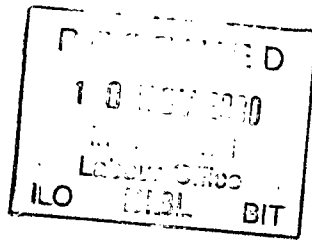
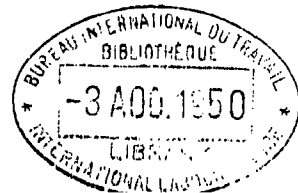


# VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF ADULTS IN BELGIUM



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International Labour Office  
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## PREFACE

The preparation of a series of monographs on vocational training and retraining in different countries forms part of a special programme of work on manpower problems which the Governing Body of the International Labour Office authorised in March 1948 for the purpose of assisting Governments, employers and trade unions on problems of vocational guidance, training and retraining, collecting information on manpower surpluses and deficits in relation to international migration, and establishing an international nomenclature of occupations most frequently concerned in such migration. In pursuance of the Governing Body's decision the Office is also organising a special library and documentation service on vocational guidance, training and retraining, which is available for consultation by all who have a serious interest in these problems, and it is prepared to give Governments technical advice on these problems if invited to do so.

In the preparation of the monographs, the Office aims at making available to Governments, employers and workers the experience of different countries in organising vocational training and retraining schemes and, in particular, at providing practical material which will be of assistance to those who are actually engaged in the work of organising training courses or instructing trainees.

The present monograph consists of three parts. The first and most important of these deals with a special aspect of the question in Belgium: Government action for the retraining of the unemployed. The public authorities in Belgium, unlike those of other countries—*e.g.*, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom—made no attempt immediately after the war to organise training for all their workers, employed or otherwise. Although vocational rehabilitation on the same footing as for the unemployed is provided, at State expense, for certain categories of war victims, they are not entitled to the same financial privileges granted to the unemployed, and the number of those able to benefit by these measures is naturally extremely limited and represents only a fraction of all the employed workers receiving training who, in one way or another, improve their technical skill.

In the absence of a central co-ordinating agency for this action, the measures put into effect to this end by various sectors of the economy vary considerably, and within the scope of this monograph no full description can be given. Moreover, in plans for the training of manpower drawn up in a given industry or establishment, it is often difficult to differentiate between what is intended for adult workers and what is designed for young workers just beginning their career in the said industry or establishment. By way of example, however, in Parts II and III of this monograph, an indication will be found of what steps have been taken for two important groups of workers: railwaymen, in view of the over-riding importance of training in the transport industry, and foremen, since the role of subordinate staff is so important in relation to output, security and social peace.

The Office wishes to acknowledge the generous help given by the Belgian Minister of Labour and Social Security in the preparation of this monograph. Valuable assistance has also been received from other quarters, particularly from the Belgian Railways and the Belgian Federation of Industries. Lastly, special thanks are due to the Fund for the Maintenance of the Unemployed for permission to use the photographs reproduced in this monograph.

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## PART I

### Vocational Retraining of the Unemployed

#### I. HISTORICAL SURVEY

The unemployment due to the great economic crisis of the 'thirties was the origin of the first action taken in Belgium for vocational retraining. The statistics showed a lack of balance as regards manpower between the different categories of workers, and also between different industries. Generally speaking, unemployment was particularly frequent among unskilled labourers, but there was often at the same time a shortage of skilled workers; moreover, overcrowded trades and industries were found side by side with other industries in which manpower was at a premium.

To a certain extent, this very disproportion helped to increase unemployment, for a shortage of skilled workers, to the extent to which it prevents an industry from working to its full capacity, limits the unskilled workers' chances of finding employment. This also holds good when as a result of manpower shortage an essential industry cannot supply other industries dependent on it with the materials they need, thereby forcing them to cut down production and consequently the number of workers they can employ.

#### FIRST ATTEMPTS AT RETRAINING THE UNEMPLOYED

Vocational retraining of the workless for a new trade in which they could find steady employment was thus an essential factor in the reduction of unemployment. Attempts were therefore made to enable the unemployed to learn a new trade. The first of these were the result of local initiative: in 1932, the Provincial Institute for Arts and Crafts at La Louvière organised courses for the unemployed in the following trades: fitters, tracers, machine tool makers, electricians, carpenters, pattern-makers, motor drivers, electric and oxy-acetylene welders. These courses, which lasted from one to three years, were given in the daytime; but unemployed men who found work could continue to follow them by attending the evening

classes held in the same institution. In this way they were enabled to keep up the knowledge already acquired. This scheme was reasonably successful during the first year (1932-1933), when there were 301 entries, but in the following years numbers declined rapidly. Doubtless interest in the venture dwindled because the unemployed who followed the courses received no special benefits, apart from the training material supplied to them free of charge and their mid-day meal.

The Belgian Association for Social Progress also interested itself indirectly in the question by conducting an investigation into the situation of young unemployed persons and means of improving their lot.

These measures proved quite insufficient, however, and the Government decided to tackle the matter itself. This it did by means of the Royal Order of 26 May 1936, by the terms of which vocational training of the unemployed came into being, within the framework of the National Employment and Unemployment Office. The Order provided that the managing committee of the National Office should determine the conditions under which an unemployed worker could be permitted to learn a new trade while continuing to receive all or part of his unemployment benefit. It further provided that in no case should the trainee's total remuneration plus his unemployment pay exceed the wages normally paid to skilled workmen in the trade to which he was apprenticed. In addition, the National Office undertook to defray a part (75 per cent.) of the travelling expenses of unemployed workers who were forced to travel in order to learn a new trade.<sup>1</sup> Retraining could take place either in a private undertaking or in a vocational or technical training centre set up or sponsored by the public authorities. In the former case, the employer undertook to train an unemployed worker over 21 years of age in a definite trade for a period of a few months. Vocational training in schools, on the contrary, was confined to the young unemployed.

In 1938, another Royal Order (25 August) modified that of 1936 by specifying that the unemployed might (*a*) learn a new trade, or (*b*) follow an advanced vocational training course in an industrial, vocational or general training institution set up or sponsored by the State, or (*c*) serve an apprenticeship by virtue of a contract concluded and put into effect under Government supervision. Provision was made for cases where the trainee received a bonus

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<sup>1</sup> Royal Order of 25 May 1936 respecting the organisation of free employment exchanges for workers, arts. 9 and 10. Cf. I.L.O. : *Legislative Series* (hereafter referred to as *L.S.*), 1936—Bel. 12.

or remuneration from the institution or his employer ; this, added to his unemployment pay, was not, in the case of adult unemployed, to exceed the normal wage paid to skilled workers in the trade or calling which they were learning ; and in the case of trainees or apprentices under 21 years of age, it was not to exceed the normal wage paid to young workers in the area.<sup>1</sup>

### COMPULSORY RETRAINING, 1939-1940

This action did not bring the hoped-for increase in the number of workers who decided to retrain ; moreover, it was difficult to appraise the technical value of the training and its real utility in obtaining employment. This failure was ascribed to the fact that retraining was optional. As stated in the Royal Order of 16 January 1939, which replaced that of 25 May 1936, a large number of unemployed, particularly the young unemployed, after a prolonged period of unemployment lost any technical skill they might previously have acquired. It was therefore considered that this state of affairs could best be remedied by making retraining compulsory. A distinction was made between two categories of unemployed : those who could be retrained directly in factories and those who needed theoretical courses in industrial schools set up or sponsored by the State. The managing committee of the National Employment and Unemployment Office was to empower the advisory committees attached to the labour exchanges to designate, among the insured unemployed under their jurisdiction, those who were to undergo retraining. Failure to do so entailed penalties.<sup>2</sup>

The Royal Order of January 1939, supplemented by a Ministerial Order of 25 March 1939, made possible a rapid development of vocational retraining during the months that followed. This was ascribed partly to the fact that retraining was now compulsory ; but there is no doubt that other factors also contributed to the success of these provisions — particularly the wider financial possibilities which they held out. For whereas under the previous system the National Employment and Unemployment Office merely continued to pay unemployment benefits and, if necessary, defrayed part of the travelling expenses incurred by unemployed workers on training

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<sup>1</sup> Royal Order, dated 25 August 1938, to amend the Royal Order of 25 May 1936 respecting the organisation of free public employment exchanges for workers, art. 1 (*L.S.*, 1928—Bel. 7).

<sup>2</sup> Royal Order of 16 January 1939 concerning vocational retraining of the unemployed, preamble and art. 1.

courses, it was authorised under the new Orders to defray the running costs of the centre (salaries of instructors and purchase of tools and raw materials), and to pay the unemployed, in addition to the benefits previously granted, an hourly bonus and an end-of-apprenticeship bonus in kind (clothing, tools, etc.), on the understanding that the total of the sums paid under various headings should not exceed the normal pay of a skilled worker in the trade to which the unemployed worker was apprenticed.

During the brief period 1939-1940, considerable progress was made. Three centres were first set up at Charleroi, for the trades of turner, arc-welder and blacksmith. They produced excellent results, and after a few months' training the retrained unemployed were taken on as semi-skilled workers. Other centres soon sprang up in different parts of the country, in factories as well as in vocational training institutions. The unemployed were trained in the most varied employments: mason, caster, waiter, fitter-caster, plumber and zinc-worker, machine tool operator, weaver. On 29 February, 431 unemployed men were being collectively retrained.

As for the functioning of the system, it should be pointed out that although in principle retraining was obligatory, there was no question of enforcing it on all the totally unemployed; rather, those were selected who were likely to benefit by retraining. In any case, appeal was mostly made to the good will of the persons in question. The object was to recruit those most suitable for retraining, so that at the end of their period of training they could be placed as semi-skilled labour, thus enabling those whom they replaced to be upgraded.

#### THE OCCUPATION PERIOD

Soon the war interrupted the work, and retraining remained almost completely at a standstill throughout the Occupation. The Directorate of the National Employment and Unemployment Office made some attempts to revive existing centres, but failed. As for the rapid training instituted by several German undertakings in the early days of the Occupation, in order to employ Belgian workers, this was soon reduced to the mere teaching of the elementary notions required for doing repetitive work in armaments factories.

#### POST-WAR POSITION

After the Liberation (September 1944), Belgium was faced with very extensive unemployment, but an active retraining policy was

out of the question : this situation, however, which was due to the disorganisation of industry and also (during the months that followed the Liberation) to the repatriation of prisoners of war, displaced persons and internees, was not likely to last long—it was a question of waiting until things should settle down. Unemployment, in fact, decreased rapidly ; and by the spring of 1945, it was possible to think of reorganising vocational retraining, with a view to the needs of the unemployed and also to the national economy.

The table below indicates the distribution by trade groups of the unemployed, and the offers of employment not yet filled at the end of May 1945.

It should be noted that, though there were a fair number of unemployed at that time, even in branches of industry in which there were at the same time a number of posts vacant, this was due to the fact that the manpower available very often did not possess

TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF UNEMPLOYED AND EMPLOYMENT  
VACANCIES NOT FILLED ON 31 MAY 1945

Trade groups	Totally unemployed receiving benefits registered on 31 May 1945		Other applicants for work registered on 31 May 1945		Unfilled vacancies on 31 May 1945	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Agriculture . . . . .	2,876	90	810	46	525	19
Forestry, hunting, fishing . . . . .	368	4	140	1	232	—
Mines . . . . .	282	87	611	44	12,861	—
Stone, ceramics, glass, diamond . . . . .	5,989	1,049	530	182	434	99
Building . . . . .	11,223	18	2,273	16	1,703	—
Timber . . . . .	5,378	418	1,628	177	2,005	36
Metallurgy . . . . .	12,282	1,197	6,608	979	5,931	394
Chemistry . . . . .	244	76	73	97	10	217
Paper . . . . .	797	553	115	279	12	169
Printing trades . . . . .	913	214	414	123	42	33
Textiles—production . . . . .	19,083	12,713	4,107	3,624	216	780
Textiles—utilisation . . . . .	780	6,118	236	2,232	194	1,644
Leather . . . . .	1,704	929	429	249	193	188
Food . . . . .	3,482	1,632	1,071	470	192	159
Engineers, technicians . . . . .	266	16	1,048	298	235	53
Commerce . . . . .	404	603	926	1,509	71	116
Transport . . . . .	5,619	1,238	2,158	462	583	79
Hotels, restaurants . . . . .	215	219	432	1,991	990	1,169
Domestic service . . . . .	144	1,223	62	3,819	46	7,207
Services industry . . . . .	268	124	278	183	41	14
Salaried employees . . . . .	1,964	1,232	4,261	3,651	1,850	1,139
Artists . . . . .	79	9	215	90	19	—
Unskilled . . . . .	25,619	6,697	7,485	3,038	8,080	744
Totals . . . . .	99,997	36,559	35,910	23,360	36,465	14,259

Source : *Revue du Travail*, June-July, 1945, pp. 359, 361, 367.

the skill which the employers required. An analysis of the position in the employment market of that time in fact shows that, despite the return of large numbers of workers who had been deported to Germany, there was a great lack of skilled men, which hampered economic recovery. The following industries and trades were most gravely affected : mines (underground workers) ; marble quarries ; glass factories ; the diamond trade (cutters of small pieces and cleavers) ; building (plasterers, tilers and masons) ; timber ; metal ; paper and printing trades ; textiles (scribblers, spinners and weavers) ; leather.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, it was clear that vocational retraining could help to solve the problem of absorbing the unemployed and at the same time help in the solution of the skilled labour difficulties.

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<sup>1</sup> *Revue du Travail*, June-July 1945, pp. 348-351.

## II. PRINCIPLES OF VOCATIONAL RETRAINING FOR ADULTS

### LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY BASES

Shortly after the Liberation, a general Legislative Order of 28 December 1944<sup>1</sup> brought about a complete reorganisation of the entire social insurance system in Belgium. Article 7 of the Order provided for the institution within the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of a provisional Fund for the maintenance of involuntarily unemployed persons. This Fund, to be financed by State subsidies as well as by a part of compulsory social insurance contributions, was entrusted by Order of the Regent (26 May 1945)<sup>2</sup> with the task, among others, of organising the vocational retraining of the unemployed. Next, another Ministerial Order (20 December 1945) was issued to supplement the basic Order of 26 May 1945, by specifying the benefits in kind or in cash to be granted to unemployed workers undergoing vocational retraining. A few modifications were subsequently introduced into the text of the Order of 26 May 1945, by another Order of the Regent dated 14 January 1948. As for the policy to be pursued with regard to retraining, and the details of its organisation, these are regulated by administrative instructions issued by the Directorate of the Unemployment Fund.

The various Orders set forth above lay down a number of essential principles: vocational retraining is organised within the framework of employment service and unemployment insurance and is therefore regarded as essentially a means of reducing unemployment. Only the unemployed are entitled to vocational retraining as provided under these regulations. They continue to be regarded as unemployed after they have been placed in retraining; the remuneration they then receive is in fact not a wage, but an unemployment allowance, supplemented if necessary by certain benefits in kind or in currency (travelling and living allowances, hourly bonus, end-of-apprenticeship bonus).

