

EDITORIAL : VAN DIE REDAKSIE

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

There is every reason to believe that the days of letter-writing are fast coming to an end. We have progressed from the laborious clay tablets, which must have taken untold time and effort to prepare, to the efficient modern electric typewriter, capable of putting out 180 words per minute and more. In between, mankind has struggled with all sorts of imaginable and unimaginable devices in order to communicate his thoughts in a tangible fashion. At first the expense and time-consuming nature of the material used must have precluded all but the most essential recording, but gradually, as more efficient methods and cheaper types of paper became available, man started to write down his thoughts in a more comprehensive way. Today, with a plentiful supply of good paper and duplicating devices our communications are threatening to get out of hand and every office has to consider the problem of storage of records which can, over the years, reach alarming proportions in weight and volume. In order to solve some of the difficulties engendered by sheer bulk, the microfilming technique has now been developed to a highly sophisticated level and one can envisage an ever-increasing use of such photocopying methods.

Hand in hand with the improved means of writing there has also been an enormous increase in travel, and whereas a scant 10 years or less ago, the businessman only left his office for select and very special reasons, and then had to be away for a week or more, he now is able to hop onto an aircraft and attend to his affairs virtually anywhere in the world with a minimum of effort and waste of time. The result is that the executive finds himself more and more frequently in the position of having to communicate with his office in some way or other. Telephone conversations are practical but they have the disadvantage that they cannot be used, except at enormous expense, for dictating protracted reports. Telex machines do offer a service which fulfils most of the requirements of the businessman who wants to send a report to his office while away from home, but again there is a factor of cost and availability which must be considered.

On a less businesslike level, one must also take into consideration the traveller who merely wishes to write to his family. Airmail postage is no longer a negligible expense as it was at one time and regular airmail letters home can represent an important percentage of the daily expenses. In addition, the writing of letters takes time and most executive staff nowadays write so little in longhand that the handwritten letter is fast becoming a dying art. Only very personal messages of condolence and similar notes are still customarily handwritten; for the rest the typiste and her typewriter have become the communication medium of the senior professional man.

Even the most modern portable typewriter is a little too bulky and heavy to be efficiently carried on an air-

craft where weight restrictions almost always limit the amount of additional paraphernalia which can be carried; so that even if he is experienced in the use of the typewriter, the executive is seldom in the position where he can at any moment be sure of having a machine available.

Some years ago various electronic firms started manufacturing tape-recorders which make use of standardized cassettes instead of loose reels of tape. These cassette machines were a great breakthrough and many businessmen realized that they were the answer to many of the communication problems while away from the office. Some of the cassettes are capable of taking up to 120 minutes of dictation, so that even long speeches may be recorded. The airmail postage for these cassettes is not that much more than that for ordinary letters and if a few days of recording can be accumulated on one cassette before it is posted, the additional cost need not constitute a factor worth considering.

Apart from official communications with the office, there is the added pleasure the family may have of actually hearing their beloved's voice, and however efficient and experienced a letterwriter one may be, there is always an added thrill and a more personal atmosphere when listening to the actual voice. At the end of a busy day the tired traveller need no longer seek a suitable table where he can sit and write to his wife, in a legible hand, but can get into bed, and just before dropping off to sleep, can record his thoughts for the day.

Although the standard cassettes are therefore useful, so far there has still been the drawback that the various machines for playing back as well as for recording are rather too bulky to carry around all the time. A new small cassette has now come on the market and this seems to be the final answer. The machine is small and light enough to fit into an overcoat pocket and the cassettes, being no larger than a matchbox, can be posted at virtually the same price as an airmail letter. In addition, a transcribing machine is available for use in the office, equipped with a footswitch and earphones, so that dictation on the tapes can be transcribed by a typist with maximum efficiency.

Due to the cost of the recording machines it might not be possible to buy more than one or two, unless a large firm can afford to supply each of its staff members with an instrument, and therefore one wonders if a short-term rental service could not be organized so that the family of the traveller can be supplied with a temporarily rented machine during the absence of the head of the household, thus enabling him to dispense with all letter-writing and using only the tapes for all communication. It would also be necessary to ensure that a sufficient number of cassettes are available so that one would not have to be stingy about the length of the recordings. A rental service where

some 10 or 15 tapes may be obtained therefore seems indicated.

With the advent of highly sophisticated electronic equipment it is not difficult to envisage that a voice-print can be arranged in the same way as a fingerprint so that the voice of the executive can be taken as having the same validity as his signature. In this way a recorded cassette,

when it arrives at the office, can be regarded as a legal document after it has been transcribed and a certificate of the authenticity via the voice-print has been appended. If this sounds a little like science-fiction, one must bear in mind that a telex machine would probably have caused our forebears to have grave misgivings as to what the world was coming to.

