Job market outlook into the 1980s

By Neal Rosenthal

No one can forecast the future. Nevertheless, by using the wealth of information available, extensive economic and statistical analyses, and the best judgment of informed experts, the work future can be described in broad terms.

To project the demand for all workers in the economy, specific assumptions have to be made about general economic movements and broad national policy. The picture of the future employment outlook is based on the following fundamental assumptions:

1. That high levels of employment and of utilization of available manpower will be maintained through the mid-1980s;

2. That no major event such as a widespread energy shortage will alter substantially the rate of economic growth;

3. That economic, social and educational trends will continue to change according to patterns of the recent past;

4. That scientific-technological advancement will continue at about the same rate as in recent years;

5. That the United States will not be at war, but that there will be no substantial reduction in the defense budget beyond that already in effect.

Assessments of the 1985 industrial and accoupational outlook assume a projected total labor force of 107.7 million in 1985, an all-volunteer Armed Forces of 2 million, and a resulting civilian labor force of 105.7 million.

Many factors will cause changes in employment levels of major occupational groups and for specific occupations over the 1972-85 period.

One of the greatest influences will be variation in the growth rates among industries. Rapid growth in an industry would logically create a favorable situation for rapid growth of those occupations that are heavily concentrated in that industry.

Another factor that affects employment is the changing occupational structure within an industry. Such changes can result from a variety of causes. The number of individual occupations in a particular industry may expand or contract, or a new occupation may emerge as a result of technological changes.

For example, development of the computer resulted in the emergence and rapid growth of jobs for programmers, systems analysts and computer operators. But it contributed to a decline in the relative importance of payroll and inventory clerks and a variety of other clerical occupations.

Changes in business operations, such as a shift to self service in stores, also alter the occupational structurs of industries.

Supply-demand conditions in one

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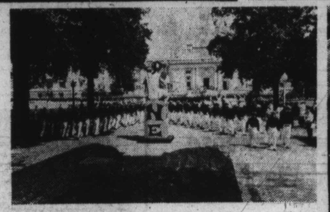

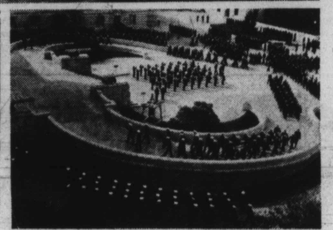

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