



Student trainee at Westinghouse Electric Corporation. Large companies such as Westinghouse select graduating students through the Placement Service for further training in factory, laboratory, and classroom.

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Placement

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ASSISTANCE in the job finding and job betterment for the the individual, and in new personnel selection for the employer, is afforded to a more beneficial degree than commonly believed, by the Alumni Placement Service of the California Institute of Technology.

The objective of the Alumni Placement Service, like that of any properly qualified technical employment agency, is to assist both graduate and employer alike. The Service is fulfilling its real responsibility of making sure that as nearly as possible the right person is brought into contact with the right job for that person.

The subject of proper placement of engineering personnel is important to the individual and the employer. A large share of an individual's waking hours is spent at his job. He can be most happy on that job which most closely fits his needs and for which his experience most adequately qualifies him.

A good employment record is one of the most valuable assets that a man can have. It is an asset which should improve with time. Its improvement comes not only from good work on particular jobs or during particular periods of time, but also from the ability to list consecutively more important positions.

The listing of too many positions with different companies, or positions of too short duration with one company, is usually a liability. It indicates a lack of persistence on the part of the individual. Such indications are one of the first things a prospective employer looks for in considering an applicant.

Proper job betterment, therefore, is a move which should be approached carefully, with the idea in mind of improving one's employment record. The Alumni Placement Service is rendering assistance to those who believe a change in jobs would be of benefit. This assistance first takes the form of counsel,

when requested, and later that of actually referring the individual to jobs for which he is qualified.

On the other side of the picture is the employer who realizes the need of having properly qualified men in engineering positions and is having a hard time to find them. He attempts selection through various channels. He is frequently defeated by his own ineptitude—by insufficiently and improperly describing the job he desires to have filled and the qualifications of the man to fill it. Numerous are the employers who come to the Alumni Placement Service with the vague information that they need a "salesman" or "an electrical engineer," without definitely stating what kind of a salesman or engineer they desire to fill a particular job.

The Service's efforts could be expended much more efficiently, and employers better satisfied, if complete job descriptions were furnished with each job order.

Both the job seeker and the employer can assist the Service by keeping that office currently posted on the outcome of interviews resulting from referrals by the Service. If the referral does not result in a job, it would be helpful to the Service to know why, both from the job seeker and from the employer. Such information can be of assistance in correcting

CORRECTION

Through a proof-reader's error, one sentence of John Mills' *THE INDUSTRIAL SCIENTIST AS CITIZEN* in the December 1946 issue, starting with the fourth line, first column, page 11, read: "He will damn a communist, and unjustly, for following his 'party line' . . .". This sentence did not follow Mr. Mills' manuscript, which read: "He will damn a communist, and justly, for following his 'party line' . . .". For this typographical error the editorial staff makes due apologies.

the concept the Service has of the individual's qualifications and desires, and of the job that is to be filled. In addition, the Service by all means should be informed promptly if the assistance of the Service is no longer needed by the individual, or if a job order should be cancelled.

In expanding times, such as the present, proper placement is of increased importance. This is particularly true with the small company that cannot afford to carry a large force of trainees with the purpose in mind of selecting a few for the higher positions. A small company cannot expand from within to the same extent as a large one, and must therefore depend upon proper selection and placement of individuals hired. Moreover, the small company frequently can only use those who are properly qualified and does not have the opportunity to place in other positions within the company those individuals improperly placed originally.

It might be well at this point to explain briefly how the Alumni Placement Service at the California Institute of Technology operates. This Service receives from various employers requests for personnel to fill certain positions which are open at the time. These positions are described as completely as possible, although frequently the descriptions are very inadequate and much improvement can be made in this respect.

In a like manner, the Placement Service receives from those who have attended the Institute or who are about to receive a degree requests for assistance in finding suitable positions. These requests are made on detailed forms which list completely the background and experience of the individual and the nature of the position, including the salary range.

With information from employer and would-be employee, the Director of Placements is in a position to consider the referral of individuals to those job orders for which there is a coincidence of the job order, the man's qualifications, and his desires. In such circumstances, the Director of Placements not only considers the written information furnished him, but also evaluates additional personal information concerning the individual, gained by him or various faculty members during that individual's term at school.

The referral of individuals does not always await receipt of a formal job order from a possible employer. The Director of Placements may frequently know of possible openings for experienced individuals and make arrangements for such referrals by getting in contact with various employers who he thinks might be interested.

In order to help defray the cost of the Alumni Placement Service, it is customary for those effecting placement through its assistance to pay to the Service an amount equal to 10 per cent of the first month's salary received.

It is interesting to note to what lengths the Alumni Placement Service has gone in recent years in order to assure the proper placement of Tech graduates. A report covering the placement activities from July 1, 1945 to July 1, 1946 has recently been issued by Dr. D. S. Clark, Director of Placements, which brings out many interesting statistics and facts.

The report opens by showing how the complexion

of placement activities has changed since 1945, particularly as a result of the war, with its effect on college operations and the limitation on individuals in changing jobs within industry. During the war period, the report points out, no difficulty was experienced in securing employment for civilians who were not susceptible to draft. The main problem was that of ferreting out available men for industrial firms.

As would be expected, the number of men registered for job betterment, or who were unemployed, decreased each year, to a minimum in the year 1944-1945. This is shown in the following table:

	41-42	42-43	43-44	44-45	45-46
Betterment	331	No record	142	133	235
Unemployed	143	Compiled	33	12	142
Total	474		175	145	377

During the last year, approximately 49 per cent of the applicants for job placement were veterans. Of the 377 noted above as registered for placement, referrals were given to 76 per cent. A total of some 784 referrals were made on these men, or an average of a little less than three per man. It was not possible to make referrals for all of the individuals seeking placement because of the non-coincidence between the jobs sought and the job orders received.

In spite of the large number of referrals, only a total of 51 men were placed during the year. Percentage-wise, this is 14 per cent of all the applicants requesting positions from the Placement Office, or 18 per cent of all the men referred to positions.

In commenting on these percentages, the report points out that the individuals involved were not depending upon the Placement Office as the sole source of job referrals. Through their own efforts many secured employment and consequently did not remain in an unemployed status very long.

At the present time, the Placement Service is handling the largest number of requests ever received, averaging around 60 per month. Many have been for men without experience and have come primarily from the larger companies, seeking recent college graduates as trainees. However, the majority of the requests are still for men with experience.

Because of the non-coincidence of job requests and job orders, no men could be found to satisfy the job requirements of 328 of the job orders. As of June 30, 1946, there were 259 job orders on file with the Placement Service, requesting the services of 515 men, and very large number of these positions were for men with experience. Some difficulty has been encountered because the salary scale offered was frequently lower than that requested by the applicants.

The Placement Service could very easily increase the number of referrals if it were not for the policy it has established of referring only men who appear to have the qualifications specified by the company requesting applicants. This policy, it is believed, is to the best interest of all concerned. How well it works in actual practice depends upon how accurate and detailed is the information furnished the Placement Service by the applicant and the employer alike.