

Worker-Trainees

A Form of Technical Assistance

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A number of references have been made in the Review to the technical assistance activities of the I.L.O. and the great increase in these activities since the launching in 1950 of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance of the United Nations and specialised agencies.¹ An important part of the I.L.O. contribution to the Programme consists of vocational training. In the following article an account is given of the working of the I.L.O. worker-trainee programme, the aim of which is to produce skilled industrial workers.

THIS study deals with a special form of technical assistance given by the I.L.O., which normally goes by the name of the worker-trainee programme. The assistance consists of giving the normal and advanced vocational training needed to turn out skilled industrial workers. It is akin to the assistance that has been sought since earliest times by apprentices in commerce and handicrafts and, subsequently, in industry. The less gifted, the less confident or the less fortunate, as well as those most eager to learn, have always gone to others better placed than themselves to ask for help over varying periods in the learning and practising of a trade. Even today, in the great majority of European countries, numbers of young workmen work their way around the country in the same way as their fathers before them. It is also common practice for manufacturers and clients to arrange for the exchange of selected workmen or supervisors for further training

¹ See, for example, the references to I.L.O. technical assistance to Burma on p. 124 above. For a full account of I.L.O. activities in this field see the report to the 37th Session of the International Labour Conference entitled *Technical Assistance*, a note on which appeared in *International Labour Review*, Vol. LXIX, No. 5, May 1954, p. 513. See also "The International Labour Organisation and Technical Assistance", *idem*, Vol. LXVI, Nos. 5-6, Nov.-Dec. 1952, p. 391.

or special instruction in the assembly, handling or maintenance of machinery placed on order.

Technical assistance by means of vocational training, as organised and financed by the I.L.O., is based upon the same idea, though its aims and scope are naturally much more ambitious by reason of the planning that goes into it. Instead of leaving the training haphazardly to individual initiative, the programme sets out to give assistance to any government that feels concern over the economic position of its country in assessing the main needs of any given branch of its economy or industry. Once this is done, a number of its nationals are given the opportunity of improving their vocational or technical standards either by spending some time abroad or by being trained at home by skilled instructors recruited from abroad. The ultimate purpose in each case is to give a decisive fillip to the productivity of the industries concerned.

In its technical assistance activities the I.L.O. has shown its primary interest in the training of workers and the improvement of their skills by devoting its main effort to raising their standards. In fact, 50 per cent. of the funds available to the Office are allocated to this form of assistance, of which the worker-trainee programmes form a part.

It should be added that in order to achieve the maximum effect the Office confines this assistance to skilled workmen and foremen, to the exclusion of apprentices. This is because technical assistance of this kind cannot go on indefinitely, nor can it be repeated. Moreover, it must bear fruit, i.e., it must be given to suitable individuals who, once their stay abroad or their training is over, can pass on their newly acquired knowledge to others. Technical assistance should set off a chain reaction. Its impact upon the individuals affected must be carefully calculated so that they in turn transmit the impulse given to them. Apart from anything else, this is a psychologically sound policy, for when anyone is offered assistance, even after he has asked for it, he is not likely to appreciate it unless it is given tactfully and does not outstay its welcome. As is well known, whatever form of technical assistance may be required by an underdeveloped country, it is in no circumstances offered by the United Nations or any of the international agencies responsible to it. The request must come from the country concerned.¹

When any such request is made to the I.L.O. it is first carefully scrutinised in the light of the amount of money available and the relative urgency of the need. The two factors that decide whether

¹ See "The International Labour Organisation and Technical Assistance", loc. cit.

a technical assistance programme can be accepted or not are the funds (relatively small) available for spending by the I.L.O. each year and the priorities given to certain requests.

Once the I.L.O. finally agrees in principle that a programme should be carried out either wholly or in part, it signs a basic agreement with the government concerned and earmarks the necessary funds after first securing the approval of the Technical Assistance Board. The basic agreement is followed by a supplementary agreement, in which detailed arrangements for the execution of the programme are settled with the government. These arrangements naturally vary from one supplementary agreement to another. However, the machinery employed by the I.L.O. is essentially the same when experts or foremen-instructors are recruited and despatched to the country concerned or worker-trainees or fellowship holders are selected, placed and despatched abroad for periods of varying length in order to complete their training. The procedure can be and is adapted indefinitely to meet the special circumstances that characterise every request for assistance. Even if the needs of the country concerned appear similar to those of others, its economic development, industrial equipment, traditions, population, geographical position, climate and a host of other factors intervene and must be appreciated, assessed and taken into account. Standardisation in matters such as these is a mistake to be avoided at all costs.

Once the I.L.O. has given its assent it must therefore show special care in organising, initiating, supervising and assessing the results of each assistance programme that it takes in hand.

In the pages that follow a description is given of the way in which the first worker-trainee programme carried out by the I.L.O. was conceived, organised, executed and appraised. This description will serve as an example. It would apply, with appropriate modifications, to similar programmes carried out later or now being carried out, and will therefore give an idea of the complexity of the task undertaken by the I.L.O. in this field.

