

HOME, SCHOOL AND WORK

*A Study of the Education and Employment
of Young People in Britain*

BY
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To
My wife and family and to the
memory of Jonathan Michael Carter

NOTE

THIS book results from a study carried out in the Department of Sociological Studies in the University of Sheffield. The author, as Senior Research Worker, was responsible for the design, planning and execution of the research. Miss Mary McNulty, M.A. (Cantab.), was Junior Research Worker and assisted at all stages. The study was made possible by a grant from the Human Sciences Committee of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, to Professor R. K. Kelsall and Dr. P. H. Mann.

PREFACE

I WISH to acknowledge the work of Miss Mary McNulty who, as Junior Research Worker, assisted at all stages of the research which is described in this book. Miss McNulty shared the interviewing, gave assistance in formulating the interviewing schedules, played an important part in the analysing of data, did a considerable amount of background reading, and made valuable suggestions for, and criticisms of, the first draft of this report. I am glad to take this opportunity of indicating Miss McNulty's rôle in the research, and of expressing my thanks to her.

Professor R. K. Kelsall, as Head of the Department of Sociological Studies in the University of Sheffield, had ultimate responsibility for this study, and I record with gratitude his kindly support. It has been a pleasure to work under his charge. Dr. P. H. Mann was responsible for the negotiations which gave rise to this research, and it was as a result of his previous work in this field that the study was begun. My thanks are due to Dr. Mann for his assistance, and specifically for help with interviews in the early stages.

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Youth Employment Service and of the obstacles with which it is confronted. I am very grateful for all the help which Mr. Brand and his staff have given, and for the interest which they have shown.

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In expressing thanks to all those who have kindly helped, I accept, of course, the responsibility for the contents and conclusions of this book, and for its shortcomings.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE majority of young people in this country attend secondary modern schools, or receive a "secondary modern" education in other, non-selective, schools. There has been a tendency in the last few years for more of these children to remain at school beyond the statutory minimum leaving age of fifteen: but most secondary modern boys and girls leave school as soon as they are entitled to do so. In the past decade, between 400,000 and 500,000 young people entered employment at the age of fifteen each year, most of them having attended "modern" schools⁽¹⁾. It is these young people who become the rank and file workers of the world of work. What sort of education have they received? What are their attitudes towards work? How suited are they to the jobs which they take? How do they adjust to a new way of life? Together, these boys and girls will constitute a majority of the population: what do they know about life, and how do they look upon living? These are large questions, and research resources are small. The field-work upon which this book is based was confined to a "sample" of Sheffield schoolchildren—100 boys and 100 girls. They were interviewed on three occasions, once before leaving school and twice subsequently. The aims of the research were to analyse factors affecting young people in their attitudes towards employment, and to examine in detail the process of transition from school to work. The purpose of this Introduction is to outline the national context in which this study must be set.

Secondary Modern Schools

The Education Act of 1944 introduced a system of *secondary* education for all, based upon three main types of school—secondary grammar, secondary technical, and secondary modern. Grammar schools and technical schools were already in existence, and provided secondary education for selected children: secondary modern schools were created as a result of the Act—to cater for the bulk of children, who previously had received an "elementary" education. It was envisaged that, in time, secondary modern schools would have the same amenities as grammar and technical schools: many new schools have been built, and many others have been modified to

meet the needs of a secondary education, but a large proportion of the buildings used as "modern" schools are unsuitable for that purpose. Most secondary modern children, however, attend schools of that name, and a comparatively small number are pupils in the "modern" sections of bilateral and multilateral schools—schools which are amalgamations of two or all three of the grammar, technical and modern elements of secondary education. A substantial proportion of "non-selected" children still attend "all-age" schools; this, in the words of a Government White Paper, "means that the older children have no opportunity of a full secondary education, while the younger children do not enjoy the advantages of a school planned and organised to meet their special needs"⁽²⁾. The White Paper was issued in 1958, when 7 per cent of senior children were in all-age schools: although the percentage had fallen to 4 by 1960, there were still 100,000 children in all-age schools in that year⁽³⁾. It is a central aim of educational policy to complete the reorganization of all-age schools, and the main building programme in the five-year plan announced by the White Paper was designed with this end in view.

In principle, children are allocated to the type of secondary education which accords with their abilities. The 1944 Act assumed that the tripartite system provides for the needs and aptitudes of all children, and it is towards this end that secondary modern schools have been encouraged to experiment in their methods and to diversify the content of their teaching. The Act also assumed that comparatively few children would have the ability and aptitude for an academic (secondary grammar) education, and few would be suited for a technical education: the majority would best be served by the secondary modern schools. It was not the intention that *all* of the most able children would go to grammar schools⁽⁴⁾. In practice, however, *allocation* to secondary education amounts, in all but a few local authority areas, to *selection* for grammar school and technical school. Those who are not selected go to the modern schools. Overwhelmingly, too, a grammar school education is preferred by those parents who are interested in the education of their children, with technical school as a second best.

The provision of grammar and technical places varies considerably from area to area: The proportion of grammar school places ranges from 10 per cent to over 40 per cent in England, and in parts of Wales the proportion is 60 per cent⁽⁵⁾. A P.E.P. pamphlet has stated the position as follows: "The one characteristic which all secondary modern school pupils have in common is that they have not reached the standard required for entry into grammar schools in

the area in which they live"⁽⁶⁾. These variations are arbitrary: they may depend upon the historical development of a locality, its economic structure, its prosperity or depression, the political leanings of the population, or a variety of other factors. They are not related to differences in the ability of children. Overall, approximately three-quarters of the children attending state maintained and aided schools in England and Wales receive a "non-selective" education⁽⁷⁾. Apart from the disparate opportunities for "selective" education throughout the country, there are many criticisms of the validity of the techniques used for selection. The assumption that three types of aptitude—"academic", "technical", and, for the want of another word, "practical"—exist is open to challenge: that these abilities can be distinguished at the age of eleven is a thesis which is met increasingly with scepticism. In practice, selection depends in many areas upon performance in tests of intelligence, although attainment in school-work and conventional tests in writing and arithmetic are often taken into account as well. There is much comment about the use of intelligence tests as a basis of selection, however. It is argued by some that too much emphasis is placed upon "intelligence" and not enough upon persistence, effort and the desire to learn. The accuracy of intelligence tests is also contested. One estimate suggests that as many as 122 children may be wrongly placed in every 1000 allocated⁽⁸⁾. Another criticism is that since children mature at different ages, and since intelligence may alter with age, selection at the age of eleven is unfair to some children. The Central Advisory Council for Education, in its 1959 Report *15 to 18 (The Crowther Report)* has, indeed, pointed out that "any system of selection of pupils, however accurate a classification it may have provided at the time it was made, becomes to some extent inaccurate with the passage of time . . . Much careful research work has shown pretty clearly that a fresh classification after four years, *i.e.* about the age of 15, would have redistributed between selective and non-selective schools about 14 per cent of the pupils"⁽⁹⁾. Some pupils—"late-ish developers" and boys and girls whom the 11-plus selection procedure patently misallocated, are subsequently transferred from modern to grammar or technical schools, usually at the age of 13 (and a few children move in the reverse direction). A Ministry *Guide to the Educational System of England and Wales* has stated that ". . . free interchange of pupils from one type (of secondary school) to another will be made as easy as possible, and the decision as to the type of education which was made at the age of about 11 will be reviewed at the age of 13 and even later"⁽¹⁰⁾. Very few transfers in fact take place, however, compared with the number of children who may be presumed to have

been misallocated: Yates and Pidgeon found that only about 3 per cent, at the most, of secondary modern children were transferred to grammar schools after the age of eleven⁽¹¹⁾. The machinery for deciding upon transfers may be inadequate, schools may not wish to lose their brightest pupils, or the children themselves may not wish to change schools. Whatever the reasons, once selection has been made and no matter how deficient the procedure used, there is little chance of a secondary modern child being reallocated to grammar or to technical school.

As the result of dissatisfaction with the system of selection at 11-plus, some local authorities have amended the organization of secondary education radically. A notable example is Leicestershire, which has experimented, since 1957, with a system by which all children go to high schools at the age of eleven. Children whose parents undertake to keep them at school until they are at least sixteen may transfer to grammar school at the age of fourteen. "Selection" is thus done away with. In other local authority areas bilateral, multilateral and comprehensive schools enable pupils to be transferred with ease from one type of secondary education to another.

Because of the differential provision of "selective" education throughout the country, and because of the inadequacies of selection procedures, many children who presumably are capable of benefiting from selective education attend non-selective schools. (There is, too, an unknown number of children who do not "try" to do well at selection tests, not being interested in going to grammar school, and a small number who, having been selected, decline to take the places *offered* to them.) Selection implies, furthermore, that many able children, who just fail to qualify for a grammar or technical education, perhaps by one or two marks, are denied the opportunities which are given to children not very different from themselves. The 1958 White Paper recognized that "the fact is that there are, today, too many children of approximately equal ability who are receiving their secondary education in schools that differ widely both in quality, and in the range of courses they are able to provide. And this means that a number of these children are not getting as good opportunities as they deserve"⁽¹²⁾. There is a tendency for secondary modern schools to be regarded as the depository of the unsuccessful—the rag bag into which those children who have not made the grade are put. Dent considers that "it is indeed quite wrong to think of the secondary modern school as the school to which 'failures' are sent; it is much more accurate to think of it as the school to which all but a minority of intellectually able children go"⁽¹³⁾. The Crowther Report expressed especial concern at the failure of the education system to provide

adequately for the group of children, most of them attending secondary modern schools, who constitute the "second quartile"—"In the middle, between the brightest quarter and the great mass of ordinary children, the deficiencies, relatively to the need, are greatest of all, for it is in this 'second quartile' that the richest vein of untapped human resources lies"⁽¹⁴⁾.

If secondary modern schools have many able children, however, they also have numerous pupils who are well below the average in intelligence and attainment—in Dent's words, "a group of children possessing such limited intellectual ability that they require special attention and treatment if they are to master the basic tools of education by the end of compulsory school age"⁽¹⁵⁾. Between the bright and the dull is the "great mass of ordinary children"⁽¹⁶⁾, the "average" children who in numbers form the core of the secondary modern population, and about whom there is constant thought amongst teachers and educationalists—what should these children be taught, and what are the best methods to use?

The secondary modern school, then, has to cater for a very wide range of ability. Although most of the children of highest intelligence are syphoned off for selective education, a substantial number are allocated to modern schools. These apart, there is a solid layer of intelligent children—the second quartile, and another layer of children of very limited ability. Between these two layers lie the majority of secondary modern children. Together these young people constitute the majority of school children: it was with reference to them that the Crowther Report stated, "the education that is provided . . . is inadequate both in its quality and in its duration"⁽¹⁷⁾.

Not only do secondary modern children vary considerably in their ability, but they come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Comparatively few secondary modern children are from middle-class homes. A higher proportion of middle-class children is selected for grammar and technical education, to some extent because their home environment is more likely to be conducive to success in tests of intelligence and to attainment at school. Middle-class parents tend, on the whole, to attach more importance to the education of their children, particularly their sons, than do working-class parents: they are more conscious of the relationship between type of school attended and level of work obtained, and recognize that if their children are to maintain the standards to which they have become accustomed some form of selective education is necessary. A. J. P. Taylor's injunction to "run away to sea rather than go to a secondary modern" is accepted as valid—the secondary modern is *not* the path to the top, and may be a shoot to the bottom⁽¹⁸⁾. Most secondary modern schools

provide courses only to the age of fifteen, and middle-class parents tend to take the view that this is too young for a child to leave school: although extended courses to the age of sixteen are now given in many secondary modern schools, there may well be no such course in a given locality. There is dissatisfaction, furthermore, about the quality of many schools, with regard to amenities and staffing—a fact which was recognized in the 1958 White Paper, which stated that “there are still too many areas in which it has not yet been possible to give the secondary schools, and in particular the secondary modern schools, the resources that they need. And this is why many parents still believe that, if their children go to a secondary modern school, they will not have a fair start in life”⁽¹⁹⁾. Rather than letting their children go to secondary modern school, therefore, some middle-class parents pay for a private education: some have financial resources to do this with ease, others consider a sacrifice well worth making.

Since most of the population is working-class, it is clear that the majority of secondary modern children would in any case be from working-class backgrounds. There is evidence that “if by ‘ability’ we mean ‘measured intelligence’, we may reasonably conclude that in very many, if not in most, parts of the country the chances of children at a given level of ability entering grammar schools are no longer dependent on their social origins”. Such was the conclusion drawn by Floud, Halsey and Martin⁽²⁰⁾. A disproportionate number of working-class children is allocated to secondary modern education, however. Some working-class children who are offered places at selective schools reject the opportunity, placing no value upon it. The main reasons for the disproportion are more subtle than this, however. In part, it is accounted for by the tendency for the lower working-class (Classes 4 and 5 in the Registrar General’s classification) to have larger families than the higher social classes—since children from large families get lower marks in intelligence tests on the average. Bernstein’s work on “sociological determinants of perception” suggests, too, that lower working-class children may, because of the upbringing to which they have been subject, be less competent at verbal intelligence tests (though not necessarily less *intelligent*) than children from homes which are of “middle class and associative levels”⁽²¹⁾. Whether through the influences of heredity or environment, a smaller proportion of working-class children possess what intelligence tests measure, or, alternatively, the tests which are used fail to establish the fact that it is possessed. And ability which is possessed by working-class children may not be measured, and thus remain unrecognized for allocation purposes. Environmental factors have a considerable influence upon performance at ordinary school

subjects, furthermore, and to the extent that attainment is taken into account in selection for secondary education, children from working-class homes are likely to be at a disadvantage. Elizabeth Frazer's study of senior school children in Aberdeen demonstrated the close correlations of cultural, material and economic, motivational, and emotional factors with progress at school⁽²²⁾. Whilst it would obviously be inaccurate to assume a working-class monopoly of adverse "emotional"—or other—factors, it is reasonable to suppose that a larger proportion of working-class children are likely to be stultified by these factors and a smaller proportion inspired by them.

Within the working-class there are, of course, considerable variations in social background. Some children live in neat "semis", others in near-derelict terraced blocks: some come from the suburbs, others from the slums. A few know well the songs of birds, others are more acquainted with the blare of traffic and the noise of machines. Some have a table and lamp to study by, others have barely a chair to sit in. An increasing number of working-class parents take a considerable interest in the education of their children—a fact which is evidenced by concern over the 11-plus selection procedure, a willingness—and keenness—to allow sons and daughters to remain at school beyond the statutory minimum leaving age, and participation in parent-teacher activities. Many working-class parents want their children to "get on", and, if not to climb the social ladder, at least to "do well". But many other working-class parents (and, indeed, some middle-class) are indifferent to their children's education or do not attach special importance to it, and a substantial number are definitely opposed to "all this schooling business". Bernstein argues⁽²³⁾ that the social background affects not only the willingness to progress at school but also the ability to do so. The children of semi-skilled and unskilled men, he suggests, become accustomed to the "public" language which is used in their homes and which produces a "culturally induced backwardness". Unlike the child of middle-class parents or of the skilled workman, who has access to a "private" as well as a "public" language, and who benefits from the exposition and discussion which is practised in the home, the lower working-class child is accustomed only to circular and inconclusive conversation—"Just fancy!", and "Well I never!" Facial expression or a shrug of the shoulders may perform the function of language, in which the child remains unsophisticated through lack of experience in expressing himself, and for want of an example from which to learn. Curiosity becomes deadened because explanations are not given: the question "Why?" meets only with responses such as "Because I say so". In time the young person brought up in such an environment loses the

ability—or never acquires it—of conceptualizing. The things that are taught at school, and the ways in which they are taught, have little or no meaning for him. Thus may the home background exert a direct, and adverse, influence upon the child's ability to profit from the education which is made available to him.

There is little agreement amongst educationalists, except at the level of *cliché*, about the aims of education: usually discussion revolves about the right of the individual to develop his personality and fulfil his potential on the one hand, and the good of society—its economic needs for trained manpower and the desirability of a highly moral corporate life—on the other. Usually, furthermore, more questions are begged than answered in such debates, and not infrequently solace is taken in expressing the confidence that the needs of the individual and the state may be reconciled to the advantage of both—although no one knows quite how. The education which a child receives is not dependent simply upon the deliberations of theorists, however. It is, for example, circumscribed by the amount and nature of the resources which society decides to devote to educational purposes—buildings, equipment and teachers, by the priorities which governmental policy assumes (the present emphasis upon the development of science and technology courses has obvious implications for the education of young people in the future). The concern here, however, is not with such broader issues affecting education in general, nor with the relationship between “aims” in the abstract and “policy” in the concrete, but with the stated aims of secondary modern schools and the shape which policies have taken at the local level.

The policy which is adopted in a school—or the orientation which the education in a school takes—is the result of the resolution of various (and perhaps conflicting) forces. Not least important is the head teacher's own theories or predilections, which may well have been moulded by, adapted to or have passed through the sieve of the precepts upheld by the local authority which appointed him, or of the selection committee which sat on its behalf. The shape which a head teacher's policy takes obviously has reference to the nature of his pupils as a body—their ability and background—but is also limited by the facilities which he has at his disposal. There are many new secondary modern schools, well provided materially and well staffed. But a very large number of secondary modern schools have inadequate buildings. With regard to science in particular, there is a notable lack of accommodation and equipment, which together with the acute shortage of science teachers places a direct limitation upon the scope of the school curriculum⁽²⁴⁾. As a whole, secondary modern schools suffer from the shortage of teachers: many children—some

schools fare worse than others in this respect—are taught by a succession of temporary teachers, whilst over-size classes are common. Approximately two-thirds of children attending secondary modern schools in 1960 were in classes of over thirty.

Because of the widely varying conditions with which they have to cope—differences in ability, social background of pupils, amenities available—secondary modern schools have developed along different lines. This was, indeed, the intention—“perhaps the main difference between a modern school and other types of secondary schools is its very broad outlook and objective. It has to provide a series of courses for children of widely different ability, aptitude and social background . . . With such a wide variety of ability the modern school must be free to work out its own syllabuses and methods”⁽²⁵⁾. The keynotes of the approach to secondary education for the mass of children were to be experiment and variation: a virtue was made of necessity. Some of the diversity which is apparent in secondary modern schools is in consequence by design: but much has been enforced, the result of coming to terms, or trying to do so, with the resources available—pupils, staff and buildings.

Some secondary modern schools are still anchored to the old conception of “elementary” education: they are “secondary” only in name, and have departed only slightly or not at all from the idea of the basic “3 Rs”. This may be by design—the view being that reading, writing and arithmetic are the essentials of education, and that the task of the school is to ensure that children achieve competence at these subjects. This is education—the inculcation of the fundamentals. Head teachers who take this view receive vociferous support from the more prolific writers of letters to the press, who argue that the decline in standards which they allege amongst the young is attributable to the failure of schools to concentrate on basic matters, and bemoan the expenditure of vast sums of money on an education which leads only to widespread semi-literacy and an inability to do sums. The concentration upon the 3 Rs may result from the backwardness of pupils—for example, in an area in which a high proportion of selective places are available the modern school may be left with children of low ability, and its energies are taxed to the full to induce a modicum of proficiency in its pupils. It is argued by some that the absence in a school of children of high ability results in an all-round lowering of attainment, there being no stimulus or competition. In so far as this is the case, such schools may be driven back even more to the “fundamental” subjects. Adherence to the 3 Rs may be by default of any other policy—a failure of head teacher and staff to consider alternative approaches. Of such, “content to limit themselves

to 'highly effective senior elementary work' without the excuse either of unpromising pupils or serious depletion by transfer", Dent has stated, "they were, to put it quite frankly, failing in their plain duty"⁽²⁶⁾.

Other secondary modern schools have veered towards an "academic" approach: they have received encouragement to do so from the government policy of developing "overlap" courses. This policy derives from the fact, noted above, that many children of "selective" quality attend non-selective schools, and results from the wish to provide for the development of the abilities of the "second quartile". Such schools centre much of their activity upon G.C.E. courses or the Royal Society of Arts examinations: the establishment of new external examinations, such as those envisaged by the Beloe Committee⁽²⁷⁾, would provide an examination for which up to 40 per cent of the secondary modern population could work, and might give an impetus to the development of modern education along traditional academic lines. The academic orientation has been particularly apparent in modern schools built in the post-war period—many of which, with panelled libraries, impressive assembly halls and well-equipped laboratories, compare favourably in their facilities with grammar schools. There are fears that modern schools which pursue an academic policy may model themselves too closely on grammar schools, and become but a "pale shadow" of them—because the main body of pupils is not of "academic" bent and because insufficient graduates are available, or prepared to work in modern schools, to teach specialized subjects at G.C.E. level. Modern schools which provide academic courses may crusade their cause in their locality, or may be reacting to a demand which exists amongst the parents of their pupils (for example, in a middle-class area): academic courses are not necessarily available in areas in which there is a demand for them, however.

A substantial number of secondary modern schools have a "vocational" bias: a link between classroom work and future career is considered to act as a stimulus to interest in studies as well as being a useful preparation for employment. The charge is sometimes levelled that such an approach turns the educational system into a direct training ground for employment—children are then but the fodder of the industrial machine. Whilst it would seem reasonable to give some emphasis to farming to children who live in the countryside and who will probably work on the land, and the same argument could be extended with regard to children whose homes are situated midst coalmines or steelworks, complications arise when there are alternative employment opportunities for young people as in most towns.

It should not be supposed that a vocationally "biased" school necessarily moulds its raw material into automatons for supply to industry, however. The vocational element of a curriculum need not assume over-riding importance, and boys and girls are not *conditioned* to specific types of work: rather are their interests and aptitudes encouraged in the light of the sorts of employment opportunities likely to be available in the district. The point may be made, however, that many employers state a preference for children whose education has been "general" rather than "vocational" or "practical"—they want the schools to provide a "good all-round education", which, they believe, is conducive to facility in decision-making, and to adaptability.

In contrast to schools which give emphasis to vocational education, there are those which concentrate more upon "cultural" activities—music, painting and drama. Acting upon the premise that their pupils will inevitably go into routine jobs, and taking into account the comparatively long time which workers now have for leisure activities, such schools attempt to equip their children so that they are able to enjoy a "full" life outside working hours—almost as a form of compensation.

Many schools take a special concern in "social" matters of various kinds. One of the arguments used to support comprehensive schools is that they provide for the integration of children of different ability and from various social backgrounds, the leaders and the led, the rich and the poor. Some secondary modern schools, though more limited in what they have available to mix, have the same aim in view. Some schools, too, affirm the importance of teaching their pupils to be "good citizens", and give a substantial amount of time to classes in citizenship, in the hope that the children will grow up to understand, and participate in, the governing of the country in local and national affairs. The content of citizenship training tends to be kept within conventional bounds: the dangers of indoctrination—the inculcation or eradication of one set of values or another—are never far distant, of course, and this probably has much to do with a tendency in some schools to confine the study of citizenship to such activities as visits to the meetings of the town council and excursions to the fire brigade headquarters.

The value of a school being an integral part of its neighbourhood is often emphasized; the point is reiterated in books and on speech days, and the head teacher may strive constantly towards this end in numerous ways. The school and the parents can then work together towards the common end of educating the children. In practice, school and home often exert conflicting influences, and the school may be

fighting a losing battle against the stronger forces of the home and neighbourhood. It has been indicated above that the orientation which a school takes necessarily has reference to the "quality" of its pupils. There are other, more direct ways, in which schools are concerned with "social" aspects of the children whom they teach: in recent years, the provision of school meals and milk, the organization of National Savings, and co-operation with the medical service have become daily features of the life of the school. Many schools go beyond this, however, and take as their theme the development of "social responsibility" in their pupils. Often such schools are situated in areas in which material deprivation, if not still current, has left its mark, and in which the horizons of young people are distinctly restricted. The policy may be a complement of the view that too much attention is paid to "intelligence", and not enough effort given to training children to be upright in character, courteous and dutiful. The school accordingly makes a deliberate attempt to perform tasks which it considers the parents of its pupils to be inadequate to do by themselves, or, in many cases, to counteract tendencies in the pupils' home lives which it regards as undesirable. The girls have babies almost before they are out of the fourth form, and the boys are ill-behaved. Cigarettes are a problem with the boys, and lipstick with the girls. Mothers go out to work all day and soak gin in the evenings, whilst fathers have been used to their eight pints a night since they can remember. For the slightest reason, children are kept away from school; trousers are unpatched and shoes are down-at-heel. The school may in such circumstances adopt an evangelical approach—its task being to "give the children a chance", to teach good manners and to open-up new vistas. The aim is "not to make the children clever, but to make them nice".

It is not only in schools whose pupils are from social backgrounds which are regarded, at least in some ways, as unfortunate that emphasis is placed upon "social" values. Some head teachers of schools in quite different environments consider that, in the modern age, science has over-run man: men know how to do things, but not why they do them, all about hydrogen bombs and nothing about harmonious living. Science advances and humanity falls by the way-side. The big need is to learn how to live together, and this is the prime purpose of education. The school is directed towards this end, with a corresponding emphasis in the time-table upon current affairs and projects on international trade and World Government.

Apart from differences in the aims which schools set themselves—or the directions which they veer towards as the result of the pressures which play upon them—there are differences in the methods of teach-

ing. Some schools abide by traditional methods—teacher standing in front of the rows of children at their desks: in other schools, group-work is favoured. Some schools adhere to conventional textbooks, others stress “project” work. Some are “authoritarian” in their organization, others encourage pupil participation—through, for example, prefect systems, “houses”, form captains, and school parliaments.

The above sketch has distinguished various approaches which may be identified in secondary modern schools. The analysis is an oversimplification: secondary modern schools do not, in general, present such clear-cut pictures. The “social” and the “3 Rs” approach may be blended in the same school, and a school may provide for both “academic” and “vocational” studies. Many schools serve heterogeneous areas, and have to cater, in the one building, not just for widely varying abilities, but for children from very different home backgrounds. A head teacher may have to choose between sacrificing a minority of more able pupils, by not providing an academic course for them—because of the disproportionate demands which would be made upon his scarce staff resources—and sacrificing the mass of average children in order to give the bright ones an opportunity of which they are capable of benefiting. What emerges may be a compromise rather than a plan. In thinking in terms of “orientations”, “emphases” and “biases”, therefore, it is essential to realize that the features which predominate in a given school do so against a complex background. That special attention is given to one aim or another does not mean that all the resources of a school are directed towards that end, nor that all the pupils fit into the main mould.

Employment Entered

Most children who attend selective schools continue their education at least until the age of 16. Some go on to universities and other places of further education before entering the professions or beginning careers in commerce, industry or administration. It is children who have had a selective education who eventually occupy the higher and intermediate levels in the occupational hierarchy: at the lower fringe they may be joined by children who remain at secondary modern schools beyond the age of fifteen, to take extended courses—of whom, as has been pointed out above, there is an increasing number. The type of employment entered is obviously profoundly affected by the education received. The kind of school attended affects as well as reflects both the ability to do different sorts of work and the aspirations which a child has—and thus the secondary modern school child is directed towards certain levels of work and is qualified only for such levels. The possibility of a secondary modern child entering the pro-

fessions is remote. It is precisely this relationship between school attended and work obtained which, as has been seen, leads middle-class parents to fight shy of secondary modern school. This relationship may pose an acute problem for the "border-line" pupil who has attended a modern school in which there is no academic course, and who in consequence may receive an education which fits him only for jobs which have no attraction for him and which are well within his potential capacity, whilst he has had no preparation for the sort of work which would have held his interest and for which paper qualifications are required. Some children, by dint of persistence in part-time education after leaving school, overcome this handicap. On many others, the secondary modern school sets its stamp for the rest of their lives.

The secondary modern child is thus in general limited to the lower level occupations: within this category, however, there are wide variations in the demands which jobs make and the rewards which they offer. Some youths take apprenticeships and after years of training may become highly skilled craftsmen: others enter dead-end jobs, with no prospects and little inherent interest. Occupations range from engineering to van-boy, coal-mining to clothing manufacture, clerical work to building—a vast range of jobs. Girls, too, may take up careers—such as secretarial work or hairdressing—or may enter dull and

TABLE 1
OCCUPATIONS ENTERED BY SCHOOL-LEAVERS AGED 15 IN 1959⁽²⁸⁾

Industry group	Percentage of grand total entering each industry group	
	Boys	Girls
Agriculture, etc.	8	1
Mining and Quarrying	3	0
Manufacturing Industries	40	41
Construction	13	1
Transport, etc.	2	2
Distribution Trades	20	35
Public Administration, Utilities, Professional Services, Entertainments and Commerce and Finance	5	9
Hotels, Laundries and Personal Services	9	11
Total	100	100
Total number of entrants (000's)	236	224

routine jobs; the majority of girls are employed in one of three main occupations—clerk, shop assistant and factory worker. The proportions in the various industry groups entered by the 460,000 children who left school at the age of fifteen in 1959 are shown in Table 1.

Approximately one-third of boys who leave school at the age of fifteen obtain apprenticeships: in 1959 32.4 per cent of the boys were classified as apprentices or learners to skilled crafts, including pre-apprentice training. In the same year, 7.2 per cent of the girls became apprentices or learners⁽²⁹⁾.

There are variations in the proportions entering different occupations from region to region and from area to area—steel, for example, is of special importance in Sheffield: but in most urban areas there is a wide range of jobs. Those secondary modern schools which have a vocational bias obviously take reference in the design of their courses to local employment opportunities. But irrespective of school policies, for the vast majority of secondary modern children the local employment scene constitutes the extent of their job horizons: there are a few exceptions, for example boys who enter H.M. Forces, or town boys who go to work on farms.

The particular jobs, within the section of the occupational structure that is open to secondary modern children, which are entered by particular individuals is the result of a complex of forces, then—a complex which includes the nature of local vacancies at a given time, and the child's ability, attainment and aspirations—all of which are influenced variously by the nature of the education he has received and the values upheld at home and in his neighbourhood. Many of the children change jobs, some within a few weeks of starting work, some at a later stage in life. The *level* of work which they enter, however, conditions their future occupational history: the boys enter a level of employment which shapes their working lives for the next fifty years. The girls enter a level which will be their lot at least until marriage or child-bearing, and probably in subsequent years when their families have grown up⁽³⁰⁾.

There are at present special problems associated with the transition from school to work arising out of the existence of the "bulge". As the bulge works its way through to school-leaving age, there is a danger that there will not be sufficient jobs for these children, and that the jobs that are available will not be in keeping with their ability and interests. In particular, there may well be a deficiency of opportunities in skilled occupations. The efforts of employers in response to the pleas by the Industrial Training Council to expand opportunities for training in skills have not been outstandingly successful. The numbers of young people reaching the age of fifteen each

year during the coming decade will be consistently higher than was usual in the past, and—in spite of the tendency for more to remain at school until the age of sixteen, a considerable increase in the numbers entering employment at the age of fifteen is to be expected. Until 1958, the number of children reaching the age of fifteen each year was less than 700,000. In 1959, when 773,000 reached the age of fifteen, 460,000 started work at that age. In 1962, the “peak” year, 929,000 reach the age of fifteen, and probably well over half a million will be seeking work⁽³¹⁾. It was not the purpose of the present study to examine the special problems of the bulge, but its existence adds point to this research into the entry of secondary modern school children into employment: clearly these boys and girls constitute a very significant section of the population.

The Aims of the Research

The research which is described in the following pages was designed to establish the facts of what happens during the period of transition from school to work, and to analyse—with particular reference to the influences of home and school—the reasons why children behaved and reacted as they did. In brief, the basic questions were, firstly, “what went on?” and, secondly, “why?”. The specific topics examined were as follows:

- (a) Attitudes towards school, leaving school and starting work—including views about the school-leaving age.
- (b) Jobs aimed at and jobs obtained.
- (c) The extent of knowledge about work in general and about particular occupations.
- (d) Methods of finding work.
- (e) Formal and informal reception and initiation into the world of work.
- (f) The nature of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with work and with particular jobs: attitudes towards employers, and other workers.
- (g) The number and frequency of job changes and the reasons for the changes.
- (h) Participation in further education.
- (i) Attitudes towards Trades Unions.
- (j) Is there a “gap” between school and work?—and, if so, do young people find the transition from the one to the other a harsh experience? How are education and employment—which are but two aspects of the same society—related?
- (k) Changes in leisure activities and in pocket-money. The relative importance of school, work and leisure.

Society has set up machinery, in the form of the Youth Employment Service, to advise young people in their choice of occupation, and to help them to find jobs. The Service is subject to the overall control of the Central Youth Employment Executive. Locally, the Service is organized in the majority of cases by the education authority, and by the Ministry of Labour in the remainder⁽³²⁾. The responsibilities of the Service are as follows: to give vocational guidance, to help young people to find suitable work, to maintain contact with boys and girls after they have left school—in order to advise on employment matters, training and further education, and to maintain liaison with employers for the purpose of obtaining information about local jobs and to assist employers to find the labour they require. The Service also administers parts of the National Insurance and Assistance Acts. An important aim of the research was to study the effectiveness of the Youth Employment Service, and the influence which it had upon young people.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHOD AND
DESCRIPTION OF THE "SAMPLE"

SHEFFIELD is a city of half a million people: it has a diversity of industries, but steel and engineering predominate—Sheffield is known as "The City of Steel"—and cutlery is also very important. Approximately one-third of the employed men work in metal manufacturing, engineering and cutlery: other prominent occupations, apart from higher level work in the professions and management, are transport, clerical work, building, coal-mining and the distributive trades. A high proportion of manual workers, notably those in the steel and engineering industries, are skilled. There is, then, a wide range of jobs open to secondary modern boys, although most of the girls—as is generally the case throughout the country—are restricted to the three basic occupations of clerk, shop assistant and factory worker.

There is a large working-class population, and the proportions of people in the higher social classes are rather lower than in the country as a whole, as is to be expected in an essentially industrial city⁽³³⁾. The social class distribution of occupied and retired males of fifteen and over at the 1951 Census is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
SOCIAL CLASS DISTRIBUTION IN SHEFFIELD

	Social class				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Sheffield (%)	2.5	11.7	56.0	13.2	16.6
England and Wales (%)	3.3	15.0	52.7	16.2	12.8

Although several secondary modern schools in Sheffield draw many of their pupils from middle-class homes, most of them have a majority of working-class children, albeit from a variety of social backgrounds.

At the beginning of 1959, there were 32 secondary modern schools, and about one-fifth of the children who were not attending selective

schools were pupils at "all-age" schools which had Senior Departments. Since that time several new secondary modern schools have been opened, and the number of senior children attending all-age schools has been steadily reduced in accordance with national and local policy. Several thousand boys and girls leave school each year: 5500 children started work at the age of fifteen in 1959. This research is based upon the experience of 200 of these children, selected at random from five of the city's secondary modern schools.

The Schools

The five schools were selected to provide diversity with regard to quality of buildings and amenities, educational orientations, and the social backgrounds of the pupils. One of the schools was built at the turn of the century and is situated in an old industrial area, much of which is blanketed in grime and shrouded by smoke. Two schools were built in the inter-war years, one on a Corporation housing estate and the other in a part of the city which has since been scheduled for redevelopment because of the deterioration of the property. The other two schools are post-war, and well endowed with libraries, laboratories and playing fields. One of them is situated on a new Corporation estate, and the other is in a middle-class residential district. At one extreme, then, are the terraced houses facing on to cobbled streets and with shared yards and rows of lavatories behind, all overshadowed by the tall chimneys of steel works. At the other extreme are the neat lines of semi-detached "desirable" properties, looking on to tree-lined avenues, where suits are worn instead of overalls, and where church bells are a more familiar sound than factory hooters. The schools served wide areas, however, and although certain types of social background predominated in each school there were also considerable variations in the home environments of the pupils.

There were important differences in the policies which the head teachers pursued—dependent in part upon the social backgrounds of the pupils and related to the varying resources which were available in each school. One school, for example, tended to give emphasis to academic subjects, whilst another gave more stress to vocational education: the different policies are considered in more detail in Chapter 3. Three of the schools were co-educational (although in one of these there was little contact between senior boys and girls): the other two schools had separate departments for boys and girls, but were on the same premises.

The Respondents

There were 200 respondents. Ten boys and 10 girls were selected

by random numbers tables from lists of the fifteen-year-old children leaving the five schools at Easter 1959, and the same numbers from those leaving at Midsummer. In the event, 23 respondents remained at school for at least one extra term, and 5 of them for an extra year. The schools varied in size, but a total of 360 boys and 360 girls were due to leave at the above times, and the "sample" thus comprises, overall, 1 in 3.6. The respondents should properly be regarded as "case-studies" rather than as a representative sample, however, although there is no reason to suppose that the children concerned in this study are particularly *unrepresentative* of secondary modern children.

