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The Collection and Utilization of Job Vacancy Data in France

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The advantage of a comprehensive, precise, and rapid means of studying job vacancy data manifests itself on two levels. From an immediate and practical point of view, the quality of this study affects the placement of workers. From a long-term and more statistically oriented point of view, it enables one to appraise the condition of the labor market, to observe its qualitative and quantitative equilibrium, and to define and apply an active employment policy capable of revealing, predicting, adapting, or even correcting the displacement of manpower. By going beyond the technical aspects of the problem, the character of the national effort as a whole in the field of employment would thus be under examination.

To these fundamental reasons for focusing attention on job vacancies one must add, in the case of France, considerations of a legal nature. Since World War II, the administration has possessed a virtual monopoly in matters of placement, and has assumed ultimate responsibility in the whole field of employment. Although these legal prerogatives have not always in fact been respected, the French public authorities have been obliged to set up certain programs and to enact certain measures designed to permit them, at least theoretically, to gather and exploit all useful data on job vacancies.

The public employment services have recently been put to the test, in an almost experimental manner, by an exceptional circumstance—the massive return to metropolitan France of 900,000 French

from Algeria, who had to be hastily reintegrated into the work force. While this circumstance revealed the insufficiencies and faults of the system, it led the administration, under the pressure of human and political expediency, to set up rapidly a more adequate system for the collection and diffusion of data on job openings. Beyond this temporary effort, the experience gave the authorities a greater consciousness of actual data, and enabled them to initiate a new plan of action.

These few considerations suffice to sketch the outline of this report. The first part will describe the traditional methods used by French employment services. The second part will discuss their value in terms of placement, and will supply statistical and economic information. The third part will retrace the innovations adopted at the time of the repatriation of the French from Algeria and attempt to draw some rules from them. The final part will propose for consideration several principles around which it would seem desirable, in France, to orient future action.

I. TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES

The systematic study of employment vacancies was first conceived with the placement of job seekers in mind. The fundamental text on the subject is the Law of May 24, 1945, relating to the placement of workers and to the control of employment. This law, influenced by the economic conditions and sociopolitical preoccupations of the period, attempted principally to alleviate the labor shortage, to prevent upheavals in the employment market, and to enable the government to exercise control of hiring and dismissing.

For this reason, the law embodies the principle of public monopoly of placement by the labor services. It provides that all wage-earners looking for work must register their application with the labor services, and, similarly, *all business enterprises having job openings must notify the services of them.*

Job openings are thus made known by the reports of employers. However, to accelerate placement by the labor services, a certain amount of systematic canvassing of business enterprises is done. In the same manner, the collation of information on job openings

created the need for the refinement of an institutional network of labor bureaus and of formal techniques of registration.

The Organization of the Labor Bureaus

In each *département* there is a labor service under the authority of the Director of Employment and Labor of the *département*, which coordinates and controls the activities of the several labor bureaus, and is responsible, among other things, for the collection of job opening data and applications.

These labor bureaus can be either of a general type, dealing with openings and applications from employers and job seekers in all branches of activity, or of a specialized type; the latter confine themselves to openings and applications in specific sectors of activity—metal trades, building, hotel personnel, etc.

In order to improve the placement system, these labor bureaus have been decentralized. For this reason there are local bureaus in the most important population centers, while in regions whose economic importance would not justify the creation of a local bureau, local agents of the labor services take care of placement operations. Finally, in each *commune* where there is no distinct branch of the labor services, a register containing job openings and applications must be kept at the mayor's office and put freely at the disposal of the public.

Means of Obtaining Information on Job Vacancies

Job openings are brought to the knowledge of the labor services either by the visit of an employer to the labor bureau, by telephone or mail, or as a result of a canvassing program.

Job vacancies are also revealed in various documents at the disposal of the services. Thus, in regard to certain categories of job seekers, notably disabled war veterans (Law of April 26, 1924) and handicapped workers (Law of November 23, 1957), the heads of industrial and commercial enterprises employing more than ten workers are required to declare at the beginning of each year, not only the total manpower employed, but also any existing job vacancies. The analysis of applications for contracts for foreign labor also brings to light a certain number of job vacancies, even when the

employers claim that national labor is unable to fill the vacant positions because of the difficulty or the required technical level of the job.

Finally, information is brought to the attention of the public services by advisory organizations called upon to study general problems of employment. On a centralized level, these include The National Advisory Commission on Labor (*La Commission Nationale Consultative de la Main-d'Oeuvre*) and, more recently, The Central Employment Committee (*Le Comité Supérieur de l'Emploi*); on a regional level, regional labor advisory commissions; and on the *départemental* level, the labor commission under the administration of the particular *département*.

In order to attain defined objectives, the commissions were instructed not to restrict themselves, in establishing short-term needs, to checking unfilled job vacancies already known to the labor services, but to take into account economic data and investment programs with short-term objectives, the needs of the public services and the local organizations, and the diverse information offered by the participants.

