

The Employment and Unemployment of Young Workers

The Unemployment (Young Persons) Recommendation, 1935, included in the Preamble a suggestion that each Member of the International Labour Organisation should submit to the International Labour Office a report stating the extent to which and the manner in which the principles of the Recommendation had been applied. Several Governments sent in such reports and, in accordance with a resolution adopted by the Conference, the Governing Body decided to convene a meeting of its Unemployment Committee and of experts appointed by those Governments to meet in January 1940 for the purpose of studying the information which the reports contained. Owing to the war that meeting could not be held. Had it taken place the Office would have submitted to it a statement containing the main items of information supplied by the Governments. As that could not be done it has been thought useful to prepare this summary, supplemented by later information at the disposal of the Office, and to present it in the form of an article in the Review, so that it may reach a wide public. The analysis of this information shows that in spite of the great changes which have occurred in the employment situation since 1935 the problem of unemployment among young persons has continued to give rise to anxiety, and the fears that there may be a serious increase in unemployment after the war give special interest to the study of the experiences made in recent years on the basis of the recommendations of the Conference.

THE PROBLEM

THE unemployment of young workers is a problem which has no doubt disappeared, or will soon disappear, in all countries which are engaged in hostilities or have mobilised their armies for defence. If, however, we are to plan for the future it is urgent that we should consider the nature and

extent of this problem, which has caused great anxiety in a number of countries in recent years, and study the measures which have been proposed or adopted for dealing with it, for there would seem to be every likelihood that unemployment among young workers will reappear and become a permanent source of anxiety unless steps are taken to prevent it. Some of these steps need to be taken now, while the war is still on, because, although in present circumstances unemployment is likely to decrease, there are nevertheless problems of employment which need to be tackled immediately and if the measures adopted are not carefully thought out they may lead to further unemployment in the future.

The question of unemployment among young workers first became acute in 1931 and 1932 when, as a result of the depression, unemployment as a whole reached a very high level. The consequences of unemployment, unless it is of short duration, are always serious, but it was felt that, in the case of young workers who were obliged by circumstances to live in idleness at the very moment when they should be gaining their early vocational experience and taking their first steps in industrial discipline, these consequences would be particularly harmful. In 1935, when the International Labour Conference discussed the matter, it adopted a Recommendation¹ the preamble of which stated, among other things, that unemployment affected a large number of young persons "whose involuntary idleness may undermine their characters, diminish their occupational skill and menace the future development of the nations". This declaration was by no means an exaggeration, for a great many young people under 25 years of age were idling away their time and receiving no training of any kind with the result that later on, when the general economic situation improved and there was a more or less severe shortage of skilled workers in certain trades, many of the young men who had been unemployed for months or even years at the outset of their careers found it exceedingly difficult to adapt themselves to the work required of them.

¹ The draft Recommendation submitted by the Office to the Conference is described in an article on "Unemployment among Young People" by Henri Füss in the *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 5, May 1935, and the discussions which took place on it at the Conference are analysed in the *Review*, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, Sept. 1935, pp. 304-310. For the final text see "Conventions and Recommendations", published by the International Labour Office (p. 340 of the 1937 edition).

Measures for the rehabilitation and retraining of the young unemployed were adopted in a number of countries and this enabled many of the young workers to be reabsorbed into industry and commerce, but, in spite of the general increase in the demand for labour which took place, there remained a "hard core" of unemployment which included many young people under 25 or 30 years of age. A few figures are given by way of example.¹

In *Belgium* the total number of unemployed persons under 25 years of age on 9 September 1938 was given as 32,000, of whom about 20,000 were stated to have been out of work for six months or more (the corresponding figure for the years 1932-1934 is estimated to have been 40,000). Of the 32,000, 25,000 were men and 7,000 women.

In *Great Britain* the number of applicants for employment under 18 was 120,518 on 15 May 1935 and 82,739 on 15 May 1939. The number of unemployed young persons of 18 to 24 was 416,333 on 18 May 1935 and 264,729 on 1 May 1939.

In the *Netherlands* the number of unemployed young persons under 24 was 74,105 on 1 July 1936 and 26,451 on 1 July 1939. These figures represented 19.5 per cent. of the total number of unemployed of all ages on 1 July 1936 and 13.5 per cent. on 1 July 1939.

In *Switzerland* the number of unemployed young persons under 24 was 10,136 in July 1935 and 2,902 in July 1939.

In the *United States* a voluntary census of unemployment, taken in November 1937, showed 2,420,408 young persons between 15 and 24 wholly unemployed and 692,983 partially unemployed. On the other hand, the National Youth Administration has estimated that the total number of unemployed young persons of 16 to 24 was 4,500,000 in May 1938.

Before going any further it may be as well to sketch in the general economic background against which the problem of youth unemployment stands out. The extent to which countries recovered from the depression of 1929-1932 varied greatly and it was possible to distinguish two groups of countries: those in which recovery up to 1939 was more or less complete, and those in which only a partial recovery was

¹ Earlier figures applying to a larger number of countries will be found in the Conference report on "Unemployment among Young Persons" published by the I.L.O. in 1935.

made. If we study the figures of general employment, we find that in the summer of 1939, of 11 countries ¹ in which statistics were available, 3 (France, Luxemburg, and the United States) had a smaller number of workers in employment than in 1929, the last pre-depression year, and 1 (Canada) had almost exactly the same number. Considering that between 1929 and 1939 the supply of labour increased considerably as a result of the natural increase of population, these figures are evidence of a serious problem. The remaining countries showed a level of employment higher, and in some cases much higher, than in 1929. If we confine our study to industrial employment, for which figures were available in 14 countries ², we find that 4 (Canada, France, Switzerland, and the United States) had a smaller number of workers in employment than in 1929. Of course, one must not read into these figures more than their real meaning. The basis of the statistics varies widely from country to country; in some cases they are based on social insurance schemes, which are fairly comprehensive, while in others they are based on returns made by selected establishments which may or may not be typical of the whole labour market. It must also be borne in mind that the situation in the base year varied very much from country to country; some countries at that time were very prosperous, while others were much less so. An incomplete recovery in the volume of employment recorded in the published figures is, therefore, not necessarily synonymous with high unemployment. If we now turn to the unemployment figures relating to approximately the same period we find that of 13 countries for which percentages were available 3 (Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United States) had a percentage of 15 or more, 3 (Canada, Denmark, and Norway) of 10 to 15, 5 (Australia, Great Britain, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland) of 5 to 10, and 2 (Germany and Japan ³) of less than 5. Similar reservations to those above must be made with regard to the comparability of these figures.

It is a striking fact that the problem of unemployment among young persons seems to have little relation to the figures of general unemployment. It was quite as acute before

¹ Canada, France, Luxemburg, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Norway, Netherlands, South Africa, United States, and Yugoslavia.

² Australia, Canada, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, United States, and Yugoslavia.

³ The Japanese figure relates to January 1939.

the war in Australia, where general unemployment was relatively low, as in countries with high rates of unemployment. It is, therefore, clearly in danger of becoming a permanent problem, and that is a disaster which must be avoided at almost any cost. It is at first sight extraordinary that in a community enjoying a large measure of prosperity there should be any young people under 25 years of age able and willing to work and who nevertheless remain out of employment for long periods, but that is the position and it has to be faced. What are the causes of this situation ?

