

RESTRICTED

NATIONAL SERVICE IN GREAT BRITAIN

6 May 1948

L48-136

CONTENTS

| | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| SPEAKER--Mr. Archibald McDonald Gordon, Labour Attache, British Embassy..... | 1 |
| GENERAL DISCUSSION | 32 |

PUBLICATION NO. L48-136

THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

NATIONAL SERVICE IN GREAT BRITAIN

6 May 1948

COLONEL GREER: Ladies and gentlemen: We have been talking a great deal lately about manpower controls that we used in the United States during the war. All the time that we were using rather indirect methods based on a voluntary system, Great Britain was using National Service and using it very efficiently. This morning our speaker, Mr. Archibald Gordon, Labour Attache of the British Embassy, will tell us how National Service worked in Great Britain during World War II.

This is the second time this year that Mr. Gordon has come to the College to help us. He was here on a seminar about two weeks ago assisting the committee that is working on National Service in Great Britain. It is a great pleasure to welcome again to the Industrial College Mr. Archibald Gordon.

MR. GORDON: Colonel Greer, thank you very much for your introduction. May I say what a pleasure it is to come here.

PREPARATIONS BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

World War I had made it quite clear to us that in the event of a major war the voluntary system would be obsolete, so far as Great Britain was concerned, if she were to have any hope of success. Demands on her resources were to be increased tremendously for three main requirements. Quoting peak figures, first, we were to need a huge Air Force with a very large industry behind it absorbing approximately three million men and women; secondly, Civil Defence Services, including Auxiliary Police, National Fire Service, Air Raid Precaution and Casualty services requiring nearly 400,000 men and women full time, and in addition vast numbers engaged part time; and thirdly, equipment for a mechanical war which absorbed into the munitions industries two million more persons than were so engaged at the end of World War I.

It was not surprising therefore that it was thought National Service might become necessary, and the British Government, in fact, made plans to establish a Ministry of National Service in the event of the outbreak of war. Meanwhile the Ministry of Labour was made the parent department responsible for planning purposes on manpower problems. In August 1939 it was enlarged and became the Ministry of Labour and National Service; it had the responsibility of mobilizing men and women for the Armed Forces and Women's Auxiliary Services on the one hand, and manpower for Civil Defence, munitions and other vital industries and services on the other.

RESTRICTED

The National Service (no. 2) Act of December 1941 was an historic Act in that for the first time in the history of Great Britain, it extended conscription to women who were made liable to be called up for service in the Women's Auxiliary Services and the Civil Defence Forces. This was a demonstration of the government's determination to achieve complete mobilization and, by its acceptance without demur, of the whole country's will to win.

The act also extended the upper age limit of liability for service in the Armed Forces to 51. In fact the only men over 41 who were called up were doctors and dentists.

The National Service Act of December 1942 reduced to 17 years, 8 months the age at which men could be called to register but it left the liability to be called up for service at the age of 18. This was to enable preliminary formalities to be disposed of so that men were available for immediate training on enlistment.

Under the Defence (General) Regulations of 1939, the Minister of Labour and National Service was empowered to direct men and women to enroll in the Civil Defence Service, Royal Observer Corps, and Special Constabulary, either whole time or part time; and under the Defence (Home Guard) Regulations, 1940 and 1942, to direct men to join the Home Guard.

The National Service (Foreign Countries) Act, August 1942 enabled conscription to be applied to British subjects, men and women, in foreign countries. An order in Council was also made applying the act to Egypt.

The Allied Powers (War Service) Act, August 1942 provided for the making of Orders in Council imposing upon men of military age of any Allied nationality to which an order applied liability to be called up to the British Armed Forces if they had not within a specified period joined their own national forces.

The Allied Powers (War Service) Order 1943 applied the provisions of the Act to the nationals of Allied powers whose governments were temporarily established in the United Kingdom and who possessed national Armed Forces, namely, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Yugoslavia. Further Orders in Council in August 1944 applied the provisions of the act to the nationals of France and the United States of America.

Under the Defence Regulations various orders were made. These orders had three main objects:

1. The registration of men and women in order to secure a record of the individuals in each age class with a view to utilizing their services for the national effort either in the Armed Forces, Civil Defence or Industry.

called up for training in the numbers required to meet the needs of the fighting services. Immediately after medical examination each man was interviewed separately by a Navy, Army, or Air Force representative who recommended the man's allocation for service in the light of his qualifications. In allocating men to the various branches of the Forces, account was taken of age, physical and mental standards and civilian occupation and experience. Men with certain kinds of skill were earmarked for one or the other of the many skilled trades in the Services (see below) and certain men who expressed preference for, but were not accepted for, the Royal Navy were considered, if they were willing, for service in the Merchant Navy. The subsequent posting of men by the Ministry of Labour and National Service to the Armed Forces was regulated by the planned requirements of all the Services. In general, men were called up by age-classes, the youngest first and single men before married men in a particular age class.

