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OCCASION

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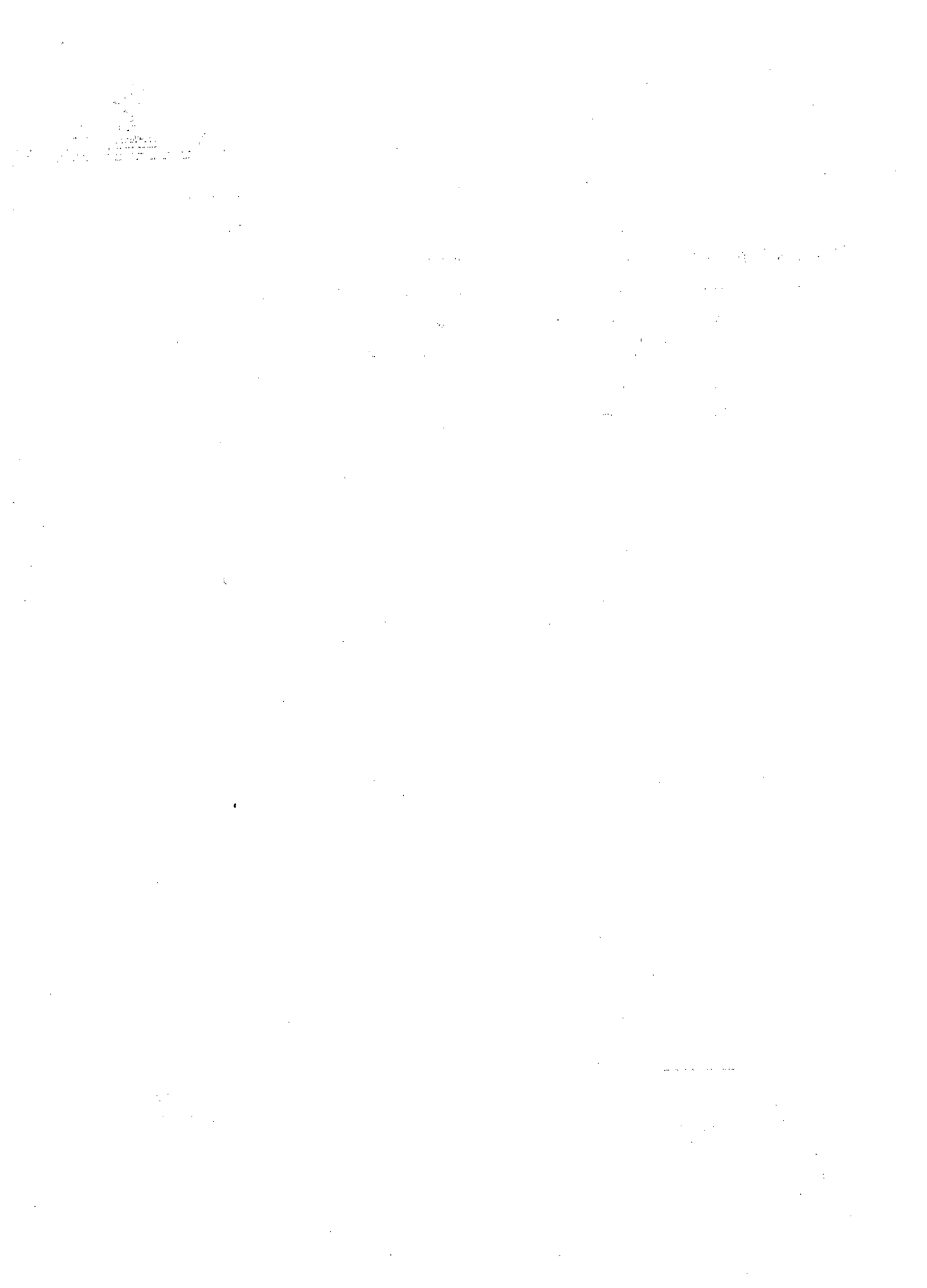
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THE RECRUITMENT SECTION

Origin and Function

The Recruitment Section of the Shannon Free Airport Development Company Limited was set up in 1963 and is primarily concerned with recruiting staff for the Industrial Estate firms. Over the intervening years the section has significantly expanded and diversified its function.

Before this the number of firms operating on the Estate was small and each firm recruited its own personnel. At this stage most of the firms employed fewer than 200 people and did not employ the services of a full time personnel specialist. All of them had an informal personnel function i.e. the delegation of personnel matters to a Senior Executive. Such delegation, however logical or necessary, created problems because such executive appointees are generally not qualified in the personnel function.

As the Estate expanded it became necessary to remedy this situation by setting up a section to handle the increasing volume of applicants for work and to rationalise the recruitment programmes of the firms as a whole.

