PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND SOCIAL AGENCIES

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L long ago realized the significance of a public employment service with the result that every important country has had such a service for many years. We in the United States were slow in our appreciation of the need for such a service, and not until the depression did we realize that to assist people in obtaining employment is as much an obligation of society as are the institutions of public education and public health.

For a good many years many of the states had limited employment services. However, the major development on a national scale toward a comprehensive and scientific approach to the public employment problem was not commenced until 1933, when Congress enacted the Wagner-Peyser Bill. This legislation, in effect, recreated the United States Employment Service, and provided that by affiliation with it and acceptance of its standards, the states could become eligible to receive matching funds for those which they expended in the developing of their own public employment services. What was contemplated by the Wagner-Peyser Act was the eventual establishment of a national federation of state public employment services to be guided by Federal standards and under Federal supervision, but locally administered and utilizing local variants of the basic principles laid down.

As an emergency step, the United States Employment Service created an instrument to cope with the needs of the public works projects undertaken by the Public Works Administration and to supplement the State Services in smaller communi-

▼NDUSTRIAL countries of Europe ties; namely, the National Reemployment Service. In those states which had no public employment service of their own, the National Reemployment Service provided a nucleus, the assumption being that where possible or useful, the National Reemployment Service offices might later be taken over by the individual states.

> At present 35 states are affiliated with the United States Employment Service, and six additional states have passed legislative acts enabling them to become affiliated with it. As a result we have in this country over 2,000 district and local employment offices. In New York State we have at the present time at least one employment office, either state or NRS, of permanent or temporary nature, in each of the 62 counties in the State.

> To insure impartiality toward employers and workers, and to guard against group pressure of any kind, the United States Employment Service is guided by a Federal Advisory Council. Each public employment service in the affiliated states is guided by a similar State Advisory Council, in which employers and employees are equally represented and of which the general public comprises approximately one-half.

As a further step, Advisory Councils on a district or a local basis are being planned in New York State. This will place the service in touch with the foremost professional or socially minded elements in each community. It is clearly recognized that only as the community participates in its work can an employment service function successfully.

In the field of fact-finding, the public

employment system is making promising strides. Under the procedure set up by the United States Employment Service. statistics now have a uniform basis throughout the country. Although the service is not yet sufficiently expanded to make its statistics of general industrial significance, the time is not far off when this will be the case. Thus both trends of industry and the resulting employment fluctuations should eventually be accurately charted, as they have never been before.

Intimately related to this new statistical competence of the service is its accumulation of industrial and employment information. By the very nature of its task, of placing men in jobs, the employment service is obliged to acquire information continuously about the jobs, the relationship of one job to another and to the industry, and the relative importance, from the employment point of view, of the various industries and their sub-divisions.

On the other hand, it is necessary to be informed exactly of all the operations in each industry. For this purpose studies are being made on job specifications in cooperation with the United States Employment Service. When completed we will have in this country common job terminology. The classifications of occupations established by the United States Employment Service comprise about 5,000 vocations. While in years past many of the public employment offices handled only unskilled labor for the most part, the service is now being transformed to number among its clients professional people, skilled mechanics, office workers and men and women of all trades and crafts.

Specialization of offices in the large communities, devoted to different groups, in separate quarters, is being developed while in the smaller communities the same specialization exists within each office.

The placement interviewers devote a certain amount of their time to calling upon employers personally to acquaint them with the service at their disposal, to learn at first hand the requirements of the industry that each employer represents, and to learn each employer's preferences. This information supplemented by the industrial and job information from the other sources, makes possible a more precise referral of applicants to jobs.

As the depression advanced, the public employment service found itself working in closer cooperation with relief agencies. However it has been clearly recognized that while the relief agencies are primarily interested in the needs of their applicants, the employment service is interested in a worker's qualifications for a specific job.

Following the enactment of the Emergency Work Relief bill and the creation of the Works Progress Administration, it was recognized by Federal authorities that the machinery of the public employment service should be utilized still further in the administration of the new works program. Federal regulations were issued providing that in each state the employment services designed by the United States Employment Service be the registration agencies where all employable persons and employable members of their families on home relief must register.

Under certain conditions the employment office is also designated as the agency to refer qualified workers on relief to projects by the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act. This registration has resulted in making available a complete occupational census of all employable persons in families seeking relief. In some instances the registration and selection of workers for WPA and PWA projects was conducted on a cooperative basis by the employment service or the relief administration. The information so acquired can, and has been in some instances used in the planning of work relief proiects.

