

in a socialized-performance kind of procedure. Then we have training films and standard tests that are tucked in as well.

QUESTION: Do you advocate more reading and fewer written reports?

DR. NICHOLS: Yes, sir. I don't know how many toes I will be treading on, but you have asked me a blunt question and I am going to take an honest position on it. We think America is drowning in a sea of paper. Personally, I think that memorandum mania has swept our Nation. Dr. Vannevar E. Bush put the thing very beautifully when he said, "One of the greatest problems in America today is the unread report." He goes on to say that the work of hundreds of able men is being lost every 24 hours because they are discovering important things, putting them on paper, putting that in a file somewhere, from which it never again can be found.

I think this is literally the truth. I think we are drowning in these memoranda. My answer to it would be to have listening training and to eliminate vast quantities of paper work by the greater use of the telephone, face-to-face communication, organized discussions. I admit that many discussions are merely bull sessions, but, if every conference or discussion is planned for, if it has a definite objective or problem, with the demand that an answer come up, and sometimes with a deadline attached, discussions can be productive.

Now, to try to generalize here a bit--I think I am being a little confusing--I would put it this way: If the message is simple, always make it oral. Suppose you want to tell Joe to call your wife to tell her you are going to be delayed 50 minutes and you cannot get home, and she is expecting you. You say, "Joe, as soon as you get back to the office would you call my wife and tell her I am hung up, that I cannot even get to the phone to call her?" This is a simple message that should never be written.

The second kind of message, it seems to me, is the very detailed one. You have a bridge party at your house. Twenty people are coming. Your wife gave you a list of 14 things to buy at the Supermarket to get ready for the bridge party. You cannot get away in time to go and buy these things. You say, "Joe, I am on the hook here. I have to get these things. We have a big party