One explanation which immediately suggests itself is that the unemployment of young people during the last few years is a consequence of the depression of 1929-1932. Something has already been said on that point above. Large numbers of young people who at that time completed their school education were unable either to find employment or to obtain the training they required. Employers were reducing staffs and cutting their costs to a minimum, with the result that there was a great paucity of openings for learners and apprentices while, on the other hand, parents often found themselves unable to afford the expense of sending their children to training establishments. The unemployed youth became demoralised and then, when the demand for labour increased, were without either the moral stamina or the occupational skill necessary to fill the jobs that were available. This factor was an important one, but there are other more fundamental and more permanent ones. Except in periods of severe depression, when the general demand for labour is reduced to a minimum, a boy or girl leaving school has little or no difficulty in obtaining employment ; there is almost always a big demand for school-leavers. The reason is clear. These youngsters are mostly very adaptable and do not expect to receive more than a rather low wage. Many of the jobs, however, are of a " blind-alley " character, that is to say they provide no training or experience likely to be of much use to the young people later on. At 17 or 18 they are liable to be discharged and a new set of school-leavers taken on. What do they do then ? In a large number of cases they drift into the unskilled labour market, in which the supply of labour almost always exceeds the demand. In consequence there is necessarily a considerable amount of unemployment and of casual employment among young adults.

As long ago as 1926 an official committee of investigation in Great Britain pointed out that in many industries "it is the younger adult workers, those of from 18 to 24 years of age, who are least in demand".¹ In 1938 the problem was still an acute one, and in February 4.1 per cent. of insured males of 16-17 years of age were unemployed, 8.2 per cent. of those 18-20 years of age, and 12.5 per cent. of those 21-24 years of age. In that year, the Unemployment Assistance Board, through its local advisory committees, undertook an analysis of the live register with special reference to men and women of 30 years of age or less. In October 1938 no less than 100,000 young men under 30 applied for assistance allowances. Most of them had been out of employment so long that they had exhausted their rights to insurance benefit, while others had had so little employment that they had never earned the right to benefit at all; indeed, 58 per cent. of the 87,610 young men for whom particulars are available had had no employment or less than six months' employment during the three years preceding the enquiry. "It has become manifest", says the Board, "that the largest group of long-unemployed young men consists of those who are unskilled and can only offer to employers labour of a kind of which there is a superabundance. The men in this group are usually or often the victims of 'blind-alley' employment. On leaving school they obtained employment in which they had no opportunity to acquire either skill or aptitude or experience of any lasting value, and after the age of about 18 found themselves stranded without any industrial proficiency and having forgotten most of what they had learnt at school. Thereafter, if they have had work at all, it has been in short spells and at odd jobs that have never given them any proper industrial status."²

Attention was recently drawn to the problem of employment for youths and young men in a memorandum prepared by the Research Section of the Australian Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics for a conference of the Commonwealth and State Governments on youth employment held in Melbourne on 19 and 20 July 1939.³ This memorandum

¹ *Report of the Committee on Education and Industry (England and Wales), First Part, 1926, p. 82.*

² *Report of the Unemployment Assistance Board for the year ended 31 December 1938, Cmd. 6021, p. 46.*

³ Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Research Section Memorandum (R.S.M. 7). *The Problem of Employment for Youths and Young Men*, July 1939.

states that the main problem is that "of finding scope in satisfactory adult jobs for many thousands of boys who leave school each year to become absorbed for a few years continuously in useful occupations and then to find themselves, even before reaching adulthood, dismissed from their jobs because of increasing age". This problem, it is pointed out, is quite independent of the depression. It was beginning to perturb the community even in the good years prior to the depression and during the past two or three years it has reasserted itself with a new degree of insistence. An investigation by the New South Wales Employment Council shows that in Sydney there is normally a shortage of youth labour under the age of 18 years and an over-supply of labour at all ages above 18. The Council points out in its report that there are wide differences in the proportion of minors under 21 to all male employees in different fields of employment. The percentage of minors among all male employees is 12.5, but in retail shops it is 33.2, in factories 24.3, in wholesale establishments 22.2, and in offices, etc., 15.9. On the other hand, in hotels, restaurants, etc., it is only 10, in amusements, etc., 10, in transport other than railways and tramways 9.1, in rural industries 8.2, in Government railways and tramways 7.8, in building 7.2, and in mining 5.6. The facts very strongly suggest "that the structure of industry's demand for labour does not completely correspond to the structure of the supply of labour already existing and as it is constantly being supplemented by fresh supplies of youth".¹

A few figures may be cited for other countries. In Belgium, on 9 September 1938, 0.7 per cent. of the total number of unemployed men were under 18, and 6 per cent. were aged 18-24, the corresponding percentages for women being 4.4 and 14.6. In the Netherlands, on 1 July 1939, the number of unemployed men of 14 to 17 was 3,752, and those of 18 to 24 numbered 17,777, the corresponding figures for women being 2,154 and 2,768. In Switzerland, in July 1939, the number of young persons of both sexes seeking employment at the employment exchanges under 20 years of age was 769, and those of 20 to 24 years of age numbered 2,133.

It would seem from these examples, which could no doubt easily be supplemented from the experience of other countries,

¹ *Ibid.*

that the solution of the problem involves some amount of planning of the whole field of employment both of juveniles and of adults.

REMEDIES

International Recommendation

In 1933, under the influence of the economic depression, the Governing Body decided to place the question of unemployment among young persons on the agenda of the International Labour Conference in 1935, and in the latter year the Conference adopted without opposition the Unemployment (Young Persons) Recommendation, 1935. This Recommendation covered a wide field and dealt with the school-leaving age, the age for admission to employment, general and vocational education, recreational and social services for the young unemployed, action by trade organisations and private organisations, special employment centres, special public works for unemployed young persons, placing and development of opportunities for normal employment, and statistics. It included in the preamble a recommendation that each Member of the International Labour Organisation should submit to the International Labour Office a report stating the extent to which and the manner in which the principles of the Recommendation have been applied. The Conference further suggested in a resolution that these reports should subsequently be laid before a meeting of the Unemployment Committee of the Governing Body and of experts appointed by the Governments of the countries which had sent in reports.¹ In June 1939 the Governing Body decided that this meeting should take place in January 1940, but the war made this impossible. The reports, however, contain a great deal of interesting information, and the following sections of this article, which give examples of recent developments in respect of the subjects mentioned and do not pretend to be complete, are based on the reports and on supplementary information at the disposal of the Office.²

The remedies may be classified under a number of headings. The first task is to ensure adequate information on which to

¹ These Governments are those of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Union of South Africa, and the United States.

² Cf. also the report on "Unemployment among Young Persons", 1935.

base an effective policy for the elimination of unemployment among young persons ; the second is to adjust the supply of labour to the demand for it by well-planned systems of education and training, vocational guidance, and placing ; the third is to increase the demand for the labour of young persons, if possible ; and the fourth is to adopt measures such as the provision of recreational and social services, employment centres, and special public works which are mainly of importance during periods of severe unemployment. Suggestions have also been made aiming at modifying the structure of the demand for labour in such a way that it shall correspond more closely to the structure of the supply. To this list should be added a system of unemployment insurance and assistance. The Conference said nothing on this subject in the Recommendation of 1935 because the whole question of unemployment insurance and assistance schemes had been dealt with in the previous year in a special Convention and Recommendation ; such schemes are necessarily applicable to the employed population as a whole irrespective of age, and for that reason nothing more is said on the subject here.

Statistical and Other Information

No problem can be studied and no solutions can be found for it unless its extent and characteristics are known as precisely as possible. That is certainly not the case at the present time so far as the unemployment of young persons is concerned. The figures given above are evidence that the statistics on the subject leave much to be desired. That was recognised by the Conference in 1935, and one section of the Recommendation adopted by it made suggestions for an improvement in the statistical information available, recommending the use of a variety of methods for the compilation of statistics of unemployed young persons under 25 showing their number, sex, age, and occupation.