As indicated earlier, the direct knowledge of job vacancies by the services is a result of notification by the employer or from the canvassing of the employers by the labor services. The latter should concern us more, in that it indicates the active part taken by the services in the location of job vacancies. The setting up of a canvassing system for job openings by the services has necessitated certain organizational modalities and definitions.

THE ORGANIZATION OF CANVASSING. Canvassing is carried out on the *département* level, as well as that of the labor bureau. Its organization must take into account the capacity of the services (number and distribution of the labor bureaus, numerical and qualitative importance of available personnel), and the local socioeconomic structure (the nature of individual and collective activities to be canvassed, the geographic distribution and size of enterprises, density of manpower, etc.).

The canvassing is entrusted either to agents of the labor services (general or specialized investigators), or to agents of The Labor Inspection Service (*Le Service de l'Inspection du Travail*), or to both.

General investigators are responsible for placement and should be able to devote a portion of their time to the study of job openings in the area of their labor bureau. Because of the regularity of the visits, the relations established between the investigators and the employers constitute one of the important elements of the development of the role of the service.

The utilization of specialized investigators is ordinarily reserved for unusual cases. These investigators are supposed to be well acquainted with professional techniques and the characteristics of job positions, but this is not always the case. They are often confined to important industrial centers specializing in one or several branches of activity, or in certain social categories (farmers, young people, administrators, intellectuals, handicapped people). In these cases the canvassing is organized in accordance with a *départemental* or regional plan.

The personnel of The Labor Inspection Service participates actively in the location of job openings through periodic visits to business enterprises. Moreover, the personnel of The Labor Inspection Service is called upon to take measures in the event that the existence or probability of a state of unemployment in a profession or a region poses particularly pertinent problems for the organization of manpower.

CANVASSING METHODS. Canvassing methods differ according to whether the purpose is direct job placement (individual canvassing) or the collection of job openings (collective canvassing). Individual canvassing consists of finding a suitable position for a well-defined opening. Collective canvassing consists of visiting all the enterprises in the prescribed area, beginning with the most important, with the idea of collecting, even perhaps creating, job openings. Here, it is not only a matter of knowing the positions which are immediately vacant, but the job needs which might arise in the near future.

The Registration of Job Openings

All job openings, whatever their origin, are registered with the labor services and the enterprises on a standard form.

For multiple openings which deal with different positions in the same enterprise, the labor services establish a form for each category

of employment. When the same opening is filed by the enterprise on several forms, each one is referred to as "partial." When an opening is filed by an enterprise on only one form, it is referred to as "total." This process avoids the risk of classifying an opening as filled when only a part of the opening is actually satisfied.

The forms allow for as complete a description of the job opening as possible.¹ The principal sections concern: the date of the job opening (date the file was established, number in chronological order), description of the enterprise (name, code number of the activity engaged in, address, telephone number), description of the job opening (nature, necessary qualifications, hiring conditions, salary, benefits, working conditions, duration of the job, specific details of the position), and indications of placement attempts.

In addition to this, the services use a registration file which enables them to have exact and readily available knowledge of the openings in each labor bureau.

The Placement Operation

Placement consists of the bringing together of job openings and applications. The placement services accomplish this by a card index, which keeps track of the operations of the service in regard to each opening, facilitates a rapid location of all the openings that would suit a particular application, and makes readily available a body of statistics concerning job openings.

A geographical balance of job openings and applications is facilitated in several ways. On the regional level, this is done through the Interdepartmental Center of Distribution (*Centre Interdepartemental de Compensation*), located in the city of residence of the Divisional Inspector (*l'Inspecteur Divisionnaire*). On the national level, a report is issued on the distribution of job openings and applications (*Bulletin de Compensation des Offres et Demandes d'Emploi*).

II. THE EXPLOITATION OF COMPILED DATA

Although the collection of job openings was principally oriented at first (for historical and legal reasons) toward the practical goal of

¹ See appended forms.

job placement, today its principal advantage appears to lie in its use as a source of economic and statistical information. In either case, its value depends upon the significance of collected data relative to the total supply of job openings, manifest or latent, and the precision with which each opening, at the time when it is formulated, corresponds to the job in question.

Collection of Data for Placement

The double objective of procuring a profitable activity for a job seeker and satisfying the needs of an employer necessitates judicious selection. This choice presupposes the existence of a sufficient volume of openings and applications, in addition to as exact a knowledge as possible of the characteristics of both.

From the quantitative point of view, if the job seekers—mainly to obtain unemployment benefits, family allowances, etc.—generally register with the labor services, it is equally true that the employers, in spite of the theoretical legal obligation which they have to obtain prior authorization for all hiring, do not take sufficient advantage of the labor services.

The reason for this is that in periods of underemployment employers can easily find by direct hiring, which is authorized by the Law of May 1945, the workers that they need. On the other hand, in periods of full employment or even overemployment, as has existed in France for several years, they become accustomed to no longer relying upon the labor bureaus, whose clients are reduced to those job seekers who are the most difficult to place. Significant differences in the frequency of utilization of the services are observed from region to region, however, according to the location, the activity, and the equipment of the labor bureaus.

