried study, outlining proposed programs for the regions, and presented on behalf of the region by the Regional Agriculturist. Discussion ensued between field and headquarters with regard to the feasibility, including financial and other requirements for implementation, of the proposed plans. The day after the conference, the Executive Committee met separately and considered the regional inputs in terms of priorities. From this meeting emerged a listing of priorities for the Alberta Department of Agriculture's programs⁶⁵ -- the first comprehensive and explicit listing of such priorities. The listing represented a clarification, and in that sense a formulation, of the policies of the Department, in which the field staff on a regional basis had directly participated, and to which the regions could respond with further plans formulated in accordance with them. The success of this conference and the following "feedback" conference in June of 1970, paved the way for the development of a formalized planning schedule for the Department as a whole,⁶⁶ in which the regional input is to play an important part.

What significance does this have for administrative decentralization? There are two answers. The first is the implication that programs were beginning to be conceived on a

⁶⁵See Statement distributed to regions and divisions by the Executive Committee, October 24, 1969, p. 2.

⁶⁶Memorandum, Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, Deputy-Minister, to All Alberta Department of Agriculture Professional Staff, December 1, 1970. A copy is included as Appendix II.

broader basis in the field, i.e. via regional considerations; and that regional staff appeared in most cases to be a well-knit group, arriving at the conference to ensure that the particular needs of their area were given proper consideration in any formulation of provincial policy that occurred as a result of the conference. This suggests goal consensus at the regional level, a phenomenon that can be identified as another factor on the decentralizing side of the balance scale.

Just as important is the answer which lies in a comparison of the priorities of the region as advanced at the October 21, 1969 Conference, and the listing of Departmental priorities that resulted on October 22, 1969. What is significant is not that the field and headquarters differed on some points,⁶⁷ but that there was substantial agreement on a greater number of points and particularly on the highest priorities. Thus the need for production adjustments in view of the then current wheat crisis; the new emphasis to be attached to marketing and processing activities and research; and the emphasis to be placed on farm management, consumer education, and family living are all examples of what Richards calls "coherence of administrative purpose"⁶⁸ and what Downs refers to as "goal consensus".⁶⁹ Its overall significance can be summed up as follows:

⁶⁷For example, one or two regions placed a relatively high priority on land clearing, on which the Department placed a low priority. See Proceedings of October 21, 1969 Planning Conference, January, 1970.

⁶⁸See Richards, op. cit., pp. 63-66; and Chapter I, supra.

⁶⁹See Downs, op. cit., Chapter XVIII.

Greater goal consensus . . . actually means an increase in the productive capacity of the bureau. Top-level officials can retain the same quality and quantity of outputs as before, but reduce the controls, reports, and other performance checks to maintain it. This results in greater delegation of discretion to subordinates, and leads to the general proposition that strong goal consensus is a vital part of any true decentralization of authority.⁷⁰

D. A NOTE ON GOAL DISPLACEMENT

On completing this chapter, a cynical reader might conclude that the original concept of regionalization was designed to retain centralized control over field operations while at the same time responding to the necessities of providing further specialization at the field level. The author is not prepared to state the case quite that bluntly, for there is evidence to suggest that some officials of the Department did recognize the possibility that certain advantages would accrue if in fact the concept evolved into decentralization. The point is, however, that the formally announced intentions at the conception of the idea did not include the delegation of authority and decision-making, which is an essential element in the term "decentralization" as used in this study. The author is therefore disposed to argue that although the concept of regionalization as originally conceived was not a concept of administrative decentral-

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 223.

ization, it is becoming such in operation.⁷¹ This suggests "goal displacement".

While in any study concentrating on administrative decentralization, the explanation of such a phenomenon must play an incidental role, it is of sufficient importance to warrant a brief discussion.

The best definition of goal displacement is provided by Etzioni:

It arises when an organization . . . substitutes for its legitimate goal some other goal for which it was not created, for which resources were not allocated to it, and which it is not known to serve. The mildest and most common form of displacement is the process by which an organization reverses the priority between its goals and means in a way that makes the means a goal and the goals a means.⁷²

In this sense, then, goal displacement probably deserves the noxious connotation it commonly receives.⁷³

But in the case at hand, the phenomenon could more properly be defined as "means displacement" rather than goal

⁷¹Further evidence on this point will be provided in Chapter V, infra.

⁷²A. Etzioni, Modern Organizations, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964, p. 10. Other, more restrictive definitions are available: A. Downs, op. cit., p. 18, points out that rules and regulations can ". . . tend to divert the attention of officials from achieving the social functions of the bureau to conforming to its rules. . . ." P. Selznick's book, TVA and the Grass Roots, can be construed to explain the goal displacement of the TVA through the phenomenon of co-optation as a result of adherence to the grass-roots doctrine.

⁷³See G. B. Doern, "The National Research Council: The Causes of Goal Displacement", Canadian Public Administration, 13(1970), p. 184: "If it is any consolation to the NRC, it ought to be pointed out that it is not the first public structure, nor will it likely be the last, to succumb to this disease."

displacement. The original goal of regionalization should not be looked on as being defined in terms of centralization or decentralization, but rather in terms of providing better service to the public at the field level. There is every reason to believe that the framers of the regionalization concept were sincere in their devotion to this goal. With the developing tendency towards decentralization, the goal is not changing -- only the means.

Why are the means changing? The "exigencies of actual operations" is the obvious answer, but such an answer should be explained in greater detail. At least three points can be made here by way of summary:

1. The increase in field staff allowed increased activity in the field, and the added load on headquarters officials provided the opportunity to delegate to those staff. As the specialist staff were quite competent in their discipline, and as they continued to report to the division at Edmonton, there was no reason not to delegate some discretion in the kinds of activities undertaken and with regard to the time spent on those activities.

2. With the recognition of the need for co-ordination at the regional level and the subsequent appointment of Regional Agriculturists, an important step was taken towards building a regional identity, an identity which was reinforced through the regional planning process. As the Regional Agriculturist became familiar with his duties and exerted his influence in a way which did not substantially interfere with

familiar field staff prerogatives, he began to gain the support and respect of the field staff, increasing his basis of legitimacy. As the increasing involvement in the planning process of the Department, combined with a week's training in the Deputy-Minister's office and occasional appearances at the Executive Committee increased his status, he was able to exert greater influence. What authority he did have was not exercised in a manner which left the impression that he "was throwing his weight around". In short, the development of the Regional Agriculturist's real or potential authority can be viewed in Barnard's sense,⁷⁴ as flowing from the bottom up. And these same kind of factors accounted for an increasing acceptance of the Regional Agriculturist on the part of headquarters staff.⁷⁵

3. The grass-roots philosophy makes it difficult to resist the influence of the field staff on the planning and policy formulation process, particularly since the wishes of the regional clientele are now compiled and expressed in a more organized fashion, through the Regional Agriculturist --

⁷⁴See Chapter I, infra.

⁷⁵In order to avoid leaving the reader with the impression that the job of the Regional Agriculturist is now all sweetness and light, it should be pointed out that there is still a number of staff at both headquarters and field levels who view regionalization and thus the Regional Agriculturist as nothing more than the imposition of "another level of bureaucracy which serves no useful purpose". The Report of Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd., op. cit., pp. 5-68, called the Regional Agriculturist's position "managerially untenable". The comments above should be taken in the context of a trend which is fairly rapidly establishing itself.

who also deals with external advisory bodies such as the Agricultural Service Boards and municipalities for purposes of the Departmental monetary assistance.⁷⁶ When advisory bodies are set up to advise and recommend, the implication is that some response will be forthcoming as a result of that advice. Assuming that such bodies function effectively, it will be difficult to resist the notion that the regional organization should be given more authority to respond on a regional basis.

Out of this section arises a further question which will be dealt with in the final chapter: "What is the probability that the means will become more important than the goal of serving the public, i.e. that the decentralizing tendencies will result in goal displacement?"

⁷⁶In 1969, the Municipal Agricultural Programs Branch, which administers the ministerial agreements with the service boards, instituted a policy whereby applications for agreements would be considered complete only when the Regional Agriculturist's signature had been affixed.

CHAPTER V

IS THE DEPARTMENT PROPERLY BALANCED?

Chapter IV outlined the development and operation of the Alberta Department of Agriculture's field organization and pointed out several tendencies that suggested a movement towards administrative decentralization. These tendencies or decentralizing factors were explicit, while centralizing tendencies were left rather implicit. This chapter will provide further information on the decentralizing factors, but will at the same time make the centralizing factors explicit. To evaluate regionalization in terms of administrative decentralization, then, we must add the further dimension of "balance".

If we could ignore Chapter I's caution against using the words "centralization" and "decentralization" dichotomously, this chapter provides information with which to answer the question "Is the Alberta Department of Agriculture decentralized?". But the chapter itself is an emphasis on the difficulties of ignoring that caution, because for every decentralizing factor identified, it is possible to identify a centralizing factor. Only by imagining a scale on one side of which we can pile centralizing factors and on the other side decentralizing factors, can we adequately understand the forces at work.

Chapter II posited the null hypothesis that the

Department was centralized, on the assumption that if we proved this hypothesis false, it would follow that the positive hypothesis, i.e. that the Department is decentralized, is true. However, in view of the concept of balance and the foregoing discussion, such proof would tell us only that the Department is decentralized to some extent, and would not tell us anything about where the Department lies on a continuum with centralization at one end and decentralization at the other. The analysis that follows suggests sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, and the concept of balance allows us to place the Department on the centralization-decentralization continuum.

A. MORALE

Chapter II suggested that personal opinions on the impact of rules and regulations, on sufficiency of authority, and on the restrictions of formal role can be a measure of both morale and centralization. Questions 1 to 7 of the questionnaire were thus an attempt to measure morale, among other things. The results of the questionnaire¹ appear to provide little or no justification for believing that morale is poor because of centralizing factors.

¹The most useful of the questionnaire results are presented in table form in Appendix III. In the interests of brevity, only an overview is provided, as the complete analysis of the questionnaire provided over 1300 pages of computer printout. While no specific comments are made on the differences between regions, some indicators of differences are also shown in Appendix III.

Only 2.6% of respondents felt that rules and regulations were of no use. Twenty-seven point five per cent felt there were too many regulations, but only 1.0% felt that such rules and regulations hampered performance. Just 16.0% felt that their formal role was too confining, or that one should frequently or always step out of the confines of their job description. While 18.5% of the personnel responding felt their personal authority insufficient to allow them to do their best job, and 20.3% felt that field staff had insufficient authority, only 2.2% felt that immediate superiors interfered with the performance of their job. Such figures tend to suggest that in general terms, morale is not poor within the Department, or if it is poor, it is not caused by centralizing factors.²

B. ACCORDING TO THE MODEL

Chapter II outlined what is referred to as the Richards Model and set out a number of criteria which can be applied to examine the degree or extent of decentralization within an organization. The analysis that follows conforms to the outline of criteria as set out by Richards, except that "external

²It would be impossible to designate a specific percentage, above which morale as indicated by any of these factors could be considered poor, and below which it could be considered good. However, on an arbitrary and largely intuitive basis, the author would maintain that these figures are too low to suggest poor morale. Further information with respect to these questions is provided under the appropriate headings relating to the Richards Model.

centralizing/decentralizing forces" are treated separately in Section C.