The Interviews

The children were interviewed three times. Interview 1 was held early in the last term at school. With the co-operation of the Youth Employment Officer arrangements were made for the research interviews to be held several weeks before the Y.E.O.'s school-leaving interview—in order that the impact of the latter could be assessed. The second research interview was held three months after the respondents had left school, and was focused upon methods of finding jobs and the initial impact of the world of work. The third interview took place one year after the children had left school, and dealt with longer-term developments and adjustments. Most of the interviews at stages 2 and 3 were held in the evenings, and the interviewing programme lasted for up to two months for each set of leavers. Quantitative data which is given in the tables—such as number of jobs held—refers, however, to the positions at 3 months and one year after leaving school, and not necessarily to the time at which interviews were held. The first interviews with the Easter leavers were held in January and February 1959 and the last in April and May 1960. The first interviews with Midsummer leavers were in April and May 1959 and the last in August and September 1960.

The co-operation of the children was good. One boy refused Interviews 2 and 3: 2 children refused to be interviewed at Interview 2 but agreed to Interview 3, and 2 who were interviewed at the second stage refused the third interview. In addition, the parents of 3 children who declined the second interview provided some basic information, and the children themselves agreed to the final interview. Short postal questionnaires were used for 4 respondents who were not living at home at the second stage, and the same number at the third stage. Thus, although comprehensive information was obtained for the large majority of respondents at all three stages, in a few cases the data was not complete.

The first interviews were held in the schools. All of the respondents with whom interviews were held at stages 2 or 3 were seen in their homes at least once. It had been hoped to interview each person once at home and once at work. This plan was not adhered to for three reasons. Firstly, it was not possible to trace the place of employment of a large number of the children who changed jobs. Secondly, it became clear that many places of work were not suitable for confidential interviews, and the interviews tended to be hurried, because of the wish not to impose too much upon the willingness of employers to co-operate and because many respondents themselves "felt awkward" about being kept too long from their work-bench or shop-counter. Thirdly, the interviews at home proved to be very fruitful, because more time was available and because of the opportunity for discussion with other members of the family (it should be added that many useful discussions were also held with employers). Most of the second interviews with girls attending full-time courses were held at the colleges where they were studying. An analysis of the interviews is given in Table 3.

TABLE 3
ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

	Interview 2	Interview 3
Held at home	105	184
Held at work	72	9
Held at college	16	0
Postal questionnaire	4	4
No response	3	3
Total	200	200

Interviewing Technique

Information was sought on two levels—"quantitative" data, dealing with such matters as size of family, wages and pocket money and attendance at Evening School, and "qualitative" data relating to the interests, attitudes and motivations of the respondents, and their relationships with other people at home, in the neighbourhood and at work. Schedules were used as a framework for the interviews: these are given in the Appendix. A formal, structured, interview was inappropriate for this inquiry, especially since it was of an exploratory nature. The technique was to make the interview as informal as possible, and more of a conversation than a rigid series of questions and answers: it was essential to establish *rapport* and, whilst guiding the

discussion, to allow the respondents to express their views in their own words. It is very difficult for the adult to picture the world as the fifteen-year-old does. The adult often tends to think that the younger person sees the same things, but sees them less adequately than his elders. In fact the youth and girl see many different things, and see the same things in a different light. One youth, describing his mother's reluctance to let him join the army, referred to the mother's brother who had been in the forces—"and then there was a war", and the brother was killed. The respondent spoke in terms of history. To him, the war was a long way in the past—indeed, the war ended the same year as he was born. He had grown up in the fifteen years since the war, in an environment quite different from that of older people. The recognition of this fact and of its implications is basic to the understanding of young people. The "free" approach was used in the interviews in the belief that in this way there was a greater chance of getting on terms with the subjects of the study than by the use of other interview techniques. The interviewing was shared by the two research workers, each of whom interviewed both boys and girls at all three stages. Some children were shy, others casual; some were suspicious and a few resentful. Many were friendly, however, and with very few exceptions the respondents co-operated willingly.

A Pilot Survey was conducted with the aid of 15 boys and 15 girls who left a school, not included in the main study, at Christmas 1958. Most of these children were interviewed on three occasions. The first object of the Pilot Survey was to shape and refine the wording and order of the Schedule—although interviews were not rigidly bound to the Schedule, the Pilot Survey was of undoubted value in establishing the pitfalls of certain phrases and juxtapositions. The second aim of the Pilot Survey was to establish, so far as possible, factors which were of importance to young people which had not been included in the draft Schedules: in this respect, also, the Pilot Survey proved its worth.

There was considerable variation in the lengths of the interviews. Interview 1 lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. About one-third of the subsequent interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes, another third lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and the remainder took longer, many of them lasting for an hour or more. The shortest interview lasted 15 minutes, the longest went on for more than 2 hours. The shortest interviews included those with children who were on full-time courses at the second stage or who had remained at school. They also included many of the interviews held at work. A substantial number of the longer interviews were with less fluent children and those who were more reluctant than others to express their views.

Interviews which parents, brothers, sisters, friends and neighbours joined in tended, of course, to be longer than those in which the respondent was seen alone. The notes which were taken during the interview were written up as soon as possible afterwards, whilst the discussion was fresh in the mind. The writing up involved reflection, and a reliving of the interview: it took much longer than the interviews themselves—up to twice and three times as long.

Discussion of Interviewing Technique

The emphasis of this study is upon qualitative matters: measurement and categorization is thus difficult, and for some aspects impossible. The “free” approach used in the interviews involves dangers—the interpretation of what the children said and the appraisal of their home and work environments places the research worker slap up against a basic problem of sociological investigation, that of avoiding subjectivity—whilst hoping for “insight”! The line between drawing out an uncommunicative respondent and putting words into his mouth is, furthermore, a narrow one. A seemingly neutral question can turn out to be a leading one. And the timing of questions, the inflection of the voice and the expression on the face can all have effects upon the nature of the responses⁽³⁴⁾. In order to provide some check on the interpretation of data, interviews were planned so that each research worker would have one interview with each respondent: this plan was adhered to with the majority of respondents, but was not possible in some cases. The coding of data on attitudes—liking for school, satisfaction with job, attitudes towards work in general—was first done separately by both research workers and amendments were subsequently made after discussion in the few cases in which there was some initial disagreement.

Apart from the problems inherent in the approach adopted, there were several special problems associated with this study. The first interviews were held at school, in most cases two interviews taking place at the same time at different ends of the classroom: there was privacy to all intents and purposes. There was a distinct danger, however, that the children would associate the interviews with authority or officialdom. Letters inviting co-operation had been distributed to respondents *through* the schools, and in two schools the research workers sat at the staff table for meals, in full view of the pupils. It was essential, if children were to express their views freely, for them to realize that the interviews were independent of the school and that the questions were in no way an examination, a test of knowledge or of character. Head teachers co-operated, by firstly impressing upon the children that the interviews were not connected with the school

or with the Youth Employment Service, and secondly by agreeing *not* to put children on their honour to show up the school in good light, by *not* suggesting to children that it was their duty not to let the side down and by *not* asking them to remember that they were the school's representatives. With the help of the head teachers and their staffs, interviews were made as unobtrusive as possible. The head teacher of one school pointed out an unanticipated advantage arising from the need to dissociate the research from the school teacher, at any rate at her school. In many respects, she felt, the children had given up hope that she and her staff would ever understand what really goes on in the world. But there was just a chance that the interviewers would have their feet on the ground. Pupils would take the interviewers as they found them, and speak openly—not, as they had come to do in their relationships with teachers, amend their manner of speaking and the way in which they conducted themselves just to please the uncomprehending teacher who insisted upon alien values, whilst maintaining a reserve in what they said simply because the teacher did not understand.

It has already been indicated that there were some distinct disadvantages—in spite of the goodwill of many employers—in holding interviews at work. If, as was often the case, the "boss" was near at hand, children were reluctant to speak out on their attitudes to work, and such questions as that about whether they intended to stay in their jobs were especially difficult ones for them to answer in such circumstances. In a few cases, too, respondents were subjected to jeering and other distractions from workmates during the course of the interview. It was a big advantage, however, to meet employers and to observe the working conditions from close at hand. Valuable interviews were held at factory benches and shop counters, on farms and building sites, in offices and warehouses.

The advantages of interviews held at home were that more time was available: there was the opportunity of studying the home environment, of observing relationships between members of the family. And the views of parents and siblings could be obtained. The problems were to record or memorize what was said, especially when more than one person was speaking at a time, and to distinguish the respondents' views from those of other people who were present.

There was a big danger, in this research, of affecting the situation—of setting children thinking about jobs, for example, formulating plans or changing their minds about what work to aim at. So far as looking for jobs is concerned, only two respondents started to seek work within a week of the research interview, but it is probable that neither these nor other respondents took action as the result of the

research. Many children had started to look for jobs before the research interview, and many more did not start to look until long after. Nor did the research interview appear to be responsible for inspiring much thought about work: a large proportion of boys and girls gave little thought to the matters considered in the research either before or after the interview. From subsequent interviews it seems clear that the interviews had no significant effect upon the respondents' thoughts or actions. The Youth Employment Officers who interviewed the respondents subsequent to Interview 1 did not get the impression that the research had affected the children. It will be suggested below, furthermore, that the impact of the Y.E.O.'s Vocational Guidance Interview is in many cases slight: it would seem unlikely that the research interview would have a more telling effect than one which is geared to the promotion of thought and action. Scrupulous care was taken in the interview to avoid saying anything that might be taken by respondents to be advice, and to avoid expressing opinions. No information was given about types of occupations or the work involved in them. At Interviews 2 and 3, several parents sought the advice of the research workers, but were told that the workers were not at liberty—or competent—to advise.

To state difficulties is not, of course, to overcome them. All that can be done is to bear them in mind and conduct the analysis in the light of the limitations inherent in the methods used. The fact that the tools are less than perfect may be regretted, but at the present stage of social research must be accepted.

DESCRIPTION OF THE 'SAMPLE'

Fathers' Occupations

The majority of the respondents were from working-class homes: the fathers of all except 14 boys and 19 girls were manual workers.

One-third of the manual workers were skilled: most of the remainder were semi-skilled but the fathers of 12 boys and 14 girls were unskilled. Twelve of the skilled workers held posts of responsibility, such as foreman and chargehand. The fathers of half of the respondents (57 boys and 43 girls) were employed in the steel and engineering industries, all except 13 of them as production workers. Approximately one-quarter of the fathers of respondents at one school worked in steel and engineering, and at least one-half of those at the other four schools. That steel was a major occupation in the areas in which these children lived was evidenced by the frequency of remarks from respondents such as that of the boy who said, "People in the area work in steel. All the men in the yard, and other neighbours, are steel-

TABLE 4
FATHERS' OCCUPATIONS⁽³⁵⁾

	Boys	Girls
Professional and Managerial	8	4
Minor Managerial	3	8
Clerical	3	7
Manual	85	79
Not known (probably manual)	1	2
Totals	100	100

The category "Minor Managerial" includes such occupations as managing a public house or small shop.

workers, except for one lorry driver." The importance of steel and engineering, however, should not obscure the fact that the fathers of over one-third of the respondents were manual workers in other industries.

Mothers at Work

At the time of Interview 1, the mothers of half the respondents went out to work, those of 17 boys and 17 girls having full-time jobs and those of 37 boys and 25 girls working part-time. Many of the part-time workers had jobs as cleaners, and most of the remainder, and of the full-time workers, were employed in factories and warehouses: a few mothers were clerical workers and some were shop assistants.

Houses

Approximately three-quarters of the children lived in rented houses, over one third of all respondents coming from inter- and post-war Corporation housing estates. Most of the other rented houses were small terraced property, but some were larger and similar to the older type of owner-occupied houses in which a number of respondents lived. The majority of the 41 respondents whose parents owned their houses lived in semi-detached houses built in the inter-war years.

Households

Nearly two-thirds of the children lived in households in which there were four or less people: 37 respondents were only children. Sixteen boys and 21 girls were from households in which there were six or more people. (In addition to parents and siblings, "household"

includes grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relations, and lodgers.) In some families, older siblings were not living at home (and are not included as part of the household in this analysis) usually because of marriage or service in H.M. Forces. It is probable that some families were not completed at the time of Interview 1, when the data was obtained: 40 boys and 40 girls had at least one parent who was only forty years of age or younger at that time. Fourteen respondents were from homes which were, to some extent, "broken". Three boys and 5 girls had no father living at home: 1 boy and 5 girls (including 2 respondents who were in the care of the local authority) were not living with their parents. In addition, 6 children had step-fathers/mothers, and 1 boy was adopted.

Education of Other Members of the Family

Eighteen boys and 27 girls were from homes in which at least one member of the family had attended a "selective school"—mainly grammar or technical, but in one case Public school. A parent was concerned in the cases of 9 boys and 10 girls, and brothers and sisters accounted for the remainder.

Intelligence Grades

For the purposes of the research respondents were classified in four "Intelligence Grades" based upon their performance in the tests used in the 11-plus selection procedure, which included Moray House verbal reasoning tests. The distribution is shown in Table 5: the highest I.Q. was 116 and the lowest was 70.

TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION IN INTELLIGENCE GRADES

I.Q.	Grade 1 104+	Grade 2 93-103	Grade 3 82-92	Grade 4 81-
Boys	22	32	33	13
Girls	31	33	29	7

It is difficult to relate the sample to the national position with regard to the intelligence of children attending secondary modern schools and equivalent courses because of the variations in selection procedure and the differences in the proportions of places available in selective schools from area to area. Overall, approximately one-quarter of children in England and Wales are allocated to selective education, and Sheffield conforms fairly closely with this picture: 24

per cent of Sheffield children were selected for Grammar, Intermediate and Technical schools at the age of eleven in 1960. In 1955, the year in which the respondents were transferred to secondary education, only 20.9 per cent were allocated to selective schools, because more children reached the age of eleven that year (8000 compared with 6700 in 1960) whilst the number of selective places available was about the same. As the result of subsequent transfers from modern to selective schools, mostly at the age of 13, the proportion of Sheffield children reaching the age of eleven in 1955 allocated to selective education eventually rose to nearly 24 per cent. Taking these facts into account, it is probable that the respondents, as a group, reasonably represent children attending non-selective schools. It is likely that Grade 1 boys are somewhat under-represented and Grade 4 boys over-represented: there may also be a rather high proportion of Grade 3 boys and girls in the sample. That there are more Grade 1 girls than boys is a reflection of the fact that there are fewer selective places available for girls, throughout the country as well as in Sheffield: in particular, there are comparatively few places for girls in technical schools. The Grades are not strictly comparable with "streams", which vary from school to school and which may depend upon effort, attainment and "character" as well as upon ability.

Age on Leaving School

This study is primarily concerned with children who leave school at the age of fifteen. Two of the schools organized extended courses for children who remained at school to the age of sixteen: these children were in principle excluded from the research. A substantial number of children remain at school for one or two terms beyond the time when they are statutorily permitted to leave, however. The reasons vary: the object with some is to complete a full school-year, some are not immediately able to find the jobs which they want. Other reasons include the wish to continue to play football with the school team. Six boys and 6 girls had stayed on at school for one or two terms at the time of their first Interview, but left at the end of the then current term. Seven boys and 4 girls did not leave at the expected time—that is, they remained at school after the end of the term in which they were interviewed: of these, 4 boys and 1 girl remained at school for an extra year. Two boys had birthdays during the 1959 summer holidays and left after completing only three years at secondary school. The overall position is given in Table 6.

Taking into account the social backgrounds of the respondents and their abilities and aptitudes then, and having regard to the type and

TABLE 6
TIME OF LEAVING SCHOOL

	Boys	Girls
Left at first statutory opportunity	87	90
Stayed on for one or two terms	9	9
Stayed on until the age of 16	4	1
Totals	100	100

level of employment which they entered, it would seem unlikely that they are unrepresentative of fifteen-year-old secondary modern school-leavers. Although the number of children concerned is small, it is reasonable to suppose that their experiences and attitudes are largely of the same order as those of their contemporaries who, like them, enter the world of work immediately or soon after they are statutorily permitted to do so.

THE SCHOOLS AND THE AREAS

THE 5 schools and the areas which they served varied in many ways. In this chapter the schools are considered in turn—the buildings and their settings, the aims which they sought to achieve, the home backgrounds of their pupils, the local employment opportunities, and the type of work entered by leavers. The objects of this survey are, firstly, to describe more fully the nature of the sample and, secondly, to elucidate some predominant themes in the interactions between home, school and work. Some basic facts are given in Table 7.

There were respondents in all Intelligence Grades at each school. The numbers in each category are small, and the pattern of distribution is not clear-cut. However, there tends to be a concentration of children in each school in the two middle grades—which may broadly be said to comprise most of the “average” children who are the bulk of the secondary modern population.

There were markedly more Grade 1 and 2 children in School E than in the other four schools, whilst School C had a comparatively high proportion of Grade 4 boys. In both cases this is in keeping with the general position in the schools so far as this could be assessed. Accepting the limitations imposed by small numbers it would seem that the sample fairly satisfactorily represents the schools.

Schools, directly and indirectly, influence children in their job aspirations, and differences in social backgrounds imply differences in job aims and in attitudes to work. The employment scene in the immediate locality exerts an influence upon children—attracting them towards the steelworks down the road or repelling them from it, familiarizing them with certain sorts of occupations and leaving them vague about or ignorant of others, enabling them to work nearby or making it necessary for them to travel to areas in which there are more jobs. It might thus be presumed that there would be distinctive patterns relating to the employment taken up by the children from the five schools. The ways in which the various social forces interact with each other and act upon the children, are, however, complex, and the areas served by the schools were not homogeneous. All of the schools were secondary modern, furthermore, and all of the

TABLE 7
HOME BACKGROUNDS OF RESPONDENTS AT THE FIVE SCHOOLS

	Schools					Totals (Boys and girls)
	A	B	C	D	E	
Fathers' Occupations:						
Professional/Managerial	1	0	0	0	11	12
Minor managerial	2	4	0	0	5	11
Clerical	3	2	1	3	1	10
Skilled	11	14	10	12	9	56
Semi-skilled	21	14	20	18	9	82
Unskilled	1	6	8	7	4	26
Not known	1	0	1	0	1	3
Father works in steel/engineering	20	25	24	22	9	100
Father works in steel/engineering on shop floor	16	22	23	21	5	87
Manual workers other than steel/ engineering	17	12	15	16	17	77
Mother a full-time worker (Int. 1)	5	9	7	8	5	34
Mother a part-time worker (Int. 1)	13	15	8	11	15	62
House owned by parents	13	7	2	2	17	41
Size of household*						
up to 4	29	20	19	24	26	118
5	8	11	10	6	8	43
6 and over	3	9	11	10	4	37
Parents aged 40 or under (Int. 1)	32	16	27	18	24	117
Member of family attended selective school	12	6	1	7	19	45

*Two respondents from school E were living in Institutions.

areas, being situated in Sheffield, were subject to the imprint of the industrial structure of the city. Whilst each school presented characteristics which distinguished it from the others, therefore, there were many things common to them, and there were variations within each area as well as between them. The relationships between jobs obtained and school, social background and local employment opportunities are accordingly not straightforward. Nevertheless, the impact

HOME, SCHOOL AND WORK

TABLE 8
INTELLIGENCE GRADES BY SCHOOLS

	A		B		C		D		E	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Grade 1	2	5	6	7	1	5	6	4	7	10
Grade 2	7	8	4	6	7	7	6	5	8	7
Grade 3	9	5	9	6	6	6	6	10	3	2
Grade 4	2	2	1	1	6	2	2	1	2	1

of the factors peculiar to each school and area upon jobs taken up can be demonstrated.

With only 20 boys and 20 girls from each school it could not be expected that an analysis of the occupations which they took up would by itself be very fruitful. Accordingly, an analysis was made of all of the children who left the five schools during the five-year period from 1955 to 1959, and the occupations first entered by the respondents have been considered in this context. (One school was not opened until just before the start of this five-year period, and another was not opened until shortly afterwards. The numbers of children leaving these schools were therefore small for the first two or three years. The total numbers of boys concerned at the 5 schools were as follows: 268, 647, 300, 288, 172. The total numbers of girls were: 275, 686, 425, 355, 178. Some sixteen-year-old leavers are included. One other limitation upon this analysis is that it is based upon records which were kept by the Youth Employment Service for another purpose: for this reason there are some gaps in the data, but it is thought that this fact does not materially affect the analysis.)

The occupations entered by respondents on the whole corresponded closely with the pattern which emerged from the analysis of the five-year period. From this data, and from the field-work, it is possible

TABLE 9
FIRST JOBS ENTERED, BY SCHOOLS

	A	B	C	D	E
% of boys entering steel/engineering 1954-9	37	42	49	48	29
Number of respondents (out of 20)	5	8	12	9	6

to sketch the sorts of ways in which employment is affected by school and social background.

Steel and engineering were important occupations for boys in all five schools. Apart from steel and engineering, no single occupation accounted for a large number of boys in the sample; this was also the case over the five-year period. The importance in the sample of building, painting/decorating, and woodwork, and to a lesser extent of van boy, shop assistant and motor mechanic was, however, reflected in the figures relating to the period 1955-9. A fairly high proportion of boys in the sample, and in the five-year period, became apprentices.

TABLE 10
APPRENTICES, BY SCHOOLS

	A	B	C	D	E
% of boys obtaining apprenticeship in first job 1954-9	46	43	38	46	42
Number of respondents	9	12	9	8	11

Clerical work for boys carries high status in some homes, and is scorned in others. The same was true of shop assistant as a boy's occupation.

The overall importance of clerical work, shop assistant and factory

TABLE 11
BOYS ENTERING CLERICAL WORK, BY SCHOOLS

	A	B	C	D	E
% of boys entering clerical work 1954-9	5	3	3	3	8
Number of respondents	0	0	0	0	2

TABLE 12
BOYS ENTERING WORK AS SHOP ASSISTANTS

	A	B	C	D	E
% of boys entering work as shop assistants 1954-9	6	3	3	2	11
Number of respondents	2	0	1	0	1

work for girls, evident in the sample, was confirmed by the analysis of the five-year period.

TABLE 13
GIRLS' OCCUPATIONS, BY SCHOOLS

	A	B	C	D	E
% of girls entering clerical work 1954-9	38	33	29	32	33
Number of respondents	6	4	2	7	2
% of girls taking commercial courses 1954-9	14	3	2	2	18
Number of respondents	2	1	1	1	8
% of girls becoming shop assist- ants, 1954-9	25	22	26	25	22
Number of respondents	5	7	5	4	3
% of girls entering factory work 1954-9	9	35	33	29	7
Number of respondents	2	3	8	7	2
% of girls entering other work 1954-9	14	7	10	12	20
Number of respondents	5	5	4	1	5

Numerical comparisons relating to the respondents are made difficult not only because the numbers involved are small but because the same thing may be done for different reasons. One boy may become an apprentice because he lives near the steelworks and called in on the off-chance, whilst another may get an apprenticeship only after long negotiations between his father and business friends. The following analysis rests upon observation and discussions: the figures are illustrative rather than the basis of the argument.

SCHOOL A

School A is set in its own grounds, with trees and hills and playing fields. It was opened in the early 1950's, and is a mixed school, with 750 pupils. The classrooms are large and airy, and there are good laboratories, a panelled library and a well-equipped gymnasium. The Entrance Hall is elegant, and leads into an imposing Assembly Hall. The long stage curtains and the electric fittings help to make Speech

Days and Concerts impressive occasions. The Hall is used exclusively for the purposes for which it was intended, and is not converted into a dining room each day: meals are taken in comfort in the rooms provided, and there is thus no inconvenience and disturbance of the school routine such as that occasioned in many schools by the need to lay out tables in the hall or classrooms. There is an atmosphere of colour, light and cleanliness. Some children move to the school from older junior schools, but there is a new junior school in the same district.

The newness of the school is the keynote to the area which it serves. There are some inter-war houses, many of them privately owned: the majority are semi-detached, and they are occupied by lower-middle class families and by skilled workmen. Thirteen of the respondents were from these houses; most of the remaining respondents lived on the large post-war Corporation housing estate which was built round the nucleus of the private housing. The families of these children had moved to the estate during the previous ten years. The houses are clean and fresh, laid out in "modern" style—with kitchen facing onto the street, and a living room looking onto the gardens at the rear. The houses are much less cramped than most inter-war Corporation housing development. Some of the houses are semi-detached, but most are in blocks of four or more. All have gardens, and there are plenty of open-spaces on the estate—although many were not laid out at the time of the research. There was concern amongst some residents, exemplified in a letter to the local newspaper complaining that young people were not treating the grass borders to the roads and the newly planted trees with sufficient care—and that the standards of neatness on the estate were thus in danger.

The inhabitants of the estate came from all parts of Sheffield, having qualified for a house by placing their names—usually a long time previously—on the waiting-list. They were working-class people, and many of them had lived in furnished rooms or with in-laws, longing for the time when they would have their own home. They had saved up to buy new furniture when they moved in, and they took a pride in their homes—a pride which was reflected in the cleanliness and polish, in the neatness of the gardens and in constant application to home decorating. They were determined that, at last, they would have "a nice home". The parents were young, on the whole—many had married during or just before the war. Thirty-two of the 80 parents were aged forty or under at the time of Interview 1: this represents the highest proportion of young parents in the five schools. Families tended to be small—29 households had 4 members or less, and only 3 had 6 or more. There was a high number of "only" chil-

dren—11. The small size of the families in part reflects the fact that parents were young: families were not completed. It is also probable that the fact of living in furnished rooms or with relations had denied the opportunity to some of these parents to have as many children as they would have wished. Small families were also a matter of policy, however: women were not to be borne down by an endless succession of children—their husbands did not want this, and the wives would not have it. Parents were seeking a higher standard of living, furthermore, and hoped to give their children opportunities—they saw large families as being a hindrance to such aspirations. Parents were young, then, houses were new, families were small and things were at a beginning.

This was a dormitory area. There were some factories on the fringe providing a little employment, and there were coal mines a little farther afield. A few local shops provided employment, mainly for women and girls, but most workers travelled out of the district each day.

The fathers of 6 respondents were managerial or clerical workers: the remainder were manual workers. A quarter of them—about the same as in the other schools—were skilled, and over half were semi-skilled. Half the men worked in steel and engineering, 16 of them on the shop floor. Nearly one half of the mothers went out to work, but only 5 were employed full-time: the main occupations were factory work and cleaning.

A fairly high proportion of respondents—12 out of 40—were from homes in which a parent, brother or sister had attended a selective school: in 5 cases either or both parents were the persons concerned. The majority of fathers had left school at the age of fourteen however—and a few had left before that age. "Education" did not mean a lot to them personally—but they were, many of them, keen for their children to do well at school, especially their sons. The newness of their homes and surroundings had inspired a new outlook, given rise to a realization that there were fresh opportunities opening up for them and their children: they wanted "the kids" to benefit—and were anxious to "do the best you can for them". They did not know quite how to set about helping their children, but were ready to co-operate with the school, and keen to have advice. They were prepared to turn the T.V. set off in the through-lounge if it would help their sons to study. In general, parents looked to the school for a lead, and were ready to fall in with its suggestions. They were willing to comply with school standards in such matters as the wearing of uniform by the children, and supported school activities not only by indicating

their approval of them to their children but by turning up on Prize-giving Day and at the Carol Concert.

In the privately owned houses around which the estate was built, lower middle-class values obtained. At school, children from such homes played with children from the new estate. The estate parents met the older inhabitants, or at any rate observed their ways, and set their standards by them. In this way, also, the malleable new-comers were shaped in the direction of higher hopes for their children. Those parents who had no special wish for their children to "get on" were for the most part concerned, at least, that they would not fall back. They need not become kings, but they must not become serfs.

Some parents were preoccupied with the school achievements of their children, and forever sounded the praises of education. The majority, whilst valuing the efforts of the school, were down to earth. They held no brief for education for the sake of education: it must be of practical use—doing well at school was important for children primarily in so far as this was a preliminary to doing well at work. There was therefore some scepticism (which the school was seeking gradually to modify) about the value of children staying on beyond the age of fifteen: the prevalent view was that, no matter how good the education was, there were surely limits, and it was important for a child to get established in a decent job and begin life seriously. A sensible education was one which would lead to a "good steady job", with modest prospects—something, if possible, a little better than father had.

All, then, was new. In such a situation the school had to set out to establish itself—to become an accepted part of the community. Consciously, it did so through the initiation of activities—sports, hobbies, clubs and school camps—which it hoped would become part of the school tradition. Every opportunity was taken of strengthening the bonds between the school and parents, and the school and the local community as a whole. The school was starting from scratch: it faced the task of building itself up. It had fine amenities, and it set out to give its children a secondary education, unfettered by previous associations with "elementary" or "senior" schooling. The school was able to benefit from the latent goodwill of the people in the neighbourhood. There was no grammar school nearby which would continually attract the eye of the aspiring parent and invite comparisons adverse to the secondary modern school—not that many parents did not hope that their children would be successful in the "11-plus", but there was no actual building in their midst which would constantly nag upon their minds—"if only . . .". The fine buildings of the secondary modern school were on the other hand, quite apparent. There was

goodwill towards the school and the parents were receptive to new ideas: the school sought to harness this interest. To an extent, the school was able to dictate its terms, to give a lead. In a new community, still working its way into a pattern of life, the school did not come up against the deep-seated predilections and prejudices which often characterize older established areas.

There were very few facilities for entertainment locally. There was a cinema, and dances were held in the Church Hall: there were also several Public Houses. Most people, however, teenagers in particular, travelled out of the area for their entertainment. Younger people had to establish their leisure-time pursuits just as adults had to work out their whole new way of life. The school responded to this situation—directly, by encouraging its pupils to participate in hobbies and clubs and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and indirectly by fostering community activities, making the school available for local activities and co-operating with the Churches. The school was situated fairly centrally on the estate, and this helped it to become accepted as a focal point. In all sorts of ways the idea of a community was developed: at a prize-giving ceremony the caretaker, cleaners and school-meals helpers were all thanked for their contributions to the good of the school. Thus did the school extend its boundaries into the locality, and thus were local citizens drawn into the ambit of the school.

In giving a lead, however, the school necessarily took cognisance of the attitudes of parents and the abilities of its pupils. It was a *secondary modern* school, after all, and it did not expect all its pupils to be brilliant scholars: the parents, too, were for the most part working-class, and, whilst many were sympathetic towards education, by no means all were persuaded that schooling beyond the age of fifteen was worth while. The school was not a grammar school, and the fact was recognised. There was an anxiety in the school that those children who were capable of doing well in academic subjects should be given the opportunity. But not too much was expected of the majority—and there was an appreciation of the dangers of over-taxing children's ability and parent's willingness to co-operate. In the interests of the body of pupils as a whole a G.C.E. course was abandoned because it diverted too many of the scarce school resources—notably in staff—to a minority of the more able boys and girls: instead the Royal Society of Arts examination, which was within the reach of a larger number of children, was developed. Children were encouraged to remain at school beyond the age of fifteen, but this policy was not allowed to dominate the school's curriculum. The main concern of the school was the mass of "average" children who would leave as

soon as they were able. Children were taken at their worth—those who were not academically bright were encouraged to develop their other qualities. Allowing for the fact that some brighter children remain at school for an extra year, the sample is reasonably representative of the school, although it may be rather *underweighted* with Grade 1 boys and *overweighted* with boys in Grade 3. The school grew up with its pupils—fifteen-year-olds were treated appropriately, and not as if they were thirteen or seventeen. Girls were treated as teenage girls, and a touch of lipstick in the evenings was not only not criticized, but not regarded as wrong. Mutual respect between the sexes was encouraged, not least by the example of the mixed staff, which had many young members.

The school aimed at ensuring minimum standards of educational competence and encouraged maximum standards. As a “social” task, the school tried to instil a sense of individual responsibility—whether as prefect or ordinary pupil (some prefects were selected by the head teacher, others were elected by the children). The importance of smartness was impressed upon boys, and girls were inspired to a pride in their personal appearance, at the same time as their awakening interest in clothes was becoming apparent. Fashionable skirts and sweaters were accepted, but the idea that clothes which were “indecently tight” spoiled the effect was implicit and conveyed. Children were reminded of their responsibility to the school as a community, and encouraged to think of the reputation of the school, and of the task which it had of building up a respected name. For the staff—as in most secondary modern schools—success was not dramatic, and was not measured by the number of “A” level passes or distinctions at ordinary level: at the same time, the staff could think of “education” in a wide sense, rather than in terms of an examination syllabus.

The school was, then, moderately ambitious. It aimed high within realistic limits. It did not expect too much, but hoped to achieve the best that the children were capable of, that their parents would accept, and that the school could offer.

The outlook of the school towards the employment of its pupils was in keeping with the modest aims of many of the parents—the hope that the child would “do well”. Children whose parents were less interested were encouraged by the school to aim a little higher than they otherwise would have done. The school’s aspirations for its pupils were level-headed, “sensible”. Children were urged to get as good a job as possible within their capabilities. There were few school activities directly associated with vocational matters, although there was an extended course for children intending to enter clerical work. Children were, however, advised to take the local Further Education

Qualifying Examination during their last year, because of its usefulness to those who enter jobs in which further education is necessary. Works visits, to familiarize children with a variety of occupations, were not given prominence. Careers literature was available, though not pressed upon children. Teachers advised and informed as part of their general personal relationships with the pupils, rather than as a part of the time-table. They made suggestions about employment, and always emphasized the desirability of getting a worthwhile job—"not just anything": and they emphasized the importance, in choice of employment as in all other things, of *thinking*. The Youth Employment Officer was welcomed to the school as an equal and as an expert. The careers of ex-pupils were followed with interest. Future employment was not a matter which *permeated* the school, however—and, because of the isolation of the area from places of employment, children tended not to be well-informed about the world of work. Because of the attitudes and demeanour encouraged in the school, on the other hand, children tended to approach work with confidence—this was a notable way in which the school prepared the youths and girls for work: personal qualities which would make the children acceptable as citizens and employees were developed.

The school had made its mark upon the area, then, and had succeeded in raising the job aspirations of many of its pupils as well as ensuring that they were qualified for the jobs at which they aimed. It was not all plain-sailing, and the school could be said to have been defeated by some homes, and to have made only a marginal impression upon the children from others: but in many cases the lead given by the school was welcomed.

Whatever jobs boys entered it was likely that they would have to travel out of the area. There was a bus service to the steelworks, but boys could equally well make a journey into the city, where a whole range of jobs was open to them. Although many fathers worked in steel, the occupations of people living on the estate were much more varied than in the areas served by Schools B, C and D: coming from all parts of the city, parents were not rooted in any one particular industrial framework: their sons, in turn, entered a variety of jobs. Steel and engineering nevertheless had a hold—and a hold which was welcomed by many boys, especially apprentices: but it was a less firm grip than that which it imposed upon areas B, C and D. Over a third of the boys entered steel and engineering during the five-year period, and 5 of the 20 respondents. Many parents, backed up by the school, encouraged their sons to seek apprenticeships: if they could not get them in the steel and engineering industry, then parents would think twice about letting their sons enter this work at all. Labouring or

machine operating were not really good enough—it was thought to be far better to seek work in which there were prospects. Forty-six per cent of the boys obtained apprenticeships over the five-year period, and 9 of the respondents. A trade was highly valued for a boy, and the more aspiring parents set their eyes on draughtsmanship: office work was also a valued job to some, but a trade was felt to be more safe—“a trade in his fingers” was frequently referred to as the best insurance a workman could have. “Dead-end” jobs were frowned upon. Five per cent of the boys had entered clerical work during the previous five years, and although no respondents took first jobs in this occupation, the 2 boys who changed to it during the year were from this school. Clerical work was a real alternative to an apprenticeship in the view of several parents, since it offers prospects, security and social status—and is clean. Shop assistant, too, is clean and “respectable” work: it does not involve arriving home with greasy hands, and you can go to work wearing a collar, tie and suit. It is a job in which there are prospects of getting on nowadays, and there is a good chance of becoming a manager in time. Two respondents, and 6 per cent of the boys over the five-year period entered such work. Whether son or daughter was concerned parents were anxious to fall in with their children’s wishes: “what they want” was of central, and often of decisive importance, in determining the occupations which the respondents aimed at. There were no airs and graces about these parents: what they did hope for, and to an extent worked towards, was that their children would do well within secondary modern limits.