The numbers of men posted by the Ministry to the Armed Forces under the National Service Acts during each of the years 1939 to 1944 and in 1945 up to 30 June were:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1939 | 177,000* |
| 1940 | 1,051,000 |
| 1941 | 604,000 |
| 1942 | 614,000 |
| 1943 | 319,000 |
| 1944 | 217,000 |
| 1945 (to 30 June) | <u>104,000</u> |
| Total | 3,086,000 |

* Of these, 37,000 were called up under the Military Training Act, 1939.

Provision was made in the principal act for postponement of calling up on account of exceptional hardship, for conscientious objection, and for reinstatement in employment on discharge from the Forces.

Hardship

Postponement of liability to be called up for service could be granted by the Minister of Labour and National Service or referred by him to Military Service (Hardship) Committees of which members decided cases the Minister had not granted. Postponement was allowed on domestic, business or personal grounds. Provision for appeal was made.

The numbers of applications by men for postponement (including renewal applications) dealt with by officers authorized to act on the Minister's behalf and by Hardship Committees up to 30 June 1945 were as follows:

Coal and Other Mining.

As from September 1942, young men under 25 years of age who became available for posting to the Forces were given the option of taking up underground employment in coal or other mining. In July 1943, this option was extended to fit men of all ages subject to certain exceptions. In December 1943, a scheme of selection by ballot for coal mining was introduced applicable to men who had been placed in medical grades I or II. Exclusion from the ballot was limited to three classes:

1. Men accepted for flying duties in the R.A.F. and Fleet Air Arm.
2. Men accepted as artificers in submarines.
3. Men in a short list of highly skilled occupations who were called up only for certain services trades and were not even accepted as volunteers for coal mining.

In 1944, the machinery of the National Service Acts was used for recruiting to the Merchant Navy a considerable number of young men who had hoped for service at sea.

Service Tradesmen

Owing to the need of the Armed Forces for large numbers of skilled tradesmen for the maintenance and repair of ships, aircraft, tanks, guns, vehicles, and other equipment, fully qualified craftsmen in short supply in industry were not called up for general service in the Forces, but were called up only to meet the demand for service tradesmen.

A committee presided over by Sir William (now Lord) Beveridge, K.C.B., made an investigation in 1941 to decide:

1. Whether the skilled manpower already at the disposal of the services was being used economically and effectively.
2. Whether the service arrangements for training skilled men were such as to meet to the greatest practical extent the service requirements for skilled men.
3. Whether the service demands for skilled men during the period ended 31 March 1942 should in any respect be modified.

Following the committee's report, close collaboration was developed between the three Service Departments and the Ministry of Labour and National Service regarding the use of skilled tradesmen.

RESTRICTED

Registrations for Industrial Needs.

As in the case of the Armed Forces, so with industry, registrations formed the basis of recruitment. These were made under the authority of the Registration for Employment Order, 1941. In successive stages men born in the years 1892 to mid-1900 and women born in the years 1893 to 1926 were registered.

In most cases registration was followed by personal interview by specially trained and selected officers. Those women who, as the result of registration, were found to be engaged on vital war work and those with children of their own under 14 living with them were not called for interview. The rest were called for interview in the order in which they were expected to be most readily available for employment on war work. Where there was doubt about the extent to which personal and domestic circumstances would affect allocation to particular employment, the case was referred for advice to one of the independent Women's Advisory Panels which were attached to the Employment Exchanges. When, after interview, a person was considered available for a particular type of work, a certain amount of choice was allowed. If the person, man or woman, was unwilling to undertake the selected employment, he or she was directed to the work by a National Service Officer. While there was no statutory right of appeal against a direction to employment, the person was normally allowed to appeal to an Appeal Board constituted under the Essential Work Orders.

The number of additional women available for the war effort was largely restricted by domestic responsibilities. The number with no employment and no household responsibilities was found to be small, a large proportion of the women being already in employment.

Registration provided information about individuals which enabled a vast system of manpower transference to be effected under which men and mobile women in areas where there was less stringency of manpower were transferred to areas where there was an acute shortage. If in connection with such transference a woman considered that she was not "mobile" and the Employment Exchange officers did not agree, her case was put to the Women's Panel attached to the Exchange.

The registration of women under the Registration for Employment Order was also used for calling up to the Women's Auxiliary Services those classes of women to whom the National Service Acts were applied.