The Governments which have sent reports on the application of the Recommendation all devote attention to this question and recognise its importance. Most of them compile either regularly or from time to time statistics which make a classification according to age, and particulars of sex are often included as well. It must be admitted, however, that the statistics are not always very useful for international comparisons because, for example, the age groups differ from

country to country, a division being made in some countries at 18, in others at 21, and in others again at 25.

But the question of adequate information does not stop there. It is also desirable that the whole problem of employment and unemployment among young persons should be kept constantly under review so that the causes of such unemployment may be diagnosed correctly and suitable remedies applied. Reference has already been made above to the results of enquiries made in Australia and Great Britain on this subject. In Australia, an important step forward was taken at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Governments in July 1939 when a resolution was unanimously adopted recommending that a research organisation be established in each State to attack the problem of employment and unemployment, and that for the purpose of ensuring continuous collaboration of the Commonwealth and the States in dealing with the problem of employment for young persons the Conference should constitute itself as a continuing body to be convened by the Commonwealth, and meeting at least twice a year. One of the tasks of the proposed research organisations to which special attention was called was an investigation without delay into "the extent of the problem of dead-end employment of young persons; the effect on such young persons of following such employment; and the possible remedies and the effect of such remedies on the industries and callings and on the economy of the State". Moreover, in Sweden, a Labour Market Commission was appointed in September 1939 to make a continuous study of the labour market situation, and this will presumably include the special needs of young persons.

Education and Training

The next step is to adjust the supply of labour to the demand for it, and for this purpose it is necessary in the first place to provide an adequate system of general education and vocational training. On this subject the Conference made a number of suggestions in the Recommendation of 1935. So far as juveniles under 18 are concerned, it recommended that in countries where compulsory education does not exist it should be introduced as soon as possible; that the minimum age for leaving school and being admitted to employment should be fixed at not less than 15 years as soon as circum-

stances permit ; that juveniles over the school-leaving age who are unable to find suitable employment should be required to continue full-time attendance at school until suitable employment is available for them, "suitable" referring primarily to the continuity of the employment and to future prospects therein ; that for this purpose there should be close co-operation between the education, placing and unemployment insurance authorities ; and that the curricula for juveniles whose period of school attendance is prolonged by the application of the measures recommended above should be designed primarily to promote their general education, but should also provide general training for occupational activity. Moreover, in 1936 and 1937 the Conference revised the Conventions fixing the minimum age for admission of children to employment at sea and to industrial and non-industrial employment, raising the age from 14 to 15.

It was argued in favour of these measures that they were desirable on purely educational grounds, and that they would also have the advantage of withdrawing a certain number of juveniles from the labour market, thus lessening the competition for jobs among both juveniles and young adults. It was, however, recognised that much unemployment among young persons is due to a lack of training and useful industrial experience during the early years after the juveniles leave school. In order to put an end to this situation, the raising of the minimum school-leaving age involving a longer period of compulsory education, mainly of a general character, is not enough. It is necessary that the young people who have already reached the school-leaving age should be able to continue their studies in a secondary school or to obtain technical training. In the Recommendation of 1935 the Conference urged that measures should be adopted to encourage juveniles with the necessary aptitudes to attend secondary or technical schools beyond the minimum school-leaving age ; that juveniles who are no longer in full-time attendance at school should, until they reach the age of 18, be required to attend continuation courses providing a combination of general and vocational education ; and that where such attendance is not compulsory for all juveniles it should at least be made compulsory for unemployed juveniles, who should be required to attend for a prescribed number of hours every day or every week. In 1939, the Conference adopted two

Recommendations dealing with vocational training and apprenticeship respectively. In the preamble of the first of these Recommendations it urged as one reason for its adoption "the rapid transformation of the economic structure and of conditions in various countries, the constant changes in the methods of production, and the widening of the conception of vocational training as a factor in social progress and in the general culture of the workers". It may also be noted that paragraph 5 (2) of this Recommendation states that "measures should be adopted to ensure that in the event of economic depression or financial difficulty the supply of trained workers necessary to meet future requirements is not imperilled by a reduction in the facilities for technical and vocational education". This latter proposal deserves particular attention. It is important that nothing should be done to diminish the provision for vocational training during the war or during any industrial depression that may occur after the war. It is fatally easy to think, in a time of emergency like the present, that vocational training may be reduced to a minimum, and indeed that may suffice for the immediate task in hand, but it is storing up trouble, and perhaps serious trouble, for the future.

A great deal of progress has been made in various countries in connection with the education and training of juveniles, and the minimum age for admission to employment.

In *Australia* the Conference of July 1939 recommended that the State Governments should take steps to introduce legislation to raise the minimum school-leaving age to 15 years by at least three successive steps of 4 months, starting from 1 July 1940; all the representatives present supported this recommendation except that of Queensland. A further resolution recommended to the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victorian Governments that the employment in factories of boys and girls under the age of 15 years should be prohibited. Moreover, encouragement is given by the provision of bursaries or other assistance to juveniles over the school-leaving age to continue attendance at school or join technical classes, and special classes are organised for those who are unemployed. In addition, Young Citizens' Associations have been created under Government auspices to provide, among other things, instructional, educational and recreational facilities for unemployed boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 21.

In *Belgium* there has been a strong movement in favour of raising the school-leaving age, but no action has yet been taken with regard to it. Juveniles over the school-leaving age who are unable to find

suitable employment may be required, under a Royal Order of 31 July 1935, to attend classes in primary, technical, vocational or domestic science schools for a period of two years ; this measure is, by an Act of 10 August 1939, being continued in force until 1 September 1941. Moreover, measures have been taken to encourage unemployed juveniles with the necessary aptitudes to attend secondary or technical schools beyond the minimum school-leaving age.

In *Finland* it has been sought, by means of more efficient supplementary education, to obviate the difficulty experienced by young persons because they cannot enter employment at the end of the period of school attendance owing to social protective legislation.

In *France* the school-leaving age was raised from 13 to 14 by an Act of 9 August 1939.

In *Great Britain* an Act was passed providing for the raising of the school-leaving age to 15 as from 1 September 1939, with the right of exemption for beneficial employment after attaining the age of 14 ; the coming into force of this measure has, however, been postponed in consequence of the war. Children are encouraged to remain at school until they find suitable employment, and close co-operation exists between the education, placing and unemployment insurance authorities. Measures are also adopted to encourage juveniles with the necessary aptitudes to attend secondary or technical schools beyond the minimum school-leaving age, with the result that there has been a remarkable growth in the provision of secondary education, and also in the extent to which pupils remain at school after the completion of the period of compulsory education. A system of courses of instruction for unemployed boys and girls is also in operation, but the centres were closed at the outbreak of war, and are being reopened only in areas in which local education authorities ask for them.

In *Ireland*, where the minimum school-leaving age is 14, the extension of compulsory school attendance up to 16 may be required in any particular area, and apprentices in certain designated trades may be required to attend for part-time instruction up to 18. Moreover, co-operation between the education, placing and unemployment insurance authorities has been effected by the statutory provision whereby principals of primary schools are required to furnish to the local employment office lists of names of pupils approaching the school-leaving age. Vocational education committees throughout the country are required to establish and maintain a suitable system of continuation education, and scholarships are given for the purpose of encouraging juveniles with the necessary aptitudes to attend secondary and technical schools.

In *Norway* compulsory continuation schools may be set up in rural areas, and if they are the children are bound to attend them during the first year after they leave the elementary school. Attend-

ance at continuation or technical schools is otherwise voluntary, and in 1936-1937 several hundred courses of various kinds were organised, and, in particular, courses in vocational training on the lines laid down by the Vocational Guidance Council. Moreover, grants are made by the Government for evening-classes for unemployed young persons in rural areas, for scholarships for former pupils of secondary schools and people's colleges, and for special courses for elementary school-teachers and pupils of teachers' training colleges whose full training course is not yet complete.

