

by the municipal council and three by the Province, with the municipal clerk as an ex officio member. The Inspector of Schools, paid by the Province, would be the Board's adviser in educational matters. A municipality would adopt a larger unit when the plan had been approved by a majority of the boards of trustees of the school sections and by the municipal council.

The Report ends with a final recom-

mendation that the provincial unit be adopted as soon as possible. If the municipal unit should be tried first, the Report suggests that when two-thirds of the municipalities have adopted it and proved its worth, legislation be enacted to provide for the creation of municipal school boards in the remaining municipalities, with the province as the financial unit for all.

Occupational Assets of Unemployed Youth

By F. H. SEXTON

A SPECIAL vocational survey was carried out in the city of Halifax last summer under the provincial Department of Labour with the purpose of finding out whether or not an unemployed youth training project in trade apprenticeship was feasible. The data collected included facts relating to a large number of idle young people between the ages of 16 and 25 as well as information about the business and industrial activities of the city. The survey was wider in scope than the intensive investigation conducted previously by the Dalhousie Institute of Public Affairs, the results of which were published in *PUBLIC AFFAIRS*.* The former was open to all idle young people within the age limits specified who voluntarily came to vocational interviewers for counsel and guidance and help toward occupational training. The latter confined itself to the youths who belonged to families receiving direct relief. The former secured personal data from 603 boys and 251 girls while the latter embraced 202 boys and 71 girls. A comparison between the two groups of young people leads to many interesting conclusions.

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*"Youth on Relief" by L. Richter, *Public Affairs*, I, August, 1937.

The vocational survey was carried out to secure information about the youth who wished to enter such a program of training and to find out the kinds of occupations that would be offered by public spirited employers. A staff of nine competent interviewers was gathered together at the Nova Scotia Technical College and an announcement made to the public that the interviewers would be glad to receive applicants who wished advice and help toward occupational training. 850 young persons presented themselves for interviews. In each case a friendly relation was established and all pertinent personal data were recorded. The ambitions, interests, and plans of each person were sympathetically discussed and wise counsel was given on the best way they could be pursued. The interviews usually lasted from one to two hours. In general, the young persons were lamentably ignorant of the world's work, the requirements for success in an occupation they thought they would like to follow, and of their own particular assets for a position on a pay-roll. Some did not even know what definite duties their fathers had to perform each day for the wage that kept the family going. Most of them had only the faintest ideas of the best way to hunt for a job and of the way to present their personal assets in an inter-

view with a prospective employer. All of them readily signed a declaration that they would be glad to accept training under the conditions of the auxiliary apprenticeship program.

From the separate interview records summaries of the information gathered were prepared for a report to the Provincial Department of Labour and the city authorities. The data were in accord with those collected earlier by the Dalhousie Institute of Public Affairs in some respect, but differed strikingly in others. The larger number of youths interviewed offered a better basis for general conclusions, and the group presented a better cross-section of the present generation of unemployed youth. Some of the more pertinent facts are presented in the succeeding paragraphs.

One striking fact is the difference between the birthplaces of the fathers and of the children as is shown in the following table:

Nativity of Youth and of Their Fathers

Place of Birth	No. of Youths	Per Cent	No. of Fathers	Per Cent
Halifax City	678	79.5	325	38.3
Halifax County..	30	3.5	69	8.1
Nova Scotia	77	9.0	171	20.0
Canada	43	5.1	56	6.6
Foreign	25	2.9	223	26.0
Unknown	0	0.0	9	1.0
Total	853	100.0	853	100.0

The figures prove that the young people are overwhelmingly Canadian and nine-tenths of them are Nova Scotians. Four-fifths of them belong to Halifax and have been reared in the city. One-quarter of the fathers were of foreign extraction and less than two-fifths were natives of the city. The conclusion may be drawn that there was a definite influx of families into Halifax a generation ago and they must have been satisfied with the conditions here because they have remained to bring up their children. It may be assumed that the young people will also continue to live here and establish homes if they can secure training and employment.

Over half of the people surveyed had left school by the time they had reached the age of 16, which is the compulsory age limit provided by law. In spite of all regulations, however, a few had slipped through the meshes of the law and had escaped at the ages of 12 and 13. No comment is necessary on the slackness of parents who would allow such a short-sighted and serious delinquency.

