RETRAINING THE UNEMPLOYED*

1. BACKGROUND MATERIAL


This series of articles covers the following: (1) government retraining programs in West European countries; (2) federal and state legislation dealing with retraining; (3) the training programs set up by the plumbers union and by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers for upgrading the skills of journeymen; and (4) a description and evaluation of the well-known Bridgeport, Conn. retraining program.


These hearings are useful for the expressions of opinion and reports of experiences which they contain.


The testimony at these hearings is concerned with proposals to modify the Manpower Development and Training Act in order to facilitate the establishment of basic literacy and youth training programs with school dropouts especially in mind.

U.S. Congress, 88th, 1st session. Senate, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. Nation's manpower revolution. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Employment and Manpower . . . relating to the

*Compiled by Hazel C. Benjamin, Librarian.

**Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.

The first three volumes of a series of hearings dealing with unemployment and manpower problems and policies. The purpose of the hearings, as stated by Subcommittee Chairman Clark, is "a look at the total problem." The testimony and exhibits included present a wide variety of data on the subject.


Although retraining is not extensively dealt with in this report, the facts presented are basic to an understanding of the need for action to meet changing occupational requirements.


Distinguishes between retraining of those already in jobs for purposes of upgrading or the development of new skills and the retraining of the unemployed. Also discusses the division of responsibility for each type of retraining between private industry and government.

2. Federal and State Retraining Programs


The pages noted contain a series of articles by state Employment Security personnel on experience with training programs under the Area Redevelopment Act.


This article is particularly concerned with the long-term unemployed and describes a variety of training programs which have been sponsored by local, state, and federal agencies.

Contains, in addition to an analysis of operations under Title II of the Act over a four and one-half month period, a discussion of criteria for assessing the training program, a description of the administrative structure, evaluation of the results so far, and a brief review of the Office of Education research program and recommendations for further research. The appendices include a digest of recommendations from the report of the Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education.


Pages 25-65 of this report cover the administrative framework and operation of the training program, the characteristics of trainees, allowances for trainees, and preliminary evaluation of the training programs.


A summary of Labor Department activities under the Area Redevelopment Act during the fiscal year 1961/62. Describes briefly the administration of the training provisions of the Act, accomplishments, characteristics of enrolled trainees, and typical projects. A statistical appendix is included.

3. COMPANY RETRAINING PROGRAMS


Describes retraining programs carried on by ITT Federal Laboratories and by the Morgan Guaranty Trust Company. In the first case, both intensive day-time training for small groups and a tuition-free, company-sponsored evening school are involved. In the second, a formal retraining program for 500 employees performing stock transfer operations combined training films and practice sessions.


A fairly detailed description of a program for retraining employees who faced possible lay-off for more highly skilled jobs in the same company. Discusses methods for communicating plans to employees, selection procedures used, type of training, and attitudes toward the program of trainees as well as of management and union officials. The author concludes "that unskilled production workers in a manufacturing industry can be retrained, in a relatively short time, to an acceptable degree of competence for occupations" that are new and
more skilled. He also emphasized that success depends upon "meticulous care... in planning, communicating and organizing the program."

McNamara, Walter J. "Retraining of industrial personnel." *Personnel Psychology* (P.O. Box 6965, College Station, Durham, N.C.), Autumn, 1963, pp. 233-247. $2.50.

Presents a preliminary study to determine the feasibility of retraining employees in a plant manufacturing computers whose jobs have become technologically obsolete. The results indicate that "if necessary, many of the employees previously not considered eligible could be retrained for a relatively high-level technician's job."


On the basis of studies of the ability of older workers to adapt to technological change through retraining in four plants, the conclusion is drawn that individual capacity is more important than age. It is suggested that counseling in advance of training might be beneficial, that improvement and extension of educational opportunities for adults would aid their adaptability, and that study of special training methods for older workers would be helpful.


The plan reported on provides that in case of lay-off, employees with three or more years service may have tuition fees for training at a recognized trade or professional school paid from the company's "income extension aid plan." In addition, General Electric has carried on some local retraining programs for long-service employees who might otherwise have been laid off. On the basis of experience with these plans, the author presents certain conclusions regarding the elements of effective retraining programs.


Report of a study carried on under the auspices of the Armour Automation Committee concerning the impact of a plant shutdown in Oklahoma City. Training in new skills was offered to the 400 persons affected, 52 of whom completed courses in fifteen subjects. The author concludes that in a situation involving middle-aged individuals with limited formal education, only a minority is likely to benefit from "retraining on a 'crash' basis" and that "a carefully planned, continuing education program promoted and supported by both the company and the union... would improve their positions in the labor market in a time of crisis."