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<sup>1</sup> Legislative Order of 28 December 1944 respecting social security for employees (*L.S.*, 1944—Bel. 2; amendments: *L.S.*, 1945—Bel. 9. A, D, G).

<sup>2</sup> Order of the Regent (26 May 1945) to set up a Provisional Fund for the maintenance of involuntarily unemployed persons. (*L.S.*, 1945—Bel. 1.)

## OBJECTS OF VOCATIONAL RETRAINING

Vocational retraining has two main objectives, one economic and one social. The economic objective is to achieve a distribution of manpower closely related to the needs of the national economy and to make as rational and effective use as possible of all manpower resources. To this end the vocational training and retraining of adults must be developed so that all may have access to the trade or level of skill enabling them to contribute to the utmost of their capacity to the economic life of their country.

The social objective of vocational retraining is to effect the resettlement of the worker in an occupation holding out the prospect of steadier employment than his previous one, while giving him satisfaction and enabling him to make full use of his abilities. Moreover, in so far as it enables the unemployed to find work again, it also alleviates the burden of unemployment benefits.

In Belgium, where vocational retraining has been organised as part of the social security system, particularly of unemployment insurance, the social objective tends to have precedence over the economic: the first concern is to provide unemployed workers with technical skill enabling them to find work, thereby avoiding the demoralisation due to prolonged unemployment, while at the same time reducing the expenditure of the Fund on unemployment benefits. The question, then, is mainly one of combating unemployment.

But though the general organisation of vocational retraining tends to relegate economic considerations to the background, they have nevertheless not been completely neglected. Indeed, during the manpower shortage in Belgium immediately after the war, some action was indispensable. Unlike other Governments, the Belgian Government did not, generally speaking, actively promote the vocational training and retraining of adult workers; but at any rate it made use of existing facilities for retraining the unemployed, in order to resettle them, as far as possible, in occupations where manpower was in short supply.

An administrative directive sent to regional employment exchanges and to the advisory boards attached to them implicitly admits that vocational retraining has two objectives — the reduction of unemployment, and the training of workers — and states that the one or the other must be emphasised according to the state of the employment market. This directive, in fact, states:

The general policy of retraining is an integral part of the general policy for the reduction of unemployment; since it is affected by changes in the economic situation, it will be subject to periodic revision. At a regional level, the policy of setting up centres is conditioned chiefly by the knowledge at our disposal concerning the employment market, which is available from the Unemployment Fund as well as from various economic circles, e.g., industrial, occupational and social groups.

Thus, an acute manpower shortage will promote vocational retraining in the trades that are the most gravely affected, in the order of their importance from the standpoint of the national economy. When there is extensive unemployment, on the other hand, the choice of trades in which the unemployed will receive vocational retraining will be dictated not so much by considerations of this kind as by the prospect of steady employment held out by the trade in which the unemployed are to be resettled.

#### CATEGORIES OF WORKERS INVOLVED

As we have seen, the Order of 26 May 1945 provides for vocational retraining only for those in receipt of unemployment benefits. Among these, unemployed men aged at least 21 are normally permitted to undergo a period of training. Unemployed workers between 18 and 21 years of age may only in exceptional cases undergo vocational retraining if, in the opinion of the Director-General of the Fund, this is necessary to help them to find employment.

The advisory boards attached to the regional offices of the Fund may, however, compel unemployed workers under 21 years of age to follow a course in a vocational training establishment set up or sponsored by the public authorities. If the unemployed worker is under 18 years, the board must first ascertain whether he fulfils one of the following conditions: that he is in possession of a leaving certificate of a vocational or industrial school; that he has been employed for 150 days under a contract for wage-earning or salaried employment; that he has been registered for not less than three months as an applicant for work and has not refused suitable employment during that period.

Apart from unemployed workers eligible for vocational retraining under the terms of the Order of 26 May 1945, four other Legislative Orders and Acts provide for the possibility of making civilian members of the Resistance (active or passive), labour deportees

political prisoners and their next of kin, and prisoners of war, eligible for such retraining.<sup>1</sup>

#### TYPES OF TRAINING

As indicated in article 56 of the Order of 26 May 1945, vocational retraining, as organised by that Order, " shall consist in the serving by an unemployed person of an apprenticeship in a trade other than his own or in the retraining of an unemployed person in his own trade ". With regard to civilian members of the Resistance and political prisoners and their families, it is laid down that the apprenticeship in question may, moreover, serve to teach them a trade if they have not learned one.

These different Orders are therefore mostly concerned with vocational retraining or, in certain cases, the training of those who have not had the opportunity to learn a trade, but their object is not to ensure the upgrading of workers or the training of supervisory staff.

Such training, which is fairly limited, may, according to the Order of 26 May 1945, be given individually or collectively. In fact, a distinction should be made between three methods of retraining: compulsory schooling for young unemployed workers and optional retraining at school, by contract or exemption from control; individual retraining with an employer; and collective retraining at a centre. All these forms of retraining alike consist of a period of rapid training lasting a few months at the most.

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<sup>1</sup> Legislative Order of 24 September 1946 respecting civilian members of the Resistance; Legislative Order of 24 December 1946 respecting labour deportees; Act of 26 February 1947 respecting political prisoners and their next of kin; Act of 18 August 1947 respecting prisoners of war.

### **III. ORGANISATION OF VOCATIONAL RETRAINING**

#### **Administrative Organisation**

##### **CENTRAL AND REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

Article 1 of the Decree of 26 May 1945, providing for the establishment of an administrative body to be called the Unemployment Fund, determines the field of activity of that body as follows :

- (1) to place at the disposal of employers and workers, free of charge, public employment exchanges and manpower recruiting services ;
- (2) to organise vocational retraining services ;
- (3) to grant cash allowances to unemployed workers.

To this end, the Fund may draw upon the part of the proceeds of the contributions of employers and workers allocated to it by the terms of the Legislative Order of 28 December 1944 concerning social security.

Vocational retraining thus functions within the administrative framework of the Fund. The Fund is administered by a Director-General appointed by the King, assisted by a Board of Directors ; it comes directly under the authority of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare. The central administration of the Fund, situated at Brussels, includes five directorates : administration, litigation, allowances, placement and inspection. Each of these is subdivided into divisions and services. Vocational retraining is one of the services under the Directorate of Placement.

The Unemployment Fund also has 25 regional offices distributed over the country in the most densely populated areas and at important industrial centres. The structure of the regional offices resembles that of the central administration ; each has a director and an advisory board, and divisions and services which deal with the different aspects of the placement of the unemployed and supervise the payment of unemployment benefits by the municipalities or the various trade unions. At the regional level, there is no organised vocational retraining service, but the work which this task involves is distributed among the different specialised placement services.

## ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are the responsibilities of the various bodies of the Fund in the matter of vocational retraining.

*The centre.* The central Board of Directors gives its opinion on the benefits in money or in kind drawn by unemployed workers undergoing retraining ; the amount of these is fixed by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare. The Director-General must consult the Board in all matters of a general character, including, should the occasion arise, questions concerning vocational retraining, particularly the setting up of collective retraining centres ; the Board itself has the right to take up any question it considers desirable to examine.

The Director-General of the Fund is called upon to approve any contract concluded by an unemployed worker for individual retraining which is submitted to him for endorsement by a regional office. With regard to collective retraining, he approves the budgets of the centres, which are submitted to him by the regional offices ; he also authorises the establishment of centres, after consultation with the Board of Directors.

The central administrative body whose task is to study the various questions connected with vocational retraining and to make proposals regarding the policy to be followed is the Directorate of Placement, particularly the Vocational Retraining Service within the Directorate. This service examines draft budgets sent to it by the regional offices and modifies or completes them in accordance with administrative regulations and its own experience, prior to submitting them to the Board of Directors of the Fund.

*Regional administration.* The regional offices of the Fund supervise the organisation and functioning of vocational retraining and observe results. After consultation with the advisory boards, they propose to the central administration the setting up of retraining centres in accordance with economic needs. To this end they draw up and transmit to the central Directorate of Placement draft budgets showing the probable expenditure involved in setting up such centres, with a detailed report on the economic conditions in the area concerned, and reasons why it is desirable to introduce vocational retraining in the particular trades ; they also submit a draft outline of the courses which they plan to organise. Once these draft budgets have been transmitted by the Directorate of Placement to the Board of Directors and approved by the latter, the regional offices must do all in their power

to open these centres at the earliest opportunity. Together with the central administration, the regional offices, assisted by the advisory boards, keep a close watch on the functioning of the centres, from the standpoint of the technical value of the training as well as of their administrative and financial running (purchases, materials, financial aid of various kinds, payment of hourly bonus, reimbursement of unemployed workers' travelling expenses, etc.). Once the retraining period is at an end, they do their utmost to provide the retrained workers with employment in keeping with the skill they have acquired, and institute periodical enquiries to ensure that the persons concerned are satisfied with their new trade.

The advisory boards within the regional offices also exercise some supervision over vocational retraining. Generally speaking, the Order of 26 May 1945 entrusts them with the tasks of giving advice on the functioning of the services, of seeing that they are impartial, assisting in maintaining their efficacy, and of considering any questions submitted to them by the director of the regional office acting on the request of the Board of Directors or of the Director-General of the Fund. Moreover, they have several special tasks in the matter of vocational retraining: they are competent to designate unemployed workers to undergo retraining in a collective retraining centre, and to exercise a general supervision over the centres (for example, they give their advice on draft budgets prepared by the regional office); to make decisions concerning the reasons given by unemployed workers for refusing retraining or giving up an apprenticeship they have undertaken, and to propose the amount and nature of the end-of-apprenticeship bonus granted to candidates who have successfully completed their training period. They do not have a voice in the matter of individual retraining, since the approval of contracts, as shown above, comes under the jurisdiction of the Directorate-General of the Fund. Nevertheless, they are expected to play a useful part, notably through the influence of their members in persuading craftsmen to take on unemployed workers as trainees.

#### PARTICIPATION BY EMPLOYERS' AND WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS

The participation of employers' and workers' organisations in the organisation of vocational retraining is ensured through the Board of Directors and the advisory boards. The Board of Directors consists of six members selected from among eight candidates submitted by the most representative trade union organisations, of six

members selected from among eight candidates submitted by the most representative of the employers' organisations, and of an independent chairman. The chairman and the members are selected by the King.

The advisory boards consist of four members selected from among six candidates submitted by the most representative workers' organisations in the area, four selected from among six candidates submitted by the most representative of the employers' organisations in the area, and an independent chairman. The members are selected by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare; they unanimously elect the independent chairman. If unanimity cannot be achieved, the chairman is appointed by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare. The advisory boards moreover comprise four employers' substitute members, four workers' substitute members, and two substitute chairmen.

In this way, the employers' and workers' organisations enjoy the right of general supervision and advice at the centre in regard to vocational retraining and are called upon especially to give their advice on the desirability of setting up new centres, to approve the budgets of such centres, and to approve the programmes of courses submitted. At the local level, they express their opinion, through the advisory boards, on the draft budgets and programmes of courses drawn up by the regional offices before the drafts are transmitted to the central administration; select candidates for the collective retraining centres; and endeavour to stimulate the interest of local employers in vocational retraining. Finally, the end-of-apprenticeship examinations are organised with the assistance of the employers' associations or other groups or persons in the region that are skilled in the particular trade.

### **Technical Organisation**

As shown above, there are three distinct methods of retraining organised by virtue of the Decree of 26 May 1945: compulsory or optional schooling of young unemployed workers, individual retraining with an employer and collective retraining at a centre.

#### **COMPULSORY OR OPTIONAL SCHOOLING**

##### *Principles*

The advisory committees may oblige young unemployed workers under 21 years of age to follow vocational courses, in order to save them from the depressing effects of prolonged idleness and

also to enable them to acquire a technical skill that may facilitate their placement in trades holding out better prospects of steady employment. Young men under the age of 18 years cannot be compelled to follow such courses except in as much as they comply with the conditions set forth above<sup>1</sup>; this is to avoid the possibility of a young worker leaving school to receive unemployment benefit and letting the State pay for the normal apprenticeship for the trade which he proposes to follow, whilst other workers of the same age must bear this expense themselves.

In any case, it is emphasised that the object is to send to school only those young unemployed workers selected in accordance with the specific provisions outlined above and for whom no work can be found at short notice, in view of the economic conditions prevailing in the region. Article 69 of the Order of 26 May 1945, which refers to this form of retraining, was, in fact, taken over from pre-war legislation drawn up at a time when there was a fair amount of unemployment among young workers: the intention was to make the best of this forced inaction by sending them to trade schools.

A safeguard is provided to avoid this clause being improperly interpreted at a time when manpower is in short supply: it is stipulated that immediately the regional office of the Fund receives notice of vacancies suited to the vocational skill of the young persons concerned, it must advise these persons that they must interrupt their training to accept the posts.

### *Administrative Procedure*

As regards the procedure to be adopted, the placement service of the regional offices communicates to the members of the advisory board, prior to the beginning of the school term, a report on the regional unemployment position among young persons, their qualifications or lack of qualifications, and the period during which they have been unemployed. The last factor is held to be of particular importance, since the unemployment is often due to insufficient training. The report must also state the economic requirements of the region, the offers of employment which are still open and the prospects of a future shortage of personnel in given categories of occupations. Finally, the employment service must give the members of the advisory board full information concerning vocational training facilities in the region, specifying whether they include day or

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<sup>1</sup> Under "Categories of Workers Involved", p. 11.

evening classes, and describing transport facilities available to persons attending such courses from their place of residence. To facilitate this task, the regional offices have been supplied with lists of approved vocational training institutions.

### *Types of Courses*

Since the Order of 26 May 1945 does not specify whether the courses given in a vocational training institution set up or sponsored by the public authorities must be full-time or evening courses, an administrative directive points out that there is nothing to prevent advisory boards from compelling young unemployed workers to attend evening courses. It is, however, understood that they will do so only where there is no vocational training institution in the region holding full-time courses.

Again, the provisions of the Order are given a broad interpretation from the standpoint of the type of course for which young unemployed workers may register: it has been decided to take into consideration any course likely to improve their vocational skill, including drawing, book-keeping and language courses, etc.

### *Candidates Other than Young Unemployed Workers*

Young men under 21 years of age are not the only unemployed who may undergo training in vocational training establishments. But while attendance is compulsory for them, it is optional in the case of unemployed men over 21 years of age. To encourage the latter to follow such courses, it is recommended that the atmosphere and environment should be made suitable for older workers.

All adult unemployed who follow courses, whatever their nature, must be registered with the vocational retraining services and have received the approval of the central administration. A regional office cannot, therefore, ignore the strict regulations concerning the approval of individual retraining contracts, and make an improper use of its right to grant exemptions from unemployment control in order to enable an unemployed worker to attend courses of more or less doubtful utility in an indifferent school.

