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Fourth Report on the work of the Brussels Treaty Organisation from September, 1954 to May, 1955

Report

1. SECTION A - INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Council of Europe, the Brussels Treaty Organisation, instead of presenting its annual report in September as hitherto, is submitting it in May in order that the Assembly may be able to study it during the first part of its Session.

Since the report only covers a sevenmonths period, there is, consequently, less to record than usual.

The activities of the Brussels Treaty Organisation during the period under review have been mainly concerned with :

solving a certain number of practical problems;

studying ways in which the best solutions adopted by certain member countries may be extended to all the others;

consolidating progress made and giving the widest possible application to conclusions reached;

proceeding with what might be termed " experiments" carried out on a limited scale, with a view to their application on a wider basis wherever results are encouraging

2. SECTION B - SOCIAL COOPERATION

2.1. 1. Questions of Social Policy

2.1.1. 1. International Labour Conventions

The Social Committee carries out an annual review of International Labour Conventions ratified during the past year by the five countries. New ratifications by the Five in 1954 totalled eleven.

2.1.2. 2. Social security

2.1.2.1. (a) Bilateral Conventions

Progress has been made in completing the network of bilateral social security conventions which will eventually link all the five countries. Eight of the necessary ten Conventions are now in force. The Anglo-Netherlands Convention is about to be ratified, and negotiations for the Anglo-Belgian Convention have been completed.



2.1.2.2. (b) Application of Conventions

An expert Sub-Committee has been studying in detail the problems arising from the interpretation and execution of the bilateral and multilateral Social Security conventions. Among the problems at present ' under study are the overlapping of benefits paid by the different countries and the conditions for the payment of survivors' benefits.

2.1.2.3. (c) Military service and mobilisation

I t had been thought that social secur i ty problems connected with the payment of benefits to the dependents of a worker who does his military service in a cotmtry other than that in which he is insured would require the conclusion of a multilateral convention as between the Five. However, it is probable that a solution will be reached through conventions now under study in larger international organisations, and the question will not be discussed further for the time being.

2.1.2.4. (d) Increasing costs of sickness and invalidity benefits

The problem of controlling demand on medical and pharmaceutical services and of eliminating abuses continues to be studied. A comparative survey of the methods used in the different countries is being drawn up; this includes an examination of statistical methods in order to make the information supplied truly comparable.

2.1.3. 3. Manpower

2.1.3.1. (a) Exchanges of manpower and employment of foreign workers

The scheme b y which the employment services of the five countries cooperate in assisting workers to find employment abroad continues to function and is reviewed at regular intervals.

A report has now been drawn up, and will shortly be published, on the foreign manpower policies of the Brussels T r e a t y countries, their application and results.

2.1.3.2. (b) Statistics

The study of statistical methods for evaluating family budgets has been completed, and an agreed method of international classification of items of expenditure has been transmitted to the International Labour Organisation for information.

Comparative reports on other aspects of statistical methods in use in the five countries have been drawn up, such as earnings in a certain number of industries, employment and unemployment, etc. These are of considerable use in comparing trends over a given period of time in the different countries.

2.1.3.3. (c) Industrial safety and health

The Sub-Committee concerned has made considerable progress in its study of safety standards for specific types of machinery : the consideration of safeguards in the use of rubber rolls and calenders has been completed, and those in respect of lifting gear and machinery are now under review. The problem of accidents in the building industry is also being examined.

The labelling of dangerous chemicals used in industry and in agriculture has been one of the main subjects of study by this sub-committee. Its aim has been to make a contribution to the prevention of injuries or of poisoning of workmen during t h e manufacture, storage, handling and use of these chemicals, by indicating clearly the kind of information which should appear on each container or package.

The Sub-Committee has therefore drawn up • a list of dangerous substances which are in fairly general use in the five countries and for each has agreed the danger symbol which, i t is considered, should be placed on the label. In addition, it has drafted a detailed scheme for the international labelling of dangerous chemicals used in agriculture, which includes precautions to be taken b y the user, first-aid instructions, etc. These documents have been communicated to other international organisations dealing with labelling questions.

2.1.3.4. (d) Other subjects

Study of the following subjects has been completed :

Possibilities of employment for the families of foreign workers ;

Employment bureaux for intellectual workers and managerial personnel;

Welfare services for women and young workers.

The following subjects are under study :

Social welfare of apprentices;

Techniques for interviewing and placing intellectual workers.

Exchanges of views take place regularly on a number of subjects which are under discussion in other international organisations.