The bureaus cannot rely much more, in questions of placement, upon the periodic reports submitted by the enterprises; the lack of regularity of these reports allows for only occasional usefulness. The advisory commissions, either *départemental* or regional, are not always very active in this respect; in recent directives it has been necessary to remind them of the importance of determining immediate manpower needs, and the possibilities of satisfying them by local or foreign labor.

Canvassing is precisely designed to alleviate these difficulties, and

it succeeds to the extent that the services have enough qualified personnel at their disposal. But too often this is not the case, and the labor bureaus are virtually never in possession of the exact volume of needs to be satisfied. Thus, the disappointing volume of collected job openings often hinders the placement operation.

From the qualitative point of view the lack of sufficient direct contact between the employers and the services results, in more than one case, in inadequate knowledge of job vacancies and, more generally, in a lack of information concerning the changes within enterprises, either in regard to the reshuffling of job categories or with respect to particular professions or job levels.

Whereas the job application form is always completed after an interview with the worker, the job opening form is sometimes completed after a rapid telephone conversation or a brief correspondence. This does not allow for a rigorous enough investigation of the characteristics of the position. Only direct interviews with the heads of enterprises permits the compilation of more precise and detailed information, providing, however, that the agents responsible for the canvassing penetrate deeply enough to the level of working positions.

A greater familiarity with the jobs and tasks within the enterprise is becoming more and more indispensable, not only because of the evolution of job qualifications, but also because of the increasing complexity of duties and knowledge required of workers. The definition of certain work categories can thus become obsolete even before a new professional nomenclature can deal with the phenomenon of industrial evolution.

An effort toward direct and permanent contact with employers, as well as the adoption by the employment services of a system of classification kept constantly up to date, appear, therefore, to be the necessary conditions for a practical exploitation of job openings.

Collection of Statistical Data

It goes without saying that the faults from which the collection of placement data suffer are reflected in the statistics. The latter therefore reflect, at least with respect to absolute values, a margin of error representing the difference between the registered and actual de-

mand for employment. The consequences of this are, however, appreciably less serious since the error appears to be nearly stable. The relative value of the figures, therefore, particularly over time, usefully approximate the real situation.

In addition to the card files established by the *départemental* labor and manpower administrations, officials of these agencies compile a certain number of statistical reports which are sent periodically to The Division of Statistics of The Ministry of Labor.

Every month statistics on the fluctuations of the labor market are compiled, which furnish information on the number of successful placements, available job offers, and applications outstanding. On the report sent to the Central Administration the *départemental* services must compile, under the heading of "unfilled job openings," all the job openings which have arisen during the particular period in the "available openings" file. The openings which are being provisionally filled are not listed as "available." The report contains only openings which are confirmed for more than three weeks.

The forms corresponding to the same job group (marked by letters on the statistical reports) are arranged in a series of columns (marked by numbers from 1 to 26) corresponding to the primary activity of the enterprise from which they originate. Thus, two openings for accountants, one from a public works enterprise and the other from a general mechanics enterprise, will both be listed on the line corresponding to "office work," but each of them will also be listed under the column relating to the primary activity of the enterprise (building and public works; mechanical and electrical industries).

On the basis of these reports, The Central Administration publishes the monthly statistics relating to the fluctuations of the labor market.

Twice a year, The Ministry of Labor publishes information concerning the labor market for young people under eighteen years of age. These data are drawn from the statistical reports compiled by the *départemental* labor and manpower administration and consist mainly of figures on unfilled job openings for young people.

Every six months also, The Ministry of Labor publishes a study of the structure of available job openings and applications in the

labor services. This publication reorganizes the data furnished by the *départemental* administrations which have already centralized the information on the labor services in their *département*.

These data allow for the chronological arrangement of job openings and applications by large groups of specified professions, and the arrangement of job seekers in the same profession according to the age of the worker. For job openings in each group of professions—and within each group, for certain specialized or characteristic professions enumerated in the report—the forms are arranged and entered into the books according to the time elapsed since filing: less than fifteen days, from fifteen days to one month, from one month to three months, and more than three months. Finally, by correlating the available job openings and applications, these tables indicate the prevalence of unemployment in nearly 500 work categories.

The advantage of these statistics on unfilled job openings (that is, those which at the time the statistics are compiled have not as yet been filled) depends greatly upon whether they are presented in raw form or adjusted for seasonal variations. Such variations are often quite pronounced, and characterize this aspect of the labor market.

Raw data have considerable value in explaining and determining, in part, the social climate and salary scale. From a study of these data, it is possible to have an approximate view of the total or sectoral tensions and equilibrium of the labor market. For example:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Number of Openings Per 1,000 Applications</i>
January 1, 1963	363
August 1, 1963	515
January 1, 1964	327
August 1, 1964	548

The relation of job openings to applications, by trade or profession and at a given date, can spotlight the surpluses and shortages in the availability of labor for any category.

An example of this type of relation for July 1, 1964, is shown in Table 1.