The records of the employment services in many communities are also being used in recruiting youths for the camps maintained by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Not the least among the present problems of an employment service are those of two groups of persons facing difficult adjustments. These are the junior groups: those just out of school or college, none of whom have had opportunity to acquire the experience which is so much in demand by employers; and those who were graduated a few years ago, and who have an additional handicap of possible demoralization because of years of enforced idleness.

In its work with juniors the employment service must cooperate with the educational system. Its knowledge of industrial and employment conditions should be of value to educators who may be turning out thousands upon thousands of candidates for non-existent clerical and office jobs. The Junior Division of the New York State Employment Service has provided some degree of guidance for young job seekers, and in cooperation with the Vocational Service for Juniors conducts the Junior Consultation Service.

Under the National Youth Administration Act the Junior Division of the employment service is made part of the machinery through which the provisions of the Act are carried out. Machinery has also been set up to provide for specialized attention to the needs of the physically handicapped. Veterans are given preference by law on part of the public works program and the Veterans' Placement Service under the United States Employment Service safeguards their rights.

As for those obliged by industrial change to seek new occupations, it is hoped that the job studies already mentioned will discover similarities between jobs in different industries, so that some of the delay and wastage in transferring skilled workers from one occupation to another may be eliminated. Such effective transference is not a simple matter, and ultimately serious consideration will have to be given to providing adults with the same counseling which is being at present extended to Juniors.

While some vocational information is now extended to adults by the employment services, lack of trained personnel, the great volume of applicants and budgetary limitations have hampered the development of plans for adult counseling. It is extremely regrettable that due to lack of finances, the valuable work conducted in New York City by the Adjustment Service had to be discontinued. Fortunately some of these activities were absorbed under the Adult Education Program, with which the New York State Employment Service is closely cooperating.

When Congress passed the Federal Social Security Act, including its unemployment compensation provisions, another great responsibility and opportunity was placed upon the employment exchanges in the United States. Those responsible for the drafting of this legislation recognized the basic fact that no system of unemployment insurance can function effectively without efficient public employment offices.

The 13 states that have their own unemployment insurance legislation have also recognized this principle. This means that a tremendous development of public employment exchanges will take place in this

For instance, in New York State the

Employment Service has been merged of the State. with the Division of Unemployment Insurance. The combined services are known as the Division of Placement and Unemployment Insurance. New York State has been divided into two regions and eleven employment districts. It is estimated that by January 1, 1938, when benefits to unemployed begin, there will be set up approximately 275 local offices. These will be known as employment offices and will be the field service through which unemployment insurance will be locally administered. In due time, these offices will become the natural source to which employers will turn in order to fill their placement needs.

In many communities there exist nonprofit making employment offices conducted by social agencies. In order to avoid as far as possible duplication of certain placement functions, a number of cooperative arrangements have been developed between these agencies and the public employment offices. In New York City, under the Welfare Council Section on Employment and Vocational Guidance, a clearance system has been organized through which unfilled jobs are cleared through all member agencies. This has developed into a state-wide clearance system. Similarly, a system of "central reporting" of activities of member agencies in the city was developed and operated for several years. Two years ago this activity was taken over by the State Employment Service.

When, some years ago, four social organizations were planning to set up their own employment services, the State was successful in convincing these agencies that they could better serve their clients by financing the maintenance of additional experienced interviewers in the State office and utilizing the existing machinery

Until recently, owing to budgetary limitations, New York State was unable to extend specialized service to the physically handicapped. Here, too, a cooperative relationship was established with social agencies who partially financed the service for this group until the New York State Service was in a position to assume this responsibility. Social agencies usually undertake community work that is desired and after the value of such work has been proven through experimentation, it has become a tendency of the public service to absorb private agency activities as its capacity to do so has developed.

Through cooperative relationship the public service can be active as the coordinating medium between non-profit making agencies and can assume leadership in placement activities and raise standards of other agencies in the community.

While the public employment service has the responsibility for organizing the labor market in the community, it is realized that other agencies, commercial as well as non-profit making, are an important factor. We have in this country private schools as well as public schools, private banks as well as a Federal Reserve system, private charity as well as governmental relief. In the field of employment work, too, there is room for private agencies to fill the needs of highly specialized groups, as they can devote more intensive study to the individual problems of the specific group they serve.