Ages at Which Youth Left School

Age (Years)	Boys		Girls	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
12	4	0.7	1	0.4
13	10	1.7	3	1.2
14	34	5.6	10	4.0
15	82	13.6	46	18.4
16	203	33.7	85	34.0
17	128	21.2	41	16.4
18	79	13.1	43	17.2
19	37	6.1	13	5.2
20	20	3.3	5	2.0
21	3	0.5	3	1.2
22	3	0.5	0	0.0
	603	100.0	250	100.0

The members of this group continued much longer in school than did the ones belonging to relief families that were surveyed at an earlier date by the Institute of Public Affairs. It should be noted also in the table that some of the boys and girls stayed in the public school up to or beyond the age of 21, doubtless due to the fact that there was little employment to be had and not because of any unusual ambition for extended academic knowledge.

The amount of education possessed by each individual is one of his most valuable occupational assets in seeking work. Inquiry about this item is invariably one of the first moves of an employer in an interview. If a youth has successfully passed through one of the higher grades, it is usually taken to mean that he has more intelligence and ambition than the average, that he is more teachable and adaptable, and that he has more initiative and dependability. Such wide inferences are not always

justified, but they are commonly drawn and must be true in the main or they would not be so pervasively applied. Since unemployment has been rife, employers have insisted upon higher standards of education among those whom they hire and it is common now to insist upon a standard of Grade XI for the entrant to a job that requires less than mediocre knowledge and ability. Often the successful applicant with a high order of intelligence finds the work too little of a challenge to his mental powers and does not perform it as well as would one who was much less gifted.

The data collected in the interviews are presented in the following table and also in the accompanying paragraphs.

**Last School Grades Attended by
Unemployed Youths**

Grade	Boys		Girls	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Below Grade V..	14	2.3	3	1.2
V.....	29	4.8	5	2.0
VI.....	51	8.5	19	7.6
VII.....	87	14.4	17	6.8
VIII.....	122	20.2	58	23.2
IX.....	137	22.7	45	18.0
X.....	75	12.4	40	16.0
IX.....	65	10.8	48	19.2
XII.....	22	3.7	15	6.0
College.....	1	0.2	0	0.0
	603	100.0	250	100.0

There is a striking difference in the amount of education achieved among this group as compared with that coming from families on relief. This can be easily realized if the following percentages for this latter group are compared with those in the table for boys: V, 12.5%; VI, 23.5%; VII, 25.6; VIII, 13.6; IX, 4.9%; X, 3.0%. It is evident that almost all of the larger group have a far better occupational asset in education and will be able to make a choice among a much wider range of occupations on this account. It is interesting to note that the percentage of girls who attend grades XI and XII is nearly twice that of the boys in each case.

At the present time there are a good many opportunities for young people to pursue general and vocational training after leaving the public school such as in evening technical classes, correspondence-study courses, and business college. It was found that 34 per cent of the boys and 40 per cent of the girls had availed themselves of some of these advantages.

The practical work experience which these young persons had had was a most important factor. Some of the most important lessons of life are gained under the discipline of a job for wages and there also may be attained some of life's greatest satisfactions. Even if the periods of employment had been only short or intermittent, the ones who had worked in business or industry had often made the personal adjustments necessary for success in practical life and a few had been able to decide definitely what career they wished to follow for life. They had learnt what measure of effort was necessary to hold their own with other workers and the sacrifice to be made in saving a dollar. They had experienced the necessity of co-operating with others under the authority of a boss to accomplish a desired result in the business organization. For brief periods they had tasted the joys of economic independence, self-respect, and of purposeful effort in productive work. These youths were the most employable and the ones who seemed most eager to make the sacrifices necessary for learning a skilled trade through a long period of apprenticeship.

Data were obtained from each person about any job held; its duration, the degree of skill exercised, and the pay received. The information about the qualitative nature of the experiences is shown in the following table. It was too complicated a matter to try to represent the data on a quantitative basis for the whole group. The graph illustrates the same data for boys surveyed.

The data show that there had been more opportunities for gainful work for the boys than had been the case among the girls. One-third of the latter had

never had a real job for wages as against one-seventh of the former. The proportions respectively who had had opportunities in semi-skilled labour were one-tenth and one-third. Very few had had a chance for a trial of the occupation which they most desire to enter. A very small proportion had ever been engaged for even a short time in work that could be classified as skilled. The universal testimony of the people inter-

he could seriously entertain the possibility of choosing a career in which he might rise to a position of executive responsibility. If he were deeply interested in some hobby and had become outstandingly proficient in it, this might indicate natural traits and ability that pointed directly and surely to a certain vocation or field of effort in which he might win both work satisfaction and personal success. In some cases there was indicated

Kinds of Work Experience of Unemployed Youths

Boys

Age (Years)	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Total	%
Skilled.....	0	4	1	5	4	8	3	4	7	6	42	6.9
Semi-skilled.....	5	16	27	29	27	30	14	16	23	16	203	33.7
Unskilled.....	36	47	57	52	25	14	18	8	10	6	273	45.3
No Work.....	24	19	21	9	6	3	3	0	0	0	85	14.1
Total.....	65	86	106	95	62	55	38	28	40	28	603	100.0