In *Sweden* children who have completed the period of elementary school education are required to attend certain continuation courses, and the obligation may be extended until they reach the age of 18. Attendance at local authorities' apprenticeship schools may also be made compulsory for young persons employed in handicrafts, industry, or commerce.

In *Switzerland* an Act was adopted on 24 June 1938 fixing the minimum age for admission to employment at 15, with a few minor exceptions. The school-leaving age is 15 years or over in five cantons containing about 40 per cent. of the total population. Scholarships are provided in order to enable promising juveniles to attend secondary or technical schools, and unemployed juveniles have opportunities for attending continuation courses. The Government points out that, as a result of the close collaboration between the education authorities and institutions dealing with vocational guidance and placing, the amount of unemployment among juveniles is very small.

In *South Africa* the minimum age for leaving school is either 15 or the passing of Standard VII, or 16 or the passing of Standard VIII, according to the province. Moreover, it is the accepted policy of all Government departments undertaking welfare and educational work to encourage juveniles with the necessary aptitudes to attend secondary or technical schools, and there is provision for exemption from the payment of fees.

In the *United States* the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 24 October 1938 specifies that no person may ship in inter-State commerce goods produced in an establishment in which oppressive child labour has been employed, this expression being defined as the employment of any child under 16 years of age, or, in the case of hazardous occupations, under 18 years of age. In January 1938 there were 7 States in which, as a general rule, the school-leaving age was 18, 7 where it was 17, 31 in addition to the District of Columbia where it was 16, 1 where it was 15, and 2 where it was 14. In addition to attendance at full-time school, attendance at continuation school may be required up to 16 years in 14 States, 17 years in 2 States, and 18 years in 10 States and, if required by the local authority, in 2 additional States. In recent years it has, however, been the tendency to require full-time school attendance up to 16 or 18 years rather than to extend the requirements for attend-

ance at a continuation school. Some States specifically require unemployed young persons to continue attendance in either a full-time or a continuation school.

Particulars of the general organisation of vocational training in a large number of countries were published in the report prepared as a basis of discussion for the Conference in 1938.¹ Since then, further progress has been made. In France, Germany, and Japan, technical training has been made compulsory in certain cases, while other measures have been adopted in Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, India, the Netherlands Indies, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, and the Soviet Union.²

The circumstances of the last few years, however, have forced another problem to the front. There was, during the period of recovery and still more during the period of rearmament which immediately preceded the war, a big and increasing demand for skilled workers in different trades coinciding with a large number of unemployed workers. It was gradually realised, moreover, that this situation, which had become particularly critical as a result of the depression and of blind-alley employment on the supply side, and the rapidly increasing needs of certain industries on the demand side, covered up a problem which was not merely temporary but is, on the contrary, permanent and, indeed, inevitable in a progressive world. Technical progress and administrative reorganisation are constantly leading to the discharge of workers whose jobs have disappeared and who require help to enable them to adapt themselves to new and expanding occupations. Some of these workers may be elderly and thus constitute a distinct problem with which we are not concerned in this article. But, in so far as they are in the younger age groups, the remedy is training or retraining for fresh employment.

This was fully realised by the Conference, which, in the Recommendation of 1935, suggested that vocational training centres, in which some provision is made for general education, should be organised for unemployed persons between the ages

¹ INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE : *Technical and Vocational Education and Apprenticeship* (Geneva, 1938).

² Cf. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE : *Year-Book, 1938-39*, pp. 239-242, and the forthcoming *Year-Book, 1939-40*.

of 18 and 25 ; and that the programmes of such centres should include, in addition to practical subjects, general courses of vocational and cultural interest.¹ Very few of the suggestions in the Recommendation of 1935 have been applied so widely in the intervening years as those concerning the retraining of the unemployed. It should be added that, while some of the measures described below apply particularly to the age group 18-25, others apply to other age groups as well.

In *Australia* schemes are in operation for supplementing wages of trainees pending their attaining complete efficiency, for training for technical trades and commercial pursuits, and for training for agriculture, forestry and mining pursuits ; they are financed jointly by the Commonwealth and the States, and the former has made grants amounting to £400,000 for this purpose.

In *Belgium* the occupational retraining of unemployed persons, which may be made compulsory under a Royal Order of 16 January 1939, is undertaken either in an undertaking on the basis of a contract approved by the National Employment and Unemployment Office or in a vocational school established or subsidised by the public authorities, or in a special centre set up for the purpose. In the centres facilities are provided for education of a vocational and cultural character and practical training in the trades of fitter, machine-tool worker, arc-welder, and joiner and carpenter.

In *Canada* schemes are in operation for the training of unemployed persons between 18 and 30 ; they are financed jointly by the Dominion and Provincial Governments, and under the Youth Training Act, 1939, the Dominion provided \$4,500,000 for a three-year period.

In *China* the Executive Yuan authorised the establishment of classes for training unemployed graduates in the years 1933-1936 for employment in public administrative services or economic reconstruction work, and set up a special committee to organise these classes.

In *Denmark*, in accordance with an Act of 27 March 1934, camps are organised to which in particular young persons between 18 and 22 years of age are admitted through the employment exchanges. At these camps, which are subsidised by the Government and the local authorities, courses of general instruction as well as practical training in various occupations are provided.

¹ Moreover, in 1938, when the question of vocational education was under consideration, the Conference adopted a resolution asking the Governing Body to consider the desirability of placing the question of the vocational retraining and readjustment of adult workers on the agenda of an early session of the Conference.

In *Finland* technical courses of instruction were organised for unemployed men and women during the depression and were attended from 1932 to 1935 by about 3,000 young men and 4,500 young women under 25. By 1937, unemployment among young persons had considerably diminished and the number of courses of instruction was correspondingly reduced.

In *France* both training and retraining facilities have been very much developed in recent years. A Legislative Decree of 12 November 1938 provided for occupational reclassification and retraining, the object being to supply undertakings working for national defence with the necessary skilled staff. A Decree of 6 May 1939, which consolidated unemployment legislation, provides that occupational retraining centres approved by the Minister of Labour are entitled to State subsidies on certain conditions, and that unemployed persons must attend the occupational retraining centres set up or recognised by the State; an Occupational Retraining Committee has been created at the Ministry of Labour.

In *Germany* far-reaching measures have been adopted for the retraining of persons for whom no employment is available in their previous occupation.

In *Great Britain* Government training centres have been in operation for several years for men and women living in areas of specially heavy unemployment. Educational instruction is given as part of the curriculum.

In *Luxemburg* a Grand-ducal Order of 14 March 1936 outlined measures for the organisation of centres for the vocational training of young unemployed persons. Such persons admitted to these centres must not be over 24 years of age if they intend to take up agriculture, or 21 years in other cases.

In the *Netherlands* special courses, attendance at which is voluntary, are provided for unemployed young persons. They are of three kinds: courses for theoretical study, for practical or technical training, and for mixed theoretical and practical training. In addition, the Government has recently appealed to employers to agree, on the basis of a "temporary subsidy", to engage unemployed persons capable of doing certain kinds of work after a period of training or retraining.

In *Norway* the Government states that centres on the lines proposed in the Recommendation have been organised. Subsidies for supplementary courses for elementary school-teachers and for unemployed teachers to follow such courses have also been provided.

In *Sweden* various facilities are given to enable unemployed young persons to attend the popular high schools as well as technical and agricultural schools. In accordance with the policy laid down by the National Unemployment Commission practical training for

local industries and crafts is particularly emphasised, although general instruction and physical training are not neglected. Moreover, in distressed areas special workshop schools have been set up by the Government for the building and engineering trades.

