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OUTLINE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN THAILAND.

AUSTRALIAN DEPT. OF LABOUR AND NAT. SERVICE, PERTH

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THE 1964 POPULATION OF THAILAND WAS 30 MILLION. ITS ECONOMY IS LARGELY DEPENDENT ON AGRICULTURE, BUT RAPID INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION IS UNDERWAY. THE NATION IS DIVIDED INTO 12 EDUCATIONAL REGIONS CONTROLLED BY AN EDUCATION OFFICER. PRESCHOOL EDUCATION OF 1 TO 3 YEARS IS NONCOMPULSORY. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION OF 4 YEARS IS COMPULSORY, AND THIS REQUIREMENT IS BEING EXTENDED 3 MORE YEARS. SECONDARY EDUCATION IS IN TWO STREAMS. THE GENERAL STREAM HAS THREE LOWER AND TWO UPPER GRADES. THE VOCATIONAL STREAM HAS 1-, 2-, AND 3-YEAR COURSES. TECHNICAL EDUCATION INCLUDES (1) DEGREE COURSES IN ENGINEERING AND MINERALOGY AT THREE UNIVERSITIES, (2) 2-YEAR DIPLOMA COURSES IN SUBJECTS SUCH AS AUTOMOBILE, ELECTRICAL, METAL, AND PRINTING TECHNOLOGIES, SURVEYING, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, HOME ECONOMICS, PLUMBING, DRAFTING, FARM MECHANICS, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, AND WOODWORKING AT TECHNICAL INSTITUTES, AND PREVOCATIONAL SUBJECTS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE, MECHANICS, BUILDING, COMMERCE, SECRETARIAL SCIENCE, DRESSMAKING, BOATBUILDING, AND PRINTING AT 180 SCHOOLS. TECHNICAL TEACHER EDUCATION IS GIVEN AT THEWES VOCATIONAL TEACHERS COLLEGE OR FIVE TECHNICAL INSTITUTES. THERE IS NO ORGANIZED APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM, BUT ADULT SHORT COURSES ARE GIVEN. IN-INDUSTRY TRAINING IS UNDEVELOPED. NATIONAL PLANNING IS CURRENTLY EMPHASIZING HIGHER EDUCATION, BUT A PROJECT TO DEVELOP 25 INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL WAS STARTED IN 1966, AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT A FORMAL APPRENTICESHIP ACT WILL BE ENACTED. (JM)