TABLE I
*Relation of Job Openings to Applications, by
 Trade or Profession, July 1, 1964*

Trade or Profession	Openings	Applications	No. of Openings Per 1000 Applications
Handling and stocking	10,168	22,589	450
Digging and extracting	1,420	623	2,280
Construction and building maintenance	9,162	3,615	2,535
Metal production and foundry	548	239	2,293
Metal alloys	9,357	5,375	1,740
Office jobs and related work	1,892	13,353	140
Commercial jobs and related work	1,255	5,881	213

The tightness of the labor market appears very clear in construction, digging, and extraction, and in the production and transformation of metals. On the other hand, there is an excess of workers in handling, and especially in office and commercial jobs.

The analysis of job openings and applications also shows the geographic structure of the labor market. Thus, on July 1, 1964, thirty *départements* had, on the whole, manpower deficits. These *départements* were situated in the northern, eastern, southeastern, and Parisian regions, that is, the principal industrial regions.

Raw data result from both the evolution of economic conditions and seasonal variations. Although seasonal variations have a clear influence on the economy, it is necessary to isolate and discount the seasonal component in order to understand the general trends in business.

The number and type of unfilled job openings, thus corrected for seasonal variations, or "deseasonalized," establish a "seasonal profile" of openings. Such findings demonstrate that the number of unfilled job openings is at a minimum on February 1st; it increases until it reaches its maximum on July 1st; it decreases approximately 25 per cent from July 1st to September 1st, then rises again in September, to attain a new maximum on October 1st (20 per cent more than on September 1st). Finally, it decreases steadily until February 1st of the following year.

The observed seasonal turning points of job openings slightly

lead those of job applications and receivers of unemployment assistance, at least for the seasonal resurgence of activity at the end of winter.

The methods of "deseasonalization" employed were devised by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Research. The correction of seasonal variations is important because the inflexibility of the labor market renders it very susceptible to variations in the general economic climate.

The labor market not only takes into account the level of production, it even predicts it. Because of this, the number of unfilled job openings—which expresses the unfilled needs of different economic activities—has been found to be a valuable predictive index of the fluctuations of the business climate.

The turning points in the curve of unfilled job openings, corrected for seasonal variations, lead those relating to unsatisfied job applications and receivers of unemployment assistance, and lead by even more the turning points in industrial production. A decrease in unfilled job openings leads and predicts the end of the expansion. Conversely, just before the resurgence of expansion, one should observe an increase in job openings. One observes, in this case only, a tapering off of the decreasing number of job openings and a stabilization. The increase of openings picks up again only when the resurgence is already under way.

This situation is essentially due to the fact that since the last war France has consistently enjoyed full employment, and sometimes overemployment. Except when absolutely necessary, employers hesitate to release a worker whom they will have trouble replacing when activity picks up. An analysis of unfilled job openings cannot provide a complete and accurate indication of general economic circumstances because of the inflexibility of the labor market. A labor market in which the directly available labor represents less than 1 per cent of the utilized manpower and the available labor force is too narrow to provide us with a grasp of the entire situation. Even though the analysis of unfilled job openings is only representative of "marginal" phenomena of employment, it still retains an interpretive and predictive value for the general business climate. But, given the importance of this indicator, there is reason to

wonder if the statistical data compiled on unfilled job openings adequately explain the great scope of the needs of employers. The criticisms formulated with respect to placement at the beginning of the present discussion can also be applied here.

III. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE REPATRIATED FRENCH FROM ALGERIA

An exceptional urgency recently furnished the occasion for an unprecedented experiment to test the system for the collection of job openings; in this case, primarily its value for job placement. This occasion was the return to Metropolitan France, in the middle of the summer of 1962 and in the beginning of 1963, of the large French population of Algeria, who had to be rapidly integrated into the employment structure.

This task of integration was the more difficult in that the majority of those returning settled in the southern regions of France, whereas the greatest manpower needs were concentrated in the northern, eastern, and southeastern regions.

The first steps taken by The Ministry of Labor consisted of the setting up of "specialized sections" within the regional delegations installed by the Secretary of State for Repatriated Citizens, in Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, and Bordeaux; these sections were responsible for the organization of the program on the regional level. The *départemental* directors of labor and employment of the other areas were to assume direct charge of the integration operations for repatriated job seekers in their areas.

The principal task assigned to the integration services was the compilation of suitable job openings. From the outset, this investigation was facilitated by the legal obligation² of the employers to accord priority to the repatriated citizens and to report periodically any unexpected job openings. The job openings which were not filled locally had to be reported to the five "specialized sections."

It was not long, however, before these measures were seen to be insufficient in view of the magnitude of the problem. The need for

² Law of April 11, 1962, relating to the employment of repatriated French from overseas.

a system of centralized and rapid communication, utilizing the most modern means of transcription and analysis, was soon recognized. In August 1962, The National Employment Exchange for Repatriated Citizens (*Bourse Nationale de l'Emploi pour les Repatriés*) was created to launch a full-scale campaign to gather information on job openings.

