INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION


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CHAPTER I

MANPOWER PROBLEMS

The Second Report emphasised the importance and complexity of the manpower problems which arose in 1947 in the various countries throughout the world. During 1948 neither the number nor the scope of these problems has diminished. As in the past they arose under two main aspects which can be counted among the most serious preoccupations of most Governments.

In the first place, there was the question of what may be called the qualitative adjustment of manpower supply and demand: the lack of skilled workers and technicians was shown to be one of the chief obstacles in the way of the development of countries which were being either reconstructed or industrialised. Secondly, the quantitative adjustment of manpower requirements and resources has continued to be both a national and an international problem. These two aspects of the general problem of manpower are by no means independent one of the other. One of the difficulties in balancing manpower supply and demand, and in the organisation of large-scale migration is the lack of occupational qualifications among migrants. Conversely, inadequate vocational training, involving faulty distribution of the manpower available, hinders the development of employment.

To solve these problems, it has been necessary to approach them in different ways. The organisation of employment is the basis of all manpower policy and has naturally been a primary object of study. Both within the various countries and at the international level, studies have been made of the best means of improving employment services to ensure a rapid and efficient means of balancing manpower supply and demand, both quantitatively and qualitatively. On the other hand, to get over the difficulty of the shortage of skilled manpower, it has been necessary to draw up and put into practice
a policy for developing vocational training. Finally, to deal with the situation of countries which, like Italy, are suffering from underemployment or chronic unemployment, and are compelled to seek outlets abroad, the migration problem has had to be approached from an increasingly practical angle.

In the past the bias of the work of international organisations in the social field has been towards research and the formulation of international instruments. In recent years, however, great changes have been taking place in social policy. Governments have embarked on new programmes involving legislation which is based in many cases on the international standards drawn up by international organisations, including the International Labour Organisation. These Governments have to build up the administrative and other machinery for the fulfilment of the programmes. To this end many of them have sought the benefit of practical experience available through the I.L.O. in such fields as employment service organisation and vocational training. The migration problem also calls for technical assistance from international organisations.

In response to these urgent needs the International Labour Organisation has undertaken an operational programme in the three fields of employment service organisation, vocational training and migration. The programme is supplementary to the Organisation's regular work on manpower. This work has been described in previous reports to the United Nations. The manpower programme is an example of the immediate practical technical assistance which the I.L.O. can supply to Governments. This assistance has been adapted to the special needs of different regions and has involved an intensification of the I.L.O.'s regional work. The Governing Body has set up special manpower committees to guide the development of this programme in Europe and Asia respectively. The manpower work of the I.L.O. in Latin America is at an earlier stage but may be expected to develop appreciably in the course of the present year. At every stage the I.L.O. has sought the co-operation of other organisations actively working in related fields, in particular of the United Nations and its regional commissions, I.R.O., F.A.O., W.H.O., U.N.E.S.C.O. and the International Bank. These efforts are leading to the development of a co-ordinated international manpower programme in which many international organisations will play an effective part.
To further this co-ordination, the Director-General of the International Labour Office, with the fullest approval of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, convened in Geneva on 17 and 18 February 1949 a meeting of representatives of the United Nations and the specialised agencies to consider the contribution which the other international organisations could make to the I.L.O.'s manpower programme and conversely the contribution the I.L.O. could make to the related programmes of the other international organisations. The subject is further discussed in the chapter of this report on relations with other international organisations.

The new work of the I.L.O. creates new problems for international organisations which the I.L.O. is attempting to solve in respect of its own immediate needs, but in regard to which it seeks also the benefit of other international organisations' experience. It involves the creation of a type of international official qualified to organise and undertake practical technical assistance. The I.L.O. has begun to form such groups of officials, which have already started work. Missions have visited the Netherlands, Belgium and Scandinavian countries in connection with the training of supervisors within industry. A team of experts has been organised to deal in Europe with questions of employment service organisation, vocational training and migration. A similar group of experts in vocational training will begin work in Asia. These are initial stages of a programme which will develop more fully in the ensuing months.