### *Results*

As a result of the manpower shortage, which has reduced idleness among young people to an absolute minimum except in a few centres

where there is more extensive unemployment, only a small number of young unemployed have been sent back to training establishments since the coming into force of retraining measures. A large number of them have left school before the end of their training in order to accept employment. It has been observed that training schools are not eager to accept unemployed workers, since they are generally older than the average pupils, they often arrive after the course has started, and their preliminary knowledge is mostly not up to the level of that of the other pupils ; the young unemployed themselves regard being sent back to school as a slight. Schools of an entirely practical character, such as the fishermen's school at Ostend, have been more successful, since the teaching could be more easily adapted to the level of knowledge of each pupil.

The best results, however, have been obtained when either young or adult unemployed workers have themselves asked to be exempted from unemployment control in order to be able to follow a vocational training course.

#### INDIVIDUAL RETRAINING WITH AN EMPLOYER

##### *Principles*

Article 61 of the Decree of 26 May 1945 provides that unemployed workers of not less than 21 years of age may enter into an individual vocational retraining contract, under the auspices of the Unemployment Fund, in conformity with a model drawn up by the Fund and approved in each case by the Director-General of the Fund.

Only in exceptional cases may a contract for individual retraining be concluded by unemployed workers over 18 but below 21 years of age and then only if, after consultation with the Director-General of the Fund, this exception is considered necessary to assist the person in finding employment. This precaution is intended to prevent young unemployed workers from resorting to this type of rapid training at State expense instead of serving a normal apprenticeship.

The object of individual retraining may be twofold : first, the re-employment of workers who are totally unskilled, or forced to change their occupation for various reasons (technical developments in their trade or a change in the economic situation of the country), or forced to return to a trade abandoned many years ago ; secondly, the re-employment of handicapped workers, who are generally regarded as hard to place.

Although individual retraining is open to certain criticisms (it is difficult to check the quality of the training provided — sometimes employers set unemployed workers to the tasks in which their output will be highest instead of teaching them their new trade) the regional offices have been invited, by an administrative directive, to continue to seek the conclusion of individual contracts, especially in areas where this constitutes the only available means of retraining, since the small number of unemployed would not justify the setting up of collective centres. This also applies to special trades, where the use of costly raw materials or equipment does not permit of the setting up of a centre.

Various steps have been taken to remedy the defects of individual retraining. Thus, the number of unemployed taken on for retraining in any undertaking must not exceed 2 per cent. of the total number of workers ; exceptions to this rule may, however, be permitted in trades where there is a shortage of manpower. In this way, it is possible to prevent employers from using unemployed workers undergoing retraining as a source of cheap manpower. Employers of less than 50 workers may be authorised to employ one unemployed worker undergoing training, provided that they undertake to provide him with employment for at least one month beyond the end of the period of retraining provided by the terms of the contract. A certain degree of supervision of retraining has also been provided.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Regulations for the Conclusion of Contracts*

The procedure for concluding individual retraining contracts is as follows : five copies of the draft contract, together with information concerning the candidate and the employer and a report supporting the request are drawn up by the regional office : two of these copies are sent to the Directorate of Placement, which returns one of the copies to the regional office after approval or refusal, as the case may be. The other three copies are intended for the employer, the prospective trainee and the body which pays the benefits. The report which accompanies the draft contract must be detailed, to enable the central service to decide with full knowledge of the facts whether the proposal is justified. It must, in particular, make mention of the following :

(1) the position of the candidate in regard to previous or probable unemployment as well as to his capacity for work ;

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<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 42.

- (2) an exact definition of the occupation contemplated and of the work that will be done during the training period ;
- (3) the manpower situation (shortage or surplus of workers) in his old and his proposed new trade ;
- (4) the duration of the training ;
- (5) the bonus which the employer undertakes to pay to the trainee during retraining ;
- (6) the average wage earned by a skilled workman in the trade which the trainee desires to learn.

A regional office does not propose a retraining contract unless it can be concluded under very favourable conditions. Prior to the conclusion of the contract, it must ascertain that no suitable employment can at short notice be offered to the unemployed worker and that, on the other hand, the candidate will enjoy training conditions which the employer could not have contemplated in cases of normal recruiting. The regional office further assumes the responsibility of exercising all the necessary supervision of the retraining to ensure that it takes place under favourable conditions ; if necessary it proposes the breaking of a contract if its provisions are not being satisfactorily observed.

The regional offices cannot conclude a contract on behalf of an unemployed worker under the sole pretext that, in view of the candidate's age, the employer refuses to take him on at the minimum wage fixed by the joint employers' and workers' committees. In fact, in all circumstances it is considered that regional offices must not take steps which would lead to the State's paying, by way of allowances and other benefits granted to unemployed workers undergoing retraining, a wage equivalent to the initial difference in output between a beginner and a skilled worker.

On the other hand, they may be less strict when a contract for a handicapped candidate is proposed, or for one who is difficult to place, and they are urged to increase the number of these contracts. Very frequently, in fact, the conclusion of an individual contract proves to be the only means of bringing back the person concerned into regular work. Very often, after a trial period of a few months, the placement is successful. Yet, even where they can afford to be less strict in regard to the degree of skill attained by the person concerned, the regional offices must take all necessary precautions to avoid exploitation and must ensure that the bonus that the employer agrees to pay is in keeping in all cases with the trainee's output.

The regional offices are also encouraged to persuade employers to conclude individual retraining contracts. Efforts are to be particularly directed towards the handicrafts, which seem to offer the best guarantee of a proper training and which are extremely neglected, and therefore appear likely to absorb a fairly large number of unemployed workers, particularly older workers. The negotiations undertaken to this effect with the employers and the subsequent supervision are carried out by a specially trained agent, who remains in close contact with all the placement agents.

All contracts for individual retraining must stipulate the duration of the training. During this period the employer undertakes, by the terms of the contract, to teach his trainee the trade contemplated and not to make him do any work not connected with actual training ; to ascertain that the trainee is present every half day ; to inform the regional office where the trainee is registered as an applicant for employment of the date on which the training period comes to an end, and to authorise the agents of the Unemployment Fund to visit the trainee in the workshop and to ascertain how the retraining is proceeding. Further, the contract provides that the employer shall pay the trainee, during the different stages of his retraining, a bonus which will gradually increase as he progresses in his new trade. The trainee, on the other hand, undertakes not to leave his employer before his retraining is at an end except with good reason and the authorisation of the regional office of the Fund.

When the period of retraining is at an end, the employer completes a second form which shows the exact number of days on which the trainee has been present, whether the unemployed worker has been taken on, and full information on the conditions under which the retraining took place. The regional office adds its own remarks and transmits the form thus completed to the Directorate of Placement within eight days of the expiry of the contract.

### *Methods and Results*

Training methods necessarily vary from employer to employer, since individual retraining cannot conform to hard and fast programmes, but must be integrated with the normal functioning of each undertaking. Employers are therefore free to organise it as they think best. Prior to the conclusion of the contract, it is true, the regional office discusses with them in what way the retraining will be carried out in order to ensure, as far as possible, a good all-round training in which the worker performs all the kinds of work that

belong to his trade. While training is going on, the office supervises progress through its specialised agent who is authorised, by the terms of the contract, to make visits of inspection at the workplace.

Nevertheless, experience has shown that contracts for individual retraining often do not yield all the hoped-for results, especially in regard to the level of skill attained by the persons concerned. In fact, although the employer, to compensate him for the time devoted to the training, is allowed to pay the worker not a normal wage but an hourly bonus, it frequently occurs that the worker, instead of learning his new trade, is simply given a job intended to produce the maximum output for the undertaking. This danger is specially great in industries where manpower is scarce and where, as a result, there is considerable temptation to turn all the available labour to production, instead of taking off part of the men to train apprentices or to undergo training. The trainee is doubly affected by this: on the one hand his training is neglected and on the other hand the bonus he receives does not correspond to his output. The Fund is unfortunately not in a position to exercise the constant supervision required to suppress these abuses.

#### COLLECTIVE RETRAINING AT CENTRES

Although in one undertaking there may be several workers undergoing individual retraining, such retraining does not become collective unless there is a real training programme, with an instructor to train the entire group. This collective retraining may also take place at vocational training establishments set up or subsidised by the public authorities, or at special centres set up and administered by the Unemployment Fund.

#### *Centres in Undertakings or at Vocational Training Establishments*

##### *Principles.*

Centres in an undertaking are essential in certain cases, for example when costly or complex tools and machinery are required for the training, or when rationed or expensive raw materials are used. Moreover, there the worker can familiarise himself with the working conditions in the trade he is learning.



Centre for masons at Brussels, 1947.  
Bricklaying.



Centre for masons at Antwerp, 1946.  
Building a chalet.

As in the case of individual retraining, however, retraining at centres set up within undertakings presents certain difficulties. Although it is easier for the regional offices to exercise supervision over a group than over isolated men undergoing retraining, clearly there is a conflict of interests between the tendency on the part of the undertaking to make the trainee's output its sole concern, and the need, from the point of view of retraining, to disregard this consideration and to give the worker the fullest possible instruction.

Centres in trade schools set up or subsidised by the public authorities and functioning with the aid of the school instructors are not, of course, open to the same dangers ; on the contrary, they hold out the advantage that the high quality of the teaching is never in doubt. For the unemployed, a course distinct from that followed by the other trainees must be organised, since adults, in the space of a few months, have to acquire all the essential notions which the young trainees can learn over a much longer period of time. There are, nevertheless, some difficulties : the instructors often find it difficult to adapt their teaching to the needs of the workers being retrained, which leads in certain cases to a method of teaching that is too theoretical, and difficult for older people to assimilate.

#### *Administrative Procedure.*

The policy to be adopted by the regional offices towards centres established in undertakings or vocational establishments set up or subsidised by the public authorities has been laid down in an administrative directive. When a regional office intends to set up such a centre, it should first of all seek the approval in principle of the Directorate of Placement. Where a centre in an undertaking is concerned, the office must seek very special guarantees, in order to avoid abuses.

In particular, when a collective centre is set up at the employer's or at a school, special care should be taken to see that a special technique is applied to ensure that the candidates receive proper training. A detailed plan of the retraining process must first be drawn up. As far as possible, such retraining should take place in special premises. Unfortunately, the conditions of production and the present overcrowding of vocational training establishments do not always make this possible.

On the other hand, when the retrained workers carry out productive work, the regional offices must calculate their output in great detail (if necessary with the aid of technicians from the

employers' and workers' associations), and must see that the unemployed are paid a bonus in keeping with their output.

After obtaining the approval of the Board of Directors, the regional office draws up a contract with the employer or the vocational training institution and submits this to the Director-General, who alone is qualified to commit the Fund. This contract specifically mentions all the clauses of the agreement concluded, in order to safeguard the rights of all parties.

### *Centres Set Up and Administered by the Fund*

#### *Principles.*

The best results have up to now been achieved, however, at the centres set up and administered directly by the Fund. Accordingly, while the order of 26 May 1945 provided for their establishment only in exceptional circumstances, another order of the Regent (14 January 1948) amended the former by authorising the establishment of such centres, on a equal footing with those functioning at an employer's or in a vocational training establishment.

The centres specially set up by regional offices can in fact devote their full attention to the problems of rapid training for the adult unemployed, and reconcile the needs of industry and the workshop with the need for thorough training. Moreover, regional offices may set up refresher courses lasting from four to six weeks, for the special benefit of those unemployed who have already been through a previous course, and for semi-skilled unemployed workers.

#### *Administrative Procedure.*

Before setting up a vocational retraining centre, the regional offices must make out a draft budget which is sent to the Directorate of Placement after submission to the advisory board. This draft budget must be accompanied by an introductory report, analysing the structure of unemployment in the region, the state of the employment market in the past (situations vacant not filled) and future prospects and probabilities. The proposal for the setting up of the centre must in fact be based upon the economic needs which will condition the subsequent employment of the persons concerned in the trade under consideration. Also, a summary of the advice and opinions of the advisory board must be attached.

The draft budget further contains information on the instructors whom it is planned to engage and on the number of unemployed

likely to attend the course. An annex to the budget gives the programme of the course, including the following details : total duration, number of hours per week, theoretical courses (number of hours) and practical courses (number of hours).

Finally, the budget itself sets forth the financial provision to be made under different headings : buildings and premises ; materials and furniture ; raw materials ; electric power ; light and heating ; consumption of water ; salaries and wages ; insurance ; assistance from the Fund (for travelling and lodging expenses, hourly bonus and end-of-apprenticeship bonus). To the general total of these expenses there has to be added 10 per cent. of the total figure of the budget for unforeseen expenses. On the other hand, the regional offices are invited to consider ways and means of offsetting part of the expenditure incurred in the setting up and functioning of the centre, either by way of subsidies from organisations in the region interested in this training, or by the sale of the articles manufactured, the sale of raw materials, etc.<sup>1</sup>

When the budget has been approved by the Board of Directors and the Director-General of the Fund, after examination and if necessary modification by the Vocational Retraining Service and the Directorate of Placement, the regional offices proceed to establish the centre, rent the necessary premises, purchase equipment, engage instructors, etc.

### *Methods.*

Table II below shows the duration of the courses and the number of trainees at certain retraining centres.

As may be observed, the duration of the course varies according to the trade, but generally it is steady within one occupation. Variations occur in certain cases, as for example in the centres for masons, partly because in the early days some courses were reduced to a period which, in the light of experience, proved to be too short and had subsequently to be extended, partly also because, in the case of the masons in particular, the Fund often organises refresher courses, the duration of which may vary according to the initial knowledge of the candidates or the degree of skill it is sought to achieve by means of such courses.

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of centres in undertakings and those attached to a vocational school, the regional offices are also requested to conclude agreements with the regional public authorities, for whom practical work can be done during the final stages of retraining.

TABLE II. DURATION OF COURSE AND NUMBER OF TRAINEES  
AT SOME RETRAINING CENTRES

Trade learned	Kind of centre	Duration of course (months)	Number of trainees
Fitters .....	Trade school	4	8
Tile-layers .....	Trade school	4	18
Art ironworkers .....	Fund	3	10
	Fund	6	16
Masons .....	Fund	3	46
	Fund	3	60
	Fund	2	29
Carpenters .....	Undertaking	6	10
	Fund	6	22
Metal casters .....	Fund	6	33
	Undertaking	6	14
Plasterers .....	Fund	4	12
Plumbers and zinc-workers .....	Trade school	6	12
Panel-beaters .....	Undertaking	4	8
Turners .....	Trade school	4	6

Source : *Revue du Travail*, Nov.-Dec. 1947, p. 988.

As for the number of candidates admitted to a centre, this may vary considerably and no definite rule exists. Trainees are particularly numerous in certain trades, such as masonry, but there are considerable differences between the numbers of trainees attending different centres : in the three retraining centres for masons included in table II, the numbers were 29, 46 and 60 ; for other trades there were similar differences between centres — 8 and 18 for fitters, 10 and 22 for carpenters, 14 and 33 for metal casters. No attempt is therefore made to establish uniform sizes for the classes, though such a procedure would enable the establishment of teaching methods suited to groups of more or less fixed numbers. That is the practice in other countries, where it is held that small groups of workers, who can receive the instructor's individual attention and advice, lend themselves better to rapid retraining, the object of which is to give them the widest possible knowledge and to let them acquire as much experience as possible in their new occupation over a very short period. In Belgium, however, where the centres are set up whenever there is a sufficient number of candidates to justify it, there is a minimum number of candidates, but no maximum number, or practically none, of candidates who may attend the same retraining course in a centre.

