

Teen-Age Jobs Scarcer; Here's How to Hunt Them

By Philip Stoddard Brown

Washington Economist and Business Writer

THE enforced idleness during summer months of so many young people who want to work is a great social waste. The waste becomes greater year by year, as the number of teen-agers increases.



Brown

There are some 18½ million teen-agers in the United States. Of those who were not in school, college or the armed forces last month, 800,000 were unable to find work. When June comes, many of the remaining 17 or 18 million will search in vain for jobs. Many who would like to work will make other plans, knowing their chances of getting jobs are slim. Indeed, it has become as difficult for many boys and girls in large cities to get work as it was for their grandparents to escape work.

Something is very wrong. Either the school year should be extended, or some organized effort should be made to provide opportunities for employment. It's not just that these young people are idle and that millions of hours of useful labor are lost to families that are far from affluent, it's the folly of denying many young people job experience—and also a feeling of responsibility and independence—until they are 19 or 20 years old and possibly ready to marry.

In the whole Washington area, no business group, no PTA, no top governmental body is making any effort to create job opportunities.

Favoritism in Hiring

To be sure, some boys and girls will find jobs. Often as not, it's those who least need the money who will get jobs, because there's lots of favoritism in hiring youngsters. It's the Negro boy and girl with little or no spending money who's most likely to search in vain.

But the prospects aren't hopeless. Business in Washington is good: there's lots of construction and tourism. Moreover, a few employers go to great lengths to create summer jobs for teen-agers.

For those who want jobs badly, here are a few suggestions:

- See your school counsellors, or register with the United States Employment Service. Talk with boys and girls who found jobs last summer.

- Decide upon the kind of job you prefer, taking account of hours, wages and the experience you'll receive. Don't

underrate experience of working with other people even though the work itself may be menial.

- There's no central roster, no clearinghouse for jobs. Even some store chains have no central employment office. The Employment Service won't have many openings. You'll simply have to devote afternoons and Saturdays to calling

tail and bright-colored jacket are "hot stuff" but an employer won't. Be polite. Don't put on an act. Employers are looking for honest, dependable, willing-to-learn helpers. Any fakiness in your manner will scare them off; they have had plenty of disappointments.

- Go prepared for questions about yourself: Where you've worked before, how you can be reached, the names of teachers, neighbors and previous employers. If you are given an application to fill out, read it carefully. Be legible and neat.

- If you want heavy outdoor work, try small suburban builders wherever you see a house under construction. Try Hechingers and other building-supply stores, nurseries and gas stations.

- Any firm that does a big summer business is a good prospect: Outlying restaurants, delicatessen shops, refreshment stands, amusement centers, hardware stores and auto-supply dealers. Banks, department and variety stores aren't good prospects.

- Most drug stores need extra help at their lunch counters. Food chains don't take on much extra help because boys working part time during the school year work a longer day during the summer.

- If you live in the District and can't get a full-time job, or aren't sure you want one, enroll at one of the District recreational centers for "odd jobs," at 75c an hour. Often odd jobs develop into full-time jobs . . . Young boys with express wagons can join the Boys' Club at various supermarkets and maybe earn \$10 on weekends. This is a year-round type of employment for over 7000 boys.

Consider Self-Employment

Consider self-employment, alone or in partnership: Washing and waxing cars, cleaning windows, gardening, painting, repairing electrical equipment, stringing tennis racquets, selling firewood, baby-sitting and tutoring. Some boys and girls have done well taking children to the Zoo, staging parties for young children, selling bait to fishermen, baking and selling pastries, growing and selling vegetables, collecting and selling scrap metal and magazines.

Instead of a job, it may be better to learn to type or study bookkeeping, with a view to getting a good job next summer. Or maybe the best course is to go to school and advance your college preparation. Or maybe you should offer your services free to some hospital, museum or laboratory to get the experience you desire.

on employers. Start now and don't get discouraged. When you're turned down, ask the person you've been to see if he has any suggestions where you can try for a job. If he suggests "dropping back," do so. Don't be casual about your inquiries. Let people know you want a job badly and are willing to work hard.

- Make yourself presentable. You may think your duck-