Organisation of Employment

As in the previous year, the International Labour Organisation gave great attention to the problems of employment organisation, but there is now a tendency to consider such problems not only in their general aspects, but even more with an eye to the practical assistance which can be given to the countries concerned.

Employment Services

An employment service is an indispensable instrument of manpower policy, and the efficiency of the service measures the extent to which such a policy can be conceived and applied.
It is through employment services that the supply and demand of manpower can be matched within each country. Owing to their knowledge of the employment market, they also play a primary part whenever it becomes necessary to determine either the manpower requirements which must be met by immigration, or the surplus manpower available for emigration, or to decide what should be the main lines of the vocational training policy to cope with the shortage of skilled workers. For this reason, questions affecting the organisation of employment services have been given special attention by the International Labour Organisation.

At its 31st Session (San Francisco, 1948), the International Labour Conference adopted a Convention and a Recommendation concerning the organisation of employment services. The Convention recommended the creation in each country of a national public employment service, to be assisted where necessary by advisory committees including representatives of the employers and the workers. The Convention also contains provisions concerning the duties of the employment service, the specialisation of its activity by occupations and by industries, or for certain particular categories of workers, as also for the recruitment of staff. The Recommendation sets out in somewhat greater detail the principles which should guide the organisation of the employment service and the work which it is called upon to do, such as the collection of information, including employment market information, the assessment of manpower requirements and resources, the guidance of workers to available forms of employment and the encouragement of the mobility of labour. Finally, the Recommendation provides for international co-operation among employment services.

At the same Session the Conference also considered the revision of the Convention adopted in 1933 concerning fee charging employment agencies, but postponed decision until its 1949 Session. The Conference will then decide whether fee charging employment agencies operating for profit should be suppressed or whether their activities should merely be subject to regulation.

At the present moment many countries which are faced with serious manpower problems are endeavouring to improve the organisation of their employment market by improving their employment services. Collation of the experience gained
in this sphere by the various countries is of great practical use and the International Labour Organisation has done the utmost to further it. In December 1948, the Organisation convened in London a meeting of European experts on employment services. The meeting considered various questions of importance both for the distribution of the working population within each country and for the migration of manpower from one country to another, including occupational nomenclature (both generally and in relation to migration), the technical organisation of placing and the recruitment and training of the staff of employment services. At its 107th Session (Geneva, December 1948), the Governing Body authorised the Office to convene when necessary a further meeting of employment service experts in regions where special assistance concerning this problem has been asked for.

The Governing Body also requested the Office to prepare a series of handbooks on the methods used by employment services in the various countries. Like the meeting of experts, these handbooks will, by providing detailed information on the experience acquired in other countries, be of great use to Governments that want to organise or reorganise their employment services.

Finally, the Office is prepared to send advisory missions of experts to any country which requires help in solving the problems of organising and operating employment services. An expert on this subject was placed at the disposal of the Chinese Government for a period of one year.

Vocational Guidance

The development of vocational guidance must necessarily accompany any policy for ensuring the best utilisation of manpower. Vocational guidance enables individuals to choose the occupations they like and are qualified for, with due regard to the economic opportunities available. The principles and the methods of vocational guidance were considered by the International Labour Conference at its 31st Session in San Francisco, where a list of points was drafted for inclusion in a Recommendation. At its 32nd Session (Geneva, 1949) the Conference will take a decision on a Recommendation based both on these points and on the views expressed by the various Governments, which have been consulted. The relevant
discussions at the San Francisco Session of the Conference are summarised in another chapter, dealing with the protection of young workers.