The program for the integration of the repatriated French is discussed below, first in regard to the systematic collection of job vacancies, and second in regard to the structure and functions of The National Employment Exchange.

Experiments in Systematic Collection

In the hope of compiling the largest possible collection of available job openings, The Ministry of Labor asked for the assistance of the administrative division of the private organization for unemployment benefits, The National Interprofessional Union for Industrial and Commercial Employment (*Union Nationale Interprofessionnelle pour l'Emploi dans l'Industrie et le Commerce—U.N.E.D.I.C.*) and of its subsidiaries, the Associations for Industrial and Commercial Employment (*Associations pour l'Emploi dans l'Industrie et le Commerce—ASSEDIC*).

The ASSEDIC associations were asked to submit to their affiliated enterprises a questionnaire, formulated by The Ministry of Labor, to be completed and returned to the ASSEDIC associations. At the time of the first compilation, the ASSEDIC associations were to transmit the assembled information to the *Départemental* Labor and Employment Administration in each *département*. For the second compilation, the ASSEDIC associations were also required to send a copy of the questionnaire to The National Employment Exchange in Marseille.

The first compilation of available job openings was begun on September 25, 1962; the second, on March 15, 1963.

Other than the necessary information relating to the identification of the enterprise filling out the questionnaire, each form required such precise data as the following: job offered (professional or subordinate, nature and functions of the position, specific aptitudes, level of qualification, professional category, sex, number

of positions, weekly hours of work); guaranteed wages (hourly or monthly salary, bonuses and compensation, social benefits); housing (provision for assistance, possibilities for one person or for a family).

In the course of the second compilation of job openings, on a national level, the employers were asked to indicate not only the positions immediately available but also any jobs which they might be able to fill by job retraining programs.

As soon as the *départemental* administrations received the employer questionnaires from ASSEDIC, they were to use the reported openings for the exclusive benefit of the registered repatriated citizens in their *département*.

Each *départemental* administration was also to examine, as best it could, the real value of the reports of job vacancies by a rapid analysis of their consistency and coherence. It was to attempt, furthermore, a systematic comparison of the employer form submitted by the ASSEDIC associations with the card files of job openings of the labor services, in order to avoid a duplication of job openings.

For the first compilation the *départemental* administration was to submit directly to The National Employment Exchange all assorted job openings and housing information concerning either administrators or skilled metal workers; then, when the methods and functions of the Exchange were more clearly defined, all collected openings. These data were submitted on standardized forms, designed to permit easy duplication and diffusion. By the time of the second compilation, it was decided to lighten the task of the local services by no longer requiring that each opening submitted to The National Employment Exchange be transcribed on a form.

The rapid duplicating equipment of The National Employment Exchange made possible the adoption of the following procedure: Each enterprise was to complete the questionnaire in triplicate and send back two copies to the ASSEDIC association responsible. The ASSEDIC association was to send a copy of the questionnaire immediately to the corresponding *Départemental* Labor and Employment Administration and another copy to The National Employment Exchange. If any *départemental* administration discovered, among the job openings collected from the enterprises, a position suitable

for a repatriated job seeker registered in the *département*, it was to get in touch with The National Employment Exchange by the most rapid means of communication possible (telegram, telephone). The openings gathered by the *départemental* labor and employment administrations which were not amenable to useful exploitation on the local level, were sent to The National Exchange.

The system just described is essentially the same as that used for the exploitation of other job offers directly compiled by the *départemental* labor and employment administrations. In addition, one must not neglect the contribution of other groups, such as agricultural and professional organizations, or employers, in the communication of job vacancies to the public authorities.

The National Employment Exchange for Repatriated Citizens

The Exchange was created by a joint ministerial decree on August 10, 1962, and was installed in Marseille. It operated under the authority of The Ministry of Labor (General Administration of Labor and Manpower) and of the Secretary of State for Repatriated Citizens (Administration of Social and Economic Affairs).

It was responsible for receiving the communications issued by the *départemental* labor and employment administrations and of specialized sections of the regional delegations of the Secretary of State for Repatriated Citizens.

In order to handle this task satisfactorily, The National Employment Exchange for Repatriated Citizens devised several procedural techniques, the most important of which are discussed below.

The permanent centralization of job opening information had a threefold purpose.

1. To furnish, at regular intervals, a total picture of available openings on record in each *département*, and to determine the number of openings for which a particular effort had been made in regard to housing, relative to the total volume of expressed needs, on the one hand, and to the skill requirements of the positions, on the other.

2. To single out, initially, the forms which contained openings

that would encourage mobility (guaranteed housing, or assistance from an employer or local or regional organization) and openings for administrators. Later, in the following stage, to classify all collected openings.

3. To devise a permanent system for keeping available job openings up to date.

The attempt to keep openings up to date was particularly necessary, since The National Employment Exchange acted as an organ of redistribution of collected openings. This meant that the validity of submitted openings had to be checked.