In *Switzerland* special attention has always been paid to vocational training for unemployed persons, such training being given in accordance with local requirements and circumstances. Admission to the courses, in which the vocational knowledge of the pupils is improved or training is given in a new trade, is almost exclusively confined to unemployed persons who have already had vocational training or are skilled workers. Under an Order of 24 May 1935, Federal subsidies are granted for the purpose of organising camps and courses, and for enabling unemployed persons to attend them.

In *South Africa* the Government states that the purposes for which the training centres are recommended are met in the case of boys by the Special Service and Pioneer Battalions. The staffs of the Battalions consist of trained officials of the Department of Defence.

In the *United States* training has been provided in conjunction with many of the work projects organised by the National Youth Administration, and resident training centres have been set up for unemployed young persons from rural areas and small communities to provide work experience and supplementary instruction in agriculture, shop work, construction, and home economics. In the regulations relating to employment on projects of the N.Y.A. made under the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, 1939, it is specifically provided that youth employees may be required to participate in a programme of related training included in their monthly assigned hours of work.

Vocational Guidance

The next matter of importance in the adjustment of labour supply and demand is the provision of an efficient system of vocational guidance. The time has passed when boys and girls can be left to choose their own careers with no other guidance than that of their parents and friends. There are, in the rapidly-changing world in which we live, a number of factors to be taken into consideration on which the average person fully occupied with his or her own affairs must necessarily be ill-informed. The desires of the child and any influence which a parent or friend may have in obtaining employment for him in a particular trade are of the utmost importance. But there are two other factors, on which outside guidance is essential. One is the personal fitness of the child for the kind of work in view,

the other is the prospect of reasonably steady employment in the occupation concerned. Many a school-leaver has made a disastrous mistake at the outset of his career through lack of adequate guidance and has subsequently found it difficult or impossible to change over to something more congenial or offering better prospects.

In the Recommendation of 1935 the Conference referred to this question and recommended special placing services for juveniles which should either include a vocational guidance department or be co-ordinated with independent bodies for vocational guidance. In 1938, it adopted a resolution drawing attention to the importance of vocational guidance as a necessary preliminary to vocational education, both as a method of determining the individual aptitudes of the future worker and as a means of adapting the choice of occupation to the needs of the labour market, and asking the Governing Body to consider the desirability of placing the question of vocational guidance on the agenda of a very early session of the Conference.

Vocational guidance services were first created in the years immediately preceding the war of 1914-1918; during that war they were greatly developed, and since then they have continued to expand.¹ Many of the Governments which have sent in reports on the application of the Recommendation of 1935 (Australia, Finland, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, and the United States) refer to the existence of such services in their respective countries. A few examples of recent developments are given below.

In *Belgium* a special committee set up in 1935 at the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to study measures to combat unemployment among young persons proposed the organisation of vocational guidance for unemployed girls.

In *Finland* the Government states that vocational guidance is being developed.

In *France* a Decree of 18 February 1939 regulates the opening, management, operation, and supervision, of voluntary vocational guidance centres, which may be under the control of local authorities, occupational associations, or other legally constituted occupational

¹ For full particulars up to 1935, see INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE : *Problems of Vocational Guidance*, Studies and Reports, Series J, No. 4 (Geneva, 1935).

groups. Fresh obligations were also imposed by a Decree of 6 April 1939 on compulsory vocational guidance centres in respect of the qualifications required of their directors and advisers, and the supervision exercised by the Secretariat of Vocational Guidance and the General Inspectorate of Technical Education.

In *Germany* an Order of 1 March 1938 provided that every young person leaving a primary, middle or higher school must register within 15 days at the local employment office, to which a vocational guidance office is attached.

In *Japan*, as a part of the programme for adapting the supply of labour to present needs, prefects are responsible, in virtue of a Circular issued in October 1938, for co-ordinating and supervising the vocational guidance of children of school age.

In *Sweden* the Central Board of Education has issued instructions concerning meetings of the teaching staff of higher classes in schools to discuss questions of vocational guidance and the prospects of training open to children leaving school; the giving of lectures and the issue of special pamphlets as an aid to vocational guidance; and the need for drawing the attention of parents to the importance of making a proper choice of an occupation for their children. The Department of Labour and Social Welfare has recently investigated, at the request of the Government, the most suitable form for a centralised vocational guidance service, and issued a report on 18 February 1939 making a number of suggestions.

In the *United States* an Occupational Information and Guidance Service has been established in the Federal Office of Education, its purposes being the collation and dissemination of information about occupations, a permanent and cumulative description of the capabilities necessary to pursue any one of these occupations, and the promotion throughout the country of the consciousness of the need of occupational information and general guidance as an integral part of school programmes. Moreover, the National Youth Administration provides vocational guidance in the form of supply of information on openings available, the qualifications required and the prospects offered.

Placing Services

The third element in an efficient labour market organisation is an adequate placing service. This may be established in the form of a regionally and nationally co-ordinated system of employment exchanges through which applicants for employment and applicants for labour can be brought into touch with one another. As far back as 1919 the Conference adopted a Convention on this subject which has been ratified by 31 countries, and in 1933 the Office published a study

containing particulars of the work of such exchanges throughout the world.¹

The Conference of 1935 considered, however, that special arrangements were desirable for the placing of juveniles, and it recommended that special services for this purpose should seek to place juveniles in suitable occupations, thus avoiding as far as possible the evil of blind-alley employment, and, as already stated above, should be closely associated with any provision that may be made for vocational guidance. It further suggested that employers should be required to notify the local placing service for juveniles of vacancies for juveniles and of any engagements of juveniles which they have made without recourse to the placing service; and that placing services for juveniles should be required to supervise the results of the placings made with a view to obtaining information likely to further the occupational prospects of juveniles and to maintain close relations with all other public and private institutions interested in young persons, and notably with the education authorities. The problem of occupational adjustment does not, however, cease to exist at the age of 18, and the Conference thought that in the development of placing services for young persons of 18 years of age and over provision should be made whenever possible for assisting such persons in their occupational readjustment, and that measures should be taken to transfer to expanding occupations and to districts in which such occupations are carried on young persons who are without employment in districts where the principal industries appear to be in permanent decline. Finally, it recommended that Governments should conclude agreements for the purpose of facilitating the international exchange of student employees.

In *Finland*, under the Employment Act of 1937, special juvenile sections have been created in employment exchanges situated in the more densely populated centres.

In *Germany* the employment offices pursue a systematic policy of labour distribution in accordance with the overriding needs of the State; in virtue of this policy they do not confine themselves to bringing employers and workers together, but they may decide that workers should, for reasons of State policy, be transferred from one job to another or from independent work to wage or salaried employment.

¹ *Employment Exchanges: An International Study of Placing Activities. Studies and Reports, Series C, No. 18.*

In *Great Britain* special local and central arrangements for the placing of juveniles are included in the national system of public employment exchanges. The placing services seek to place juveniles in suitable occupations, but other questions, such as hours of employment, distance from home, and wages paid, are taken into consideration, as well as the continuity of employment and the future prospects therein. They encourage employers to notify all vacancies for juveniles, but it would be contrary to the Government's general policy to require compulsory notification of vacancies. In occupations insurable against unemployment employers are required to return to the placing service the unemployment book of any juvenile discharged, and engagements and discharges of juveniles are thus known to the officers of the service. Active steps are taken for the purpose of transferring young persons who are without employment in districts where the principal industries appear to be in permanent decline to expanding occupations and to districts in which such occupations are carried on.

In the *Netherlands* the employment exchanges in Amsterdam and The Hague have special sections for young persons.