**Vocational Training and Retraining**

As has been mentioned above, there is at the moment a world shortage of skilled manpower. This is due to various causes. In many countries the expansion of industry during the war has increased the requirement for skilled workers. The position has since become even more critical owing to the stoppage or slowing up of vocational training, both during the economic depression and during the war, in all industries which were not considered as essential to the war effort. In war-devastated countries, the manpower shortage has been more severe both because of the loss of human life and because of the exceptional requirements of reconstruction. Moreover in occupied countries the complete disorganisation of vocational training deprived many workers of all chance of appropriate apprenticeship. Finally, in countries which are in process of development, the shortage of skilled manpower arises by reason of the requirements of newly-created industries. These industries have no difficulty in securing workers in plenty, since most of the countries concerned are suffering from under-employment and unemployment, but the workers are unskilled with no experience of industrial work, and their inadequate output results in a needlessly high level of production costs.

The only remedy for this is the development of vocational training. For highly industrialised countries which did not directly suffer from the war, the problem is above all one of developing existing facilities, co-ordinating efforts and improving methods. For countries which were hit directly by the war and, above all, countries in process of development, the problem is harder and more complicated.

To ensure the best utilisation of available manpower, the development of vocational training must cover not only young persons, but also adult workers. Such adult workers may well need to be retrained in a new occupation. Even if no change of occupation is involved, output may be improved by courses to perfect or refresh the workers' occupational knowledge, by upgrading courses and by special courses for supervisors. Because the need is urgent, and because of the contribution
which the development of adult training can make to the solution of the existing skilled manpower crisis, the Governing Body, at its 107th Session (Geneva, December 1948), placed the question of the vocational training of adults (including the disabled) on the agenda of the 1950 Session of the International Labour Conference, with a view to the adoption of a Recommendation. As a preliminary measure, a preparatory technical tripartite conference on training of adults is to be convened to study the proposals to be made to it by the Office, and the views of Governments are being sought.

Apart from this general action to secure the adoption of international instruments, the Office has undertaken practical work in the sphere of vocational training, within the framework of the manpower programme adopted as the result of a decision of the Governing Body in March 1948. Further decisions of the Governing Body at its last Session (Geneva, December 1948) have enlarged this programme.

At the request of the Rome Manpower Conference and of the Manpower Sub-Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Office set up in 1948 a documentation service on questions concerning vocational guidance, training and retraining, which may be consulted by any person interested in such problems. The Office publishes periodically a bibliographical bulletin on this subject.

Furthermore, the Office has begun to prepare a series of studies on the vocational training of adults in various countries. Studies concerning Belgium, the United Kingdom and the United States have already appeared, and others are in preparation. The main object both of the studies and of the documentary service is to spread the experience already gained in various countries.

In certain countries, increasing use has been made of vocational training films, which have been shown to be most useful in this connection. The Governing Body has authorised the Office to prepare a catalogue of available films concerned with training, together with information on the methods of procuring such films. This catalogue will be placed at the disposal of such Governments and organisations of employers and workers as may wish to make use of it.

The Office is also in a position to give valuable assistance to Governments which ask for practical advice in the organisation of their systems of vocational training. For this pur-
pose, the Office has had recourse to experts who have been lent to it by various Governments, as also to the services of its own officials. Missions of this kind have also been sent to the refugee camps of the International Refugee Organisation, and to various other European countries particularly to advise on the training of supervisors.

At the present moment, the training of supervisors is of great concern. Good supervision is of the greatest importance both from social and from economic aspects, and it is of particular importance to vocational training that supervisors should be taught how to teach others. Acting on a resolution of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, which requested the International Labour Organisation to set up in the near future an international course for the training of supervisors, the Governing Body authorised the Office to convene a tripartite meeting of European experts on the subject. This meeting took place on 30 March 1949. The Office has already taken practical steps to facilitate the development of training for supervisors: it has had recourse to the services of experts from the most experienced countries, and has also sent missions to various European countries which are interested in the creation of such courses (e.g., Belgium, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden).

Since the inception of the European manpower programme the I.L.O. has been requested to undertake special work in other parts of the world.