The teaching includes a theoretical and a practical part. In the former, which keeps step with the practical work, the trainee is given technical background essential for his understanding of the work he is doing and the solution of problems with which he may find himself faced. This part is generally in the hands of a technical training instructor. A great deal less time is devoted to this theoretical part than to practical training. Thus, metal casters are given two hours, and masons, plumbers and zinc-workers one hour a day of such related instruction.

The theoretical training deals with the technology of the trade (materials, tools and their uses, main types of process, terminology, safety measures), as well as, in certain cases, with some notions of drawing, mathematics and geometry. For example, the plan of retraining courses for fitters includes four parts, each subdivided into a theoretical and a practical section. During the first part, the trainee is taught various elementary notions concerning his trade (materials, tools, principles of simple processes), while at the same time he does simple exercises (filing, fitting, assembling, drilling, sawing, etc.). During the second part, he learns the technology and the practical work of turning. Next, he goes on to the technology and practice of milling, and finally he learns arithmetic and drawing. For panel-beaters and coachbuilders the theoretical course includes a study of the materials, the names and use of several kinds of material and the general principles of working on sheet-iron (cutting, beating, planing, rolling, form-making).

Practical instruction fills in the rest of the working day. Generally an ex-foreman or yards supervisor with years of practical experience is in charge of this. The men first of all do simple jobs. Carpenters, for example, begin by doing measuring, tracing, sawing and grooving exercises. Next come the various kinds of joint used in carpentry (angle joint, vertical joint, mitre-joint, mortise-and-tenon-and-mitre angle joint, dovetail joint, scarf joint, etc. ; combinations of the these different sorts of joint).

In order that retraining may be carried out under conditions resembling as closely as possible those in real production, and enable the unemployed to adapt themselves more easily in undertakings afterwards, the regional offices may, during the latter part of the retraining when the trainees are familiar with the various operations that they will encounter in their trade, have productive work done at the centres. Such work must naturally have an obvious connection with the trade the trainees are learning. The work must be fairly difficult and involve numerous exercises. Repetitive work



Plasterers' centre at Saint-Nicolas.



Metal casters' centre at Tournai, 1946.

is strictly forbidden, because it involves mechanical repetition of the same exercises and can therefore considerably hamper the training of candidates intended for a skilled trade.<sup>1</sup>

For example, the practical work given to trainees in carpentry when they have been through their elementary training includes the manufacture of mallets, planes, shelves, frames, coat-racks, tool-boxes, as well as doors and various window-frames.

In addition to practical work, the courses frequently provide for special exercises, which vary with the special difficulties encountered during the course, and for the repetition of exercises already done ; these must be performed at a definite pace, the aim being to help the trainee to acquire a certain speed.

The centres use a certain number of standard programmes for various trades. These programmes, drawn up by the Fund on the basis of experience gained, indicate the key points both in theoretical and practical training, and serve as a guide for instructors, whose teaching experience, at any rate in the matter of rapid retraining, is mostly limited. This ensures that no essential point of the new trade is neglected during the retraining, which is very much shorter than a normal apprenticeship period. Some of these standard programmes will be found in Appendix I.

In addition there are handbooks for the use of trainees in certain trades. For masons, for example — the occupation with the greatest number of trainees — the Fund has published a " practical course " of about 40 pages, which includes all the theory of the trade, with numerous illustrations of practical exercises and explanations of how to do them. A handbook of this kind is a useful supplement to the oral teaching of the instructor ; it is particularly valuable to those undergoing vocational retraining since, owing to the short duration of the training period, they generally do not have time to revert to an exercise already learned.

There are also practical guides for instructors in certain trades such as carpentry. These guides include no theoretical teaching, but give the instructor guidance as to the type and quantity of materials he will need for his teaching and for each exercise. They

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<sup>1</sup> Productive work at the centres is regarded in Belgium as one of the means of meeting the running costs of the centres. It is considered preferable to obtain orders from the public administrations, but if this cannot be done, the centres may execute orders for private undertakings or persons. Naturally the regional offices must do all in their power to prevent the centres from being accused of competing with private undertakings, especially by seeing that they do only tasks of secondary importance which, had the centre not been able to do them, would probably not have been performed at all.

further include dimensioned sketches of the different practical exercises which the trainees have to do. Since the Fund is not in a position to train the instructors it engages<sup>1</sup>, a teaching plan, as detailed as possible, is very helpful in rationalising instruction, ensuring regular progress from the simplest to the most complicated exercises and eliminating, as far as possible, wastage of the materials used.

### *Results*

However much attention is devoted to the drawing up of rational programmes for retraining centres, the periods of training are mostly much too brief to enable the trainees to do more than familiarise themselves with the chief processes of the trade they are learning. They could not possibly acquire sufficient skill to enable them, on the first day of their taking up new employment, to produce the same output as an experienced worker. This rapid training cannot of course be compared to the normal vocational training generally given to young workers. Moreover, these two types of training differ in their aims and meet the needs of different categories of workers, so that the one could not possibly replace the other. What matters most is that experience shows that with rapid training for the unemployed in special centres, it is possible to concentrate into a few months' training the main points of an apprenticeship which, in the case of young men, requires years of practical experience. This is, of course, achieved by eliminating purely general subject-matter and by giving concentrated theoretical training. It is true that candidates who have worked in one of the Fund's special centres leave such centres as specialised rather than skilled workers, but this is itself a considerable achievement, since they can replace more experienced men who are in a position to hold posts requiring a higher degree of skill. Moreover, if they are judiciously placed in jobs where they can continue to do all the work that forms part of the trade they have learned, rather than repetitive work, they can often supplement later a rather hasty apprenticeship.

### TECHNICAL RESEARCH

Technical research on special problems connected with the rapid training of the unemployed is not very advanced in Belgium. There is nevertheless a central body which deals in particular with

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 34.

questions connected with vocational retraining: this is the vocational retraining service in the Directorate of Placement, one of the administrative bodies of the Fund already discussed. It will be remembered that one of the tasks of the regional offices is to submit to the Directorate of Placement all proposals for individual retraining contracts, as well as draft budgets, accompanied by a programme of the courses planned, for the collective centres which they consider should be set up. The Directorate of Placement considers these proposals and approves or rejects them, or modifies them in the light of experience already gained.

Furthermore, the Directorate of Placement has available a certain number of standard programmes for courses for use in vocational retraining centres. There are programmes, for example, for fitters, tilers, electricians, ironsmiths in the building trade, masons, carpenters, painters, plumbers and zinc-workers, restaurant keepers and shorthand-typists. The programmes constitute general directives; drawn up on the basis of experience, they serve to make the teaching less makeshift and more standardised than used to be the case in the early days of retraining, when the instructors were almost entirely responsible for the organisation of the courses at their centres, both practical and theoretical.

We have seen above that in addition to these standard programmes, the Directorate of Placement has prepared handbooks for the use of trainees in certain trades, as well as practical guides for instructors. The continuation and development of such work will certainly enable improvements to be effected in the quality of rapid retraining for the unemployed and help to adapt it to their particular needs.

The Directorate also sends administrative directives on vocational retraining to the regional offices. In this way it exercises supervision over the various aspects of retraining, such as the preparation and submission of the budget, the selection of candidates, the way in which the budget is implemented, including the engagement of instructors, the purchase of tools, the payment of the benefits granted to the unemployed, etc., and the principles which must govern the three retraining methods. The entire practical organisation of retraining, then, rests with this central body.

The Directorate also defines policy, on the basis of monthly reports on vocational retraining. By considering the difficulties of various kinds encountered in the placement of retrained persons in various trade groups it may stimulate the setting up of centres or the conclusion of individual contracts in such occupations as seem most likely to absorb manpower.

It is true that Belgium possesses no technical research institute with an experimental centre attached, where different educational methods could be tested in order to ascertain which are the most effective. However, the Directorate of Placement and its vocational retraining service, though unable to undertake proper technical research, nevertheless form a body which centralises all data, guides the drawing up of programmes, and, on the basis of the results achieved as well as other information concerning the employment market and the skilled manpower situation, determines the retraining policy to be pursued and facilitates its execution.

#### RECRUITMENT OF INSTRUCTORS

The Fund attaches much importance to a careful selection of instructors by the regional offices, as it regards the value of the training given at the centre as nearly always closely related to the technical and educational skill of the instructor. The instructors are recruited mainly from three sources :

- (a) part-time instructors at industrial schools ;
- (b) works foremen, shop supervisors, foremen of undertakings which are aware of the importance of vocational retraining and agree to dispense with the services of their employees for a number of months ;
- (c) independent workers (craftsmen) or retired workers.

Recruitment is not free from difficulty. As a result of the shortage of specialists, both the industry and the schools are reluctant to part with their best men. Moreover potential instructors hesitate to relinquish a safe post for an intermittent one which does not offer much security. However, the employers' organisations requested to do so often nominate candidates who possess all the technical skill required for the work.

The recruitment of capable instructors is the more important because no provision for their training exists within the framework of the Fund, so that candidates must be found who are capable of giving instruction without previous special training. Generally, moreover, the retraining courses consist of two parts : practical and theoretical. The practical courses are under the supervision of persons selected among the skilled staff in undertakings : foremen or works supervisors who have complete mastery of their trade as well as a long practical experience acquired in factory or workyard ; on the other hand, it is considered preferable to entrust the theoretical



Centre for building smiths, Antwerp, 1946



Centre for fitter-turners, La Louvière, 1946.

part to part-time instructors at technical colleges who organise their courses in accordance with the character of the occupation and with the advanced age of the apprentices; that is, without laying too much emphasis on abstract notions which are of little use in practical work.

Two different arrangements are used in the engagement of instructors:

(1) The instructor, during the life of the training centre, may remain in the service of his original employer (private undertaking or public body); in this case the regional office concludes an agreement with the employer, by the terms of which the person concerned is transferred to the technical direction of the Fund for as long as the centre continues to exist. In accordance with the regional agreements, his original employer may remain responsible for his wages or he may be paid periodically by the Fund.

(2) The instructor may be recruited by the Fund, in which case he is regarded as a salaried employee of that body.

It has been impossible to organise the systematic training of instructors, owing to the limited scope of arrangements for vocational retraining. The centres, in fact, do not exist for long and none is opened unless a sufficient number of candidates can be found. Since the trainees are recruited mostly among the unemployed and since they are not very numerous and their capacities vary considerably, it is clear that the number of potential candidates is bound to be somewhat small; this prevents any extensive organisation of courses and makes permanent arrangements impossible. Certainly, if it were possible to recruit specialists for a term of several years and to train them with reference to the particular needs of the rapid training of adults, a good many difficulties could be overcome. It may be possible for arrangements of this kind to be made, at any rate for trades where there is a shortage of manpower which bids fair to continue for several years. However, every initiative of this kind is liable to be constantly hampered by the need to confine its application to those in receipt of unemployment benefits, with few exceptions. As the level as well as the structure of unemployment cannot be foretold for so long a period, it would seem that the possibility of engaging instructors for several years and of giving them training which will improve the quality of their teaching cannot be achieved unless vocational training, from a means of resettling the unemployed only, becomes an instrument for training skilled manpower generally.

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## IV. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ADULT TRAINING

### RECRUITMENT

#### *Principles*

The selection of candidates for vocational retraining is carried out on the principle that, except in cases of seasonal unemployment for which refresher courses are organised, preference is given to candidates who without such retraining might be unlikely to find work again. At the same time, it is desirable that other factors should be taken into account, such as good will, age, and the physical capacity of the worker in regard to his former or proposed new trade.

#### *Preliminary Selection*

In the recruitment of candidates, the employment offices are asked to proceed as follows: first of all they must carefully go through the card index of each trade group and note especially those who have been unemployed for a long time or have repeatedly become unemployed; they also make a selection among partly-fit and aged unemployed, who have sufficient physical strength; finally they seek out candidates who belong to a trade that is dying out. These are the people most in need of vocational retraining—those who can hope to achieve more stable employment after taking a course.

Generally, the unemployed are not compelled to attend a vocational retraining course against their will; but sometimes offers of retraining are made in order to remove from the unemployment assistance registers those who are unwilling to work.

Otherwise, the offices are urged to exercise great caution in regard to the recruitment of voluntary candidates for the courses. It is admitted that the will to learn is important, but offices are required to ensure that there is no possibility of the volunteers finding work shortly and that they are not giving up a trade which is financially as lucrative as that which they wish to learn.

#### *Selection by the Placement Officer and Medical and Psychological Tests*

When lists of suitable candidates have been made from the various card indexes, the task of selecting them is entrusted to specialists in the

occupation in which the candidates are about to receive retraining, or at any rate to a placement officer who is familiar with the conditions and requirements of that trade. For purposes of judging whether a candidate possesses the necessary qualifications to enable him to derive the maximum benefit from vocational retraining, the Order of 26 May 1945 provides that he shall, if necessary, be subjected to a medical or technical examination carried out by technicians. In fact, there is no question of demanding such examinations for all candidates, and most of the task of selection rests entirely with the specialised placement officer. Certain rules have been laid down to guide the latter in his decision as to cases in which a medical examination or psychological test should take place:

(i) *Medical examination.* Only those candidates are liable who are suspected of suffering from a disease or physical handicap which would hamper a useful apprenticeship.

(ii) *Psychological testing.* The offices are urged to act judiciously in view of the high costs of such tests, which must be settled with the vocational guidance offices. Such tests are mostly necessary in cases of candidates suffering from a handicap which might prove to be a grave hindrance to their vocational training. They may also be considered in cases where a selection is to be made for admission to centres where a particularly difficult trade is taught, such as carpentry. For the simple trades, on the other hand, no psychological or aptitude tests are required, except in doubtful cases.

The employment offices are invited to report on the technical problem involved in the recruitment of the best possible candidates for the centre. Thus, a selective examination, designed to eliminate a number of candidates, is bound to lead to stricter standards than a test intended merely to reveal definite counter-indications to the trade contemplated, in regions where there is little unemployment and where it is very difficult to recruit candidates.

#### *Final Selection*

When the psychological test shows that the candidate's aptitude is up to the average, the manager of the regional office accepts or rejects the candidate in the light of such other factors as the number of vacancies, the personal position of the candidate and his chances of otherwise obtaining work.

Once the preliminary selection by the employment office and the employment office manager is complete and, where necessary, the results of the medical examination or psychological test are known,

the candidates submitted must come before the Advisory Board, which nominates the candidates after a brief conversation with each. It also gives its advice on any refusal.

