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[See table of contents](#)

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Recruiting, Selection and Placement of Apprentices in the Building Industry

by CHARLES-E. THÉRIEN, *Statistician of the Apprenticeship Service,
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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 group 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 enforcement led to the proper operation and to the efficiency of the apprenticeship centers.

It is to be hoped that, with the

constant improvement of these methods, our apprenticeship system will always be in a position to answer the ever-increasing needs of the industry in our province.

A World-wide Economy

by FR. LIONEL MOREAU

The problems of Political Economy, 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 statement that His Holiness Pope Pius XII made 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 undertaken 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 collaboration 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, continue to believe in liberalism and in the economic system which embodies it. But their faith has undergone an evolution, because their adhesion has ceased to be a complete one to become conditional. Liberal capitalism is no longer regarded as the only possible system and the phenomena to which it gives rise, such as depressions, are no longer considered inevitable."¹

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 Money" by Lord Keynes to which refer the Fair Deal of Truman and the similar plan applied in Canada. Furthermore, the Marshall plan, the gifts of Canada to European countries, the Colombo plan proposed recently by the United States to help Asia, have no doubt a most commendable humanitarian aim but come also within this capitalistic context.

The capitalist system had to renew itself or disappear. It has tried to promote social progress by extending its programme of economic stability. 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 evident-

(1) *Réalisme économique et progrès social*, Semailles sociales de France, Lille, 1949, p. 90.