

Our Changing Economy

Teen Agers Advised On Summer Work

By Philip Stoddard Brown

THIS IS for teen-age readers who are thinking about summer jobs. (Complaints from parents and employers who read what isn't addressed to them will be filed in a round receptacle beside my desk.)

First, decide whether you want a full, or even part-time, job. The experience some jobs provide isn't worth very much. So, consider the alternatives.

You can go to school and study something that will advance your college preparation, or something that will enable you to get a job more easily next summer and earn a higher wage. For example, a really competent typist can almost certainly get a job within a fortnight that will pay nearly twice as much as jerking sodas, cleaning floors or doing housework.



Brown

Perhaps the most worth-while summer for some boys and girls about to go to college would be to explore Washington. Attend Congress before it adjourns, go to committee hearings, listen to proceedings in District courts and spend a few evenings at Council meetings in Arlington, Alexandria, or wherever you live. Watch the papers for meetings and events of interest.

If you choose this course, plan something new and purposeful every morning. Discover the wealth of the Smithsonian and other museums. Visit dairies, bakeries, printing establishments, lumber yards and foundries. Watch building operations. Study machines wherever you find them . . . For most fun of all, visit the excellent District Public Library once a week and keep a good novel "going." You can do all this and still have time for sports and parties.

May Have to Work Free

If you know the kind of work experience you want, try first for it. Go to the man in charge and explain what you want to do and why. Be modest but not shy. If you intend to study pharmacy, go to the proprietors of locally owned stores, or the personnel directors of chain stores, tell them of your plans and let them know you'll make yourself useful. I'm assured by two personnel directors that you will be hired.

In some fields you will have to offer your services free to get the experience you want. It may be worth it in helping you decide about your career. It may lead to a paying job next summer.

For those of you who want to earn as much as possible, and are willing to take whatever you can get, here are a few suggestions:

- Don't rely on your parents. Find your own job. Use your spare time to make inquiries and look around. Begin now.
- Inquire at new stores, restaurants and gas stations. Speak to foremen wherever building operations are in progress. Speak to homeowners at work in their yards, and to housewives engaged in summer cleaning. (Colored boys may have to roam farther from home and be more persistent.)
- Try seasonal businesses that are busiest in summer: nurseries (the kind that grow and sell flowers and shrubs), country clubs, outlying restaurants, ice cream stores, sporting goods stores and auto-supply dealers.
- Consider self-employment, alone or in partnership. Some boys and girls go into business for themselves: washing and waxing cars, cleaning windows, gardening, painting, repairing radios, stringing tennis racquets, selling firewood, baby-sitting, taking children to the Zoo and tutoring. Advertise your service, or services.
- Enroll at one of the 25 or more District recreational centers and take odd jobs at 75 cents an hour that they line up for you. Boys with express wagons can join the Carrier Boys' Clubs at various supermarkets and maybe earn as much as \$10 on weekends.
- Make yourself presentable—clean and dressed in appropriate work clothes. Be polite. Turn up when you promise (telephone if you can't). Listen to instructions; don't just do the job your way. Work steadily. Clean and put away any tools given you. Report to your employer before you quit.
- You may get a job right off, or you may have to make 100 inquiries. Ask employers that turn you down if they have any suggestions. Ask boys who are gas-station attendants, delivery boys, store clerks and stock attendants and those with newspaper routes if they know of any openings, or if they are going on vacation and need a substitute. Don't hesitate to go back to an employer; he'll be impressed by your persistence. Don't be too casual about your inquiries; let people know you want a job badly and will take your work seriously.

How to Handle Adults

Adults control the jobs. They pay the wages. They have the experience. Also, they have prejudices and are "set" in their ways—some more than others. They need to be reminded that when they were young they were given opportunities to work and learn—opportunities that are denied many teen-agers today.

But keep your thoughts to yourself until you have proved you are worth your pay and gained the respect of your employer. Then, your views may carry conviction, if voiced with good will. To be successful with some adults you may have to be more adult than they are.

When you get back to school in the fall, organize and attack the problem of changing adult attitudes and amending the Child Labor code and work-permit rules, so as to open up more jobs for teen-agers.

Send delegations to interview personnel directors and owners of businesses, to the Board of Trade and local Chambers of Commerce. Write the editors of local newspapers. Call attention to the fact that some personnel directors boast of having had valuable job experience when they were teen-agers, yet make sweeping generalizations about the incompetence of young people today. Call attention to the unfairness of "not wanting to be bothered about work permits."

Some of the biggest employers in this area won't employ teen-agers because "they are just too young to be dependable." Yet these same men were at work—some in business for themselves—when they were under 20. Maybe too, they should be told not to take for granted the continued patronage of teen-agers.

The "conspiracy against youth"—the reluctance of businessmen to hire teen-agers and the opposition of many labor unions—has become formidable. It calls for effective protests—by teen-agers, as well as sympathetic adults.