THE YUGOSLAV PROGRAMME

Origin of the Programme

The first experiment in vocational training undertaken by the I.L.O. was the Yugoslav worker-trainee programme. The Yugoslav Government's request to the I.L.O. was accepted in the summer of 1951, and a basic agreement was duly concluded. War-torn Yugoslavia had lost one-and-a-half million men between 1939 and 1945. Although the country was desperately impoverished

there was a firm determination to maintain its freedom and, in order to reduce its economic dependence on others, to build up an efficient industrial machine—a vast undertaking which was being carried out with United States, British and French financial assistance. Yugoslavia either possessed or would soon possess some first-class industrial equipment, but there was an almost complete lack of the skilled manpower needed to assemble, handle, maintain and repair the modern machinery becoming available. The fledgling industries were thus acutely in need of assistance from abroad in training the necessary skilled workers as quickly as possible.

A supplementary agreement was signed in November 1951 after a number of visits by I.L.O. study missions to Yugoslavia to help the authorities and industry in assessing the relative urgency of their needs. This agreement provided that the assistance requested from the I.L.O. would be supplied simultaneously in two different forms, viz. :

(i) by sending 44 foremen-instructors to Yugoslavia for an average of six months to give instruction within certain industries and factories to be specified ;

(ii) by placing abroad 382 skilled workers, technicians, foremen and young workers who had completed their apprenticeship, for an average of six months.

In each case the branches of industry for which assistance was sought were listed ; there were nine in the case of foremen-instructors and 24 in the case of trainees. In the second phase, which is now in progress, the number of trainees to be placed has had to be reduced to 160 because of the limited funds available.

The supplementary agreement also defined the general conditions under which the programme would operate, together with the respective obligations of the Yugoslav Government and the I.L.O., particularly in respect of the financial arrangements. The Government pays part of the fares of the foremen-instructors and trainees, together with the full cost of the board and lodging of the foremen-instructors and of any accidents or sickness suffered by the trainees. The I.L.O.'s obligations comprise a share of the fares together with the monthly salaries and insurance of the foremen-instructors and the monthly allowances of the trainees, which are designed to cover their board, lodging and maintenance.

Choice of Factories and Posts

The selection of the factories to be helped and of the posts to be filled was left entirely to the Yugoslav authorities. The factories finally selected were then listed in an addendum to the supplement-

any agreement when they were to be supplied with one or more foremen-instructors. In the case of the trainees, the addendum merely mentioned the number of men from each branch of industry without specifying where they should come from.

The addendum contained only a sketchy description of the jobs to be filled, and in every case the I.L.O. had to ask for this description to be expanded when it started recruiting the foremen-instructors and placing the trainees. This proved in fact to be the knottiest point of all, but it also yielded the most useful experience. As a result, much more detailed job descriptions were requested and obtained for the second phase in 1954.

Initial Action by the I.L.O.

To start with, the I.L.O. prepared English, French and German translations of the information given in the addendum. In the case of the foremen-instructors this consisted of a list of the requests by branch of industry and of the individual posts to be filled, together with technical information about the Yugoslav factories asking for assistance; in the case of the trainees a list was given of the requests by branch of industry, together with the questionnaires filled up by the applicants giving full information about their qualifications and present jobs, together with the skill or skills in which they sought further training.

Once this material was assembled the I.L.O. simultaneously approached the proper authorities in a number of countries that might be of assistance and, subject to their agreement in principle, sought to make arrangements for recruitment and placement. The Office also approached the employers' and workers' organisations, particularly the former, in order to obtain the co-operation needed for success.

Response to the I.L.O.'s Requests

In virtually every country the I.L.O.'s request for help and co-operation was treated with interest and understanding. Everywhere, however, the response depended first and foremost upon economic circumstances. Offers of co-operation were in fact governed by the state of trade. When business was good for industry as a whole and there seemed to be no end to full employment, the idea of placing trainees was welcomed and put into practice without any trouble; on the other hand, during the boom years foremen-instructors could not be had at any price. Conversely, it was considered impracticable to place trainees whenever there was a recession or even a distant threat of slight unemployment or short-time working; and, of course, when these

developments or symptoms became apparent it was hinted that the foremen who were needed could after all be spared for the time being.

While circumstances were thus not always favourable, the Office nowhere encountered a flat refusal. Twelve European countries accepted trainees, most of them at once, the others a short time later. It was much more difficult to recruit the foremen-instructors, because of the far greater sacrifices involved; there was nevertheless a very general willingness to do anything possible to help the I.L.O. in its task.