SCHOOL B

School B is organized in separate boys’ and girls’ departments, with approximately 500 pupils in each. It was built midway between the two wars, but all of its primary “feeder” schools are much older. In its day it was a model school, but compared with more recent buildings it is very much second best. It is overcrowded, and some overflow classes are held in halls in the neighbourhood. There is little room to move in the school: each square foot of space and every cupboard must be allocated with care. The view from the asphalt playground is of chimneys and factory roofs, rows of small houses and a network of railway lines and main roads. The setting is of grey and yellow smoke, sometimes flecked red by a penetrating sun. To stand in this playground is to know that Sheffield is an industrial city. Most of the children were from artisan homes, but the area served by the school is very mixed. The school itself is situated on the fringe of the city centre, in a “zone of deterioration”—a part of the city in which large

old houses, and many smaller ones, have crumbled over the years: at the time of the research many of them were scheduled to be demolished to make room for new housing. Many children who attended the school lived in small "two up, two down" back-to-back houses, and some lived in larger houses which had been converted into flats. The school also catered for a residential area—mostly of medium sized houses built early in the century—and there were some inter-war semi-detached houses. The parents of 7 respondents owned their homes. The families of most of the respondents had lived in the area for many years: some parents longed for the day when they would be able to move to a "better district", others were impatient for the time when new houses would be available nearby: most were content with their homes and their neighbourhoods.

There is no focal point common to this mixed area. There is a small park and some open land strewn with rubble, much of it awaiting building development. The few local cinemas and cafés are concentrated in one part, and most of the shops are in the same district. There are several Working Men's Clubs dotted about the area, which is also well provided with Youth Clubs. The differences within the area are well-known to the children, who distinguished between "those who are all out for the money they can get, and take any job they can find" and those who are "more interested in finding work in which they could practise a craft", between those who "drop their h's" and those who "speak properly", those who "put it on" and those who are "ordinary, average people". In such a situation, children abided by the principle of "choosing who you mix with"—although the layout of the area is such that, out of school, contacts with people from other backgrounds were not usual.

Compared with the other schools there was a large proportion of middle-aged and older parents: only 16 out of nearly 80 parents were aged forty or under at Interview 1. Households were larger than in all other schools except School C, which is also an industrial area. Only half of the households were of 4 people or less and in many of these older sons and daughters had left home; nearly a quarter (9) of the households had 6 or more people. There were, however, 10 "only" children amongst the respondents: the parents of most of these were consciously striving to maintain standards: some lived in "the better parts", others sought to rise above their surroundings, and the vision of one day moving to the other side of town was never far from their thoughts: indeed, several fathers—clerical workers, foremen and chargehands—had this as a main objective, and saved towards it. Only 6 respondents were from homes in which someone had received a selective education (1 parent, 4 brothers and 1 sister): parents

were essentially manual workers, and they evaluated education in practical terms—pen and book were as nothing when compared with chisel and saw.

The world of the manual industrial worker saturated most of this area. Where there were no factories there were, for the most part, houses which were obviously occupied by factory workers. "I like the people", said one boy, "but in a way I would like to move—for there is the steelworks up the hill, the Gas Company on the corner, a brewery across the road and the railway at the back." It was, as he remarked, "a right set-up". There were no pretences: this is a working world, and these people looked upon themselves as workmen in it. The fathers of 25/40 respondents worked in steel and engineering (22 of them on the shop floor), and so did many relations, friends and neighbours. One-third of all the fathers were skilled workers, another third were semi-skilled, and 6 were unskilled. Of the remainder, 4 fathers were in minor managerial occupations and 2 were clerical workers. There were more mothers at work than in any other school. Nine of the 24 were employed full-time, most of them, like the part-time workers, as cleaners and domestic helps.

There were many local opportunities for boys and girls in factories, warehouses, shops and offices—and the city centre was not far away.

A small proportion of parents were very keen for their children to "do a little better" than was usual in the neighbourhood—to rise above their surroundings. They were not wildly ambitious, but hoped that their children would take jobs which would one day enable them to move out of the area and settle down in a nicer part. Fathers in skilled jobs—of whom there were more in this area than in the other four—were hopeful that their sons would emulate them, or perhaps go one better by becoming highly skilled pattern makers or draughtsmen. These parents adopted the principle of "doing the best you can for the kids". They liked to indulge in "socially desirable" jobs for their daughters, and were ready to pay for a commercial course and to forego earnings whilst the girls studied. Selective education was not a burning issue, however: some had been disappointed that their children "failed" the 11-plus, but most took the view that there were plenty of worthwhile jobs which did not depend upon going to grammar school: they wanted their children to be happy and settled at work, but they did not seek the earth. The emphasis was upon practical jobs for boys—jobs where you acquired a high degree of skill, jobs that were obviously useful. Academic schooling was not understood and would have been considered irrelevant. A "socially" nice job was all that was asked for the girl—and you don't need selective education for that.

Another set of parents was as unconcerned about the children's employment as about their education. They were feckless, and kept boys and girls—particularly the latter—away from school for the slightest reason: conversely they would send children to school when they were obviously unwell—and the head teacher could not send them home because mothers were out at work. These parents had no job preferences for their children—anything would do.

The largest group of parents thought in terms of their children taking solid working-class jobs such as they themselves had. They took a benevolent interest in the children's activities and performance at school, without ever assigning special importance to education. School was seen as a preliminary to work—part of the order of life—but not as a preparation for it. They did not think of jobs in terms of status—it was nice if a boy did get an apprenticeship but parents were not put out if he did not, or if he got one and then left the job. These people got on with the business of living, not expecting and not getting a lot out of life—and not enquiring into it. They did not think in terms of "good" or "bad" or "suitable" jobs—but only of work in the mass. It was nice if the children "got what they wanted", but apart from this it was not important what jobs children entered: there was certainly no problem as far as girls were concerned—their function is to have babies and look after the home, so what does it matter what occupation they enter, so long as the wage is reasonable? Since there were plenty of shop and factory jobs going in the area, it seemed only sensible for the girls to go into this work. Parents were well-intentioned, but lacked both a knowledge of and an interest in work for their children. The children, for their part, also made little fuss about jobs.

In the boys' department of the school, the approach was utilitarian, unpretentious, down to earth. It was realized that, with few exceptions, the boys would enter manual jobs. This was what they were used to at home—their relations, friends and neighbours were skilled and unskilled workers, many of them in the nearby factories. The school accepted the inevitable. It deliberately emphasized the industrial scene in which it was set but strove to ensure that the boys would get the best possible jobs within this context. The youth who would otherwise have been contented with a routine job as a machine operator was persuaded to aim at an apprenticeship, the youth who wanted to be a butcher's boy was advised to study at Evening School and become qualified. The school always had one eye on the future jobs of its pupils—the practical value of studies was never lost sight of. A substantial number of parents could see the benefit of apprenticeships, and were thus in sympathy with what the school was doing.

The remaining parents—or at any rate their children—could be wooed over to education by stressing the practical approach, indicating all the time that mathematics would be useful in this way, and science in that.

Overcrowding and pressure on the available staff made the provision of extended courses dubious, especially since the demand from parents and pupils was small: the really bright boys were encouraged to stay on at school to study for the Royal Society of Arts examination, however, and were given individual tuition. For most boys, taking an apprenticeship at the age of fifteen was held out as a very worthwhile aim. The importance of continuing education after leaving school was urged on these boys, and towards this end they were encouraged to take the Further Education Qualifying Examination. Fifteen was considered a sensible age for leaving because the boys had little inclination for school, because there was but sparse support in the homes for schooling beyond that age, because the boys felt ready to start work, and because an apprenticeship with part-time studies would launch boys into a worthwhile career. Those boys for whom a job in steel and engineering was not automatic (automatic because they and their parents did not think in terms of them entering any other sort of work) were encouraged to seek a trade in such occupations as motor mechanic and painting/decorating. The school gave emphasis—as part of its vocational orientation—to works visits, and these were integrated with Social Studies lessons: school visits were something more than an afternoon out of the classroom.

The school had its own employment questionnaire, which each boy filled in during his last year at school. This enabled the boys to clarify their ideas about work, was a guide to the teachers, and served as a preparation for the interview with the Youth Employment Officer. The Youth Employment Officer was seen to be performing a useful service; placement was a serious business and an important conclusion to school life. The school co-operated with the Youth Employment Service, and complemented its work. The school itself had contacts with employers, and placed some boys in jobs.

Eight respondents, and 42 per cent of the boys over the five-year period entered steel and engineering. That a smaller percentage of boys entered steel and engineering compared with Schools C and D is attributable to the abundance of other employment opportunities in and near the area. Twelve respondents and 43 per cent of all the boys became apprentices—proportions which testify to the success of the school in raising the aspirations of many boys. Clerical work and shop assistant were not sought—white collar jobs scarcely seemed like

work at all to these boys: no respondents, and only 3 per cent of all the boys entered each of these occupations.

The girls' department was very conscious of social matters. Long rows of terraced houses led up to the schools' entrance: houses were caked in soot, though there were some brave attempts at neatness revealed in the worn but whitewashed front doorsteps. In such an environment, what could you expect of children but a limited outlook upon life? But the school must keep trying, no matter what the odds—it must fight back against the muck, rally the forces of what is clean and pure, right and just. The school would be constantly vigilant, a force to be reckoned with. Children must not be allowed to succumb to evil or temptation. The emphasis was upon training "nice" girls, who were polite and would not lose their virginity too lightly. Strict discipline was enforced towards this end, discipline which would lead to self-control and self-respect. G.C.E. and R.S.A. were regarded as irrelevant to the needs of all except a few. They were unrelated to the jobs which the girls would assuredly enter. It was no use day-dreaming: few of these girls would become secretaries, many would become warehouse workers. The important point was that they should work at a good warehouse, instead of taking the first job that came along, and should know how to behave towards employers and other workers. Broadly speaking, 'A' stream girls were considered to be suitable for clerical jobs, 'B' stream for shop assistants and 'C' stream for factories and warehouses. It was of no avail for a dull girl to say that she wanted to be a secretary, or for her mother to come queening it at the school with the demand that such a job be found; it was foolish for a girl to aim at shorthand/typing when she was known to be incapable of correct spelling. The idea of "status" jobs was fiddlesticks, and quickly dismissed—a girl should be content to do the work she was suited for to the best of her ability, and should be proud of being a person, irrespective of the job. It was ridiculous to aim above what you could do well—and it should always be remembered that even a dunce can be honest, cheerful and kind. Whatever the occupation, however, there were plenty of bad jobs and plenty of good ones: the school tried to ensure that the girls entered good ones—where fair work met with just reward, and where there was no bad company—especially bad men—to put in jeopardy the standards towards which the school had striven over the years. The school itself placed many girls in "suitable" jobs—through personal contacts with employers, through combing the newspaper advertisements, and as the result of information from former pupils now happily at work. There was no nonsense, no circumvention. If an employer 'phoned up, and there was no girl of the standard required,

he was told so. If the girl's aim was considered to be unrealistic, *she* was told so—and so were her mother and the Youth Employment Officer. Bright girls were picked out for "plum" jobs. Unless their parents took a stand, or they themselves were adamant, other girls were likely to be recommended for jobs in accordance with the stream which they had been in at school. But they were urged to move—to take steps of some sort to find work. It was driven into girls and their parents, that, contrary to the view of many of them, the job which a girl took was important, not a matter of indifference. It was not so much the intrinsic satisfaction which the job might afford, but the tone which it gave to the life of the girl. The *place* of employment was more important than the *type* of work—for it was that which could continue the training of the school, or which could alternatively reduce its good influence to nought.

The parents of both boys and girls at this school were not, for the most part, great thinkers. The school tried to fill the vacuum. It had to fall in with what parents and pupils would take—but hoped all the time to make them more receptive to new ideas and perspectives. Whether by patient, modest persuasion and endeavour or by the forcefulness of argument to win a respect for the teachers' views and some compliance with them, the school tried to shape a better life for its pupils than would otherwise have been their lot.

SCHOOL C

This school was built at the turn of the century: it has separate departments, each with over 300 pupils. The children came there from two equally old and grey primary schools. The years and the smoke have darkened the school, but inside, bright paints do something to combat the rather prison-like mien of the corridors and stairways. There is a staff problem, the high proportion of stop-gap and "supply" teachers placing a great burden upon the nucleus of teachers—a burden made that much greater by the fact that the school sees as its main rôle the establishment of friendly relationships between the children and the staff. There was no sports ground nearby, and games were preceded by a long bus journey. The school had more than its share of pupils with old clothes, unwashed necks and dirty language. It is considered in the school that the pupils on the average are less intelligent than in many schools; there is, indeed, only one Grade 1 boy in the sample, although there are five Grade 1 girls.

The school serves a fairly wide area, but small terraced houses predominate, all of them much of a muchness, many with no bathroom or indoor sanitation. Street after street looks the same, the houses

interspersed with small corner-shops and waste land. Parts of the area are near-slum. The parents of only 2 respondents owned their houses, and both lived some distance from the school. Families tend to live in one downstairs room—in spite of its smallness, cooking and eating take place there, cats and dogs share what space there is and the television set is the focus of the room: the family washes at the sink in the corner. There is often a lot of noise in the home—television, parents, children and neighbours all contributing. Most of the families have lived in the district many years—parents themselves grew up in the area, and uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents abound in the neighbourhood. Steelworks—some of them immense and employing thousands of men—are to be seen at every turn. Rolling mills and the driving hammers send their noise resounding through the narrow streets. The noise in the home is a complement to that in the factories where the men work. As with the school, the dark grey exteriors of houses are in many cases relieved by bright wallpaper and paint inside, together with furniture made of light coloured wood (usually bought on “easy payments”). Although the factories take up a lot of space, the area is very densely populated—much more so than the other four areas. Behind the houses are shared yards, often filled with mongrels and nappies and gossiping women in hair curlers: there is much “neighbouring”—people in and out of each other’s houses, knowing each other’s business and helping each other out (perhaps by informing young Tom that there is a vacancy at the factory up the road). Children of all ages play in the streets. Dirty words and injunctions are scrawled on some walls. There is a community life—people live so close together, and have known each other as babes, adolescents, parents and old folk. Some, of the younger parents particularly, would like to move out to larger houses and cleaner areas. But the district and its people are dear to many, including respondents—the idea of moving to an estate was repellent: “I like it here because there are lots of people and because it’s noisy”, said one boy, “There’s no-one to talk to on an estate—it’s *country*.” Another boy said, “I wouldn’t like to live on an estate—it’s too quiet, and the next house is a mile off.” Neighbourliness tended not to extend, however, to the substantial number of immigrants in the district—there was some dislike of “the darkies” one boy saying of a local café, “It is run by *blackmen*—it shouldn’t be allowed: they don’t know how to run it—and it’s encouraging white girls to associate with blacks.” Some of the respondents’ families preferred not to have dealings with their neighbours—whether black or white: they “liked to keep themselves to themselves”. Being so close together there were endless chances of quarrels

—“the people next door bang a lot and don’t look after the garden—it is just like waste ground”. It saved trouble to keep a distance from such people, and preserved superiority.

There is a flourishing shopping and entertainments centre running through the area, and this is a regular rendezvous, especially for the younger teenagers (the older ones go into the city more). The district is in many ways self-contained—work and places for leisure are both close to the home: there is, indeed, an ignorance of—and indifference to—the outside world, including other parts of the city. Television programmes which deal with other things and places, even if watched avidly, go unregistered. Favourite programmes are music and singing, and these are not foreign—they are participated in at the local cinema and dance halls.

There was a fairly high proportion of young parents—27 out of 80. People in the area marry young, but remain in their parents’ houses or live nearby. There were also many middle-aged parents, however. Many families were large—only three respondents were “only” children, and a quarter of the respondents (11) were from households of 6 or more (the highest proportion in any of the schools). Babies were always much in evidence in the area.

Only 1 respondent was from a home in which someone attended a selective school. Even the idea of a child going to grammar school did not occur to many parents: “education” was something which was outside their experience, a matter of no interest—or of derision. The parent of 1 respondent was a clerk: the other parents were all manual workers, nearly three-quarters of them (28) semi-skilled or unskilled. Twenty-three of the 24 fathers who worked in steel were shop-floor workers, and many other members of the families did similar work in steel and engineering. The occupational picture for the area is well-conveyed in the words of the boy who said that men in his area worked as “coal merchants, iron and steel workers, scrap merchants and railway workers”. The men wore overalls—there were few white collars to be seen in this neighbourhood.

Fifteen mothers went out to work, 7 of them part-time: some mothers were tied down with young children, but the high earnings in the steel industry made work unnecessary for many mothers, especially those with grown-up sons living at home and bringing in a wage.

Some parents did look kindly upon the efforts of the school on behalf of their children. If it led to a decent job—say an apprenticeship in the Works—schooling was “alright within limits”. There was even affection for the school amongst some parents, who themselves had been pupils there: the school had always been part of the local

scenery, and had become a part of their lives. Book-learning was on the whole belittled, however—it is practical ability and know-how, and physical strength, that counts in steel.

Another group of parents were decidedly suspicious of school-teachers, and any other officials, come to that—any outsiders. They were wary of patronage, and cynical about education, the purposes of which were not understood. Schooling was sneered at—of what use is a book to a man who has got to earn a living? Resentment was felt at any attempt by the school to impose or induce alien standards—“getting at” the working-class again. School was not seen as having anything to do with work—and in any case work was not regarded as specially important, so that the idea of being prepared by school for work did not make sense. Children grew up with the same attitudes. Whilst amusement mixed with contempt was felt towards teachers as a body—all teachers—individual staff were accepted as friends, as persons. In spite of being teachers, children found, they were really quite nice in some ways.

In many other homes, there was indifference to school, and the subject of education rarely entered the mind. Children were kept away from school on any pretext—since school was not important, it did not matter. Life was a hand-to-mouth business, and people lived for the moment—pork on pay day and bread and lard in the middle of the week if need be. The idea of planning ahead—learning a trade or starting a career—was out of keeping with this approach to life. Children were allowed to do as they liked, partly because this was the easy way out, partly because of a positive desire to let the children have a good time, since they were “only young once”—a desire that was sometimes reinforced by the parents’ memories of their own dull childhood when times were less bountiful. Children were also expected, at a young age, to be able to stand on their own feet—mother had younger children at home who took up all the time she cared to devote to them. In any case, it was felt, young people should work their own lives out—one’s own life is too complicated, without having to advise other people (even the kids) how to lead theirs. Boys and girls looked forward to the time when they could leave school, start work—in any job—and earn a wage; and this seemed a perfectly sensible aim to parents: indeed, what else could you expect the kids to want?

Some families, whilst not having much truck with or time for the school when things were going reasonably smoothly, turned to it when there was trouble—just as the priest or local doctor might have been turned to in the past. Wives, especially, were inclined to seek the support of the school when the situation had got nasty—when they

were afraid to tell their husbands of the children's misdemeanours ("His father will kill him if he gets to know"). The question of blame did not arise ("Well, they shouldn't leave things on shop counters like that—what do you expect a kid to do?"), but the school was saddled with the responsibility of doing something—to keep the child out of trouble, and sort things out when he was in trouble. Police and Probation Officers were aware of this function of the school, and often worked through the head teacher.

The school, then, was confronted with parental inadequacy, indifference and suspicion, and with lack of interest in planning ahead. Children were disciplined inconsistently or not at all in their homes—and were spoken to (or shouted at) in a markedly different way from that at school. The philosophy of many parents was that of "making the best with what you've got": the school adopted the same principle, but in a more positive way. An "academic" approach was out of the question—laughably so. Even if it were possible to develop them with the limited facilities and space (there was no metal-work room), vocational courses would have been treated with suspicion and disdain by many—you get enough of work when you leave school, and who are they trying to kid that work can be interesting? The school saw its task to be that of extending the children's limited horizons and at the same time encouraging them towards "social responsibility", to make them aware of standards other than those by which they were daily enjoined in street and home. Not only did the school stress that table manners and speaking politely were important, and stealing not to be tolerated, but it tried to make the children understand why. The aim was to lessen the gap between school and home by finding common points of agreement: in this task the school set itself to amend in a few years and hours what had been inculcated into its pupils over many years in the home and neighbourhood. And the bright lights and back streets were strong attractions. The school staff were in a sense missionaries, and their guide was the Christian religion. There was a cheerful atmosphere in the school, such that many other policies would not have succeeded in inducing. But it was a constant fight against the odds, and it was realized that many children would be unscathed by all the school's attempts. The influence of the school was always tenuous, and whether it would survive after children had left school was doubtful: the head teacher was himself sceptical, but, as always, hopeful. Children "put up with" school, just as they would later put up with work: except that work did have *some* meaning—you were paid for it. The fact was that the basic assumptions of the home and the school were at variance: the school could only try to do a patch-up job. This it did to the best of its

ability. Not that the pupils should be regarded as a bunch of juvenile delinquents and their parents charged with child neglect: the school did not take this view of the position. Rather did it value many of the qualities of its pupils—their readiness to help other people out, their generosity over the faults of others, their close community ties, their sincerity and “honesty”—they lived from the guts, with no veneer, no pretence. The school did not wish to destroy these attributes but sought rather to capitalize them, extend them into new channels. The more intelligent and understanding boys were enlisted on the side of authority so that they might act as evangelists in the development of a better school spirit. The provision of full-length mirrors for girls, and the toleration of dyed hair, were part of the attempt to develop the girls’ femininity, to meet them half way, and to eradicate the tendency to hardness which was apparent in young women in the area, so soon laden with young families, their freedom gone.

Children were persuaded to respect people who looked different from themselves—it was explained that people who wore suits, sounded their aitches and did not prefix every other word with “bloody” were not necessarily their enemies or “queers”. The school met with many rebuffs—but it did not expect miracles and it kept trying. Pupils might be inclined to laugh behind their hands at the idea of “sitting properly” at the table for school meals, especially since they took meals at home with much less ceremony: domestic science classes which dwelt upon planned meals and morning coffee also had an unreal ring for the girls. Some pupils tended to the view that the friendly approach of the teachers was a case of false pretences—an attempt to make them work hard at lessons for which they held no brief, the offering in a silver goblet of a bitter drink. The head teacher was aware of this suspicion, and strove by patience to overcome it. Yet many pupils appreciated the teachers’ attempts to make them feel equal individuals, and respected the efforts of the staff to be “fair” in all things. There must be *something* in a master who will admit that he is sometimes wrong.

Attempts to foster parental interest were carried out hopefully, but with a realization that the task was huge. Fathers scarcely came to the school—“education” was a woman’s business. Mothers felt ill at ease in the presence of teachers, being suspicious, embarrassed and conscious of their inability to express themselves. One mother, discussing with the head teacher a wound suffered by her daughter, endured moments of agony to avoid using the word “bottom” which she felt the head would regard as indelicate, before hitting upon the word “*bum*”. Even willing parents were put off from visiting school because neighbours associated such visits with trouble—you only go

there if there is trouble, and to be able to say that you have never had to go to the school is something to be proud of. At any given time, the boys' department could reckon to have at least a handful of thugs: it could not devote much energy to them, but simply tried to keep them under control, hoping that they might mend their ways, and looking forward to the time when they would leave.

It was realized in the school that concentration upon the main body of pupils was hard on the few who had academic leanings and ability: efforts were made, by means of tutorials, to make up for this, and several children remained for an extra year to study for G.C.E. Staying on at school was not a live issue for the vast majority, however: most did not think about doing so, others realized that it would mean deliberately cutting themselves off from everyone else in the area, and doing without dances, smokes and cinemas.

The school tried to give help with regard to future employment in various ways. Indirectly, the aim was to encourage courtesy and give confidence in talking to others, so that a child would not feel out of place when in the company of an employer. Boys and girls were urged to "make the best of themselves" with regard to appearance—to dress tastefully, not to confront a prospective employer with "winkle pickers" which are abhorrent to him and typify for him the degeneracy of modern youth. A "right attitude" to work was recommended: School Assembly might be given over to the theme that an honest day's work was not only the employer's due but a reward in itself. The approach that "It's O.K. if it's in the firm's time" was denounced—not least because children advanced the parallel view that "It's O.K. if it's in the school's time." Laziness and "getting away with" things were wrong, whether at school or work. Ironically, the attempts of the school to prepare children for work by encouraging "responsible" attitudes resulted in disillusion in some cases: other people at work—bosses included—were not polite and reasonable: "It's not the same as it was at school, sir, they don't let you explain—they boss you about."

Children had a good knowledge of many aspects of factory work, especially steel and engineering, because they had been brought up in an industrial atmosphere. They knew from everyday experience what clothes were worn, what shifts were worked, and the language used. They had little knowledge of processes, however, and tended to be ignorant of jobs other than factory work. The school arranged some Works visits for the boys, but these were not a prominent part of its activities. Through personal contacts with employers, the head teacher placed some boys in employment. The school also tried to impress upon children the importance of the Youth Employment Ser-

vice: but the idea of vocational guidance was hard to get across—one job could not be much different from another, children thought. It was all work. And Youth Employment Officers must have led pretty sheltered lives if they thought you could *choose* a job. In practice, therefore, and with some exceptions, children only turned to the Y.E.O. when they were looking for jobs and other methods had failed: even then there was a good chance that it would not occur to them to seek the help of the Y.E.O.

More boys entered steel and engineering from this school than from any other—12 respondents and 49 per cent of all boys over the five-year period. Steel was a significant part of the life of the community, rather in the same way as the pit dominates a mining village: son follows father, and in his turn becomes a man of steel—there was some pride in doing “a man’s job”. Steel is not a job for the weak and ineffectual.

A considerable number of respondents in this study—from all schools—were in many ways indifferent about what occupation they would take up: it was not a matter of vital importance. Many, too, when the time to find work came, depended upon help from friends and neighbours, or called at firms on the off-chance. They were prepared to take whatever jobs were available—and the jobs which were obviously available were in the steel works midst which they lived. Those who wished to find other work had to make an effort to do so—perhaps travel out of the district. Work was not sufficiently important to most to merit such effort. Friends, relations and neighbours who were asked for help—or who volunteered it—were likely themselves to be working in steel, and to know more about jobs in this industry than in any other: whilst a boy who casually set out to find work by calling on the off-chance had not far to walk before he came to the gate of a steel factory. These reasons account largely for the fact that such a high proportion of boys from this school became steel and engineering workers. Although several boys left the industry during the year, it is likely that they—and others who at first entered different occupations—would find themselves back in it, probably by the age of eighteen, when a man’s wage could be earned. Nine boys became apprentices, but although a trade had been keenly aimed at by several boys, others just found themselves in apprenticeships without particularly having sought them: several of the latter gave up their apprenticeships within the year. Semi- and unskilled work was not looked down on. Over the five-year period, few boys entered clerical work from this school and few became shop assistants: one respondent entered the latter occupation. Both of these jobs brought a smile to the lips—they were cissy, a girl’s work.

Rather fewer girls became clerical workers from this school than from the others: shop assistant and factory and warehouse work seemed the obvious jobs to girls and their parents. There were many local opportunities, and this was the work which friends and neighbours did. Two girls who were offered clerical jobs turned them down, one because she preferred the companionship of factory work, the other because she considered office workers were "snooty". So far from according it a higher status, many girls, if they thought of office work at all, regarded it as inferior to manual work in shop and factory. Like the boys, they believed that *real* work involved dirt and muscles.

SCHOOL D

This school has over 600 pupils: although it is "mixed", the senior boys and girls did many of their lessons separately at the time of the research. It was built in the inter-war years, and is of a somewhat later vintage than School B, with an air of modernity: it has a gymnasium, laboratories and handicraft workrooms, and its own playing fields are adjacent. Nevertheless, the school is a little dowdy when compared with those built since the war. The external appearance is sufficiently impressive to announce that the school is meant to stand for something, however—although the message does not get across to many of the local inhabitants. The area served by this school is more homogeneous than is the case with the other schools. It consists mostly of a large, sprawling, inter-war corporation housing estate. Many of the original householders were moved to the estate as the result of slum clearance, and a substantial number of these still live there today. That life was a struggle in the early days of the estate is testified to by the school photographs of pupils in the inter-war years, the dress and appearance of the children reflecting a background of poverty and unemployment. Some of the residents still have fond memories of the communal life in the old back-to-backs. Most of the children had never known that sort of life, however; of the few who had, some resented the move, for the same reasons as the parents were nostalgic, but others were glad—as one girl said, "It is very nice here—I like it. Where I lived before it is stuffy and dirty with the factories and that. It is a pleasure to be up here—with fresh air, trees and scenery."

The corporation houses are of three or four basic designs, and a walk from one end of the estate to the other reveals little variation. There are, however, differences in the standards of upkeep applied by the residents: some keep their gardens neat, their curtains washed and floors polished: others care not about looking out on to weeds and stones, nor about their threadbare carpets and rickety chairs. Some

parents—including many of the younger ones—are consciously “on the rise” socially: they aim at more material possessions, and like to “keep themselves to themselves”. Lace curtains at the windows protect the domestic scene from the outside stare. Doors are only opened to neighbours when they knock and are a barrier between the one way of life and the other. The mother of one girl advised her not to mix with the other girls in the area “because they are fly”. Such people live in their island homes, not much noticed by the other inhabitants—who do, however, distinguish between “neighbours who are easy to get on with and some who are snobbish”. A number of other households stand out because of the neglect of the property: these are the few “families with a bad name” identifiable on most estates. The large mass of families are solid working-class, however—not concerned to rise in the social scale, but with a dignity which makes them deplore though tolerate those people who have “let things slide”. One end of the estate is considered to be better than the other—the secondary modern school is fed by two primary schools, and the one at the “better end” consistently sends a higher proportion of pupils to selective schools: in general, parents at this end regard themselves as superior to those at the other end, and they have higher aspirations for their children. It is at the “better” end, too, that the privately owned houses (which account for only 2 respondents) are situated: mainly lower middle-class people live in these houses.

Whilst there is variety in the home backgrounds of these children, the overall impression is one of uniformity. The area is rather drab, lacks cohesion, and has an air of purposelessness—in part due to the fact that there is next to no employment on the estate itself. There are a few public houses, a cinema, and a large park. But by no means all roads lead to them—there is no meeting place, no shopping centre. Even the school is tucked away in a corner. If they are going out for the night, people tend to go into the city—it does not take long on the bus—or into neighbouring areas, where there are dance halls and more life in general.

Many of the respondents' families have lived on the estate since before the war years, but some have moved there in recent years. A comparatively small proportion were “young” families—18 out of 80 parents were under forty years of age at Interview 1. There were a substantial number of large families—10 with 6 or more people. There were 7 “only” children, and over half of the households were of 4 people or less—but in many cases this last fact resulted from older brothers and sisters having married and left home. A large number of the families who had previously lived in slum clearance areas had

been employed in steel and engineering and many men still work in that industry, travelling on the buses which connect the estate with the steel works. Twenty-two of the fathers worked in steel, 21 of them as production workers. Many boys thought it natural to follow their fathers into the same work. Apart from 3 clerical workers, the fathers were in manual occupations, and only 12 were skilled men. The working-class nature of the estate was well expressed by one boy who said, "The people in the area are nearly all in steel—when I am doing my paper round, I see workmen waiting at the bus stop. They are all in dirty working clothes—there are no office workers in clean clothes." Nineteen mothers went out to work—mostly in factories and shops or as cleaners: 8 were employed full-time. Only 7 respondents had immediate relations who had received a selective education.

The environment provides no stimulus to these families, and the aimlessness and lack of imagination which characterizes the estate is reflected to some extent in the people who live there. With some exceptions, families have no ambitions for their children. "I'm not bothered", "couldn't care less" and "what's the use" are expressions which come readily to the lips. Young and old tend to drift—through school, into jobs, and out of them. Many parents who wanted to do the best they could for their children felt inadequate—they did not know *what* to do or how to set about doing it. For others, it was enough to keep up with day to day problems, never mind planning ahead.

The school is faced with an uphill fight—it tries to replace aimlessness with aspiration, makes efforts to arrest the drifting through life. Some local people believe that improvements in the standards of behaviour on the estate since pre-war days are in part attributable to the influence of the school: but the school still considers that there is a long way to go. It keeps plugging away, not expecting quick results, but pursuing a constant crusade. Many parents remain genial but unimpressed—it's all very well to have day-dreams about examinations and staying on until the age of sixteen, but this is not an ideal world; teachers always seem to have their heads in the clouds. The school is not up against direct opposition so much as apathy. Its response is to try to *sell* itself—to parents and to employers. If parents are doubtful of the value of bookwork, it must be demonstrated to them that study is worthwhile. Those children who do remain at school for an extra year must therefore be successful: parents must not be given the opportunity of saying, "I told you so". Examinations must be passed—and, even more important, better jobs must be obtained than is usual for the fifteen-year-old leaver. To make its mark, the school must be prepared to be unhurried. Only the most com-

petent children are encouraged to stay on at school, and then only after lengthy discussion, during which the risks of failure are stressed. On the other hand, all children are encouraged to complete the fourth year: the school only has them under its influence for a short while, and there is much to be done—the extra term or two could be used to advantage. Education, furthermore, must be made exciting and interesting: through impressing these children, the school might be able to explain itself to their parents. School trips—at home and on the continent—have made an impact upon this rather “dead” area, giving some pride: fancy a picture in the paper of our Jim at the station, on his way to Switzerland! Children returned with the realisation that geography and history were not just a textbook grind. Past pupils are encouraged to continue to participate in the school’s activities, the hope being that in this way the school will in time become consolidated as a vital part of the community. In all things, however, the school has to take the initiative. The school is always trying harder than the parents.

The school is involved in a considerable amount of social welfare work amongst the small core of “problem families”: the children of fathers who are dead, in prison or have deserted the home are always in need of help. A constant stream of children who are not tended at home for their illnesses is despatched to the school clinic. There is a recurring need for clothing, shoes and free meals for such children. Dealings with boys and girls from these homes can place a heavy burden on the teachers’ time and conscience. If a child is in trouble, the school feels that it must always support the parents, but the staff has often wondered whether the children do not think to themselves, “Teacher is a mug—he doesn’t understand these things.” And how can the teacher support both parents when they have just separated—how can he advocate politeness and fellow-feeling when the family is constantly arguing, perhaps settling the dispute with blows?

The head teacher felt strongly that employers were unaware of the progress which has been made in secondary modern schools, and still regarded any boy or girl who had attended such a school as second-rate. Another crusade, therefore, was to familiarize employers with secondary modern education. The school was concerned that its pupils should get worthwhile jobs. Careers displays were a feature in the senior pupils’ classrooms. Teachers talked about jobs during the course of ordinary lessons—the science teacher pointing out, for example, that the afternoon’s experiment was of direct importance to those boys who might be thinking of applying for an electrician’s job. Stress was laid upon the importance of the Y.E.O. interview—the point being made all the more emphatic because of the likelihood of

many children disregarding it. Children were encouraged to stick to their choice of work, and remain at school until it could be found, rather than leave and enter "any" job. There was a realization, however, that in spite of all the schools' efforts some children would take dead-end jobs.

There is no industry on the estate, but the area is fringed by a substantial number of small and medium-sized factories employing boys and girls, and the buses which were provided to take fathers to the large steel-works now convey young people as well. Nearly half of the boys over the five-year period entered steel and engineering (48 per cent) and 9 respondents took jobs in this industry. There was little concern for "status" jobs, but the aspiring parents set their eyes on apprenticeships for their sons, and some steelworkers also hoped that their boys would go one better than them and learn a trade. Eight respondents and 46 per cent of all the boys became apprentices. Clerical work and shop assistant were "cissy". There were some shops on the estate, but most of the girls who became shop assistants worked outside the area, some of them in the city. About the same proportions of girls worked in the three main categories as in Schools B and C: factory work was not considered to be inferior.

SCHOOL E

Like School A this is a post-war school, of a rather grand design: all is light and colourful. It is a mixed school, with over 700 pupils. It has extensive playing fields, and the open countryside is not far distant. A long drive winds its way up to the school entrance: any child who is passing through the vestibule when a stranger walks in will politely ask if he can be of help. The school is situated on the edge of the city and the nearby houses are large, detached and modern. The school is "on the right side of town", and a substantial number of its pupils are from middle-class and aspiring middle-class homes. Compared with the other schools a much higher proportion of respondents were from privately owned houses (17 out of 40). Most of the families were well established in the district where they lived, but some had moved in recent years. The school served two main areas.

