Recruiting, Selection and Placement of Apprentices in the Building Industry

Charles-E Thérien
Recruiting, Selection and Placement of Apprentices in the Building Industry

by CHARLES-E. THÉRIEN, Statistician of the Apprenticeship Service, Quebec Department of Labour

The purpose of this study is to give an outline of the recruiting, selection and placement system applied in our Building Industry Apprenticeship Centers which are to be found in Montreal, Chicoutimi, Hull and Sherbrooke. These centers are under the jurisdiction of apprenticeship commissions composed of employers' and workers' representatives, as required by our apprenticeship system.

In each such center, the recruiting, selection and placement play an important part. We shall then study the methods used in each case.

I — Recruiting methods

In general, the recruiting of apprentices in our apprenticeship centers is done either through the unions or employers or by means of newspapers or radio publicity. In some places, the National Employment Service acts as recruiting agent for our centers as, for instance, in Hull and Montreal.

Other means, which cannot be applied on a very large scale, have nonetheless proved to be effective. Among others, contacts with social action groups and propaganda by former apprentices of our centers can be most useful.

In some places, an officer of the center calls each year on pupils of primary schools and these pupils are invited to visit the center. This procedure is bringing forth most satisfactory results.

II — Selection methods

If it is important to have apprentices in our centers, it is also of much consequence to interest them in a trade for which they are most fitted. This is where arises the need for selection. Although not organized to the point of becoming a system, selection plays an important part in the operation of our apprenticeship centers.

The procedure, in this field, varies from one place to the other. In Montreal, most of this work is entrusted to the chief-instructor of each department. It lies with him to decide whether an apprentice has what it takes to become a skilled worker in any one trade.

Elsewhere, as in Sherbrooke, Chicoutimi and Hull, the method is different. The director of the center acts as adviser with the assistance of the teachers and, sometimes, the moral adviser.

In Sherbrooke, the candidates are divided into two categories. One groups those who have chosen their trade and are fitted for it, and the other includes those who have not yet decided upon any particular trade but who wish to learn one. The latter are invited to try their hand at the trades for which they seem to be qualified.

The study of these methods reveals that, in each case, much attention and consideration is given to the natural disposition of the apprentice. We recognize the fact that he is the
one most concerned when the time comes to choose his trade.

III — Placement methods

At the completion of his apprenticeship the apprentice is eager to work and earn money. In order to facilitate the employment of young apprentices just out of centers, there exists a placement service in each center.

There is a special officer whose duty is to make the necessary contacts with the employers and their foremen. The young apprentice, upon completion of his term, goes to the placement officer who informs him of the places where work is to be found. For the time being, this is more or less the extent of placement services; however, the centers are looking forward to improve the placement techniques.

Various considerations

The above is an outline of what is actually done as regards recruiting, selection and placement in our apprenticeship centers. Of course this does not constitute a completely organized system but we want recognition of the fact that the methods used have been effective.

In the case of recruiting, for instance, it may be asserted that the methods used are generally good since the desired number of apprentices has been attained. Only in the painting and tinsmithing trades do we find that we could train as many more apprentices as there are now in our centers but, for special reasons, this situation mostly prevails in Montreal.

We feel more inclined to discourse on selection. In fact, its importance exceeds that of recruiting and placement for it has to do with the work of each apprentice and, consequently, with the efficiency of the centers.

As things are, we must admit that selection is arrived at through the director or teachers and that the methods used are not always objective and adequate.

This procedure may have been sufficient in the past but, with the actual advancement in this sphere, more consideration must be given to this question.

Without drawing any conclusions, we will mention here the figures as published in the second statistical report on apprenticeship which we published in November 1950. On a total of 2,153 apprentices who came to our centers, a percentage of 69.5% have completed the regular course. This means that more than 30% have given up their trade during the term.

As for placement, statistics give a very different picture. They show, in fact, that all apprentices from our centers have been employed promptly, at least for a first time.

This is an achievement worthy of mention. Nevertheless, the placement service should extend its activities. It should check up on all apprentices out of the centers for the purpose of their self-improvement. Such measure would no doubt make for greater stability in employment.

To conclude this study, we wish to emphasize the constant progress in the field of apprenticeship in the past few years. Particularly in the building trades, let us point out that 1,500 young apprentices have served a complete term in the centers, and that over 6,000 apprentices and journeymen have attended refresher courses.

Recruiting, selection and placement methods of each center have largely contributed towards these
achievements, and their enforce-
ment led to the proper opera-
tion and to the efficiency of the ap-
prenticeship centers.

It is to be hoped that, with the
constant improvement of these me-
thods, our apprenticeship system will
always be in a position to answer
the ever-increasing needs of the in-
dustry in our province.

A World-wide Economy

by Fr. Lionel Moreau

The problems of Political Econo-
my, production and distribution of
goods, can no longer be limited to
class problems or even to national
problems. They are problems which
present themselves on a world-wide
scale. Such is the principal state-
ment that His Holiness Pope Pius XII ma-
de last June 3rd, to the International
Congress of Social Studies and of
the International Christian Social
Union.

After having thus outlined the
problem of balancing production
and consumption within the world
economy, His Holiness, continuing
his teachings of Summi Pontificatus
and his Christmas speeches on Peace,
counts on the universal fellowship of
the great human family and makes
appeal to the “combination of all
good people”; “Away with the
selfish preoccupations of nations and
classes which can hinder, even in the
smallest way, a work loyally unde-
taken and vigorously carried out — in
the cooperation of all forces and all
possibilities throughout the world, —
for the aid of all initiatives, and all
efforts by individuals and private
groups, with the universal collabora-
tion of peoples and states, each one
making its respective contribution of
wealth in raw materials, capital and
labour”.

In our time, serious studies are
undertaken by economists to put the
capitalist system back in operation
again.

As the Reverend Father Lévesque
notes “on the doctrinal plane, the
majority of individuals, as much in
the United States as in Canada, con-
tinue to believe in liberalism and in
the economic system which embo-
dies it. But their faith has undergone
an evolution, because their adhesion
has ceased to be a complete one to
become conditional. Liberal capita-
lism is no longer regarded as the
only possible system and the pheno-
mena to which it gives rise, such as
depressions, are no longer considered
inevitable.”

This revolution on the doctrinal
plane is the logical consequence of a
revolution on the economic theory
plane. Let us mention the principles
brought out in the “General Theory
of Employment, Interest and Mo-
ney” by Lord Keynes to which refer
the Fair Deal of Truman and the si-
milar plan applied in Canada. Fur-
thermore, the Marshall plan, the
gifts of Canada to European coun-
tries, the Colombo plan proposed re-
cently by the United States to help
Asia, have no doubt a most commen-
dable humanitarian aim but come
also within this capitalistic context.

The capitalist system had to re-
new itself or disappear. It has tried
to promote social progress by exten-
ding its programme of economic sta-
bility. Capitalism is going through
different phases, so much so that one
would believe to be in the presence
of new doctrines with the New Deal
and the Fair Deal. We are eviden-

c
(1) Réalisme économique et progrès so-
cial, Semaines sociales de France, Lille,
1949, p. 90.