1) Structural or Formal Organizational Patterns

(a) The Extent of Delegation

Reference to Appendix III shows that most personnel of the Department do not feel they have insufficient authority, with only 18.5% claiming that to be true. Two points are striking about the replies to question 5; first, field personnel claim insufficient authority less often than headquarters personnel, the relevant figures being 16.4% and 21.7% respectively. Second, the headquarters staff of two divisions, Animal Industry and Plant Industry seem relatively more dissatisfied than the rest of the Department in this respect, although their field staff remain closer to the Departmental average. Thirty-nine point three per cent of Animal Industry Division headquarters staff and 33.3% of Plant Industry headquarters staff claim insufficient authority, compared to the Departmental average for headquarters of 21.7%.

When the same question was phrased to elicit answers to whether or not field staff of the Department have insufficient authority, the relationship between field and headquarters was reversed, with 20.2% of the field staff maintaining that field staff in general have insufficient authority, compared to the headquarters opinion of 18.5%. Field staff of Animal Industry, Agricultural Economics, and Water Resources appear to be strongest in this belief.

Supervision of either field or headquarters staff does

not appear to be unduly restrictive, as less than 1.0% of field staff and less than 6.0% of the headquarters staff felt that their immediate supervisors interfered with the performance of their job. Animal Industry and Plant Industry headquarters staff chose this answer to question 7 the most often, but were still both below 15.0%. In Animal Industry, all those that chose such an answer were below grade 29, and in Plant Industry, both respondents choosing the answer were in the 30-33 grade level. The number of people who have their decisions questioned frequently is, in the case of both field and headquarters, less than 5.0%.

Such figures tend to support observations gathered by way of interviews. Despite variations between divisions, it is possible to say in general terms that the Department has provided fairly extensive delegation, or at least has delegated enough authority to allow adequate performance of jobs as presently defined. There would be insufficient evidence on the basis of these figures to accept the hypothesis that the Department is centralized.

On the other side of the scales, however, there must be placed some factors that suggest accepting the hypothesis. With regard to field-headquarters relationships, the two most important to be noted are the lack of budgetary and substantive personnel policy control on the part of the regions. The regions do not have a budget which they control and allocate according to their view of the regional priorities; most financial decisions, other than the purchase of minor

office supplies, are made by the headquarters divisions.³ The regions play little or no part in the recruitment, selection, and placement of staff within the region, although their wishes are sometimes taken into account. Influence would appear to be small as well with respect to what positions are established. When the Red Deer Region had neither a plant industry specialist nor a livestock specialist, the Region indicated that its priority for the region would be a livestock man. At the subsequent round of estimates, it was the plant industry position that was established for the Red Deer Region.

(b) Specialist Assistance⁴

Although specialist assistance was not provided to the field as part of a conscious plan of administrative decentralization, it was provided, and does operate to facilitate delegation. Although only 23.5% of the personnel of the Department require specialist assistance often or constantly, such assistance when required is provided quickly and is of good quality.

³The Department is moving toward the provision of a regional fund for use with regard to special regional projects. The Minutes of the January 13, 1970 Executive Committee Meeting state that the provision of funds for local administration is a long-term objective. Small amounts had earlier been made available for this purpose by the Municipal Agricultural Programs Branch of the Program Development Division. This factor should be listed on the decentralizing side of the scales.

⁴It should be noted that specialist assistance comes not only from Department personnel designated as "specialists", but also from the three agricultural and vocational colleges, the federal research stations, the horticultural station at Brooks, and the Universities.

Ninety-seven point three per cent of headquarters staff, and the same percentage of field staff feel that specialist assistance is provided quickly or at least as time permits. Eighty-eight point two per cent of headquarters staff and 83.8% of field staff feel the assistance provided is adequate or more than adequate. Less than 2.0% of Departmental staff feel that personnel of other divisions generally interfere with the performance of their job, and almost 50.0% feel that other divisions provide valuable assistance or assistance without which the job could not be done. The concept of regionalization itself is an attempt to place specialist assistance in the field. To the extent that it does so, it is a decentralizing factor.

On the other side of the scales can be placed those kinds of specialized assistance which are not sufficiently feasible, practically or economically, to place in the field. Examples would be the major laboratory facilities, the personnel and accounting offices, and the computer or data processing facilities.

(c) Standardization

Standardization is an enigma in that it may operate to make decentralization possible but is also in itself a centralizing force. To the extent that standardization curtails power and authority to act and make decisions, it is a centralizing factor. But question 1 of the questionnaire showed that only 1.0% of the Departmental staff felt that rules and regulations, which are one vehicle of standardization, hamper their

performance, and with the exception of the Agricultural Economics Division, over 95.0% of the divisional personnel felt that they served some useful purpose. Many of the staff, especially those in Water Resources, felt that there were too many regulations. This obviously suggests a topic for further study, but it is quite likely that the specific regulations in question would not be Departmental regulations, but regulations of the central control agencies such as Treasury Board and the Personnel Administration Office. There is little reason, therefore, for accepting the hypothesis that the Department is centralized on the basis of the impact of rules and regulations.

On the other hand, interviews and observations show a substantial concern, especially within headquarters, with the necessity for uniformity of policy application on a provincial basis. To the extent that such policy is designed so restrictively as to prevent necessary modification in terms of implementation at the regional level, it must be regarded as a centralizing factor. As an illustration, many of those interviewed expressed, as a basic objection to the idea of an integrated field organization, the danger that regions could become too autonomous and thus seriously weaken the uniformity of application of provincial policy. The possibility of "seven Departments of Agriculture" and the chaos that would result was often put forward almost as a hyperbole.

(d) Provision for Appeals from Lower Decisions

The existence of appeal provisions when decisions are made or over-ruled can have two effects. When appeal is

possible to an employee's immediate superior, it can be considered a healthy practice in terms of human relations and considerate management. However, when successful appeal is possible over the head of the immediate superior, it represents a substantial negation of effective delegation, whatever effects it may have on the employee's morale. It would then have to be considered a centralizing factor.

In the Alberta Department of Agriculture, 70.4% of the personnel felt that they could be successful in appealing to their immediate superior everytime⁵ or sometimes. It is interesting to note that the higher levels of the hierarchy felt greater possibilities of success. Of the 106 people at grade level 30-33 answering the question, 52 felt that they could be successful in such appeals; of the 24 people at levels higher than 33, 12 felt they could be successful. Below grade 29 the proportion was 55 of 167.

With respect to appeal over the head of the immediate superior, the percentage of people feeling they could be successful in such an appeal was substantially less, being 31.0%,⁶

⁵Only 3.6% of the staff of the Department said they could be successful every time.

⁶This figure is itself inflated, however, because the "not applicable" responses were not considered in the calculations. The way the question was worded necessitated some provision for those who would not be able to answer the question if, for example, they did not make any decisions that were subject to overrule. Comments on the returned questionnaires indicated that the alternative of "not applicable" was also used by staff to signify that such an appeal might be possible but that they would not consider taking advantage of it. Such an attitude works just as effectively to make delegation effective as does the formal restriction of appeal. If

and no one stated that they could be successful every time. In this case, absolute numbers rather than percentages are perhaps more useful -- only 31 people in the entire Department stated that such a successful appeal was possible. Again, the higher levels of the hierarchy felt slightly more effective; of the 31 mentioned above, 16 were above grade 29.

The answers to both questions show that greater possibilities for successful appeal appear to lie at headquarters as opposed to the field. The difference was not substantial, however, in either case.

It seems clear, then, that the answers to these questions suggest that the provision and use of appeals do not operate to negate the effective delegation of authority either at headquarters or in the field. There would be little evidence for accepting the hypothesis that the Department is centralized on the basis of this evidence.

Any evidence that could be placed on the opposite side of the scales with respect to this criterion would most likely have to do with external centralizing influences, where appeal would lie to the central control agencies (e.g. to the Personnel Administration Office on classification) or by way of pressure brought to bear by interest groups as the result of dissatisfied employees "leaking" or "planting" information with such groups in the hope that indirect appeal can be successful.

these answers could be isolated, they should be placed under alternative "(iv) there can be no such appeal." If all "not applicable" answers were considered such, the above percentage would be 10.8% (65.2% chose the "not applicable" alternative).

This latter possibility seems very remote indeed, because of the high standards of integrity and ethics demanded both by the Department and by the agricultural fraternity.

2) Steps Being Taken to Overcome the Problems Inherent in Decentralized Operations, or to Regain the Advantages of Centralized Operations

(f) Supporting Philosophy Among Senior Administrators

Basic to effective decentralization is an active supporting philosophy among personnel both at headquarters and at the field. If we arbitrarily designate senior personnel as those at grades 30 or higher, the answers to question 23 yield interesting, though questionable results. When the question was designed, it was hoped that responses would indicate the attitudes of field and headquarters personnel towards the taking of administrative policy decisions at the regional level. On the basis of the responses, the amount of support on the part of senior personnel at headquarters is not encouraging. Although the average for the Department answering that policy decisions affecting field operations (assuming consultation always takes place) should be made either by field specialists or field generalists was 39.1%, only 16.9% of headquarters staff chose those answers compared to 62.9% of staff at the same pay grade in the field. In the case of every division, field staff were more convinced than were headquarters staff that such decisions should be taken in the field. On the basis of these figures one could be drawn to the conclusion that support at the headquarters level (which

can be considered most important) was weak, and that the hypothesis that the Department is centralized should be accepted. Other points tending to support such a conclusion are the attitudes with regard to uniformity previously mentioned, and a healthy fear of "empire builders".

However, the figures with respect to headquarters support may be misleading, due to the unfortunate wording of the question. Comments on the returned questionnaires and a discussion with a senior member of the Department subsequent to the return of the questionnaires indicate that the inclusion of the word "policy" may have misled respondents. While the word was meant to refer to "administrative" policy, or the policy with regard to specific implementation of broader or general policy decisions that must be made at the political level, many of the headquarters staff could have taken the word to refer to the latter type of policy only. If the word had been omitted or more clearly defined, it is suggested that the percentage of headquarters staff choosing "support answers" would be higher, though probably still not as high as field responses.

Such an interpretation seems to be supported by observation, as the impression gained through headquarters interviews was that support for decision-making at the field level is greater than the 16.9% indicated by the questionnaire results. An interview with the Deputy-Minister suggested such support at least to some extent, and the direction of the proposed reorganization of the Extension and Colleges

Division⁷ also suggests support for the delegation of decision-making to lower levels. The factors identified in the previous chapter, such as the increasing role of the Regions in the planning and policy formulation process, the broad concept of the role of the Regional Agriculturist, and the effects of the bureaucratic ideology add further credence to the proposition that support for decentralization is greater on the part of headquarters staff than is shown by the results of the questionnaire.

In Chapter IV, an increasing identification with the region on the part of the field staff, was identified as a decentralizing factor, and the answers to question 23 by field staff tend to support this point. Further support is provided by the analysis of question 14. A plurality of the field staff, or 30.7%, felt that their loyalty and commitment is equally to their division and to their region. A further 22.8% felt that their loyalty and commitment was mostly to the region with some divisional ties, and a further 14.8% identified primarily with the region. Thus almost two-thirds of the field staff regard their loyalty and commitment as being to the region equal or greater in extent than to the division. These factors must go on the decentralization side of the scales and serve to suggest rejection of the null hypothesis.

⁷To be discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI, infra. Programs of other divisions indicating support for decentralization are also noted there.