In *Norway* a special section for juveniles was established at the public employment exchanges at Oslo and Bergen in March 1938, and it was intended to open a similar section at Trondhjem. Adequate consideration is given in the placing of juveniles to the continuity of the employment and future prospects therein. Experimental courses have been organised in certain districts for training unemployed young persons with a view to transferring them to other districts providing more opportunities of industrial employment.

In *Sweden* the Social Board has issued instructions with regard to the placing of juveniles. Care must be taken that the employment will provide not only an income but also if possible an opportunity for training in a trade which may be of value to the future livelihood of the young person. In large localities a special section for young persons should be set up, and the exchange should keep in touch with young persons in order to ascertain the results of the placing and if need be to offer its continued services. Early in 1935, when the Act relating to employment exchanges came into effect, there were special sections for young persons in ten employment exchanges, and similar sections have been added in other places since that time.

In *Switzerland*, no steps have been taken to make special local or central arrangements for the placing of juveniles. Young persons leaving school are placed in employment mainly through the efforts of the vocational guidance institutions. Unemployed persons are readapted to other occupations by training in courses and camps for the unemployed, and also individually by employers. Moreover, young persons are systematically guided towards the trades in which there is a shortage of labour.

In the *United States* there were, on 1 September 1939, special junior placement services in operation in 144 cities in 41 States. Experts for ascertaining the ability and experience of applicants for work between 16 and 25 years of age and advising them are attached to the staff of employment offices and are paid by the National Youth Administration. In addition, in 51 cities State employment services have opened Junior Placement Divisions which follow the N.Y.A. procedure but are supported by their own funds.

It may be added that Belgium, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, have all concluded agreements for the exchange of student employees. Moreover, an agreement has recently been concluded by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, providing for an exchange of workers for purposes of study. The exchange will apply in the first place to skilled workers in industry, handicrafts, etc., but may possibly be extended to commercial and office staff, agricultural workers, and foremen, and will as a general rule be confined to persons between the ages of 20 and 40. An engagement under this agreement will be for a period of 6 to 9 months, or for such shorter period (not less than 3 months) as may be considered suitable in the circumstances. It is assumed that the workers will receive wages in accordance with the rates fixed by collective agreement at the place of work. The exchange will be organised by committees in each country including representatives of the principal employers' and workers' organisations.

Hours of Labour

We come now to a suggestion made in the Recommendation of 1935 with the object not of ensuring a better adjustment of existing labour supply and demand but of increasing the demand for the labour of young persons and thus bringing about a reduction in unemployment. This relates to a reduction in hours of labour, which in a general way was also under discussion by the Conference in 1935. So far as young persons are concerned, the Conference recommended that attempts to promote re-employment by a reduction in ordinary hours of work should be pursued with special vigour in respect of employment in which such persons engage. Not much information is available on measures for the application of this recommendation, which has in any case been pushed into the

background by recent events. There are, however, three items of information which may be noted. The Australian Conference of July 1939 adopted a resolution recommending that the Commonwealth Government, in collaboration with the States, should arrange for a competent authority, preferably a Royal Commission, to enquire into the practicability and desirability of adopting a shorter working week, and to make a recommendation. After consideration of the report of the Conference the Commonwealth Prime Minister announced that proposals for a general enquiry into the value of reducing the working week would be submitted to the next Premiers' Conference. The British Government, in its report on the application of the Recommendation of 1935, stated that it had conferred with a number of representative industrial organisations on the general question of what can be done to absorb unemployed persons into industry, and that the conferences had been undertaken with a view to the examination of a variety of proposals including a reduction in working hours. Finally, the Hungarian Minister of Industry announced his intention, in 1936, to alleviate unemployment among young persons by reducing the hours of work of private employees so as to enable establishments to engage a larger number of non-manual workers.

Recreational and Social Services

The Conference, in the Recommendation of 1935, suggested the adoption of a series of measures which are palliatives rather than real remedies, and which are mainly required in times of severe unemployment. As long as unemployment exists special measures of this kind will be necessary, and it was during the depression which started in 1929-1930 that they were set up for the most part. Since then they have had far less importance than they had at that time but they are far from being unnecessary, for the long-term unemployed are in some ways more isolated and more in need of help in times of relative prosperity than in times of depression. The first measure of this kind to be mentioned is the provision of recreational and social services. On this point, the Conference recommended that measures for promoting the general and vocational education of the young unemployed should be accompanied by measures to facilitate the useful and agreeable utilisation of their spare time; that such centres should not

be reserved for the exclusive use of the unemployed but should also be open to young employed persons ; that in districts where there is a sufficient number of young unemployed measures should be taken to establish social service centres and hostels where they can obtain board and lodging at low cost ; and that the public authorities should assist educational and other social services for the young unemployed organised by trade organisations and other associations.

In *Australia* work of this kind is undertaken by the Young Citizens' Association and by other voluntary bodies. A limited amount of financial assistance is given in some cases by the State.

In *Canada*, while provision has been made for facilities for recreation and physical training in all schemes for training unemployed young persons, particular attention has been given to such facilities by the Provinces of British Columbia and Quebec.

In *Great Britain* local education authorities have wide powers to supply and maintain facilities for social activities and physical training. These powers have been exercised to some extent for a long time and, in order that they should be more widely used, Parliament adopted the Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937. The British Government is in agreement with the principles of the Recommendation of 1935 concerning the desirability of throwing open the recreational centres to all young persons, both employed and unemployed. In the case of juveniles transferred to employment away from their home area, hostels are provided where necessary and special arrangements are made to provide for the recreation and leisure of the juveniles. Local authorities have power to assist educational and other social services for the young unemployed organised by other bodies. After the outbreak of war in September 1939, the Board of Education set up a National Youth Committee to organise, co-ordinate, and help, the efforts of voluntary welfare organisations. The Committee will dispose of special funds and will work in close co-operation with the local education authorities.

In *Norway* assistance has been given in a few cases to the work of private organisations in this field.

In *Sweden* special steps have been taken to enable young unemployed persons to spend their spare time usefully and agreeably, but it has not been found necessary to establish special centres or hostels for young unemployed persons in particular. The work of trade organisations and other associations to provide educational and other social services for the young unemployed have, to some extent, been supported by the public authorities.

In *Switzerland* hostels, gymnasiums, sports grounds, swimming-pools, libraries, etc., are to be found throughout the country and

are accessible to unemployed persons of all ages. Institutions in which board and lodging can be had at a low cost exist in the country and are also accessible to unemployed young persons. The trade unions and private associations are responsible for a large part of the social services for unemployed young persons and assistance is provided for this purpose by the Federal, cantonal and municipal authorities.

In *South Africa*, in addition to the Special Service and Pioneer Battalions and the training centre for girls at Pretoria, which are national schemes, hostels where low-paid female workers may obtain board and lodging at low cost are subsidised by the Department of Labour and Social Welfare in the larger industrial centres. It is the practice of public authorities to assist educational and other social services for the young unemployed where such services are entirely localised, as in the case of the clubs conducted by Juvenile Affairs Boards.

In the *United States* there has been, in recent years, a considerable extension of the facilities for recreation equally open to young unemployed persons and others. Between 8 April 1935 and 31 May 1939 a total sum of \$804 million of emergency relief funds was spent in the construction or improvement of public recreational facilities.