Outline

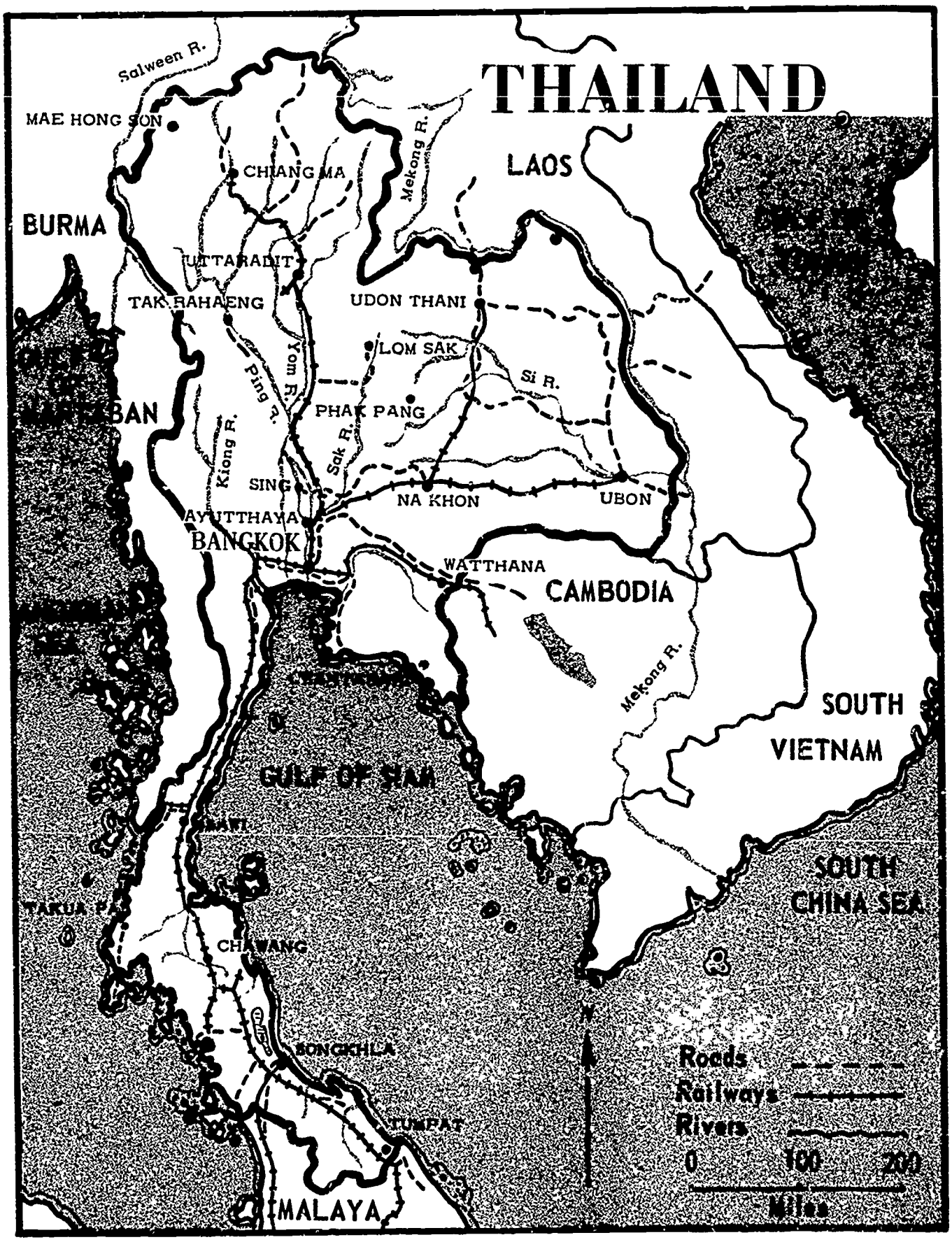
of

Vocational Training

in

THAILAND

PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA FOR THE
PAN INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
PERTH, 1966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Frontispiece: Map of Thailand

1. Introduction

Area, Population

The Kingdom of Thailand has an area of almost 200,000 square miles. The population, in 1964, was estimated at 30 million and is expanding at the rate of about three per cent per annum.

Primary Industry

Thailand's economy is largely dependent on agriculture. Under the 1961-1966 Six-Year Development Plan, successful efforts are being made to strengthen this sector through rural development projects. A Department of Community Development has been created, which, with the support of a number of Regional Technical Assistance Centres, is encouraging diversification, double cropping and the further expansion of irrigation. Although mechanical equipment, crop rotation, fertilizers and pesticides are still not widely used, there is an increasing appreciation of their value. In 1965, a 60,000-ton capacity fertilizer plant commenced operations.

The chief crops are rubber, rice, maize, sugar-cane, copra, cotton and tobacco. Rice and rubber still account for more than half the country's export earnings, but rice production is not keeping pace with domestic consumption and the introduction of improved methods is urgently required.

Thailand's mineral resources are extensive and to a large extent, untapped. They include tin, coal, copper, gypsum, gold, iron and lead.

Secondary Industry

Although the economy remains predominantly agricultural, the secondary sector is now expanding faster than its primary counterpart.

A large number of private industrial enterprises (including motor assembly, chemicals, textiles, paper and oil refining) have been established under the Industrial Promotion Act of 1962. The Act guarantees their independence and provides for tax exemptions for five years.

The development of power resources has made a plentiful supply of energy available for industrial use. This is an important step forward as further industrialisation is essential if employment is to be made available for the rapidly-increasing population.