### *Candidates Other than Workers Drawing Unemployment Benefit*

Special instructions govern the acceptance at vocational retraining centres of candidates other than workers drawing unemployment benefit who are proposed by bodies unconnected with the Fund by virtue of the Legislative Orders in favour of civilians who took part actively or passively in the Resistance, political prisoners and their next-of-kin, etc. These may be accepted only in a few individual cases and it is specified that they cannot be accepted in one centre in large numbers. The principle applied to the unemployed, according to which the new occupation which they wish to learn must be economically more lucrative than the old, holds for these persons also, unless the exercise of their former trade is forbidden them for personal (*e.g.*, medical) reasons. When there are more candidates for admission to a centre than the centre can take, men drawing unemployment benefit always have priority.

### REMUNERATION

The Order of 26 May 1945, supplemented by those of 20 December 1945<sup>1</sup> and of 29 January 1948<sup>2</sup>, fixes the different payments which the Fund is empowered to make to persons undergoing retraining. Since these are mostly unemployed men who continue to be regarded as such rather than as workers attending a retraining course, they do not receive proper wages; their basic remuneration consists of unemployment allowances in lieu of a maintenance allowance. Moreover, their additional expenses (travelling, lodging) are reimbursed if retraining involves them in such expenses. Thirdly, in order to stimulate their interest in retraining, the Fund is authorised to pay, or to have paid to them by their employer, bonuses which are supposed to correspond to a certain extent to the value of their productive work and which, moreover, serve to reward those who have been the most successful in their course. The different grants made to the unemployed are set forth below.

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<sup>1</sup> *Moniteur belge*, 18 and 19 February 1946.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, 20 February 1948.

### *Maintenance Allowance*

The daily rate of unemployment pay is as follows :

(1) for a man 21 years of age and over and for a married man under 21 years of age, 50 per cent. of the minimum wage of an adult unskilled worker ;

(2) for a woman 21 years of age or more, 50 per cent. of the minimum wage paid to an adult woman worker ;

(3) for workers of both sexes under 21 years of age, 50 per cent. of the minimum wage of workers of their own age.

In addition to these allowances, there are family allowances, but in no case may the total exceed two thirds of the average wage fixed by the Minister of Labour, with the addition of family allowances.

### *Reimbursement of Expenses*

The Fund reimburses to the unemployed man all the travelling expenses occasioned by vocational retraining, when the distance he has to travel exceeds 5 kilometres. In addition, an unemployed worker undergoing collective retraining with an employer or at a special centre may receive a lodging allowance, but only if the daily journey between his home and the training centre is difficult or costly.

With regard to young unemployed who are required to attend a course of vocational training, the Fund defrays the costs of their enrolment. It may also pay the registration costs of unemployed workers of all ages who on their own initiative attend a course of this type under the auspices of the Fund.

### *Bonuses*

Unemployed workers who undergo collective vocational retraining at an employer's establishment or at a special centre are entitled to a bonus of 4.50 francs per hour in addition to their unemployment allowances ; the bonus is paid in monthly instalments. The Fund does not, however, pay this in all cases of collective retraining : when the retraining is carried out in an undertaking, the employer is invited to pay the unemployed a bonus for their services, and this bonus then replaces the one otherwise paid by the Fund. In the case of unemployed men undergoing individual retraining, it is

provided that the employer shall pay them a bonus, fixed in agreement with the Fund, in keeping with their output.

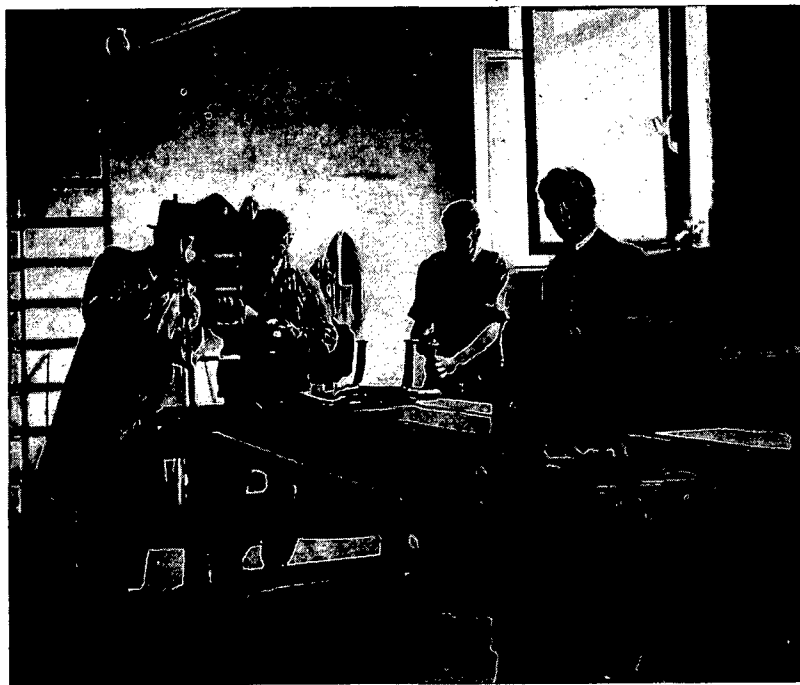
On the proposal of the Advisory Board, a bonus in kind (tools, work clothes, etc.) to a maximum value of 800 francs is allocated to unemployed men who successfully conclude their retraining period. This end-of-training bonus is not granted unless the unemployed worker has, within twelve months of the conclusion of his retraining, found employment in his new trade and remains employed for at least one month. This period may be extended in the case of certain groups of trades, by decision of the Advisory Board concerned. In practice, the amount of the bonus is fixed on the basis of the duration of the training and the results achieved.

It should be noted that in no case may the total amount received by the unemployed man undergoing retraining exceed the normal wage paid to skilled workers in the trade which he is learning. To avoid this, the unemployment benefit is reduced by the amount involved. In the case of trainees and young apprentices between 18 and 21 years of age, the total which may not be exceeded is calculated by taking into account the wage normally paid to young unskilled workers in the region.

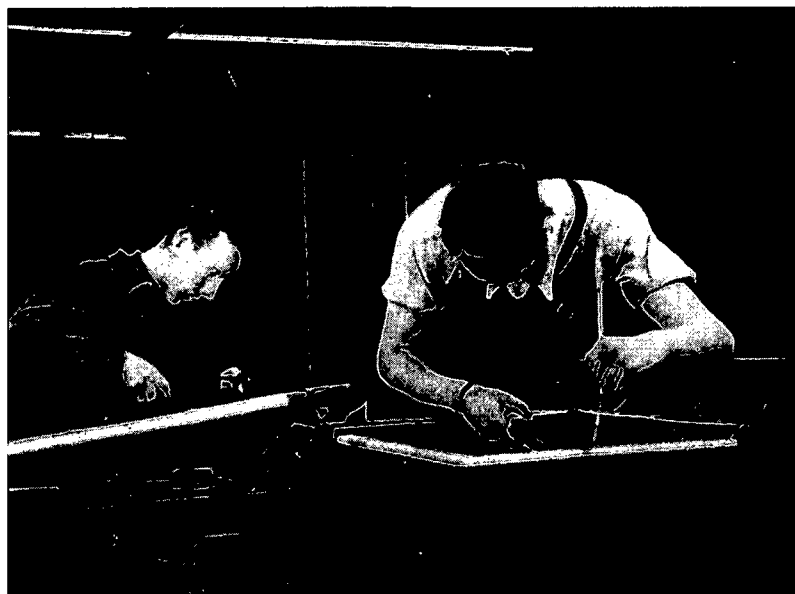
With regard to social insurance, unemployed men undergoing retraining enjoy the special dispensation for the benefit of the unemployed in regard to family allowances, sickness and disablement allowances and old-age pensions. In addition, they are insured against accidents sustained in the course of their work, either partly by their employer and partly by the Fund (individual retraining, or, in certain cases, collective retraining in an undertaking), or else entirely by the Fund (retraining at a centre).

### *Candidates Other than Workers Drawing Unemployment Benefit*

In the case of civilians who were formerly members of the Resistance, etc., who are permitted to undergo retraining under the Legislative Orders mentioned above, the Fund does not share the costs of such retraining. The body which sponsors this sort of retraining — or the person concerned himself — must reimburse to the Fund its (or his) share of the running costs of the centre. Of course the Fund, in such cases, pays no travelling or lodging allowance, or hourly or end-of-apprenticeship bonus. Each body responsible for such persons fixes its contribution as it sees fit.



Plumber-zincworkers' centre, Louvain, 1947.



Zincworkers' centre, Charleroi, 1946.

### SUPERVISION OF TRAINING

The regional offices are responsible for supervising retraining contracts. The director of the regional office, the specialised placement officer or the agent in charge of retraining pays monthly visits to the employers and vocational training institutions, in order to ensure that retraining proceeds smoothly. They ascertain that the person concerned is really working in such conditions that at the end of his training he knows the fundamental principles of his trade and can therefore earn a living as a semi-skilled worker; they also ascertain that training is not neglected for productive work and in cases of individual retraining they see that the bonus paid by the employer is fixed on the basis of the worker's output and that it is really paid to him.

In addition, the employer or the director of the training institution must ascertain every half-day that the unemployed undergoing retraining are present.

#### *Examination at End of Training Period*

During the final days of their training at the centre the candidates have to undergo an examination, with the assistance of the instructors and any persons skilled in the trade who are prepared to give their assistance, especially the employers' organisations in the area. The candidates must obtain at least 60 per cent. of marks before they can be regarded as having effectively mastered the skills necessary for their new trade. On the basis of the results achieved at this examination it is decided whether a candidate shall be awarded the end-of-training bonus, as well as its amount in kind. As regards persons retraining with an employer, the standard contract provides that at the end of the retraining period the employer shall make a report on the results of the course, thus enabling the regional office to form an idea of the extent to which the unemployed man has benefited by this training, and to classify him in the appropriate category.

### PLACEMENT

Great efforts are made to enable those retrained to find employment in keeping with the degree of skill attained during their training. Where they were bound by individual contracts, the employer is urged to keep the retrained person in his service. As for those who attended collective retraining courses, a few weeks

before the end of the course the office takes various steps to ensure that they can be employed immediately they leave the centre, to avoid their losing what they have gained during training, either by remaining unemployed or by accepting employment as unskilled workers. It is therefore considered most important that they should be placed in employment where there is a certainty that they will be able to perfect themselves in their trade and do as many and varied jobs as possible, rather than repetitive work. Enquiries held subsequently have in fact shown that among the unemployed who have attended the same retraining course, the level of vocational skill after a given time was conditioned by the type of work which they had done after their retraining course was at an end.

Once the retrained unemployed men have found work, the regional offices must hold periodical enquiries, by letter or, preferably, by personal contact, to ensure that they are satisfied with their new occupation and that they have the opportunity to perfect their knowledge. To this end, a member of the staff of the office visits them at regular intervals (*e.g.*, every six months), or invites them to visit him at the office, so that he may speak to them personally. In addition the regional offices may be called upon, where necessary, to make the retrained men change their employment when their new post is not satisfactory from that point of view.

It must, however, be admitted that this procedure which the regional offices are asked to adopt in the matter of placement is not always possible in practice, since the employment service in Belgium does not have a monopoly of placement. For this reason, unemployed men who have finished their training often, of their own accord, accept employment that offers no future and in which they will do nothing but repetitive work, instead of trying to perfect themselves at their trade, because they are attracted by the prospect of immediate financial advantage. Again, in numerous trades where there is a shortage of manpower, suitable employment cannot always be chosen for the retrained.

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## V. ACHIEVEMENTS

One of the criteria whereby the success of retraining may be judged is the number of unemployed who successfully complete their retraining and find employment in the trade they have learned. In fact, the higher their number, by comparison with the total number of unemployed who have undergone retraining, the more certain we can be that they have really mastered the new technical skill desired and that the choice of trades in which they have completed their retraining enables their rapid absorption into the economic life of the country. In this way, a twofold object is achieved: a better standard of training for the workers, and a reduction of unemployment.

There are not many data on the results obtained by means of compulsory and optional training. Those that we possess are not very satisfactory, for a large number of young unemployed selected to attend the vocational training courses leave in the middle of the course to accept employment. It is impossible to determine to what extent such placement is due to their newly acquired knowledge rather than to their previous training. Such desertion during training is due to the fact that the young unemployed, who are generally older than the average pupil in vocational schools, feel ill-adjusted there. It must also be remembered that a period of training undertaken under the compulsory training system under the auspices of the Fund is fairly uncertain in character, because that body must bring it to an end immediately it has posts to offer that would be suitable for the young unemployed.

The best results have been achieved when unemployed men of all ages have themselves asked for permission to attend courses at a vocational training establishment.

With regard to individual retraining with an employer, table III below gives some indication of what has been obtained by this method.

The Office has no information concerning unemployed men who took individual retraining after 1 April 1947. However, the cases introduced by the regional offices since 1 January 1948 were distributed by 30 April as follows (unemployed men over



Carpenters' centre, Brussels, 1946.

Making a dormer window.

TABLE III. RESULTS OF 570 CASES OF INDIVIDUAL TRAINING  
ON 1 APRIL 1947

	Taken on in the trade learned	Returned to their original trade	Still unem- ployed	Left training owing to military call-up	Left without reason	Found to be un- suitable	Totals
On expiry of term stipulated ...	333	6	11	—	—	—	350
Before expiry of term .....	61	25	12	13	37	72	220
Totals .....	394	31	23	13	37	72	570

21 years of age) : 172, no further action (unemployed man proposed, but no training given) ; 50 cases in process of retraining ; 683 cases of retraining completed ; 233 gave up during retraining.

From these data we may conclude that up to 1 April 1947, 176 cases of individual retraining out of 570, *i.e.*, about 30 per cent., produced disappointing results, because the unemployed returned

to work in their former trade, or were still unemployed after their retraining was completed, or abandoned their training. Some 70 per cent., however, were successful. The proportion of unemployed who did not complete their training by comparison with those who did was just below two thirds (220 against 350). In 1948 it dropped ; by this time it was only about one third (233 against 683), which denotes considerable progress.

Collective retraining in centres also yielded satisfactory results. On 1 April 1947, data were available for 1,279 unemployed out of 1,950 who had attended centres. The figures are given in table IV.

For the beginning of 1948 (1 January to 30 April), statistics show that out of 3,423 cases introduced by 30 April, in 141 no further action was taken, 751 were still training, 1,900 cases of retraining had finished their retraining and 631 abandoned their training before the end.

