

this form of labor exchange are too many to be taken up here, but they are discussed in the larger work of which this chapter is part of the introduction. An excellent piece of advice was offered recently, however, by Dr. H. S. Person in an address delivered before the American Association of Public Employment Offices, Ottawa, Sept. 20, 1920:

If I were to leave you with one thought it would be this: attempt to work yourselves out of a job. You will never be able to do it, for there is bound to be more or less unemployment, and your service is a splendid effort to relieve unemployment. Just now, confronted with the gigantic disorganization resulting from war, your problem is a gigantic one. But look ahead to the more settled conditions of peace; and resolve from this moment on to conduct a campaign of education for better management in every plant with which you have contact, so that unemployment may be reduced to a minimum.

2. *"Dovetailing" and the Mobility of Labor.* This idea has had a glamour which its practical importance does not at all support. With respect to any systematic dovetailing between industries, the author has not been able to uncover a single authentic and successful instance. A psychoanalyst might discover back of the advocacy of the mobility of labor a heritage of the nomad past that impels intellectuals, keen for travel, to see a peculiar fascination in free-moving laborers. Thus, in "Seasonal Trades," edited by Sidney Webb, Mrs. Barbara Drake has a paper on "The Waiter" which pictures the route of the migratory waiter who follows the fashionable seasons and transfers his studied elegance thus:

The Riviera, Italy, Egypt, Switzerland, and the South Coast in the winter; the fashionable seasons of London, Paris, and other great cities in the spring; in the summer the British and foreign seaside seasons; Switzerland again; the "Spas" and Scotland in the autumn (p. 96).

In the introduction to the same book Miss Juliet Poyntz says:

Even an economic product like a wheat crop, which seems so completely under the domination of seasonal influences, is, considering the production of the world as a whole, not seasonal at all. There is no month of the year in which a wheat crop is not produced in some country of the world (pp. 55-56).

a suggestion which conjures up the vision of a vast horde of wandering men, like Arabs over the plains, moving from continent to continent, and like Vikings, embarking for distant climes.

Mobility has a limited application. Its difficulties, from the standpoint of efficiency, are very many, and the experience with mobile (or shall we say fluid?) labor during the war period has not endeared this form of operation to industrial executives, no matter how much the interest in the welfare of the wage-earning class. In fact, many will say that if we need anything today it is to reduce the mobility (i.e. turnover) of

labor, and to make each community self-centered with respect to its labor supply, a remedy which the author advocates at length in other chapters. And Prof. Don D. Lescohier, formerly Superintendent of the Minnesota Public Employment Office, in his book, "The Labor Market," quite pointedly says (p. 304):

One of the essential labor problems that confront the United States is the checking and the reduction of the migrating of labor. Local self-sufficiency in labor supply is a goal to be striven for by every community. . . . The Minnesota office . . . was able to entirely eliminate two-thirds of the state from the Minneapolis market.

To the practical business administrator the difficulties of labor mobility as a problem of management are obvious enough; if transfer within a firm is attended with many complexities, the organization of the whole market so that efficient dovetailing will result from mobile labor presents insuperable difficulties. And from the social point of view all our panegyrics of the influence of home life will have to be discarded if we take any serious stock in the proposal to have wandering hordes of men touring the country to eke out their living. In an article on the I. W. W. in the Atlantic Monthly of November, 1917 (pp. 651-662), Carleton Parker said:

Numerous statistical studies show that the average term of employment of the migratory worker is between ten and fourteen days. With a stake of ten dollars he will retire to a hobo camp beside some stream,—his "jungle" as the road vernacular has it—and, adding his daily quarter or half dollar to the "Mulligan fund," he will live on it until the stake is gone. If he inclines to live further on the charity of the newcomers, he is styled a "jungle buzzard" and cast forth. He then resumes his haphazard search for a job, the only economic plan in his mind being a faint realization that about August he must begin to accumulate his thirty-dollar winter stake. Each year finds him physically in worse disrepair, psychologically more hopeless, morally more bitter and anti-social. His importance to any forecast of our nation's future lies in the uncomfortable fact that proportionally he is increasing in number and his recruiting group above is increasing in unrest and economic instability. . . . The casual migratory laborers are the finished product of an economic environment which seems cruelly efficient in turning out human beings modeled after all the standards which society abhors. (Italics mine.)