The registration system was of enormous service in discovering men and women with special skill. For this purpose there were special registrations of engineers, electricians, shipbuilders, miners, seamen, cotton operatives, nurses, and midwives. Those found to be employed in less essential industries were transferred to the war industries and services where they were urgently needed. The first registration of this kind was

RESTRICTED

Alterations in the schedule were made from time to time to meet the changing military and civil requirements. Under the original scheme, however, in determining reservation, no account was taken of the man's employment. A further refinement was accordingly introduced by compiling a Register of Protected Establishments and in occupations there were two different ages of reservation, the lower of the two ages applied only to men employed in establishments whose production was of sufficient importance to justify their inclusion in the register.

Individual Deferment

By the end of 1941 it was clear that the growing needs of the Armed Forces rendered necessary a much finer instrument of distribution. Various revisions were introduced in the scheme of block reservation according to age and occupation and in January 1942 it was replaced by a system of individual deferment. This meant the examination of every individual case where a man was reserved for industry through the operation of the Schedule of Reserved Occupations and it introduced the single test of the importance to the war effort of the work upon which the man was engaged. In addition to providing more men for the Forces, the new system facilitated the transfer of men with special skill or experience from less essential to more essential work. It was done by raising the age of reservation for nearly all occupations by monthly steps of one year. Exceptions were made in the case of men employed in certain services such as the Merchant Navy, Civil Defence, National Fire Service, Royal Observer Corps, Police, certain classes of students, lay evangelists, and lay brothers. As men became dereserved, the opportunity was given to their employers to apply for deferment of their calling up and if no application was made by an employer, the man himself was allowed to submit an application on his own behalf. Deferment was granted only in cases where it was established that:

1. The employer was engaged on work of national importance.
2. The work performed by the man was essential to the employer.
3. The man could not be replaced by someone not liable to be called up.
4. The position which would be created by the calling up of the man could not be met by other means, such as reorganization.

With the exception of:

1. Men employed in agriculture, coal mining, building, and civil engineering, for which industries special arrangements were made.
2. Men in a number of services and professions (e.g., schoolmasters) who were granted deferment under special schemes at Headquarters; applications for deferment were dealt with by District Manpower Boards, 44 of which were created in various parts of the country and started work at the beginning of January 1942.

In considering the withdrawal of a man from a particular employment the government department concerned with the work on which he was engaged was consulted. Employers were advised by the District Manpower Board of any proposed cancellation of deferment in order that they could, if necessary, communicate with the appropriate government department.

Allocation of Women

There was no Schedule of Reserved Occupations for women but those engaged in certain vital war work or service were regarded as reserved from calling up. The list of such occupations and services included the following:

- Agriculture and Forestry, including the Women's Land Army
- Ambulance Drivers for Army Commands
- Asbestos Cement Industry
- B.B.C. (Engineering Branch)
- Canteen and Hostel Staff
- Canvas Hose Pipe Manufacture
- Coal Production
- Cotton and Rayon Spinning, Doubling, and Weaving
- Dentists
- Electrical Porcelain Manufacture
- Employment under Government Department or Local Authority
- Flax Fibre Production
- Gas (Cutting, Welding, and Medical) Manufacture
- Hospital, Nursing and Midwifery Services (including domestic staff)
- Laundries
- Munitions Work
- Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes
- Public Utility Services, i.e., Gas, Water and Electricity
- Religious Sisters and Deaconesses in recognized religious bodies
- Royal Observer Corps
- Rubber
- Teaching Profession
- Theological Students
- Timber Production
- Transport Services
- Veterinary Surgeons
- Women's Auxiliary Police Corps

Other women were entitled to deferment if they were engaged on work of importance to the war effort and it was in the national interest that they should not be moved from their present work. Special schemes for regulating withdrawals, arranged by Headquarters, applied to women in a number of industries, services, and professions. Applications for individual deferment were dealt with by the District Manpower Boards.

This began the compulsory channeling of workers through Employment Exchanges.

2. The Undertakings (Restriction on Engagement) Order of June 1940

This order required that all engagements in certain vital industries (engineering, building and civil engineering, and later electrical installation), should be made through the Employment Exchange machinery of the Ministry of Labour and National Service or through approved trade unions and the purpose of the order was to stop the growing evil of the poaching of skilled labour. The order also provided that agricultural workers and coal miners might not be engaged for work outside these industries.

3. Employment of Women (Control of Engagement) Orders.

These required all engagements of women aged 20 to 30 (February 1942), later 18 to 30 (May 1942) and subsequently 18 to 40 (February 1943), subject to certain exceptions, to be made through the Employment Exchange machinery or an approved agency.

4. Special Registrations

From August 1940 onward men and women with special types of skill such as engineers, electricians, etc., were registered at different times to ascertain the whereabouts of those employed in less essential industries.