The first ("Area I") was residential and suburban, with a high proportion of professional and managerial people, many of them affluent. Houses were detached or semi-detached: some were inter-war and a few were post-war. Nearly all were owner-occupied. No one wore overalls here, but many of the men possessed dinner-jackets. The children from a large number of these houses attended selective

schools or private schools—one girl described the people in her neighbourhood as follows—“Most of my friends in the district are at grammar school. After grammar school, girls and boys in the area go on to do medicine and law and to be almoners, pharmacists or physiotherapists. My neighbours do such jobs as managers at steelworks. The wives do not go out to work, on the whole”. A substantial number of children from this area—more particularly girls—did attend School E, however.

The second area (“Area II”) was “lower middle class-cum-respectable working class”. Houses were fairly large, “older-type”—perhaps four bedrooms, one of them converted into a bathroom. Some were rented, some privately owned. A number of families had moved to the area from less salubrious parts (the families of two respondents at other schools moved there from the other side of the city during the course of the research): this represents a modest but distinct move-up for the skilled working man, technician or clerk.

Nearly one half of the respondents (19) were from homes in which someone had received a selective education—and in half of these cases one or both parents were concerned. A high proportion of fathers were professional men or managers: one was a clerical worker. School E accounts for 11 of the 12 professional/managerial fathers, and 5 of the 11 who were in minor managerial jobs. Nevertheless, over one-half of the children were from working-class homes: 22 fathers were manual workers, 9 of them skilled. Only 9 fathers worked in steel and engineering, and 4 of these were at clerical or managerial level. These people lived a long distance away from the main steelworks, and this—together with the fact that such a high proportion were non-manual workers—accounts for there being so few men in the industry. Twenty mothers went out to work, 5 of them full-time. Some were cleaners and shop assistants, but there were some clerical workers and sales assistants. Many of these mothers worked because of the desire to maintain the material standards in the home which were normal in the neighbourhood.

Parents tended to take the business of bringing up children seriously: it was a matter for thought. They insisted upon certain standards of behaviour—in by 9.30 p.m., no lipstick for daughters until they had reached a “reasonable” age. The standards were sustained by the organizations—Church, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides—which parents encouraged their children to join. There were accepted, polite, customs—cards were exchanged at Christmas, children telephoned each other to arrange outings. As well as mixing at school, boys and girls from each area met at Church and Youth Club, in the parks and at Riding Schools,

In general, parents in both areas were sympathetic towards education—although some parents in Area II did not attach a great importance to the work of the school. In Area I, parents' thoughts turned automatically to grammar school. For them, secondary modern school was very much second best. Public school was a possibility for the children of some of the richer parents, and there were several private schools in the district. But some children ended up at secondary modern school, and, especially in the case of boys, parents were anxious. What sort of job would he get? Hopes were raised at the realization that the secondary modern school was such a fine building—perhaps things were not so bad after all: the chance of children getting a qualification had not passed by. There were signs, however, that some parents rejoiced too quickly and were later disillusioned. They did not always recognize the limitations of their children's ability and the school was blamed for turning out not to be a grammar school and for not making the children grammar school products. Many Area II parents looked to the 11-plus with hope—they very much wanted their children to go to grammar school. But with the new secondary modern school for them to go to, it was not such a disappointment if they did not do so. The opportunity for their children to remain at school until the age of sixteen was welcomed eagerly by many Area I parents, and looked upon kindly by others. It was normal for children in the area to remain at grammar school at least until the age of sixteen, and many who went on to University did not start work until they were over twenty. Educationally the extra year was valued, socially it was usual (and the done thing) for children to continue at school. There was no need at home for an extra wage—and some pride in the fact that this was so. The children themselves did not object—their friends and neighbours were still at school: they were not flashing wage packets around.

The extra year was also considered worthwhile by some Area II parents, but many were inclined to favour their children leaving school and starting to train for a good, secure job. For boys this meant an apprenticeship, a trade: no other manual work was acceptable. Overalls were alright for the boy who is learning a trade—but are a badge of failure for the one who is not. White collar jobs were more in keeping with the area. Clerical work and shop assistant (with prospects) were possibilities. For girls, a year on a commercial course (even if the fees meant a sacrifice—parents wanted to do the best they could for their daughters, and a course seemed a good investment). Sales assistant and hairdressing were highly favoured jobs—the important thing was for girls to have clean jobs, where they could wear nice clothes, speak properly, and not meet the wrong sort of people.

In both areas, parents were keen to give a good start in life to their children: parental resources were mobilised to assure a reasonable job—friends were contacted, words were put in. The boys must have a career, the girls a socially acceptable job. (One girl described the Commercial Course which she attended as “the last thing I wanted to do”: but her mother said, “it was the only possible thing”—and, in the context of the values of the neighbourhood, so it was—another girl summed up the position in the words, “On the other side of Sheffield they nearly all go into factories, but none of us in this school want to—we want good jobs. Those on this side of Sheffield usually go into shops and offices and not into factories”).

A high proportion of the respondents were in Intelligence Grades 1 and 2, and this in spite of the fact that many of the brighter children at the school remained for an extra year: the sample is rather *under-weighted* with Grade 3 children.

The school met the demand for education which was obvious in many of the parents of its pupils, and latent in others: parents were ready—anxious—to co-operate with the school, and encouraged it as it set out to establish itself. The school did not have to *prove* the value of education to parents: they accepted it as worthwhile. They would ensure quietness and heat and light for homework, and insist on their children doing it. Emphasis is given to “academic” courses, although children who are not adjudged to have the ability for examinations are not overlooked. A large number of children are entered for G.C.E. and R.S.A., and there is a high success rate. The starting point is that many children who “fail” the 11-plus are competent and should be given the opportunity of obtaining qualifications. For the “unacademic” children, there are classes which are more “practical” or “vocational”, and “remedial” classes help less able children. The attitude is that children should prove their ability: with the school and the home working together, they have a good chance of doing so. A high proportion of children remain at school beyond the age of fifteen: staying on is a possibility for all children, not just the more able—the school is organized in this way. The extra year is considered to be beneficial irrespective of whether an examination is taken or passed.

It is not all plain sailing, however: it never is in any school, least of all in one which is in its early years. Facilities do not *make* a school. Willing parents, willing pupils and willing staff can give a good start, but they have to be blended together. One handicap was the germ of dissatisfaction amongst some parents, referred to above, whose children had not passed the 11-plus: they supported the school alright, but how much better it would have been if it were a grammar school.

And there are a few "roughs" there. Children's "failure" was rationalized to "failure of the school"—any school—and by extension, the teachers. Some parents, then, expected more than they were entitled to expect from both their children and the school.

Another problem for the school was that some parents had to be convinced that "academic" education was right for their child—they thought twice about an extra year at school: that might be alright for a grammar school boy, but was it sensible for one from a secondary modern school? On the one hand were parents who expected more than was reasonable, on the other hand were those, who, whilst kindly disposed, did not take full advantage of what the school could offer. The school had to educate both sets of parents—to teach some not to *over-emphasize* schooling as a means to an end ("getting on") and to teach the others that their children could "get on" if they made the effort. There was, too, a belief amongst some parents that the secondary modern school imposed a much lower ceiling upon aspirations than is in fact the case. The school had constantly to try to restore the self-respect of 11-plus rejects—to eliminate the feeling of "failure", to encourage them to raise their aspirations beyond what they *believed* themselves to be able to do, to what they were really capable of: the school had faith in the children's ability, and wanted the boys and girls to share it.

The school's encouragement of smartness, courtesy and correct speech (which complemented the influence of the home) were of relevance to children in the jobs which they aimed at—especially those boys and girls who wanted clerical work, and girls who wished to become sales assistants or hairdressers. The "all-round" education was regarded as a preparation for children to turn their hands to whatever jobs they entered. The school encouraged children to be selective about jobs, instead of being content to take anything. It was considered to be very important for a child to remain at school—for a week, a term or a year—until the "right" job became available: boys and girls must get off to a good start. The inclination of children to aim at a job well within their capacity was fought against—"aim high" was the principle constantly hammered home. Discussions between head teacher and parents about careers were usual occurrences: many parents could talk with teachers on their level and without awe or nervousness—for parents, too, wore suits. Parents also felt on equal terms (and some felt superior) to the Youth Employment Officer, to whom the school accorded great respect as a visiting specialist. In comparison with the other four schools there was more awareness amongst parents of the function of the Y.E.O. in giving *guidance*: he was looked to for this perhaps more than for help in finding jobs.

There was not a lot of employment in the district—although Area II had a substantial number of shops, offices and factories and some small businesses such as plumbing and building. There were direct bus routes into the city, and partly because travel was easy many children took work in or near the city—this was where the “status” jobs for girls were more likely to be found, in any case. Considerably fewer boys than in the other four schools entered steel and engineering—only 6 respondents, and 29 per cent of boys over the five years. There were some engineering firms in Area II, but they were by no means dominant. Forty-two per cent of boys over the five-year period had become apprentices: that there was not a higher percentage is probably due to the fact that a large proportion entered “white collar” jobs—including, probably, many who remained at school to do an extended course. Over half the boys (11) became apprentices. In the five-year period, 8 per cent entered clerical work and 11 per cent became shop assistants: 2 respondents became clerks, and 1 a shop assistant. As at School A, such employment was regarded as “suitable”, rather than work for a cissy. Half of the girls entered clerical work over the five-year period, 18 per cent of them first doing commercial courses. Two respondents became clerical workers immediately on leaving school, and 8 did commercial courses before beginning work: several of them hoped to become secretaries. Girls who became shop assistants aimed at the “better type” of shop, and many were sales-girls: 22 per cent of all girls entered this work, and 3 respondents. Only 7 per cent of the girls, and 2 respondents, became factory and warehouse workers.

The varying influences of home, school and local environment have been seen to result in differential job aims and attainments—this is seen notably with regard to the numbers of boys entering steel and engineering from each school, and the numbers becoming white collar workers. It is reflected, too, in the number of boys obtaining apprenticeships. With girls’ occupations, the position is even more clear. The importance of clerical work—and particularly of commercial courses—for girls attending Schools A and E is an indication of the aspirations of the parents, the policies of the schools and the interests of the children themselves. Because it could lead to a career, and because of the social status attached to it, clerical work was especially valued in these two areas. Work was seen less as a means to a wage than as an opportunity for a girl to do something interesting. The desire to do the best for their daughters, and the ability to do so, was revealed further in the proportions of girls entering Pre-Nursing School (which meant that earnings were low for the first few years) at the five schools—2 per cent over the five years in three of

them, but 3 per cent in School A and 8 per cent in School E. There were no significant variations by schools in the five-year period with regard to the percentage of girls becoming shop assistants, although it is probable that a higher proportion of girls from Schools A and E entered salesgirls jobs rather than jobs as counter hands. That there was little difference reflects the intermediary nature of shop assistant in the occupational hierarchy for secondary modern girls. Most shop assistants are "not in the same class" as clerical workers (although there is some overlap, particularly with salesgirls' work). But, equally, shop assistant is generally regarded as superior to factory work. Differences between schools were clear with regard to the latter occupation—approximately one-third of girls entering this work over the five years in three schools but only 9 per cent from School A and 7 per cent from School E. The respondents follow this pattern with the exception of School B, where more than 3 girls might have been expected to take jobs in factories or warehouses.

During their first year at work, 36 boys and 36 girls changed their jobs at least once. Table 14 analyses the changes by schools.

TABLE 14
JOB CHANGES BY SCHOOLS

	A	B	C	D	E
Boys—Left first job	6	8	11	3	8
Girls—Left first job	4	9	11	10	2
Boys—Had more than 2 jobs	0	4	3	2	2
Girls—Had more than 2 jobs	2	1	3	2	0

A high proportion of children from all schools changed jobs. Differences between schools and areas are revealed less in the numbers concerned than in the reasons for the job changes. Children from Schools A and E, generally, changed after more thought and to more purpose than children from the other schools. Some indication that this was so is given by the figures relating to the number of jobs held in the first year: it should not be forgotten, however, that more girls from Schools A and E went on Courses which lasted for at least 3 months and in many cases nearly a year. It is notable that the highest proportion of changes occurred with children from School C—11 boys and 11 girls left their first jobs. It was at this school that many parents and children were indifferent or antipathetic to work—job changes were made in a very casual way, reflecting the small importance attributed

to matters connected with work. At this school, too, parents were inclined to let the children do as they wished, whereas at other schools more parents exercised a restraining hand, and advocated "giving a job a try" before leaving it: reasons for job changes are discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

Fifteen boys left the steel and engineering industry during the course of the year, and 2 boys entered this work—so that at the end of the year, there were only 27 boys in this occupation compared with 40 who took first jobs in it. This remained an important occupation for boys from all schools, but there was a decided drop in the number of boys at School C, the school which was surrounded by steel and engineering factories. This is shown in Table 15. Apart from the fact that work—any work—did not mean a lot to boys at School C, it would seem that many of these boys who left steel and engineering did so as a mark of defiance.

TABLE 15
NUMBER OF BOYS TAKING FIRST JOBS IN STEEL AND ENGINEERING COMPARED WITH NUMBER IN THIS WORK AT ONE YEAR AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL

Steel and Engineering	A	B	C	D	E
First job	5	8	12	9	6
Job one year after leaving school	4	6	5	8	4

For years it had seemed "natural" to everyone that they would enter this work—it was automatic, they were carried along with the waves. After a few weeks at work, they felt more independent, and began to ask themselves, "Why should I work in steel?" Parents expected them to make their own decisions—and so they left. Many of them would find their way back into the industry within a year or two, but the gesture had been made. With the exception of School C, the pattern one year after leaving school is similar to that relating to first jobs obtained. This is also broadly true with regard to appren-

TABLE 16
NUMBER OF BOYS ENTERING APPRENTICESHIPS IN FIRST JOB COMPARED WITH NUMBER OF APPRENTICES ONE YEAR AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL

Apprenticeships	A	B	C	D	E
First job	9	12	9	8	11
Job one year after leaving school	7	10	6	8	11

ticeships. There was an overall fall from 49 apprentices to 42. Table 16 shows the position.

The occupational pattern for girls, overall and by schools, was similar one year after leaving school to that relating to first jobs entered—many job changes were within the same occupation: by this time, all except one girl had completed the commercial courses which they attended.

In the above analysis an attempt has been made to sketch the interactions of home, school and work. Brevity may have involved some misrepresentation—some might call the sketches caricatures: but it is believed that the portrayal is essentially correct, although in describing the themes it has not in all cases been possible to elaborate the variations on them. In the following chapters the respondents are considered as a group, but the influences of home and school are constantly borne in mind.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCHOOL
AND LEAVING SCHOOL

AT the beginning of their last term some boys and girls thought that school was "lovely" and "ever so nice", others that it was "childish" and "boring". A few "dreaded" leaving, and many were "fed up" with the discipline and "silly rules". Just over a half of the respondents liked school on the whole—either enjoying it in a positive way or finding it "not so bad": several welcomed it chiefly as an alternative to boredom at home. Only 9 boys and 7 girls disliked school altogether: they could find little to say in its favour and felt that the sooner they left, the better. The remaining boys and girls had mixed feelings about school—sometimes it was "alright", sometimes it was "rotten". Most of the latter had decided to "make the best of a bad job"—for "there is no getting away from it: you've got to do it". School was not exactly pleasant, but you can have fun on occasions. All things considered, school was "not bad in some ways". Many children who derived little satisfaction from school were not concerned about the fact: they attended because it was compulsory, but they were only partially involved in the school life, present in body but only sporadically in mind, and never in spirit. They did not object to school—there was little point in doing so—but nor did they have any enthusiasm for it: school was something which they had "not really thought about". It had not inspired them to a respect for learning or to an enjoyment of activities. These boys and girls complied with the regulations, but without giving to or taking from the school more than was obligatory. Their attitude was much like that which they were shortly to adopt towards their jobs.

Children who positively liked school had a sense of belonging to the community and a pride in membership—they wore the school uniform gladly, and recalled the success of the football team over the years with satisfaction. Boys and girls with this outlook were to be found in all schools. The dark and cramped school, like the bright and colourful one, gave rise to loyalty and affection as well as to hatred and abuse. There was, indeed, no straightforward relationship between the attitudes towards school and the quality of the amenities which the school had to offer. Although many children were clearly

appreciative of the facilities in their schools, others were not resentful that their schools were poorly endowed.

The respondents were not questioned about their attitudes towards teachers, but some made spontaneous comments. Many girls were enthusiastic about their teachers ("Miss Smith is *ever* so nice"), and stressed their friendliness and kindness. Boys, also, showed approval, although they thought more in terms of "fairness" in discipline and help with lessons. The teacher who was willing to meet children half-way—to devote some time to making the lesson interesting ("for some teachers bore you—they talk about one thing all the time and don't explain"), to make allowances when a boy was cheeky once in a while, and to give up spare time to help with sports—was much appreciated. The boys attending one school in a "tough" area were especially grateful to their teachers because they "did not seem rough on you". The boys and their families had no regard for education, and started from the assumption that teachers were "out to get you". When they found that they were not bullied by the teachers and that they were encouraged to put their points of view in the event of disputes, they began to enjoy school instead of merely accepting it—and incidentally disproved a widespread view that rough treatment is "the only thing they understand". Teachers who were thought not to care were given short shrift—and so were those who were inconsistent. Children like to know where they stand and are not prepared to laugh at a joke one day if they know that they will be offered only a scowl the next. Strictness was not objected to as such, but only its inconsistent application—the ideal was to have "teachers who are strict when you do wrong and friendly when you behave": teachers who "are soppy and let you mess about" gained no respect. Indeed, a few children were resentful at the lack of discipline, which, they said, held them back from learning. One boy said, "the teachers I had for two years taught me nothing: the children told the teachers what to do, and the teachers told the head teacher what to do".

Many boys and girls seemed to have spent a lot of their time at school in a state of boredom, and learning little. Occasionally they "had fun"—notably when they managed "to get a teacher off the subject". To achieve this was one of the most satisfying accomplishments. If the half-hour intended for Religious Education was spent instead on a reappraisal of last year's Cup Final, the day was off to a good start. The subject of the digression need not be of interest in itself—for there was pleasure merely in keeping the teacher from returning to the subject on the time-table. ("We used to have good fun at school with one of the teachers, especially in Geography lessons", said one boy. "By the time we had got to the Fourth form the teacher had

refused to teach us any more.”) Some of the happiest hours at school were spent thus: lessons in Arithmetic, English and Science rarely held the interest in the same way.

Some children liked school mainly because they enjoyed the lessons and were competent at them. They looked upon education as a “good thing”, and were keen to progress—for “without school you would only get a job as a road-sweeper or some right low job”. Although few children wholeheartedly supported the view of one boy that “the more education you have the better”, some went a long way with him. Several expressed their satisfaction that they had found their right level—they much preferred to jog along at lessons which they could manage than be like other children they knew who had “just scraped through the 11-plus” and were “always at the bottom of the class”. In contrast, a few boys and girls disliked school primarily because they had not made as much progress as they wished, and felt that they were being held back: one boy complained that “in the lower classes you do easier things—easier than you need do”, and several others felt that they were “getting nowhere” with their studies. A few boys and girls returned to this theme a year after they had left school—and with more vehemence: teachers were blamed for the lack of success. “We didn’t do enough work there”, said one boy, “It was terrible. Most of the teachers just said do something without explaining it. And when you had finished it, instead of going on to teach something more advanced, they just told you to get out a book and read”. Many boys and girls had a special dislike of certain subjects: Religious Education was high on the list (“What’s the use of *that*?”). Arithmetic was difficult and Music was “daft” (“the way *they* do it”). One girl “could not stand” Domestic Science lessons—“the teachers are too precise. Every crust must look like the next crust. That’s not my idea of cooking”. It seemed so stupid to her—a woman has not got time for that sort of thing. Pies are made to eat, not to look at. Domestic Science lessons typified the futility of school: this girl wanted to get on with living, not engage in a caricature of life. Her impatience was shared by many others who, in the last few months, had become increasingly tired of being “treated like children”: “You are so anxious to leave that school only irritates you more.”

Some children felt misgivings at the approach of the end of their school days—there was regret that time had been wasted “messaging around”, instead of taking full advantage of the opportunity to learn, and there was a realization of the finality of leaving school: once you left, an era was at an end. Several children, too, wondered whether their initial exuberance at leaving school would be short-lived. This idea arises because teachers and parents speak cynically, though

usually without any depth of thought, of their own longing for their school days, and tell children they will soon wish they were back. Most boys and girls resolutely ignored the warnings, however—they were not prepared to have the long-awaited event spoiled for them by the darkly muttered forebodings of uncomprehending adults. They were not interested in being told what they would feel like in a few years time, being determined to enjoy leaving school and starting work no matter what people may say.

Some children were particularly keen to leave school because their friends had left before them: they felt “left out of things” and were impatient to regain equality of status. (“It leaves you a bit out of the limelight if you aren’t at work.”) Several boys and girls were anxious to leave because they were worried about the employment position—“It will be a big weight off my mind”, said one boy, “I’ll be glad to get fixed up and not wondering all the time if I’m going to get the job I want.”

Irrespective of attitudes towards school, the majority were looking forward, some already with great excitement, to starting work. Three-quarters of the boys and girls expressed their satisfaction at the thought that they would soon be workers—independent, recognized as grown-up, no longer “school-kids”.

The feeling was widespread that starting work would be “quite a new adventure”. Allied to the feeling of hope was curiosity—something new was going to happen to them and they wanted “to see what it’s like, starting work”. The mere thought of attaining the status of worker was enough to raise spirits—the idea of “going out as a workman, going out in the morning and coming home at night”, of leading a *man’s* life. Some children saw it as “a big advance for us all” and even as “a new lease of life”. They wanted to put school behind them, “forget about it all”. In addition, there was the prospect of earning a wage, which would “entitle you to stick up for yourself”. No longer would you be at everyone’s beck and call. As wage-earners, too, you could “play your parts” at home and “help Mum out”.

Of the remaining children—about a quarter of both boys and girls—most had mixed feelings about starting work, mainly because they liked school so much that they felt it would be a wrench to leave. Only a handful were *sorry* that they would soon be starting work. The outside world was too forbidding for them: one boy said, “I don’t fancy work. I’m scared of something new. It is rather frightening to be leaving after all these years. And it is a hard life outside school, with more regulations.”

A year after they had left school many children had discovered that work was not all it had been cracked up to be: but the status of

worker was, even so, something to be cherished. Only a few boys and girls regretted having left school: several others were reminiscent from time to time about things which they had taken for granted in their schooldays, especially the long holidays. They had begun to think that school had not been so bad after all—"You did not have so many worries and responsibilities", for one thing.

With the confidence of a year at work behind them, boys and girls were more inclined to be outspoken about their attitudes towards school—and their parents underlined the feelings of the children. Work and school could now be compared. As a result some children (often to their surprise) were more appreciative of what school life had offered—school friends were particularly missed by a few: "I would rather be back at school any day", said one girl, "I never realized what fun we had until I left, and I miss my friends a lot." At school you were surrounded by friends who say, "Let's go to the pictures tonight", or "Let's go out on our bikes". But after leaving school, friendships had broken up. Most children stopped going around in gangs and maintained contacts, if at all, only with *special* friends: few friends were made at work to go out with in the evenings. Those children who did not go to Youth Clubs or dances where they could meet other young people did, therefore, have fewer friends than when they were at school. One girl thought that the days of fun and laughter were gone for ever—"I miss all my friends and all the goings on at school. Things aren't the same now. Even my special friend isn't as gay as she was at school." The opportunity for "fun" had passed by—"I was a sod at school, and did everything for the fun and spite of it", one girl said: now she was stuck behind a shop counter with a lot of old maids. A few children longed for the opportunities for sport which they no longer had—sport had been the main interest at school, and now they missed games during school-time and the long leisure hours. Several children, too, were very regretful that they had not taken advantage of the opportunity to learn—bitter experience at work had revealed to them the tragedy of not paying attention to lessons: "I realize now", said one boy, "that I did not learn much at school. I did not study, but played around a lot and wasted my time. I would like to go to school right from the start again. I realize how important study is now."

Although some yearned for the days that were gone, however, very many more were thankful to have these days behind them. There were positive attractions in being a worker—school is all very well for children, but when you are older you want something more: at last you could launch out into life proper. No longer did you have to sit at a desk all day. ("You always had to be sat down, and writing, and

you couldn't eat sweets, and you had to be quiet all the time.") Girls, especially, welcomed the new life, in which high heels and bright lights replaced ankle socks and dusty book cases. The memory of a gym-slip still brought forth a shudder a year after it had been discarded for good. Some children had never liked school—"She hated it", said the mother of one girl, who herself said, "I only really liked two or three of all the teachers I had during my ten years at school. Like my young brother, I had to be dragged, screaming, to the Infants' School on the first day." She had always resented having to go to school—and several other boys and girls had never properly reconciled themselves to going. "It was rough", said one boy, with feeling, "I was never really interested and I never really got on too well with the teachers. The only regret I have is on account of not seeing the lads." In some homes the dislike of school was a family joke. One youth said that he was very glad to have left school, and the assembled parents, brothers and sisters, chuckled. When he was asked *why* he was glad, he replied, "I didn't like school", and the family laughed. The youth was asked whether there were any aspects of school which he liked, whether he had *ever* thought he would like to be back at school, and whether he attended Evening Classes. The answers were greeted by increasingly loud laughter from the family, rising to a crescendo of guffaws. This part of the interview was concluded midst uproarious merriment which the family found almost unbearable. The youth and school were acknowledged to be incompatible. Many other children who had not disliked school so intensely were now thankful that they had left—they had felt, during the last year at school, that they were "too old to be bossed about"—"strict discipline may be alright for the younger ones, but it is not right for older people." Contrary to their expectations, boys and girls found that they were given fewer orders at work than at school and that the employer was less strict than the teacher. ("You aren't told what to do, where to go, and how to do things—or, rather, you are, but in a milder way.") You are left to your initiative at work—"Teachers", complained one girl, "didn't treat you as equals, but acted right superior." Work gave a dignity and a sense of freedom which had not been felt at school—"You haven't always got someone hanging round your neck, telling you what to do, and bickering at you. And you don't have to ask anyone if you want to go to the toilet." Instead of being a "nobody" you are "someone"—"You know what to do. You are not told all the time. You know." The children's feelings cannot be dismissed as an exaggerated reaction to their new situation: they felt really strongly on this point, which weighed as much with them at one year after leaving school as it did when they first left. Although

many boys and girls found little to hold their interest in the work which they were doing, they looked back upon school as being even more boring—"the same old thing all the time", and "you are stuck in the classroom, no moving about." The days used to drag. Even if work is not very inspiring you are at least paid for it. Children were glad to have put aside academic work—reading and writing had been difficult and uninteresting: they were "mechanical minded" and "preferred to use their hands." They were not only more happy, but more successful using a machine, a chisel or a trowel than they had been holding a pen. Their work was not constantly criticized—they were not reminded all the time that their performance was "Fair" or "Poor", and not regularly informed that they "Could try harder". At work you may be good, bad, average or mediocre—but people do not keep telling you so.

The majority of children, then, were pleased to have left school: some had pleasant memories, but they, like the large number for whom school had never meant much, were on the whole glad to be rid of it. It was much better to be a worker.

Attitudes Towards the School-leaving Age

At their first interview, over three-quarters of the boys and girls thought that fifteen was the best age for leaving school. Seventeen boys and 12 girls thought that the age should be above fifteen, whilst 4 boys and 8 girls felt that it should be fourteen. A year at work confirmed most of the children in their views, but there was a distinct tendency for some to look more favourably upon a leaving age of sixteen. Twenty-two boys and 18 girls now supported this age, or were not averse to it, and another 20 boys and 12 girls did not entirely reject the idea. Thus, two-fifths of the boys and nearly one-third of the girls could by this time see some advantage in raising the leaving age. They were no longer keyed up with the excitement of leaving school, and they could also look more dispassionately at the world of work. They realized that studies were important and that qualifications gained at school could help at work. Most of them, too, had liked school and could face the possibility of another year with equanimity, for "school was not *that* bad". A somewhat higher proportion of these children were from the top I.Q. Grades, but many were from Grades 3 and 4. Of the remaining respondents some, whilst opposed to raising the leaving age, were not particularly bothered about the issue—it was not important enough to make a fuss about. But half the children were solidly opposed to raising the age, and the feelings of these 48 boys and 54 girls were in many cases conveyed in powerful

language: they were backed up with similar force by their mothers and fathers.

Arguments in Favour of the Leaving Age of Fifteen

The leaving age was raised from fourteen to fifteen in 1947, before the respondents had started school. Most of them accepted fifteen as "normal". Some were unaware that the age had ever been lower than fifteen, but others disapproved of the old leaving age and considered that "you are still in the baby stage at fourteen", and "only starting to get to know things"—"you don't know what you are doing, though you think you do at the time". Several children gave examples of the ill-effects of leaving school too young, one boy remarking, "My mother left at fourteen and she is not very well educated." Fifteen seemed *the common-sense age*, then: no nonsense about staying on after that, but equally no foolishness about leaving when you are still a kid. Many children argued that there are *limits to what can be learned*—after fifteen, "there is nothing more to learn": at fifteen "you have got all you can learn in. After then you would only go over what you have done before, like we are doing in class now." If you have not learnt by fifteen, furthermore, you never will. The line must be drawn somewhere—this business of education must be kept within reasonable bounds. "Education" was seen as a process of gaining a certain amount of basic knowledge: there was no idea of enjoying school, developing abilities or widening interests. By fifteen, children felt, they had done their stint, and if the teachers had not by then succeeded in inculcating what they set out to do, it was just too bad. One youth supported a leaving age of fifteen from the opposite standpoint, saying that "You can't get all the education you need in 100 years, so one extra year wouldn't make much difference." Several children made a distinction between grammar schools and their own—they regarded it as natural to stay at school until sixteen at grammar school. That is what makes them different from secondary modern schools. But at the latter an extra year would just be "stuck on". Such things were not meant to be for the likes of them: "Sixteen?" said one boy, "not at secondary modern—you don't learn much at this kind of school." These respondents were not complaining, but simply stating the facts as they saw them. There was one other point, expressed by a girl as follows: "There are a lot of High School leavers at sixteen and seventeen—they would get all the good jobs." Children felt that their only trump card in competing with grammar school boys and girls was the fact that they could start work at fifteen. Take that away and the position would indeed be grim. Many children indicated that there were *limits to human endurance*.

They had borne with school patiently, and even enjoyed it, but "when you are fifteen you get really sick of school and are more idle than ever. So it is best to leave." They could put up with the boredom no longer. There was also the question of *duty to parents*. "Lads should be earning, especially those from big families," said one boy, "their wages are needed at home." Another boy said, "I know that children take a lot of keeping. My young brother is only two inches shorter than me and he can shift some grub. It costs something to keep him, with his food and his clothes and his bus fares." Not only did children want to help out where there was need at home, but they thought that their parents were entitled to a reward for the sacrifice which they had made in bringing them up—"Doing your parents a bit of good", enabling them "to make a little profit" for a year or two was regarded as a duty. The trend towards an *early age of marriage* was also given as a reason for leaving school at fifteen. Time is pressing at this stage of one's life, there is so much to do in such a short time—you can't afford to waste a year at school: "With people getting married at eighteen", said one boy, "if the leaving age was raised to sixteen you would not be earning enough to support a wife and several children." Boys, in particular, thought that it was sensible to leave school at fifteen and "*get started on a career*". For, "at fifteen you can work up and get a knowledge of a job, whereas at sixteen they expect you to know it all, because it's only two years before you go onto a man's wage". Furthermore, "although you do work in the fourth year, it is not helping you particularly, whereas if you left you could go to Night School and Day Release classes and study more specialised subjects connected with your jobs".

Arguments in Favour of a Leaving Age of Fourteen

Only 4 boys and 8 girls were definitely in favour of lowering the leaving age: 3 of them were in the top I.Q. Grade and 7 in Grade 2. Most of them *disliked school*, and this accounted to a large extent for their attitudes: but there were other factors. There was a conviction that schooling was of *no practical value*, and did not help in getting a good job: 1 girl, for example, cited her friend's sister, who had stayed at grammar school until the age of eighteen, "and then only got an ordinary job". These children also took the view that *what had been good enough for their parents was good enough for them*: they could see no ill-effects on their fathers who had left school at fourteen. Most important, however, was the belief that the *last year at school was wasted*—"You don't do much. They ought to knock it down. The things we are doing in lessons are daft. Anyhow, we have done it all in the first two years and now they are making us do it all again."

The same point was made by many children in objecting to the suggestion of raising the leaving age to sixteen, and this is considered in more detail below. Three of the children who thought that fourteen was the best age made suggestions. One girl recommended the years 4 to 14 for attending school, since "you feel you want to leave when you are fourteen, but when you are little you want to be at school, and it would get you out of your mother's way". Another girl suggested that education would not suffer by lowering the age to fourteen if holidays were shorter—"They are boring, anyway." Finally, a boy who was concerned at the delay in earning a wage proposed that "everyone should take an examination at the age of thirteen-and-a-half. If they passed, they should be allowed to leave. If they failed, they should try again in those subjects. Money is a big temptation to leave school. If they *make* you stay on at school they should pay lads a fair wage, say £2 or £3 a week."

Arguments in Favour of a Leaving Age of Sixteen

Of the 17 boys and 12 girls who supported this age at the first interview, 3 boys and 1 girl stayed on for an extra year. The reasons why the others did not do so are considered in a later section. Several children thought that to leave at fifteen was to waste an opportunity, because "*you don't really start to learn until the third and fourth years*": at fifteen, "you are beginning to understand what you are doing", and it seemed foolish to leave school just at this time. One boy referred to *the changing requirements of industry*, saying that "higher standards are wanted for jobs nowadays". Another remarked that "you have more build on you at sixteen": boys, that is, were *better equipped physically* for the hard jobs they were expected to do. The extra year would be particularly useful if it were directed towards *preparing children for work*. "You are absolutely raw at first", said one boy, "and people think you are pretty foolish. And you need an insight into what you are going to do. At school they started us off four months before we left, and some did not know what they wanted to do two weeks before they left. You should not start to decide what to do before you are fifteen—you are too young. But if you had a year from fifteen to sixteen before leaving, you would have a whole year to train for it a bit." Not only choice of work was involved, but *the chance of a better job*—"The people whom it immediately concerned would not appreciate it at first," one girl thought, "but they would be glad after they had done it—the extra year would really mean something if you want a good job." Some respondents made a distinction between boys and girls—the justification for an extra year was the chance of a better job. But jobs do not matter for

girls, since "they get married at twenty, anyway", and "girls only get the same sort of job if they do stay on". Jobs were important for a boy, on the other hand, and staying on could help. (A contrary view was that whereas a youth should start work at fifteen and get down to learning a trade, it did not much matter if girls delayed starting work; it was not as if their work were important—nothing was lost by staying on for a year.) Several respondents thought that at fifteen, boys and girls were *not sufficiently mature* to leave school. The extra year would enable them to develop a "more responsible outlook". Criticism of teenagers is not confined to those who themselves have ceased to enjoy youthfulness. A few boys and girls firmly believed that another year at school would inject some sense into those of their contemporaries who showed obvious signs of a need for it. "Teenagers are a stupid lot", declared one boy, whilst a girl said, "I have always thought that children are big-headed at fifteen. They think they can do this and that—go to 'X' films and smoke cigarettes." One girl had thought about this matter very seriously. Drawing upon her knowledge of what happened in her neighbourhood, she said:

Usually girls go into factories and put cardboard boxes together when they leave school. I stayed on for a term and I think that helped me to get on better at work. It made me feel I would not be content with factory or warehouse work. But staying on also had a good effect on my state of mind. That's why I think sixteen would be a better leaving age. Girls would get more idea of life and work. Most girls of fifteen just think of leaving school and going for a good time. But they soon find that the good times only last for a few weeks, and then they get bitter and disappointed. Girls who rush out of school at fifteen tend to throw themselves at anyone. If you stayed on till sixteen you would get to know the rights and wrongs. At fifteen you don't know what the score is. I know a girl who left at fifteen and started going around with lots of boys—she had a baby before she knew where she was, and regrets her behaviour now. At fifteen, everything seems strange: at sixteen you wouldn't go muddling into things and you would know how to behave.

The girl was not a prig: she spoke, rather, with sadness in her voice. She rebelled at what she saw all around her—girls throwing themselves away at a tender age, before they knew what they were doing, and only to regret it later. As she saw it, they acted out of ignorance. Several children who would not themselves have liked to remain at school after the age of fifteen thought that it was a sensible plan for some boys and girls to do so. The factors which these respondents referred to were individual ability ("some of them should stay on—people in the top classes, the brainy ones. Some could get to Oxford and Cambridge if they tried more"), personal preferences ("It's all right to stay on if you want to"), differences in maturity ("some of

them don't seem hardly old enough at fifteen"), and home circumstances ("If your parents can afford it, it's not a bad idea").

