

BOOK REVIEWS

Lessons in Management

Mid-Career Development: Research Perspectives on a Developmental Community for Senior Administrators. By Robert N. Rapoport. With contributions by M. B. Brodie and E. A. Life. Pp. xiii + 290. (Tavistock: London and New York, 1970.) £2.90.

THE Administrative Staff College at Henley was one of the earliest British entrants (1948) into management education; it had 15 years of pioneering work before the business schools were born. This very careful analysis of its experience is therefore of first-class importance, and is full of lessons for what is now a great industry.

Henley concentrated on a 3 month course, teaching as wide a range of managers as it could get from private manufacturing industry, commerce, banking and services, nationalized industry, central and local government. The average age was 39, about half of them graduates, and the median salary pre-Henley (1967 prices) around £3,200, and post-Henley about £3,800. These are mid-career courses, aimed at enabling men to take the jump to the posts that lead to higher management.

The book is about what one can only describe as a great research project by the College's research staff and the Tavistock Institute. They collected returns from 576 people who were at Henley from 1960 to 1966, some 70 per cent of all those who were there—it seems a remarkable achievement to have obtained replies from so many and to such a huge questionnaire. Of these, 52 per cent were from private industry, 14 per cent from nationalized industry, 15 per cent from commerce and banking and 19 per cent from central and local government. The questionnaire showed how they came to go to Henley, what they did there, how they gained from their experience and how they have fared since. This is unique material for everyone engaged in this field.

There were no great surprises. 57 per cent thought they developed by "a fair amount" or more as a result of the course: the typical member was promoted a year or two after attending the course (and the pay of the median increased by about 20 per cent at 1967 prices): 70 per cent recorded an increase afterwards in the number and magnitude of decisions taken without higher authority. They all reached remarkable agreement on management philosophy, 93 per cent agreeing that "the most important skill for managers in future is planning and controlling change", and only 27 per cent holding that "most

managerial jobs require a person to compromise with his moral standards". The extent of doctrinal agreement makes one complaint about the courses—that there should be more expository teaching and less syndicate work—seem rather odd.

In this massive analysis I noticed two points that fitted in with my experience from outside, and seemed to me to need perhaps more attention than they receive in the book. One was that the job satisfaction of those in private industry was less after the course than before; whereas in the other occupations, the job satisfaction was much improved. Has private industry's ability to make the best use of people with training matched the amount of money which it has subscribed?

The other was that in their post-Henley jobs, people find the economic, financial and human relations problems the most frequent; while the most irksome by far (65 per cent) are those of human relations and problems in relations with higher authority. The latter is typical enough of the man coming back who wants to use the management techniques that he has acquired and finds no opportunity to do so; but to me a serious question is raised in management education generally, of whether enough weight is put on training in handling human relations problems. These are much more difficult questions to discuss than those of quantitative techniques and policy formulation; but this is unquestionably where the biggest problems of management lie, from the factory floor to the board room.

The experiment breaks interesting ground in classifying the managers into development patterns, distinguishing those who create change from those who build up their careers stage by stage and from those who do not enter easily into an organization but if handled properly can suddenly become so orientated. These too are well-known types—in the Treasury many years ago we used to call them the "carnivores" and the "herbivores" and the "marsupials"; and the report calls them "metamorphic", "incremental" and "tangential". There is an interesting question here, which the report begins to analyse, of which kind of training is best for each.

The real issue is whether, having distinguished into which category each promising man falls, the purpose should be to develop the strong characteristics or to seek to get more balanced men at the top by trying to reinforce their weaknesses. This is very difficult territory indeed; and it could well be

that the wise answer for career development in large-scale private industry is different from what is suitable for medium-scale private industry, and both different from the civil service.

I was left in some doubt at the end about whether the analysts had not perhaps sought to extract more information from the data than the data could be said to hold. Does a 3 month course play as decisive a role in a man's career as the analysis would imply? If so, there may be tens of thousands of people who should be on mid-career courses of this kind. It is difficult to see how the experiment could have been extended to provide a more definite answer, but I would like to know more of what the employers thought of the men when they came back from the course, and how the men performed in comparison with those who had not been to the course at all. As the quantity of management education expands, this is a problem of increasing relevance.

RICHARD CLARKE

Power and Privilege

Race and the Social Sciences. Edited by Irwin Katz and Patricia Gurin. Pp. xii + 387. (Basic Books: New York and London, 1969.) \$8.95.

THIS book comprises six lengthy essays by noted American scholars which emanated from papers and conversations at a conference in April 1967, held by the Center for Research on Conflict Resolution at the University of Michigan. In their preface, the editors state that the book is an effort to define the seminal research issues in American race relations today. They also note that "the gross inequalities of status, welfare, and opportunity that define Negro-white relations in America today urgently demand basic structural reforms in our society". But the essays do not delve deeply enough into the "seminal issues" and thus do not make the contribution, possible by social science, that is necessary to create "basic structural reform". All the essays are interesting, informative and provocative if for no other reason than that they highlight the gravity and immorality of race relations in America. If one is disposed to read between the lines and also has some awareness of the dimensions in race relations that have been omitted or under-emphasized (namely, inequality and institutionalized racism in American society), this volume seems but a moderate contribution to descriptive research, and a minor contribution to relevant analysis.