(g) Action to Obtain and Maintain a High Degree
of Competence in Administrative Personnel

The nature of the Department and its organization is such that subject-matter specialization is a highly-regarded value, and the Department therefore expends considerable effort in obtaining and maintaining subject-matter competence. This is done through various in-service training courses, on-the-job training, and extensive provision for academic upgrading through paid or partially paid educational leave, both for post-graduate credit study and for short courses. In this sense of the word "competence", there is little doubt that the Department is taking commendable action to obtain a high degree of competence in personnel. But the Richards Model uses the term in a broader way, to include administrative competence as well as technical competence. On this point, the Department has not scored as well. The major determinant for promotion to administrative levels seems to be academic improvement in a technical field and/or extensive practical experience. In the past, acquisition of training in administration has not been emphasized and the normal process of building administrative competence has been through trial-and-error learning after promotion.

Even within the Department the argument is frequently heard that too little emphasis has been placed on administrative training both before assumption of an administrative position and after. When applied to field personnel, the argument seems particularly telling, for one of the arguments,

among others, sometimes used against the delegation of more of the administrative functions to the Regional Agriculturist is that he does not have the training and experience to do the job properly. To the extent that this is true, there has not been laid a proper foundation in administrative skills that can facilitate effective decentralization. The absence of such a foundation suggests, or at least facilitates, centralization.

However, it should not be maintained that large numbers of personnel have no training in management at all. In response to a question on the questionnaire, only 19.5% of headquarters and 18.5% of field staff indicated no training at all. At the higher levels, 13.6% of the 30-33 paygrade claimed no management training and 4.5% of the over 33 level similarly reported. A large percentage of staff had attended in-service courses or seminars or had done some reading and study on their own. Much of the training in farm management and extension education could be applicable to governmental administration. Of the 248 people who indicated they had received management training in one form or another, only 8 indicated that they had found it of no use, 6 of whom were below pay grade 30.

In the last few years, fairly specific action has been taken to remedy the apparent lack of emphasis on administrative training. The Deputy-Minister's orientation program for the Regional Agriculturists, mentioned previously, is a concrete example. Another is the establishment of a Management Development Committee in 1969, from which resulted a Departmental

management seminar conducted by a prominent management consultant. The efforts of this committee also resulted in the adoption of the "management by commitment" concept, a variation of management by objectives, for implementation in the Department, starting at top management levels. By the summer of 1970, the committee was engaged in the development of a formal management training program for supervisory levels. Some senior members of the Department have attended the six-week executive development course given annually by the School of Advanced Management at Banff, Alberta, and an attempt has been made to participate in this course on a regular basis. The management training section of the central Personnel Administration Office has recently increased its efforts in this area, and Departmental personnel have been encouraged to attend and participate.

Related to the factor of administrative competence is that of coherence of purpose or goal consensus, an example of which was given in Section C of Chapter IV. Such coherence of purpose is supported by the existence of a healthy, yet not excessively large percentage of people with extensive experience in the Department. Six point eight per cent of the Department has been employed by the Department for over twenty years; 8.9% of headquarters personnel and 5.7% of field personnel have that distinction. Another factor serving to emphasize the development of coherence of purpose is the high level of lateral communication that occurs within the Department. Eighty-one point seven per cent of the headquarters staff and 70.1% of the field staff said that in their opinion there was always or frequently lateral communications with

interested parties when making a decision.⁸

Coherence of purpose does not appear to be supported, however, by the figures illustrating mobility. A full 60.5% of the personnel of the Department have never moved or transferred from one division or region to another,⁹ and the percentage is higher for headquarters staff (72.2%) than for field staff (53.8%). While such lack of mobility undoubtedly serves a useful purpose in reinforcing specialization in a subject-matter area,¹⁰ it may have an unfortunate result in that it tends to provide a narrow or parochial outlook. To the extent that this prevents the acquisition of a broader view and understanding of the Department and differing provincial conditions, it prevents the development of greater coherence of purpose or goal consensus, and operates to restrict the possibilities of effective decentralization.

- (h) Specific Formal Support for Speed in Communication, Including Adequate Management Control Systems.

A centralizing factor, which is regarded as being common

⁸This factor should also be noted under (2) (h).

⁹This may be partially explained by a large percentage of staff with five years or less service (51.9% of respondents). Of those with five or less years of service, 65.1% have never moved. At the highest levels of the hierarchy (i.e. over grade 30), 4 respondents of 11 indicating over 20 years service also indicated they had never moved.

¹⁰For divisions which by the nature of their function require extensive specialization, such as veterinary medicine, it would perhaps be illogical to encourage mobility between divisions. It can be argued that a veterinarian would be wasted, for example, if he were transferred to the Extension Division.

to government operations, is the relative lack of quantitatively definable goals and measurement tools. Many of the goals that relate to the extension or social development functions of the Department are not easily definable in quantitative terms. As pointed out in Chapter I, control in a decentralized organization involves observation of various indicators that have been set up in advance to measure the achievement of goals. The absence of clear goals or the measurement tools with which to monitor progress acts to prevent effective delegation of authority, and the point clearly applies to the Department's field operations. It should be noted, however, that a recent emphasis on a management by objectives philosophy is serving to mitigate the importance of this problem; presumably as the Department becomes more skilled in defining its goals, this type of restriction on effective delegation will tend to disappear. To the extent that such goals and measurement tools are not as yet satisfactorily defined, the situation suggests evidence for accepting a hypothesis that the Department is centralized.

This may be too hasty a conclusion. The frequency of lateral communications mentioned in the previous section, and formal technological aids to communication and decision-making are examples that suggest the opposite. TWX units (the Alberta Government Telephones equivalent of TELEX) have been installed in all Regional Offices, with connections to most other government departments as well as to the Department of Agriculture. The telephone, of course, is another widely used device to

facilitate communications.¹¹

There is reason to believe, as well, that the Department ranks well in terms of speed of communications and decision-making. In response to questions regarding these points, 41.9% of the Department's staff said that they received desired information from headquarters within two or three days and 59.5% said information was received from the Regional Office in the same length of time. Forty point eight per cent said a necessary decision is generally received from headquarters in two or three days, and 69.8% said it was received from the Regional Office in that time. Reference to Appendix III shows some interesting differences when these responses are examined in further detail. Headquarters staff feel that both decisions and information are received more quickly from headquarters than from the field. Similarly, a greater percentage of field staff feel that they are more likely to receive both information and decisions from the Regional Office in two or three days than from headquarters. While one could point out that this is probably only natural because of the proximity of staff to one another at different locations, it would seem fair to conclude that the introduction of regionalization has resulted in faster communications and decision-making at the field level. Prior to regionalization, this intermediate source of information and decisions did not exist, at least to the same extent; if all information and

¹¹It should be noted that these kinds of facilities also allow centralization.

decisions had to come from headquarters, it must have taken longer.

One could also point out that the reason for the apparent speed of information-provision and decision-making at the Regional Office level may be that the kinds of information provided and decisions made are so unimportant and uncontroversial that it is only natural for such processes to be faster. But this is no argument against decentralization; in fact, it is an argument for further decentralization, for the record to date in handling present responsibilities provides some justification for believing that any increased responsibilities would be handled adequately in terms of speed.

C. EXTERNAL CENTRALIZING AND DECENTRALIZING INFLUENCES

The only decentralizing external influence of any significance is the influence of the people and local organizations at the field level, as previously discussed in Chapter IV. And for this to be an effective influence, there must develop a history or tradition of response, as well as the power to respond, on the part of the field organization.

At the present time, more significant are those influences that arise out of the nature of the parliamentary system of government. With the existence of an extremely decentralized organization, where regions are relatively autonomous, it seems clear that ministerial control of the Department's function is weakened. To the extent that this is true,

the power of Cabinet to formulate agricultural policy within the context of a society in which the rural population and its votes are decreasing in significance¹² is also weakened. One method of avoiding such problems has traditionally been centralization.

Another way of explaining this is by way of the concept of ministerial responsibility. As Glassco put it,

The foregoing chapters have emphasized the role of the Minister as the principal factor determining the form of organization appropriate to each activity of the federal government. For this reason, organization must be designed from the top down, in order to ensure that the powers of ministers are commensurate with their accountability. This is the great centripetal force in government, tending to concentrate all authority.¹³

The Minister must of necessity maintain the power to intervene and impose, for forces external to the Province, such as the Canada Department of Agriculture, as well as influences within the Province, must receive response. Within the Province, forces external to the Department tend to be exerted at the Provincial level because of cabinet government and ministerial responsibility. The universities, the farm organizations, agribusiness, commodity groups, and other formal agricultural co-ordinating groups and interest groups, can more effectively exert influence on one central point which has the power to

¹²In 1946 the rural population, at 448,934, comprised 55.88% of Alberta's population. In 1966, the rural population, at 455,796 (including rural non-farm), was 31.15% of the population. Between 1961 and 1966 the rural farm population decreased by 8,225 and the rural population (including rural non-farm) by 32,937. See Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada (1966 and 1946).

¹³Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1962, Vol. V, p. 76.

make changes throughout the Province than they can on a number of points which have only the power to make changes in a limited area of the Province.

Mention has already been made in Chapter III of the influence of farmer and commodity groups¹⁴ on the Department's programs. Unifarm is probably the most powerful in terms of influence, and has been both supportive¹⁵ and critical¹⁶ of the Department's programs and policies. As a union of the former Alberta Federation of Agriculture, with 27 member-organizations representing grain, dairy, livestock, farm supplies, and specialty crops, and the Farmers' Union of Alberta, representing 29,000 individual members, Unifarm is a highly representative and powerful organization, which also has ties with the prestigious Canadian Federation of Agriculture.¹⁷ Its president¹⁸ has enjoyed close contact with the

¹⁴Appendix IV is a partial listing of such groups as an illustration of their size and nature (not including Unifarm). For an analysis of the operation of some of these groups, see Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd., op. cit., Chapter 7.

¹⁵See J. Art, "On the Land", The Edmonton Journal, August 15, 1970, p. 11. "Unifarm, its officers and member co-operatives and commodity groups, say 'farm marketing boards negotiate better prices'".

¹⁶See "Babey acclaimed president of new Alberta farm union", The Edmonton Journal, March 25, 1970, p. 3. "Mr. Babey rapped 'armchair extension specialists who knew all about production, but not what to do with it after it was produced'".

¹⁷See "Unifarm votes to join CFA", The Edmonton Journal, March 28, 1970, p. 58.

¹⁸Mr. Babey, Unifarm's first president, resigned in December of 1970, and was subsequently appointed to the government's new Environment Conservation Authority. See "Babey, Smith named to environment body", The Edmonton Journal, December 23, 1970, p. 1.

Alberta Cabinet, and it seems fair to say that the effectiveness of such groups tends to operate to maintain a fair degree of centralization.¹⁹

Central control agencies in Alberta can also operate to restrict a department's ability to take positive steps towards decentralization. To the extent that personnel policies and other regulations are standardized by the Personnel Administration Office or the Treasury Board, these bodies are centralizing factors, though paradoxically such regulations can facilitate decentralization by removing these policies from the realm of intra-departmental controversy. For example, it does little good to attempt to redesign the appropriation structure to facilitate financial management by field staff if the Treasury Board insists that all such management must be centralized for ease of control. By the same token, a department cannot construct a useful transfer or rotation policy to facilitate the development of coherence of purpose through broader experience if the regulations designed by the Treasury Board mean that personnel who are transferred from one part of the Province to another actually lose monetarily because of the move. And a classification and pay system that appears to be based on the number of people being supervised does not encourage delegation of authority or the rational placement of personnel. Finally, the Civil Service Association of Alberta increasingly resembles

¹⁹The National Farmers' Union in Alberta does not enjoy the same status as Unifarm because of its tendency to exert pressure through direct means such as picketing seed plants to raise prices paid to farmers, or marching on the Legislature to protest the disappearance of small egg grading stations. See "Angry farmers hit legislature", The Edmonton Journal, April 1, 1970, p. 1.

a union, and as it gains an extension of collective bargaining, it seems likely that the Association will also become a force operating to promote centralization in the name of uniformity.