Today the Section offers many services and its activities fall into the following main categories:

1. Operating a Central Employment Service
2. Positive recruiting
3. Providing a testing and selection service
4. Estimating availability of labour
5. Administrative and propaganda work
6. Career Guidance

Central Employment Office

The Central Employment Office employs a Recruitment Officer, 2 Interviewers, a Records Clerk and a Secretary. Applicants for work who write or call to the section are given an accurate assessment

of the employment situation as it affects them individually. They are supplied with application forms and these forms when completed are filed in appropriate categories. There are at present over 2,000 application forms on file in over 70 different categories. Most of these forms were not solicited but were completed by persons who called to the office in search of employment and through postal enquiries. However, since applicants details and circumstances can change rapidly it is essential to up-date the forms at regular intervals. This ensures that forms on files are active and applicants are still interested in being notified of vacancies.

Notification of vacancies

As vacancies arise in firms, the Section is submitted with job descriptions or detailed information on their requirements. Suitable applicants are then invited to attend for interviews and staff of the C.E.O. carry out preliminary assessments. Those who meet the requirements of the vacancy are then directed to the firms concerned for final interview. Successful applicants are deleted from our files and the unsuccessful ones before being returned to file are informed of the final selection. Applicants who on a number of consecutive occasions do not attend for interviews are informed that their application is being deleted. However, when we do not have a sufficient number of suitable applicants on file when notified of a vacancy we embark on a positive recruitment campaign.

Positive Recruiting Programme

In the past this action has been required for the recruitment of highly skilled and specialised staff and for female production workers.

Methods of positive recruitment employed are:

1. Drafting and placing advertisements in the local or national press or in special periodicals.
2. Distributing circulars in housing estates, operating a mobile recruiting office and establishing temporary recruiting offices in large population areas.

3. Schools are visited and staff and pupils are told of job opportunities at Shannon and invited to visit the Estate.

To overcome shortages of skilled engineering workers, we keep in close contact with the National Manpower Service, Trade Unions and various associations in Britain which have helped in the repatriation of such workers.

Testing and Selection

The influence of foreign companies whose parent firms have been using tests for some time has accelerated the use of psychological and aptitude tests in this country.

Initially tests were regarded with suspicion and misunderstanding, but there now appears to be a more enlightened approach and greater acceptance of them.

Tests in current use assess general intelligence, special aptitudes and some attainment and typical performance tests. While the range of tests has so far been somewhat limited, it is planned to increase the number of tests to meet growing demand from industrialists.

Labour Availability

The Development Company's Planning and Research Division maintains up-to-date data on labour availability. This is essential to the Company's industrial promotion programme, estimating housing needs and in presenting accurate information to industrialists planning expansion or new operations.

The Recruitment Section's register of available labour in specific categories and its liaison with schools, local labour exchanges, trade unions, etc. provides some important information to the Planning and Research Division in compiling labour availability statistics.

Propaganda Work

The nature of the section's work brings it into close contact with workers and management. Consequently information of vital importance to the Development Company - firms in difficulty, redundancies, union problems - is obtained for the Company so that corrective action can be taken. It is therefore useful to our Company that as many firms as possible use our services and consequently a certain amount of propaganda work is carried out. This is particularly important to foreign industrialists who may not be familiar with local conditions and practices. This is accomplished by meeting prospective industrialists, having formal and informal meetings with the managements of existing firms. Industrialists are advised on labour availability in specific categories, sources of recruitment, educational qualifications, etc. and informed of all aspects of the Section's work. Regular meetings with factories' managements ensure that they are kept informed of current trends and developments experienced by the Section.

Administration

The Recruitment Officer is responsible for the control and co-ordination of the Section's activities and does this by holding regular section staff meetings to discuss employment trends, labour turnover, and related matters. Monthly reports are prepared for members of the Board on numbers of job seekers interviewed and placed in employment. This report also provides general comments on difficulties encountered in recruiting and employment trends. Information sharing meetings are also held with other sections and divisions within the Company.

Conclusion

The Recruitment Service provides a free service to firms in Shannon and to applicants for work. However, these factors alone will not ensure its success. To be really effective the Service must maintain a high standard of work, thus ensuring that the firms will continue

to notify it of all or most vacancies. A steady flow of vacancies will be its best advertisement to prospective job seekers to avail of the service. Consequently, a large number of vacancies and a large number of active applications on file will lend itself towards better selection and therefore better recruits. Delays in filling vacancies must be avoided and administrative details should not be cumbersome, but should aim at being functional and practical. Success will depend largely on maintaining close contact with firms and a clear statement of objectives and methods. Finally, it is essential to review the role of the service in relation to changing circumstances, whether they be environmental, technological or educational.