WETGEWING OOR CHIROPRAKTISYNS

Die eerste wetsontwerp oor chiropraktyk waaroor ons in 'n vorige inleidingsartikel kommentaar gelewer het, is op 24 Februarie deur sy Edele die Minister van Gesondheid, dr. Carel de Wet, teruggetrek. Dit skyn asof daar heelwat misverstand bestaan oor die presiese bepalings wat in die nuwe wetsontwerp vervat word wat nou voor die Parlement dien. Die indruk is uit sommige oorde geskep dat die eerste wetsontwerp teruggetrek is weens 'n te intense reaksie teen die voorgestelde bepalings, maar dit is nie die geval nie.

Met die uitsondering van een aspek, is die nuwe wetsontwerp wesentlik dieselfde as die vorige. Die klousule wat sal vereis dat niemand, behalwe sekere uitgesonderdes, na inwerkingtrede van die Wet in Suid-Afrika vir wins chiropraktyk mag beoefen nie, sal net so bly staan en die uitsonderings is ook dieselfde, naamlik diegene wat nou reeds in die praktyk is en diegene, synde Suid-Afrikaanse burgers, wat reeds besig is om die chiropraktyk te studeer. Met ander woorde, wat oorspronklik met die voorgestelde wetgewing beoog is, naamlik om chiropraktyk in ons land te verbied deur dit geleidelik te laat wegwyn sonder om die reeds praktiserendes se lewensnering hulle te ontnem, bly net so onveranderd staan.

Die eerste aspek waarin die nuwe wetsontwerp verskil is die erkenning van die Vereniging van Chiropraktisyne as die amptelike mondstuk van die beroep. Die Vereniging is goed verteenwoordigend want van die 118 praktiserende chiropraktisyne in die land, is 113 lede. Dit is dus nie minder as reg dat so 'n bykans 100% lidmaatskap erkenning moet ontvang nie. Die wetsontwerp bepaal voorts dat die twee kategorieë van persone wat wel na inwerkingtrede mag bly praktiseer, ook deur hul Vereniging aanbeveel moet wees. Daar word wel 'n agterdeurtjie oopgelaat in soverre dat bepaal sal word dat enige chiropraktisyn wat voel dat sy registrasie moedswillig deur die Vereniging ondermyn word, aan die Sekretaris van Gesondheid vertoe

1. Van die Redaksie (1971): 45, 161.

mag rig om wel registrasie te bekom. Dit is ook 'n billike klousule, want die lidmaatskap van die Vereniging van Chiropraktisyne, net soos dié van die Mediese Vereniging, is vrywillig, en mens kan nie wetgewing indien wat lidmaatskap 'n voorvereiste vir registrasie maak nie.

Waarom word die Vereniging van Chiropraktisyne nou erken? Daar is in die Volksraadsdebatte deur verskeie sprekers daarop gewys dat die huidige wetsontwerp, indien dit slaag, die voortbestaan van 'n aansienlike aantal chiropraktisyne vir nog 30 jaar of langer sal verseker. Weliswaar sal hulle op die ou end van die toneel verdwyn, maar intussen mag hulle bly praktiseer. Intussen is kontrole gewens, veral gesien in die lig van die Mönning-kommissie-verslag wat onomwonde veroordelend teen die beroep is. Die Geneeskundige en Tandheelkundige Raad kan nie die kontrole uitoefen nie—daarvoor sien hulle nie kans nie want vanuit die mediese oogpunt gesien is daar net eenvoudig geen wetenskaplike agtergrond tot chiropraktyk nie.

Nou word die beheer van die chiropraktisyne feitlik vierkantig in die skoot van hul eie Vereniging gelê en dit is hul plig om hul huis aan kant te kry. Daar is selfs gesuggereer dat as die opknapping werklik met erns aangepak word, heroerweging geskenk kan word aan die voortbestaan van die beroep. Die Mönning-kommissie het aanbeveel dat chiropraktisyne geleentheid gebied moet word om hulself deeglik op wetenskaplike wyse te kwalifiseer, hetsy in fisio-terapeutiese rigting, of volwaardig medies. Miskien kan die Vereniging van Chiropraktisyne daarin slaag om in die toekoms hul opleidingsfasiliteite en vereistes so te wysig dat die medici nie meer die heftige en geregverdigde besware teen hul totaal onwetenskaplike werkswyse kan opper nie. As hulle dit kan regkry kan ons weer praat, en indien hulle nie daarin slaag nie, moet hulle ten gronde gaan—die verantwoordelikheid rus op hul skouers.

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS : INSTRUKSIES VIR SKRYWERS

The attention of authors is drawn to the revised 'Instructions for Authors' which appear regularly in the *Journal*. The most recent example will be found on p. xiv of the issue of 10 April 1971. Publication of papers can be expedited considerably if they are prepared in accordance with these instructions.

Die aandag van skrywers word vriendelik gevestig op die nuwe hersiene 'Instruksies vir Skrywers' wat gereeld gepubliseer word. Die jongste voorbeeld verskyn op bl. xxvi van die *Tydskrif* van 3 April 1971. Publikasie van bydraes kan aansienlik bespoedig word as hulle voorberei is in ooreenstemming met hierdie instruksies.