Arguments Against Raising the School-leaving Age to Sixteen

The mere suggestion of raising the school-leaving age was sufficient to induce feelings of rage in some children—even though they would not be affected themselves: their parents got even more worked up on this issue. Half the boys and girls objected strongly to the idea. "I couldn't stand it", said one boy, whilst a girl said, "I don't think I could have lasted." Some children thought that the suggestion was ludicrous, others that it was preposterous. Several respondents said that they would have rebelled against such a regulation—"I wouldn't have bothered. I wouldn't have tried. They would have had to send for me. I wouldn't have gone of my own will." Many of those children and parents who were most appalled by the idea could give no reason—it was something which they *felt* to be wrong, and which they could only express in such terms as "it is ridiculous", "it is wicked", "it is stupid". A large number of boys and girls who objected so strongly had liked school, and many had tried hard at lessons: their views are not to be dismissed as the squeals of a minority of malcontents. Some did, however, regard school attendance as a sentence to loss of freedom—and now they appealed for both justice and mercy. Although the issue no longer affected them directly they had every sympathy with those whom it might affect in the future—"It is not fair: we left at fifteen, so the others should be able to." Some boys were less brotherly, however, and the suggestion struck them as funny—no longer in danger themselves, it would be quite pleasant to witness other children having to stay at school until sixteen. One youth laughed raucously at the thought, but repented after reflection. For, as he said, he might have a family of his own one day and he would feel a bit of a swine if he had tacitly condemned his own children to stay on at school to the age of sixteen. He displayed signs of guilt at the thought that his spontaneous mirth might be taken to imply that he had wished the evil scheme on any of his progeny. There was another side to it, too—it would mean keeping the kids when they should be bringing money in. His rumination led him to the view that, on several counts, his earlier mirth was misplaced.

Parents felt certain that it was wrong for "great big boys and girls" to be at school: to add point to their ridicule, they remarked that many boys and girls were *bigger* than their teachers. Could anything be more absurd? Education was something for kids, not young adults—"I'm dead against it", said one mother, "You see courting couples, and smoking, on the way to and from school. The girls are made up

to death at nights, and the boys are as bad." School allowed them to idle their time away—if they had a job of work to do they would have less time for getting into mischief. "If it is to be sixteen, it will have to be all men teachers", said one mother. "Even the little ones answer back nowadays, and they all chase one another round the classroom. The teachers aren't strict enough—it's no wonder they won't do what they are told at home." "Look at the size of Tom!" another parent remarked, as if to prove her point—"Imagine him at school now!" She continued, "A child at the age of fourteen costs more to dress—look at girls and stockings. They should earn a bit towards their keep. And they are not kept in check at school—I wouldn't like to be a teacher, in charge of great lads and lasses. They are just a nuisance at home *and* at school. They need a job to occupy them. Anyhow, they know more than you know yourself nowadays—Tom could tell me a thing or two." Children are far enough advanced as it is, without stuffing anything more into their heads. Things must be kept in check—let us preserve *some* sanity in the world. All arguments led to the same conclusion—that the school-leaving age should not be raised. Everyone stood to suffer if it were—children, parents and teachers. The mother of one youth said, fiercely, "It's *ridiculous*, isn't it—they'll be getting married at school next!" Mothers who had been tied down to the home and babies ever since they married were concerned for their daughters to "see life" before they, too, were tied down: "You have not seen anything of life if you marry as soon as you leave school." The earlier age of marriage was "natural" and to be accepted: a later school-leaving age was "unnatural" and to be deplored. Parents and children wondered where all this business was going to end—what *are* we coming to? "If they put it up to sixteen", said one girl, "they might just as well put it up to seventeen. After all, my mum left at twelve or thirteen." You can't trust these officials—they don't know where to stop. Children who stayed on voluntarily for an extra year were dismissed as "potty": what they said was discounted—"Some of the boys stayed on and said they liked it, but I don't think they did, really."

Some parents regarded wage-earning at the age of fifteen as a moral issue: a school-leaving age of sixteen would prevent a child from doing his duty. Young people should not be pampered, and a lad of fifteen who is not earning his keep should be ashamed to look anyone in the eye.

In any case, the children felt an urge to leave school and to lead an adult life. A youth said, "I would have felt deprived if I had had to stay on." They wanted independence and the chance to earn the wherewithal to lead the sort of life which teenagers lead. If they are

kept at school after fifteen, "they will only get bored—and that's where trouble starts": "It is silly, terrible. A lad *wants* to start work when he is fifteen. He is grown-up, isn't he? He doesn't want to feel like a school lad all his life!"

The whole idea of raising the leaving age seemed so pointless—to lose a year's wages and have nothing in return: it didn't make sense. The onus of proof was on those who contemplated such a move, and the plain fact was that "they don't know what to do with them in the last year as it is, never mind an *extra* year". This feeling was widespread amongst parents and children—the last year at school, from fourteen to fifteen, is wasted. There are difficulties in organizing the fourth year because some children remain for only one term and others for only two out of the three terms. Another difficulty is that secondary modern schools, as a whole, are not decided on how best to use the final year. "In spite of the extra year from fourteen to fifteen," said the father of one respondent, "the children are not as well educated now as we used to be. There are some terrible samples working at my place. I don't know what they *do* with the last year." The children supplied their answer—"You do not learn anything in the year from fourteen to fifteen—all you do is run errands for the teacher, or go over what you did in the first year": "It's just wasted, it is simply fun and games": "It's all repetition." Children did not reflect that they had not *learnt* all that they had to "revise": the point which impressed them was the boredom of it all, the same old things over again. "We learnt nothing new in the last year", said one girl, "we had done it all before. If it were sixteen I don't know what we *would* do." Nor do many of the staunchest supporters of raising the school-leaving age. And the same is true of many of the teachers whose charge it would be to do *something* with the extra year.

To parents, it seemed wrong that young people should have to go to school against their will. The chief merit of school, as far as many parents were concerned, was that it kept the children away from home for a few hours a day. For these parents, things just did not add up. When children are young and should be at school (out of your way and learning—that's what teachers are for) they are, in fact, hanging around the house on holiday for long stretches, getting into mischief. Then—when the children are fourteen, old enough to go to work and earn a bit of money and keen to do so—they are made to stay at school. Where is the sense in that? The parents' own experience of education is that it doesn't do you much good. ("It's not got me far", and "I studied hard, but it didn't get me anywhere.") It is felt that the Government, or the Council, or the teachers, are trying deliberately to be awkward—for the fun of it, or to heap more burdens upon

the firm but aching shoulders of ordinary folk. Why *don't* they give the working class a chance? The idea of an extra year was almost laughable—but it was too serious for laughter: it left a bitter taste in the mouth. Can't these people see reason, or are they just being malicious, to contemplate imposing further unhappiness and boredom on the child, and another delay in the time when mother will benefit from the extra wage packet. "What they think they are up to in the last year, I don't know!" exclaimed one mother, "Fancy a boy of fourteen bringing home an apple tart from school!" How stupid could you get—her son cooking tarts instead of wielding a hammer: are boys to cook tarts for two years and not just one? The "authorities" don't understand what's what. Parents' righteous indignation was flavoured by baffled resentment. Officials won't see what is so obvious. All these people, supposed to be brainy, with their books and correct speaking and so on—and yet they come out with such daft ideas, ideas which the ordinary bloke, with no pretensions but a good measure of common sense, can see to be quite ridiculous.

There was a final point, which clinched the issue so far as several parents were concerned—their children were "a lot better" at work than they had been at school: work had "done them the world of good". Their sons and daughters were now more happy, more capable and more confident. One mother said that her son "seems happier now than he has ever been in his life". Children no longer had the "moods" from which their parents had suffered during the last year at school. Work had transformed them: disobedient, unruly bullies had been changed into well-mannered, smartly turned-out and dutiful sons. Slovenly girls became fashion-conscious young ladies. And if work was praised for the virtues, school was invariably blamed for the vices. Work had surely succeeded where school had failed.

Before raising the school-leaving age to sixteen, it would be necessary to make provision in staff and buildings. This is a major task, but the *Crowther* Committee considered that it would be possible to accomplish it by the end of the 1960's if the appropriate decisions were made soon after the issue of their Report in 1959. It is not proposed to discuss the practical difficulties involved, but merely to emphasize that they exist. The question here is, should the leaving age be raised to sixteen in the near future?

If the school-leaving age were raised many children would gladly accept the change: many others would comply with it, taking the view that it was "not worth arguing about", and that, in any case, "there would be nothing you could do about it". In this world you do as you

are told, it is pointless to think in terms of right and wrong, advantages and disadvantages. In the long run, too, it is likely that, in the words of one boy, "if you didn't have the chance to leave at fifteen you wouldn't think about it". Open rebellion is, of course, unlikely. But it is clear that a very high proportion of children would resent the measure. Some children went through their schooldays—and entered the world of work—with what is best described as a *neutral* outlook. They did what they had to do, but only *because* they had to. It may be argued that these are an important category of children, for whom a higher leaving age is essential in order that their minds may be developed and their interests broadened. If this is to be more than a pious hope, much thought is required before deciding what to offer these children—not only during their last year or two, but throughout their school lives. Such thought would have to take into account the forces—in homes, neighbourhoods and the schools themselves—which are conducive to this neutral state of accepting whatever is decreed by others, without complaint but without interest. Many other children would be strongly opposed to remaining at school for another year: it is unlikely that they would be receptive to the efforts of the teachers, no matter what new subjects were taught or techniques used. They have been bored for ten years and they are not prepared to take graciously to yet another year. In the view of some people, it is precisely these children, variously described as "awkward customers" and "loutish", who require an extra year at school—"to knock some sense into them". Another view is that even if the "hooligans" and "hussies" would be better off at school they would be a disruptive influence in the school as a whole, and the harm they did would far outweigh any good to themselves. Many parents consider that school itself leads to "loutish" behaviour—insufficient discipline, discipline of the wrong kind, too much discipline causing rebellion and a lack of interesting activities at school are all referred to as causes of bad behaviour.

There remains one large category of children who would not take kindly to an extra year at school: these are boys and girls who are not ill-disposed towards "education"—many even sound its praises, *up to a point*. They consider, however, that fifteen is the limit—and some have reservations about the present final year. The acid test for these is that of practical value. Although the raising of the school-leaving age to *fifteen* is now generally considered to have been accepted and welcomed, there is in fact strong opposition amongst many parents. There is no form in which this opposition may be expressed by these people, apart perhaps from persistently withholding a child from school—and you never win a battle with the authorities. It is

not obvious to these parents that their "ordinary" children have benefited from the extra year from fourteen to fifteen: to raise the age to sixteen would be scandalous, to their way of thinking. Hostility towards a measure is not necessarily an argument against introducing it: but it is well to realize that where there is disgust in the home and resentment amongst the pupils, the chances of a child benefiting from another year at school, no matter what the school has to offer him, are remote. It is not only amongst children and their parents that there is opposition to raising the leaving age: some teachers are sceptical of the value of doing so, and some employers who think about such matters (most do not) believe that many young people would benefit more from starting work at fifteen and attending part-time Day Release classes. The long-term aim is to produce parents who wish their children to remain at school until the age of sixteen or more, and who are well disposed towards education. The obvious fact that today's school-leavers are tomorrow's parents (one or two respondents were already *today's* parents a year or so after leaving school) is often overlooked. Certainly many of the boys and girls in this study would actively or passively condemn a leaving age of sixteen for their children. Slow influencing through compulsory Day Release classes—whereby children who are anxious to stop being school-kids are allowed to do so, and are thus less likely to have chips on their shoulders—could well be more successful, in the long run, in engendering amongst present and future parents a respect for education and a realization of its worth. Although the policy of raising the age to sixteen may appear more direct, it could be that it would achieve its object less quickly and less thoroughly.

An alternative to raising the leaving age is to encourage children to remain at school voluntarily: increasing numbers of secondary modern children are staying on for an extra year. It has been seen that a substantial proportion of the boys and girls in this study favoured a leaving age of sixteen—and that after a year at work many more were sympathetic to the idea. Only 3 of the 17 boys and 1 of the 12 girls who considered that sixteen was a sensible leaving age at their first Interview themselves stayed on. Why did the others not do so? There were various reasons. Firstly, there were full-scale extended courses in only two of the five schools—whereas it was usual for a substantial proportion of children to stay on an extra year at these schools, it was exceptional at the others: they had neither the staff nor the facilities, and there was little demand. A few did stay on at these schools, but they were only the brighter children. In these schools, then, the idea of staying on did not occur to most: those who did think about it tended not to regard it as all *that* important—if no

one suggested to them that they stay on they did not seriously contemplate doing so. They left at fifteen "because everybody else did". In the schools in which staying on was accepted as a normal sort of behaviour, some children took the view that this was only for the most able pupils ("I'm not clever enough"). Extended courses tended to have an academic bias, and this scared off children. Although many do stay on who are by no means brilliant scholars, and succeed in passing examinations, there is a high failure rate amongst secondary modern pupils who take G.C.E.⁽³⁶⁾ This is partly explained by the fact that so many children are trying to do in one or two year "extended courses", what grammar schools take four or five years to do. More children would have been inclined to stay at school if they could have seen a direct relationship between studies and future work. Several children considered that the courses in the extra year were inadequate—"It takes a long time at my school to get *enough* G.C.E. subjects: you would need about twenty years before you got enough." Indeed, children of high ability tended to think that they had reached a dead-end at school. They preferred to get out into the world and devote their energies to something new, rather than vegetate at school or struggle against the odds to get on terms with grammar school children. It was better, too, not to take an examination at all than to take it and fail. Children referred to other pupils who had stayed on at school to no apparent advantage—"Seven or eight stayed on, and four or five of them left without completing the course. So, according to this, the course can't be much good. In my view, it is no use staying on unless there is a proper, satisfactory course." It should be said that the respondents who did remain at school for an extra year were all satisfied. But those who decided not to stay on were sceptical—they were of the opinion that what was held out as a highway to the future could easily turn out to be a time-consuming cul-de-sac. It will be recalled that head teachers' policies differed in this matter, some encouraging all to stay on at school, irrespective of ability, others warning that only the best and those prepared to study hard would benefit. Some children were from social backgrounds in which education was held in low esteem: for them to stay on at school would have meant standing out against the tide, perhaps being subjected to the ridicule of friends. Children from such homes, too, would have to start the discipline of homework, accustom themselves to studying in a new way: only the most enthusiastic were prepared to face up to all the disadvantages. The parents of a few children who had mentioned the possibility of staying on either refused permission outright ("none of that nonsense—look at Jimmy up the road! Stayed on at school *to play football*, if you please!") or per-

sueded them against the idea. Mothers pointed out to their daughters that it would mean foregoing clothes which friends would be able to buy—"You can stay on if you want, but you won't get a new dress out of me"—and warned that pocket money would be small in comparison with wage-earning contemporaries. Doubts about the worth of examinations were expressed and dark pictures were drawn of the amount of studying that would be necessary. Finally, there were cases in which the families' financial circumstances did not permit of a delay in earning, or would have been severely strained. It should not be forgotten that there are many families—there were several in this study—who are far from affluent: life was a struggle for the widows and invalid parents and those in poor health. One respondent, when he started work, was the sole wage-earner in a family of 4 children in which neither the mother nor father was able to work. In other families much of the father's wage was devoted to his leisure activities, and mother had to struggle along—and in consequence felt a need for the money which her child could earn. Not a few families find it hard to manage: the demands of school may be difficult to meet—"uniforms are expensive, and even a blazer badge is 5s. 6d. They don't realize this is a lot of money for a working man with several children. And if the children aren't wearing uniform they feel out of it". A P.E.P. Report has suggested that "in spite of the various grants available it may still in practice constitute a real hardship to some families to keep their children at school."⁽³⁷⁾ This is undoubtedly true. There have been recommendations that maintenance grants for children who voluntarily remain at school should be increased in amount, and that their existence should be publicized more⁽³⁸⁾. But grants don't go far: and many parents guard their pride with determination.

Here, then, is the dilemma. If all children were compelled to remain at school to the age of sixteen many would be resentful and the harm done could, in the long run, be more important than the good. Whilst if the extra year is voluntary, many who could benefit—educationally and socially—do not elect to remain at school, and others are unable to do so. There is goodwill amongst some parents and children which could lead to a distinct increase in the proportion of children who voluntarily stay on, and more attractive courses would have a considerable effect. But there is a limit to the number of children who could be captured in this way. Meanwhile, satisfaction at the number of children who at present stay on should be sobered by the realization that some have no particular aim in view—they just happen to stay on instead of leaving—whilst others follow courses of study which are inappropriate to their needs.

Whatever policy is adopted—continuing to encourage voluntary

staying on, raising of the leaving age, or development of Day Release classes—there is a real problem of designing courses. Some children will study for G.C.E. and R.S.A. examinations and perhaps for new examinations on the Beloe model⁽³⁹⁾. The Central Advisory Council for Education is at present considering the question of what form the education of “ordinary” children from thirteen to sixteen should take. The present research suggests that no matter what form it takes it will be unwelcome to many children. Nevertheless, there is obvious room for improvement. To think in terms of “vocational” education for the large number of children who will enter jobs requiring no special knowledge or ability is to practice self-deception. Possibly “traditional” subjects should be cut down considerably or the approach to them amended radically. More attention could be given to leisure activities—not in an attempt to *replace* cinema and coffee bar with orchestral concerts and pottery, but with the aim of deepening children’s knowledge and enjoyment of those things which do hold their interest, and developing them. The object is to proceed from the known to the unknown. This often means proceeding from grimy streets, dull houses, ramshackle cinemas, “pop” singers, motor cycles and football teams. The navy who was hopeless at Arithmetic when he was at school can work out winnings on complicated bets with facility: he has the ability in him but school did not bring it out. Ordinary children have ability in them. Leisure-time activities of many children bear no resemblance to the “cultured” pursuits which schools tend to dwell upon, whilst the real lives which they lead are only tenuously or not at all related to the theoretical life of “a good citizen” which they hear so much about in the classroom. It must be demonstrated to these children that education has something to do with their lives. The schools face a big task. The chance of them succeeding is dependent upon the importance which society attaches to education: at present this society gives a low prestige to its teachers, especially to those who are concerned with educating the ordinary child. Buildings are important, but ultimately it is the teacher who counts: if the teacher is to succeed, he must have strong sections of society patently on his side.

CHAPTER 5

FACTORS AFFECTING CHOICE OF WORK

DECISIONS about work are the result of a complex of influences—direct and indirect, deliberate and fortuitous, personal and social. The home and the school provide a framework within which the Youth Employment Service must work.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOME

The home is fundamental: its general atmosphere orientates children towards particular levels of employment, and the school-leavers' attitudes towards work are affected by the outlook of other people at home who are employed. With few exceptions, parents were ill-equipped to advise on choice of work. Knowledge was confined to jobs which other members of the family were doing or had done. Parents tended to be unaware of the significance of social and technological changes over the past few years not realizing for example, that clerical work was no longer the exclusive province of grammar school boys and middle-class girls, or that there were new technical jobs in steel which did *not* demand strong muscles and the willingness to "sweat out your guts". Older parents, particularly, were out of touch with the modern employment scene for young people: but experience with their elder sons and daughters enabled them to take the situation in their strides—they had given up worrying a long time since. The younger parents who thought that they ought to give advice were far from being sure about what suggestions to make. Either the mother or father of two-fifths of the respondents were aged forty or under at Interview 1. New generations of parents as well as of children have grown up since the war, and the age gap between parents and children is in many families small. The fifteen-year-old school-leaver may have a parent of thirty-two or three. Because of their inexperience, and because the war interfered with their early years at work, some parents were uncertain what to recommend to their children. There was some compensation in the fact that they were more in touch with the teenage world, better able to understand their children's attitudes and aspirations.

Although most parents had lived in Sheffield all their lives, they knew little about the types of work which were available beyond the universal recognition that steel and engineering were important. If they attempted a survey of occupations at all, they did so on the basis of work done in the immediate locality, supplemented by knowledge of what relations did and perhaps by a glance at the advertisement columns in the newspapers.

In most homes, mothers took the lead in "advising" both boys and girls: this was expected of them by the husbands—"anything to do with the kids" was a woman's concern. Mothers, too, saw more of the children, since fathers were at work all day. A substantial number of fathers did take an interest in their sons' employment, but it was exceptional for them to get involved in their daughters' decisions about work—for it did not much matter what job a girl took. The suggestion that fathers might be concerned was treated by some girls as wildly humorous. The girls themselves had no wish for their fathers to intervene: fathers who did make suggestions were liable to be dismissed as interfering busy-bodies or ignored as genial buffoons who were quite unacquainted with the needs of women. Girls assumed that their fathers would say nothing about work, and doubted whether they *could* say anything worthwhile. A few mothers had direct experience of the sorts of work which their sons might enter—they had been employed during the war or before marriage in engineering factories, for example, and in one or two cases still were. Some mothers, too, had first-hand experience of the jobs which their daughters were likely to enter. There was, indeed, a slight tendency for children whose mothers were at work to be more realistic both about the jobs which they aimed at and about the world of work in general.

The ability of parents to advise was very limited, then: but even the knowledge which they had was rarely made use of. Firstly, they did not attempt to draw together the threads of their experience, and, secondly, there was little communication between parents and children on the subject of work. The amount of thought and discussion which took place was very small—whether about work or anything else. Such discussion as there was did not amount to much in about two-thirds of the homes—one boy could recall only that "last year" he had told his mother that he would like to be a plumber, and she had replied, "No you don't, it's too dirty." There the matter had rested. Discussion in other homes consisted of no more than a mild suggestion by the parent that it was time to think about work, and a non-committal reply from the child—mother said "What job do you want?" the boy replied "I'm not sure", and the mother retorted, "You

had better make your mind up soon": or, father had merely commented on his child's choice of work, "It's as good a job as any." The lack of discussion often reflected parental indifference, but in many homes in which parents were concerned about what jobs their children should take there was a failure to talk things over.

There are definite obstacles to discussion in many homes. The television set is on full-blast: the family feels ill-at-ease if it is not—men who have spent the day in the Works are used to noise and expect it. Conversation at home, as on the job, is replaced by the exchange of shouts. Everyone is crowded into a small room, and there is a jumble of people and furniture. Neighbours wander in and out, each contributing to the din, and ensuring that the talk becomes no more than chatter. Grandma's heart, Tom's new bicycle and Rene's new boy friend are all blended into a meandering stream of inconsequentiality, which serves to pass the time more than anything else. Father may go off to the pub, and the children themselves are glad to get out of the house, away from it all.

There is, in any case, no habit of reasoning things out. When work is discussed, each person offers his own entrenched ideas, using his limited experience to generalize and dogmatize: there is never any attempt to reconcile conflicting conclusions. Or, realizing their inadequacy, parents may feel embarrassed about trying to talk on a serious level and fight shy of doing so. Discussion rarely resulted from parental policy: usually the subject came up by chance—an item was noticed in the newspaper, or the television happened to be tuned in to a programme dealing with work. Parents had it in the backs of their minds that the time for action was approaching, and a chance event triggered off discussion. There was no discussion until the respondents raised the subject, in several homes: but even direct requests for advice usually met with non-committal responses. On the other hand, a few children resented the attempts of their parents to set them thinking—"they keep on nagging about it : I like to do things in my own time". Although keen to start work, children did not consider that it was necessary to think about what jobs to aim at: it did not strike them as in any way curious that their parents had said little about it—what was there to say?

In approximately one-third of the homes discussion was fairly frequent. A few parents gave constructive advice—various occupations were mulled over, wages and prospects looked into and possible places of employment considered. Most of the parents concentrated upon urging their children to decide on an occupation, however, rather than making suggestions or providing information.

Parental Attitudes

Some parents were very anxious for their children to "get on". Fathers looked back on their own lives with dissatisfaction and hoped that their sons would "make a better go of things": men who had been ordered about year in and year out urged their children to strive towards the top. It would not be easy, but it was worth trying—"It can be done. There's not room for everybody but you can and should try." These parents were prepared to make sacrifices to give their children "a better chance in life": even if an apprenticeship meant that parents would "not get much out of him financially", it was well worthwhile. This attitude was particularly apparent with regard to "only" children and the youngest of grown-up families whose brothers and sisters were at work: the parents could afford to go without a high wage. The desire for a child to get on was also associated with the parents' pre-occupation with position in the social scale: they were "on the rise" socially, and wanted their sons and daughters to continue the climb up the ladder. This resulted in jobs being assessed in terms of their social suitability rather than their appropriateness for the children concerned. Other parents were concerned less with rising in the social scale than with consolidating their position: they were determined to maintain certain standards ("they wouldn't want me to be a *labourer!*"). Apart from the middle-class families, there were many solid working-class parents who would not have been content with "any old job". Mostly the fathers held positions of responsibility—such as foreman—and were skilled men: they were "comfortably off" financially. Their sons were guided towards a job which would offer a steady income in the future, sufficient to maintain a family and a home of which a man could be proud. There was no thought of rising out of the working-class—but a desire that, within it, their children would be first among equals.

A small minority of parents gave a clear lead to their children. Some took a very firm line—work was too serious a business to be left to young minds: children did not understand its importance. The sons and daughters regarded it as right and proper for their parents to take the initiative, and parents went ahead to arrange a job of their own choosing, something "suitable" which would "give a good start". The children simply waited to be informed about what they would be doing, and when they would start. Some parents despaired of their children ever making up their minds, and for this reason themselves took action: one girl, enrolled for a Commercial Course, remarked, "I don't know if it *is* my choice at all. Mother just told me I was to do it. All the family thought it was a good idea, so I thought I had better do it." The father of a boy arrived home one night and told

him that a job had been arranged at the steelworks: the boy had half expected that this would happen, and had said at his Interview that "If father comes home and says, 'You've got to come to the Works on Saturday morning and see about a job', I suppose I'll go." The dominance of some parents was more subtle. They told their children that they could do whatever they wished, but consistently pointed out disadvantages of all jobs except those which they preferred. Children were not fooled by this, but several as a consequence entered the work "what would please Mum".

A number of parents wished very much to do the best they could for their children, but were very conscious of their ignorance of how to set about doing it. Not knowing what action to take, they took none. Some felt themselves to be at the mercy of events, and their only "plan" was to wait and see what happened. Parents who were exasperated at the failure of their children to decide what job to aim at were at a loss to recommend anything. There were even scenes at home, arguments about what to do for the best: but no one could offer a constructive suggestion.

The largest group of parents consisted of those who allowed their children free-will in choice of work. This was a positive policy for a few: they wished not to influence their children unduly by their own preferences. One boy had overheard his father say to his mother, "I can tell him about work in the steel factories if he wants to know, but I don't want to press it on him", and another boy said, "My father is interested, but I think he wanted me to show interest first." Keen to offer advice, such parents scrupulously avoided persuasion—"they didn't want to interfere and get me into the wrong job". Some parents indicated with pride that they had "not forced the kids into anything they didn't want". When *they* had left school times were difficult, and it was not a question of choosing an occupation but of getting what job you could because the money was needed at home. Memories of having to do jobs which they had disliked led these parents to refrain from making any suggestions: the free-will of their children was thus exercised on the basis of ignorance. Several parents were willing to allow their children to make a decision which they believed to be wrong. The mother of a building apprentice said, "It is not what we would have chosen. His teacher told us he thought Jim was wasting himself. He was really good at Maths and would have done well to take it up. But it's his life, and he has got to lead it." Quite a lot of parents felt that they had no option but to let their children do as they wished—it was no good interfering, for "you know what lads and lasses are at that age". You cannot expect to get any sense out of adolescents, so there is no point in trying: "You can't shove them if

they don't want to do anything." It is best to let them go their own ways and find things out for themselves. In any case, many parents think, "That is what I had to do, and it hasn't done me any harm." Thus some mothers and fathers had to reconcile themselves to sitting back and seeing their dreams fade: but they realized that children are particularly conscious of their status and jealous of their independence, and that any attempt at persuasion would meet with obstinacy.

Another reason why free-will was allowed was that this enabled parents to avoid a difficult problem. A considerable number of respondents stated that all their parents had said was, "It is up to you" or "You must please yourself". Parents abrogated responsibility for helping the child to come to a decision, and accepted whatever choice was made. To think at a serious level is a difficult matter for many people, and these parents shirked it. They took the easy way out, and often made the rationalization that advice which could have been given might have been bad advice. The willingness of parents to think that what a child wants is the same as what is good for him does not, of course, usually extend to other spheres. A substantial number of parents genuinely feared that their children might reproach them in future years if they influenced them towards certain kinds of work—"If she gets her own job, it will be her own fault if she doesn't like it." Some of them harboured grievances against their own parents: none of them realized the possibility that their children might reproach them in future years for not giving them more guidance. However, many parents do not *care* particularly what jobs their children enter. One job is much like the next, so the children might just as well do what they want. Life is such a chancy business, furthermore, that it seemed pointless to waste time worrying about the children's jobs. The ordinary man can do nothing in this world, and in such circumstances it is best for a child to "make his own mistakes".

Some parents refused to take what they regarded as their children's worries upon their own shoulders. They had enough to worry about without bothering themselves about a grown-up son or daughter: the children were old enough to look after themselves. Weary with the complications of life, other parents had adopted the philosophy, "Why worry?—to Hell with it all!" If they were not going to worry about their own troubles, why fret about their children's? They had given up the struggle, and took things as they came—"as far as his job is concerned", said the father of one boy, "he can please himself for all me and his mother care. All we ask is for him to be in at a reasonable time and not disturb us." The children who were thus left to their own resources had little experience to act on: several came from filthy terraced houses in the darkest parts of slums. They had

rarely glimpsed anything other than grimy, cobbled, smoky streets. There was not much pleasure in being at home, with all the fag ends, and broken chairs, and babies with dirty nappies. But fathers' counsels would not in any case have been a subject of awe and respect.

In general, parents considered that work was not an important matter for girls—there was seldom any question of a career, and, unlike boys, girls would not have to maintain a family in later life. One father said, "We didn't insist on her sticking to her first choice because she is a girl. She will get married, and her training would have been useless then anyhow." If girls could get jobs in which something of direct help in their future homes would be learnt—such as needlework or cookery—that was sensible, but it was not really important. A decent wage in a job not too far from home seemed the best plan for a girl—on the other hand, her fancies could be indulged since it was not of much significance what she did. A few parents did think it important for a girl to have training—"something she could fall back on": for "you never know when it might come in useful".

The Nature of Parental Advice

Much of the advice which parents did give was in general terms. They tried to impress the desirability of smartness and punctuality. Several parents were particularly concerned about the attitude of modern youth towards work: typical of these was one father who said, "I believe in discipline, and I believe that if you have to work hard when young it comes natural when you are older. Discipline among young workers is too lax nowadays. In my younger days if we had a five minutes break the foreman would stand over us after four minutes and say 'Come on—are you going to rest all bloody day?'" Now they take their five minutes and just wander back as they please." Young people "couldn't care less" and are "work-shy". These parents were determined that their children would have a different outlook.

A few parents stressed the need for deep thought about work—"We have talked about it a lot. Mother says it is no good going into a job you don't like, for you would only be slap-dash at it. She wants me to talk it over with the Y.E.O., and then we will know more about it." A few of the parents who hoped to use their influence in finding jobs were especially concerned for their children to think hard: one boy said, "My father wants me to be quite sure I know what I want to do and will stick to it, so that I won't let him down when he finds me a job."

Some parents realized that their children were likely, in the excitement of choosing a job, to overlook details which would later have a

considerable bearing upon their satisfaction with the work. They therefore emphasized the need to take into account such aspects as distance from home, bus fares, hours and holidays.

A good many parents were keen for their sons to learn a trade—the particular occupation was often not discussed: the important thing was to have a trade of some sort. One boy said that his parents had told him, “You can do what you like, but you’ve *got* to get a job with a trade in your fingers.” The aim was to find employment which offered security—“it is foolish to aim at bread vans, window cleaning, or daft jobs like that: what you need is good pay and a future”. The father of one boy had in consequence told him sharply that he “could scrub round the idea of van boy”. Skilled men, in particular, tended to favour apprenticeships for their sons, but experience of insecurity in the past had impressed upon many semi-skilled men the desirability of learning a trade. Many parents, however, expressed doubts about the value of an apprenticeship. It would be ironic if such doubts were to gain ground, as they appear to be doing, precisely at the time when the need for trained personnel in the new age of technology is being constantly emphasized. At the basis of parents’ doubts was the increased prosperity of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, who were thought to be much better off than the craftsman who had put in years of training. To some men, it seemed an outrage. No longer, furthermore, did the unskilled man have any less security than the skilled man—the Welfare State had seen to that. Nor did the craftsman enjoy much prestige—indeed, he was liable to be discounted as a “mug”. All the old values seemed to be changing: the spiv fared better than the honest worker, and people only laughed if the spiv “got away with it”. Training and learning counted for nothing—whilst people who could not write their own names drove around in Bentleys. Who could say what was right and what was wrong in such circumstances—and how do you advise a child what to do? “I often wonder”, said one father, “whether working hard for a trade is worth all the effort, even though there is satisfaction in a job that requires skill.” Doubts are strengthened by the knowledge that many apprenticeships are not well organized, and are not accorded much importance by the employer (fathers have “seen for themselves” at their own place of work). Most parents who expressed their dilemma tended in practice to encourage their sons to aim at a trade, but many did so with much less conviction than would have been the case a few years ago.

Ironically, the most forceful advice which many children received was negative—warnings *against* certain sorts of work. Several parents forbade their sons to work in the coalmines, because of the danger of

accidents and the hazards to health. The steelworks, too, were regarded by some parents as dangerous and unhealthy: "Mother doesn't want me to go in the rolling mills", said one boy, "My father worked there and was never in the best of health, with the grit and grime". Similarly, a girl had "dropped the idea of hairdressing because mother says it is unhealthy—you get hairs down your throat". The desire for a child to get a socially acceptable job resulted in the prohibition of certain types of work. Several girls were warned against factory work, one father telling his daughter that he would prefer her to remain at home "rather than take a job like that". A mother who had told her daughter that she was to do a commercial course had also told her that if she wanted to work in a shop she would have to leave home. The parents of a few children who had considered jobs which would have meant them living away from home refused to give their permission. One boy said, "They haven't really given a good reason why I shouldn't go in the Merchant Navy, but they say I might regret it later on." The parents of these children thought that their sons were too young to realize the full implications of working away from home. One father, in contrast, would have liked his son to join the Army, although he was not otherwise bothered about what the boy did. He said, "My oldest boy is in the nick. He went on the booze and finished up by hitting an Arab—so he was sent inside. I've told all the boys that if ever they want to go in the Forces I would be only too willing to sign their papers. I think it's a fine life, and my boy would not be in the nick now if he had gone in the Army. It is the finest life—it is a holiday, with everything found, and you move all over the world. And it keeps you out of trouble."

Advice was for the most part vague, however: parents' value judgements took the place of systematic thought—they made statements that such and such jobs are "good" ones, but no attempt was made to *define* a good job, or to assess its "goodness" in relation to the person to whom it was recommended. The mother of one boy told him, "If you can't get a pattern-making job try being a butcher: there are quite a lot of openings, and you could work your way up, like your uncle." As was so often the case, this mother had seized upon a job about which she had a little information, and suggested to her son that he "try it". "Beliefs" and "feelings" were resorted to when what was required was thought and knowledge: other people's views were called as evidence without any cross-examination—"they say" that so-and-so is "a good job". Often *firms* were referred to rather than type of work—"Why don't you try for a job down at Smith's?" One boy, more percipient than most, said that his mother had advised him to "go into steel", but added that "she does not know much about

it, though". Truth, half-truth and falsity were often combined in a single piece of advice which ended in a conclusion which was not contained within the premises. Most children who received such advice took little notice of it—their actions were in turn governed by impulse rather than planning—but some children did act upon it. Thus were decisions based upon prejudice and ignorance, sometimes masquerading under the name of "experience". Parental value-judgements directed children towards certain types of jobs for which they had no special interest, and persuaded them against work which might have been more enjoyable and rewarding.

Follow in Father's Footsteps?

Eleven boys wished to do similar work to their fathers. These respondents were better informed than most about the work which they aimed at—everyday observation and experience at home made them familiar with aspects of their fathers' work, and this was usually supplemented by detailed discussions. A fifth of the remaining boys were emphatic that they did not wish to do the same work as their fathers, but the majority had never contemplated doing so and had simply decided on something different.