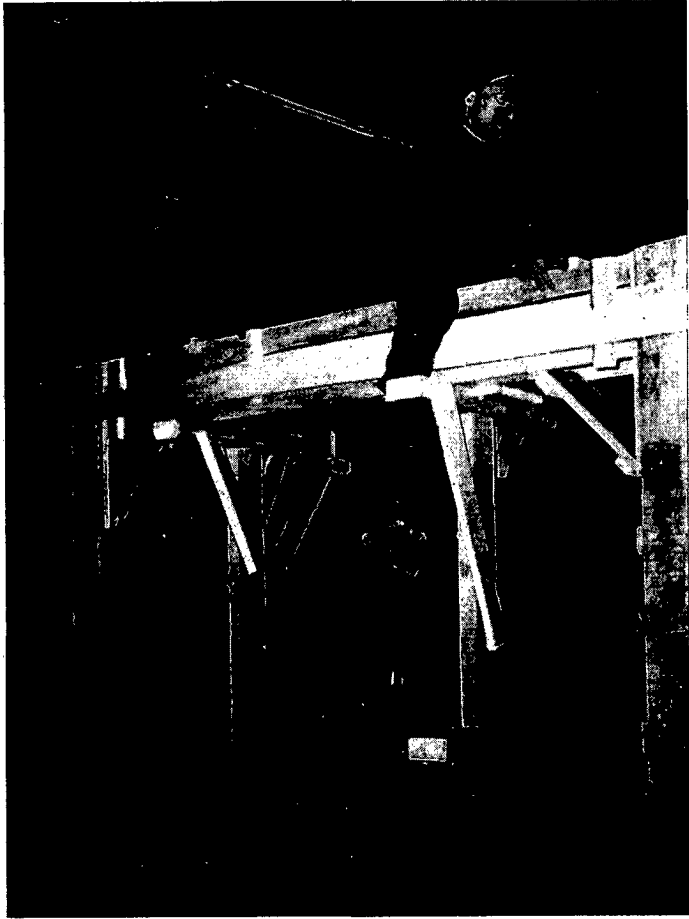
TABLE IV. RESULTS OF 1,279 COLLECTIVE RETRAINING CASES,  
1 APRIL 1947

	Taken on in the trade learned	Returned to their original trade	Still unemployed	Left training owing to military call-up	Left without reason	Found to be unsuitable	Broken off by unemployment fund	Totals
On expiry of term stipulated....	800	10	11	—	—	—	—	821
Before expiry of term .....	100	167	8	20	73	63	27	458
Totals ....	900	177	19	20	73	63	27	1,279

These figures show that by 1 April 1947, 30 per cent. of cases of retraining had produced no result, while in the remainder of cases the unemployed had been taken on in the trade which they had learned, irrespective of whether or not they had completed their training period. These results of collective retraining, then, were proportionately the same as those achieved by individual retraining. About 36 per cent. of those who went in for vocational training during 1947 gave it up (458 cases out of 1,279), as against 25 per cent. in 1948 (631 cases out of 2,531). In the case of collective training, as in that of individual, the proportion of unemployed who gave

up their training course before the end, shows a satisfactory downward trend.

It is also interesting to consider in what branches of activity vocational retraining has developed since its inception. The fairly limited framework within which it is practised in Belgium obviously prevented it from becoming the instrument of a manpower policy



Centre for concrete shutterers, Tournai, 1946.

aiming at a redistribution of labour on the basis of economic needs. However, although this action affected only a small number of persons, an effort has been made to direct the unemployed towards trades in which there was a shortage of manpower.

Tables V and VI give an idea of the distribution of the training courses organised, by industries and by types of retraining. Table V deals with the first months of the retraining scheme (up to November 1946, except for collective retraining, for which the data go up to 1 April 1947). Table VI refers to the first four months of 1948.

Table VII gives the distribution by occupations of the various collective retraining centres functioning in various parts of the country during April 1948:

TABLE V. DISTRIBUTION OF TRAINING COURSES BY INDUSTRIES AND TYPES OF RETRAINING (FIRST PERIOD)<sup>1</sup>

Industry	Schooling	Individual retraining	Collective retraining		Total
			1945-46	1946-47	
Catering .....	—	4	—	—	4
Timber .....	38	63	52	84	237
Chemistry .....	—	7	—	—	7
Building .....	—	33	564	360	957
Leather .....	—	48	2	6	56
Book .....	—	25	—	—	25
Metal .....	115	167	255	133	670
Paper .....	—	5	—	—	5
Fisheries .....	17	1	—	18	36
Stone, ceramics, glass, diamond ..	—	117	5	20	142
Textiles .....	13	156	—	—	169
Clothing .....	—	45	—	—	45
Miscellaneous .....	—	12	14	48	74
Totals .....	183	683	892	669	2,427

<sup>1</sup> Victor MARTIN: *La réadaptation professionnelle et la formation accélérée des travailleurs* (Brussels, Larcier and Lebègue, 1947), pp. 57, 63-65; and "De la réadaptation professionnelle des chômeurs à la formation accélérée du personnel des entreprises", *Revue du Travail*, February 1947, pp. 146-147.

These various tables show what has been done, particularly for the building industry. Out of 2,437 workmen who completed their collective retraining courses in the early days of such courses, 977, i.e., two fifths, were retrained in that industry. Of the 2,583 who had completed their retraining by 30 April 1948, 1,300—a little more than half—had also received instruction in the building trade. Out of the 36 centres functioning as at 1 April 1948, there were 13 for masons, four for plasterers, two for painters, one for central heating fitters and one for tilers.

The high proportion of training courses organised for the building industry may be partly accounted for by the fact that the Fund

makes use of the winter months, when that branch of activity is affected by seasonal unemployment, to set up refresher courses for unemployed builders. The object is not merely to avoid their having to go through a long period of inaction, but also to alleviate the shortage of skilled labour which just after the war is particularly heavy in the building trade.

Hitherto, the Fund has mostly been able to find employment in their new occupation for applicants who have finished their vocational retraining, as may be seen from the above tables. This success, while it indicates that most of the trainees attained sufficient technical skill to enable them to find work in the trade they had learned, can also be partly accounted for by the shortage of manpower from which Belgium has suffered until quite recently, and which made employers more inclined to take on workers whose

TABLE VI. DISTRIBUTION OF TRAINING COURSES BY INDUSTRIES AND BY RETRAINING GROUPS (1 JANUARY-30 APRIL 1948)<sup>1</sup>

Trade group	Types of retraining			Previous trades
	Individual retraining	Collective retraining	Totals	
Agriculture .....	—	—	—	134
Timber, hunting, fisheries .....	1	25	26	15
Mines .....	—	—	—	11
Quarries, ceramics, glass, diamonds .....	148	5	153	165
Building .....	52	1,248	1,300	212
Timber .....	46	172	218	65
Metal .....	137	367	504	203
Chemistry .....	5	—	5	1
Paper .....	5	—	5	9
Books .....	24	—	24	9
Textiles ; production .....	136	6	142	87
Clothing .....	61	—	61	29
Leather .....	46	8	54	9
Food, tobacco .....	11	—	11	48
Transport .....	3	—	3	108
Hotels, restaurants .....	—	18	18	28
Domestic service .....	—	—	—	18
Service industry .....	—	—	—	11
Skilled industrial technicians ...	6	—	6	5
Skilled employees .....	—	—	—	—
Subordinate employees .....	2	51	53	92
Artists .....	—	—	—	1
Unskilled .....	—	—	—	1,323
Totals .....	683	1,900	2,583	2,583

<sup>1</sup> The Office has no information regarding the distribution by industry of school training courses during that period.

training had sometimes been rather hasty. Retraining, in fact, in some cases had been too rapid and not sufficiently diversified, so that the trainees could not always acquire all the technical skill necessary to enable them to ply their trade.

TABLE VII. DISTRIBUTION BY OCCUPATIONS  
OF COLLECTIVE RETRAINING CENTRES (APRIL 1948)

Regional office	Centres functioning during 1948 which had opened earlier	Centres opened during the month	Centres closed during the month
Alost .....	Masons		Masons
Antwerp .....	Plasterers		Plasterers
	Masons		
	Painters		Painters
	Central heating fitters		
	Plumbers and zinc-workers (1st group)	Plumbers and zinc-workers (2nd group)	Plumbers and zinc-workers (1st group)
	Carpenters		
	Shorthand-typists		
	Electricians		
	Stampers (1st, 2nd and 3rd groups)	Stampers (4th and 5th groups)	
Arlon .....	Masons		Masons
	Plasterers		Plasterers
Bruges .....	Plumbers and zinc-workers		
Brussels .....	Masons		
	Carpenters		
Louvain .....	Masons		Masons
	Tilers		Tilers
	Carpenters		
	Timber-workers		Timber-workers
Mechlin .....	Masons		
Nivelles .....	Masons		Masons
Ostend .....	Electricians		
	Plumbers and zinc-workers		
	Plasterers		Plasterers
	Carpenters		
Rosselaere .....	Masons		Masons
Saint-Nicolas .....	Masons		
	Fine-darners		
Tournai .....	Painters		
	Plasterers		Plasterers
	Masons		
	Carpenters		
	Tapestry-weavers		
Turnhout .....	Masons		



Fishermen's centre, Ostend, 1946.



Tapestry-makers' centre, Tournai, 1948.

Nevertheless vocational retraining has a useful part to play: it enables some workers who are difficult to place to get back to work again; also, there is no doubt that it can do much to alleviate a shortage of manpower in a given trade. Its defects can also be remedied—its somewhat sketchy nature, and the resulting danger that retrained people may have difficulty in finding work unless there is a great demand for manpower. On the one hand, a judicious placement policy should be pursued, with the aim of getting retrained men placed with employers in whose service they can meet with a great variety of work which provides them with experience normally acquired in the course of years of work; on the other hand, vocational retraining should be developed, as far as possible, in industries or trades where there is a shortage of manpower and where, as a result, the unemployed will have no difficulty in finding work and in improving their knowledge. A highly flexible policy must be followed, and this is what the Fund endeavours to do: thanks to the central supervision of retraining by the Placement Directorate, the Director-General of the Fund and the Board of Directors, it is possible either to stimulate or to slow up the establishment of centres and the conclusion of individual contracts for given industries and trades, according to developments in the economic situation.

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## VI. CONCLUSION

As may be seen from the preceding chapter, vocational retraining of the unemployed has, by and large, produced satisfactory results. Nevertheless, until recently, the total number of unemployed in Belgium was not high and those who could not find work and as a result became candidates for retraining were often people who were difficult to employ on grounds of age, physical handicap or for other reasons. As a result those who received vocational retraining were often not those who would have been the most likely to derive the full benefit from it, and in fact the regional offices were actually requested to take a very special interest in the latter. The results achieved by the Unemployment Fund are therefore especially encouraging.

However, certain criticisms have been levelled at the vocational training arrangements in Belgium, because they are almost exclusively for the benefit of the unemployed. We have seen above that certain categories of war victims are also eligible for vocational retraining; but in fact only a small number have access to them. Therefore the total number of adults liable for retraining at State expense is not high, which may appear somewhat paradoxical in a country which, since the end of the war, has experienced a serious shortage of skilled manpower. Nor has this shortage decreased as yet, despite some slowing-up in economic activity during the past few months.

These observations have led to certain proposals for extending to other categories the scope of the measures now in existence for the organisation of retraining. Thus on 27 January 1948 a Bill containing proposals for the setting up of an Office for Rapid Vocational Training was submitted to the Belgian Chamber of Representatives.

This Bill observes that at the present time vocational training and retraining are not sufficiently developed with a view to alleviating the shortage of skilled manpower, and proposes that the Office for Rapid Vocational Training, the establishment of which it advocates, should be entrusted with two distinct tasks: the first, which would demand an immediate and intensive effort, would be the rapid training of a large body of workers for skilled or semi-skilled work; the other, more permanent, task would be to facilitate

the training of workers in connection with the changing needs of the national economy, or to resettle all those who, at a given moment in their lives, for the most diverse reasons, are compelled to change their trade. By virtue of Article 1 of the Bill, the Office would be attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, since this Ministry appears to be best equipped to accomplish these tasks, while taking into account the industrial needs and the employment situation and without neglecting the task of resettling underprivileged social categories, such as the workless and war victims. The organisation itself of retraining by the terms of this Bill would not greatly differ from that which already exists within the framework of the Unemployment Fund, to the extent that all beneficiaries would be equally entitled to serve an apprenticeship, either at a centre or under an individual retraining contract. The provisions of the new Bill would replace the provisions dealing with vocational retraining in the Order of the Regent of 26 May 1945, whereby the Unemployment Fund was instituted, and in the several Legislative Orders governing the status of the different categories of war victims.

This, of course, is no more than a Bill. But it reflects a sentiment which is common to a great many people besides its authors. Indeed, the Head of the Vocational Retraining Service of the Unemployment Fund, expressing his personal views on the subject in his book *Vocational Retraining and the Rapid Training of Workers*, states that :

Vocational retraining cannot be dissociated from a general problem. What is important today is not so much that a few hundred—or thousand—unemployed who are receiving benefit should also receive some additional technical knowledge. What does matter is that the technical skill of our workers should be adapted to the demands of the present-day economy and that of the future....

The growth of rapid vocational training, so that it may be placed within reach of all workers, appears to be an urgent need ; in this field, we have lagged considerably behind France, the Netherlands and Great Britain....

Without ignoring the fact that full employment implies State aid in the organisation of our economy, the development of rapid training finally appears to us as one of the essential factors likely to restrict the wastage of labour forces now taking place in a country which more than ever needs the judicious use of all its energies for its reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>

The great interest that has been shown in the idea of extending retraining facilities to all workers instead of limiting them to a few categories of workers—who are not always the best suited to derive

<sup>1</sup> V. MARTIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-112.

the maximum benefit from them—is highly significant. It is certainly due to the success achieved by the Fund in its endeavours to aid the unemployed, which accounts for the fact that this rapid retraining is now seriously considered as a possible immediate remedy to the manpower shortage as well as, generally speaking, a means of facilitating the adaptation of workers to the changing conditions and needs of the economic situation. Steps of this kind, it is noted, have been taken abroad with good results. Moreover, it is very probable that a widening of the present basis of vocational retraining would enable its occasionally experimental character, due to the limited number of persons for whom it is intended, to be corrected. In particular, it would be possible to improve research into teaching methods and to recruit and systematically train instructors for the rapid training of adults, which has hitherto been impossible.

Doubtless, Belgium has been slower than her neighbours to realise all the arguments in favour of the setting up of facilities for the rapid training of adults, on a centralised basis and under the direction of the public authorities who are best informed of the needs of the economic situation generally. At the same time, it cannot be denied that if Belgium should decide one day to extend existing facilities to cover all categories of workers, the existence of a well-developed administrative structure and the experience gained in this matter by the Fund would be extremely helpful in making vocational retraining general.

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## **PART II**

### **Training of the Staff of the National Belgian Railway Company**

#### **General Organisation**

Since 1942, vocational courses have been provided for the Company's workers and employees for the following reasons :

- (1) To widen their technical and administrative knowledge ;
- (2) To enable them to perfect themselves in the discharge of their duties ;
- (3) To prepare them for examinations and competitions for definite posts.

The teaching is confined entirely to subject matter connected with the running of railways or closely related to it. The courses include subdivisions corresponding to the various services in the Company and also seek to provide general and special training connected with railways. Generally, each course is given in one or several 20-hour series at the rate of one hour a week. The school year consists of two series of 20 weeks each.

There are four schools, two French language (Brussels and Liège) and two Flemish (Brussels and Ghent).