As the result of resolutions adopted by the Preparatory Asian Regional Conference (October-November 1947) and by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (E.C.A.F.E.), the Office had undertaken to create appropriate machinery to assist in the development of technical training in this part of the world. In collaboration with E.C.A.F.E., an expert of the Office carried out a preliminary enquiry on training problems in this region and on requirements and possibilities for the development of vocational and technical training. As a result of this enquiry, whose findings are contained in a report on Training Problems in the Far East \(^1\), the Governing Body decided that the measures taken by the Office to develop training in Asia should include the creation of a special tripartite manpower committee to meet periodically,  

\(^1\) I.L.O.: Studies and Reports, New Series, No. 11 (Geneva, 1948).
usually in Asia, to consider Asian manpower questions (this committee held its first meeting in March 1949); the creation of a special field office in Asia on technical training to act as an information centre and also to supply technical assistance to the Asian countries; and the convocation in 1949 of a technical conference of experts on questions connected with training in Asia.

E.C.A.F.E. and the International Labour Organisation will continue to collaborate closely on the findings of the report. The First Asian Regional Conference, which is to meet in 1950, will afford a fresh opportunity of studying the problems of vocational training which arise in this part of the world.

In June 1948, the Economic Commission for Latin America (E.C.L.A.) adopted a resolution asking for the help of the International Labour Organisation to study requirements of technical and administrative staff in Latin America, and the available means of meeting these requirements. The Office has accordingly sent an official to Latin America to conduct a preliminary enquiry into the requirements and existing possibilities there for vocational and technical training. This official is working in close collaboration with the secretariat of E.C.L.A. The enquiry will permit of determining the nature of the assistance which can be given to these countries, and also the machinery which might have to be set up in Latin America to promote vocational training. The Fourth Labour Conference of States Members of the International Labour Organisation which is to meet at Montevideo in April 1949 will consider certain aspects of manpower problems in Latin America.

MIGRATION

Certain aspects of migration are closely related to problems of vocational training and the organisation of employment services. Thus, the work of the International Labour Organisation on these problems also has an important bearing on migration, because it is calculated to increase the possibility of transferring workers from one country to another. Moreover, full utilisation of manpower calls for co-ordinated, practical action at the international level, to ensure the movement of workers from countries where there is a surplus to those where there is a shortage. Despite measures already taken by certain immigration countries to encourage the
admission of foreign workers, and despite the tendency to regulate migration by means of bilateral agreements, the international mobility of labour is still hampered by obstacles of various kinds. It is to overcome such obstacles that the International Labour Organisation is extending its activities on migration.

The Permanent Migration Committee and the Governing Body in March 1948 agreed that Governments of States Members of the International Labour Organisation should be invited to report to the Organisation on the conditions of labour of refugees and displaced persons who have settled in their respective countries, and how far they have applied, in respect of these persons, the Convention and the Recommendations of 1939 concerning the recruitment, placing and conditions of labour of migrants for employment. The International Labour Office drew up and distributed to the Governments concerned a list of points to assist them in making these reports. Replies were received from 32 countries, and the answers have been collated and made available in a document that was submitted for information to the Third Session of the Permanent Migration Committee.¹

In the spring of 1948, in order to obtain basic information for stimulating migration movements, the I.L.O. began to collect and exchange information concerning manpower needs and surpluses in European countries. A first questionnaire was sent on 3 May 1948 to 22 European Members of the Organisation, the three Western Zones of Germany, and the International Refugee Organisation, requesting information on manpower requirements and surpluses. The questionnaire emphasised the importance of precisely defining the work and duties to be performed by the workers required, and the qualifications and skills of those available for emigration. The information was collected during 1948 on a quarterly basis, and, although the collection was limited to European countries, the information received was made available to all Members of the International Labour Organisation. In December 1948 the Governing Body decided that the collection should be made at six-monthly intervals and should cover all countries. In the same month, a meeting of employment service experts of