Although the proportion is not unimportant, it is surprising that comparatively few boys wished to do the same work as their fathers—especially in a city in which sons have followed their fathers into steel work for several generations. The fathers of only 6 of the boys who wished to do the same work were employed in steel and engineering, whereas the fathers of 14 of the boys who *definitely* did not wish to do the same work were in this industry. So that the majority of the sons of steel and engineering workers either had no inclination or were definitely opposed to doing the same work.

Several boys thought that it was "natural" to follow their fathers, especially if—as was often the case—other relations, friends and neighbours were in the same industry. It seemed the obvious thing to do. Some families were proud of their association, however humble, with firms of high repute, "known all over the world", and were keen for their sons to carry on the tradition. Usually, it was the skilled man with a position of responsibility who urged his son to enter the same occupation. Such men had done well at their jobs and enjoyed them, and wanted their sons to do the same. Some boys hero-worshipped their fathers, and wanted to emulate them. Important, too, was the ability of fathers to use influence to get jobs at the firms where they worked—fathers were pleased to be able to ensure a good job, whilst sons were reinforced in their desire to do the work by the knowledge that a job could be arranged. Too much talk at home about steel

could, however, lead to satiety: the father of one boy who disliked the idea of doing this work said that his own father had been in steel for fifty years, and he for thirty-seven. He thought that they had dwelt on it so much that his son had had a surfeit of it.

The boys who definitely had no wish to do the same work as their fathers referred to various adverse attributes—it was hard and tiring, dangerous, unhealthy, insecure. The son of a steelworker referred to the “dust and grime”, and another boy exclaimed, “not likely—it is dangerous and fearsome, all that molten steel and red hot ingots”. A furnaceman’s son described how his father arrived home sodden through with sweat, and tired after a twelve-hour shift: several times he had had accidents, burned by molten steel. A few boys referred to lack of security, because there had recently been some short-time working—“it is a failing industry. It is not paying what it should. Father is on short time.” Such children lacked a perspective, and arrived at decisions affecting the long-term by means of short-term objections.

Various reasons were given by boys whose fathers were not steelworkers. One boy complained of “the long hours and hard work” in his father’s job as a shop-keeper—“You never have any spare time: my father never seems to be able to get out”. Another said that his father’s work “meant being outdoors in all sorts of weather”. Several boys rejected their fathers’ jobs because they offered no prospects—one who preferred clerical work, said, “you can start as an office boy and work up: it’s better than just being an ordinary worker all your life”. The fathers of a number of boys were outspoken in their wish for their sons *not* to do the same work as they. These fathers hoped that their sons would “do better”: they did not want them to “go through” what they had been through—“I’ve worked hard all my life and look at me now—I’ve nothing to show for it.” As one boy said, “Dad doesn’t want me to go into cutlery, like him: for he has been at it for a long time and hasn’t really got anywhere.” Another boy said, “I wouldn’t mind cutlery, but Dad is not so keen. Dad says he has spent nearly all his life in it and doesn’t see any point in me doing the same.” A boy who said that neither his father nor his mother wanted him to work in steel because “there is not enough money in it”, was wearing a wrist watch which had been given to his father in recognition of twenty-five years’ service to the steelworks where he was employed. Some fathers felt that their work was too hard: they hoped that their sons would get jobs in which less effort was required—“Father says steel is too hard—and he doesn’t want me to do the things he has to do.” Not having gained much satisfaction from their jobs fathers thought that their sons might as well try

another occupation: there was at least a *chance* that it would be more satisfying. One father, a steelworker, was doubtful about prospects in the industry—he said that the reason why fathers no longer wanted their sons to follow them was because of automation and the uncertainty that this brought for the future.

Some fathers, whilst not objecting to their sons following the same occupation, did not approve of boys working at the same firms as their fathers. The father of one boy thought that the young people who worked for the same firm as he would have been a bad influence on his son, and although he could have arranged a job for him he did not do so for this reason. Fathers felt, too, that it was unfair to a youth to have his father looking over him at work—"lots of fathers, myself included, do not favour having their sons working with them. From my own experience of working with my father, I know they expect too much from their sons—they expect them to be not just as good as, but better than, everyone else." One father referred to the unhappiness which a child (and his father) may experience if other workers consider that he has been specially favoured: "I don't think working with their fathers is right for boys, especially if the father is foreman or something like that. People think you are making things right for your children. They are a lot better on their own." Not only are they then free from the taint of privilege, but they have to stand on their own feet, which is "good for them".

There were other disadvantages which appeared to have deterred some fathers from arranging jobs at the same firm. Fathers who were doubtful of their son's competence feared that they would be "shown up" or "let down". In addition, if father is unpopular at the Works, or is well-known for his rough tongue or stock of dirty jokes, he would be embarrassed by the presence of his son. Father may have some authority at home, furthermore, but none at work. To some fathers work is a place of privacy from the family: they are different persons at work than at home, and they do not wish their particular worlds of work to be disrupted.

The Influence of Other Relations

Two-fifths of the children lived in homes in which at least one person other than the parents—usually a brother or sister—was at work full-time: several others had brothers and sisters at work who had left home but who frequently paid visits. But only 16 boys had "talked about" work with their brothers, and 7 with their sisters: and only 14 girls had talked about work with their sisters and 3 with their brothers. This is in keeping with the general lack of discussion: but, in addition, brothers and sisters often have little in common in their

early teens. Even children of the same sex separated by no more than a year or two tend not to mix much, either at home or in their leisure pursuits. Seventeen boys and 23 girls had talked about work with relations other than in the immediate family, but on the whole these discussions had little influence upon choice of work.

The Influence of Friends and Neighbours

Only one-quarter of the boys and two-fifths of the girls had discussed what jobs to aim at with friends who were still at school, or who had left school before them. There was plenty of *opportunity* for discussion, since four-fifths of the children had *special* friends attending the same school (in most cases in the same class), who were leaving at the same time. A special friend was someone with whom they habitually played and talked (in and out of school), and in many cases accompanied to and from school. But children "didn't bother to talk about work—the subject never came up". Less than a half of the boys and girls even knew what jobs their friends were aiming at, and a very small minority had more than the vaguest of ideas about what jobs other children in their classes wanted to do. Jobs were not sufficiently important—"there is no talk about it—most of the boys have not got jobs yet, but they are not particularly worried about it". Even the firmest of friends had other things to occupy their minds: one boy had a friend with whom he had "gone about for ages". Neither he nor his friend had mentioned jobs, although they went most weeks on long train-spotting journeys together, and saw each other every evening. Even when friends did talk about work the discussion was very limited in its scope—"So I said to her So she said to me So I said to her": words were exchanged, but not ideas. The delights of being at work might be conjured up, but the actual job aims were overlooked: as one girl said, "We talk about wanting to leave, and say that we will be glad when we have left. We don't really talk about what jobs we are going to do."

Children who did discuss job aims with their friends tended to be unrealistic: girls in particular were prone to decide that they would like to work at the same place—one girl hoped that she and three others would be able to get jobs in the same shoe shop. Groups of boys sometimes had crazes—perhaps resulting from a chance remark by a teacher which caught their imagination, or, since an important element in job choice was the ease with which work could be found, from the information that there were vacancies at a particular firm.

Very few children had discussed work with friends who had left school: few had such friends—"You don't often see people after they have left, so you don't hear much about their jobs." Those who did

have contact with young workers—at Boy Scouts, Youth Clubs or in the streets—preferred to talk about other matters.

Some children had little to do with their neighbours: others—living in houses with shared yards, and kitchen doors scarcely a dozen feet apart—could not avoid contact even if they wished to do so. The latter knew what hours men worked, what clothes they wore, what language they used and how they passed their time: they knew something of the atmosphere of work—but they did not enquire about particular jobs.

THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL

The general influences of the school were considered in Chapter 2: the concern here is with the direct influences upon children's attitudes to employment arising from time given over to careers matters, both formally (for example by Works visits) and informally, by discussions in class.

Head Teachers

Even those head teachers who attached special importance to employment matters had little direct influence upon the individual school leaver. Only 6 boys and 9 girls could recall the head teacher having spoken to them about work. Head teachers have many other calls upon their time, and many are tied down (through lack of secretarial assistance and shortage of staff) to routine work which takes up time which they would prefer to use in teaching, talking with pupils and thinking about their schools. Employment matters may, therefore, be delegated to another teacher. The only opportunity which arises for the head teacher to talk about work may be at Assembly: but this is for all children, not just leavers, and there are other matters to be dealt with—behaviour on the school bus, the success of the football team and so on. Most children who remembered the head teacher talking about work said that he had spoken in Assembly—pointing out the need for thought, and emphasizing the desirability of working hard in a job and treating employers with respect. Doubtless other respondents had been present when such talks were given, but were either not listening at the time or dismissed the advice as not true to life (all this nonsense about reward being related to effort, and going forth into the world with the good name of the school to uphold!).

Other Teachers

Two-thirds of the children remembered that their teachers had

spoken to them about jobs. Most children were vague about what had been said: "Teacher spoke a little about jobs—she said all different things, but I can't remember what, now." The vagueness was due to the children's lack of interest, but also to the brief and casual way in which employment had been mentioned—"No one says anything much, but teachers sometimes bring the subject up. If you come across something about electric currents, the teacher might say 'This will come into engineering'. But that's about all."

In contrast, a few teachers made a special point of discussing employment with their classes: some had regularly devoted entire lessons to employment matters. One boy referred enthusiastically to booklets which each pupil was designing on the subject of the coal and steel industries. Some lessons were specifically designed to inform about work and arouse interest in it: as a result, as one boy said, "all the work you do shows you what life afterwards is going to be like—and it helps you to decide which branch of life you want to go in for". Children could see some point in paying attention to such lessons. Girls, especially, welcomed lessons dealing with how to conduct themselves at interviews—"Wear sensible clothes and you don't have to be too flashy, and you must be polite." Efforts of teachers to give detailed information about work—as distinct from vague generalizations—were much appreciated.

Much of the advice which children recalled was of a general nature. Warnings were mixed with encouragement and pleading: "They tell us to stand up for ourselves at work, but don't give cheek; don't be fooled if they pick on you, and hold your own. They will think better of you for it." There were cautions that work was a different proposition from school—"You can get away with anything at school, but if you slack at work you are fired." Some teachers saw in the approach of work an opportunity to emphasize the need for children to apply themselves to lessons, and said that "the best pupils will get the best jobs": but boys and girls did not look kindly on this sort of advice, considering it to be a subterfuge.

Specific advice concentrated on the desirability of thinking about what jobs to aim at. Dead-end jobs were criticized, and children were told to beware of taking a job simply because it offered a good wage—"Don't go after a job if you don't want it, even if the money is good. If you don't like the work you will be unhappy, no matter how good the money." A few children had been given detailed advice by their teachers—"The form master tells us what jobs we are fit for", and, "Teachers help you pick jobs, and if they think you are thinking of a job which is not suitable, they tell you." The teacher who is popular may, indeed, wield a powerful influence, perhaps unbeknown to

him: for children accept his advice unquestioningly—as one boy said, “If the teacher suggests a job, we all want to do it.”

Since so much of what teachers said consisted of remarks made from time to time, rather than of systematic explanation, and since advice differed from teacher to teacher, it is not surprising that most children could recall only snippets of what they had been told. The advice did not, in any case, ring true to many children. The teacher may say that the first choice of job is important because it will shape their future lives, but this savours too much of the “preaching” and lack of realism which children have learnt to associate with school. For the fathers, sisters and brothers of many of them had changed jobs several times since starting work. Boys and girls knew that changing jobs was normal, not unusual. Children’s knowledge of life made them sceptical, too, of teachers’ platitudes about virtue being its own reward and success inevitably following effort. The suggestion that “the best lads will get the best jobs” did not accord with the facts known to young people—whose own brothers had perhaps been turned down for apprenticeships whilst less able youths were accepted because of their family connections. In any case, what is the good of teacher saying that it is important to make the right choice of work and then saying the next minute that jobs were scarce and you might have to take what you can get? Furthermore, teachers’ definitions of a “good” job—“don’t go after high wages”, “get a job with training”—were too much like the usual “self-denial” advice: teachers are always telling you not to do things you want to do, and to do things that you do not want to do. Just when you are looking forward to starting work they try to spoil *that*.

There were other inconsistencies in teachers’ advice which led children to repudiate it. At one time teachers will paint a picture of the opportunities which lie ahead, as if the world were at your feet: and then, at other times, they suggest that work will be hard to endure—“it will come as a shock”, and, “you’ll soon wish you were back at school”. Teachers were “always on about” jobs being scarce, too: “Teacher says it’s getting worse every year to get jobs”, “Teacher tells you all the difficulties”, “Teacher gave a talk on how hard it is to get jobs”. Aiming at making their pupils realistic, and at moving them to action, teachers often succeeded only in spreading alarm, resignation or confusion. Some children were undoubtedly discouraged by the continual lament—“They put you off. They unknowingly discourage you.” Other boys and girls were simply confirmed in their “couldn’t care less” attitudes: the onset of the bulge and the economic situation were just two more complications in a life which is fundamentally mad anyway: why worry about them? Most children

who bothered to listen chose to ignore teachers' warnings about how difficult life was going to be: they resolved to find out for themselves.

In some schools the head teacher acts as careers master, but it is more usual for another teacher to do this work. The importance which is attached to the post, and the amount of work put into it, vary considerably from school to school. Some careers masters do no more than the minimum documentary work which is required of them, others take the work very seriously, have thorough interviews with all school-leavers and try to promote interest through displays and projects. Not infrequently the careers master is in charge of the senior form in the school, and in consequence the children in his class (the "A" stream) come into contact with him and the careers material which he stores in the classroom more frequently than pupils in other forms. This may reinforce a tendency in children from lower forms to associate careers with the top class—any job will do for other children. The careers master is handicapped in his dealings with the less able children by the paucity of information available about the more routine sorts of work: few booklets deal with occupations which the less intelligent children are likely to enter.

Careers masters as such made little impact upon the respondents, although some gave advice, outlined above, in their rôle as class-teachers. Only a handful of children made any reference to careers masters: one boy had decided to aim at a job as the result of reading a pamphlet which the careers master had given to him. It is probable that many schools do not attach much importance to the post—it is more of a device to syphon off some paper work from the head teacher than a positive measure to ensure sensible choice of work. At least some careers masters regard the post as a nuisance—as well they might, since they have many other duties, especially if, as is often the case, they are deputy head teachers. Careers masters have insufficient time to do the job properly: many themselves realize that they can do little more than toy with the work.

Thirty boys and 5 girls had been on *School Visits*, which were common practice in only two schools. The girls had visited a hospital only, and none of them aimed at being nurses. Most of the boys had been on just one visit, and the job choices of only two had been directly affected. One boy had thought of becoming a welder, but was "not dead certain" until he had been given the opportunity to test his ability when visiting an engineering firm. The other boy, together with several children in his class, was offered employment at a factory which the school party had visited a few weeks before the end of term: it would seem that the visit was designed with the aim of arranging jobs for the pupils (and labour for the factory) rather than

simply to familiarize the children with the industrial world. A Works Visit may turn a child away from a particular occupation—the noise and heat and the sense of being closed in led one boy to give up the idea of becoming a steelworker. The visits were not part of an overall programme of careers information, and the children tended not to look upon them as being connected with their choice of work. Rather were they welcomed as trips out of the classroom, a happy change from routine. Visits can be misleading to children—not just because so few are made, but also because usually the firms which offer facilities are both spacious and well-equipped with modern machinery, whereas children who enter the same occupation may be employed by firms with old machinery and no welfare facilities, clean white overalls or gleaming tools. Visits would serve a more useful purpose if comprehensive programmes were worked out, and if teachers were able to explain the work adequately beforehand and follow up afterwards. Some industries co-operate with the Youth Employment Service to provide courses which help the teacher to do this, but very little is done in this direction at present.

In some schools *Careers Evenings* are organized regularly by the Youth Employment Service. The meetings aim at promoting interest amongst parents and providing them with an opportunity to get information from employers. Only a few parents had been to such meetings, and the respondents seemed not to have been influenced as a result of them. The majority of parents did not think in terms of starting a career, but of getting a job. Most did not think of seeking information: those who would have liked information but did not know where to get it did not know either that there were such things as *Careers Evenings*—and probably would not have associated such activities with their own problems, if they had known. The *Careers Evenings* are likely to attract only the dutiful parents: and it seems likely that parents who do go attend out of support for the child and his school rather than in search of guidance. Some of the respondents had attended a *Careers Exhibition*: these tend to be orientated towards grammar school children. Most of the occupations with which they deal are within reach of only a small proportion of secondary modern children. Few exhibitions deal with routine machine operating, the work of a warehouse packer, or a day in the life of a van-boy.

Girls from one school had listened to *broadcast programmes* dealing with careers. Most could recall little of what they had heard: they remembered that the programmes dealt with conditions and tasks in various occupations, without remembering what the occupations were or what had been said about them.

Very little reading was done by the majority of children on any

subject. Reading outside school was usually confined to comics and magazines, and the pictures received more attention than the written stories. Some respondents had glanced at pamphlets about careers which they had seen in the classroom or school library. Several boys had read recruiting literature issued by the Services—which glamourizes the life rather than giving information about work. Booklets issued by various industries had also been looked at—but these often do more for the prestige of the organization concerned than for the enlightenment of the young reader. A few children expressed the wish that there were more pamphlets to read dealing with “ordinary” jobs—as distinct from those which concentrated on “careers” and “getting to the top”.

Most children had done no reading about work at all. They were amused at the idea of wasting their time in this way—or even alarmed that anyone should take work so seriously.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The Youth Employment Officer has two contacts with children whilst they are at school—the School Talk and the vocational guidance interview: the former is a general introduction which has the aim of clearing the path for the latter.

The School Talk

Schools vary in the importance which they attach to the Y.E.O. Talk. Announcements in assembly may stress the need to be attentive to the forthcoming talk, or children may be left uninformed of the impending visit by the Y.E.O. until just before it is made. Children in their turn may approach the talk seriously or dismiss it as casually as the school appears to do. Some schools accord the Y.E.O. high prestige, welcoming him to prize-giving ceremonies and giving him the run of the building—he thus becomes accepted by pupils and staff: in Sheffield, Y.E.O.s are allocated to schools with the aim of promoting this. There are teachers who look down upon the Youth Employment Service, however—and some officers find that one of their greatest tasks is to win respect in the schools. There is a feeling amongst some teachers that the Y.E.O. is out to grab their best pupils and push them into jobs instead of letting them remain at school. They think—just as do many parents and children—that the Service is primarily a job-finding agency, and fail to realize that vocational guidance is at the core of the Y.E.O.'s work, and that he is, like them, concerned for the welfare of the children. Y.E.O.s are well aware of the value of study, and several respondents stated that, in his talk,

the Y.E.O. had urged the need to work hard at school—advice of which children might take more heed when given by a person whom they regard as disinterested, in contrast with the teacher whom they see as having a vested interest in education. Y.E.O.s encourage children who can profit from an extra year at school to stay on—but the belief persists amongst some teachers that their work is in conflict with the school rather than complementary to it. Some teachers, too, are loath to relinquish any of their authority, and may resent the presence of an expert—someone talking to the pupils who knows more about the subject than themselves. A Y.E.O. may thus have to deal with a dominating head teacher who does not understand the purpose of the talk, and who is anxious to indicate that in this, as in all matters in the school, he is in charge. One Y.E.O. gave an example of the delicate situation which arose when he addressed a school (not involved in this research) on the subject of opportunities in agriculture. He took care to point out the disadvantages as well as the advantages, saying that working in the open-air meant putting up with snow, frost and rain as well as basking in the sunshine. The head teacher butted in with the remark that things were not really as bad as had been painted—a comment which was obviously prejudicial to the aim of the talk. The Y.E.O.'s resources were taxed to the full in his attempt to affirm to the children the soundness of his information, whilst not affronting the dignity of the head teacher in front of his pupils. Y.E.O.s are not infrequently slighted in such ways—whether by teachers, employers or parents. The professional status of the Y.E.O. is nebulous: he is one of the poor relations of the educational system and has, all the time, to strive for recognition and respect. The Institute of Youth Employment Officers knows of this task and is constantly seeking to raise standards and to gain a standing in the community commensurate with the importance of the tasks which the Youth Employment Service exists to deal with. At present much depends upon the personality of the individual Y.E.O., who has little tradition and not much prestige behind him to lend weight to his efforts.

No matter how well disposed towards the Y.E. Service they may be, some head teachers are unable to give much help to him. The head teacher of a crowded school may have to choose between disrupting a lesson and interrupting the Y.E.O.'s Talk, for example. Demands on his time may make it impossible for him to co-operate with the Y.E.O. as fully as he would wish.

The School Talks were given during the last year at school—in most cases during the penultimate term (in some schools talks are given in the third-year). In principle, all schools are given a talk, but

it can happen—through lack of time, illness of a Y.E.O., shortage of staff and so on—that isolated sets of leavers do not attend a talk. In one school the talk had not been given at the beginning of the children's last term at school. Two-thirds of both boys and girls recalled that the Y.E.O. had talked to them. Of the rest, some had not attended a talk—apart from the school where it had not been given, some children were absent, a third-year leaver had missed the talk because it was given only to the fourth-year, and a prefect was engaged on her duties. The remaining boys and girls had attended a talk but forgotten all about it.

With some children there was direct evidence of the value of the talk—they had started to think about work as a result of it. Children heard about jobs which would not have entered their heads otherwise, and the talk broadened horizons, injected realism and clarified aims. Boys and girls were encouraged, for the first time, to think systematically about jobs—were they good with their hands or their heads, or with both? Were they prepared to study at Evening School? The Y.E.O.s advised them to think of an alternative job aim, in case they were unable to get their first choice. Children were told “to think for themselves—you don't have to decide on a job because your friend wants to do it. You must think what *you* really want to do.”

Y.E.O.s vary in their approaches, and also attempt to do different things in different schools. Where there are keen pupils, already fairly well informed about employment, they may concentrate upon details and spend much of their time answering questions. In other schools they have to attempt to ignite a spark of interest in children who are not much concerned, and many attempt to do this by talking in general terms. One of the biggest tasks is to dispel the belief that the Y.E. Service is exclusively a job-finding agency: children are more interested in getting a job than in thinking about it, and are loath to pay attention to anything that may be said about vocational guidance or characteristics of various jobs. Some Y.E.O.s consider that their primary task is to instil confidence in the children—“he told us that the bulge was not all that bad, and that all the Christmas leavers got fixed up O.K.” Ironically, the talk in many cases served only to strengthen the opinion, already implanted by parents and teachers, that the employment position was not easy. One boy remarked, “Yes—he came not long ago: he talked about unemployment.”

Because of shortage of time the Y.E.O. often gives his talk to a very mixed audience—perhaps all of the leavers together, irrespective of their ability or interests. Many Y.E.O.s would prefer to talk to small groups of children in a less formal atmosphere than classroom or

school hall provide—and some are able to arrange this. It is more usual for there to be a large number of pupils, however—and the inattentive do not benefit, whilst the shy fail to ask questions: very few respondents raised queries with the Y.E.O. at the end of the talk.

Although some children clearly benefited from the talk, then, a large number could remember little about it—they could recall that various occupations had been mentioned, but did not know what had been said about them. A few who had already decided what job to aim at closed their minds to what was said in the talk—not realizing that they might be unable to get their first choice. Many boys and girls had not been the slightest bit interested—“Someone” (they forgot who) had spoken to them, but they paid only grudging attention. They had other things to occupy their minds, of more immediate consequence to them—going to Army Cadets that night, wondering what was for dinner and whether they would see their boy friends. Minds wandered, or time was spent flicking paper unobtrusively at the boys in the next row. A number of children did not know that the person who had talked to them was the Y.E.O.: they remained, indeed, unaware of the existence of the Youth Employment Service, and had no knowledge of its functions. One boy spoke of “a mister who came to school about four months since”, and a girl was even more vague, saying, “Oh! um-ah!—Oh, yes! someone did come to talk to us. I *think* it was a woman.” A month or two seems a long stretch to children. The fact that a child cannot recall having had a talk, or is vague about what was said, does not *necessarily* mean that the talk has completely failed to inspire him to think about work: the evidence of this research, that many children are vague and ignorant about employment matters, suggests that this is not uncommonly the case, however.

It is argued by some that the talk is too little and too late: this study indicates that more talks are necessary if all children are to be stimulated to thought and action. An isolated talk can do little to combat deeply ingrained indifference and antipathy towards school and jobs—the Y.E.O. cannot be expected to perform magic. The talk would stand more chance of making an impact if it were part of an integrated plan—if the schools led up to it before and followed it up afterwards. This is rarely done with any thoroughness. The “preparation” for the vocational guidance interview is in consequence but a vague memory to many children when the time for the interview comes round.

At the beginning of their last term at school, then, the children had been influenced by home, school and the Y.E.O.’s talk: the pre-

liminary stages of the process of vocational guidance had been completed. What did children know about work?

Many respondents believed that the general employment position in Sheffield was not easy. A slight recession at the turn of the year had been given much publicity, and, as has been seen, parents, teachers and Y.E.O.s had drawn attention to difficulties. A very few children were worried about their prospects, and thought that it would be best "to take any job you can get and be thankful". But the majority put the matter out of their minds, or took the view that they were unlikely themselves to be affected—the general situation was put into a separate compartment from their own lives: many children, too, believed (correctly) that the position was improving.

Only a few children had more than a slight knowledge of the jobs which people do in Sheffield. Although all knew of the importance of steel and engineering, there was an ignorance of the occupations within the industry—boys were not able to distinguish between different trades and processes. Whilst most girls realized that there were jobs in shops, offices and factories, few were well-informed about the actual tasks performed in these jobs.

Defined generously, just over one third of both boys and girls had a reasonably sound idea about the tasks involved in their first choice jobs. Of these, some had given a great deal of thought, and some had had discussions with people employed in the occupation. There was a *slight* tendency for children from the higher I.Q. Grades to give more thought to the question of what jobs to aim at, but there was no marked superiority in knowledge about work amongst these children. Those who thought a lot about work tended to decide upon an aim at an early age—at the beginning of their fourth year at school or before.

Two-fifths of the boys and one-quarter of the girls were noticeably vague about work in general and about the nature of the occupations at which they aimed. Many of them were explicit—"I haven't really thought about it much", and "I'll wait and see what it's like when I've started." Some children, in any case, kept changing their minds about what job to aim at—but as the result of whim rather than knowledge: they never aimed at a job long enough to find out anything about it. The obvious lack of inclination to think about work is but one aspect of the failure to think deeply about anything: action in connection with work, as in most other spheres of life, derived from spur-of-the-moment decisions, not from thought and planning. The vagueness was very apparent in many boys who aimed at apprenticeships. They had picked up the idea that an apprenticeship was a "good thing", but did not know what it amounted to: teachers and

parents had urged the desirability of apprenticeships without explaining what they were. Many boys did not even know approximately how long an apprenticeship would last.

Most children were realistic about hours—everyday observation had taught them that they would probably start earlier and finish later than at school—and about wages. Wages were a matter of great interest, and information given in the Y.E.O.'s talk was thus more likely to be remembered: much of the talk at home had centred around pay, too—children knew that they were unlikely to get less than £2 a week or more than £4.

A substantial number of respondents replied that they “couldn't say” or “didn't know” when they were asked why they wanted to do the work which they aimed at. The reasons which many others gave can only be described as slight, and by any standards other than the children's own, inadequate. A boy happened to have heard of somebody who was a plumber and decided to “try it” himself: a girl decided to become a shoe shop assistant because a friend had told her it was “quite nice”. One girl described how “me and my mother were out shopping one day and passed a wallpaper shop, and there was a girl, ever so busy, selling it. Mum said, ‘You'd be alright in a wallpaper shop’ ”—and thus the choice was made.

Children accepted unquestioningly the value-judgements of others who were no better able to judge than themselves: a boy who aimed to be an engineer at a particular factory because his friend said he liked it did not know what work he would be doing or what machines he would use. Several boys were convinced that “big firms are best to work for” because they had been told so, and others were equally certain that small firms were preferable for the same reason. A reason frequently given for aiming at a job was that someone had said that it was “interesting”—the nature of the interest was not analysed, and children did not consider whether it would hold appeal for them. Some children judged jobs by the people whom they knew who did them: if a person was “nice” then his job was presumed to be a sensible aim. Many children could see no point in weighing up likes and dislikes—for “even if you *want* to do something else you only end up in steel”. Others felt that since not much satisfaction was to be expected from *any* job, they might as well take what they could find, and change if it was unbearable to something which they could “stick”.

A few children were indecisive about jobs precisely because they had given a lot of thought to the question: they were unable to think of any occupation which had an appeal, but which they could hope to get. One boy who had just failed to get a place at a grammar school was in a quandary: the jobs which were open to him were not “worth-

while and enjoyable" in his view, whilst he could not compete for those to which he was attracted. A girl said, "In my time I have thought of lots of different jobs—too numerous to mention." She knew that she was "not particularly bright", but at the back of her mind was the idea that there must be jobs which she would like but which she had not heard of. She thought that there should be more down to earth advice at school about what jobs there are. A year after she left school this girl was working in an office, still unsettled, and vaguely hankering after something else.

Some children had definite ideas about what they wanted from a job, and were determined to find work in which the conditions were fulfilled, but many boys and girls had given little consideration to the question of what constitutes a "good" job: and comparatively few of those who had thought in such terms applied their criteria when deciding what to aim at, or actually seeking jobs. The factors which they thought to be worthwhile in a job tended to be abstracted from their actual behaviour: the criteria were used rather to assess a job once it had been found than to govern the search for it.

For some boys and girls *pay* was of the utmost importance: "Money counts most—after all, that is what you work for". Other factors were irrelevant. One boy had been told by the woman in the Fish and Chip shop that there was good money to be had in forestry—the Grocer's son was in this line and earning £10 a week at the age of seventeen: the boy was keen on the job, saying, "You travel about and if you don't get back at night you have all your expenses paid." When asked what work he would have to do he was apologetic at not being able to help, and said, "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I can't say." Emphasis upon wages derived from the positive desire for money and from the negative belief that satisfaction was not to be found in work itself. The stress which society as a whole gives to material satisfaction is particularly apparent amongst teenagers: the joys to be derived from new clothes, travel and entertainments are constantly brought to their attention. To keep up with one's friends, and to entertain the girl friend in the way to which she has become accustomed, money is needed now: that there may be advantages in taking a job with a low initial wage but offering better prospects is regarded with scepticism or disbelief, or is dismissed as irrelevant. The concern is with life here and now, and the future can take care of itself. Several of the children who regarded pay as of primary importance did so because of the wish to help out at home as much as possible, rather than through a desire to spend it on a good time for themselves. In only one or two cases was there evidence of a child being pressed by his parents to earn a high wage. Several parents prided themselves that they were "not like

some, who want to get as much out of their children as they can". But others, by example and precept, recommended a high wage as the most important feature of a good job. They derived little satisfaction from work themselves and "only worked for the money"—and their children assumed the same ideas.

The large majority of children were *not* motivated by the desire for a high wage: they would be satisfied with "reasonable" pay—"about the same as other people get". They would, however, avoid jobs in which wages were relatively low—especially if there were no compensation, such as apprenticeship. Several children emphasized that wages were of secondary importance—"Money", said one boy, "is not such a big thing. I wouldn't say 'no' to a high wage, but other things, such as enjoying the work and prospects of a better job, are more important."

About a third of the boys and girls thought that *interest in the job* was of fundamental importance: nearly half of these boys hoped to obtain jobs which were related to their hobbies. Liking the job was the basis of everything else—"If you don't enjoy it, it's no use having the job." These children hoped for positive satisfaction from work: and some thought that interest was in any case the necessary basis of high wages and essential to success. "Most important in a job", said one boy, "is that you like it. Then you can get a good way ahead. If you are interested you get on, and if you get on you get higher wages. The two go together." One boy rejected two opportunities of apprenticeships at steelworks because there were no vacancies in his chosen trade of joinery. Many boys would have jumped at the opportunities which he rejected, but he was determined to do the work which interested him. Some of those children who did not consider interest in work to be important believed that they were being realistic: you could not expect to find such work—you *might* be lucky, but interest was a fortunate bonus rather than something which could be sought. The lack of intrinsic interest in many of the jobs which these children entered means that the children were correct in their appraisal. The rest did not look for interest at work because they were never really interested in anything—at home, at school, or in leisure time: their sources of satisfaction were essentially transitory—a visit to a football match or the cinema. There was no conception of long-term satisfaction.

One-fifth of the boys thought that *future prospects* were an important element of a good job. They wanted, in time, to be more than "ordinary workers": "I would like a bit better wage than someone else when I am older", said one boy. Prospects were also thought of in terms of having a position of responsibility—nothing wildly ambi-

tious, but something above the bottom rung, like chargehand or foreman. A few boys were keen "to get to the top": the precise occupation was relatively unimportant. The boy who has aspirations to get to the top socially faces a sterner task than the girl. The boy has to work away for years, learning a trade and earning gradual promotion: whereas the girl, simply by taking a year's course at a commercial college, or perhaps by entering an office immediately after leaving school, may step up into a higher social rank. Most of the boys who gave stress to "prospects" hoped to be apprentices: they were aware that wages were likely to be lower to start with, but thought that the long term benefits were worth the sacrifice. Another important reason for aiming at apprenticeship was *security*—"reliability is a good thing—you know that next year and the year after you will be working at the same place". To learn a trade was to insure yourself against the future. As one boy said, "If you are thrown out of work you can turn to something else—but if you start on something else and are thrown out of a job you can't start to learn a trade then." Other boys expressed the doubts about the value of an apprenticeship which their fathers felt. But boys also had other reasons for not wishing to aim at apprenticeships. They did not expect a high wage, but apprentices' wages, especially in steel and engineering, seemed so *low*. In addition, they wanted to have done with learning and all things connected with school: they did not like the idea of sitting at a desk at Day Release school, or spending their evenings swotting. The desire to avoid study and training was linked with a concern to be a fully-fledged worker. Boys wanted to be the real thing, not just learners. Apprenticeships, generally, did not carry high prestige amongst the boys. Several, especially those with hopes of working in the large steel firms, looked forward with some awe to the day when they would attain the status of apprentice: but the majority did not attach special importance to an apprenticeship. They expected that they would spend a lot of time at first "mashing tea" and doing odd jobs, and did not think that this was a detraction from the status. An apprenticeship was just a job that offered more security: there was nothing special about it.

Some children were affected by *glamour* in jobs ("working in a swish gown shop"), and by *excitement*—a boy who wanted to join the Navy was thrilled at the prospect of seeing the world ("that's what they say in the adverts"). *Variety* was important to many—doing different tasks, and "not being stuck in the same place all the time". Some children were attracted to jobs because there was a *mystique* associated with them—Comptometer Operating, for example, sounded new, technical and important. Jobs in which there was a chance of *learning to drive* were held in high regard by boys. Some boys and

girls hoped for *clean* jobs. (One mother, who had worked in cutlery for many years, thought that girls "fancied themselves" too much nowadays and considered factory work which involved a bit of dirt was beneath them.) A few children thought that *welfare facilities*—canteen, rest-room, sports club—were an essential of a good job. The opportunity to be *of service to the community* was important to several intending nurses. Girls were concerned about *having nice people to work with*—and *having the opportunity to meet people* (several girls aimed at jobs as shop assistants for this reason).

Security was not a matter of importance for girls—and nor, on the whole, were the prospects: job choice was an even less serious matter for girls than for boys. Work for girls was not a career, and they did not aspire to positions of power and responsibility. In spite of rises in the status of women the world of work is still very much a man's world. Some occupations are not open to girls: they are not regarded as "women's work", except in time of war or national need. Employers do not provide opportunities for girls to train in skilled crafts—and girls do not demand such opportunities. In a few years they would marry, and although aware that they would probably continue to work for a while after marrying, and might well return to work later on in life, girls thought of this only as a means of supplementing the household income.

Three-quarters of the girls thought that it was a good idea to continue work after marriage, and only a few girls favoured marriage before the age of twenty—although probably many of them would marry before that age. Girls therefore expected to be working for several years after leaving school. They thought of two main advantages of continuing to work after marriage—the need to save for a home and the desirability of keeping the mind occupied. Only one girl thought that a reason for continuing work was that a person might *enjoy* her job, and only one girl referred to the independence which earning a wage may confer on a woman. Independence did not strike girls as being relevant at a time when they would be striving with their husbands to build up a home: probably, however, independence will assume increasing importance as fashions and hair-do's become more and more important in the life of the working-class woman. (A quarter of the girls and two-fifths of the boys did not favour women continuing to work after marriage—one reason was that "if they go out to work something has got to go—and it is usually the home": the woman's task is to make the home comfortable. The second reason, expressed by several boys, was that it was "not right"—not the "proper thing"—"the husband should provide.")