D. BALANCE

As Richards points out, ". . . balance . . . is not a single point balance but rather a set of balancing points."²⁰ In other words, there are differences in the extent of decentralization between the various functional or specialist sections of an organization. In the case of the Alberta Department of Agriculture, the results of the questionnaire suggest such differences, which in turn suggest the necessity for further research to enable the designation of the specific balancing points.²¹

Two other points should be made clear with regard to balance. First, balance implies an equilibrium of opposing centralizing and decentralizing forces, which means that the

²⁰Richards, op. cit., p. 77.

²¹This study has left many of these differences implicit and for this reason is probably subject to legitimate criticism. However, one of the purposes of the study was to provide a generalized or overall picture of the organization, and to provide a methodological and conceptual basis for further study should the Department decide formally that the best means of achieving its goals is through further administrative decentralization. As the existence of a formalized field organization with provision for co-ordination at the field level is perhaps the most important single indicator of decentralized operations, headquarters-field relationships received the greatest attention in this study.

identification of an equilibrium at any particular point in time in any particular situation is only an identification -- it does not tell us where that equilibrium lies in relation to what should be the "proper balance". This means, secondly, that the area of proper balance must be defined, and it will inevitably remain to some extent a subjective designation based on the nature of the competing forces, personal commitment to decentralization, the perspective of the viewer,²² and difficulties of weighting the identified factors in terms of importance.

Despite these limitations, however, the concept of balance is useful. It allows the identification of the competing factors, and by doing so it forces one to consider where a particular balance (or set of balances) lies on a continuum of balances stretching from centralization on the left to decentralization on the right. If we accept the proposition that different organizations require differing degrees of centralization to operate effectively, such a continuum might appear as Diagram 2, with the area of proper balance being a grey area originating at or near the centre.

DIAGRAM 2: THE CENTRALIZATION-DECENTRALIZATION CONTINUUM

²²Other than differences of opinion caused by the effect of specialization, ". . . differences in satisfaction with the degree of decentralization achieved depend on whether one is looking down from the top or up from the bottom." Richards, op. cit., p. 77.

On the basis of the competing forces identified in this study, there is sufficient evidence to reject the hypothesis that the Alberta Department of Agriculture is centralized, i.e. that its position lies at the extreme left of the continuum. Thus we contend that the Department is decentralized to some extent. The exact position on the continuum is then determined by the number and importance of the competing factors.

Review of the factors identified in this study shows that the centralizing and decentralizing forces do not differ significantly in their number -- it is the importance of each which will determine the position of the Department on the continuum. Two points about the centralizing factors seem clear: first, most assume greater importance because of the original definition of the purpose of regionalization, the relative strength of the headquarters divisions as opposed to the field organization, the near-complete control of budgetary and personnel policy administration by headquarters, and the effects of centralizing external factors. Second, most centralizing factors are well-established, and have existed for some time. Many of the important decentralizing factors can be defined in terms of tendencies only, and for them to gain the relative importance necessary to offset the centralizing forces, they must continue over time, and they must be increasingly accepted as legitimate.

For the Department, at this point in time, this suggests a position to the left of the proper area of balance

on the continuum. But the answer to a question of whether or not an organization is relatively centralized or decentralized can only be put forward in terms of a definition of the proper area of balance. Such a definition is developed in Chapter VI, and the answer to the question posed as the title of this chapter will be provided there.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT OF TOMORROW?

The preceding chapters have left some important questions unanswered. Chapter IV posed, but did not answer, three questions: "Is the choice between function and area still relevant in view of the modification of the concept of regionalization arising out of its actual operation?". "Can the Regional Agriculturist be expected to perform his job of co-ordination effectively without greater authority?". "What is the probability of goal displacement?". Chapter V left us without a definition of the "proper area of balance", and without an answer posed as the title of that chapter.

It can be seen that the first three questions depend directly or indirectly on the definition of the "proper area of balance", and that the answer to the question "Is the Alberta Department of Agriculture centralized or decentralized?" also depends on such definition. A major responsibility of this chapter, then, is to provide a definition of the proper area of balance.

It is the contention of this chapter, and therefore of the entire study, that such a definition must be based on an examination of the Department's role and on the needs of its clientele -- phrased in terms of what is likely to be the requirements of tomorrow. The appropriate definition is set out in Section C, below. To get there, however, it is necessary

to examine two views of what will be required on the part of the Alberta Department of Agriculture to most effectively discharge its responsibilities in the near future.¹ The first is the Department's views and plans for Regionalization, and the second is the view of an "outside" group.

A. DEPARTMENTAL PROJECTIONS OF REGIONALIZATION

In 1970, the Department undertook, as part of a beginning exercise in "Management by Commitment", a review of the regionalization concept which was to result in the offer, on the part of divisions, of specific action designed to improve the operation of the field organization. These "offers" were received by the Deputy-Minister in the fall of 1970.

By June 15 of 1970, the Executive Committee had defined the objective of regionalization to be: "Within the purpose of the Department to improve total Alberta Department of Agriculture communication and services to the public by increasing administrative efficiency and capability by using the regional

¹This chapter concentrates on "Regionalization" because, in the opinion of the author, it is both the most significant of the decentralizing factors previously identified and the most useful vehicle to promote further decentralization should that be one of the necessities of tomorrow. As a result, the chapter deals primarily with field-headquarters relationships, on a departmental basis. It should be kept in mind, however, that the question of centralization and decentralization also involves relationships within individual divisions of the Department. Throughout this study, the need for brevity has meant treating this latter aspect by implication only.

basis."² While this definition is broad enough to refer to almost any organizational structure of authority, an elaboration of goals within that broad objective is revealing:

4. Put more reliance by 1972 on local programming and implementation based on relevancy to the region re budgeting, research, production, marketing, etc.
5. To have provincial policies, programs and services planned more by total Departmental staff and more elastic for regional purposes provided those required by statute are honored and provided staff don't spend more than 30% of their time on planning, meeting, training, courses, etc.³

The above objective and goals suggest a greater emphasis on regional responsibility, and seem to reinforce decentralizing tendencies. However, no mention is made specifically, in any of the goals, of the consideration of the choice between function and area. It must then be assumed that the objectives and goals of regionalization are to be achieved within the current definition of the lines of authority and the existing relationships between field and headquarters.

With a few significant exceptions, the responses by divisions to the objective and goals enunciated by the Executive Committee did not include delegation of decision-making authority to the regions. The regions continue to be viewed as useful vehicles to provide advice to headquarters decision-makers and to serve as communication links with the Department's clientele.

Despite this, however, the responses indicate strength

²Statement by Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, Deputy-Minister, June 16, 1970.

³Ibid.

in the Department's commitment to regionalization. The Municipal Agricultural Programs Branch of the Program Development Division indicated a considerable willingness to accept increased regional involvement in the decision-making process with regard to its programs; the Plant Industry Division noted that "Most programs are provincial in scope, but regional programs are developing"; the Agricultural Economics Division noted that some programs could be regionalized now and some in the long term; the Animal Industry Division confidently anticipated that,

as we develop Branch capability in the regions and become fully staffed; . . . overall policy within a region will tend to identify the most appropriate livestock enterprise for a particular region, and that emphasis on certain programs will vary from region to region, depending on decisions made at the district and regional levels.

At least two points are important to note with regard to the commitments of the Extension and Colleges Division: the Regional Agriculturists were to enunciate relevant priorities for their regions, and regional budgets were to be developed, the policy with regard to the use of regional funds to be clarified by the Director. These two processes are significant first steps toward administrative decentralization.

What is more significant is the reorganization of the Extension and Colleges Division to be implemented January 1, 1971.⁴ Effective that date, all field staff of the Extension

⁴See C. J. McAndrews, Director, Extension and Colleges Division, Document of Needs and Opportunities, (mimeo), November 1, 1970. The old and new organizational structures are shown as Appendix V.

and Colleges Division, with the exception of Colleges staff, will report to the Regional Agriculturist who is to be responsible for the extension function within his region. In other words, the field organization of the Extension and Colleges Division is to be integrated -- the choice between function and area has been made in favor of area, and staff of the Agricultural Engineering and Home Economist Branches will not report to the headquarters offices in the future.

Instead of reporting through a complicated hierarchy to the Director of Extension, the Regional Agriculturists will report directly to the head of the Division. Former branch heads and other "line" officials will become "staff" personnel, organized on the basis of a "Professional Services Secretariat" which will provide subject-matter information and assistance to the region, and a "Programs Secretariat", which will advise on program content, implementation technology, and program planning, and which will monitor inter-regional programs to promote provincial co-ordination.

In effect, the field organization of the Extension and Colleges Division will no longer exist for the convenience of headquarters, as it appeared to do prior to the reorganization, but rather the headquarters office will exist for the purpose of assisting the field organization to do its job effectively. The Regional Agriculturist will now be given the responsibility for an entire region, with formal authority over more key personnel and, if the budgetary commitment develops, with more control over necessary resources. He will likely gain more autonomy in decision-making, if only because the new span of

control is so large that it would be difficult for the Director to exercise unduly restrictive control.

This proposed reorganization has been approved by the Department and will be implemented.⁵ It is clearly a move towards an integrated field organization and effective decentralization, which implies an evolving definition of the proper area of balance. But it does not yet fully answer all the questions with which this chapter must be concerned. More information with respect to the answers is provided in the following section.

B. AN OUTSIDE AND "EXPERT" VIEW

In November of 1968, the Alberta Government engaged Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd., of Calgary, to

enquire into all phases of agricultural extension carried out by various government, education, industry and producer agencies, and to recommend such changes as may be deemed necessary, in order to integrate, co-ordinate and administer existing and future programs to best serve the interests of the farm people of Alberta.⁶

The consultants submitted their report to the Minister of Agriculture in December of 1970, and it was released externally and internally on February 25, 1971. The report, entitled Tradition and Transition: Extension Education for the Farm Unit in a Changing Society, provides the outlook for the future upon

⁵Communication with the Department after January 1, 1971 revealed that the new structure is now operational.

⁶Government of Alberta, Speech from the Throne, February 9, 1967.

which a useful definition of the proper area of balance can be based.

The report examined agricultural extension in all its aspects, including Alberta Department of Agriculture Extension functions, University and College extension, farm organization extension, agri-business involvement, and a brief analysis of Canada Department of Agriculture extension services. It also examined the needs of the farm unit operators in the 1970's, and the role that extension officers must play to be effective until 1980. For the purposes of this study, it is the latter with which we are concerned.

Farm unit operators in the 1970's will be of four major classes: the Managerial Farm Units, including the top commercial and regular commercial operators; the Developing Farm Units, including the emerging and adjusting-out groups; the Semi-commercial Farm Units, comprised of the large scale hobby and part-time groups; and the Country Residents, who include static non-commercial, the small scale hobby and the small scale part-time farm operators. According to the consultants, it is to the Managerial Farm Units (and particularly the regular commercial units) that most of the efforts of the Alberta Department of Agriculture have heretofore been concentrated. In the future, it must be to the Developing Farm Units that intensive extension efforts must be directed; all other groups are capable of and should be encouraged to make use of data sources on their own initiative.