The first regulations stipulated that an opening could not be considered valid more than fifteen days after the date of its initial reception. After this delay, if the opening had not been renewed, it was assumed to be "nullified." But experience has shown that the period of the validity of a job opening is a complex and variable concept, and that it is difficult, in fact, to ascribe to it a theoretically average period of duration.

It was ultimately decided that the opening would be presumed "valid" until it had been explicitly "blocked," "filled," "nullified," or had clearly "expired." The local services had the obligation, before any placement attempt, to make sure that the opening in question was still available. These terms can be explained in the following manner.

BLOCKING. The specialized section or the *Départemental* Labor and Employment Administration "blocked" the opening by informing The Exchange, by telegram or telephone (with confirmation by letters), that the opening was temporarily unavailable.

FILLED OPENING. When the placement of a worker had been successfully concluded, the specialized section or the *départemental* administration informed The National Employment Exchange of it by letter. The opening then became definitively unavailable.

NULLIFICATION. If the *départemental* administration, whence the opening originated, decided to nullify it, it informed The Exchange by telegram or telephone and confirmed it by a letter of nullification, which had the effect of making the opening definitively unavailable.

EXPIRATION. The National Employment Exchange could itself

nullify openings which were filed before a certain date and which, because of the length of time elapsed, were no longer useful.

This entire procedure, which formed the basis of permanent contact between the individual services and The National Exchange, allowed for the systematic centralization of job opening data.

The National Employment Exchange distributed the centralized data on job openings, in the form of duplicated lists, to the four specialized sections in Marseille, Lyon, Bordeaux, and Toulouse, as well as to those *départemental* labor and employment administrations in which a significant number of repatriated workers had settled.

In view of the industrial density of the Paris area, a direct exploitation of compiled job openings in the three *départements* of the area was planned in collaboration with the local services of the regional area covering Paris. Moreover, in order to avoid the return south of those repatriated job seekers who had already come as far as Paris, The National Exchange sent to the "specialized section" of the Seine region only those openings originating in the *départements* situated to the north of Paris.

At a later stage, however, The National Employment Exchange was able to disperse all job openings throughout the country.

The National Exchange transcribed and codified job openings on perforated cards and sent duplicates of the cards to the Statistical Division of The General Labor and Employment Administration. As a result, the structure of available job openings has been successfully studied both in regard to general economic activity and professional skill, and geographically by *département*.

The Results of the Experiment

This program of professional classification, initially adopted to solve the problems posed by the repatriated citizens, became a part of the entire employment policy.

It is, moreover, from the aggregate point of view that the experiment seems to have been the most successful, since the number of repatriated job seekers in industry and commerce fell from 70,000 on November 1, 1962, to 38,000 on July 1, 1963, and to 14,000 in October of 1964. It is also in this general perspective that the ex-

perience could best be used in a consideration of both the collection of job openings and the technical methods used by The National Exchange.

The systematic compilations of job openings, organized with the assistance of the U.N.E.D.I.C. and the ASSEDIC associations, have shown that a certain number of available job openings had not been reported to the labor services by the employers.

It must be noted in this respect that the advantages presented by the new methods lie primarily in the close and effective unification of professional organizations with the activities of the public authorities. The latter have developed the instruments necessary for their operations, and have also made maximum use of the communications network existing between the ASSEDIC associations and their contacts, in order to detect the number of job openings actually available.

The difference between the quantity of actual openings found by the ASSEDIC associations and the more conservative estimate registered at the time in the files of the public services is essentially due to the indifference or skepticism on the part of the employers toward the resources of the labor bureaus, especially in periods of full or surplus employment. It remains to be seen, however, whether it is possible to repeat such periodic canvassing.

The problem of validating job openings has been re-examined several times. At first a job opening, unless it was confirmed, was considered valid for three weeks. Then, in formulating the techniques for keeping job openings up to date for the repatriated citizens, a job opening was considered valid only for fifteen days; eventually, a great latitude of interpretation was left to the services.

Two observations support the contention that the validity of job openings is essentially related to the general economic situation. On the one hand, the analysis of the second compilation of job openings showed that a considerable number of compiled openings in March 1963 corresponded to the openings already presented at the time of the first compilation in October 1962. On the other hand, the study of the structure of job openings demonstrates that in periods of full employment, the proportion of recent job openings diminishes, while the proportion of older ones increases.

In any case, the techniques used have permitted both the systematic location of enterprises having job openings and the exploitation, within convenient periods, of openings thus discovered.

The uniqueness of The National Employment Exchange is essentially due to its role of centralizing and redistributing job openings. On the other hand, The National Exchange has never been responsible for placement, which has continued to be within the province of the "specialized sections" or the *départemental* labor and employment administrations.

If The Exchange has nevertheless played an important role in the integration of the repatriated citizens, this is due mainly to the fact that it facilitated a more rapid analysis of information, increased the volume and scope of the data, and relieved the services of certain preliminary work in connection with placement.

Rapidity of analysis was increased through use of teleprinters, telephone communications, development of coded listings, and rapid updating of available openings.