Many children defined "good" jobs in negative terms. A good job,

for example, was one which was undemanding. A girl thought that warehouse packing was a sensible choice because "you *only* have to pack knives"—that was all you had to do! What job could be easier and, therefore, better? Several girls did not wish to become shop assistants because it might involve working on Saturday afternoons. Some boys avoided working in steel and engineering because of the risks to health—the atmosphere in the factories and the danger of accidents. One boy referred to the skill of the furnacemen, but pointed out that "they pay for it—you see how burnt a furnaceman's face is when he gets older!"

Such were the various elements of "good" jobs : it must be emphasized that a very large number of children had not thought the matter out, or did not relate their thoughts to their actions. They had only a limited knowledge of what jobs there were to aim at, and they knew little about the nature of the work involved even in the jobs of their own choice. They did not analyse themselves in terms of what they would like to get out of work. The Y.E.O. School-leaving Interview only succeeded in amending this situation marginally.

The School-leaver's Interview

The most important contact between the Y.E.O. and the school-leaver is at the individual interview held during the last year at school, usually during the last term. This interview is crucial to the process of vocational guidance. Scientific vocational guidance based upon psychological tests is possible and has been proved successful in terms of happiness for the individual, stability in jobs, and value to employers⁽⁴⁰⁾. Such guidance is dependent upon having in all schools teachers who are competent to apply psychological tests, and upon having trained Youth Employment Officers to interpret the results and give guidance in accordance with them. At present this position does not obtain. Very few teachers and only a small number of Y.E.O.s have had the rigorous training necessary. The Institute of Youth Employment Officers sponsors a Diploma in Vocational Guidance, but only a minority of Y.E.O.s have this qualification. Of just over 500 Full and Associate members of the National Association of Youth Employment Officers in December 1959, 11 per cent held the Diploma. (Just over 50 per cent of the members held a qualification of some sort—30 per cent were graduates, 15 per cent were qualified in Social Work, and 5 per cent were trained teachers.) Training for Y.E.O.'s with regard to all aspects of their work is inadequate. The report of the Committee on Recruitment and Training for the Youth Employment Service recommended in 1951 that there should be full-time training for one year, reduced to six months for those appro-

priately qualified. This recommendation has never been effected. A small number of Y.E.O.s attend courses lasting for one year at Lamorbey Park Adult Education Centre, Kent, and there are one month courses at Birkbeck College, University of London. Students can prepare for the Vocational Guidance Diploma through a correspondence course. Although some Y.E.O.s are able to make up for their lack of training with their experience and "way with children", training is "a sore point", to use the words of the Assistant Secretary and Chairman of the Central Youth Employment Executive in 1957, before a Select Committee on Estimates: "We have . . . been left to do the best we can as regards training, and we do not regard it as by any means satisfactory."⁽⁴¹⁾ Even if Y.E.O.s were qualified to give scientific vocational guidance, however, they would not have the necessary time. Most interviews last only 10 minutes or a little more, and few go on for more than 15 minutes: it is sometimes possible to have a second interview, but this is rare. The Y.E.O.'s aim is therefore more limited. All he can hope to do is to help a child to make up his mind on the basis of rather more adequate information about himself and the work which is available than would have been the case if left to his own resources: even this limited aim is often barely fulfilled. Most Y.E.O.s base their interviews upon the 7-Point Plan devised by Professor Alec Rodger. The Plan has the objects of ensuring that all relevant information is taken into account and of avoiding bias towards any one particular aspect of the information. The Points are Physical make-up (including appearance and any defects of speech or body), Attainments, General Intelligence, Special Aptitudes, Interests, Disposition (for example, whether friendly or reliable), and Domestic circumstances. The Y.E.O. is helped at the interview by the Report which all head teachers are required to make for children leaving school at or soon after the statutory minimum age, and which provides background information about the child's progress at school and his home life.

It is important to realize that the school-leaving interviews are by no means always held under the best conditions, and many schools have no spare room which can be used. Interviews are often held in the head teacher's room and are punctuated by the telephone ringing and knocks on the door. Two interviews may take place at the same time. The interview, furthermore, does *not* consist of three or four rational and disinterested beings gathered together to evaluate the evidence and deliberate upon a policy. It usually consists of people from different social classes, with different norms, different ways of speaking and dressing, and all playing different rôles.

The Head Teacher's Report on the school-leaver can be of con-

siderable value to the Y.E.O.: head teachers in Sheffield have co-operated with the local Youth Employment Service in the design of a Report which fulfils the needs of the Service. Although all head teachers are obliged to complete a Report they vary in the time and thought which they are prepared (or able) to devote to it. Just as some parents wish for amplification of the well-worn phrases which regularly appear on end-of-term Reports—"good", "satisfactory", "capable of more effort"—so do Y.E.O.s wish that some head teachers would give more detailed information on the School-leaving Report.

The head teacher or a deputy was present at the interviews of just over one half of the respondents (no one was present except the child and the Y.E.O. at the interviews of 18 boys and 10 girls). In some schools it is the practice for head teachers to hold separate discussions with the Y.E.O. and with the parents some time before the interview, but this is not common. Head teachers who would like to attend the interviews may be unable to do so because they have so many other matters to deal with—and teaching duties may prevent the careers master from attending. In some cases, the head teacher was present only through force of circumstances—the only available place for the interview was his room, and there was nowhere else for him to go. He therefore remained, working at a desk in the corner and not participating in the discussion. In other cases the head teacher simply put in an appearance from time to time, maintaining general surveillance but not being involved in the interview. Of those head teachers and teachers who do attend the interviews many take special care not to obtrude, feeling that the Y.E.O. should be left to handle the situation. But in some cases the head teacher may dominate the interview—unconsciously (out of habit—it is *his* school, and he is used to having the final word), or deliberately ("I know what's best for my girls"). A young and inexperienced Y.E.O. could be overwhelmed in such circumstances: one girl said, "Mother didn't get much chance to say anything as the head teacher never stopped talking—the Y.E.O. didn't get much chance, either." A forceful head teacher may, of course, serve the very useful purpose of sweeping aside irrelevancies and eliminating time-consuming detours: the following description of an interview—based on a head teacher's account—illustrates this point:

Mother sits down nervously on the edge of a chair, and the terrified school-girl enters the room. The girl is from the lowest form. The Y.E.O. enquires—with a smile designed to put mother and child at ease, but standing no chance of overcoming the suspicion which mother feels for officials—what job the girl would like to do. Before the girl has a chance to speak, mother jumps in, saying with a determination made more formidable by the certain knowledge that she will shortly be contradicted, 'she

ain't going to work in a warehouse.' The head teacher disregards mother and turning to the girl says 'What do you want to do?' The girl blurts out that she wants to be 'one of them shorthand-typewriters.' The Y.E.O. now has something to work on, and enquires of the girl whether she is good at spelling. There is a dull silence, broken by the head teacher, who says in a significant tone, 'One out of ten.' An inquiry about English Composition leads to the comment 'Four out of twenty.' The head teacher is becoming impatient, and tells the girl that this is a waste of time: that there is no likelihood of her getting an office job: that she would not be happy doing office work: and that she *would* be happy doing packing work in a warehouse. Mother has by this time reached 'the sniffing stage.' The head teacher turns her attention to her and says, 'Look here, Mrs. So-and-so, things have changed since you and I were children. Lots of valuable things are packed nowadays. It is an important job. Factories have good conditions, girls can earn good wages, wear nice clothes and be happy doing the work.'

The Y.E.O. can then take over and decide upon suitable warehouse work—large or small factory, working in a team or as an individual and so on—and promise help in finding a job. In such ways the head teacher may complement the work of the Y.E.O.: but it is not usual for them to play such a leading rôle—and many Y.E.O.s, aware that teachers may know very little about the 7-Point Plan and less about local employment opportunities, are thankful for the fact.

A parent was present at the interviews of just over one-half of the boys and girls (attendance in Sheffield varies between 50 and 60 per cent). Few fathers attended, and only one was present at a girl's interview. Fathers are at work when the interviews are held, and some mothers did not attend for the same reason. Several fathers, who were particularly interested in their sons' employment, took time off from work to attend. It is generally believed that this sort of thing—anything to do with school—is the mother's responsibility, however.

Special steps are taken in some schools to encourage the attendance of a parent by impressing on the child that he should ask his mother to come along, by sending a letter of invitation, or even by instructing the child to ask his mother to send a note if she is *not* able or willing to attend. The results of such policies were reflected in the relatively high numbers of parents attending at the schools concerned. Head teachers tend to be philosophical about invitations to parents, however, having learnt that it is unwise to expect much from many of them and that to put pen to paper is a chore which is faced only when there is no way of avoiding it.

A few children were anxious for their parents to attend and glad that they had done so: they would have felt nervous otherwise—as one girl said, "I would not like to go in on my own: some girls don't mind, but I would". In contrast, several parents did not attend as the

result of the pressure by their children against them doing so. Boys and girls subsequently expressed their thankfulness that mother had not been there. One reason was the desire for independence—it was a test of being grown-up: as one girl remarked, “I didn’t want Mum going all over with me, as if I were a child who couldn’t look after myself”. A more common reason was anxiety about being “shown up”—“I wouldn’t mind Dad coming”, said one boy, “but Mum would just put you off and get on to another subject”. An interview, he explained, is “so that they can tell you what to do”—not an opportunity for mother to start gossiping. He was afraid that his mother would say the wrong thing, talk too much, get the wrong ideas, go off on a side-track—and make a fool of herself in front of the experts. Furthermore, this was a serious matter—a man’s matter—not the sort of place where you want mother, treating you like a child, plucking bits of cotton off your blazer and telling you to comb your hair. Mother would be just as likely as not to come out with something stupid, like “He’s always been a good boy”. Boys feel that they would be cissies to have their mothers come along. Several children had neglected to inform their parents of the interview, and at least one had deliberately misled his parents, telling them that they were not allowed.

The presence of a parent is intended to make up for the Y.E.O.’s lack of knowledge about the child’s home background, as well as to establish parents’ views and gain information about children’s interests and aptitudes which might otherwise be overlooked. Knowledge of a child’s “domestic circumstances” is of obvious importance, not only so that special home circumstances can be taken into account (the need for a child to help support a widowed mother or invalid father, for example), but also in order that the child’s aspirations may be set against the family background—when considering whether to recommend clerical work for a girl or sending her to apply for such a job, for example, the Y.E.O. would be helped if he knew whether her home life was such that she would be able to “keep up appearances”, to dress smartly and attend work regularly: and before recommending a boy for an apprenticeship the Y.E.O. may wish to be sure that the parents will encourage him to continue his studies at Evening School. Y.E.O.s may have a considerable knowledge of the home lives of the children whom they counsel: some have previously been employed in other Social Work—for example, as Welfare Officers or School Attendance Officers—which has brought them into close contact with the families. But most Y.E.O.s have only a slight acquaintanceship with the children’s social backgrounds. The teacher can make good this deficiency to an extent, but his knowledge is limited.

Head teachers know quite a lot about the extreme cases—Jimmy's father is a stalwart of the Parent-Teacher Association, and Tom's has just gone into prison again—but knowledge about most families is restricted to what can be deduced from such evidence as absences from school, "excuse" notes, and brief meetings at prize-givings. This information is helpful but inadequate. It would be invaluable to the Y.E.O. if he were able to call at the home of each child: at present he has not the time and society does not consider this to be a sufficiently important matter to make provision for it. Meanwhile, those parents who attend the meetings are the more dutiful ones—some seek advice and information, others go as a formality, and are relieved if no complications develop and they are not called upon to express an opinion other than, "Yes, I think he would like that" ("Mother said nowt", was a remark made by several children). Undoubtedly some parents are nervous at the interview. The working-class woman feels out of place, being unaccustomed to the interview situation and to being treated as an equal by officials: she is immediately suspicious of motives—and she is afraid of revealing her ignorance. Fidgeting with her handbag, she has little energy left for the main business—she is so preoccupied with doing the right thing, or not doing the wrong. Unused to discussion in the home, mother feels her lack of sophistication. The embarrassment of the parent is often conveyed to the child. Questions which mother would like to ask remain unuttered: she is especially shy of mentioning wages for fear that it will be thought that she is after the money. Some teachers and Y.E.O.s incline at times to the view that a parent cannot possibly know what is best for her children: parents sense this, and resentment may make them all the more confused in their attempts to prove that they are not morons.

The Y.E.O. often finds that he has to plunge the depths of an uncommunicative parent as well as those of the child; mothers who "would be satisfied with really anything suitable" are less helpful than they sound. Or a vociferous parent may tend to irrelevance, obscure the issues and obstruct all attempts to get at the child's interests ("Mother was there and did most of the talking"). Difficulties are particularly likely to arise if mother has set her mind on an occupation (usually on social status grounds) for which the child is unsuited.

Most parents who attend the interview believe that its primary purpose is to arrange jobs: the idea of vocational guidance is foreign to them. Some found the notion of getting a job you *liked* amusing—you get what you can in this world. They did not, in any case, envisage the possibility of anyone enjoying work, and thought that

one job was much like another. The main thing was to enlist the Y.E.O.'s help in finding work.

Some children were pleased to have the opportunity of discussing work with the Y.E.O., and grateful for the advice which he gave: they participated in the discussion, asking questions and making points. Several boys and girls regarded the interview as superfluous because they had already arranged jobs. Many others looked upon the occasion as essentially a means of informing the Y.E.O. of their choices of work, so that he could find jobs for them: they were not interested in guidance or discussion. Others were very casual in their approach to the interview, attaching no importance to it—an attitude which was in some cases reinforced by the seemingly casual outlook of the school towards the interviews. The Y.E.O. Talk had been held a long time ago, and if listened to had been quickly forgotten: the interview was another such isolated event, rather than the next stage in a continuous process of vocational guidance. With such children, the Y.E.O. was faced with the problem of translating the "alrights", "don't knows" and "don't cares" into something positive: "I don't really mind" is a statement that does not give him much to work on.

Even willing children often have not thought things out before the interview—one boy who wanted to be a machine tool setter hoped at the same time to work in the open air: it had not occurred to him that there was any inconsistency. When so many children are ambivalent in their aims and uninformed about their choices of work, it is difficult to distinguish between a true aim and one which has been thought up for the occasion. Several respondents were hesitant to mention the jobs which they would really have liked—they were shy and modest, and thought that the Y.E.O. might think their aims too ambitious, or even laugh at their pretensions. Some children felt shy in the presence of the head teacher, the supreme authority in the school, and were anxious to avoid saying anything which might meet with his disapproval. One girl did not reveal her "secret" aim of ultimately being a newspaper reporter because she thought the Y.E.O. might think she was being "too choosy". Children who withhold such information do not realize that it could give a lead to the Y.E.O., who might be able to suggest similar work which *was* attainable. Several children failed to mention jobs which they had in mind simply because it did not occur to them to do so at the time. The interview with one girl concentrated upon warehouse work although she was equally interested in being a shop assistant: asked why she did not mention her alternative choice, the girl said, "I don't know really, but I thought that there would be more warehouse jobs going than shop assistant jobs." Children who have not thought much about

what jobs to aim at are afraid that they will be asked to justify their choices: worried that they might be caught out, they say as little as possible.

Several children were reduced to the status of a by-stander at the interview: there was no opportunity for them to express their real wishes. One boy said that the Y.E.O., his mother and the teacher were "tossing up between inside and outside work". The Y.E.O. recommended inside work, the teacher supported him, and the mother "was on the Y.E.O.'s side too". The boy himself "hardly got a look in". Whilst many children were thankful for the advice which they had been given, many others were either indifferent or disappointed. Some could see no more virtue in Y.E.O.s than in teachers and approached the interview with sullen antagonism. Others had hoped and expected that the interview would be more useful. Quite a number felt that it had been a waste of time—"He told me the job I wanted was a good trade and that's about all." Interviews were far from penetrating: the youth who stated fairly clearly an aim within his ability was likely not to be questioned much: he was passed on quickly, to give more time to the vague children. There was little attempt to measure the job aims in terms of the 7-Point Plan. In consequence, some children were cynical, regarding the interview as a formality in which, for the sake of a record, they put in an appearance—but only in order that their choice could be rubber stamped. One boy, who was not sure what job to aim at, complained that the Y.E.O. "did not help at all, but just left me on my own. He didn't particularly point anything out. I just had to choose something by myself". A girl condemned the Y.E.O. for telling her that if she were unable to get a job as a shop assistant by her own efforts she could go to the Y.E. Bureau, but "would have to have a warehouse packing job or something like that". She regarded this as a threat rather than an offer of help. Another girl thought that the Y.E.O. had not helped as much as she could. An army of people had tried to persuade her to do office work—mother, teacher, brother, uncles and aunts, and now the Y.E.O.: "She said the same to me as everyone else, 'you are suited to office work because you are quiet'." The Y.E.O. had been her last hope, but had proved to be no different from anyone else—no help at all to a girl who was looking for ideas. Several children believed that the Y.E.O. deliberately set out to repudiate their choice of work as if he enjoyed doing so and was contrary by nature. The Y.E.O.'s suggestion was regarded as interference. At the first research interview one girl said that she intended to apply for a Nursing Course before she saw the Y.E.O., otherwise "she will try to change my mind—she seems to try to make most children change their minds". The Y.E.O. was seen as an

obstacle to be overcome: a boy said resentfully that "the Y.E.O. said everything I said was no good", whilst a girl indignantly recalled that the Y.E.O. had suggested jobs in which she was "in no way interested". The Y.E.O. was perverse, and the interview was seen as a battle of wits—if you came out with your original aim you had won the day.

Condemnation was severe amongst children who had been aiming at a higher level of work than they were competent to do (though it was not confined to them). There was venom in the voices of one or two children. One boy was disgusted at the Y.E.O.'s suggestion that he was not suited because of his physical health for the job on which he had set his mind. The Y.E.O. often has a difficult task in persuading children to lower their aspirations: rather than tell a child he is not good enough he may concentrate on other matters. The reasons which a Y.E.O. gives to the child may thus be not his real reasons, but diplomatic ones: hence the young person pours scorn on the advice which displeases him. Of course, some children accept the advice in good faith: as one girl said, "If you have any fancy notions you are told to come down to earth".

The majority of boys and girls expressed neither satisfaction nor disappointment with the interview, however: it had passed them by. They did not think it was of much importance. Of considerable value to a small number of children, the interview had only a marginal influence on most and left many unaffected. The interview served less to guide children than to provide an opportunity for the Y.E.O. to settle on an occupation for the child as quickly as possible, in order that the Service could help in placing in employment children who wanted help.

Analysis of Y.E.O.'s Recommendations

Eight children were not interviewed at school because of absence: 4 of them were subsequently seen at the Youth Employment Bureau, 2 as the result of their own initiative. One girl called at the Bureau but was told that nothing could be done until she left school—probably she failed to make it clear that she had not been interviewed.

Three-quarters of the respondents gave the same choice of work at the Y.E.O. interview as at the first research interview. Of the remainder, about half changed their minds completely and the other half gave second choices at their research interview as first choices at the Y.E.O. interview. Only one boy had no idea what job to aim at by the time of his Y.E.O. interview. Two-fifths of the children had been vague about their job choices at their research interview, knowing little about the nature of the work involved and not being especially interested in the work: few of them gave much thought to the matter

between the two interviews and it is clear that many of the choices given to the Y.E.O. had no special significance. Undoubtedly several of the aims which children gave had been invented for the occasion, and this was particularly true with regard to second choices. Told by teachers to have two choices ready to tell the Y.E.O., some children manufactured them: only the more intelligent were prepared to state that they *had* no second choice if that were the case.

TABLE 17
Y.E.O.'s RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHILDREN'S CHOICE OF WORK

	Boys	Girls
Y.E.O.'s recommendation = respondent's choice	86	85
Y.E.O.'s recommendation = different from choice	10	14
No choice	1	0
No interview	3	1
Totals	100	100

Only 10 boys and 14 girls were recommended to occupations other than their first choice. Some of these were advised to raise their sights—to aim at an apprenticeship rather than at semi-skilled work, for example. Others were recommended to seek less demanding work because they were not considered competent for the jobs of their choice, and some were told that there were few vacancies in the work which they aimed at. In several cases the Y.E.O. was able to suggest work which, whilst different in many ways from the child's aim, involved aspects of the chosen work which made an appeal: thus, one girl was advised that there was little chance of getting work as a children's nurse, but was encouraged to try for a job in a toy shop or baby linen shop where she would be in contact with children.

The Y.E.O. endorsed the aims of the large majority of children. Fourteen respondents told the Y.E.O. that they had already obtained jobs and the Y.E.O. accepted the choice of work. Y.E.O.s are aware that children sometimes mistake half-promises or casually mentioned possibilities for concrete offers, and attempt to establish beyond doubt that children's claims to have found jobs are correct—as one boy said, "I told the Y.E.O. I had a job and he as good as told me I hadn't, and that I ought to look for another job." In the event, several children found that the offers of work fell through. With so many children who do not give much thought to work, and to whom the idea of look-

ing for jobs does not occur until just before they leave school, it comes as a welcome relief to the Y.E.O. to find a child who has obtained employment through his own effort, or that of his parents. One boy quoted the Y.E.O. as saying, "You're soon settled—I wish there were more people like you." A girl stated that the Y.E.O. had praised her in saying, "So many girls go out every night and don't bother about getting jobs"—if others are prepared to take action children willingly leave it to them.

In some cases the Y.E.O. clarified the choice of work by narrowing it down: boys who give electrician as their choice, for example, are usually unaware of the multiplicity of jobs which come under this heading—domestic, industrial, automobile and many more. Boys tend to think only of switches, fuse boxes and coils of wire. The Y.E.O. helped children to pin down the particular aspects of the broad choice which appealed to them and related these to ability and local opportunities. Children who were undecided between two occupations were told which was the best one to try for. In other cases, aims were broadened—a girl who wanted to be a waitress was advised to consider "any light, practical work", and a boy who aimed at motor mechanic was told that any skilled craftsman's occupation would be suitable. Some Y.E.O.s prefer not to recommend specific occupations, but to advise a range of jobs—especially to children who have no special enthusiasms or aptitudes. Whilst a broad recommendation may make sense to the Y.E.O. in trying to place a child in a job, however, it may be meaningless to the child who has very limited knowledge of work involved in different occupations and is thus unable to decide whether a particular job is in the category recommended or not. Some recommendations are so broad ("unskilled", "practical" and "semi-skilled", for example) that the children could take almost any job in conforming with them.

In a few cases the Y.E.O. tried to amend children's aims, and only acceded to them reluctantly. The Y.E.O. suggested to one boy that he remain at school for an extra year, but to no avail: another boy was warned that it was most unlikely that there would be a vacancy in the work which he wanted. One boy insisted upon being a miner or a van boy, in spite of the Y.E.O.'s plea that he was "capable of better jobs than those". Children who are keen on particular jobs are not easily persuaded—criticism of their choice often serves only to strengthen their determination to seek it. The Y.E.O. tried to inject some realism into several children who had false ideas about the occupations at which they aimed—a prospective draughtsman was told that "it would not be an office job—you'll have to get some overalls on". But the enthusiast is not prepared to hear anything

which detracts from his idea of what the job will be like—and the Y.E.O. knows that children have minds of their own.

The child's preference is obviously of importance to a Y.E.O. in formulating his advice. Interest in an occupation is relevant to suitability for it and enthusiasm may make up for deficiencies in ability or attainment. Many of the children had no great interest in the jobs they aimed at, however. And the 7-Point Plan, in taking account of the child's choice, seeks to put it into perspective: there are many other factors to be taken into account. It is therefore surprising that such a high proportion of the children were recommended to try for jobs which were precisely their own choice, or which were closely related to them. In part the high proportion is accounted for by the broadness of some of the recommendations. In addition, some Y.E.O.s were presented with a *fait accompli*, and "recommended" jobs had already been obtained. Some of the children who were vague about what work to aim at, furthermore, crystallized their aims as the result of prodding and persuasion by the Y.E.O., so that in effect first choice and the Y.E.O.'s recommendation were one and the same thing.

There are clearly very severe limitations upon what the Y.E.O. is able to achieve in the School-leavers' Interview. Of the 74 boys and 78 girls who gave the same choice of work at the Y.E.O. interview as at their first research interview, many were vague or ignorant about the work involved in the occupations at which they aimed: yet the choices of 57 of these boys and of all the girls were endorsed. In several of the cases in which the Y.E.O. advised work other than the first choice, the recommendation was the children's second choice at the research interview—work about which they were equally vague. The way in which a chance remark by a child under pressure to state a choice may lead to him being placed in a job for which he at no time had much desire, and which he may find intolerable, is illustrated by the case of a boy whose only wish was to work outside, or in a job which would involve travelling around from place to place. He had no special occupational interest, but "mentioned" plumbing during his interview because he knew that plumbers do travel during the course of their work. The Y.E.O. concentrated upon plumbing as an "interest", and the youth was found a job—but in a specialized form of plumbing which involved working inside a factory all day long. The youth left the job after disliking it for nearly a year—and started work as a builder, in the open air. It seems probably that a few children were recommended to jobs which they had thought up for the occasion. When the first choice so often is based upon a paucity of knowledge and interest, it is clearly unwise to attach much significance to alternative "choices". The fact that knowledge about work is vague

does not necessarily mean that the choice is bad—but other possibilities would be explored if the 7-Point Plan could be adhered to, and a larger proportion of children would, in consequence, be adjudged suitable for types of work other than those which they “choose”.

With so much vagueness the Y.E.O. may feel that his only option is to grasp any straw which blows in the wind, to kindle the tiniest flame of interest. Unless the “choice” is clearly unsuitable, or unless there are few vacancies in such work, the Y.E.O. may have to concentrate upon the only clue about the child’s leanings which he has. What can be done other than this with a child who says he wants to be a driver’s mate and is “not bothered what else”? and how can a child be counselled whose reply to any question is, “I don’t know” or “It’s alright”? The children’s accounts suggest that there was little discussion at most interviews. To some boys and girls the interview was an irrelevant episode—they came out with the same aim as they went in, none the wiser: their subsequent actions were unaffected by the interview. Too much emphasis may be placed upon occupations and often insufficient effort is made to find out what element of a job appeals to a child. Intrinsic interests in a job may be negligible—but other factors, such as the opportunity to move about or to meet people are important to many boys and girls. Professor Alec Rodger’s attempts to stress the importance of job analysis have, as yet, met with little response. The Y.E.O.s themselves have little time to familiarize themselves with occupations, or to break them down in accordance with children’s interests. A great deal more effort is needed, also, to arouse interest: it cannot be assumed that it is there—children are lacking not only in information, but in the desire for it. The schools have more opportunity to inspire interest than the Y.E.O., though the task is not simple.

Twenty-five boys and 15 girls changed their job aims between the interview with the Y.E.O. and the end of term (periods varying between 4 and 10 weeks). Twenty of these respondents had arranged jobs by the end of term and had changed their minds because a vacancy cropped up. Only 6 of the boys and 2 girls changed their aims as the result of advice from the Y.E.O., and not all of these accepted the Y.E.O.’s recommendations in place of their own. One boy, for example, had aimed at being a motor mechanic, but changed his mind because the Y.E.O. told him that there were few vacancies: he rejected the recommended occupation and “just went after anything”. Having been discouraged from his choice, he said, “I didn’t mind what it was so long as I got a job.” In general, children were not set *thinking* by the interview, though a number were moved to action

in seeking jobs as a result of it. That the latter object was achieved (though not universally—some children left the Y.E.O. to find a job for them, whilst 29 respondents did not start looking for jobs until they had left school) must not be overlooked: but it was *not* the main purpose of the interview, which was vocational guidance. In a high proportion of interviews what takes place is little more than a superficial analysis of children's job choices, and an attempt to amend aims when they are blatantly unrealistic. To label this as vocational guidance is at best to use a euphemism and at worst to be downright misleading. It would be churlish and inaccurate to blame Y.E.O.s, many of whom regard their work as a social service and are deeply concerned about the welfare of the children. The plain fact is that there are too few Y.E.O.s to be able to cope with the work with which they are charged. Apart from the School-leaving Interviews and School Talks, the duties include helping leavers and other young people under the age of eighteen to find employment, follow-up interviews after children have left school, liaison with employers (to encourage them to make use of the Service and to persuade them to provide more opportunities for training), and to attempt to familiarize themselves with the nature of the work in all occupations which children enter, with the local employment scene and with changes in technology. Sheffield is not untypical—in 1959 there were 9 officers and over 5000 school-leavers: many Youth Employment Departments are even less adequately staffed. Although the number of Y.E.O.s increased nationally by nearly one-half between 1956 and 1961 this emphasizes the deplorable position in the former year rather than a satisfactory situation in the latter. Sheffield now still has 9 Y.E.O.s. The Report of the National Youth Employment Council in 1959 made the position clear:

In the final analysis the success of the Service depends upon the quality of the individual Youth Employment Officer. It is by him that the whole Service stands or falls. He requires enthusiasm, aptitude and a sense of vocation. But, whatever his attributes, he also requires training. We are not satisfied that the training which the new entrant at present receives is in all cases adequate. Nor are we satisfied that the salary and prospects offered by authorities are at present such as will continue to attract men and women of the right calibre . . . We are indeed concerned as to the ability of the Service under present conditions to recruit extra staff of the requisite calibre in order to meet the needs of the "bulge," or even to replace normal wastage⁽⁴²⁾.

In spite of increases in salaries in 1960, Y.E.O.s are still underpaid in 1962—some local authorities are notorious in the Service for their meanness with regard to responsibility pay: there is much dissatisfaction amongst Y.E.O.s. Deficiencies of the Service arise from the failure of society to take seriously its own stated aims.

CHAPTER 6

JOBS AIMED AT, FIRST JOBS OBTAINED AND JOBS AT ONE YEAR AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL

IT has been seen that at their first Interview some children were quite definite about the jobs which they hoped to obtain—their minds were set on particular occupations, and perhaps had been for some months or even years. It was very important to them that they should get the work of their choice. On the other hand, many boys and girls were extremely vague about job aims and a few had no idea at all. They were liable to change their minds from day to day—although in most cases thoughts about work were not a daily occurrence. Some children who were not especially bothered about what jobs to aim at referred to particular occupations which they definitely did *not* want to do. The following analysis of aims should be interpreted with these points in mind.

JOB AIMS: BOYS

The largest category, consisting of one-fifth of the boys (21), was Steel and Engineering. This includes a wide range of jobs, varying from routine machine operating to pattern making and draughtsmanship. The widespread view amongst boys that the majority *want* to enter this work (“at least 75 per cent of them”) was true neither with regard to the boys in the sample as a whole nor with regard to the boys in the particular schools in which this belief was most strongly held—although there was much feeling in these schools that boys would “*end up* in steel and engineering” whatever their aims. It is clear that steel and engineering does attract a substantially higher proportion of boys than other types of work: apprenticeships with some firms were very highly regarded. The appeal of steel and engineering was, indeed, mainly to boys in the top I.Q. grades who aimed at apprenticeships in the highly skilled crafts, such as pattern making. Fourteen of the 21 boys aimed at apprenticeships, and 8 of these were in the highest I.Q. grade and 4 in the second grade: only 2 were in the third grade and none in the fourth.

The second category, Electrician (15 boys) also covers a wide range of work and includes radio, television and refrigeration. Two-thirds of all the boys aimed at jobs in the five categories of Steel and Engineering, Electrician, Woodwork, Building and Painting/Decorating, and Motor Mechanic.

TABLE 18
OCCUPATIONS AIMED AT AND ENTERED — BOYS

Occupation	1st choice at Research Int. No. 1	1st Job obtained	Job at 12 months
Steel and Engineering	21	40	27
Electrician	15	2	3
Woodwork	11	6	6
Building	9	5	7
Painting and Decorating		4	2
Motor Mechanic	9	3	3
H.M. Forces	5	3	3
Clerk/Accountant	4	2	4
Plumber	4	3	2
Butcher	4	4	5
Agriculture, Gardening, Forestry	3	1	3
Coal Mining	3	1	1
Van Boy	3	4	7
G.P.O. Messenger	2	0	1
Cutlery	1	4	5
Wine Cellarman	1	1	1
Shop Assistant	1	4	3
Commercial Artist	1	1	1
Hairdresser	1	0	0
Cook	1	0	0
"Odd Job Man"	1	0	0
Warehouse and Factory Labourer	0	2	4
Railway Porter	0	2	1
Laboratory Assistant	0	3	3
Carpet and Lino Fitter	0	1	1
Quantity Surveying Trainee	0	2	2
Printing	0	1	1
Typewriter Mechanic	0	1	1
Barrow boy at market	0	0	1
Paper Mill Factory Hand	0	0	1
Not decided	6	0	0
Unemployed	0	0	1
Totals (6 boys had 2 jobs equally in mind)	106	100	100

Only one boy aimed at Cutlery although Sheffield is famous for this industry: this is symptomatic of a trend which has been remarked upon in Sheffield for several years⁽⁴³⁾. The Youth Employment Service has co-operated with employers in an attempt to arrest this trend, notably by helping to organize an apprenticeship scheme in the industry.

Forty-one boys definitely aimed at apprenticeships, although many of them were very vague about what an apprenticeship entailed. Some other boys did not know whether the occupations which they hoped to enter involved becoming an apprentice. In addition there were many respondents who were vague, and who had not decided (mainly because they had not given thought to the matter) whether or not they wanted to become apprentices. Several boys stated quite flatly that they were not interested in learning a trade. 14 of the boys who definitely aimed at apprenticeships hoped to work in steel and engineering, 7 wanted to be electricians, and 9 wanted to do woodwork: the remaining 11 were divided between building, painting/decorating, motor mechanic, butcher and cutlery. A higher proportion of boys in I.Q. Grade 1 aimed at apprenticeships (14 out of 22) than in the other grades, but many of the less intelligent boys did aspire to apprenticeships.

TABLE 19
I.Q. GRADES OF BOYS AIMING AT APPRENTICESHIPS

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Aims at apprenticeship	14	10	14	3
Total numbers in grades	22	32	33	13

JOB AIMS: GIRLS

The largest category, consisting of one-third of the respondents, is that of girls who aimed at Office Work, either immediately or after completing a Course. The 9 girls who hoped to do Commercial Courses wished to become shorthand-typists. Of the 17 girls who hoped to get office jobs as soon as they left school, some attended private shorthand and typing lessons whilst still at school and intended to seek this work, and others hoped to obtain jobs which would enable them to learn shorthand and typing by practice at work and attendance at Evening School or Day Release classes. Six girls had no wish to graduate from general office work to shorthand and typing.

The second category is Shop Assistant (29 girls); this includes all

types of shop work; most of the girls had small shops in mind, but a few wished to become sales-girls in large "fashion" shops, and several hoped to work in multiple stores. The two categories of Office work and Shop assistant accounted for 60 per cent of the girls: Nursing

TABLE 20
OCCUPATIONS AIMED AT AND ENTERED — GIRLS

Occupation	Aim at Int. 1		1st Job obtained		Job at 12 months	
Office Work						
General	17		19		17	
Shorthand/typist	0		2		9	
Comptometer Operator	0		0		4	
Commercial Course	9		8		1	
Comptometer Operator Course	5		5		0	
Total		31		34		31
Shop Assistant						
General			12		18	
Multiple Store			4		5	
Sales girl			8		6	
Total		29		24		29
Factory and Warehouse		7		22		21
Nursing:						
Course	8		4		4	
Cadet	0		0		1	
Children's Nanny	4		2		2	
Total		12		6		7
Hairdressing		10		5		4
Care of Animals		3		1		1
Telephonist		3		1		1
Window Dressing		3		0		0
Agriculture		1		1		1
Dressmaking and Sewing		1		3		1
Waitress		1		2		1
Domestic Science Course		1		0		0
Laboratory Assistant		0		1		1
Not Working (1 in care of local authority, 1 married)		0		0		2
Not decided		3		0		0
Totals (5 girls had 2 jobs equally in mind)		105		100		100

and Hairdressing made up half of the remainder. As few as 7 girls aimed at Factory and Warehouse work—but many girls who did not aim at it were reconciled to the fact that they would probably “end up” in it.