2.2. 11 . Public Health

2.2.1. 1 . Pharmaceutical products

Progress has been made towards the standardisation of drugs and dressings which are essential for the needs of the civil population in wartime. It is expected that, by the end of the year, specifications will have been agreed by the five countries for a considerable number of items. This work entails a good deal of research, including laboratory tests, and is being carried out with the cooperation of the Pharmacopoeia Commission of each country.

Other subjects with which the subcommittee is concerned include the classification of drugs containing poisonous substances, national regulations concerning narcotic drugs, and the emergency stocking of drugs and dressings. Information is exchanged regularly on research concerning new medicaments, and on the standardisation of medical and surgical equipment.

2.2.2. 2. Health control of foodstuffs

An expert sub-committee has continued its study of certain aspects of the health control of foodstuffs. Those include the addition of colouring matter, and a considerable amount of technical information on synthetic dyes has been exchanged and summarised in the form of data sheets. Eight of the dyes studied are, in the present stage of scientific knowledge, regarded as suitable for use in food in all five countries; the Sub-Committee considered that these eight substances might form a nucleus for future international action on the control of the addition of synthetic colours to foodstuffs.

Standards of purity for colouring matters have also been studied; the experts have now drawn up a comparative table for the five countries indicating those foodstuffs to which the addition of colouring matter is prohibited and those for which such addition is tolerated.

Technical exchanges of information are taking place on the danger to the consumer of the use of pesticides, with particular reference to the nature and quantity of the residues of such chemicals on foodstuffs at the time of sale to the consumer.

Other exchanges of technical information concern anti-oxidants and preservatives.

2.2.3. 3. Public health aspects of civil defence

Two working parties have met during the past seven months to study questions of an organisational nature such as hospital evacuation, recruitment and training of personnel, etc. The results of their work have been communicated to the public health authorities of the different countries.

2.2.4. 4. Recruitment of medical and other health personnel for Government departments

In at least three of the Brussels Treaty countries the problem of the recruitment of professional and technical staff for the Government public health services is one of considerable difficulty. A comparative study has therefore been made of remuneration, conditions of service, methods of recruiting, etc., and a series of conclusions formulated.

2.2.5. 5. Public health aspects of poliomyelitis

The Committee has completed a first comparative survey of the problems arising from the increase in prevalence of this disease; information to the general public on preventive measures, immunisation, methods of control of the spread of the disease, etc., are among the particular questions that have been examined. The Committee continues to exchange information on new developments.

2.2.6. 6. Other subjects

Study of the following subjects has been completed :

Tularaemia in Western Europe;

Rodent control;

Medical aspects of rehabilitation of the tuberculous.

The following subjects are under study:

Expenditure on medicines within social security schemes;

Rabies in Western Europe;

Food-poisoning;

Definition and control of Irregular Practice of the Art of Healing;

Control of medical advertising in the lay Press.

2.3. III . Rehabilitation and Resettlement of the Disabled

2.3.1. 1. Rehabilitation and resettlement of paraplegics, epileptics and patients affected by cardiac rheumatism

The Committee has continued its study of the social aspects of the rehabilitation of paraplegics, with special reference to vocational guidance and re-employment.

A detailed exchange of information has taken place on the problem of epilepsy, in particular the organisation of the fight against the disease, and the type and conditions of work most suited to those affected. The Committee, with the assistance of the Public Health Committee, is now preparing a series of recommendations to Governments.

As regards patients suffering from cardiac rheumatism, though it is not considered that special provision should be made for them in the general scheme of the different countries, it is hoped that it will in future prove possible to widen their range of employment.

2.3.2. 2. Rehabilitation of amputees

A Working Party of experts has completed a set of " General principles for the rehabilitation of amputees " for the information of Government departments and medical services in the five countries, which will be published shortly. A number of appendices deal in detail with such technical aspects as remedial exercises, surgical techniques of amputation, different types of artificial limbs.

2.3.3. 3. Conditions to be complied with, by disabled persons for obtaining driving licences

The Committee has strongly recommended to Governments that restrictions should be kept as few as possible, since the aim should be to help, rather than hinder, rehabilitated persons in obtaining licences.

The question of the driving of motor vehicles by amputees and paraplegics is to be examined further.

2.3.4. 4. Statistical data on rehabilitation

The attention of Governments has been drawn to the importance of assembling the most complete information possible in the sphere of rehabilitation, and to the necessity of working out appropriate methods for providing such data. As a first experiment, the Committee itself intends to study the question of statistics for paraplegics and amputees.

2.3.5. 5. *Rehabilitation of the tuberculous*

A study on the rehabilitation of the tuberculous was referred, on completion, to the Public Health Committee, which considered certain medical aspects of the problem.

