

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



### *Training the Poor : A Benefit-Cost Analysis of Manpower Programmes in the U.S. Anti-Poverty Programme*, D.O. Sewell, (Kingston : Queen's University, Industrial Relations Centre 1971). XIV + 153.

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celui-là comptera peut-être soixante-dix pour cent de toute la main-d'œuvre d'ici une dizaine d'années, il ne faut pas se surprendre, d'autre part, que le pourcentage de travailleurs syndiqués par rapport à la main-d'œuvre totale ait décliné de quelque sept pour cent au cours des dernières années et que le mouvement syndical devra, s'il veut remonter la pente, relever un défi d'envergure.

André ROY

D. O. Sewell, *Training the Poor: A Benefit-Cost Analysis of Manpower Programmes in the U.S. Anti-Poverty Programme* (Kingston: Queen's University, Industrial Relations Centre 1971). XIV + 153.

It is a shame that the title of this book may keep it from being read by a wider audience. Upon receiving it I thought it would be yet another of those dreary, specialized little empirical studies that are quickly read and deservedly forgotten.

The Sewell book, however, is not one of these. In fact a more descriptive, but clumsy, title would have been, «*The Theory and Practice of Cost-Benefit Analysis — with Special Reference to the U.S. Anti-Poverty Programme*». Fully one-half of the text is devoted to the conceptual problems of cost-benefit analysis dealing with such questions as allocative versus distributive effects of training, the role of externalities, and separation of the real, from the pecuniary effects of training.

In dealing with these and other conceptual problems, Sewell has been exhaustive in surveying the literature right up to the date of publication. There is an excellent seven page selective bibliography, and the quality of discussion in the text is ample proof that Sewell has in fact read the material cited in his bibliography.

While the first half of the book will be of interest to a very wide audience — including academics and administrators with some background in economics — the second half will be primarily of interest to those formulating and administering training programmes in the field.

Sewell has set out to determine the benefits and costs of a very special training project sponsored under the U.S.

Manpower Development and Training Act (M.D.T.A.) of 1962. The special project known as Manpower Improvement Through Community Effort (M.I.T.C.E.) was conducted in North Carolina, and Sewell examined the subsequent earnings profiles of workers training during the contract year 1965-66.

In accepting the conclusions one should be careful not to interpret them as the values that might be obtained for training under Canada's Manpower Retraining Act. Eligibility requirements for M.I.T.C.E. training are stringent: «*Trainees were required to be heads of households, at least 18 years of age, and prior to enrolment in training they had to have been unemployed for more than six months, or to have been members of farm families with incomes of less than \$1,200 per annum.*» Certainly we are not training the cream of the crop here.

But not only were the trainees suffering from poverty, they were also non-white in predominant numbers (88%). Sewell is clearly studying the training of a severely disadvantaged group. Perhaps, then, his results would be comparable in Canada with the results from a training project involving Indians.

Sewell conducted a questionnaire survey among three hundred and sixty of the total five hundred and thirty-four male and female trainees in 1965-66, sixteen months after they had completed training. Roughly two-thirds of the trainees received on-the-job training, and the other third received institutional training. Basically, what was done was to compare the trainees pre, and post-training earnings with the earnings of a sample of non-trainees possessing otherwise similar characteristics. Some of Sewell's conclusions are interesting; but space allows for a listing of some only.

Even though the trainees represented one of the most disadvantaged segments of the population in the U.S., Sewell concludes that their training added more to national output, through increased productivity, than to cost. The aggregate allocative benefit-cost ratio is calculated at 3.1; that is, for every dollar sunk into training, three dollars is generated because of increased worker productivity. Moreover, Sewell believes that the income gains were substantial enough to lift most of the trainees out of poverty.

Looking at the more disaggregated findings, on-the-job training for women yielded the highest benefit cost-ratio, 6,8. For men, on-the-job training was twice as productive as institutional training, 3,3 versus 1,7. However, the lower ratio for institutional training was attributed to higher costs, not lower returns. As a policy directive, therefore, Sewell urges the Department of Labour to shift more of its training efforts into on-the-job training.

Finally, a curious but unexplained result is that trainees below the age of 21 years did not experience any increase in earnings, and regardless of the type of training.

Sewell's conclusions will strongly support the argument that the poor should be aided through programmes rather than welfare hand-outs. He should be commended for undertaking such a time-consuming task and for placing it so well within the current literature. **Training the Poor** comes highly recommended for both those in the field and on the campus; it is both a 'how to' and 'how come' book.

David P. ROSS

GAGNON, Robert, LEBEL, Louis et VERGE, Pierre, **Droit du travail en vigueur au Québec**, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1971, 441 pp.

Depuis la publication de l'ouvrage du regretté Marie-Louis Beaulieu, **Les conflits de droit dans les rapports collectifs du travail** en 1955, aucune autre étude d'ensemble sur la législation du travail au Québec n'avait été publiée en langue française, même si, pendant cet intervalle, la législation du travail a subi des modifications profondes, voire radicales. Est-il même nécessaire de souligner, par exemple, l'adoption du Code du travail, en 1964, qui a subi lui-même des transformations considérables en 1969, l'élargissement du droit de négociation aux employés de l'Etat tant au niveau provincial que fédéral, la suppression de l'interdiction du droit de grève à la très grande majorité des employés des services publics.

Aussi l'étude que viennent de publier en collaboration Me Robert Gagnon, Louis LeBel et Pierre Verge sous le

titre **Droit du travail en vigueur au Québec** arrive-t-il à point.

L'ouvrage comprend seize chapitres qui s'intitulent, identité du droit du travail, contrat individuel du travail, réglementation étatique des conditions de travail, conquête du droit d'association, protection du droit d'association, classification juridique des groupements syndicaux, statut privilégié de l'association accréditée, procédure d'accréditation, négociation collective, grève, piquetage, convention collective, arbitrage des griefs, négociation sectorielle, extension juridique des conventions collectives et, enfin, droit au travail.

La matière très vaste est bien présentée en chapitres courts et précis auxquels les auteurs ont ajouté des compléments, une bibliographie intéressante ainsi que de multiples références aux décisions des tribunaux et autres organismes compétents.

Il s'agit donc d'un outil qui sera utile, voire nécessaire, à tous ceux qui oeuvrent aujourd'hui dans le domaine si complexe et brûlant des relations du travail. Ils y trouveront non seulement un exposé théorique des lois actuellement en vigueur, mais aussi une bonne vue d'ensemble de la jurisprudence qui est en train de s'élaborer.

Il faut savoir gré aux auteurs d'avoir consacré un chapitre au contrat individuel de travail ressortissant au Code civil qui est souvent négligé, sinon complètement passé sous silence dans des travaux de ce genre tellement, de nos jours, l'aspect des rapports collectifs retient l'attention.

Cet ouvrage durera-t-il longtemps? Il se peut bien que non, parce que la législation en matière de relations professionnelles est sujette au changement, parce que les conditions de vie et de travail se modifient sans cesse sous nos yeux. Déjà, au moment où les Auteurs publient leur ouvrage, le législateur fédéral ne s'apprête-t-il pas à adopter un code du travail qui modifiera substantiellement les lois existantes. Mais, tel qu'il est présenté, il sera relativement facile de remettre cet ouvrage à jour au fur et à mesure des événements.

D'autre part, il s'imposait, après une évolution extrêmement rapide, de faire le point, de fixer les expériences acquises et de poser un repère qui aideront à s'y retrouver plus tard.