5. Essential Work Orders

These orders mark the shaping of a long-term policy, the necessity of which became obvious early in 1941. The primary object of the orders was to prevent the unnecessary turnover of labour and thereby to increase production and secure economy in the use of labour. This was achieved by scheduling essential undertakings and restricting drastically an employer's freedom to discharge and an employee's freedom to leave his employment. With certain exceptions, e.g., serious misconduct, the permission of a National Service Officer was required but there was a right of appeal from his decision to a Local Appeal Board. This board consisted of representatives of employers and workers with an independent chairman. In addition to placing restrictions on the right to leave or discharge, the orders required the payment in scheduled establishments of a guaranteed weekly wage in the case of time workers and a guaranteed daily wage in the case of piece workers. The orders also contained provisions relating to welfare, absenteeism, persistent lateness, and to cases in which workers failed to comply with welfare and reasonable orders.

undertakings was the responsibility of a committee composed of head-quarter representatives of the Ministry of Labour and National Service, the Ministry of Production, the Supply Departments, the Board of Trade, and any other department vitally concerned, working under Ministry of Labour and National Service chairmanship. The decisions of the committee were issued in the form of a fortnightly Preference List of undertakings to which all suitable labour should be directed, wherever possible, until their needs were met. The committee considered for the highest priority (first preference) only vacancies on products or services of a particularly urgent character included in a list drawn up by the Ministry of Production in consultation with the Ministry of Labour and National Service. A lower grade of priority (second preference) was awarded by Regional Preference Committees composed, on the model of the Headquarters Committee, of Regional representatives of the departments named. The Headquarters Committee normally refused to admit vacancies for first preference unless second preference was tried without success. The decisions of the various Preference Committees were communicated to the Employment Exchanges concerned for the necessary action when redistributing manpower made available through the channels of normal supply or through registrations under the Registration for Employment Order or as the result of withdrawal of labour from industries and services which were due to suffer cuts in their labour strengths.

"Ring Fence" Schemes. Specialized labour preference schemes were developed for some industries such as agriculture, building, shipbuilding, iron and steel, and chemicals. In 1941 "ring fence" schemes were introduced into the iron and steel and chemical industries. The objects of the schemes were to secure the maximum use of the labour within the industries themselves and thus to assign so far as possible a definite labour force for each industry.

COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

The mobilization of manpower had two main aspects. First the direction of individual men and women to the places where they were most needed for the war effort having regard to their qualifications and experience. Secondly, the general redistribution of manpower so that the maximum possible numbers were employed directly on the war effort in the Armed Forces, Women's Auxiliary Services and munitions industries.

The first of these two objects was secured through the operation of the measures of control already described. The registration of men of military age under the National Service Acts yielded all the information needed to determine whether a particular man could best serve the war effort by being posted to, or being allowed to volunteer for, the Armed Forces, or by being retained in industry, with or without transference to fresh work. Once it was decided that a man should go to the Forces, his case was considered by the authorities concerned in order to

them. It is easy to understand why a comparatively small employer, whose labour force, changed but little, might wonder what purpose could be served by the reporting of his numbers quarter by quarter to the Minister of Labour. And yet his returns were as essential as any other because they were needed to complete the picture.

The individual returns served two main purposes. First they gave indispensable information to the Regional officers of the Ministry of Labour and National Service and of the Supply Departments. The importance of the returns from this angle will be appreciated when it is remembered that they showed not merely the numbers of men and women at work in each factory at a particular date but also the extent to which the labour force was being employed on various branches of the munitions program. The returns from certain of the more vital industries also gave forecasts of the increases required by the particular employer in his labour force having regard to the contracts in hand or those which he expected to receive in the near future. This information was supplemented by an occupational analysis, both of the existing labour force and the increases required, a statement of the principal products manufactured and an indication as to whether the employer had facilities for undertaking further war work. Separate figures were collected as to the number employed in the manufacture of machine tools and engineers' small tools. It will be readily appreciated how valuable all this information was to the District Manpower Boards that were concerned with applications for the deferment of military service put forward by particular employers in respect of their employees and who had to deal with labour demands of the utmost urgency that had to be met in order to carry out some vital munitions production. The returns furnished basic information on which Labour Supply Inspectors and the officers of the Supply Departments handled all their problems and they enabled the Regional and Head-quarter offices of the Supply Departments to keep themselves informed of the progress of their program of expansion.

Second, on the statistical side the returns enabled the department to compile, at reasonable short intervals, detailed figures of the changes in the labour force in each industry and, within the principal manufacturing industries, the changes in the numbers employed on work for each of the Supply Departments, other government departments, home market, and the export trade. These statistics formed the basis of periodical reports to the War Cabinet and of information supplied to other government departments in regard to the changes in the industries in which they were particularly interested. For nonmanufacturing industries and services the returns were necessarily of a much simpler character but they served to complete the picture and in particular to furnish a measure of the extent to which manpower was being drained away for use on more vital purposes.