General Economic Development

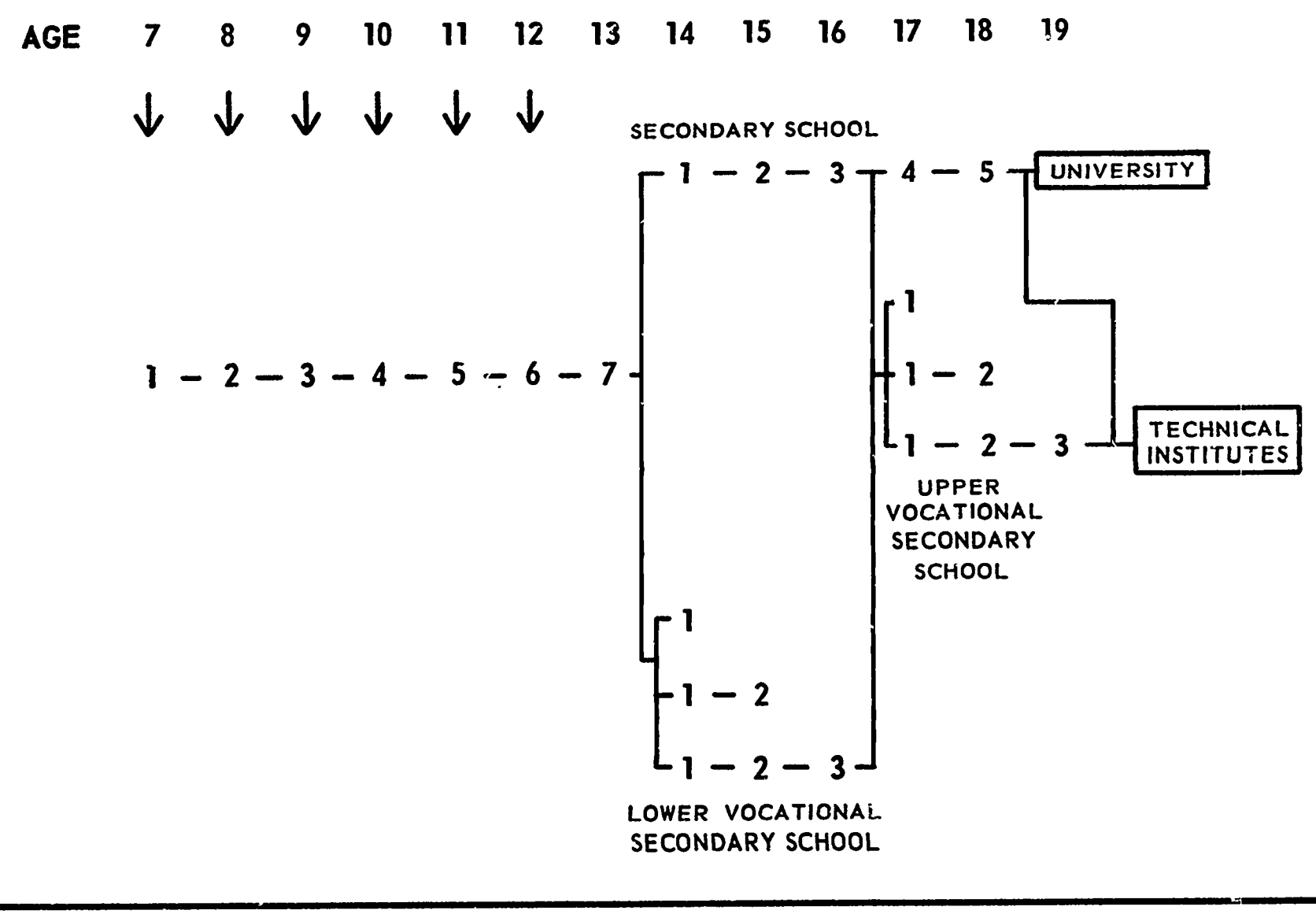
The launching of the 1961-1966 Six-Year Development Plan has greatly accelerated Thailand's economic development. Indeed, Gross National Product has expanded at a faster rate than was envisaged (largely as a result of development loans, increased export earnings and expansion in the industrial sector), and has been continually reinforced by the consequential rises in purchasing power.