Each country was asked to find places for trainees in those branches of industry where its reputation stood highest. In view of its tripartite structure, the Office approached the competent government authorities (usually the Ministry of Labour) and the national employers' and workers' organisations. In doing so it stressed, among others, the following points:

(i) the whole admirable concept of technical assistance deserved something more than lip service and the payment of a contribution to the special United Nations Fund; this was an opportunity of playing an active part in the programme and thereby demonstrating belief in its tremendous constructive possibilities;

(ii) the I.L.O. was responsible for carrying out the programme and for the good behaviour of both instructors and trainees; if any complaint should be made about the behaviour of any of them despite the undertaking given by each to abide by the works regulations of the receiving factory and to refrain from any political activity, or even if the factory management felt any doubts about keeping a man, the I.L.O. would at once cut short the training or the mission and send him home;

(iii) the receiving factories would incur no expense by reason of the training, any such expense being wholly refunded by the I.L.O.;

(iv) there was no foundation for any fear of competition or of the closing of markets as a result of such training; the internal needs of the countries asking for assistance were so large that it would be decades before the prospect of saturation could even be contemplated; the full impact of competition on external markets would not be felt for another generation or two, when the skilled workers it was hoped to train had handed over to successors born and bred in the traditions of their trades;

(v) in accepting help, the I.L.O. undertook to supply information in due course on any lasting benefits derived by the factories of origin from this attempt to provide training of the best possible kind.

It was heartening to find that almost everyone we approached agreed at once or after very little persuasion. The main reason for this helpful attitude was unquestionably the fact that all concerned knew they could have complete confidence in the International Labour Organisation with its world-wide authority. There was also a clear realisation of the importance of the vast undertaking that goes by the name of technical assistance, and the firms concerned were anxious not to be left out. Naturally—and it would be a mistake to be either surprised or pained at this—the reasons for their goodwill and alacrity were not always or wholly altruistic. Some firms accepted because they foresaw that active participation would lead to new business openings and because they felt that failure to participate would place them at a disadvantage compared with firms in other countries.

Where opposition and refusal were met with they were due to the fact that the branch of industry concerned was very "closed", even at the national level, or that certain manufacturing processes to which the trainees would have to be given access were, and must remain, closely protected. There are certain manufacturing formulas and secrets which cannot be made available to anyone, and the I.L.O. had to accept this argument.

Trainees

The Search for Receiving Factories.

Broadly speaking, the search for suitable factories was conducted with the help and under the joint auspices of the governmental authority and the national employers' organisation. They were supplied by the I.L.O. with details of each post to be filled and the general conditions of training. They, in turn, approached the various branches of industry concerned, and in some cases the factories and works that might be able to accept trainees, and passed on to the I.L.O. any offers they received. These offers were made upon the basis of the information given by the Yugoslav factories about the department in which they wished each man to be given further training. This was the crux of the whole matter, for the degree of success of the training obviously depended upon the way this matching was done. The best way of making sure that the foreign receiving factory fully met all the conditions required for a Yugoslav worker would have been to visit both factories. In the case of the Yugoslav programme, however, this was not possible because the number of factories in need of assistance was so large that the necessary time and money were simply not available. Some chances had, therefore, to be taken, but on the whole things

worked out reasonably well, as will be shown later. Nevertheless, whenever it was possible—and it usually was—visits were paid to the receiving factories. Information was collected on the volume and type of output, the equipment, the size of the labour force employed and the type of study and work that the trainees would be able to follow. In this way the Yugoslav Government was able to decide with a full knowledge of the facts whether to accept any given offer forwarded by the I.L.O. In addition, these visits to the factories before the arrival of the trainees led to contacts of the utmost value with their executives and with those who would have to devote a great deal of their time to the trainees. We have discovered by experience that the confidence thus created played a large part in the successful outcome of the training given.

To save time the search was conducted simultaneously in a number of countries. This sometimes had awkward results ; in the case of some industries that were willing to accept trainees, the I.L.O. simultaneously received identical offers from equally well known firms, only one of which could, unfortunately, be taken up.

At first the search was relatively plain sailing. A number of offers came in quickly from factories and firms in such industries as shipbuilding, civil engineering, iron and steel, mining and machine tools, where there is little or no difficulty. Large numbers of trainees were thus placed in the early stages of the programme. As time went by and the easier posts were filled, we were left with some that were less easy or even very difficult, not to say impossible. Once more we had to go back and knock on certain doors and try a little more energetically to enlist active support. It was less easy than at the start, but we had some fresh arguments, such as the universal satisfaction expressed by the first receiving factories, the undoubted success of the training already given and the generally excellent behaviour of the trainees. We did this in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and Austria. In Switzerland the search for receiving factories was carried out by the Federal Office of Industry, Arts and Crafts, and Labour in Berne. In the Netherlands help was received from the Netherlands Office for International Technical Assistance, which is a part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Sweden the task was assumed by the Royal Labour Board of the Ministry of Labour, and in Germany the necessary help came from the Federal Employment and Unemployment Insurance Service in Nuremberg. The help received by the I.L.O. from these bodies was in every way remarkable and was deeply appreciated ; without it the Office could not have succeeded so quickly. In other countries, particularly the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries, the search, which was on a reduced scale, was carried

out with the help of the Office's national correspondents and branch offices.

Placement.