Within the Developing Farm Units group, there must be

a separation between those units (called emerging units) capable of developing into Managerial Farm Units, and those farm unit operators who will choose to "adjust out" of agriculture. These two groups will require different programs for government assistance to be most effective. The consultants suggest that the Alberta Department of Agriculture, using a more specialized team approach, work with the emerging group, and that an interdisciplinary team be formed within the Department of Social Development to concentrate on assisting the adjusting group. The two departments would have to ensure that their programs (to be called Managerial Farm Development and Resource Development respectively) are very closely coordinated. Extensive use of electronic communications technology will of necessity play a large part in both programs.

Farm unit operators in the 1970's will no longer require the generalist District Agriculturist to solve their day-to-day problems; the operator can do that himself provided he is instructed in the use of today's and tomorrow's data search tools. Instead, the farm unit operator will become increasingly sophisticated in his demands, and there will be increasing pressures on the operator in the Developing group to either upgrade his operations or withdraw from agriculture. He will require more specialized information, faster, and he will become more appreciative of the necessity for knowledge of managerial decision theory.

If the recommendations of the consultants are accepted by the Government of Alberta, the Alberta Department of

Agriculture will be required to place a major extension emphasis on the emerging farm unit, to promote the emergence of economically viable farm units. This has several implications for the role of the field organization. The fast pace of the 1970's will require fast, flexible, and effective action on the local level. The differing types of farm units and the commensurate needs and wants of these units will require innovation and intensification of effort, as well as more specialization at the regional level. The diversity of agriculture and climate within the Province will dictate an increasing necessity for programs designed especially for the peculiar needs of an area. Uniformity of application of policies respecting a particular goal will become less important than the achievement of the goal itself -- i.e. upgrading emerging farm units into the group of managerial farm units. Herein lies the basis for a definition of the proper area of balance.

C. THE PROPER AREA OF BALANCE

Reference to the Introduction and to Chapter II of this study would remind the reader of some of the advantages of administrative decentralization. It may be useful to restate them briefly once more:

1. Better adaptation of purpose to work problems.
2. Flexibility of adaptation of purpose to local public needs.
3. Development of administrative skills.
4. Quick decisions for workers; fewer costly delays.

5. More efficient use of administrative time.
6. Improved morale.

Read in conjunction with the needs of the 1970's as identified by Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd., it seems clear that these advantages must be developed further if the Alberta Department of Agriculture, and in particular its field organization, is to fulfil its responsibility to the farm public.

The existing situation with regard to the operation of regionalization should be compared to the definition of the proper area of balance implied by the report of the consultants with its predictions of the requirements for contending with the next decade. On the basis of that report, one can construct the following definition: For the Alberta Department of Agriculture in the context of the 1970's the proper area of balance is that delineation of authority and responsibility whereby field operations can respond to the needs of clientele in the fastest, most creative way possible, with a maximum of freedom and flexibility of action and a minimum of conflict and diffusion or duplication of goals, and whereby accountability is clearly defined and the taking of corrective action (should it be necessary) is facilitated.

What does this mean in "operational" terms? "The fastest, most creative way possible, with a maximum of freedom of flexibility of action" means that more discretionary resources and authority must be given to the regions -- in effect the regions must become more autonomous. "A minimum of conflict and diffusion or duplication of goals" means that the

word "co-ordination" must be defined to include "control" at the regional level, which in turn means that the Regional Agriculturist must be in charge of all those resources, including specialist personnel and finances, necessary to achieve a regional objective. "Accountability clearly defined and the taking of corrective action facilitated" means that the Regional Agriculturist must have authority commensurate with his responsibility, and that he must be held strictly accountable in terms of demotion, transfer, or termination for any failure to achieve goals specified by Departmental policy. Hand in hand with this must go the development of useful and reliable indicators of success or failure of regional programs, based on objectives at all times, and on quantifiable results where possible.

Chapters IV and V pointed out that the regionalization concept, in spite of the original definition of purpose, was developing into decentralization. Section A. of this chapter pointed out that this tendency was being reinforced by present plans for the operation of regionalization in the future. What now needs to be examined is whether or not these tendencies will lead naturally to an evolution of administrative decentralization that will provide the advantages of decentralization to the fullest extent possible. Whether the examination is done through an external study, such as that of Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd., or through an internal study, such as this one, the answer appears to be negative. There are too many violations and contradictions of accepted management

principles to hope for complete success. Some of these are reviewed below:

1) In the 1970's, the region must be at the forefront of Departmental response to the needs of the clientele. The region must have the authority and resources to make that response in the fastest and most creative way possible. Where final control over the resources necessary to achieve an objective rests too far from the action level, such a response will be too slow and too stereotyped for the pace of the 1970's.

2) Not only must there be an increasing delegation of authority and responsibility to the regions, but the regions must be held accountable for the effective use of their authority and resources. At present, no one person, branch, or division is responsible for the successful achievement of co-ordinated field objectives; for that reason accountability for failure at the field level is almost impossible to enforce. The Regional Agriculturist has been given the responsibility for "co-ordinating" the field programs. But he has little or no control over the resources absolutely necessary for him to fulfil his responsibility -- there is thus no way that he can be held accountable for any failure.

3) Where goals and policies of field operations and the responsibility for their achievement are diffused, field staff cannot identify with the achievement of a sufficiently specific goal, and efforts are likely to be diffused. The Alberta Department of Agriculture has recognized the necessity

for co-ordination in this context, but co-ordination has been defined to exclude control. This is the use of "co-ordination" as synonymous with "co-operation"; the smallest conflict inhibiting co-operation can very easily destroy the effectiveness of co-ordination when the meaning of the word does not include the authority to resolve conflicts. Moreover, it is difficult for the Regional Agriculturist to provide the required leadership in such an environment of diffusion.

4) At present, control from headquarters is essentially control in the "pre-audit" sense. This has a tendency to deny the possibility of innovation and the development of sound, competent management in the field. Control from headquarters should consist of two processes: a) initial delineation of broad objectives for field operations, such as those suggested by the consultant study, together with initial provision of budgetary ceilings within which the region can spend according to its view of the best way of achieving the specified objectives, and b) post-audit of the efficiency and effectiveness of achievement of objectives, considering the use of resources in doing so, and based on well-defined indicators of success or failure. Should such indicators, or management information systems, show failure on the part of the region, the prerogative and responsibility of headquarters to take corrective action should be exercised quickly and judiciously. The exercise of this kind of control is not possible under the present and projected organization of the field services. Even the fairly progressive reorganization to

be instituted by the Extension and Colleges Division will result in limited success only, because the Regional Agriculturist still will not have full or adequate control of the resources necessary to achieve objectives.

D. SOME ANSWERS

Some answers to the perplexing questions following us through this study are now clear. The original choice between function (or discipline) and area is no longer appropriate. "The primary function of Supervisors and Specialists is extension. They must be fully integrated. . . ."⁷ The new choice must be in favor of area, or an integrated field organization in which the Regional Agriculturist is responsible for all functions (or at least all those extension functions) carried on within his region.

The question with regard to the future effectiveness of the Regional Agriculturist has already been answered by implication in the preceding section, and a definition of the proper area of balance has been provided. The question posed as the title to Chapter V, viz. "Is the Department properly balanced?" can be answered in terms of that definition. The answer must be that in the context of the next decade, the

⁷Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd., op. cit., pp. 5-66. A reading of the job descriptions of specialists would support this conclusion. It might be pertinent to ask whether or not some of the activities described as "servicing divisional programs" might be more suitably performed by technicians rather than professionals.

Alberta Department of Agriculture lies to the left of the proper area of balance on the centralization-decentralization continuum. In other words, the Department, at this point in time, is decentralized to some extent, but not decentralized enough to enable it to fulfil its obligations in the future. Some action must be taken now to offset the strength and weight of the centralizing forces identified in this study.

The answer to the question concerning the probability of goal displacement can be provided in terms of one other point not emphasized previously. Glassco provides the introduction: "An exaggerated concern with ministerial authority . . . will produce administrative apoplexy at the centre of government and paralysis at the extremities, and cause frustrating delay to the public."⁸ The regional organization is subject to one important check not as constantly imposed on the headquarters organization -- it is the field organization that is in closest contact with the clientele, and which receives the first and most vehement feedback when clientele needs are not satisfied. This fact, plus the commitment to the grass-roots ideology, is an important consideration in calculating the probability of goal displacement at the regional level. Indeed, present indications in the Department seem to suggest that it is easier to lose sight of goals within a maze of rules and regulations at headquarters than it is in the field.

⁸Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, p. 76.

E. AN ALTERNATIVE

Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd. recommended an integrated field structure, together with the merging of the Program Development Division and the Agricultural Economics Division with the Extension and Colleges Division, and the transfer of the Colleges to the Colleges Commission. District offices were to be phased out, with existing personnel centralized at regional headquarters and upgraded to specialist rank. The regions themselves were to be "fully autonomous" by 1980. A stronger, and more assignment-oriented Executive Committee and an expanded advisory structure is presumably to provide the control over such regions, through the Director of Extension.⁹

As the consultants recommended administrative decentralization and an integrated field structure, it is impossible for the author of this study to disagree with their recommendations. However, the creation of the proposed "super-division" resulting from the merger of three existing divisions may be impractical in terms of the heavy load placed on the director of the new division, and may create problems in welding the three groups into one unified and cohesive whole. Although these are not insuperable problems, it seems useful to point

⁹Many other, more specific recommendations were made by the consultants, some of which are applicable to the kinds of problems explained in more detail in this study. In order to avoid duplication, therefore, I will pledge support to most of their recommendations and confine myself to the presentation of an alternative headquarters structure.

out that there is an alternative structure possible which might avoid them. The author's alternative has the advantage of allowing the immediate superior of the Regional Agriculturists more time for close and detailed contact with the regions than would be possible with the large span of control (or alternatively, the complicated hierarchy) implied by the proposed super-division. This seems particularly important because the first few years of decentralized operations will require effective leadership and great effort to develop the managerial and technical capacity of the regional organization.

If field operations are integrated under the Regional Agriculturist, there may be less of a need to integrate headquarters divisions. Indeed, leaving the Agricultural Economics Division as a separate entity could be advantageous in terms of maintaining an esprit de corps and reinforcing the economics specialization. All divisions should, however, come to regard themselves as staff agencies servicing a field operation completely¹⁰ under the direction of the Regional Agriculturist.

The Regional Agriculturists would report to an Assistant Deputy-Minister in charge of Field Operations, who would consistently carry the voice of the regions into Executive Committee deliberations and who would have the necessary authority to resolve any conflicts between headquarters divisions and the regions. The Assistant Deputy-Minister should also

¹⁰Except for purely regulatory services requiring uniformity of application.

have sufficient authority to take such corrective action as necessary (identified by divisional monitoring of programs related to a particular specialty) and as sanctioned by the Executive Committee. He would also be responsible for the implementation of "top-down" decisions, or those that require regional response to political policy.

The Assistant Deputy-Minister should surround himself with a small group of extension and managerial specialists operating in a staff capacity. The operational or extension programs and branches now located within the Program Development Division should be transferred to the most appropriate of the other divisions, and the director of the division should be placed in charge of the staff services of the Assistant Deputy-Minister. Other staff should include an extension specialist, a production science specialist, an economist, and one or two others with useful skills. One of the first tasks the group would be given is that of devising an acceptable management information system which emphasizes indicators of success or failure of regional programs based on the disciplines or commodity areas of all divisions. The objectives which these indicators should reflect and some of the factors which could be considered in the development of indicators have been suggested in broad terms by Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd.¹¹

¹¹One measure of success could be the success of a region over a specified period of time in "upgrading" emerging farm units to managerial farm units. Other indicators suggested

F. THE LAST WORD -- NOW 25 YEARS OLD

It can be argued that centralization can result in a more efficient organization, especially in view of the communications and data processing technology now available. Even if one were to accept this argument, and it can surely be debated, there is another strong argument which effectively destroys its significance. It was explained by Peter Drucker in 1946:

While [centralized organizations] can produce goods as cheaply and efficiently as any decentralized [organization], they fail to measure up to one of the most important yardsticks of institutional and administrative efficiency: they do not discover and develop . . . leaders. . . .