Kinds of Work Experience of Unemployed Youths

Girls

Age (Years)	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Total	%
Skilled.....	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	4	2	1	11	4.4
Semi-skilled.....	1	0	3	4	4	2	3	3	3	1	24	9.6
Unskilled.....	13	24	22	19	17	9	10	4	1	2	121	48.4
No Work.....	24	27	16	14	4	1	2	2	2	2	94	37.6
Total.....	38	51	41	38	27	12	16	13	8	6	250	100.0

viewed was to the effect that their jobs had been of short duration for low pay with long periods of idleness between. Some of the young people had reached the age of 21 and 22 without ever having been able to find a job of any kind. A number of the boys testified that their whole practical experience consisted of a few weeks with a pick and shovel on a relief project.

All of the youths surveyed were asked about their spare-time activities in sports, social amusements, and hobbies. Important information which was helpful in recommending an occupation was often disclosed in such questioning. If the young person possessed qualities of leadership, it was bound to be exercised in sports or games. If he were a born leader,

the possibility of expanding the hobby, itself, to a permanent occupation.

It was made evident that nearly all of the boys and girls spent a great deal of their time in outdoor sports. This was probably the biggest single factor that helped them keep in good physical condition and maintain their morale. Baseball, softball, football, hockey, skating, and swimming were the favourite sports of the boys and baseball, softball, skating, and swimming, of the girls. Only one per cent of the boys did not indulge in outdoor sport while one-eighth of the girls were in this category. Practically all of the boys had hobbies, but one-sixth of the girls had none. One and one-half per cent of the boys and one-sixth of the girls followed no social

amusement. 53 per cent of the boys and 62 per cent of the girls were active members of some kind of youth club.

Reading habits were considered of importance in indicating mental attitudes as to whether this was pursued with the idea of self-improvement or just as a means of escape from the realities of a drab or discouraging environment. It was learned that these young people designated popular magazines of the kind represented by *MacLean's*, *Collier's*, *Liberty*, and the *Saturday Evening Post* as "class" publications. The lurid, trashy magazines which adorn the news stands in such profusion and which carry stories of flashy romance, wild adventures, mystery, suggestive sex experiences, crime, detective exploits, etc. were dubbed "pulpers". It is significant that 62.5 per cent of the boys and 21.6 per cent of the girls read "pulpers" habitually, only one-quarter of the boys and a twelfth of the girls made a practice of reading so-called "class" publications, but nearly half of the girls regularly read movie magazines and home journals.

General impressions of the interviewers are of value even though they cannot be expressed in statistical tables. The young people appeared eager to find an opportunity for work and were not primarily concerned about the wage that could be earned. The great majority were well aware of the desirability of having a skilled trade and were willing to make sacrifices of both time and low wages to acquire the competence recognized as belonging to a journeyman mechanic. In general they knew little about their own personal traits and abilities and still less about the particular requirements for success in the commonest occupations. They were not making any strenuous or intelligent efforts to dig up jobs because they did not know how to go about it. They were waiting for something to turn up in newspaper advertisements or in opportunities that would be relayed to them through the family or by a friend. They had made a few applications for work in a few obvious places and after a few refusals had become convinced that there were

no jobs to be had. A very few were following a definite course of study to prepare themselves for a particular job when a vacancy could be found. A small number only could be considered employable for specific jobs except of the simplest kind. An occasional one was found to be sullen, bitter, and resentful against conditions, but practically none showed attitudes of a "red", radical, or revolutionary nature. They did not seem very downhearted on account of their discouraging experiences nor yet so accustomed to idleness that they wished to continue through life as if on a perpetual vacation. They were desperately anxious to get almost any kind of work and many showed splendid qualities that would quickly make them of value in business or industry if they could only get a start. What they needed most was vocational training and some job experience.

The second portion of the survey concerned itself with interviews of the proprietors of all kinds of business in the city, seeking opportunities where unemployed youth could get training through a system of auxiliary apprenticeship. Everybody proved to be deeply concerned with the present unusual problem of idle young people and many were willing to lend a hand toward its solution. For boys there were found 161 definite openings for apprenticeship and 33 for girls. In addition there were also discovered 124 opportunities with promise in the near future. The places included almost every kind of productive, distributive, and service activity in the city. In this wide range of occupations there would be openings for the different interests and abilities of the unemployed and there would not be so many trained in any one line of work that they would upset the labour market in securing employment when they had become competent. The results of the survey seemed convincing that an auxiliary apprenticeship training centre should be organized in the city of Halifax to help the unemployed youth get started upon their life careers.