It is no light undertaking to find the right factory for a skilled worker, technician or foreman about whom all that is known is contained in a questionnaire, who comes from a factory about which only the scantiest information is available and who needs training in one or a number of skills. The factory must be comparable in its equipment to the factory of origin, but must be more modern, more efficient and more productive, and must turn out a better product. When these conditions have been fulfilled the trainee must be settled in and given the opportunity of following the programme of study or work mapped out for him. This matching of the two factories governs the whole course of training. The care taken to ensure proper matching was, however, amply rewarded. There were very few real failures, and hardly any were caused solely by faulty matching.

Departure of Trainees and Their Reception by the I.L.O.

Once the offer was made by the factory and approved by the I.L.O., it was forwarded to the Yugoslav Government for approval. When this was given, the I.L.O. informed the receiving country and factory of the forthcoming arrival of one or more trainees. The government concerned was asked to grant entrance visas through its diplomatic representatives in Belgrade and to issue the necessary work permits. The receiving factory, which had previously been informed of the general conditions governing training, was advised of the probable date of arrival. It was also requested to find suitable lodgings, preference being given, for psychological reasons, to the family of a worker or member of the staff of the factory itself.

Once the visas were granted, the date, hour and place of arrival were settled between Belgrade and Geneva, and the receiving factory was duly informed and requested to make arrangements for the trainee to be met on his arrival. Whenever the trainees travelled in fairly large groups or were the first to be sent to any particular country, the I.L.O. itself took part in the reception. This was, in fact, the usual practice in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and Finland. Any newcomer, no matter where he comes from or where he arrives, deeply appreciates a welcome. The first few hours spent in a foreign country where the language is strange and almost everything is

completely new are psychologically vital. Every effort was therefore made to create a good first impression.

The Office has not been surprised at the steady flow of tributes that have come in spontaneously from the overwhelming majority of the trainees either during their training or on their return home. These heartening tributes leave no doubt that the warm welcome the men received played a very important part in deciding the way they approached and carried out their training. Care was also taken to make this welcome something a great deal more than a commonplace encounter. The Office's representatives took advantage of the opportunity to get to know each of these young men and to assure him that, despite the distance, he would not be forgotten and that the Office would keep in touch with him through letters and visits. He, in turn, was encouraged to talk about his family, his factory and his country ; at the same time he was given an account of the technical assistance given by the I.L.O. to so many countries, and in particular to his own. His good fortune and special responsibilities were impressed upon him ; he was also given some facts about the work of the International Labour Office and Organisation, one of whose many protégés he would be for a number of months. Lastly, he was given some idea of the country he was going to, which often sent one or more representatives to the welcome.

The Training.

Even when the training appeared sure to succeed we set out to follow it as closely as possible. Shortly after the trainee's arrival at his factory he received a circular reminding him of a number of points : the terms and length of his training, the immediate payment by the factory of an installation allowance to meet the unavoidably heavy expense of his start in a foreign country and the advance payment by the factory of the I.L.O.'s monthly allowance designed to cover all his personal expenditure on board, lodging, etc. This allowance, which varied little from country to country, was fixed so as to enable the trainee to live comfortably. Without treating him as a tourist, the I.L.O. sought to be sufficiently generous to relieve him of any financial worries and to give him an opportunity in his spare time of taking part in the cultural, artistic or sporting activities of those among whom he was to live. He, for his part, was asked to obtain from his factory without fail a programme of study or work designed to meet his case and accepted by him. He was told that he would receive a special reply-card from the I.L.O. every month, on which he should place a cross against the questions

dealing with his health, food, lodging, work and progress in the language if all was going well in each particular respect. Of course, any trainee was free to write to Geneva at any time and in greater detail.

This monthly report became very important. Apart from being a regular means of contact with the trainees it helped the Office to spot any trouble and look into it in collaboration with the trainee or the factory management, to give advice, encouragement and, where necessary, to send a representative to the spot.

A number of visits were also made to see how the training was progressing. The first of these took place, where possible, after three or five weeks, when a bad start could most easily be corrected. In many cases the value of the training was governed to a considerable extent by these visits, which were usually carried out in company with a member of the Yugoslav diplomatic delegation in the country concerned. They were always greatly appreciated as a sign of encouragement and interest. In some cases they also made it clear that certain justifiable desires had not been fulfilled. Sometimes it became evident, on talking to a trainee, that a complaint that he had merely hinted at was, in fact, quite serious: for example, that the type of work or manufacture that he had hoped to learn was not the one he had briefly indicated some eight or ten months before, so that an urgent attempt must be made to transfer him to a more suitable firm. Above all, these visits had a decisive effect upon the general behaviour of the trainees. On this point we have their own word for it.

In many cases they had reluctantly left home for the first time. They felt somewhat lost in a foreign country and expected the I.L.O. to be inevitably a large, impersonal civil service machine, so that the arrival of a visitor from the I.L.O. in the workshop, factory, shipyard, office or mine where they were doing their training came as a very welcome surprise. This is a good place to tell the story of the trainee who complained that his factory was a bad one; he was wasting his time and wanted to go home, especially as the allowance he was being paid made it very hard to make ends meet. We soon got to the bottom of the problem and gave him some encouragement over family worries, as well as a small increase in the allowance—which was very “tight”—both for himself and his uncomplaining companions. A fortnight later we had a letter from our young friend, thanking us for our sympathy and help and going on to say that the factory was the ideal place and the training was wonderful.