The increased volume of compiled information is attributable to improved methods of centralization and analysis which have led to marked improvement with respect to the registration of repatriated citizens, on the one hand, and to job openings and means of training on the other hand. These approaches have influenced the choice of new programs undertaken, notably the special programs for job training for repatriated citizens.

Finally, by analyzing the information received on job openings, and by submitting to the placement services complete and up-to-date listings, The National Employment Exchange has relieved these services of a certain number of material and manual tasks; it has thus enabled the agents to devote more time to the correlation of job openings and applications, thereby increasing their effectiveness.

The experience of The National Exchange, combined with that of the systematic compilations of job openings, has demonstrated that it is possible to locate, at a given time, the total number of job vacancies in a country. One wonders, consequently, if there is not a need, in the light of these results, for a new look at the policies carried out in this domain by the labor services.

IV. NEW ORIENTATIONS

Although it might seem foolhardy to generalize from the experimental methods of The National Exchange, devised at the time of the integration of the repatriated citizens, a certain number of measures can be, and are actually being, proposed in the periodic analysis of manpower needs to improve the exploitation of job opening data. These measures, in order to be fully effective, must still be complemented by an inventory of actually or potentially available labor, especially including young people who are in quest of their first job.

It is, on the other hand, equally important to establish the administrative structure within which a new program can be defined.

It is this double preoccupation which is presently directing the efforts of the French employment services.

Improvement of the Understanding of Manpower Needs

The experience of such systematic compilations as previously described is not likely to be of great use for the proposed reforms. It is an awkward procedure, which could not be indefinitely repeated without imposing difficulties on the employers and diminishing, consequently, the value of the investigation of job vacancies. A compilation as of a fixed date, for all activities and professions, is, moreover, poorly adapted to the seasonal variations of the enterprises and the use of labor. It would therefore be necessary to resort to more selective compilations, appropriate to the individual branches of activity.

For this reason it would seem preferable to proceed with periodic investigations, with the assistance of the U.N.E.D.I.C., and also to make short-term predictions of the needs of business enterprises by analyzing more carefully the needs indicated by individual professions and by skill.

The systematic analysis of information about foreign labor is concerned with both work applications and the placement of foreign workers. The routine methods used in this analysis should be expanded in such a way as to include monthly information, classified by *département*, economic activity, nationality, and professional

category. An annual cycle seems sufficient for knowledge of the distribution of foreign workers, according to size of the enterprise, age group, sex, and level of professional skill.

This information would both assure a more active search for national candidates for job positions and allow for provisions to be made concerning job training.

The classification of job openings now used—by *département*, by economic activity, and by professional categories—should be supplemented by a classification based on the level of skill and profession and by information on housing, means of training, and school and university background, in order to facilitate geographic and professional mobility and to inform candidates and the employment services of placements. These data would be gathered at different intervals, taking into account the rapidity with which they vary.

Such a use of job opening data could only be accomplished on a centralized level, by The Ministry of Labor, and would require an increase in the resources at the disposal of the Division of Statistics and Duplication. But these improvements would be practical only if a corresponding effort were made on a regional and local level.

It is especially important to develop regional information on openings for long-term jobs which would require certain additional training. Investigation in this field should be directed toward quantitative and qualitative studies of the evolution of employment. These studies would, in turn, strengthen the system of documentation and compilation of professional and economic information used by the employment services to predict the fluctuations of the labor market.

In order to increase the effectiveness of placement, it would appear equally desirable to accelerate and intensify the means of communication of job openings on a regional level, and assure, in all circumstances, an effective body of information.

On the local level, the effort should be essentially directed toward the discovery of average and short-term openings requiring immediate placement. Two major sources of information present themselves in this connection: the systematic utilization of newspaper advertisements, provided that the advertisers are known by the labor services and are required to inform them of all job openings; and,

more important perhaps, a larger and more rational recourse to canvassing.

It is canvassing alone which makes an opening really exploitable, and leads to satisfactory placement. Although canvassing is often the result of more general investigation, or is provided by information gathered by the Labor Inspection Services (which should be better equipped to observe probable labor migrations), or is simply undertaken because of the need for labor, it should assume, as often as possible, a systematic character.

Furthermore, canvassing must be done by more qualified and better trained agents; interviews must not be limited to personnel officers, but must extend as far down as the level of the specific positions. Its value depends a great deal upon its precision, and it would seem desirable in this respect that the specialization of agents be determined according to branches of professional activity (contingent activities being grouped together), rather than according to geographic zones. It is indispensable in any case that the canvasser know the employer personally, for placement is essentially a question of human relations, in which confidence and trust play primary roles.

The Improvement of the Organization and Functions of the Employment Services

As the example of canvassing shows with particular clarity, all the innovations suggested above assume, among other things, the existence of employment services which function effectively—in a well-organized manner, equipped with the necessary tools, and able to apply adequate methods. This is not always the case, however, either because the structure and equipment are not adaptable to new needs, or because of the numerical or qualitative insufficiency of the personnel.