One of the favorite stories with General Motors executives is that of the large division which, some fifteen years ago, was split up into four or five new divisions. When the divisional manager who had built up the business, protested in the name of productive efficiency, he was told that the problem was not one of productive efficiency at all but of giving four or five times as many men a chance to develop, to become leaders and to test themselves against the responsibility of an independent command. . . .

Efficient and cheap production can always be reached, given the human abilities and the human organization. But without an able, responsible and enterprising leadership, willing and capable of taking the initiative, the most efficient institution cannot maintain its efficiency, let alone increase it.¹²

by the analysis of the consultants include speed of information dissemination, costs of services provided, comprehensiveness of programs supplied, devotion to objective, professional and administrative expertise developed in the region, and so on. See Farm and Ranch Management Consultants Ltd., op. cit., Chapter 5.

¹²Concept of the Corporation, pp. 125-8.

Mr. Drucker's point is no less valid today, and its statement following a recommendation for further decentralization seems appropriate. Tomorrow's greatest requirements will be those of leadership.

APPENDIX I

From: Doug Radke

To: Staff of the Alberta Department of Agriculture

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for my M.A. in Public Administration, I am doing my thesis on the Department's regionalization concept. Your help, by filling out and returning the attached questionnaire, would be extremely valuable.

Please return it to the following address:

Doug Radke,
c/o School of Public Administration,
Carleton University,
Colonel By Drive,
Ottawa 1, Ontario.

Please do not sign your name. All returns will be considered confidential and cannot be interpreted in such a way as to identify any one individual. All raw data will be destroyed after analysis, and none of the returns will be brought back to Alberta.

Thank you for your co-operation.

C. DOUGLAS RADKE

APPENDIX I

Please do not sign your name.

Please indicate by checking:

Division:

Position:

_____ Animal Industry

_____ Plant Industry

_____ Agricultural Economics

_____ Veterinary Services

_____ Water Resources

_____ Program Development

_____ Extension and Colleges

_____ Grades 0-22 (Technologists,
Technicians, Ag. Officers,
Brand Inspectors, etc.)

_____ Grades 23-29 (D.A.'s, DHE's,
Administration Officers,
etc.)

_____ Grades 30-33 (Ag. III's, Ag.
IV's, Branch Heads, etc.)

_____ Over 33 (Superintendents,
Directors, Senior Single
Classification positions,
etc.)

Check one

Location: _____ at Headquarters _____ at the Region

Please answer the following questions by checking the one
answer that appears most appropriate:

1) In my job,

_____ a) there are general guidelines for me to follow

_____ b) rules and regulations guide my performance

_____ c) rules and regulations hamper my performance

2) Rules and regulations

_____ a) are necessary to ensure uniformity

_____ b) are a method of supervision

_____ c) are of no use at all

3) In this Department,

- ☐ a) there should be more regulations
- ☐ b) the amount of regulations is just sufficient
- ☐ c) there are too many regulations

4) In accomplishing a given task,

- ☐ a) one should never step out of the confines of his
job description
- ☐ b) one should sometimes step out of the confines of
his job description
- ☐ c) one should frequently step out of the confines
of his job description
- ☐ d) one should always step out of the confines of
his job description

5) Authority delegated to me is

- ☐ a) insufficient to enable me to do my best job
- ☐ b) sufficient to enable me to do my best job
- ☐ c) more than sufficient to enable me to do my best job

6) In my opinion, field personnel

- ☐ a) have more authority than they need to do their
best job.
- ☐ b) have sufficient authority to do their best job
- ☐ c) have insufficient authority to do their best job

7) My immediate superiors

- ☐ a) give me complete freedom within the normal rules
and regulations

- ☐ b) help me to do my job
- ☐ c) allow me to do my job
- ☐ d) interfere with the performance of my job

8) Personnel of other Divisions generally

- ☐ a) interfere with the performance of my job
- ☐ b) provide limited assistance
- ☐ c) provide valuable assistance
- ☐ d) provide expertise without which I could not do my job

9) I require specialist assistance

- ☐ a) never
- ☐ b) occasionally
- ☐ c) often
- ☐ d) constantly

10) When I require specialist assistance

- ☐ a) it is provided quickly
- ☐ b) it is provided "as time permits"
- ☐ c) it is provided with reluctance
- ☐ d) it is never received

11) The specialist assistance received is

- ☐ a) of no real use
- ☐ b) less than adequate
- ☐ c) adequate
- ☐ d) more than adequate

12) When I make a decision within my authority,

- ☐ a) it is never questioned
- ☐ b) it is sometimes questioned
- ☐ c) it is often questioned
- ☐ d) it is always questioned

13) When my decisions are overruled, I can appeal to my immediate superior and be successful in that appeal (i.e. reverse the overruling)

- a) ☐ i) every time
- ☐ ii) some of the time
- ☐ iii) seldom
- ☐ iv) there can be no such appeal
- ☐ v) question not applicable

When my decisions are overruled, I can appeal to a higher level than my superior and be successful in that appeal (i.e. reverse the overruling)

- b) ☐ i) every time
- ☐ ii) some of the time
- ☐ iii) seldom
- ☐ iv) there can be no such appeal
- ☐ v) question not applicable

14) My loyalty and commitment, other than to the Department generally, is

- ☐ a) primarily to my Division
- ☐ b) mostly to my Division but to some extent to my Region

- ☐ c) equally to my Division and to my Region
- ☐ d) mostly to my Region but to some extent to my Division
- ☐ e) primarily to my Region

15) I have received the following "management" training

- ☐ a) none
- ☐ b) undergraduate courses
- ☐ c) undergraduate diploma or degree
- ☐ d) graduate courses
- ☐ e) graduate diploma or degree
- ☐ f) inservice courses, seminars, conferences, etc.
- ☐ g) reading or study on my own

16) The management training I have received, is

- ☐ a) of no use in my job
- ☐ b) of some use in my job
- ☐ c) very useful in my job

17) Since joining the Department in 19____, I have moved or transferred to another Division or Region

- ☐ a) never
- ☐ b) once
- ☐ c) twice
- ☐ d) three or more times

18) When I need information from "Headquarters", it usually

- ☐ a) is received the same day as requested
- ☐ b) is received in two or three days
- ☐ c) is received within a week

- ☐ d) takes more than a week
- ☐ e) is often not received at all
- ☐ f) question not applicable

19) When I need a decision from "Headquarters", it usually

- ☐ a) is received the same day as requested
- ☐ b) is received in two or three days
- ☐ c) is received within a week
- ☐ d) takes more than a week
- ☐ e) is often not received at all
- ☐ f) question not applicable

20) When I need information from the "Regional Office", it usually

- ☐ a) is received the same day as requested
- ☐ b) is received in two or three days
- ☐ c) is received within a week
- ☐ d) takes more than a week
- ☐ e) is often not received at all
- ☐ f) question not applicable

21) When I need a decision from the "Regional Office", it usually

- ☐ a) is received the same day as requested
- ☐ b) is received in two or three days
- ☐ c) is received within a week
- ☐ d) takes more than a week

_____ e) is often not received at all

_____ f) question not applicable

22) In addition to consultation within the formal vertical lines of communication when reaching a decision

_____ a) there is always lateral or sideways communication with interested parties

_____ b) there is frequently lateral or sideways communication with interested parties

_____ c) there is sometimes lateral or sideways communication with interested parties

_____ d) there is never lateral or sideways communication with interested parties

_____ e) question not applicable to my job

23) Assuming "consultation" always takes place, the person most qualified to make a policy decision affecting field operations is usually

_____ a) the man who has an overall knowledge of the situation, from a provincial viewpoint

_____ b) the specialist, at "Headquarters", who has the expertise in the particular subject area to which the question relates

_____ c) the specialist, at "the region", who has the expertise in the particular subject area to which the question relates

_____ d) the man who has an overall knowledge of the situation, from a regional viewpoint

24) YOUR COMMENTS

PLEASE RETURN TO:

Doug Radke,
c/o School of Public Administration,
Carleton University,
Colonel By Drive,
Ottawa 1, Ontario.

APPENDIX II

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

MEMORANDUM

From: E. E. Ballantyne, D.V.M.,
Deputy Minister

To: All Alberta Department of
Agriculture Professional Staff Date: December 1, 1970.

Re: Alberta Department of Agriculture Planning Schedule

The Executive Committee has endorsed the following schedule for planning by the Department of Agriculture. It is also expected that Agricultural Service Boards and Advisory Committees will adjust to contribute their inputs to, and requirements of Alberta Department of Agriculture programs to meet the timing of this schedule.

- 1) October to December: Start the process of program planning in the districts. The past year's programs should be evaluated. Arrangements should be made for winter activities that will develop an awareness of the situation at the grass-roots to produce statements of needs and opportunities. Objectives or goals can then be designed, or re-defined, followed by planning a course of action.

The above applies to planning of programs to be implemented in the subsequent and future years. The timing in advance of implementation is necessary so that priorities can be examined and funding can be estimated and budgeted.

- 2) January to March: Statements of needs and opportunities for the immediate two years ahead should be drafted. Five year forecasts might also be considered. The Agricultural Service Board and Advisory Committee programs and budgets should be drafted and submitted to the Regional Agriculturists not later than the end of March.
- 3) April to June: Planning at Regional and Provincial levels. District plans should be processed and consolidated by the Regional team. The Regional plan then becomes the basic input for province wide planning, the development of policies, and the preparation of estimates.

- (a) Regional plans are to be on Division Directors desks not later than May 1.
- (b) Division Directors and Branch Heads will complete Provincial plans during the month of May.

There are other inputs at the provincial level which contribute to province wide planning and the development of policies. Such forces and factors may arise from external sources or from technological developments.

- 4) A Department planning meeting shall be called during the first week of June, each year, to examine and coordinate the regional and provincial plans and priorities. The Department personnel attending the annual meeting shall be the Directors, Branch Heads, Regional Agriculturists and a number of the following to be named by their respective Directors: a) Regional Supervisors and Specialists; b) District personnel; c) Laboratory and other Specialists; d) Administrative personnel.
- 5) July to October: Budgeting, estimates, and the authorizing of commitments. Finality remains for Ministerial approval and the Legislature's vote of appropriations.
- 6) Management of Commitments: As soon after (5) as possible.

The implementation and management of commitments will in many cases not begin until the beginning of the next fiscal year.

E. E. Ballantyne

DEPUTY MINISTER.

APPENDIX A

"Programs are time-phased plans for allocating resources and for specifying the successive steps required to achieve stated objectives".

Essentially a program involves:

- 1) objectives - specified end or ends. Program objectives are the specific results to be obtained by the planned commitment of resources
- 2) successive steps through time to completion
- 3) allocation of resources
- 4) a number of performance units, which may be defined in terms of activities
- 5) the ability to select and identify by the existence of an end product which is significant and in most cases measurable
- 6) costs, which are broad summary costs, usually arrived at by aggregating the cost of performance units.

"Activities are sub-categories of a program, being the steps to or means of achieving the program objectives".