Efforts are being made to further modify Thai investment laws to encourage foreign investment. Changes in the tariff structure, particularly in favour of capital goods, have been made and should assist programmes for modernizing and increasing the amount of industrial and agricultural machinery and equipment.

In fact, although imports still exceed exports, their structure is beginning to change. Food, consumer goods and luxuries have now dropped to about 55 per cent of the total, giving way to raw materials for growing industries and to agricultural implements for rural development.

THAILAND

STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION



2. General Education

Thailand is divided into twelve educational regions. Each region is controlled by a Regional Education Officer, who is assisted by a number of Provincial Superintendents, whose duties are to plan and develop regional education according to the general policy of the Ministry of Education.

According to the National Scheme of Education, 1960, the education system is divided into four levels: pre-school; elementary; secondary and higher.

Pre-school education is non-compulsory and varies in length from one to three years.

Elementary education is divided into a junior level (four years), which is compulsory, and a senior level (three years), to which the Ministry is gradually extending the compulsory requirement.

Secondary education is divided into two streams. The general stream has three grades at the lower, and two grades at the upper levels, while the vocational stream has three grades at both levels. The vocational stream aims chiefly at preparation for a specific vocation. The courses at both levels are arranged to cover one, two or three years, depending on the occupation concerned. Some courses at the upper level are a continuation from the lower.

Higher education includes universities and other institutions of higher learning.

In 1963, there were more than 4.7 million students enrolled in Thai schools. Of these 90 per cent were in primary schools, six per cent were in secondary schools; one per cent in vocational schools, 0.4 per cent in teacher-training schools, 0.9 per cent in institutions of higher learning and the remainder in other schools (mainly private or missionary schools).

3. Technical Education

Organization and Administration

Technical education in Thailand is the responsibility of the Department of Vocational Education. However, some technical training is given in a number of privately organized schools.

There are no formal facilities for co-operation between industry and technical education, but as a result of a Colombo Plan Seminar, held at Bangkok, in 1965, it is planned to establish Advisory Boards (consisting of representatives of education, industrial and commercial undertakings, Government technical services and organized professional associations), at both national and regional levels, to review and advise on all aspects of technical education and training.

Types of Institutions and Courses

Chulalongkorn University provides four-year courses leading to the Bachelor of Engineering Degree. This degree may be obtained by completing two years' general study in mathematics, physics and chemistry, followed by two years of specialization in one of the four departments, viz., electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, civil engineering and mineralogy. Kasetsart University, on the outskirts of Bangkok, also offers a four-year course leading to the Bachelor of Science Degree in irrigation engineering. The Faculty of Irrigation Engineering has recently been developed into a fully-fledged engineering faculty, offering wider specialization.

In 1960, with the co-operation of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization, the SEATO Graduate School of Engineering was established as a separate faculty in Chulalongkorn University. Advanced courses in hydraulic, structural, transportation, highway, and sanitary engineering leading to the Master of Engineering degree are now offered at this institution.

Since 1965, the new Khonkaen University has also been enrolling engineering students. At this time arrangements have been made to establish a faculty of engineering in Songkhla as a part of the University of the South.

The Bangkok Technical Institute offers two-year diploma courses (14th and 15th grades) in automobile technology, electrical technology, electronics, machine-shop and metal technology, civil technology, surveying, printing technology, industrial technology, business administration and home economics. It also offers a one-year programme for technical instructors. Similar courses at this level are also offered at three other regional technical institutes in the North, North-East and South.

Other technical training institutions include the following: The Thai-German Technical Institutes at Bangkok and Khonkaen, which provide three-plus-two training for auto-mechanics, machinists, electricians, radio mechanics, industrial plumbers, wood-workers, and technical draftsmen; agricultural colleges at Chiengmai, Surin, Ayuthaya, Bangphra, Nakorn Sithamarat, which offer courses in farm mechanics, animal husbandry, plant and co-operative economics; Thonburi Technical Institute, which offers three-year courses for science graduates of upper secondary schools for training in various technical specializations; the Civil Aviation Training Centre, which provides courses relevant to its own needs, ranging in duration from three months to two years; the Design and Construction College and the Nonthaburi Institute of Telecommunications.