Special Employment Centres

Another institution which became very popular during the depression was voluntary labour service, or, as the Conference called it, the establishment of special employment centres, the principal object of which was not to give education and training but to provide opportunities of work under other than normal conditions of employment. The establishment of such centres was the subject of keen controversy in 1935 when the Conference discussed the matter, and it felt unable either to recommend or to discourage them. It felt equally unable not to say anything at all about them, because centres had been set up in a number of countries and it was thought desirable to make certain recommendations in order to prevent the abnormal conditions resulting in abuses. In fact, the recommendations made were very detailed, but it is perhaps unnecessary to do more here than refer to the more important ones. These were that attendance at employment centres should be strictly voluntary; that every care should be taken to prevent centres, whether public or private, from becoming institutions for military training; that the organisation of the centres should, as far as possible, be such as to enable the young unemployed to govern them-

selves particularly as regards discipline ; and that the work programmes of the centres should be such as to avoid competition with workers in normal employment.

Since 1935 the situation has considerably changed. Germany has followed the example of Bulgaria by transforming her voluntary labour service into a compulsory labour service, not merely for the unemployed but for all young people, both men and women, and it can therefore no longer be considered as an unemployment measure ; compulsory labour service has also been adopted in Bohemia-Moravia and Rumania. In some countries there has been a marked tendency to introduce some form of military discipline, if not of military training. Elsewhere, however, apart from measures adopted in connection with national defence and which are not directly related to the problem of unemployment among young persons, the original character of the centres has been retained ; they have continued to be regarded as strictly voluntary, non-military organisations through which work of public utility may be carried out by workers who would otherwise be unemployed. In certain countries, however, the number of centres has been reduced owing partly to the decreased unemployment among young persons. In other countries the centres are tending to become more and more vocational training centres.

In *Australia* some provision for giving employment to young persons under other than normal conditions of employment has been made in certain States, notably Tasmania and Victoria, mainly in connection with forestry work. Attendance at these camps is quite voluntary and nothing like military training is permitted or tolerated.

In *Belgium* voluntary employment centres were set up and subsidised under the Royal Decree of 30 September 1935 with the object of assisting unemployed young persons to maintain their physical fitness and vitality. Only 170 persons, however, took advantage of the three centres which existed in 1938, and in 1939 the centres had no activity worthy of mention. In consequence, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare has recently announced that it is no longer desirable to encourage young unemployed persons to go to employment centres, but that they should rather attend courses of vocational or industrial education or of vocational retraining.

In *Canada* relief camps were established for unemployed men during the depression but they were not found satisfactory, and on 1 July 1936 they were closed.

In *Estonia* an experimental camp was opened in August 1935 for about 100 unemployed persons between 17 and 25, to be employed on land cultivation and the establishment of workers' settlements.

In *Great Britain* the Government set up instructional centres for unemployed men between 18 and 35, where reconditioning courses on healthy out-of-door work were provided to restore and maintain the employability of the men. A few courses of this type were also organised for older women. The practice in Great Britain with regard to attendance at such centres and the organisation of and conditions in such centres were in accordance with the principles stated in the Recommendation of 1935. The work done by men at the centres, though of ultimate benefit to the nation, such as work connected with afforestation, was work which would not be done as a commercial enterprise by wage-paid labour. These centres have been closed since the outbreak of war.

In the *Netherlands* labour camps, attendance at which is entirely voluntary, are organised by various bodies. The work consists in the maintenance of wood and nature reserves, and in the building, maintenance, and improvement, of youth hostels. An attempt has also been made to extend the employment of young persons in industry by placing them in undertakings for the purpose of carrying out what is described as unprofitable work, or work which would not otherwise be performed; there have, however, been several difficulties in the way of carrying out this plan, and only a few undertakings have tried it. Experiments have also been made with the so-called two-for-one system, under which two young persons are employed in the place of one, each working half a day, and as far as possible are given instruction during the free half-day. The Minister of Social Affairs has recently announced that the system of labour camps would be reviewed with a view to making them to a larger extent vocational training centres.

In *Poland* a Decree was promulgated on 22 September 1936 establishing a voluntary labour service for young persons. Under it teams of young unemployed persons performed labour service for national defence or economic purposes, and underwent training for military or auxiliary military service; they also received vocational training, training in citizenship, and general education. The duration of the labour service was two years, but persons might leave on giving four weeks' notice.

In *Sweden* camps subsidised by the State have been established for the voluntary labour service of unemployed young persons. In these camps, the simpler types of forestry, building, construction, and agricultural work, are carried out, the principal object being to enable the young persons to maintain and enhance their capacity for employment. The organisation of the camps is non-military in character. Admission, which is entirely voluntary, is restricted to those who have no dependants and are between 16 and 25 years of age.

In *Switzerland*, in accordance with an Order of 24 May 1935, Federal subsidies are paid to labour camps organised by the cantons, municipalities, and private associations. Attendance at a labour camp is not compulsory, but unemployed persons are entitled to unemployment and emergency benefit only if they can prove that they have worked for at least 150 days during the year preceding the claim whether in a labour camp or otherwise. Preference is given to unemployed persons between 16 and 24 years of age who have no family responsibilities. The organisation of the labour camps is in accordance with the provisions of the Recommendation of 1935.

In the *United States* the Civilian Conservation Corps, first established by an Act of 31 March 1933 and since then extended up to 30 June 1940 by an Act of 28 June 1937, is a non-military organisation, and provides employment and training for unemployed young persons in the conservation and development of the natural resources of the country. The workers in these camps do not compete with private industry; on the contrary, the purchase of food, clothing, and other supplies, effected by the Corps increases employment in private industry. Admission to the Corps is voluntary and, except for a small number of ex-service men, is restricted to unemployed unmarried men from 17 to 23 years of age who are in need. The total number of young men admitted between April 1933 and January 1938 was nearly 2 million. The Department of Labor has from the beginning selected the applicants other than the ex-service men, and the task of constructing and administering the camps was undertaken by the War Department. In spite of this, however, the members of the C.C.C. neither receive military training nor are they subject to military regulations. The final responsibility for the administration of the Corps rested with the Director, who was appointed by the President. In accordance with the President's reorganisation plan effective in July 1939 the C.C.C. has now been transferred to the new Federal Security Agency.

Special Public Works

Finally, the Conference recommended that special public works should be organised to assist unemployed young persons, and that such works should, as far as possible, be adapted to the age and occupation of such persons.

In *Denmark*, by an Act of 20 May 1933, provision was made for the grant of subsidies to municipalities, trade unions, and other bodies, for the employment of unemployed young persons of 18 to 22 years of age on useful work which would not otherwise be undertaken, such as, for instance, forestry, agricultural or horticultural work, the laying-out of playgrounds or sports-grounds, or work of personal interest to the unemployed. This Act was replaced by an Act of 13 April 1938, under which, in addition to municipalities and other bodies, the Government itself may under-

take work for the employment of young persons. The new measures apply only to young unemployed persons of 18 to 20 years of age. Contrary to the system in force in previous years, under which engagement in such work was optional, young unemployed persons who are assigned work in a centre, in accordance with the new Act, are required to perform such work and a refusal on their part or their premature departure from a camp entails the suspension of unemployment benefit and relief granted to them by the authorities.

In the *Netherlands* special public works, engagement for which is entirely voluntary, have been organised for unemployed young persons. They are in part municipal works and in part works for private organisations such as sports or other recreational associations which serve a public purpose.

In *Norway* two Circulars were issued by the Minister of Social Affairs in May 1937 and April 1938, concerning the organisation of special public works for unemployed young persons. The works in question consist in the construction of roads in mountain districts and on communications to areas under cultivation, as well as drainage work, and they are undertaken between May and November as the weather conditions are suitable during this period. Men are engaged for these works only in localities where the economic situation is bad. No worker may leave the works during the period of employment except with the permission of the leader of the group, and any worker who fails to observe the regulations or whose conduct is unsatisfactory may be asked to leave the works, no grant being made in such cases for the cost of the journey to the place of residence.