2.3.6. 6. *Other subjects under study*

Sheltered employment, particularly sheltered workshops;

Education of handicapped children;

Rehabilitation of the mentally deficient ;

Publicity for facilitating rehabilitation and resettlement.

3. SECTION C - CULTURAL COOPERATION

3.1. I. *Education*

3.1.1. 1. *University education*

The Cultural Committee has made further progress in its study of problems relating to higher education, in particular the reorganisation of university teaching. A Conference of Rectors and Vice-Chancellors from the countries of the Brussels Treaty Organisation will be taking place in July, 1955 at Cambridge under the patronage of H. R. H. the Duke of Edinburgh, who will make the opening speech; other member countries of the Council of Europe will also send representatives.

The general theme of the Conference will be " The University in the World of Today ". The Conference will give special attention to the urgent question of the maintenance of a true balance in university education between general culture and specialised teaching. The problems of independence and autonomy— more particularly the financial autonomy of the university—and of the system of nominating teaching and research staff are also to be examined, as are questions relating to the selection of students, their welfare, their participation in university affairs and their vocational guidance. Finally, those taking part will discuss certain aspects of the relationship between the university and the community. The main purpose will be to assess the effect upon our spiritual values of recent progress in all fields of knowledge. On another level, views will be exchanged on the problems created by producing too many graduates in one faculty and too few in another, with due consideration for the needs of modern society.

3.1.2. 2. *Courses for Inspectors of Education*

A new series of courses began in 1953 in the United Kingdom; the 1955 course will take place in France, the theme being the training of secondary school inspectors,

3.1.3. 3. *Teachers' Courses*

The 1954 meeting was held in France, its main purpose being to acquaint the four other countries with the methods adopted for training apprentices in French schools and technical establishments. Besides the visits paid to institutions giving technical training, lectures and general discussions enabled the delegates not only to appreciate French achievements in this field but also to compare them with those in their own countries.

The 1955 course will take place in the Benelux countries and will deal with the teaching of geography.

3.2. II. *Youth*

3.2.1. 1. *Courses and meetings for young people*

Courses and meetings took place under the auspices of the Brussels Treaty Organisation as in previous years. The 1954 programme was as follows :

a Youth Camp at Châtenay-Malabry, France, attended by 06 young people of under 17 years of age from the five countries;

an international tour of Luxembourg for technical students, during which a number of industrial establishments were visited ;

a course on physical education outside the school curriculum, held at Joinville, in France.

The 1955 programme will include :

a course in the Netherlands for experts on the sociological problem of t h e young girl at work;

a course in Belgium, for young people, on the growth of a community.

3.2.2. 2. School party travel and school-linking

Following the meeting of a Working Group on school party travel, held in France in 1953, a second meeting took place in London in 1955 to study techniques of international school-linking. They stressed the value of this type of exchange and recommended that Governments should, amongst other measures, do all they could to encourage school-linking and devote as much publicity to it as possible.

3.2.3. 3. Other subjects

The Youth Sub-Committee is preparing to publish a collection of songs for young people, as well as a number of travel guides and a handbook on camping.

3.3. III. Films

3.3.1. 1. Joint film productions

Plans are now complete for the joint production of a second film; this will be in colour, entitled : " December, the Children's Month " . National festivities will be filmed in each of the five countries.

A series of five educational films is nearing completion, and t h e y will b e made available to schools in all member countries. The subjects were agreed internationally so t h a t each country should be able to make use of t h e films produced elsewhere. A further series of films is being planned, and t h e exchange of educational films as between the Brussels T r e a t y countries is under consideration.

3.3.2. 2. Glossary of cinema terminology

The Sub-Committee is compiling a glossary of cinema terms in use in the five countries, which will be of great value to film technicians and which might be published later on.

3.3.3. 3. Continuing activities

The screening during meetings of the Sub-Committee of films considered suitable for exchange;

Regular exchange of information on the production of non-commercial films;

Exchange and purchase of educational and cultural films.

3.4. IV. Television

The Cultural Committee has decided to confine its work in this field to the question of educational television, the general opinion being that wider discussions would be unlikely to yield practical results.

Some preliminary studies have been carried out by a Working P a r t y set up by the Brussels Treaty Organisation. A Study Group was called b y UNESCO in London in J u l y , 1954 to consider the subject and was attended by a representative from the Brussels T r e a t y Organisation; this work is to continue in 1955. The Brussels Treaty Organisation has decided to await the results of t h e UNESCO studies.

3.5. V. Government officials

As part of the series organised every year, a course will take place in Paris in 1955 for the purpose of considering the part played by administrative and technical officials in planning activities and the execution of any such plans.