Arrangements were also made to send the trainees a monthly bulletin in Serbo-Croat. This kept them informed about the development of the programme, described the work of the I.L.O.,

published extracts from some of their own letters, etc. This additional link, which was much appreciated, undoubtedly helped to create the atmosphere of real understanding between the trainees and the I.L.O. which characterised the whole programme. Many trainees wrote to say so, and asked the Office to continue sending them the bulletin after they went home.

Where social security was concerned, sickness was adequately covered by the I.L.O. on behalf of the Yugoslav Government ; in respect of employment injuries trainees were given the same treatment as the workers of the receiving country. Where it was not possible to arrange for the monthly allowance to be free of income tax, the I.L.O. refunded the tax paid by the trainee.

Relations with Receiving Factories

Every effort was made to see that relations with the receiving factories were as close as possible. When the original survey was made advantage was taken of the opportunity to convince managements, where it was still necessary, of the tremendous value of technical assistance and to describe to them (this was always necessary) the work of the great international organisation of which they knew so little. We have still not forgotten the surprise and admiration expressed by a manager whom we had visited once and who, on being visited again a few weeks later to arrange the number of trainees to be received, could not get over "the speed with which the I.L.O. had gone from words to action, contrary to all expectation". In another case the manager of a large factory, who had earlier given a very firm refusal, gave us two hours of his time, at the end of which he was convinced and agreed to accept four trainees.

The visits during the training were mainly intended to keep in touch with the factories, thank them for the trouble they had already taken and make sure that their managements were satisfied with the trainees' behaviour. Translations of the bulletin referred to earlier were sent to all the receiving factories as well as to all the government departments and employers' and workers' organisations that had helped or shown special interest in this new I.L.O. venture. This helped to keep their interest alive.

Trainees' Behaviour

On the whole the behaviour of the trainees was exemplary. They had been carefully selected, they were conscious of the honour that had been done them and realised that their country would inevitably be judged on their own conduct. Concerning

the overwhelming majority of the trainees the I.L.O. received nothing but praise from all countries and from nearly all the factories for their keenness and willingness to learn, their intelligence and gratitude, and their cheerfulness and good behaviour. They were liked everywhere and when they left were nearly always given a rousing send-off. Many factories spontaneously offered to take other trainees—a number of such offers have come in since the announcement of the start of the second phase of the programme. A few trainees (three or four out of 330) found their homesickness too much for them, and had to be sent home; one or two did not put their backs into their work; but in no case was it necessary to take disciplinary action.

Difficulties Encountered

The greatest difficulty was, as stated above, the inaccessibility of certain branches of industry, which led to delay, hesitation and, in some cases, refusal.

Another difficulty, which was also considerable, was that of language. This was of course expected. It is the price to be paid for any human enterprise that seeks to reach beyond national frontiers and it is particularly troublesome in the case of those who have no book learning. The drawback was not, however, as serious as had been feared. We found that with a little goodwill and a great deal of determination the barrier was quickly lowered even in the case of the least gifted. Some arrangements were naturally made to deal with the situation as best we could. Languages, after all, can be taught; thus when a fairly large batch of trainees was sent to a French-speaking country intensive French language courses lasting a week or a fortnight were held in Geneva before the training began. We make no claim to have taught them French. We did, however, give them some idea of the language as it is spoken and taught them how to carry on learning alone and to build up a small vocabulary of the technical terms they would need to know. In addition, all trainees were given the opportunity when necessary of taking lessons in the language of the receiving country during their training. In this way, apart from a handful of exceptions, after periods of varying length the trainees finally came to understand and express themselves well enough to reap real benefit from their training.

In some cases circumstances were such that transfers had to be made, and this was also a very awkward process, because once such a shift had become unavoidable or was considered desirable it had to be carried out without delay if it was to be of any value, and there were no spare factories available at short notice.

Special Group of Management Trainees

At the urgent request of the Government in Belgrade, during the first phase of the Yugoslav programme part of the funds earmarked for the placement of trainees was devoted to a special experiment, which was in line with the general purpose of the programme. Ten trainees holding posts at varying levels of management in a number of Yugoslav factories took a course in management at Royaumont near Paris in autumn 1953. This course, in which the I.L.O. played an active part, was organised by "Cégos" (*Commission générale d'organisation scientifique*) in Paris and lasted a month; it dealt with the following main topics:

- (i) the conduct of meetings within the undertaking and the role of the manager;
- (ii) the practical training of supervisors: (a) the art of instruction; (b) labour relations;
- (iii) work simplification—decisions and control by the manager;
- (iv) management and the financial running of the undertaking;
- (v) quality control by management;
- (vi) modern methods of management.

The success of this course was beyond dispute. It was not only followed with marked interest and benefit by the participants but it also gave them a clearer idea of their own scope for improvement as managers. This course will probably be the starting point for a much wider scheme at the national level for the systematic training of managerial staffs and supervisors in Yugoslavia itself.