Assistance was frequently given to industry by the Forces, by postponing or suspending call-up, by releasing men from the Forces or by loaning uniformed personnel, e.g., for repairing air raid damage, to overcome shortages in the aircraft manufacturing industry and in coal mining, harvest work, etc.

The employment of women on a part-time basis was rapidly developed after 1941. In that year married women with household responsibilities were interviewed at the Employment Exchanges to ascertain whether their domestic circumstances would permit them to undertake employment, and, if so, whether they were willing to do so. By March 1942, married women without children were the main, if not the only, reserve of woman-power available and the increasing demands of war industry required that more such women should be brought actively into the war effort. Women's Advisory Panels were set up at the Employment Exchanges and, if the panel recommended that the woman should be regarded as available for full or part-time employment, directions were issued accordingly. By the end of the war nearly one million women were in part-time employment in industry. (In the Ministry's statistics of manpower two part-time women workers are counted as equivalent to one whole-time worker.)

Further additions to the labour force were provided by plans for out-workers and for workers during vacations and for the suitable employment of the disabled.

DISTRIBUTION OF LABOUR

This was effected through the Employment Exchanges which became involved in labour matters in many ways, e.g., public appeals, concentration of industry, registrations for employment, control of engagements, etc.

Among the most valuable classes were young mobile women and in order to make the best use of this type of labour and to avoid waste, regions were grouped into (1) importing regions, (2) exporting regions, and (3) self-sufficient regions; and local office areas were grouped under four headings according to circumstances.

Labour Preferences.

To guide Employment Exchanges, a system of labour preferences to which reference has already been made, was introduced.

The Effective Use of Labour.

The economical use of labour depended mainly on the energy and skill of employers, but to assist in stimulating the breakdown of highly skilled work into less skilled operations, the Minister appointed a number of

RESTRICTED

During the war very close collaboration was maintained by the Ministry with other government departments at all levels.

Thus, the Labour Coordinating Committee, consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Production and of other government departments concerned, under the chairmanship of the permanent secretary to the Ministry of Labour and National Service, insured that the activities of the Ministry in implementing the allocations of labour were properly coordinated and that the other departments principally concerned were kept in close touch on such matters. The Preference subcommittee of the Labour Coordinating Committee dealt with the preferences to be given by the Employment Exchanges in the filling of vacancies.

Collaboration with the government departments was secured in the Regions and contacts were established as necessary in the local office areas.

There was much informal day to day contact with other departments on matters of common interest.

The Minister of Production was appointed in February 1942 to coordinate the work of the three existing Supply Departments; viz., Ministry of Supply, Ministry of Aircraft Production, and Admiralty Supply Department. He was a member of the Lord President's Committee and of the War Cabinet. He maintained liaison with the Services and other appropriate departments and he worked in close contact with the Minister of Labour and National Service in adjusting the various needs for manpower and supplies.

Collaboration at all Levels.

This was achieved by committees at headquarters and at the regional and local levels and was made possible by the decentralization of the departments concerned. There was also much informal day to day contact with other departments having common interests.

Regional Boards were established where all appropriate departments were represented and where all problems of manpower, production, and other ancillary matters were discussed.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

The organization of the Ministry of Labour and National Service underwent certain functional developments in the early part of the war due to the pressure of labour supply problems and to the administration of the National Service Acts, and in June 1940, the administration of the Factories Acts was transferred from the Home Secretary to the Minister of Labour to link up the promotion of good working conditions inside the factories with the Ministry's arrangements for promoting the welfare of workpeople outside the factories. The main outlines of the Ministry's

RESTRICTED

reluctance of juveniles to enter the industry; the appeals for volunteers to make good the heavy wastage; the release of men from the Forces for work in coal mining; the option introduced in 1942 for men called up under the National Service Acts of work underground in coal mining as an alternative to service in the Forces; the introduction in 1943 of the ballot scheme for directing "Bevin boys" to the pits; the appointment of the Minister of Fuel and Power of a committee of mining engineers to examine the technical efficiency of the industry.

ANALYSIS

An outstanding feature of the story just unfolded is that for the first time in our history the mobilization of the nation's manpower was placed under the control of a Civil Department; viz., the Ministry of Labour and National Service, and that it was made responsible for all aspects of the manpower program.

