TECHNICAL TRAINING IN ADEN

By G. C. Tomlinson, Principal,
Technical Institute, Aden

The first record of Technical Education in Aden was the opening of an Industrial School in 1921. This school appears to have trained boys for the cabinet-making industry alone, and due to lack of financial support closed in 1929. The Industrial Education Committee of that time would be surprised to see Aden today, as one of the other reasons given for the closing of the Industrial School was that Aden, being a small sea port, with very little industry, found that the demand for skilled artisans was decreasing. No other attempts to reintroduce technical education appear to have been made until 1948; when a Technical Instructor was appointed to develop and encourage craft training to make goods for the tourist trade.

It is from these humble beginnings that the present Technical Institute and Craft Training Centres have been developed, not, however, to produce goods for the tourist trade, but to meet the demands of Aden for skilled craftsmen.

Since 1948, Aden has progressed rapidly, the older industries dying out and being replaced by new projects, the building of the oil refinery at Little Aden and the enlarging of the harbour facilities being two of the most important. At the same time, large building projects and road developments have taken place. Blocks of multi-storey flats, dual-carriage motor ways and housing estates have been built, all demanding skilled craftsmen, technicians and technologists. Because of these demands the Technical Institute has developed, not for the tourist trade, but for the engineering and industrial requirements.

In 1951, the main block of the Technical Institute, Maalla, was built by the late Monsieur Antonin Besse K.B.E. Chevalier Leg. d'Hon, at a cost of £30,000, the Aden Government providing the workshops and school equipment at a further cost of some £90,000. A further expansion was made in 1959, when the BP Refinery (Aden) Ltd., built, and gave to the Education Department, the Little Aden Branch of the Technical Institute, at a cost of about £30,000, the Aden Government again supplying the equipment.

The institute provides full-time day, part-time day and evening courses in a wide range of subjects. The General Certificate of Education for secondary students, the City & Guilds Craft Courses for apprentices and the Ordinary Certificate in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Building for the Aden youths, who are being trained to fill senior posts in industry. To suit the demands of commerce, a two years secondary school commercial course has been established, leading to the Royal Society of Arts Stage I level, also special full-time and part-time day and evening classes are held for subjects at the Royal Society of Arts Stage II and III Levels.

Most of the part-time students are being given practical training in training centres of local firms, BP Refinery (Aden) Ltd., Public Works Department and the Electricity Department having the largest training schemes.
The institute has modern workshops and science laboratories where practical work, up to the level of the City & Guilds Final in Carpentry & Joinery and Machine Shop Engineering is given. The modern air conditioned science laboratories provide the opportunity for students to carry out experiments to suit the needs of the Ordinary National Certificate level courses. In October, 1961, the beginning of the present academic year, the institute had 328 full-time students, 148 part-time apprentices and 965 evening class students on its roll.

In April, 1961, Aden held its Commonwealth Technical Training Week, which for the first time in the history of the Colony, brought Industry, Commerce and the Technical Institute together under one roof.

A very successful exhibition was held for a week, the exhibits being provided by Aden Government Department, the Technical Institute, along with local industrial and commercial firms, and was unique in the sense that all of the exhibits were on a non-advertising basis, each concern concentrating on bringing the attention of the general public to a particular craft, trade or profession.

In recent times there has developed a new approach to technical training—the public becoming aware of the advantages of correct training and demanding it from industry and the Education Department, and a greatly improved and closer relationship between the Technical Institute and industry. As a result of this, at the present time, nearly 100 students at the institute on full-time advanced courses, are receiving salaries from industry.

Since, 1957, students from the Technical Institute have been sent to the United Kingdom for further training and are now returning holding the qualifications of graduate membership of senior professional institutions and Higher National Diplomas in Engineering and Building, to take up responsible positions in firms, and to play their part in the progress of Adenisation.

His Excellency the Governor Sir Charles Johnston with Mr. G.C. Tomlinson Principal of the Technical Institute, Aden inspecting the stand erected by BP to demonstrate pump and pipe fitting at the Aden Technical Training Week Exhibition.
Ordinary Certificate Engineering Students carrying out a Tensile Test
General Certificate of Education Students doing specific gravity tests
Secondary Commercial Students at work

The Technical Institute, Little Aden Branch. Built by BP Refinery (Aden) Ltd., and presented to the Education Dep't. Aden