"Commitment is an approved statement of intention to act, specifying only that action within an individual's control, and consisting of an activity and a schedule of attainment.

A well-written commitment should tell:

- a) the reason for action
- b) what action is being offered
- c) how to know when the action is completed".

APPENDIX B

An example:

- 1) October to December, 1970: districts evaluate programs in progress or just completed
 - drafts situation statements
 - start drafting needs for 1971-72-73-74.
- 2) January to March, 1971:
 - complete draft of needs and opportunities.
 - plan adjustments for 1971-72
 - start planning programs for 1972-73
 - receive Agricultural Service Board and Advisory Committee adjustments for 1971-72 and programs and plans for 1972-73.
- 3) April to June, 1971:
 - regional processing and consolidation of district plans and of regional supervisors and specialists (to be on Directors desks by May 1, 1971).
 - provincial adjustments for 1971-72 and plans of programs for 1972-73 to be completed during the month of May.

First week of June, 1971: provincial meeting to examine and co-ordinate regional and provincial plans and priorities.

July to October, 1971: budgeting and estimating for the 1972-73 fiscal year - offers and authorizing of commitments for 1972-73 (final authorization requires ministerial approval and the Legislature's vote of the appropriations).

October to December, 1971: PROCESS BEGINS AGAIN FOR adjustments in 1972-73 and PLANS of PROGRAMS in 1973-74.

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

MORALE, DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

	Animal Industry	Plant Industry	Ag'l. Economics	Vet. Services	Water Resources	Program Devel.	Extension & Colleges	Total Department
Question 1 Rules & regulations hamper performance Headquarters Field	N=58 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=28 3.6 7.1(1) 0.0	N=20 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=19 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=30 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=10 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=14 1.4 0.0 1.6(2)	N=312 1.0 0.9(1) 1.0(2)
Question 2 Rules & regulations are of no use Headquarters Field	N=57 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=28 3.6 0.0 6.7(1)	N=20 15.0 7.7(1) 28.6(2)	N=18 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=29 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=10 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=140 2.9 7.1(1) 2.4(3)	N=308 2.6 1.8(2) 3.1(6)
Question 3 There are too many regulations Headquarters Field	N=58 17.2 26.7(8) 7.7(2)	N=29 20.7 21.4(3) 20.0(3)	N=17 23.5 30.0(3) 14.3(1)	N=17 23.5 26.7(4) 0.0	N=29 41.4 42.9(6) 40.0(6)	N=10 30.0 22.2(2) 100.0(1)	N=139 29.5 46.7(7) 27.0(33)	N=305 27.5 33.0(37) 24.3(46)
Question 4 One should always/ frequently step out of confines of job description Headquarters Field	N=58 15.5 16.7(5) 15.3(4)	N=30 10.0 6.7(1) 13.3(2)	N=18 27.8 36.4(4) 14.3(1)	N=19 21.1 25.1(4) 0.0	N=30 20.0 14.3(2) 25.0(4)	N=10 20.0 11.1(1) 100.0(1)	N=142 13.4 6.7(1) 14.4(18)	N=313 16.0 17.4(20) 15.4(30)

MORALE, DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

	Animal Industry	Plant Industry	Ag'l. Economics	Vet. Services	Water Resources	Program Devel.	Extension & Colleges	Total Department
Question 5 Authority delegated to me is insufficient	N=57	N=30	N=20	N=19	N=30	N=10	N=142	N=314
Headquarters	31.6	26.7	15.0	10.5	16.7	0.0	15.5	18.5
Field	39.3(11) 22.2(6)	33.3(5) 20.0(3)	15.4(2) 14.3(1)	12.5(2) 0.0	14.3(2) 18.8(3)	0.0 0.0	20.0(3) 15.2(19)	21.7(25) 16.4(32)
Question 6 In my opinion field personnel have insufficient authority	N=54	N=29	N=19	N=16	N=30	N=10	N=137	N=300
Headquarters	31.5	13.8	21.1	6.2	23.3	60.0	15.3	20.3
Field	22.2(6) 36.0(9)	7.1(1) 20.0(3)	16.7(2) 28.6(2)	7.7(1) 0.0	14.3(2) 31.3(5)	66.7(6) 0.0	6.7(1) 15.3(19)	18.5(20) 20.2(38)
Question 7 Immediate superiors interfere with performance of my job	N=59	N=30	N=20	N=19	N=29	N=10	N=142	N=315
Headquarters	5.1	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4(2)	2.2
Field	10.0(3) 0.0	13.3(2) 0.0	0.0 0.0	0.0 0.0	0.0 0.0	0.0 0.0	7.1(1) 0.8(1)	5.2(6) 0.5(1)

N = total number of respondents answering the question.
Numbers in brackets refer to absolute numbers of respondents. Others are percentages.
Numbers may not add horizontally or vertically because of lack of respondent identification.

PROVISION OF SPECIALIST ASSISTANCE

	Animal Industry	Plant Industry	Ag'l. Economics	Vet. Services	Water Resources	Program Devel.	Extension & Colleges	Total Department
Question 8 Personnel of other Divisions generally provide valuable assistance or assistance without which I could not do my job Headquarters Field	N=55 41.9 48.1(13) 34.6(9)	N=30 36.7 46.7(7) 26.7(4)	N=20 40.0 38.5(5) 42.9(3)	N=17 41.2 42.8(6) 33.3(1)	N=29 34.4 28.5(4) 40.0(6)	N=10 80.0 77.7(7) 100.0(1)	N=139 51.8 66.7(10) 49.2(60)	N=306 46.8 50.0(56) 44.7(85)
Question 9 Specialist assistance is required often or constantly Headquarters Field	N=58 6.9 3.4(1) 7.4(2)	N=30 30.0 40.0(6) 20.0(3)	N=20 15.0 7.7(1) 28.6(2)	N=19 15.8 18.8(3) 0.0	N=30 23.3 35.7(5) 12.4(2)	N=10 50.0 44.4(4) 100.0(1)	N=142 28.9 40.0(6) 28.0(35)	N=315 23.5 24.2(28) 23.1(45)
Question 10 Specialist assistance is provided quickly or as time permits Headquarters Field	N=57 98.3 100.0(28) 96.3(26)	N=30 100.0 100.0(15) 100.0(15)	N=20 90.0 84.6(13) 100.0(7)	N=17 100.0 100.0(14) 100.0(3)	N=29 96.6 100.0(13) 93.8(15)	N=10 100.0 100.0(9) 100.0(1)	N=141 97.1 91.3(14) 97.5(121)	N=309 97.4 97.3(108) 97.3(189)
Question 11 Specialist assistance is adequate or more than adequate	N=57 91.2	N=30 83.3	N=19 89.5	N=17 100.0	N=28 78.6	N=10 80.0	N=140 82.8	N=306 85.6

PROVISION OF SPECIALIST ASSISTANCE

	Animal Industry	Plant Industry	Ag'l. Economics	Vet. Services	Water Resources	Program Devel.	Extension & Colleges	Total Department
Headquarters	92.8(26) 88.9(24)	80.0(12) 86.7(13)	83.3(10) 100.0(7)	100.0(14) 100.0(3)	76.9(10) 80.0(15)	77.8(7) 100.0(1)	93.4(14) 81.3(100)	88.2(97) 83.8(161)
Field								

N = total number of respondents answering the question.
 Numbers in brackets refer to absolute numbers of respondents. Others are percentages.
 Numbers may not add horizontally or vertically because of lack of respondent identification.

FINALITY OF DECISIONS

Question 12 Decisions questioned often or always	N=58 6.9 10.3(3) 3.7(1)	N=30 3.3 0.0 6.7(1)	N=19 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=19 5.3 0.0 33.3(1)	N=30 10.0 0.0 18.8(3)	N=10 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=141 2.1 13.4(2) 0.8(1)	N=313 3.8 4.3(5) 3.6(7)
Question 13(a) Appeal to my immediate superior will be successful every time or sometimes	N=33 66.7 64.7(11) 50.0(7)	N=16 93.8 100.0(8) 87.5(7)	N=10 70.0 71.4(5) 66.7(2)	N=10 80.0 85.7(6) 66.7(2)	N=18 72.2 100.0(8) 50.0(5)	N=7 71.4 66.7(4) 100.0(1)	N=70 64.3 87.5(7) 60.7(37)	N=169 70.4 80.0(52) 63.3(64)
Question 13(b) Appeal over head of immediate superior will be successful	N=18	N=8	N=8	N=4	N=10	N=6	N=42	N=100

FINALITY OF DECISIONS

	Animal Industry	Plant Industry	Ag'l. Economics	Vet. Services	Water Resources	Program Devel.	Extension & Colleges	Total Department
every time or sometimes	27.8	62.5	50.0	25.0	0.0	33.3(2)	28.3	31.0
Headquarters	22.2(2)	60.0(3)	60.0(3)	50.0(1)	0.0	40.0(2)	20.0(1)	34.1(14)
Field	33.3(2)	66.7(2)	33.3(1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.7(11)	27.4(16)
	No one said they could be successful every time							

N = total number of respondents answering the question.
 Numbers in brackets refer to absolute numbers of respondents. Others are percentages.
 Numbers may not add horizontally or vertically because of lack of respondent identification.
 "Not applicable" considered as no answer.

REGIONAL IDENTIFICATION

FIELD STAFF ONLY

	N=26	N=15	N=7	N=3	N=16	N=1	N=120	N=189
Question 14 Loyalty and commitment is								
a) primarily to Division	26.9(7)	26.7(4)	0.0	66.7(2)	12.5(2)	0.0	13.3(16)	16.4(31)
b) mostly Division; some extent region	19.2(5)	26.7(4)	14.3(1)	33.3(1)	37.5(6)	0.0	9.2(11)	15.3(29)
c) equally to Division & region	42.3(11)	33.3(5)	71.4(5)	0.0	25.0(4)	0.0	27.5(33)	30.7(58)

REGIONAL IDENTIFICATION - FIELD STAFF ONLY

	Animal Industry	Plant Industry	Ag'l. Economics	Vet. Services	Water Resources	Program Devel.	Extension & Colleges	Total Department
d) mostly region; some extent Division	11.5(3)	6.7(1)	14.3(1)	0.0	18.8(3)	0.0	29.2(35)	22.8(43)
e) primarily region	0.0	6.7(1)	0.0	0.0	6.2(1)	100.0(1)	20.8(25)	14.8(28)

N = total number of respondents answering the question.
 Numbers in brackets refer to absolute numbers of respondents. Others are percentages.
 Numbers may not add horizontally or vertically because of lack of respondent identification.