In practice, the local administrative organizations are totally unprepared to satisfy the need for job vacancy information and the demand for employment. It would seem more effective, therefore, to organize permanent services in the local regions and the geographic zones not covered by the activities of the local labor bureaus.

Within the labor bureaus themselves, the sharp division of roles

and functions of the different agents, as a result of excessively rigid specialization and the amount of time required for administrative duties, has made it difficult to use appropriate methods of observation and investigation of actual job openings. Furthermore, the active services must be reorganized, on the *départemental* and regional levels, and more precisely defined on the centralized level. This would entail a review of the role of the agents of the Labor Inspection Services, who would be called upon to serve as liaison between the employment services and the central administration, clarifying, on the one hand, the role of the administration in the elaboration of general policy and, on the other hand, stimulating the activities of the whole organizational structure on the regional and *départemental* level.

This modification in organization, supplemented by a strengthening of human and material resources at the disposal of the services, as well as by an improvement in the recruitment and training of agents, should lead to the realization of more effective methods of operation.

On the local level, "local employment sections," replacing the existing labor bureaus, would constitute in the future the sole organs of direct contact with the public in matters of employment. Located in all population centers within a circumscribed area, they would be able, from a functional point of view, to act in direct collaboration with one another, inside or outside the *département*, and in this way they would establish for employers and workers alike a national labor market which would no longer be artificially divided by administrative boundaries. These sections would have the greatest degree of cooperation and support from the *départemental*, regional, or national organizations in regard to general information on job openings.

On the regional level, the organizational structure could take the form of regional employment exchanges, having as their objectives:

1. The mechanization of certain tasks, so that the regional employment services could more rapidly and systematically use data on job openings and applications. The experience of The National Employment Exchange could serve here as an example, providing,

however, that certain of that agency's procedural problems are avoided.

2. The establishment of an over-all system of labor exchange balances among "local sections." This would include an interzonal system (limited to skilled and unskilled workers) among sections covering certain zones that are socioeconomically homogeneous, and a regional system for housing needs and for openings and applications for technicians and other administrative and technical personnel.

The advantages of these regional employment exchanges would doubtless be numerous: they would permit increased communication among the local employment sections of the area, and improve the activity of these services in regard to skilled jobs; they would create a more effective system of regional balance; they would make it more practical for the regional services to gauge the employment situation; they would lead to a more profitable system of canvassing.

On the national level, such a policy, to the extent that it would be generally realized, would lead to a consideration of the reorganization of The National Employment Exchange, but with different objectives and along different lines than those established for the repatriated citizens. It should be pointed out that such an organization would only participate on the level of highly skilled jobs and administrative and technical positions for which the greatest possibility of geographic mobility is foreseen.

The program for industrial decentralization has shown that the heads of business enterprises are not reluctant to concern themselves directly with the housing of their administrative personnel. The National Employment Exchange would have a very important role to play, by facilitating professional mobility; this alone is capable of reviving certain regions of the country.

Programs oriented in the directions sketched above are presently in the process of being realized, examined, or studied in The Ministry of Labor.

Job opening form standardized, used, and established by the labor services in accordance with the information furnished by the employers.

Code No. of the Profession

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Code No. of the Activity of the Enterprise

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Opening No.

Total--Partial¹

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Group

M	F
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Group

EXACT STATEMENT OF THE PROPOSED POSITION

Nature: Qualification:

Social purpose of the enterprise:
Activity of the enterprise:
Address: Telephone No.
Address of place of business:
Means of communication:
Person in charge of recruitment:
Days and hours indicated for appointments

Number of positions to fill:
of which are subject to the law of
April 26, 1924, and are subject to the law
of October 8, 1940.

Opening Collected:	Transmitted:
Verbally, by letter, by telephone,	for regional action on
canvassing visit (1) by:	for national action on
. on	Observations:
.

¹ Cross out the particulars which do not apply.

"Employer" form utilized by all labor services in order to compile information concerning enterprises in need of labor.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	14	
S.S. No.								Code No. of Collective Activity					
								Effective Code No.					

"EMPLOYER" FORM

Social purpose of the enterprise:

Activity of the enterprise:

Address:

Commune: Telephone:

Address of place of business:

Means of communication:

Person in charge of recruitment:

Days and hours indicated for appointments:

Characteristics of Enterprise	DATES
1 Manpower stability	
2 Work period	
3 Partial unemployment	
4 Seasonal jobs	
5 Housing--quarters	
6 Food services	
7 Social facilities	
8	
9	

Supplementary "employer" form relative to the application of provisions for the mandatory employment of disabled war veterans and handicapped workers.

APPLICATION OF THE LAW OF APRIL 26, 1924 AMENDED

Year

Social purpose of the enterprise:

No.

Nature of Activity

Registration No.

1. PERCENTAGE

Date of report:
File No.:

ATTAINED NOT ATTAINED
Number of beneficiaries
lacking:(1).

II SPECIAL CATEGORIES

DATE	CATEGORIES of special positions	NUMBER OF POSITIONS		OBSERVATIONS
		male	female	

(1) Cross out the items which do not apply and complete accordingly.