The vast mobilization of the nation's manpower was brought about by various measures which together formed a carefully timed plan. The fundamental aim of the Ministry's policy was to mobilize the nation's resources in such a way and at such a speed that our naval, military, and air forces and our war production reached their highest point at the time when maximum impact on the enemy was required. The mobilization fell into two parts--mobilization for the Forces, under the wide powers given to the Minister by the National Service Acts, 1939 to 1942; and mobilization for the munitions and other vital industries, for which powers were given to the Minister by Orders and Regulations under the Emergency Powers (Defence) Acts, 1939 and 1940. The extent of the mobilization was considerably greater than in the First World War, largely owing to the contribution of women to the war effort. Here again for the first time in our history, conscription was extended (in 1941) to women.

The over-all mobilization of men in the Forces and in war occupations was virtually completed at an early stage of the war, though a considerable volume of transfers between duties continued as demands changed. The full mobilization of women was not completed until 1943 although nearly 1.5 million women of working age were added to the numbers employed by mid-1941, when recruitment of women was still on a voluntary basis.

When the peak of over-all mobilization was reached in September 1943, out of 15,920,000 men of working age (14-64) domiciled in Great Britain, nearly 15,000,000 were in the Forces, Civil Defence, or industry, the balance being mainly students or invalids or otherwise unfit for industrial employment. Of approximately 16,020,000 women of working age (14-59) about 7.25 million were in the Forces, Civil Defence or industry. About 80 percent of the single women aged 14 to 59 (approximately 90 percent of these aged 18 to 40) and about 80 percent of the married women and widows aged 18 to 40 with no young children, were so employed.

The ease with which the labour controls and administrative machinery worked was largely due to this policy, but even more to the willingness with which men and women accepted restrictions and hardships in order that the war might be brought to a successful conclusion.

The country had to contend with shortages and to make the best use of what it had. This it can claim to have done largely owing to the purpose and unity of the people, a unity which in all its history it had never before surpassed.

MOBILIZATION OF MAN-POWER: STATISTICAL SUMMARY,

MID-1939 TO MID-1945

The maximum mobilization of men was reached in 1941. The mobilization of women continued throughout the following two years and the peak of mobilization of manpower as a whole was reached in September 1943. This is shown in the following figures of the numbers of men aged 14-64 and women aged 14-59 in the Forces, Civil Defence and industrial employment at the dates mentioned:-

| Date | Men | Women | Total |
|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Mid-1939 ... | 13,643,000 | 4,837,000 | 18,480,000 |
| Mid-1941 ... | 15,122,000 | 6,012,000 | 21,134,000 |
| Mid-1943 ... | 14,971,000 | 7,230,000 | 22,201,000 |
| Sept. 1943 .. | 14,987,000 | 7,258,000 | 22,245,000 |
| Mid-1945 ... | 14,786,000 | 6,720,000 | 21,506,000 |

It will be seen that the proportion of men to women at mid-1939 was about 2.8 to 1 and at September 1943, about 2.1 to 1.

The statistics showing the mobilization of manpower during the war were derived from a number of sources. For civilian employment the figures for mid-1939 were obtained from the operation of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme so far as insured workers were concerned, supplemented by estimates based mainly on the 1931 Census for the uninsured part of the working population. During the war additional sources of information became available. These consisted mainly of registrations under the National Service Acts, and under the Registration for Employment Orders, coupled with regular employment returns collected from nearly 90,000 employers. In order to throw light on wartime manpower problems, a more intensive study was also made of the information that could be derived from the working of unemployment insurance such as the intake of new entrants into the various industries. By means of annual samples it was also possible to make analyses by age, and for women also by marital status, for the various industries and also to measure the movement of manpower

from one industry to another. Under the Unemployment Insurance Scheme, the annual exchange of Unemployment Insurance books for new ones took place in July of each year and this operation virtually furnished a census of insured workers. The following statistics, therefore, relate to the middle of each year and cover only persons of insurable age, i.e., men aged 14-64 and women aged 14-59. Figures for the Armed Forces and Auxiliary Services and for Civil Defence, National Fire Service and Police were furnished directly by the responsible Departments.

It will be seen that the total working population increased between mid-1939 and mid-1943 by 2,531,000 to a total of 22,281,000; this was due to mobilization from the nonindustrial section of the population. (At the peak of mobilization in September 1943, the total working population was about 22,337,000.) Between mid-1943 and mid-1945 there was a decrease of 632,000 largely due to married women leaving industry, so that at mid-1945 the working population had fallen to 21,649,000 but was still 1,899,000 greater than at mid-1939. Appendix VIII shows that the increase was comprised of 225,000 men and boys and 1,674,000 women and girls.

In the foregoing figures, as elsewhere in this report, two part-time women workers are counted as one unit. If such women are counted as individuals, the total working population at mid-1943 becomes 22,656,000, falling to 22,099,000 at mid-1945. The increase in the number of women in the working population on this basis, as compared with mid-1939, would, therefore, be 2,534,000 at mid-1943 and 2,124,000 at mid-1945.