Placements Made

The number of trainees placed between July 1952 and June 1954 was 329, as shown in the accompanying table.

Receiving country	No. of trainees placed on				No. of receiving factories
	31.12.52	30.6.53	31.12.53	30.6.54	
Austria	15	30	29	32	14
Belgium	13	19	28	30	14
Denmark	—	1	1	1	1
Finland	—	—	—	2	1
France	49	60	68	69	20
Germany	19	65	69	75	34
Luxembourg	—	4	4	4	3
Netherlands	34	34	34	34	8
Norway	—	—	—	8	2
Sweden	—	—	8	8	6
Switzerland	47	54	59	61	33
United Kingdom	—	—	5	5	6
Totals	177	267	305	329	142

The trainees came from 103 Yugoslav undertakings belonging to the following 24 branches of industry: cellulose and paper; iron and steel; non-ferrous metals; accumulators; machine tools; smelting and boiler making; cables and electrical conductors; chemicals; shipbuilding; reinforced concrete construction; petroleum; lignite coke; porcelain; fire-proof materials; salt; asbestos; heavy electrical equipment; tractors and farm machinery; motor cars and trucks; textiles; precision engineering instruments; aircraft construction; radio; glass; railways; dam building; tools and dies.

The Foremen Instructors

Recruitment.

The search for the men whom the I.L.O. had undertaken to supply to Yugoslav industry for an average of six months turned out to be extremely difficult. It was in fact even more difficult than the already troublesome search for technical assistance experts. The men whom we were looking for to give instruction on the job, introduce better working methods and drive home the vital importance of such methods as the systematic maintenance of machinery and the prevention of accidents were almost always key men in their own factories. During the period of full employment or industrial reconstruction which characterised most of the countries of Western Europe in 1952-53 it was no easy task to persuade anyone to make the sacrifice involved in giving up such important men. In the end, however, we succeeded, with the help of the I.L.O.'s extensive contacts, in finding about 40 men, of whom 28 were accepted by the Yugoslav Government.

Here, too, the preparations—in this case for their selection—were made as strict and as thorough as possible, so that only men who were completely reliable were taken on. The technical qualifications of applicants were carefully scrutinised and in many cases tested theoretically and practically in a suitable factory. Once this vital point was cleared up each applicant was interviewed to make sure that he had the right sort of personality and the ability to instruct others. Thereafter the following procedure was adopted:

When the man had been selected he was recommended to the Yugoslav Government for a given post. Once he was accepted the applicant received a firm offer from the I.L.O.; he was asked to make the necessary arrangements to leave on a given date and to have himself medically examined. He was also requested to equip himself for the technical work of his mission, the paramount importance of which was impressed upon him. In addition, he was sent some literature on the I.L.O., since he would be expected, as

a temporary representative, to know something about it and to be able to speak about its work ; he was also requested to collect notes, diagrams, illustrations and any technical or other books that might prove useful in supplementing his knowledge and helping him to impart it. A special grant was made for the purchase of such books or audio-visual apparatus as he did not possess and considered essential. Lastly he was asked to stop at Geneva for two or three days on his way to Belgrade. Here further information was given on the I.L.O. and Yugoslavia as well as on the factory to which he was going. He was also given a clear idea of the way he was expected to carry out his task, since there is nothing more difficult than helping others, even when they themselves have asked for help. An instructor must accordingly perform his duties with the utmost tact, so as to avoid any ruffled feelings. He must not impose his own corrections, remedies or solutions and must not be scornful about mishaps, mistakes or carelessness. The only method is to have no preconceived ideas, show sympathy and interest in the persons he has come to help, suggest the right thing to do and get them to do it themselves.

Lastly the foreman instructor must feel himself to be "one of us" and free to ask for help or advice ; he must feel that his work is being closely followed ; above all he must never forget that he is in the service of an Organisation which expects work of the highest quality from those it employs.

The instructors recruited by the I.L.O. and sent to Yugoslavia between July 1952 and June 1954 were 28 in number and came from the following countries : the United Kingdom (8) ; France (6) ; Germany (6) ; Belgium (3) ; Austria (2) ; Finland (1) ; Sweden (1) ; Switzerland (1). They served in 22 Yugoslav factories belonging to the following branches of industry : electricity, tractors, machine tools, engines, agricultural machinery, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, fire-proof materials, reinforced concrete, production of smelting coke from lignite and drilling of oil wells.

The Mission.

In every case the mission began in Belgrade, where the instructors were introduced to the authorities and briefed by the United Nations Technical Assistance Office before going on to their respective factories. Once a month they made a report to the International Labour Office on their activities in the factory and outlined their programme for the following month. The Office made a careful study of these reports and made comments and suggestions. To supplement this contact through correspondence a representative of the Office paid personal visits to the men as well as to the

factories where they were working so as to ensure that they were giving the services expected of them. In several cases these visits also afforded an opportunity of impressing the main aim of the presence of these experts upon the managements of the factories themselves. Lastly, the experts were given the necessary comforting feeling that they did indeed belong to the Organisation.

