

Vocational education

*Training  
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
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(Pictures may be obtained on application.)

MUST TRAIN VAST ARMY FOR WAR WORK

New Service of Department of Labor will have great part in solution of labor problem.

Hundreds of thousands of skilled workers must be trained in the United States by January 1, 1919, if the demand from the factories engaged in war work is to be met.

This places upon the Nation a responsibility greater than has been borne by any of the Allies, greater than ever has been presented to any people. In no country has such intensive preparation been necessary, and, it is safe to add, in no land has there been such effort on the part of a Government to cooperate with both employers and employees.

The Department of Labor has established eight new services to be maintained during the period of the war, and none has more possibilities of assisting in the development of expert hands and brains than the Training and Dilution Service, of which Charles T. Clayton is Director. Working with Mr. Clayton as Chief of Training is H. E. Miles, recently appointed to this work, but since the beginning of the war, Chairman of the Section on Industrial Training of the Council of National Defense.

Upon the Training and Dilution Service will rest the responsibility of getting into touch with all the manufacturers engaged on Government contracts, and of helping them to solve the problem of obtaining enough skilled hands to produce the immense quantities of munitions of war now needed by the Army of the United States. This task demands familiarity with all the difficulties of both employers and employees, and Mr. Miles, although an employer and at one time a director of the National Association of Manufacturers, had proved his right to the confidence of labor by his stand on great industrial issues. In recent years he has become an authority on many questions that will become more and more important in their bearing on industry as the war progresses.

"It is the duty of our service to start the training of workers wherever needed, and to develop such training wherever possible," said Mr. Miles. "Many of our manufacturers have already established training-rooms. Our service thinks first of production -- of shells, cannon and depth bombs, but with a fundamental belief in the wage-earner's welfare as a basic element. We are to develop training wherever there is need of more skilled workers, and that is everywhere in the United States.

"We are now many thousands short in skilled workers, and we need many unskilled workers. We are supposed to put 400,000 men a month into the army until we have 5,000,000. It is generally accepted now as a fact that at least three producers in civil life are needed to keep one soldier at the front. This means for an army of 5,000,000 the gigantic force of 15,000,000 for war work, in addition to those engaged in the occupations that contribute to civil life.

"Dilution is simply the bringing into any trade that has been presumably adequately manned in peace times enough new people to offset the loss by draft and to produce the essential output required for the winning of the war. It means, also, the restricting of skilled workers to processes which only they can do and committing other elements to workers of lesser experience.

"Our man power has been depleted. To supply losses of hundreds of thousands of skilled workers we must first promote every skilled man left, so that he may do the most difficult work within his ability. Second, we must bring into the factories men from the non-essential trades and obtain from them the highest service they can perform. Third, we must bring in women to supplement but not to supplant men. The factories in England and France have been operated for the last four years mostly by old men, by men unfit for war, and by women.

"It should be understood that the training that must be begun without delay in every factory running on war production is absolutely practical and as far removed as possible from the theoretical instruction in schools. America has been brutally inconsiderate and stupid in her attitude regarding working people, where education or training for life work is concerned. The Nation has spent \$700,000,000 annually in public schools with only the law or some other profession in mind. All the concrete-minded, or hand-minded children have left school at the sixth grade, at the age of puberty, the hour of life when the will and the creative faculties assert themselves. These children have gone into the shops to take pot luck; they have literally had to steal a trade. The public schools have spent \$5,000 in training a lawyer, but have grudging fifty cents toward making a boy a machinist when his life hung on the trade.

"We are beginning to do what north continental Europe has done for forty years. We are teaching the trades, supplying expert instructors so that a worker may obtain in a few weeks or months knowledge that a man left to fumble for could not get in years. Under this intensive training every place of labor becomes a place of education. The man or woman taught by a master on a job can go into a shop with head up, and oftentimes can show those who have been engaged for years something in expertness or precision of touch.

"The great leaders of labor are most generous in opening their ranks here as in England for necessary newcomers. This crisis is a challenge to employers to equal generosity in taking no advantage of this situation to labor's injury.

"The imperative need now is that every manufacturer shall realize that he must train new hands. The time has gone by when any factory can hope to replace skilled men by others already skilled, and each must provide experts to teach the recruits who will be called in to fill vacancies. Between one and two hundred plants now working on Government contracts are supplying the means of intensive training, and by having new hands taught to be expert they are keeping up the standards of production, or even improving them. But the factories engaged on war work now number over 45,000 and all are facing serious problems."