¹ Cf. Conditions of Labour of Refugees and Displaced Persons (PMC/3/3), a mimeographed document available on request. The information contained in the document will be published in the International Labour Review.
European countries considered the whole problem of occupational nomenclature with special reference to the recruitment of foreign workers. It was pointed out at the meeting that the demand for foreign workers was limited to occupations, mostly skilled, in certain defined industries, and that the list of occupations for which comparable definitions had been prepared by the Office should be adapted as necessary to take account of possible changes in migratory movements. The London meeting recommended that the Office should undertake work on occupational descriptions and should consult experts on the possibility of establishing general principles to be applied in the various countries, and, in particular, should continue the enquiries as to the descriptions in use in various countries of those occupations of present concern in current migration movements. These recommendations are to be put into effect during 1949.\(^1\)

In December 1948 the Governing Body decided to include the migration activities of the I.L.O. in the general operational manpower programme, and consequently emphasis will now be placed on practical plans to facilitate migration, on the collection of precise information designed to assist Governments in planning for migration for employment or for land settlement, on advisory missions to help in land settlement projects and the resettlement of certain types of workers, and on providing opportunities for training abroad. The new trend of migration activities was indicated at the Third Session of the Permanent Migration Committee (Geneva, January 1949) which on the one hand prepared the way for revision by the International Labour Conference of the Convention and Recommendation on migration for employment, and on the other hand, outlined a full operational programme to be carried out in 1949 and subsequent years. This programme was approved by the Governing Body.

The agenda of the Third Session of the Committee was as follows:


2. Formulation of principles concerning migration for land settlement, including preparation of a model agreement on migration for land settlement.

\(^1\) Cf. Document G.B.108/2/2, March 1949.
3. Migration within the manpower programme of the International Labour Organisation.

4. Migration and resettlement of "specialists".

5. Methods to further exchange of trainees, including preparation of a model agreement.

In considering migration within the general manpower programme, the Committee stressed a series of specific migration activities that it considered the I.L.O. should undertake during 1949. The Committee welcomed the proposal of the Director-General, endorsed by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, to convene the meeting of the United Nations and specialised agencies, which was held in February 1949 and which considered the contribution that each could make to the whole manpower programme including its migration aspects. The Committee agreed that the next practical step was to hold a preliminary conference of Governments and international organisations to survey the possibility of increasing the movement of migrants and to consider what further steps should be taken in co-operation with other agencies concerned in order to arrive at precise agreements on migration movements.

In considering the machinery for carrying out the migration tasks of the manpower programme, the Permanent Migration Committee recommended that provision be made for tripartite consideration of migration problems by the Regional Manpower Committees of the Governing Body, but it also considered that the Permanent Migration Committee itself should continue to meet regularly to give the Governing Body technical advice on migration questions.

As a background for further activities, the Committee expressed the view that the I.L.O. should undertake a series of further studies, including, in particular, a study of the absorptive capacity of possible countries of immigration; the adaptability of migrants from particular countries to the conditions in different countries of immigration; the general mobility of labour, including in particular the simplification of administrative procedures; the provision of adequate housing for migrants; increased transport facilities; vocational training of migrants; and the periodical enquiries on manpower surpluses and deficits as well as the classification of occupations already referred to.¹

¹ Cf. Report of the Permanent Migration Committee on its Third Session, January 1949 (PMC/3/21), Appendix III.
The Committee drafted revised texts of the Convention and Recommendations on migration for employment which are being circulated to Governments to enable a final decision to be taken by the General Conference in June 1949.

With respect to migration for land settlement, the Committee adopted a number of general principles and recommended that they be submitted to Member Governments; it also recommended that the draft on a model agreement on migration for land settlement be completed by the Office, in accordance with suggestions made during the meeting, and submitted to Governments for examination, and that a new text then be drawn up in the light of the observations of the Governments and submitted to the next Session of the Committee. The Committee also suggested that the Office, in co-operation with other interested international organisations, should continue its studies on this subject and should make the results of these studies available to all interested Governments. The Committee proposed that the Office should undertake, in collaboration with the Governments of countries which afford possibilities of immigration and with the international organisations concerned, enquiries as to regions suitable for immigration for land settlement, to determine the difficulties involved and to give assistance in the drawing up of precise plans for land settlement, taking into consideration the difficulties of financing such plans.¹