Oral courses are given at the above schools for employees who have reasonable transport facilities to and from them. Moreover, service chiefs are requested to grant their staffs every possible facility to enable them to follow these courses, provided that it does not interfere with the smooth running of their services. In addition, the chiefs must impress upon their employees the full importance of this training for their future career. The text of the lectures is distributed to the trainees free of charge. Employees who follow such courses receive full pay as well as transport on the Company's lines.

Correspondence courses, intended for trainees who cannot attend the oral courses, are also organised at each school. They are identical with the others, follow the same programme and include the same number of lessons.

The correspondence courses are distributed by lessons at the rate of one per course per week. The lessons are accompanied by questionnaires, the replies to which must be sent to the School Secretariat. The directors of the school organise coaching and visits to workshops, which are accessible to correspondence pupils as well as to the others. Marks are given for the replies to each questionnaire and each course is followed by a written essay or an oral examination. At the end of the final year of training, certificates of proficiency are given, the holders of which are entitled to certain benefits, as laid down by the Organising Committee for Vocational Training.

In addition, the courses are published in the form of brochures for those who wish by private study to facilitate the discharge of their duties.

Independently of these courses organised in the schools, other courses and theoretical training are given to station and workshop staff. The object is to improve the technical qualifications of the employees with a view to upgrading. Most of the Company's services have to varying degrees organised such courses and theoretical classes in accordance with the peculiar needs and objects of each service.

Below is a statement of what has been done in each of these services.

#### RAILWAY OPERATING SERVICE

##### *Practical Training for Trainee Drafters*

This practical training has been in action since 1 September 1947; its object is to train employees with a view to making them suitable for immediate service, and to discover any particular bent they may possess for one or another branch of the service, by way of vocational guidance.

The training is intended for young people who have finished their secondary schooling.

It involves: (1) a 12 months' period at a station for those who are suitable for the movements service; or (2) a nine months' period at a station and three months in the offices of the group for those who are better suited for a more restricted post.

The stationmaster himself is responsible for the vocational training of trainee drafters; he explains the instructions that they must carry out, takes them over the signal boxes, demonstrates the supervision of marshalling, etc. Apart from this, these pupils must follow

vocational training courses and special arrangements are made to ensure that their work is regularly handed in.

The syllabus includes the following courses of instruction :

(1) *For employees suitable for the movements service :*

- Initiation into passenger service ;
- Initiation into the goods service ;
- Initiation into the rolling stock service ;
- Initiation into the movements service ;
- Initiation into the organisation of the station service.

(2) *For employees unsuitable for the movements service :*

- Initiation into the passenger service ;
- Initiation into the goods service ;
- Initiation into the rolling stock service ;
- Initiation into the accounts service ;
- Initiation into the personnel service ;
- Initiation into the organisation of the station service.

At the end of each training period, trainee drafters must pass an oral test on the subject matter which they have just learned. The stationmaster, after each training period, draws up a report in which he gives his opinion of the trainee's work and progress. Subsequently, the Directorate of the Service directs the men into the work for which they appear to be best suited.

## EQUIPMENT SERVICE

### *Training Course for Inspectors*

The task of the equipment inspector is to examine the rolling stock (railway coaches and cars) in large stations. He makes a thorough examination of vehicles and their loads to see whether their construction is in accordance with the regulations in force. He also checks maintenance, sees that the load is in good condition, and looks for any damage or defect that might justify scrapping the vehicle.

At the beginning of each year, the groups announce that a course for apprentice inspectors is about to be organised and invite candidates to apply. Persons between the ages of 20 and 35 are eligible ; they must be in possession of a diploma from an industrial school ; preference is granted to employees in the services and cars.

The number of candidates is based upon probable service requirements for the coming year.

The training takes six months, during which the candidates are exempt from all routine work, so that they may devote all their time to their studies, which include courses, theoretical classes and weekly written papers. The latter, which are marked by an official, facilitate the elimination of unsuitable trainees. At the end of the course, a written examination is held on the basis of which equipment inspectors may be appointed as and when vacancies occur. The examination results remain valid indefinitely.

#### *Courses for Motor Drivers*

These courses are given to motor drivers to perfect and keep up to date their technical knowledge. Besides teaching the highway code and accident laws, the courses deal with the engine and the main parts of the vehicles, and their running.

A training motor van specially equipped to facilitate the understanding and assimilation of the subject matter taught is periodically placed at the disposal of regional garages.

Theoretical instruction is given to the drivers by the immediate chiefs of these garages. A full theoretical course includes 24 lessons of one hour each divided into six series, each series corresponding to a period during which the training van is present in each of the garages. Drivers have every facility for attending each theoretical lesson as well as their practical recapitulation when the van is available.

Candidates are subjected to oral questioning on each lesson, and the results are entered on a time-sheet. Any driver who fails to obtain sufficient marks for all his answers must attend the next complete course.

#### *Training and Refresher Courses for Foremen Welders*

In view of the importance of welding in the repair of equipment and the shortage of skilled welders, the Company was forced, shortly after the Liberation, to set up welding schools. Foremen and instructor-welders were first trained to teach the practice of welding. To this end, a course in French and one in Flemish were provided. The candidates were selected from among welders in the workshops. The entrance examination included a practical test in arc-welding and tube-welding, and a general training test. The courses lasted 60 days and were followed by a practical test and an oral examination on the theory.

There are now 10 French language and 10 Flemish language instructors, and one bilingual instructor, distributed over 10 training centres, where training and refresher courses are held for welders from the workshops. The centres have a training card for each employee, on which reports on his proficiency are entered. Employees who are found to be deficient in technical skill are sent to the school for a refresher course. At the end of the course, the trainee has to undergo a practical test, the result of which is entered on the card.

In addition to the upgrading of existing employees, the welders' schools may also be called upon to train new welders or welders specialised in a particular branch (e.g., copper welding). A new course has been organised to train foremen welders to check the welding on welded coaches ordered from industrial establishments. Some of these foremen are now used in coach repair shops.

#### *Beginners' Courses for Drivers of Electric Trains*

Hitherto, drivers of electric trains were recruited among former engine-stokers, but it was realised that these employees lacked the elementary knowledge of electricity required for their work. Therefore, from early 1947 onwards, it was decided to establish a series of 10 lessons on electricity, in order to facilitate the training of mechanics and stokers for the selective examination for the appointment of electric train drivers.

The lessons are given at the rate of one per week, but repeated two, three or four times in the course of every week, together with ordinary theory concerning brakes, signalling and the technology of steam engines. During the fourth week of each month the lessons of the preceding weeks of that month are recapitulated.

#### *Theoretical Course for Mechanics and Stokers*

These courses are given by instructor-mechanics on premises in the engine sheds, for the training of mechanics and stokers. They include: (1) eight introductory lessons on engines, to cover greasing, inspection and maintenance; (2) a track test for driving and stoking the engine. Not more than four employees may attend each lesson, so that they may derive the maximum benefit from the teaching. The lesson takes about an hour and a half.

After each lesson and road trial, the employees are questioned and receive marks; if they do not obtain sufficient marks, they have to attend another beginners' course.

In addition to these courses, demonstration lessons are given by an instructor-mechanic on training coaches. These coaches travel from one engine shed to another and remain there as long as is needed for the lessons.

### *Boiler-Making Courses*

Immediately after the Liberation, the question was raised of organising practical courses for the training of garage boiler-makers in the workshops. Small maintenance jobs carried out in these sheds were most inadequately done and led to subsequent repairs that were much larger than would have been the case had they been properly carried out. These courses were intended to last three months and to provide theoretical and practical training for the candidates. Unfortunately, the men could not be taken from their posts for so long a time because the numerous repairs occasioned by the war required all their time. Moreover, the supervisors in the sheds had no special knowledge of boiler-making. For this reason a skilled workshop foreman was instructed to travel round the different sheds to remedy, as far as possible, the existing situation, but this palliative proved to be insufficient.

### *Training Course for Apprentice Inspectors, Planning Men, Checkers and Preparers*

There are courses lasting three to four hours a week for instructing employees in the practice of repairs.

## PERMANENT WAY SERVICE

### *Training Course for Engineers and Section Chiefs Undergoing Apprenticeship or Pre-apprenticeship*

These courses supplement the university training and familiarise the candidates with the special needs of the service concerned.

## COMMERCIAL SERVICE

Vocational courses of about a fortnight's duration are provided for statutory employees in charge of inspecting trains. These employees are responsible for checking all passenger traffic and should know how to behave towards the public. Since its inception, the Company has never ceased to attach the highest importance to maintaining good relations between the public and the staff of the railways. With this in mind, it sees that the staff on the trains

behave properly, have a high standard of personal cleanliness and are properly attired. In addition to a technical knowledge of the trade, it endeavours to train such staff always to be obliging, attentive and polite, for such behaviour will do much to ensure the good reputation of that category of employees.

After an examination, these workers are instructed in the regular routine of their functions and then sent to a depot. Subsequently and throughout their career, they receive practical training on the trains from the chief guards-ticket collectors who supervise their work.

## ELECTRICITY AND SIGNALLING SYSTEM

### *Training of Signalmen*

Until 1943, only workers on the permanent way and greasers could become trainee signalmen and then candidates for such employment. The position of trainee, apart from the medical examination, involved no special test of fitness. These trainees became candidates after having undergone a period of training in a signal-box of their own choice. Their companions initiated them in the work under the guidance and supervision of the stationmaster and the instructor-signalman. Recruitment in such circumstances did not yield satisfactory results, nor were there sufficient candidates to meet the demand. Moreover, as a result of technical progress achieved in the matter of signalling, the apprenticeship had become long and difficult and the responsible chiefs complained of its quality and the results achieved by it.

Temporary arrangements were made to raise the technical level required of signalmen; and the responsible authorities then decided to begin recruitment on the basis of capacity and of vocational and psychotechnical tests.

At the same time the signalling service obtained a practice train for signalling, which moves from one group to the next and contains sufficient teaching material to familiarise the signalmen with all the contingencies that may arise in electrical as well as in mechanical cabins. This train is allotted to each of the eight groups in succession for a period of six weeks, the last four weeks of the year being set aside for purposes of overhauling. For reasons based on experience, equipment and teaching are about to be modified to yield a better output.

The signalmen on duty are periodically visited (once in three months) by instructor-signalmen who are responsible for their

technical training. The teaching staff (chief-instructor signalmen) receives special educational training.

### *Training of Telephonists*

Up to 1944, telephonists were recruited among navvies, or temporary employees (ex-servicemen), who had received no technical training at all. Since then, the work has devolved on female employees who follow a series of 30 lessons at the rate of four lessons a week.

### *Training of Electricians, Electro-Mechanics and Fitters*

The electric signalling service has always suffered in its work from a quantitative and qualitative lack of manpower trained for this kind of work. These workers were recruited privately, without special previous training for the particular method in use by the services of the network, so that immediately they joined the Company they had to be taught a second trade to be superimposed on their basic calling. It took several years to train such employees before they achieved a reasonable output. This training, moreover, was carried out in a haphazard fashion, the trainee tackling any work that occurred or being coached by a colleague.

To remedy this situation, a national school was set up in 1945, the essential object of which was to ensure that full training as electricians, electro-mechanics and fitters was provided for apprentices, who were accepted from the age of fifteen years; they were expected to know the trade by the time they reached the age of 18. This school at the same time helped to retrain existing manpower and provided refresher courses, while also ensuring that employees, who for the time being were still recruited privately, were systematically and rapidly trained.

### **Exchange of Officials with Other Countries**

For purposes of technical training, a system of exchange of officials with other countries has been instituted. This system for the time being operates on a reduced scale, but the tempo may be increased.

Belgian officials are now working on the Netherlands and French railways in order to perfect their knowledge of special points connected with the running of the railways, and foreign officials are now employed on the Belgian railways for similar purposes.

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## PART III

### Training of Foremen

#### **A Brief Description of some of the Work done in Belgium in Industry, in Special Institutions for the Training of Supervisory Staff, and in Technical Institutes<sup>1</sup>**

##### APPLICATION IN INDUSTRY

##### *The Fabelta Company*

The Company adopted the principle of recruiting its future foremen from among the existing personnel. To this end, posters are put up inviting whoever desires to attend courses to register; also the heads of services are asked to propose any suitable persons who fail to come forward at the time when registration for the courses takes place. The candidates must first take an examination covering school knowledge, ease of speech, technical training and personality, with special reference to dynamic qualities.

Before the new session opens, the final list of candidates who have passed the examination is submitted to the Directors for their approval.

The syllabus of the courses is subdivided into three parts: principles of leadership; technique of manufacture; general training.

The courses are given at the factory during normal working hours and at the rate of two lectures per week. The total duration of one session is about two years.

In each factory, a representative is nominated to take charge of the general organisation of the courses. He also gives some of the courses, mostly those dealing with labour legislation. Applications for this post are generally addressed to the head of the recruitment service or to the psycho-technician. Each factory nominates two or more other persons — normally heads of services — to lecture on the technical speciality for which they are responsible in the factory.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE ON VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING: *La formation générale des contremaîtres* (Brussels), pp. 20-28.

A special card for marks, adapted to the qualifications required of foremen, is submitted at quarterly intervals to the head of the service of each candidate. When the time for the final selection comes the results entered upon this card are taken into account. About once a month the candidates are given a written test on the subject matter treated, and the results achieved during the first quarter enable a first selection to be made.

A leaving examination marks the end of each session. Finally, a proficiency certificate is awarded to the candidates who at the end of the session obtain 50 per cent. of the total marks, and who show good leadership in their daily work. This certificate entitles the candidates to the rank of " manufacturing overseer " pending their promotion to the rank of " shop foreman ".

#### *The Solvay Company Staff Training School at the Couillet Factory*

Periodical meetings, in principle once monthly, are organised at the staff school for foremen and for future foremen or employees of similar rank.

Talks are given by specialised members of the staff. The most varied subjects are treated : the role of the foreman and his influence in the various fields of working life ; leadership ; safety and the prevention of accidents (10 meetings) ; a historical survey of the company ; social institutions in Belgium ; pensions and industrial accidents ; the uses of soda and their development ; the uses of chlorine and chlorinated preparations, etc. Each meeting is followed by a discussion in which everyone is asked to state his views and to ask for any information that he may require. A syllabus of each talk is given to all those who attend.

#### *The Belgian Chemical Association*

In November 1944, the *S. A. Union chimique belge* organised a first training course for applicants for posts as foremen. These were held at its Zandvoorde factory.

On grounds of equity, every member of the staff, administrative or technical, was entitled to apply for permission to follow the courses. Out of 900 persons, 33 candidates came forward. To these were added, by way of an experiment, seven pupils who had newly left regional industrial schools. In order to exclude those unsuitable for the course, candidates were subjected to a test which included a psychological examination and a very simple test

involving spelling, arithmetic, drawing and domestic economy. It was observed that, to a remarkable extent, the results of these two tests tallied.

The theoretical and general training courses were organised at the rate of one daily, lasting one hour. The training programme included scientific and technical courses. These were supplemented in the practical field by practice periods in the factory workshops. In addition, the Directorate organised technical courses in leadership followed up by practical exercises within the undertaking. Finally, courses and talks were organised to help to perfect the general training of the candidates. Practical exercises and written papers further supplemented the training.