The public employment service, by legal requirements, safeguarded by constant supervision of its advisory councils on which specialized groups are represented, must be impartial, non-partisan and free from any imputation of bias in the performance of its task. Moreover, in the normal course of its activities, placement

behalf of underprivileged and handicapped groups. It is in this field that organizations serving special groups can function most effectively. Excluding general placement activities which the public service is organized to carry on, there are certain distinct functions which it cannot undertake as effectively as a private group.

One of these functions might be that of research into conditions affecting the employment of members of the group, fitted into the research program of the public employment service. Constructive use by the private group and the State Service could be made of information derived from such research.

Another desirable activity on the part of an agency serving a special group might be a program of extensive vocational guidance for juniors, and certainly for those adults who face vocational readjustment. Such an agency understands more fully the vocational hopes and aspirations and the specialized problems of members of its group. A placement service for delinquents and other problem cases where individual treatment is highly essential might well be for some time to come a project of private initiative.

Furthermore, the public employment agency is an instrument at the service of all groups. Consequently, if special groups would refer job openings to the public service in such form that members of their groups receive their share of placement opportunities, that would be a service not only to their group, but to the public agency as well.

In filling a job order, the public employment service endeavors to fill the employer's requirements, whatever they may be. The opportunity, in these circumstances, of special groups, is obvious. ning.

workers do a certain amount of work in Where certain groups are now discriminated against, the special groups can, on the basis of their research, discover where to go to counteract this discrimination. On the other hand, employers can be induced to make particular mention of certain types of workers, thus giving them opportunities which they have not had before.

Active propaganda is outside the functions of the public employment service. It lies well within the functions of a special group. In doing this work, the private agency will not only avoid duplication of work that the public employment service is already and in many communities more effectively doing, but will safeguard its usually limited finances.

This review of some of the many activities of the public employment service indicates both the scope of its outlook and the importance of the increasing duties it is called upon to perform. In considering both the present and the future of public employment work, its limitations as well as its potentialities, must be borne in mind. Clearly, the public employment service cannot create jobs. That is a private and a governmental function outside its field of activity.

To the individual citizen, his vocational needs are the kernel of his life, and his vocational existence is not a thing apart from his social world. Social planning to aid the individual is going on in every community, and the public employment service which in the past has been one of the minor agencies participating in this planning, should in fact be one of the major agencies. In view of the close involvment of the public employment service with manifold activities affecting the individual, it may well seem that this service should be a central point for extensive social plan-

JEWISH EXPERIENCE WITH GOVERNMENT OCCUPATIONAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS IN PRE-HITLER GERMANY

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URING my short stay here I have commercial agencies were legislated out of had occasion to observe that Jewish welfare problems are very similar to those which existed in pre-Hitler Germany. I find, however, that progress here has been made in a great measure, as a result of thorough study and diligent work and ability. I am astonished at the accomplishments achieved by the Jewish vocational and placement services here. I, therefore, feel somewhat embarrassed in trying to present something new.

It will be my endeavor in relating the conditions existing and the methods practiced in Germany before 1933 to use recent experiences as a basis for a somewhat critical consideration.

In Germany there were three types of institutions that were occupied with all that comes under occupational adjustment.

1—The network of public employment offices consisting of the Federal Institution with its headquarters in Berlin, 13 district employment offices in the different states, and 360 local employment offices.

2—The non-commercial employment agencies sponsored and supervised by private groups such as trade unions and employers' associations, and agencies maintained by religious and charitable institutions.

3—The commercial, fee-charging agen-

Of these main types, the commercial agencies, which were always a source of abuse, became the object of federal governmental regulation in 1910. By the act of the Reichstag of 1927, which established a system of unemployment insurance, the existence, effective in 1931.

However, the private non-commercial agencies were allowed to continue under certain conditions. These conditions can easily be understood if one visualizes their historical development, especially the development of the relationship between the public and private agencies.

The origin of placement service lies in the general public welfare movements. Private initiative gave the first impulse. Government activities entered in with the intention of regulation in the interest of the community demand and supply in the labor-market.

In the latter part of the 19th century the public and private agencies were in free competition with one another. As late as 1913 the placements, numbering 1½ millions, of non-commercial private agencies almost equalled those of the public employment offices.

With the enactment of the Placement Law in 1922, the non-commercial agencies, which served for placement, vocational guidance and apprenticeship-placement, were put under the supervision of a Federal Department. With the unemployment insurance act of 1927, which combined employment placement and insurance, this regulation was maintained and amended. During the period 1922 to 1927 and after, the relationship between state and private employment service is characterized by a well knit system in which there were few further changes.

The third step in the development of employment placement in Germany in-