Between mid-1939 and mid-1943 the total increase in the numbers in the Forces, Civil Defence, and industry was 3,721,000 due to the absorption of 1,210,000 unemployed and the intake from the nonindustrial section of the population. The 3,721,000 comprised an increase of 4,277,000 in the strength of the Forces, an increase of 243,000 in Civil Defence and a decrease of 799,000 in industry.

Although the mobilization of manpower taken as a whole reached its peak in 1943, there was a considerable further expansion of the Armed Forces and Auxiliary Services after that date in order to provide for the intensification of military operations. Thus, between mid-1943 and mid-1945 the number of men and women in the Forces and Auxiliary Services increased by 333,000 and at the latter date reached a total of 5,090,000, or 4,610,000 more than at mid-1939. During the same two years the total working population in employment declined by nearly 700,000 and the increase in the Forces and Auxiliary Services had to be met by a heavy decline in industry and Civil Defence of no less than 1,028,000. Fortunately, large stocks of munitions had been built up by 1943, for by that time employment in home civilian industries and services and in manufacture for export had been reduced to the lowest practicable level. It was, therefore, possible to provide for the reduction in employment in industry to meet the needs of the Armed Forces by reducing employment on the

The changes in the numbers employed in the manufacturing industries may be analyzed as follows:

Thousands

| | Mid-1939 | Mid-1943 | Mid-1945 | Comparison mid-1943 with mid-1939 Inc. (plus) or Dec. (minus) | Comparison mid-1945 with mid-1939 Inc. (plus) or Dec. (minus) |
|---|----------|----------|----------|---|---|
| Manufacture of Equipment and Supplies for the Forces: | | | | | |
| Metals and Chemicals..... | 1,070 | 4,310 | 3,132 | plus 3,240 | plus 2,062 |
| Other manufacturers | 200 | 811 | 698 | plus 611 | plus 498 |
| Total..... | 1,270 | 5,121 | 3,830 | plus 3,851 | plus 2,560 |
| Home Market: | | | | | |
| Metals and Chemicals.... | 1,586 | 833 | 1,014 | minus 753 | minus 572 |
| Other manufacturers | 2,969 | 1,540 | 1,566 | " " 1,429 | " 1,403 |
| Total Home Market | 4,555 | 2,373 | 2,580 | minus 2,182 | minus 1,975 |
| Export: | | | | | |
| Metals and Chemicals..... | 450 | 90 | 200 | minus 360 | minus 250 |
| Other manufacturers | 540 | 162 | 210 | minus 378 | minus 330 |
| Total Export .. | 990 | 252 | 410 | minus 738 | minus 580 |
| All Manufacturers: | | | | | |
| Metals and Chemicals | 3,106 | 5,233 | 4,346 | plus 2,127 | plus 1,240 |
| Other manufacturers | 3,709 | 2,513 | 2,474 | minus 1,196 | minus 1,235 |
| Total..... | 6,815 | 7,746 | 6,820 | plus 931 | plus 5 |

RESTRICTED

51

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

As to the first part of the question, the reason for the use of the Employment Exchange machinery was, in fact, that it was perhaps the most effectively distributed service in the country. There was an Employment Exchange or local office or branch office or an agency in almost every part of the country, and, therefore, it was the machinery by which the population could be approached personally.

Now, the Ministry of Labour and National Service was divided into two functional divisions. In 1941 a Director of Manpower was appointed, and a Chief Industrial Commissioner headed up the other side. Under the Director of Manpower was a Military Recruiting Department, a Labor Supply Department, a Manpower Department, and a National Service Department. They were the four agencies which determined manpower policy, so far as the department was concerned; that is to say, after directions from the War Cabinet. When decisions relating to the supply and distribution of manpower were made, they were sent to the Regional Controllers, who were each responsible for a number of Employment Exchanges, Employment Offices, etc, and instructions were given to each local office. We had in each local area, an Employment Exchange which had a registration of all the people within its locality. That registration could be used either for manning the Forces or for industry.

The Employment Exchange lived in very close cooperation with the individual. It was responsible in the early days for his employment; it was responsible after the beginning of the war for mobilization for the Forces or for industry. It was brought in close contact with all the appeals machinery, and it was consulted by workers and employers when any directions were given to workers of any kind.

DR. FITZPATRICK: I think the most significant thing in the whole scheme administratively is this Employment Exchange. Without its experience, England could hardly have done the amazing job it did.