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LENGTH OF SERVICE AND MOBILITY

Question 17 Over 20 years service Headquarters Field	N=57 14.1 13.7(4) 15.4(4)	N=29 6.8 6.7(1) 7.1(1)	N=19 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=18 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=29 0.0 0.0 0.0	N=10 10.0 11.1(1) 0.0	N=140 5.7 13.3(2) 4.9(6)	N=308 6.8 8.9(10) 5.7(11)
Question 17 Mobility: Have never moved from one Division to another or one region to another Headquarters Field	N=57 64.9 82.1(23) 48.1(13)	N=30 70.0 73.3(11) 66.7(10)	N=20 60.0 76.9(10) 28.6(2)	N=19 89.5 100.0(17) 33.3(1)	N=30 63.3 57.1(8) 68.8(11)	N=10 50.0 55.6(5) 0.0	N=142 53.5 53.3(8) 53.6(67)	N=314 60.5 72.2(83) 53.8(105)

SPEED OF COMMUNICATION & DECISION-MAKING

	Animal Industry	Plant Industry	Ag'l. Economics	Vet. Services	Water Resources	Program Devel.	Extension & Colleges	Total Department
Question 18 Information is received from head- quarters within 2 or 3 days Headquarters Field	N=37 67.6 77.7(7) 65.4(17)	N=13 46.1 100.0(2) 36.3(4)	N=12 66.7 80.0(4) 57.1(4)	N=10 70.0 85.7(6) 33.3(1)	N=16 25.0 0.0 28.6(4)	N=6 66.7 60.0(3) 100.0(1)	N=126 29.4 71.4(5) 26.4(31)	N=222 41.9 73.7(28) 35.0(63)
Question 19 Decision is received from headquarters within 2 or 3 days Headquarters Field	N=34 67.6 50.0(5) 77.3(17)	N=14 35.7 66.7(2) 27.2(3)	N=10 30.0 66.7(2) 14.2(1)	N=10 60.0 57.1(4) 66.7(2)	N=14 35.7 33.3(1) 36.3(4)	N=7 71.4 66.7(4) 100.0(1)	N=127 32.3 45.4(5) 30.7(35)	N=218 40.8 52.3(23) 37.7(64)
Question 20 Information is received from Regional Office within 2 or 3 days Headquarters Field	N=42 64.3 33.3(6) 90.9(20)	N=19 31.6 10.0(1) 55.5(5)	N=16 50.0 30.0(3) 83.3(5)	N=6 66.7 50.0(2) 100.0(2)	N=20 60.0 50.0(4) 66.7(8)	N=9 33.3(3) 25.0(2) 100.0(1)	N=105 66.7 63.6(7) 66.7(62)	N=222 59.5 35.6(26) 71.2(104)
Question 21 Decision is received from Regional Office within 2 or 3 days Headquarters	N=31 74.2 50.0(7)	N=14 42.9 25.0(2)	N=13 46.1 28.6(2)	N=2 100.0 100.0(1)	N=17 52.9 16.7(1)	N=9 33.3 25.0(2)	N=89 83.1 62.5(5)	N=179 69.8 38.2(21)

SPEED OF COMMUNICATION & DECISION-MAKING

	Animal Industry	Plant Industry	Ag'l. Economics	Vet. Services	Water Resources	Program Devel.	Extension & Colleges	Total Department
Field	100.0(16)	66.7(4)	66.7(4)	100.0(1)	72.7(8)	100.0(1)	85.0(68)	84.4(103)

Note: Not applicable counted as no answer.
N = total number of respondents answering the question.
Numbers in brackets refer to absolute numbers of respondents. Others are percentages.
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LATERAL COMMUNICATION, DECISION-MAKING

Question 22 Always or frequently lateral communications	N=42	N=23	N=19	N=13	N=26	N=10	N=134	N=299
Headquarters	66.7	73.9	84.2	61.5	80.8	90.0	72.4	67.2
Field	77.2(17)	81.8(9)	75.0(9)	63.6(7)	91.7(11)	88.9(8)	92.3(12)	81.1(77)
(N/A's treated as no answer)	52.9(10)	66.7(8)	100.0(7)	50.0(1)	71.4(10)	100.0(1)	70.6(84)	70.1(122)
Question 23 Policy decisions affecting the field organization should be made by	N=51	N=25	N=15	N=11	N=29	N=10	N=131	N=278
a) regional generalist	5.9	16.0	20.0	18.2	34.5	20.0	42.7	29.5
Headquarters	4.3(1)	18.2(2)	25.0(2)	20.0(2)	15.4(2)	11.1(1)	28.6(4)	17.2(16)
Field	7.4(2)	14.3(2)	14.3(1)	0.0	50.0(8)	100.0(1)	44.3(51)	35.7(65)

LATERAL COMMUNICATION, DECISION-MAKING

	Animal Industry	Plant Industry	Ag'l. Economics	Vet. Services	Water Resources	Program Devel.	Extension & Colleges	Total Department
b) regional specialist Headquarters Field	7.8 0.0 14.8(4)	20.0 9.1(1) 28.6(4)	26.7 12.5(1) 42.9(3)	9.1 0.0 100.0(1)	20.7 15.4(2) 25.0(4)	10.0 11.1(1) 0.0	21.4 0.0 24.3(28)	17.6 5.4(5) 24.2(44)

N = total number of respondents answering the question.
 Numbers in brackets refer to absolute numbers of respondents. Others are percentages.
 Numbers may not add horizontally or vertically because of lack of respondent identification.

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DECISION-MAKING, GRADES 30 AND OVER ONLY

Question 23	N=18	N=17	N=7	N=10	N=17	N=7	N=35	N=115
Policy decision affecting region should be made either by regional specialist or regional generalist Headquarters Field	16.7 0.0 42.9(3)	35.3 30.0(3) 42.9(3)	28.6 0.0 66.7(2)	20.0 11.1(1) 100.0(1)	46.9 14.3(1) 70.0(7)	28.6 28.6(2) -	60.0 28.6(2) 69.2(18)	39.1 16.9(10) 62.9(34)

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES, SELECTED QUESTIONS, FIELD STAFF* ONLY

	T	2	4	5	6	7	Total Regions
Inefficient Personal Authority	N=48 8.3(4)	N=28 21.4(6)	N=20 30.0(6)	N=24 12.5(3)	N=34 23.1(2)	N=22 9.1(2)	N=176 16.5(29)
Believe field personnel have insufficient authority	N=48 20.8(10)	N=27 25.9(7)	N=20 30.0(6)	N=24 12.5(3)	N=32 21.9(7)	N=21 19.0(4)	N=172 21.5(37)
Policy decision affecting field organization should be made by a) Regional generalist b) Regional specialist	N=43 30.2(13) 27.9(12)	N=26 42.3(11) 7.7(2)	N=19 63.2(12) 5.3(1)	N=25 32.0(8) 28.0(7)	N=34 29.4(10) 14.7(5)	N=21 23.8(5) 52.4(11)	N=168 35.1(59) 22.6(38)
23-29 grade Appeal over head of immediate superior will be successful seldom or no appeal possible	N=16 18.7(3)	N=15 13.3(2)	N=13 15.4(2)	N=14 28.6(4)	N=13 38.5(5)	N=14 50.1(7)	N=85 27.1(23)
Loyalty is mostly or primarily to Region	N=48 20.9(10)	N=27 33.3(9)	N=19 42.1(8)	N=25 52.0(13)	N=34 50.0(17)	N=21 47.6(10)	N=174 38.5(67)
Decisions from region within 2 to 3 days	N=48 48.0(23)	N=27 51.8(14)	N=20 50.0(10)	N=25 48.0(12)	N=33 69.7(23)	N=21 38.1(8)	N=174 51.7(90)

*Where possible, staff of Agricultural and Vocational Colleges are excluded.

APPENDIX IV
FARM GROUPS IN ALBERTA

<u>Group</u>	<u>Approximate Membership</u>
Alberta Association of Municipal Districts	n.a.
Alberta Broiler Growers Association	110
Alberta Fresh Vegetable Association	n.a.
Alberta Honey Producers' Co-op Ltd.	115
Alberta Livestock Co-op Ltd.	3617
Alberta Poultry Marketers	1200
Alberta Provincial Milk Producers	800
Alberta Provincial Swine Breeders' Association	110
Alberta Swine Council	n.a.
Alberta Sugar Beet Growers	1100
Alberta Turkey Association	110
Alberta Vegetable Marketing Board	270
Alberta Wheat Pool	52,321
Alberta Wool Growers' Association	n.a.
Blindman Valley Co-op Shipping Association	n.a.
Bow Slope Shipping Association Ltd.	520
Brooks Central Feeders' Association	141
Canadian Meat Packers Council	n.a.
Central Alberta Dairy Pool	2203
Coronation Livestock Ltd.	110
Edmonton Potato Growers	266
Mountainview Livestock Co-op	180
Northern Alberta Dairy Pool	4960
Peace River Co-op Livestock Marketing Association	2010
Pembina District Livestock Co-op	110
Ponoka Co-op Livestock Marketing Association	300
Southern Alberta Sheep Breeders' Association	742
United Grain Growers Ltd.	12,669
Vegreville Livestock Shipping Association	110
Western Stock Growers' Association	2000
Alberta Broiler Growers' Marketing Board	110
Alberta Hog Marketing Board	n.a.
Alberta Cattle Commission	
Alberta Potato Commission	
Alberta Egg & Fowl Marketing Board	
Alberta Dairymen's Association	
Alberta Poultry Marketers Co-Op Ltd.	
Consumers Association of Canada	

Source: List of Delegates to Direction '70 Conference,
prepared in October, 1969.
n.a. = figures not available.

APPENDIX VA*

EXISTING ORGANIZATION OF
EXTENSION AND COLLEGES DIVISION, DEC. 31, 1970

*Source: C. J. McAndrews, Director of Extension & Colleges Division, Document of Needs and Opportunities, November 1, 1970.

APPENDIX VB*

NEW ORGANIZATION OF
EXTENSION AND COLLEGES DIVISION, JAN. 1, 1971

Source: Ibid.

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III. Interviews Conducted*

Dr. T. H. Anstey, Assistant Director-General (Western Region), Research Branch, Canada Department of Agriculture.

R. E. Bailey, Director, Water Resources Division, Alberta Department of Agriculture.

- Dr. E. E. Ballantyne, Deputy-Minister, Alberta Department of Agriculture.
- O. G. Bradvolt, Head, Field Crops Branch, Plant Industry Division, Alberta Department of Agriculture (now Director, Plant Industry Division).
- F. W. Buser, Chief, Management Services Division, Canada Department of Agriculture.
- J. G. Calpas, Regional Agriculturist (Lethbridge), Alberta Department of Agriculture, and interested staff of the Lethbridge Region.
- C. A. Cheshire, Head, D. A. Branch, Extension and Colleges Division, Alberta Department of Agriculture.
- M. H. Douglas, Regional Agriculturist (Calgary), Alberta Department of Agriculture, and interested staff of the Calgary Office.
- J. S. Duncan, Regional Agriculturist (Vermilion), Alberta Department of Agriculture, and interested staff of the Vermilion Region.
- K. Elgaard, Acting Director, Agricultural Economics Division, Alberta Department of Agriculture.
- H. J. Fulcher, Regional Agriculturist (Edmonton), Alberta Department of Agriculture, and interested staff of the Edmonton Region.
- S. S. Graham, Director, Extension and Colleges Division, Alberta Department of Agriculture (now retired).
- W. E. Jarvis, Assistant Deputy-Minister (Production and Marketing and Health of Animals), Canada Department of Agriculture.
- C. J. McAndrews, Director, Program Development Division, Alberta Department of Agriculture (now Director, Extension and Colleges Division).
- R. H. McMillan, Executive Secretary, Alberta Department of Agriculture.
- W. L. McNary, Regional Agriculturist (Fairview), Alberta Department of Agriculture, and interested staff of the Peace River Region.
- W. H. T. Mead, Director, Animal Industry Division, Alberta Department of Agriculture.

J. G. O'Donoghue, Director, Veterinary Services Division,
Alberta Department of Agriculture.

R. D. Price, Regional Agriculturist (Red Deer), Alberta
Department of Agriculture, and interested staff
of the Red Deer Region.

A. M. Wilson, Director, Plant Industry Division, Alberta
Department of Agriculture (now retired).

*At regional meetings, personnel other than the Regional
Agriculturist were also present, but are not herein listed.