Once their missions were over, the instructors all passed through Geneva on their way home, partly to wind up their mission, but chiefly to enable the I.L.O. to go over it with them and help them in drafting a final report covering its achievements.

None of these missions by foremen instructors were easy. The need was so great and the men so keen that in every case their missions seemed too short. They varied in length from three to 12 months, the average being six months. The instructors were paid a monthly allowance by the I.L.O., which also paid a substantial share of their fares, in the same proportion as for the trainees. The Yugoslav Government for its part assumed responsibility for their lodging and upkeep and made them a grant.

Difficulties Encountered.

Apart from the difficulty of recruitment already mentioned, there was also the language difficulty. This was usually overcome by using interpreters, but in several cases was serious.

Sometimes slowness of recruitment led to the late arrival of an instructor, and this did not improve his reception.

Lastly, unfavourable circumstances sometimes placed instructors in an embarrassing position, for example, at times they were unable to start training skilled workers or foremen because the factories, contrary to expectation, were still grappling with major problems of organisation and equipment.

Success of the Programme

Mention has already been made of a number of indications of the success of the programme, such as the almost universal satisfaction of the trainees while abroad and the equally universal satisfaction of the factories that received them. To this should be added the unqualified tribute paid several times by the Yugoslav Government to the vital importance of the I.L.O.'s programme of assistance to Yugoslav industry.

To enable the results of the programme to be assessed after enough time had elapsed for its anticipated benefits to mature, it was agreed with the Yugoslav Government that detailed reports

would be submitted to the Office by: (1) the factories that had received instructors; (2) the Yugoslav factories upon the performance of the trainees after their return; (3) by the trainees themselves after their return.

A substantial proportion of this material is now available. None of the reports in the three categories can be called completely negative. Some, particularly those of the trainees themselves, are not very enlightening. It seems certain that this is mainly due to the very common experience that it is never easy to analyse one's own work, and this is particularly so in the case of men who are unaccustomed to expressing themselves on paper. This was brought out when we visited instructors and had an opportunity of seeing former trainees at work. They had a number of useful points to make which they had been unable to put into writing but which became clear enough when they were interviewed.

We have regularly passed on these reports to the receiving factories concerned so that they may realise how successful their efforts had been, since the great majority of the reports contain very encouraging evidence.

We reproduce below extracts from the final reports made by the instructors and by the factories in which they worked.

(i) *Electrical construction works.* Training completed of two foremen, one charge-hand and 30 workmen in all operations connected with the assembly of large transformers, electrical generators, hydro-electric equipment, special assemblies and high speed tests, sheet metal assembly, the preparation of winding operations and power station repairs. A large proportion of these men are now in a position to train others. In the assembly of hydro-electric equipment there was a saving in manpower of 40 per cent.

(ii) *Engineering construction works.* Savings in working time of from 200 to 300 per cent. in cutting, grinding and work on parallel and turret lathes with simultaneous improvement in quality; instruction of foremen in the organisation and planning of work, the assignment of duties and responsibilities to subordinates, training methods, improved handling, the systematic overhaul and maintenance of machinery, renewal of equipment and safety measures. The factory was supplied with a manual illustrated with drawings on the various forms of instruction given; this manual was translated into Serbo-Croat and given wide distribution in the factory.

(iii) *Rolling mills.* Improvements in rolling techniques leading to better quality, a 44 per cent. reduction in spoilage, better control, less wear and tear on the rollers and a reduction in power consumption leading to a monthly saving of 8 tons of metal in the galvanising department, valued at half a million dinars.

(iv) *Reinforced concrete*. Training given to 50 workers and technicians on two dam construction sites.

(v) *Lead smelting*. An increase of 50 per cent. in output ; introduction of systematic maintenance of ore-dressing machines.

(vi) *Oil (drilling)*. Improved techniques and higher productivity ; introduction of measures, installation and equipment designed to prevent accidents ; monthly saving of 300 man-hours through work simplification and time-saving measures.

(vii) *Manufacture of electrodes and X-ray tubes*. Output increased by 500 per cent. and quality improved by 90 per cent.

(viii) *Manufacture of cables and electrical conductors*. Training and advice on working methods.

Owing to the number of reports from the trainees themselves and from their factories only the most striking points can be mentioned here. It should be stated at the outset, however, that on their return the great majority of the trainees were promoted to jobs more responsible than those they held before. This in itself is a remarkable result and although the reports themselves do not always make it clear, it is proof enough that these men are now in a position to pass on to others what they have learned.

It would be interesting to speculate on the effect of such an infusion of new blood in the shape of 330 men distributed among Yugoslav factories. It was in any case much greater than would be gathered from the reports, glowing though they were, from the trainees themselves. The main points in these reports may be summarised as : improved output, productivity and quality ; savings in raw materials and lower production costs ; better organisation and discipline and greater accuracy ; improvements in the maintenance of tools and machinery and the prevention of accidents ; reductions in working time ; and improvements in mechanical equipment.