3. *The Long-Range Planning of Public Work.* This is certainly a desirable idea, but social reformers will have to "take a lot of punishment" for every step they actually make in this direction. The proposal was quite proper in England, France or Germany, accustomed to unified systems of public administration and to national control over local government. In a country such as England, where the whole tendency in recent decades has been to subordinate completely the House of Lords, the House of Commons and even the Cabinet to a single officer, the Prime Minister, who is entrusted with both executive and legislative leadership, it is much more natural for long-range policies to be suggested. B. Seebom Rowntree and Mr. Bruno Lasker, in their

book on "Unemployment, A Social Study," published in 1911, describe a scheme of afforestation which would occupy the unemployed of York a few months a year for eighty years, and even have the temerity to estimate (p. 76) that "At the end of eighty years, when the whole forest reaches maturity, forty-two men would be permanently employed, and three hundred eighty-two for four months each winter." In America, however, harsh critics have maintained that we have been unable to secure a consistent policy even for the eight years of a double term! Therefore, until we improve our national system of administration, as well as that of our states and cities, we can expect little long-range planning. Look at the situation even now! In spite of the severest depression of the century we cannot get legislation from the Congress that will even scratch the surface of long-range planning! Even appropriations for immediate stimulation of public work have been denied. The most one can say is that the effort to secure such long-range planning is indeed worth while, but the results from it will be very meagre for decades to come. For efficiency in our system of government (if I may paraphrase the prophesy that Samuel Gompers made in another connection to Mr. Untermyer) will not come next January 1st at four o'clock if it doesn't rain.

4. *The Training of the Unemployed.* The Minority Report of the Royal Poor Law Commission was quite shocked at the system of blind alley employment for young people, and called its discovery "perhaps the gravest of all the grave facts which this Commission has laid bare."¹² But the great interest in this phase of employment is really due to the fact that so many investigators of unemployment have dealt with the relief of the unemployed, and of those who resort to charity: the proportion of unskilled and unreliable persons among those applying for charity is far greater than the proportion of unskilled and unreliable in the community as a whole. Sidney Webb and Beveridge as well as others make it clear that lack of training is only the incidental reason why particular individuals are unemployed, and Webb goes on to say that if employers could not distinguish between employees on the ground of skill they would perhaps find a distinction in the color of their hair. The President's Unemployment Conference last year paid no attention to this phase of the problem at all, and since it has but slight reference to the major issues, their attitude was undoubtedly correct. In this connection it may be remarked that some of the

¹² Royal Commission on the Relief of Distress. (Great Britain), 1909, Vol. 37, p. 1167.

most efficient firms in the country, notably, for instance, The Joseph & Feiss Company, really prefer untrained employees because the methods of work taught by the company are so different from those of other firms. As elsewhere explained, however, there is a certain kind of training which undoubtedly will help to reduce unemployment, but the current literature has not reflected it.

5. *Insurance.* I have already treated this factor, and it is clear that American thinking on this subject is far in advance of the English plan of compulsory and contributory insurance, which penalizes the well-managed and the poorly-managed firm alike, or the Ghent plan of subsidizing trade union funds, proposed by the Webbs, since that takes the whole responsibility away from management.

Let us now consider the application of what Mr. Richard A. Feiss has called "The Engineering Approach to the Problem of Continuous Employment" in a concrete instance. From the various firms which have tried to regularize their production and employment through improved management, I have selected a simple case which presents a striking instance of the efficacy of the new method.

The Hills Brothers Company—"Dromedary" Dates

The Accompanying Chart A presents a graphic account of two important factors of the business of the Hills Brothers Company, largest packers and distributors of dates in the country. The dotted line shows the sales, and in 1921, as well as in other years, there was a pronounced seasonal peak in the three autumn months. The year 1921 was not a year of depression for this company, in fact, the demand for dates was greater than the supply. Yet the curve of production, (packing—the solid line) shows an extreme fluctuation, with a sharp peak preceded by a deep, wide hollow. In terms of employment it meant many men and women laid off, many persons left without income temporarily and a very much impaired morale in the plant.

Now what would have been the solution for this situation in the light of the traditionary program of remedies? First: the employees would more readily go to the Brooklyn office of the public employment exchange and endeavor to find work—perhaps in a needle factory in New York, or possibly a tire factory in Akron. Second: some form of insurance would support, on a meagre basis, those who could not get located. Third: some form of public work which Brooklyn presumably had long planned for a year of depression would suffer the competition of a group of workers whose trade