MR. GORDON: I rather agree with you that we had to have machinery of that kind. We found in England that the Employment Exchange and the cooperation between the Government, the employers, and the trade unions enabled us to put the thing through smoothly. The day-to-day domestic working of the exchange would produce problems. A man, perhaps, would receive directions to go three or four hundred miles from his home and leave his wife and family. He would come to the exchange and say that that was quite impossible or that he wasn't fit, or he would give some other reason. He had the right to appeal. The exchange manager could consult not only the employer's representative but also the trade union representative, and this would very often facilitate the working of the Act by insuring the fullest understanding of a case. The Employment Exchange manager in England was likened by somebody in days gone by to a parish cheryman or parish priest. It has developed very much on parallel lines. The exchange is in close individual contact with the population in its area relating to many phases of life.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

MR. GORDON: It may be a great tribute to your tolerance, but I doubt whether the workers throughout the country at this time share your view.

I gather that this is going on record. I would be very glad to look into this and see whether I can quote actual figures for the record. I think it would be very useful. I myself think that the movement of workers away from industries was negligible. I sat in at a number of those panels up and down the country. I never heard a case conducted other than with what I considered extreme reason and justice. I should not have thought that any preference was given either to workers or to employers. The odd case would come up, of course, where a worker was compelled to remain with his firm, where he was not of much value because he did not want to stay; and when it would perhaps be an economy to let him go elsewhere. In those circumstances, if an Appeal Tribunal thought it could get more production from a worker by allowing him to be transferred, such a decision, with the employer's consent, might be given. The paramount consideration was the country's interest. But, by and large, I should not have thought that the orders had the effect you suggest.

QUESTION: Were there any adjustments made in the wage scales between different industries that would equalize the possible effect of a person's being directed into one industry where the wage scale was low and another person's going into an industry with a higher wage scale?

MR. GORDON: That is rather a long story. In England we developed self-government in industry so far as possible on the industrial relations side, and many industries have established their own machinery for fixing wages and conditions of employment by the voluntary process of collective bargaining. Now, in the early days of the war the possibility you mention was foreseen. That was one of the reasons which induced workers to leave their jobs and which encouraged poaching and which made it necessary to control the movement of labor.

You will remember that the Emergency Powers Act of 1939, amended by the 1940 Act, enabled the famous Regulation 58A to be made. That regulation gave the Minister power to direct a person from one job to another at the rate for the job. That was a potent and stabilizing factor in the transfer system. Also at the time—I am afraid I had no time to mention this earlier—when we realized that production was necessary if we were going to save ourselves, all sides—the Government, the employers, and the workers—agreed that strikes were just unthinkable in such an emergency and that production should not be hindered. With the consent of both sides, the Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order was put through in 1941. That, on the one hand, made a strike, subject to certain procedure, a criminal offense and, on the other hand, required

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

MR. GORDON: Do you mean in industry, in the Forces, or both?

QUESTIONER: Both, sir.

MR. GORDON: As I mentioned, for the Forces men were graded by the Medical Board into four categories. Invariably only categories one and two were called up for the Forces. The third and fourth categories were allocated perhaps to the service trades in the Forces or perhaps to industry, but having regard to their disqualifications, that is, their medical record. That was taken into account by the placing officer in the exchange before they were directed to their work. In the case of industry, wherever there was a direction there was no statutory right of appeal, but the Minister of Labour and National Service established administrative appeals; and the worker, the person who was being directed to a post, had a perfect right to state his case to the Employment Exchange before he was allocated to a job. In the case of medical disability, in all cases where it was possible, he had a choice of employment. In the case of medical disability, he was offered employment having regard to his medical disability. If he or she were then offered employment which they thought was unsuitable, each then had the right of appeal and could appeal to local committees. In that way I think we took care of those suffering from functional disabilities. That is quite apart from the disabled.

Had you anything else in mind?

QUESTIONER: Sir, there has been some thought that the Armed Services took too many of the available people in the first-rate category, that they extracted from industry those who were physically better capable of carrying on some of the duties that industry had to perform, and that those people who were physically fit to a high degree were more or less diverted over to the Armed Forces at the expense of industry.

MR. GORDON: We took the view that modern warfare requires physical fitness and we could not send less than physically fit men into the Forces. I do not think there is much justification for the other part of your statement so far as we were concerned. Under the Schedule of Reserved Occupations, people above the age of reservation, whether they were physically fit or not, remained in industry. It was only people below the age of reservation who were called up to the Forces. After the use of the Schedule of Reserved Occupations disappeared and the individual deferment system came along, each individual was considered by the District Manpower Board on an individual basis. The Schedule of Reserved Occupations was a whole-block basis--age and occupation; it had no regard to employment of a particular individual. It was an age-and-occupation basis. But the individual basis provided for individual consideration, and there a man's physical condition was very often one of the considerations. I should have thought that we took care of that under the circumstances in which we had to work.

RESTRICTED