The Committee had before it a report concerning migration and resettlement of specialists, and it recommended that, in close collaboration with other international organisations concerned, the I.L.O. should send the fullest practical information to Governments of Member States concerning available specialist refugees and displaced persons who are the concern of the I.R.O.; should request Governments to inform it by a stated time about such opportunities as they may have for placing these persons in their own or ancillary occupations; and should give, where necessary, appropriate information concerning the regulations in force. In addition, it urged the Office to give Governments and the I.R.O., at their request, all possible assistance in order to facilitate the recruitment, placing and retraining of these specialists, and to consult with other international organisations as to a concerted publicity campaign to aid in

¹ Cf. Report of the Permanent Migration Committee, op. cit., Appendix II.
the placing of such specialised workers. The Committee suggested that the Office be authorised to ask the Governments of Member States whether they have a surplus of specialists, and if so, to supply the details; to circulate this information to the Governments; and to take such further action as may be appropriate in the light of known surpluses and known demands.¹

Methods of facilitating exchanges of trainees and providing opportunities for training abroad have been under consideration since March 1948. It was also considered, in relation to Asia, in the report on technical training in Asia and the Far East, prepared by an Office expert for the use both of the I.L.O. and of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East.² Subsequently, in October 1948, a resolution was adopted by the Manpower Committee of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, inviting the I.L.O. to consider the possibility of developing and encouraging international arrangements whereby the nationals of one country might be admitted, for purposes of vocational training, to the appropriate institutions of other countries. The results of a first enquiry addressed to Governments in 1948 were submitted to the Permanent Migration Committee at its Third Session.

The Committee expressed keen interest in the exchange of trainees, and considered that it would be useful for the Office to collect as quickly as possible and make available information concerning regulations which now apply to the admission and treatment of trainees, the organisations having responsibilities for facilitating the exchange and placement of such persons, and the various procedures, both national and international, for securing the movement of trainees from one country to another. It suggested that the Office might assist Governments, on request, in matters relating to the movement of trainees and study, in collaboration with other international organisations concerned, the general principles applying to the movement of trainees.

The Latin American aspect of migration problems will be considered at the Fourth Labour Conference of American States, which is to be held in Montevideo in April 1949. At

¹ Cf. Report of the Permanent Migration Committee, op. cit., Appendix IV.

the Second Session of the Permanent Migration Committee, in February 1948, the Peruvian Government proposed that the Governing Body be asked to draw the attention of the countries concerned to the need for co-ordinating the international efforts of Latin American countries which are able to assimilate in the immediate future a large-scale flow of immigrants from Europe, this being essential for European recovery. The Peruvian proposal emphasised that in addition to the necessary participation of the countries of Europe and Latin America, which were interested in the development of emigration from the former to the latter continent, the international organisations concerned in migration movements should co-operate in the financing and execution of such migration schemes. In June 1948, the Peruvian Government representative asked that the countries affected by this proposal express their views upon it, and that the Office study the possibility of convening a regional conference on migration. In view of the development of the situation as a whole during 1948, the Governing Body in December 1948 proposed that this resolution might be considered in a preliminary manner at the Montevideo Regional Conference, and it was therefore agreed that the question should be referred to in the Report of the Director-General to that Conference, and that it be suggested to Governments attending the Conference that they should include experts on migration in their delegations.

The decision of the Governing Body to accept the suggestions of the Permanent Migration Committee referred to in the preceding paragraphs, has given a considerable impetus to the work of the International Labour Organisation on migration questions. This impetus comes at a time when migration seems likely to be of even greater importance than it has been in the recent past. Efforts now being made to develop the resources of underdeveloped countries will require, for their complete success, an increase in the manpower of at least some of those countries, notably the South American countries. The enquiries of the International Labour Organisation show that labour is available for this purpose, and the problem which faces the Organisation and other international bodies in this field is to assist in the preparation of development plans and to ensure that the most favourable conditions exist for the needed movements of migrants.