Seven engineers and chemists on the staff of the factory divided the courses among themselves and carefully watched the candidates during their normal duties in the factory, endeavouring to assist the trainees with advice and to stimulate their attention and initiative. Marks were given for oral tests and the candidates' behaviour in the factory and transmitted to the Directorate at regular intervals. The courses took place during normal working hours in the factory and the pupils who attended were paid as if they were working normally. After six months' training, the trainees were paid a bonus calculated on the basis of their marks.

Very encouraging results were obtained during the first series of training courses, and the Company decided to organise another course at the Zandvoorde factory. This course began in November 1946.

#### RESULTS OBTAINED IN A SPECIAL INSTITUTION FOR THE TRAINING OF SUPERVISORY STAFF

##### *Committee for the Guidance and Training of Staff in Industry (C.O.F.C.E.), Brussels*

The Committee for the guidance and training of supervisory staff in industry organises educational courses accessible to persons selected by the heads of undertakings and who have shown themselves to possess technical ability and a sense of responsibility. The series are also open to certain foremen who are not entered by the directors of their firms. In this case, the pupil must hold a technical education certificate (secondary) and may be granted an honorary loan if he gives a verbal undertaking to help in his turn a young man in a situation identical with his own when he

entered the C.O.F.C.E., immediately he realises that he has benefited, materially and morally, by the educational courses.

These courses are intended to give foremen in employment and candidates for posts of foremen the benefit of the guidance and experience of specialised persons who synthesise the essential elements of knowledge considered an indispensable element of the supplementary training it is desired to achieve.

Numerous study meetings enable the audience to hold exchanges of views among themselves, under the guidance of an instructor, on practical problems concerning leadership. During these meetings the personal work of the audience is examined and commented upon. At the end of each year, a number of visits to factories conclude the series.

### *Organisation.*

The meetings are held for one half-day per month, in order to restrict travelling. They are held out of working hours and three lectures are given at every session.

The complete series is spread over three years, in the course of which the following subjects are treated :

functions of the supervisor ; scientific organisation of the work ; occupational hygiene ; prevention of accidents ; analysis, method and synthesis ; general psychology ; psychology of leadership ; psychology of the worker and economic and social questions ; labour legislation ; vocational guidance ; industrial education.

To be admitted to the training series, candidates must have reached the age of 21 and must have been on the staff of an undertaking for a minimum period of two years. As far as possible, each candidate is provided by the head of his undertaking with a certificate stating that he holds a responsible position or is likely to be appointed to such a position in the near future. At the end of the series, the candidates take an examination before a jury composed of well-known persons belonging to industrial circles. A certificate stating that they have attended the course is given to those who succeed in the examination. Those who attended the course without taking the examination, and who belong to the senior staff of the undertakings, are invited to attend the lectures regularly, in order to spread the atmosphere of education and confidence created in the C.O.F.C.E. courses.

*Regional Sections.*

The committee for the guidance and training of staffs in industry has set up local sections in several industrial centres in the country. Those of Antwerp, Brussels, Charleroi, Ghent, Lokeren, La Louvière, Liège and Mons are now functioning. A section is also to be set up shortly at Tirlemont.

A total of more than 500 foremen and applicants for such posts now attend the refresher courses organised by this institution.

Rapid training courses will also be set up before long for foremen and subordinate skilled staff as well as for senior employees in undertakings.

**TECHNICAL INSTITUTES***Paul Pastur Labour University (Division E) at Charleroi**Present Achievements.*

The Labour University has instituted a refresher course for skilled craftsmen in mechanical engineering. This course is given in the evening, twice a week, over a period of one year.

The pupils must in principle be not less than 25 years of age and must have passed the final examination of a full-time vocational or secondary industrial school, or they must have equivalent educational qualifications. They are sent by their employers; special cases are considered at the request of such employers.

The object of the course is to develop the person's suitability for leadership by familiarising him with its methods, the qualities required in a good supervisor, the means and the knowledge which facilitate the exercise of such leadership. The course aims sometimes also at improving elocution.

The syllabus is subdivided roughly as follows: knowledge of men (psychological and physical); technique of leadership; study and preparation of work; methods of remuneration; the economic return; the ideal foreman; elementary and practical principles of electricity.

*Prospects.*

The Paul Pastur Labour University annually recruits a number of applicants for posts as practical instructors<sup>1</sup> for the requirements of vocational schools in the Hainaut Province.

The course lasts two years and includes classes in general culture, technical refresher courses, and some educational training, both theoretical and practical as necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Instructors teaching the practice of manual trades in vocational and industrial schools.

Up to 1940, this training yielded the most satisfactory results, and persons who had undergone it generally headed the list in examinations for posts as instructors in various trade schools in the country. Unfortunately, owing to the poor pay now given, teaching of this sort no longer attracts the best men, and it is to be feared that there will be unfortunate repercussions in industry when the pupils trained by a weakened staff begin to show signs of the inadequacy of their training.

The directorate of the school considers that with a little change in organisation, the courses for instructors could be made suitable for candidates for foremen's posts in industry.

In fact, if the factories were willing to allow some of their best workmen to apply for the post of practical instructor, they could thus form a reserve of foremen, while the Labour University could at the same time recruit qualified practical instructors. Such workers would also be given facilities to attend the courses for foremen. All that the industry would have to do would be to give these young men a guarantee that their posts would be available for them again on their return from the school. It might possibly also make good the difference between the salaries paid at the school and the men's wages at the factory.

#### *Henry Story School at Ghent*

In order to provide suitable training for foremen, the Ghent Branch of the Industrial Committee on Vocational and Technical Training has set up a school attached to the municipal trade schools. It has premises in the Ruc des Maçons, rented with the kind aid of the Deputy Mayor in charge of Public Education. The subsidies necessary for the adaptation of these premises have been granted, and industrialists, in response to the appeal of the Committee in question, have placed at the disposal of the school whatever equipment they could spare and which is still in sufficiently good condition for teaching purposes.

The school is intended to provide refresher courses for young men who hold diplomas as fitters, and to train them for the post of foreman spinner.

What distinguishes this school from most others in this field is that young men cannot secure admission to it unless they are in the employ of a firm. In principle the school is for pupils who have successfully passed out from the advanced fitting class; in practice, however, it is also open to other promising candidates, recruited from industry or from other schools.

The training, which takes three years, takes place on a part-time basis at the school and in the factory. The pupils are given technical and general training as follows :

Ordinary courses : weaving, textile fibres, electricity, laboratory electricity, industrial economy, industrial book-keeping, arithmetic, industrial building, industrial mechanics, applied mechanics, mechanical craftsmanship, French, Flemish, organisation, education, gymnastics and sports.

Special courses : spinning (theory and practice).

In this way, the Ghent Committee hopes that the trainees' theoretical knowledge may be sufficiently developed, and that at the same time they will become familiar, from the age of 17, with the atmosphere of the factory. It is hoped that they will thus be better adapted to the environment in which they will hold positions of authority, and there is good reason to suppose that from the point of view of personal development they will acquire qualifications which they would not have attained in a purely educational establishment, even had they done practical work during the holidays.

It should also be stressed that the cost of the training will be borne entirely by the factory in which the trainee works, which will not only defray the cost of his studies, but also pay him the wages to which he would have been entitled had he been working in the workshops as a fitter.

At the end of their training, the candidates for posts as foremen, once they are in possession of their diplomas, would be assigned a task corresponding to the rank of assistant foreman and for some years they would remain under the supervision of an experienced foreman, which would enable them to complete their training by acquiring some practice of leadership.

#### *The Cardinal Mercier Technical Institute, Brussels*

The object of the courses is to provide those who hold or are about to hold posts of responsibility in industry with knowledge that will enable them to undertake the responsibilities of their position.

The courses include lectures, written tests and study sessions. These take place on the first Sunday of each month.

The school does not attempt to attract large numbers of trainees; indeed, it prefers to collect a small nucleus, some twenty trainees at the most.

The full series of lectures occupies two sessions.

The following subjects are included in the syllabus : scientific organisation of work ; individual and collective hygiene ; industrial hygiene ; prevention of accidents ; general psychology ; psychology of leadership ; psychology of the worker ; economic and social problems ; labour legislation ; vocational guidance and selection ; industrial education ; the Church and the people.

*School for Labour Almoners, Antwerp*

These courses are open to all trainees 18 years of age or occupying a post such as foreman, overseer, technical employee, chief of planning, etc. They are given in Flemish, over a period of two years, and include lectures (on Saturday afternoons) and study sessions (Wednesday evenings).

The school delivers a proficiency certificate to successful trainees.

The principal points of the syllabus are : knowledge of men ; the social standpoint ; scientific organisation ; practical knowledge ; production ; general training.

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## APPENDICES

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### APPENDIX I

#### **Outline of Retraining Courses Approved by the Fund for Plumbers and Zinc-Workers, Tilers, Electricians, Masons and Metal-Casters**

##### **PLUMBERS AND ZINC-WORKERS**

###### *Theoretical Course*

(6 hours per week)

Knowledge of materials ; properties and qualities ; specific gravity of materials ; characteristics of sound roofing ; slopes of roofs ; weight per square metre ; pipe-laying.

Lead conduits ; importance of hygienic aspects for internal installations, etc.

###### *Practical Course*

###### *Syllabus.*

- Planing zinc plates.
- Use of drawer.
- Use of chisel.
- Measuring cornices and gutters.
- Hemispheric gutter for cornice ; bending rods, etc.
- Building an expansion joint.
- Building an attic window.
- Building a platform for a dovecot.

###### *Lead Construction.*

- Alignment of pipes.
- Beading of pipes.
- Bending of pipes.
- Lead soldering.
- Flanging of collars of pipes.
- Making wipe-joints.
- Making an oblique joint.
- Making pump barrels.
- Connecting a pipe attached to the wall.
- Bending copper pipes.
- Hard-soldering copper pipes.
- Swaging copper pipes.
- Bending iron pipes.
- Swaging iron pipes.

## TILERS

*Theoretical Course*

Handling of tools.  
 Properties of materials.  
 Calculation of surfaces and volumes.  
 Calculations to scale.  
 Reading of plans.  
 Ornaments (various explanations).  
 Elementary principles of geometrical drawings.  
 Layout and combination of different drawings.

*Practical Course*

Handling of tools.  
 Preparation of mortar (composition, mixture, slaking lime).  
 General :  
     stretching wire ;  
     removing mortar with a trowel and spreading ;  
     laying tiles ;  
     tapping tile into place with the handle of the trowel ;  
     blending the mortar ;  
     repointing ;  
     decorations ;  
     erecting a corner.  
 Masonry (one brick, one and a half bricks, two bricks) :  
     ordinary masonry ;  
     putting the coping on a wall-surface of wall-openings ;  
     arches and vaults.  
 Practical work in accordance with plan drawn up by the candidates themselves.

## ELECTRICIANS

*Theoretical Course and Practical Exercises**Preliminary Knowledge.*

Names of tools and materials used by the electrician.  
 Handling of tools and use of material.

*Course.*

Definition of : volts, ampères, ohms and watts, kw., kwh.  
 Practical uses of these definitions.  
 Outlines for connecting lamps and bells ; simple and two-way lighting connections ; double and triple circuits.  
 Wiring of switchboards (direct or alternating current).  
 Practical uses of Ohm's Law.  
 Repetitions and easy exercises on the subject matter taught.  
 Different types of resistance connection and calculation of these.  
 Calculation of the section of cables and wires used, as well as the loss of tension in the case of different conductors.  
 Direct current motors : serial, shunt and compound motors ; diagrams, coupling, change of the direction of rotation ; maintenance, practical application.

Alternating current motors: short-circuit motors with rheostat starters (various models), "Asychroon" motors and their starting mechanism; diagrams, coupling, change of the direction of rotation; maintenance, practical application.

Measuring apparatus: voltameter, ampèremeter, connection and methods of their use.

### *Practical Exercises.*

Coupling of direct-current or alternating-current motors; changing direction of rotation.

## MASONS

### *Theory*

One hour daily, following progress in practical work. It includes:

Notions of general arithmetic and geometrical drawing, calculation of perimeters, surfaces and cubes.<sup>1</sup>

Technology of materials: nomenclature, choice, different qualities, composition of mortars, etc.

Technology of tools and equipment, their maintenance.

Theory of bonding, walls, corners, thresholds, chimneys, basements, pilasters, arches, foundations, etc.

Principles of concrete forming and of iron and concrete work.

Special constructions: drains, etc.

Reading of plans, surveys on different scales.

### *Practical*

Laying of dry bricks ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  sections of brick).

Preparation of mortars.

Laying bricks with mortar.

Building of walls, corners, thresholds, arches, etc. (in correlation with the theoretical training).

Team work.

Erecting scaffolding.

Repetition of these operations, but at a given rhythm, with a view to acquiring a certain speed.

## METAL-CASTERS

### *First Stage*

Notions of plane geometry: perpendiculars, parallels, surfaces, the various geometrical figures, including the circle.

### *Technology.*

Composition of the various sands and how to make them suitable for casting. Modern casting apparatus, frames and their adjustment. Reasons for defects. Various forms of casting, air gates, air pockets.

<sup>1</sup> Elementary notions only, which can be assimilated by trainees many of whom left elementary school more than six years ago.

*Practice.*

Green sand and stove moulding.

Placing simple pattern in the frames without core, making of the cope with air vents, risers, runners, etc.

*Second Stage*

Volume of geometrical figures and practical application.

*Technology.*

Density of most important metals.

Description of wooden pattern.

Making cores.

The smelting cupola : proportion of loads, ventilation.

Moulding of grooved pulleys ; usefulness of dryers.

*Practice.*

Moulding the most variegated pieces and fitting to mould.

Moulding with hook-tools and core frame.

Utilisation of crane runways and crane.

Casting, withdrawing from mould and cleaning.

*Third Stage*

Geometrical drawing and projections.

Drawing from existing pieces and reading of plans.

*Technology.*

Description of tool-kit.

Making a sweep mould.

Moulding without pattern according to geometrical sketch.

Assaying the smeltings.

Method of making a mixture of smeltings.

*Practice.*

Moulding and runnings with cores.

Placing heavy piece on the mould, requiring a strong core made by strickling with trundle.

The use of formers and scrapers.

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## APPENDIX II

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**Czechoslovakia:** Dr. Jiri FISCHER, c/o Ministry of Labour, Prague.

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**Greece:** Mr. E. D. MAZARACHI, 51 Patriarche Joachim Street, Athens.

**Ireland:** Miss Brighid STAFFORD, 1 Upper Pembroke Street, Dublin. (Tel. Dublin 6 21 29.)

**Pakistan:** Mr. Muhammad ASLAM, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Law and Labour, Karachi.

**Poland:** Mr. Jan ROSNER, Miedzynarodowe Biuro Pracy, Czerniakowska 231, Warsaw, Z.U.S.

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