In *Sweden* public works have been organised by the central and local authorities primarily for the relief of the unemployed, and at the end of November 1936 525 persons between 18 and 21 years of age were employed on such works organised by the Government and 104 on those organised by the local authorities.

In *Switzerland* unemployed young persons may be employed on general relief works. Persons with no family responsibilities are subject to certain restrictions and they may be employed on agricultural work in summer.

In the *United States* the National Youth Administration, which was set up by Executive Order on 26 June 1935 as part of the Works Progress Administration, and has recently been transferred to the Federal Security Agency, provides part-time employment for young persons between 18 and 25 years of age if their income, or, if they are members of a family, if the income of the family, is insufficient to meet basic needs. The young people are employed on work which would not otherwise be undertaken for a recognised non-commercial institution, it being open to private agencies to co-operate in these schemes by supplying the necessary equipment, materials, work-rooms, and supervisory staff.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear from the above analysis of measures adopted both nationally and internationally that the principles of the Recommendation of 1935 have been widely applied.

In the first place, the Conference itself, as a result of a resolution passed in that year, subsequently dealt, in greater detail or in a different form, with certain aspects of the problem to which the Conference of 1935 devoted attention. Thus, in 1936 and 1937, the three Conventions relating to the minimum age for admission to employment were revised and brought into harmony with the proposals contained in the Recommendation of 1935, and in 1939 detailed Recommendations were adopted on the whole question of technical and vocational education and apprenticeship. Moreover, in resolutions adopted in 1938 the Conference invited the Governing Body to place the questions of vocational guidance and of vocational retraining and readjustment of adult workers on the agenda of an early session of the Conference. In the second place, steps have been taken in a large number of countries to deal with the problem of unemployment among young persons along the lines laid down in the Recommendation of 1935.

The problem has not, however, disappeared, and it is useful to investigate how far the remedies proposed in 1935 are still of value in the circumstances of to-day or in the light of probable developments in the future. It is much clearer to-day than it was in 1935 that the problem was not a purely temporary phenomenon, destined to pass away at the end of the depression. It has permanent features which require constant attention from the Governments and from all those who are concerned with the employment of young people.

The Conference included in its Recommendation of 1935 a section on statistics, and recommended ways in which they might be improved. This certainly continues to be important, but if the Conference were reviewing the situation to-day it might well wish to extend this section of the Recommendation and say something about other kinds of information as well. The experience of recent years has shown very clearly that a continuous study of the employment and unemployment of young persons is necessary in order to lay a sound basis for remedial measures.

Enquiries which have been made in some countries disclose the fact that much of the unemployment among young adults is due to blind-alley employment, in which many juveniles

engage immediately after leaving school. This is unquestionably a matter worthy of most careful consideration. The remedy would seem to be to discourage young school-leavers from going into jobs which lead nowhere, and if they do take such jobs (for there is some work of this kind that cannot be dispensed with) to encourage them to undertake some kind of training which will fit them for more progressive employment later on.

Coming now to the question of adjusting the supply of labour to the demand for it, including education and training, vocational guidance, and placing, it can hardly be doubted that the permanent importance of the section of the Recommendation of 1935 on the school-leaving age, the age for admission to employment, and general and vocational education, is very great indeed. So far as the minimum age for admission to employment is concerned, this has since been regulated internationally by the revision of the three Minimum Age Conventions. At the same time, the value of an adequate system of general and vocational education, from the point of view of the organisation of the labour market, as well as from the general educational point of view, is gaining increasing recognition, and here also the Conference has taken a step forward since 1935. It is of particular importance that the principles laid down on this subject should be followed during the war. On the other hand, educational courses for unemployed juveniles and training or retraining centres for unemployed adults have been extended on a considerable scale in the recent past, owing to the need for skilled workers for those trades which have been expanding most rapidly. It may, therefore, be said that this section of the Recommendation of 1935, supplemented by subsequent decisions of the Conference, retains its full importance in the light of recent developments.

The need for a well-organised system of vocational guidance, co-ordinated with the school and the employment exchange, is also recognised more and more, and the war may well lead to a considerable development in this field. In normal circumstances, it is probable that this question would find a place on the agenda of an early session of the Conference.

Most of the paragraphs in the Recommendation of 1935 relating to placing are of importance at all times. Special placing services for juveniles, the assistance of young persons of 18 years of age and over in their occupational readjustment,

the transference of young unemployed persons to expanding occupations and to districts in which such occupations are carried on, and international agreements for the exchange of student employees, are all of permanent value in the organisation of the labour market. On the latter point, attention may be drawn to the important agreement concluded recently by the northern countries of Europe; this agreement is regarded in some quarters as preparing the way for the creation of a common labour market in the countries concerned. Even if such exchanges may be impossible in many countries at the present time, they will assuredly have renewed importance at the end of the war.

A suggestion was included in the Recommendation of 1935 to the effect that attempts to promote re-employment by a reduction of hours of work should be pursued with special vigour in respect of employment in which young persons engage. In this matter, the situation has radically changed since 1935, but it may be regarded as certain that this problem will again become acute in the future, and when that time arrives the special aspect of it which concerns young workers will deserve reconsideration.

The object of the above proposal was to increase the demand for the labour of young persons, and the Conference of Australian Governments, which met in July 1939, put forward another idea, the object of which is also to influence the demand for labour but in a different way. The Research Section of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics said, in its memorandum to the Conference, that the structure of industry's demand for labour did not completely correspond to the structure of the supply of labour. If that is so, whatever may be done to adapt the supply of labour more closely to the demand will be inadequate. The problem will still remain unsolved. It was therefore suggested that action should be taken to change the structure of the demand for labour and to lay down a suitable ratio of minors to adults in employment. The Conference, basing itself on the figures quoted in the earlier part of this article¹, showing the differences in the proportion of minors to adults in different fields of employment, unanimously adopted a resolution affirming the desirability of consideration by all competent industrial tribunals of the fixation of interim maximum ratios of minors to adults who may be employed, and inviting the Governments con-

¹ See above, p. 451.

cerned to take the necessary steps to implement this resolution.

Recreational and social services for the young unemployed are mostly of importance when unemployment exists on a large scale, but they continue to be needed as long as there are any long-term young unemployed. On the other hand, the assistance which public authorities were recommended to give to educational and other social services organised by trade organisations and other associations is desirable at all times, especially so far as educational services are concerned.

The section of the Recommendation on special employment centres is also of most importance when there is large-scale unemployment. Such centres exist, however, in a considerable number of countries and in some of them are now considered a permanent feature, and, in these circumstances, the practical value of the principles set forth in the Recommendation of 1935 can hardly be denied. Much the same applies to the suggestions on special public works for young unemployed persons, and these suggestions will doubtless be particularly relevant at the end of the war.

To sum up, the suggestions for dealing with unemployment among young persons are of two kinds: those which are of importance at all times and which necessarily form part of an employment policy, and those which are of importance mainly when unemployment on a large scale exists or is threatened. The former are real remedies; the latter are palliatives which are, however, indispensable at times when the remedies have not been effectively applied or some of them, owing to a depression, are temporarily inapplicable. If the remedial measures are systematically applied, they should ensure a progressive development of employment for young persons. Most, if not all, of these measures are quite as important in wartime as in peace-time. We have to plan for the future, and if a sound basis is not established now the end of the war may well find us unprepared to face the new problems of peace. In any case, when that time comes there will be a severe dislocation which may be accompanied by serious unemployment, and which will require the application of all the measures which have been referred to above. Looking beyond the transition, it is clearly inconceivable that anything should be neglected that is likely to prevent a situation from arising again in which numbers of young workers, able and willing to work, are unable for long periods to find the employment they are seeking.