Vocational schools at the upper secondary level offer a wide range of pre-vocational subjects. These include agriculture, mechanics, building, metal-work, wood-working, commerce, secretarial science, dressmaking, boat-building, leatherwork, weaving, languages, painting, sculpture and carving, and printing. Teaching time is divided to allow approximately two-thirds for vocationally oriented electives and one-third for general subjects. Courses at lower vocational secondary level are now limited to farming, dressmaking, carpentry, barbering, earthenware-making, and silversmithing. There are over 180 schools offering courses at these two levels all over Thailand.

Arrangements for Technical Teacher Training

There is only one teacher-training institute which offers a two-year combined course in industrial training and teacher-education. That is the Thewes Vocational Teachers' College. Five of the technical institutes and agricultural colleges also provide training facilities for technical teachers. To be eligible for technical teacher training, students must at least finish their upper secondary courses (grade 13) in vocational education.

The Loan Project for Vocational Education Development, which is scheduled to start this year, will provide facilities for technical teacher training with a view to up-grading technical teachers for vocational and technical schools.

4. Apprenticeship

There is no nationally organized apprenticeship scheme in Thailand. Some metal-work, electricity and telecommunications employers operate their own forms of apprenticeship, but in view of the present level of industrialisation, it appears unlikely that private firms will undertake voluntary standardisation of training arrangements.

5. Accelerated Vocational Training

Short courses in several trades, lasting from three to six months are offered to employed persons beyond school age who want to acquire certain skills.

6. In-industry Training

There is no one authority which assumes responsibility for the promotion and development of in-industry training. The technical departments and agencies of the Government, such as Posts and Telegraphs, State Railways and the Royal Armed Forces, conduct special courses, either on a permanent or periodic basis to meet their own personnel requirements. The Department of Public Administration, however, has an In-service Training Division, which conducts courses for officers of other Government departments. They are designed to help them introduce and develop in-service programmes in their own departments.

Private industries train their own workers in the skills they require, but the general tendency is to allow workers to pick them up on the job, rather than to provide formal training courses.

Some development has taken place since supervisor-training was introduced by an I.L.O. mission, 1957-1959. This mission established the Job Instruction, Job Relations, and Job Methods Programmes of the Training-Within-Industry System by training trainers for a number of Government departments and industrial undertakings.

7. National Planning for Vocational Training

The National Council of Education was created in 1958 to take charge of setting up policy and national planning for all levels and types of education in Thailand. So far this national body has been concentrating on the development and improvement of higher education. Vocational and technical education policy and planning is still largely in the hands of the Department of Vocational Education, where vocational schools and technical institutes are formally attached. Within the Ministry of Education, an educational planning office has been established as a liaison office for working out policy and planning, with the National Economic Development Board on one hand, and the Department of Vocational Education or any other department concerned, on the other. Vocational education development and improvement projects of various types must be submitted to the National Economic Development Board for study and approval. The Executive Committee of the National Economic Development Board meets at intervals to review the prospects and the feasibility of the implementation of the projects submitted. Many factors have to be taken into consideration in order to formulate a suitable programme in which human and material investment is sure to yield the best result. Sources of finance and projections of skilled and technical manpower requirements of various types, must be assured before any proposed project can be approved.

As far as the future development of technical and in-industry training is concerned, Thailand is still in its infancy. Very few large industrial establishments could afford heavy expenses in training their own skilled personnel. Some of them, however, co-operate with technical institutes in providing vacation employment for their final-year students so that they may gain practical experience.

It was mentioned earlier that apprenticeship in the traditional sense is practicaly non-existent in Thailand. However, it is expected that a formal Apprenticeship Act will soon be promulgated.

A project was started this year to develop 25 industrial and agricultural schools with a view to raising the standard of skilled manpower and of technical teachers. Finance will be provided by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Bank of Thailand. The Budget Bureau of the Government of Thailand will also allot funds to the project over a period of five years.