When it is considered that all these gains are probably permanent it obviously becomes impossible to reckon their worth in dollars. Beyond question the Yugoslav Government's request for assistance was met to a large extent and was well worth the money and effort devoted to it.

OTHER WORKER-TRAINEE PROGRAMMES

To conclude this study a brief list is given below of the other worker-trainee programmes which have so far been carried out or are now in hand.

Yugoslav Programme, 1954

The Yugoslav programme has been continued in 1954. In accordance with the wish of the Yugoslav Government the I.L.O. will not supply any foremen instructors in the second phase. It will merely place trainees, who are expected to number about 160.

Turkish Programme, 1953-54

Eleven Turkish engineers and technicians who had been appointed to run the power station and associated substations under construction at Sariyar on the Sakarya River were given training in Switzerland, Germany and France between September 1953 and March 1954.

After a few days of briefing in Geneva and elsewhere in Switzerland the trainees split up into three parties which spent one-and-a-half months in Berlin, Grenoble and Zürich in the three works manufacturing generators, turbines, circuit breakers, etc., for the station. They then returned to Switzerland and spent the last four-and-a-half months at hydro-electric stations.

As in the case of all the worker-trainees the I.L.O. watched carefully over their training. They too created an excellent impression on their instructors.

The I.L.O. has not yet received any report making it possible to assess the practical results of this training. There are, however, good grounds for assuming that the high standard of the instruction given, the keenness of the trainees and the care taken by the receiving firms must have had results of the greatest value.

Turkish Programme, 1954

A somewhat different formula was adopted in the case of this programme, which is fairly ambitious and will be spread over a number of years. The 60 trainees to be sent abroad in 1954 will be placed in groups of five, one of whom will be an engineer. The members of each group will be from the same factory and will all be either engineers or foremen. Their training will last two months on the average and will be designed to show the trainees how their opposite numbers in the receiving factories carry out their duties and discharge their technical and personal responsibilities.

We were able to visit their factories of origin and to take part in the selection of the trainees, which should make the matching a great deal easier. When this article appears a few groups will probably have been placed by the Office and will be preparing to start their training in one or other of the countries of Western Europe.

Colombian Programme

This programme is now being carried out. Four trainees, engineers or technicians from the National Steel Company at Paz de Río near Bogotá, have been placed for six months in a steel works at Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg and in two French steel works at Villerupt and Longwy.

Israeli Programme

This programme is proceeding satisfactorily. No progress report can yet be made as some of the trainees only returned home a short time ago. The programme calls for the placement of 30 trainees selected from a variety of industries. Of this number 13 have been placed in Sweden and six in Switzerland.

Iranian Programme

This programme will be carried out during 1954 through the placement of ten trainees employed as foremen in textile mills at Isfahan.

CONCLUSION

It will be seen that the concrete action undertaken in the worker-trainee programme has had two gratifying consequences, apart from the success of the training itself. One is the forging of many new and valuable links between the International Labour Office and the member States that have received assistance. The other is the heightened prestige and authority of the Office in the circles to which such action has been extended. When the I.L.O. embarked upon the worker-trainee programmes there were plenty of sceptics who foretold failure and disillusion. Their doubts were speedily proved to be ill-founded. At first it was argued that so large an Organisation was not well fitted to carry out such a task, which for its success must at all costs avoid an anonymous and impersonal approach. This the I.L.O. has managed to achieve. We are convinced that there is enormous scope for the I.L.O. in this domain.

In the case of the Yugoslav programme we have been able to quote some of the results achieved in the vital task of raising the standards of those responsible for the technical training of others. Less obvious but almost as important has been the impact of these schemes on both those who have given assistance and those who have received it. The Yugoslav example has been repeated; and we are convinced that it will go on being repeated as long as

the I.L.O. has the funds and keeps its faith in the success of its enterprises. As many of the trainees told us in their letters or when we met them back at work in their factories, their training brought about a tremendous broadening of their outlook. It led to firm friendships and thus helped towards creating better understanding between peoples. Both the trainees and those who received them came to realise that if we treat every man as an individual in his own right and look for the good points of those who for a short time are our neighbours the barriers between peoples disappear and a climate of peace is established.

This work has also meant a great broadening of outlook for those of us who have been privileged to be assigned to it. It is satisfying in the fullest sense of the word. Nothing is more heartening than to deal with men who, although immersed in their own affairs, show a willingness to share your enthusiasm and your faith and give proof of it by sharing in the sacrifices involved in any gift worth having. Above all it is stimulating to deal with men who need help and depend upon you to provide it.

Our belief that the I.L.O. was on the right road was confirmed when we visited in December 1953 a large engineering works at Zagreb where three instructors had spent a whole year. We were delighted to encounter eight former trainees who had previously been placed in Austria, Belgium, France, and Switzerland. The welcome given to us by the management and these men, the warmth of their handshake, their pride in showing us their new responsibilities and their account of everything that had happened since they had come back testified in the most moving way to their wholehearted gratitude towards the International Labour Organisation.