The more intelligent girls tended to aim at Clerical Work and Nursing, but by no means all of the brightest girls had these jobs in mind. Of the 14 girls who aimed at Commercial or Comptometer Operating Courses, 8 were in Grade 1 and 4 in Grade 2. Two-thirds of the girls who hoped for General Office Work were from Grades 1 and 2. Most of the lower-grade girls aiming at Clerical Work hoped for the less demanding, routine jobs. Of the girls who aimed at Nursing, 7 were in Grade 1, 4 in Grade 2 and 1 in Grade 4. Shop assistant was aimed at by several girls from all grades—15 were in the top two grades and 14 in the bottom two. With some exceptions, the girls from the higher grades aimed at sales assistants jobs—gown or shoe shop for example, rather than a greengrocer's or sweet shop.

In spite of the lack of thought by many boys and girls at the time of Interview 1, their choices of work were on the whole not unrealistic. They were fairly well aware, that is, of the *level* of work to which they might reasonably aspire. Few aimed at jobs which they patently had no chance of getting: and, even if some less intelligent children aimed at jobs which are generally assumed to be the exclusive province of brighter children (for example, apprenticeships for boys and office work for girls) it will be seen that children of lower intelligence may succeed in getting—and holding—such work. Intelligence is, of course, only one criterion for job suitability, and not necessarily the most important one; but it is a limiting factor. Several children did aspire to jobs which they were unlikely to be capable of doing, but the overall tendency was for children to be cautious rather than adventurous, to underestimate their competence rather than to over-estimate it.

“FANTASY” AND “IDEAL” JOBS

The children were asked, “If you could do just what job you would like, what would you choose and why would you like to have this job?” They were then asked what jobs they actually intended to aim at. Approximately 60 per cent of both boys and girls said that they would aim at the job which they specified in answer to the first question—though in most cases this indicated not so much positive realism (for example about personal ability, qualifications needed, likelihood of vacancies) as a lack of thought about alternative jobs. In comparatively few cases did this indicate the belief that the job

aimed at was an "ideal" one. Those boys and girls whose actual aims were different from the jobs which they would really have liked referred, in answer to the first question, to what are here classified as "Fantasy" and "Ideal" jobs.

Fantasy jobs are those which are associated with "day-dreaming": the children had never seriously thought of applying for such jobs—they knew them to be beyond their hopes of attainment. They were part of another world, the world of magic and glamour and "if only": as one girl said, "I have wanted to be an air hostess ever since I was little—you all have dreams when you are younger." Seven boys and 8 girls had Fantasy jobs. The boys' included aeroplane pilot, filmstar, lumber jack and veterinary surgeon, whilst girls had visions of modelling, being a great actress, and "travelling round the world as a kind of secretary". One girl had "always fancied being a plumber"—but "realized that girls don't become plumbers". It was, she thought, out of the question, and must remain a dream.

Thirty-two boys and 35 girls had *Ideal* jobs—jobs which they would have preferred to the ones they proposed to aim at, but which they did not intend to seek immediately, if at all. The distinction between Fantasy and Ideal jobs rests upon the child's circumstances rather than the nature of the job—thus, professional football may be a Fantasy job for one boy (a job which he dreams of, but which he recognizes he is not sufficiently talented to achieve) but an Ideal job for another boy (who is a skilled player, but has to wait until he is older and physically developed). Similarly, a Fantasy job for one girl may be a practical possibility for another—the girl from a middle-class home may stand an excellent chance of an unpaid job at a Riding Stables, for instance, whereas the girl from a housing estate or slum tenement may be in no position to aim at such work. A variety of reasons were given for not aiming at Ideal jobs. Nearly half the boys (15) thought that they *did not have the ability* to do the work—which included draughtsman, electrician, pattern maker and chartered accountant. With possibly 3 exceptions the boys' assessments of the demands made by Ideal jobs and their own inadequacy to meet them were realistic. This was also true of the 2 girls who gave the same reason for not aiming at their Ideal jobs. Other reasons included *bad health*, *lack of qualifications* (for example, R.A.F. pilot, physical education teacher, Librarian), *that there were few vacancies* (for example, Beauty Culture—"there are no facilities in Sheffield, really", and motor cycle messenger—"I tried to put my name down, but the list was full"). *Parental opposition* deterred several boys and girls from aiming at their Ideal jobs—unwillingness of parents to let their children leave home (for example to go into H.M. Forces) and a dislike of "danger-

ous" and "unhealthy" jobs (such as coalmining) were at the basis of parental objections. Two boys and 10 girls gave as a reason that they were *not old enough*. The boys' jobs were footballer and representative ("a fully qualified commercial traveller—with a car"). Girls' jobs included H.M. Forces, policewoman, telephonist, bus conductress and nursing. The two boys and 6 of the girls intended to apply for their Ideal jobs when they were older. Four boys and 2 girls were unable to say why they did not propose to aim at their Ideal jobs. This is but one instance of the inconsequentiality which characterized so many children in so many aspects of the transition process—and, indeed in the approach to life in general. They had not thought the matter out. In most cases, however, children's explanations for not aiming at their Ideal jobs were valid. Ideal jobs were dismissed from the mind, permanently or temporarily, without regret, disappointment or impatience. Even Ideal jobs were not, in most cases, sufficiently important to induce such strength of feeling.

FIRST JOBS ENTERED AND JOBS AT ONE YEAR

By the time of Interview 3, all but a few boys, and three-quarters of the girls had been at work for nearly a year: the remaining boys and girls had done Courses which lasted for 3 months or a full year, had remained at school, or had not started work as soon as they left school for various reasons. During the year, 36 boys and 36 girls changed jobs at least once.

First Jobs Obtained: Boys

Two-fifths of all the boys entered Steel and Engineering—twice as many as the number who aimed at this work. Twelve of the boys entered the very large steel firms (each employing several thousand men): it is important to realize that, in spite of their dominance, the large firms do not constitute the entire industry. It is a reflection of this fact that 28 boys entered medium and small firms. The occupations of the boys varied from apprenticeships as toolmakers to semi-skilled machine operating.

Nine boys entered Building, Painting/Decorating. The same number of boys (though not the same boys) took this work as had aimed at it. The building industry is an important employer of labour throughout the country, and in Sheffield there is much new construction work in progress. Although at the time when the boys left school there was a substantial amount of unemployment amongst unskilled building workers, there was a shortage of skilled men: the respondents all became apprentices. Four of the 6 boys who became Woodworkers were

in jobs related to the building industry, and the other 2 worked in factories. Most of the boys who had aimed at Electrician and Motor Mechanic were unsuccessful: only 2 boys found work in the former, and 3 in the latter. Many of the occupations which were obtained had not even entered the children's thoughts early in their last term at school.

Nearly a half of the boys were apprentices in their first jobs.

TABLE 21
APPRENTICESHIPS AND OCCUPATIONS

Occupation	Aim	First job	Job at 12 months
Engineering and Steel	14	25	16
Electrician	7	1	3
Woodwork	9	4	5
Building, Painting/Decorating	4	9	8
Motor Mechanic	3	2	2
Butcher	3	1	1
Cutlery	1	0	0
Printing	0	1	1
Commercial Art	0	1	1
H.M. Forces	0	2	3
Plumber	0	3	2
Total	41	49	42

A relatively high proportion of Sheffield workers are skilled—this is mainly because of the predominance of steel and engineering. In consequence, rather more boys become apprentices than is general throughout the country—in 1959, 33.6 per cent of boys entering employment at the ages of 15, 16 and 17 were apprenticed to skilled crafts in Great Britain, and in Sheffield the percentage was over 40⁽⁴⁴⁾. It is, however, remarkable that as many as 49 boys should obtain apprenticeships in their first jobs, and that 25 of them should be in steel and engineering. The other occupation which accounted for a substantial number of apprentices was building and painting/decorating. The two boys in H.M. Forces were not strictly comparable with the other apprentices, but were described as apprentices under the terms of their engagements and received regular training and instruction. It is especially difficult for the secondary modern boy to come by apprenticeships in some trades. A good example is Electrical

work in which 7 respondents had hoped for apprenticeships but only 1 boy succeeded.

A very high proportion of boys in the top I.Q. Grade became apprentices—18 out of 22. It will be seen below that many apprentices were appointed in a haphazard way, but in spite of this most of the ablest boys managed, in one way or another, to obtain jobs which at any rate ostensibly offered them prospects and the chance to learn a trade.

TABLE 22
APPRENTICESHIPS AND I.Q. GRADES: FIRST JOBS

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Apprentice in first job	18	15	13	3
Total numbers in grades	22	32	33	13

One-third of the boys were from the two lowest I.Q. Grades. Good craftsmanship does not necessarily demand high intelligence, but further education is likely to assume more and more importance for the skilled man of the future. Although many apprentices nowadays are required to study at Evening School or Day Release classes, however, their studies are often only tenuously related to the skill which they practice—so that the fact that they are unable to perform well at studies may not detract significantly from their ability to do the work which is required of them. Success in studies is not necessarily a requirement of completing apprenticeships: employers may therefore feel sanguine about taking on apprentices who are not very bright intellectually. Many employers, indeed, are unconvinced of the value of technical studies. Some are unaware of the existence of facilities for further education, and others scorn book-work as irrelevant to the practice of a trade. It remains a fact that many apprenticeships do require greater ability at studies than the boys who hold them possess, and that many boys in consequence have the greatest difficulty in keeping up with the syllabi for examinations. These points are considered in Chapter 12.

Some boys of low intelligence possess the ability to appear intelligent. Often this is related to home background, a smart turn-out, especially if allied to good speech and vocabulary, enabling a boy to impress (and unintentionally mislead) a prospective employer. Some employers adopt the policy of giving a boy a trial, to see whether he is competent—and this accounts for a few of the less able boys obtain-

ing apprenticeships. But with many of them, the employers made no attempt at "selection" or at assessing suitability. For their part, less able boys applied for apprenticeships because they believed (often correctly) that all they needed to do was serve their time—that once they were accepted they were "in" for keeps. Apprenticeships, furthermore, had no special prestige for many boys—they were not regarded as something to be achieved, and were not looked upon with awe: boys applied for an apprenticeship just as they might apply for a job as van-boy, and perhaps without knowing that it *was* an apprenticeship. Some of them were offered the jobs without any reservations, others were "given a trial" which involved no weighing of the evidence or of performance. As a result of these various facts, some boys (notably from I.Q. Grade 2) who would have liked apprenticeships, and who were capable of benefiting from them were unable to obtain them, since they were filled by less able boys. Of the 4 boys in I.Q. Grade 1 who did not obtain apprenticeships, however, 3 entered jobs in which they received training (one as a quantity surveyor): the other boy became a van delivery boy, and remained in this work throughout the year.

Several boys who were not apprentices (the Quantity Surveyors, the Laboratory Assistants, two of the butchers and several boys in steel and engineering) received some training—indeed, some were given more guidance and instruction than many of the boys who were apprentices.

A number of boys knew all about their apprenticeships—what work was entailed, the terms of employment, the paths which would be followed over the next few years. Parents, employers and Youth Employment Officers had made the position clear to them. But these were a minority, and amongst the rest there was a good deal of confusion—about the nature of their apprenticeship, whether they were indentured, whether they had signed any forms, whether they would attend Evening Classes, what subjects they would study and so on. One building apprentice provides an example of this vagueness: when asked whether he was a bound apprentice, he replied that he did not understand the question. He believed that he was an apprentice, he said, because when his employer had taken him to purchase some overalls he had said to the shop assistant, "I want a pair of overalls for my apprentice." This, together with the rumour that he would be attending Evening School—which, he said, is "tied up with being an apprentice"—was sufficient for him. He had given no more thought to the matter. Even one year after leaving school many apprentices were vague and casual about their jobs.

One-third of the boys (32) entered work which was broadly in the

same category as their fathers' occupations: the great majority of these were steel and engineering workers, and in most cases it was fortuitous that the work was in the same category.

The influence of home background on type of work obtained was clear: the occupations entered by the 14 boys whose fathers' work was professional/managerial, minor managerial and clerical were as follows: 2 quantity surveyor trainees, 1 wholesale meat salesman trainee, 1 laboratory assistant, 1 clerk, 1 motor mechanic, 1 agricultural worker and 7 apprentices (4 in steel and engineering).

Occupations at One Year: Boys

The general picture at one year was similar to that relating to the first jobs obtained. There were two important trends, however. Firstly, there was a distinct move away from steel and engineering, in which the proportion of boys fell from two-fifths to just over one-quarter (40 to 27). Secondly, there was an inflow of boys into "dead-end" jobs. This was reflected in the fact that 11 boys ceased to be apprentices, and several other boys moved into jobs with few prospects: 6 boys became van-boys (although 3 boys left this occupation), whilst 2 became warehouse labourers and 1 a barrow boy.

Apprenticeships

The number of apprentices fell from 49 to 42 (4 boys who were not apprentices in their first jobs changed to apprenticeships during the year). The main drop in apprenticeships was in steel and engineering, in which the number fell by over a third from 25 to 16 (see Table 21, p. 137). Most of the boys who left apprenticeships were from the lower I.Q. Grades, and only 1 was Grade 1.

TABLE 23
APPRENTICESHIPS AND I.Q. — FIRST JOBS AND JOBS AT ONE YEAR

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Totals
Apprentices in first job	18	15	13	3	49
Apprentice at one year	17	13	11	1	42
Totals in grades	22	32	33	13	100

It is quite clear that some boys who are suitable for apprenticeships—keen, intelligent, willing to study—do not obtain them. These qualities were not enjoyed by all of the boys who, at Interview 1, hoped to be apprentices and were not successful, but they did apply

to some—one-third of the 41 boys who definitely aimed at apprenticeships did not enter such jobs, and the same proportion were not in them at one year: a few of these boys were in occupations in which they received some training. Several of them had hoped to work in Steel and Engineering, but there was a large unsatisfied demand for apprenticeships in Electrical Work and Woodwork. Several boys who would have liked such employment, and who were unable to get it, were not prepared to take an interest in any other sort of occupation: if they could not get what they wanted, they would not bother. In all trades, there were boys who were not really concerned whether or not they were apprentices. The research conclusions fit in with the national situation: boys who are capable of becoming highly skilled are kept out of apprenticeships by boys who will never be more than mediocre at their crafts: boys who are competent and willing to advance in further education studies are left by the wayside whilst some apprentices stop attending classes because they cannot keep up with the lessons, and others take several years to master a one year course. There are many national plans for more apprenticeships and training for young workers: in Sheffield, and probably nationally, a more pressing need is to allocate those apprenticeships which are available more sensibly—as well as to improve the quality of what some disillusioned boys referred to as “so-called” apprenticeships.

First Jobs Obtained—Girls

When asked what job she intended to aim at, one girl answered that she hoped to be a shop assistant because she “wouldn’t want to work in an office or factory, and shop is what is left”. That the girl was substantially correct in her appraisal of the employment opportunities open to secondary modern school girls is indicated by the high proportion of girls who entered one or other of these three occupations—80 per cent.

One-third of the girls entered clerical work or began Courses which would lead to such employment. This is a high percentage for secondary modern fifteen-year-old leavers, especially in a city which is renowned more for its industry than for its commerce: but the number of clerical workers in industry, especially female, is high and is increasing. The better opportunities for secondary modern girls arise from a greater overall demand, and from the fact that more grammar school girls, who previously entered clerical work, now remain at school and go on to University, Training College, or to other professional work. In Britain as a whole, 35 per cent of girls starting work in 1959 at the age of 15, 16 and 17 took clerical jobs, and the percentage rose to 38 per cent in 1960⁽⁴⁵⁾.

With the exception of two who had studied shorthand and typing at private Evening Classes whilst still at school, the girls who started in clerical jobs immediately they left school did general office work—such as filing, invoicing, operating office machinery, and stamping the mail. Some girls were in jobs in which they would continue to be general clerks, but others hoped to become shorthand typists eventually—they had an opportunity of doing a little typing at work (mostly of the one-finger sort) and attended Evening School and/or Day Release classes to learn shorthand and typing. The girls' jobs varied also in the amount of responsibility which they entailed. A few girls acted as receptionists, and in addition to clerical work operated the internal telephone system—whilst others were little more than messengers and distributors of morning coffee and afternoon tea. The Commercial Courses lasted for between 9 months and one year: the eight girls who started work after completing Courses all entered shorthand-typing jobs. There were considerable differences in the level of proficiency attained by the girls who took Courses—some attained very high speeds, and a few took external examinations in both shorthand and typing. These girls entered a variety of jobs, ranging from being members of a typing pool to being a “secretary” in a small business. There was no obvious relationship between level of competence attained and type of work obtained: the numbers are very small, however, and none of these girls had been at work for more than 3 months at the time of Interview No. 3, so that such a relationship was unlikely to be evident then—the girls had not had time to show their ability or to progress to more responsible positions. Two of the more proficient girls, however, became full-time tutors at the Colleges where they had received their training. The Comptometer Operating Courses lasted approximately three months; one girl who did a Course became a shop assistant, but the other four obtained jobs (with the assistance of the Comptometer Schools which they had attended).

One-quarter of all the girls became shop assistants. Again, a variety of work was involved within this category, ranging from assistant in a local grocer's to counter hand in a multiple stores and sales girl in a city departmental shop. Some wore overalls which, like their hands, were quickly soiled by vegetables: others wore smart skirts and blouses which they were expected to keep spotless throughout the day. Eight of the respondents were “salesgirls”: not only were the demands made upon them different from those made on other shop assistants—with regard to smartness of appearance, manners, intelligence and speaking ability—but the prestige which they enjoyed was

different. Many salesgirls would not consider being "ordinary" shop assistants.

Over a fifth of the girls entered factory and warehouse work: 9 of them took jobs in the Cutlery industry, which has been an important employer of female labour in Sheffield for many years. Jobs which the girls in this category did varied from packing knives to stacking cardboard boxes in dozens, from semi-skilled machine operating to performing routine tasks at a production belt. A few warehouse workers did a small amount of clerical work. Whilst considerably more girls entered factory and warehouse work than had aimed at it the proportion in this work was by no means as high as children themselves had expected: there is a common view, prevalent amongst children, parents and some teachers, that the secondary modern girl—especially the less intelligent one—is doomed to factory work. Some girls were unwilling to enter such work and their parents—often factory workers themselves—discouraged them from doing so. There is a demand for female labour in factories and warehouses, and the large number of married women employed in such work in part results from the unwillingness of girls to do it. But a considerable number of girls did not have strong feelings against factory work. They did not look upon it as conferring a low status. It was simply that they had leanings towards other jobs—notably shop assistant, which was for most of them the only practicable alternative. But if other work was not available they were content to work in factory and warehouse. About a third of the girls who were in this occupation were positively attracted to it—because of the "sociable" atmosphere ("You can talk and sing"), because of the high wages in some factories, because hours were short, and because Saturday was a day off.

Of the remaining 20 girls, 2 became Children's Nannys, and 4 entered Pre-Nursing School, where they received full-time general education and nursing training. Thus, only half the number of girls who had hoped to become children's nurses and nurses were successful. Sheffield is fortunate in having a Pre-Nursing Educational Course, organized by the Education Committee in co-operation with the United Sheffield Hospitals Group: the Course lasts for three years, and at the age of eighteen girls start their full-scale nursing training. The number of girls who would like to enter nursing is much larger than the School is able to accept, however (some girls do not apply because they do not think they "have a chance"—and some do not mention their ambition to Youth Employment Officers because they think that it is necessary to be eighteen before becoming a nurse). Although some girls are reconciled to doing other work for a few years until they are old enough to begin adult training, others are lost to

the profession. If a larger proportion of children who would like to become nurses at the age of fifteen could be captured at that time, the national shortage of trained nurses would be much less acute. The Pre-Nursing Course, furthermore, is intended for the brighter girls: there are many children who are less able academically but who are capable of the more menial nursing tasks and anxious to do them, and many who are "good with children". They would like, as a social service, to help those in less fortunate circumstances than themselves: they would never pass examinations, but they could be excellent nurses. For these, there are few or no opportunities—certainly not at the age of fifteen.

Hairdressers in Sheffield have remarked upon the great demand in the city from girls who wish to enter this occupation—and have pointed out that it is impossible to place all the school-leavers wanting to take up apprenticeships. An increasing number of girls have become hairdressers in recent years, however—a reflection of the increase in feminine affluence and the accelerated changes in fashions, styles and colours of hair. Ten girls aimed at hairdressing and 5 were successful.

There are no apprenticeships for girls which are comparable with those for boys. Thirteen girls took Courses before entering clerical work: all except 2 (who were selected for a Course which was organized by the local education authority) attended private Colleges. Apart from these respondents, only 10 girls received organized training lasting for more than a few days—the 4 girls at Pre-Nursing School, 1 girl who was training to be a florist, and the 5 hairdressers. Two of the latter received very rudimentary training, however.

No other girls received systematic training in their jobs: a few shop assistants in large stores had undergone initial instruction, lasting for a week or so, and dealing with such matters as how to handle a till and how to talk to customers. The majority of girls were expected to pick up their jobs as they went along, mostly by watching other workers: such was the routine nature of the work of many girls that they managed to do this with little difficulty.

When interviewed at school, some girls were of the opinion that there is a rigid relationship between ability and type of work obtained—they thought in terms of the three main categories (office work, shop assistant and factory work), and a few even gave as a reason for aiming at a particular job that this was the sort of work which girls of their ability went into. Some girls were confirmed in this belief by what they had been told by teachers and Youth Employment Officers. There was a tendency for girls in the top I.Q. Grades to go into clerical work. for those in the middle grades to become shop assistants,

and for the lower grade girls to enter factory and warehouse work. Table 24 analyses occupations by I.Q. Grades. Clerical work accounted for over half of the girls in the top I.Q. Grade, whilst nearly a half of the girls in the two lowest grades were employed in factory and warehouse and related work.

TABLE 24
I.Q. GRADES AND FIRST JOBS — GIRLS

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Office Work					
General	10	8	2	1	21
Courses	6	5	2	0	13
Totals	16	13	4	1	34
	—	—	—	—	—
Shop Assistant					
General and					
Multiple Stores	2	7	6	1	16
Salesgirl	4	1	3	0	8
Totals	6	8	9	1	24
	—	—	—	—	—
Factory and Warehouse	1	6	12	3	22
	—	—	—	—	—
Other Work	8	6	4	2	20
	—	—	—	—	—
Total numbers in grades	31	33	29	7	100
	—	—	—	—	—

Some girls who became sales assistants regarded clerical work as an alternative and would not have been prepared to become "ordinary" shop assistants. If these are included with Office Workers, the tendency for girls to enter the three basic occupations in accordance with their ability is even more marked. Of 31 girls in I.Q. Grade 1, as many as 16 were clerical workers and 4 were sales assistants: only 2 were shop assistants and 1 a factory worker. Hairdressing and Nursing accounted for most of the remaining Grade 1 girls. Seven of the 13 girls on Commercial Courses were in Grades 2 and 3—such Courses are, indeed, a means by which less intelligent girls, who would otherwise become shop assistants or factory workers, are able to enter the (to them) more highly esteemed clerical work. Seventeen of the 24 shop assistants, including the remaining 4 salesgirls, were in Grades 2 and 3. Fifteen of the 22 girls in factory and warehouse work were from the two lowest Grades, and only 1 was from Grade 1.

There were, however, substantial overlaps: not only did some girls from the highest grades enter shop assistant and factory work (and remain in these occupations), but some girls in low grades obtained (and held onto) jobs as clerical workers and salesgirls. It is important to realize that there are many "routine" office jobs which require neatness rather than high intelligence and salesgirls jobs in which charm, smart appearance and cleanliness are of more importance than ability at writing or working out bills. The influences of home and school are also revealed—some girls were pushed towards higher aspirations, others were left to decide for themselves and were expected to do the sort of work that everyone else in the street did. The occupations of the 19 girls whose fathers' occupations were professional/managerial, minor managerial and clerical were as follows: 6 clerks, 4 on courses leading to clerical work, 1 on a nursing course, 2 hairdressing apprentices, 3 shop assistants, 1 florist, 1 care of animals and 1 factory and warehouse worker.

Occupations at One Year: Girls

Many of the job changes made by girls were within the same occupations, and the picture at one year was very much like that relating to first jobs obtained. With one exception the girls who had been on Commercial and Comptometer Operating Courses had started work. The number of girls working in offices fell by 3, and in factory work by 1: the main increase was in shop assistant, which went up by 5. The tendency for the girls of high I.Q. to enter offices and intermediate girls to become shop assistants was confirmed: there was a movement into shop assistant by girls from I.Q. Grades 2 and 3. Table 25 gives an analysis of occupations by I.Q. Grades.

TABLE 25
I.Q. GRADES AND OCCUPATIONS AT FIRST JOB AND AT ONE YEAR: GIRLS

	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Total		
	Ist Job	One Year	Ist Job	One Year	Ist Job	One Year	Ist Job	One Year	Ist Job	One Year	
Office Work	16	17	13	11	4	2	1	1	34	31	
Shop Assistant	6	4	8	13	9	12	1	0	24	29	
Factory and Warehouse	1	2	6	4	12	11	3	4	22	21	
Other Work	8	8	6	5	4	4	2	2	20	19	
Totals in grades	31		33		29		7		100		

RELATIONSHIPS OF FIRST JOBS OBTAINED AND
JOBS AT ONE YEAR AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL TO
JOB AIMS AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICERS'
RECOMMENDATIONS*Job Aims at Interview 1*

Tables 18 and 20 indicate that many children entered jobs other than those at which they had aimed, and that jobs at one year did not correspond closely with aims. The tables do not, however, reveal the extent of the discrepancies. Only 6 of the 9 boys who aimed at Building, Painting/Decorating were amongst the 9 who entered this work, for example, and only 14 of the 29 girls who aimed at shop assistant were amongst the 24 who took up this occupation. An analysis of the relationship between job aims and jobs entered is difficult. There is the vagueness of many children about their aims, and there is the problem of deciding whether the elements which appealed to a child in the job of his choice are or are not present in the job he obtains. A youth who had hoped to become an apprentice joiner considered his job as woodwork machinist to be very much second best, for example—although a girl who reflected that in her aim of sales assistant she had “had big hopes” was content to be an ordinary shop assistant.

Only one-third of the boys and just under one-half of the girls took jobs which were precisely the same as or closely related to their choice of work at the first research Interview (that is, at the beginning of what was expected to be their last term at school). The overall result of the many job changes was that rather fewer boys and girls were in their Interview 1 first choice at the end of the year than at the beginning. Approximately one-eighth of the boys and one-fifth of the girls entered jobs which had been their second choice at Interview 1. Many of the remaining children took jobs which were only tenuously related to their job aims, and one-quarter of the boys and one-eighth of the girls entered jobs which were in no way related to either their first or their second choices at Interview 1. As the result of job changes, these proportions rose to two-fifths of the boys and one-fifth of the girls during the course of the year.

About one-fifth of both boys and girls changed their minds about what job to aim at between the first Research Interview and their interview with the Youth Employment Officer—a period which varied between one and eight weeks. Many also changed their minds about what job to aim at between the Y.E.O. interview and the end of term (only a few as the *result* of the interview). A substantial number of children had several changes of mind—according to whim, to what a friend had told them, as the result of seeing an advertisement in the newspaper, or because the chance of a job came along. Many children

were "not particularly bothered" about whether they got one sort of job or another—a girl who had originally aimed at clerical work said that she "just happened to fancy shop assistant, one day". She had a "hunch" that she would prefer this, but it was neither a burning desire nor an informed choice. Because their job aims were not of vital importance, children's minds were easily swayed, especially if a vacancy cropped up. In a few cases, too, the initiative in finding a job was taken by parents without consulting (and in a few cases against the wishes of) the child: the job was sometimes not the sort which the boy or girl had aimed at.

Though many had changes of mind, however, approximately two-fifths of the boys and one-fifth of the girls had set their minds on their choice of job at Interview 1, and these stood by their choice unwaveringly until the end of term. In the event, only just over half of *these* boys and girls obtained the work of their choice or work closely related to it. A few entered jobs which were broadly related to their choice, but about one-third of these boys and well over a third of the girls took jobs which were completely different. So that although proportionately more children who had set their minds on particular jobs obtained such or similar work than in the sample as a whole, a considerable number of them were not successful. Four boys and 1 girl subsequently changed to the jobs of their choice—the remainder either stayed in their jobs or moved to work which was again different from their original aims.

Youth Employment Officers' Recommendations

Just under two-thirds of the boys entered jobs which were precisely those recommended by the Youth Employment Officers or in the general category of that recommendation. As the result of job changes, the proportion fell to a half. Three-quarters of the girls took first jobs in accordance with the Youth Employment Officers' recommendations, and the proportion was the same at the end of the year. The relatively high proportions for girls reflects the narrow range of jobs open to them.

The advice of the Y.E.O. helped a substantial number of children to clarify their minds, but only 6 boys and 2 girls changed their job aims as a direct result of their interviews, and only a quarter of those children who entered jobs which were quite different from those which they had aimed at at the Research Interview took work which the Y.E.O. had recommended (in several of these cases the Y.E.O. had confirmed the child's own aim which had been *revised* since the Research Interview). Fortuity had much to do with the entry of boys and girls into jobs which were in accord with the Y.E.O.'s recommenda-

tions. Also important was the fact that the Y.E.O. endorsed the aims of a large number of children who were keen to work in particular occupations. The main explanation, however, is that the Y.E.O.'s recommendations were in many cases very broad ("engineering", "routine shop work", "practical work"). After the Y.E.O. Interview some children quickly forgot what advice the Y.E.O. had given to them, and most others paid little attention to it: very few children acted upon it.

There were various reasons why job aims, and to a lesser extent Y.E.O. recommendations, were not closely related to jobs obtained. The industrial structure of Sheffield imposed overall limitations—demanding more boys in steel and engineering than the number who aimed at it, for example, and offering fewer jobs as electricians than boys would have liked. This factor was exacerbated by other factors which could be avoided. Very important was the tendency to *take the first opportunity which occurred*. When jobs are scarce, this tendency is easily understandable—but when the respondents left school jobs were not scarce (although some, particularly Easter leavers, thought that they might be). Children were keen to get started no matter what the job was, especially if their friends had already obtained jobs. They, too, wanted to get fixed up as soon as possible. The idea of waiting for the job of their choice did not occur to most of them. Some children who were at first loath to abandon their job aims "*got fed-up with trying*" after making several unsuccessful applications: they began to think that they "would never find a job". Some had tried hard and changed their aims reluctantly, but others were easily put off. Forgetting (or never having remembered) the Y.E.O.'s recommendation they decided to take whatever job they could find quickly. A few boys and girls were offered jobs "out of the blue", jobs which they had not thought of previously but which now appealed to them: they snapped them up whilst they had the chance. Several children had job aims which were, for them, *unrealistic*—this was true of a few boys who hoped for apprenticeships but who were not up to the standard. It has been noted that some less able boys did get apprenticeships—but they were aided by luck, influence, or by the fact that they encountered a gullible or unconcerned employer. Other boys found things much less easy, and had to be content with jobs which were more in keeping with their ability. The aims of a few children were unrealistic in that they were out of harmony with their home backgrounds: thus, one girl who hoped to work with animals (preferably at Riding School)—a job in which the fifteen-year-old is usually not paid at all or receives only a token wage—was unable to find a job because she lacked the social contacts through which such work is

often obtained. In any case, she would not have been able to accept this sort of job because her parents were unable—or unwilling—to maintain her when she was “old enough to be earning”. In a similar way, a girl who hoped to do a Commercial Course which involved the payment of fees and a year’s delay in earning, was doomed to disappointment. Children’s *knowledge of the employment structure of Sheffield was very limited*, and as a result several found themselves in jobs (such as Quantity Surveyor Trainee and printing apprentice) which they had not thought of at all until the opportunity occurred. *Knowledge of vacancies* was even more limited. Few thought of seeking information about alternative vacancies from the Youth Employment Service before accepting a job of which they had the chance. In any case, the Y.E.O. was unaware of many vacancies simply because the employers do not inform him of them. It will be seen that the Y.E. Service placed some children in jobs which were different from its recommendations and from the children’s choices—it is limited to the jobs of which it is notified. If more children sought the help of the Y.E. Service, more employers would make use of it, and the reverse is also true: there is a vicious circle, and one which at present contributes largely to the haphazard “allocation” of jobs. Most employers use other means of filling their vacancies (newspaper advertisements, asking other employees if they know of anyone, waiting for children to call on the off-chance, and so on). Children who took jobs which were filled in such ways may or may not have wanted the particular occupations—but undoubtedly others who *did* aim at such work were unaware that there were vacancies. The *methods* which many children used to find work led to them taking jobs which they did not really aim at, and which were not in accord with the Y.E.O.’s recommendations: particularly was this true with regard to jobs obtained through indiscriminate “calling on the off-chance” and, though not in all cases, those found through help from friends and relations. A child who calls at a factory to ask for a job may not specify the type of work he wants, and the employer may not bother to ask him: the child often takes anything that is going. Or, if he says he wants to be a plumber but there is a vacancy only for painter/decorator, he may accept the latter and forget about the former. Help from friends and relations often took the form of passing on information that there is “a job” going at a particular firm—the *nature* of the job was seldom defined: “a job” is a job—the actual occupation was a secondary, indeed a minor, matter. Another important reason why so many of the jobs obtained had little relationship to job aims, then, was that *the particular occupations were not a vital matter* to a large number of children. That many children were not loath to enter occupations

other than those which they had "chosen" was also a reflection of cynicism, fatalism, and the belief that so much in life depends upon luck. The job you get was thought to be as much a matter of luck, chance and fortuity as of merit. If you got the chance of *any* job, it was best to snap it up, before someone else did—this was simply *to face the facts of life*. It was not much use waiting for the job you would really like—if you were lucky enough such a job would have turned up, or will do in the future. These things can't be planned. Children who could not call upon the use of "influence" to help them find work were resigned to taking what they could get, and to abandoning their aims—many boys shared the view of the father of one respondent who said that "influence is essential in some trades today: you try getting a lad an apprenticeship in pattern making or as an electrician without influence—it's impossible!" Children saw themselves, too, not as sellers of labour, but as seekers of wages—an attitude which was to change in some of them when they had launched themselves into the world of work and felt at home in it, but which, when they first left school, contributed to their readiness to accept any opportunity. Of course you don't *choose* a job—you get what you can. By their own belief in chance, children helped to bring about the situation in which chance was important—their's was a self-fulfilling prophesy. Where knowledge is lacking luck holds full sway.

The fact of obtaining a job in accordance with the aim did not necessarily mean that children were satisfied at work: several, even of those who had set their minds on a particular occupation, were disappointed, and some changed jobs. Nor did it follow that children who obtained work other than that which they aimed at were dissatisfied. Some were well-content, although others remained unsettled throughout the year. On the whole, satisfaction with a job, except for a minority, had little to do with whether or not it was in accord with either the children's choice or the Y.E. Service recommendation.

W A G E S

The wages in first jobs and after one year at work are analysed in Table 26, p. 152.

Wages in First Job

Two-thirds of the boys and girls received gross wages of £3 a week or less in their first jobs. Only one boy, a Trainee, received less than £2 a week. One-third of the boys received between £2 1s. and £2 10s. a week. Two-thirds of these were apprentices, mostly in steel and engineering. Those working at the large steel firms were entitled to

free or cheap mid-day meals in the Works Canteens: but, although 9 of the boys in this wage category had the opportunity of such meals—which were equivalent to up to 10s. 0d. a week extra wages—only about half of them availed themselves of it. Several of the remaining boys in this wage category were employed in the steel and engineering industry, but were not apprentices, and in most cases were not receiving any planned training. The rest of the boys were in a variety of jobs, including motor mechanic, warehouse work and laboratory assistant.

TABLE 26
WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

	First job		Job at 1 year after leaving school		Apprentices (Boys)		Girls					
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	1st Job	1 year after lvg. school	Clerical		Shop		Factory	
							Job 1	At 1 yr	Job 1	At 1 yr	Job 1	At 1 yr
Up to £2	1	12	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
£2 1s.—£2 10s.	33	13	6	3	23	2	6	—	5	—	2	1
£2 11s.—£3	31	47	20	16	15	11	14	5	17	7	15	2
£3 1s.—£3 10s.	18	17	24	41	6	13	8	14	2	17	4	9
£3 11s.—£4	7	3	17	16	0	4	3	8	—	4	—	2
£4 1s.—£4 10s.	3	3	15	7	1	5	1	2	—	—	—	3
£4 11s.—£5	—	1	3	3	—	1	—	1	—	—	1	2
£5 1s.—£5 10s.	—	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
£5 11s.—£6	—	—	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
£6 1s.—£6 10s.	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
£6 11s.—£7	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
£7 1s.—£7 10s.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
£7 11s.—£8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Over £8	1	—	4	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
No information and not applicable	6	4	6	6	3	4	2	1	—	—	—	2
Totals	100	100	100	100	49	42	34	31	24	29	22	21

(5 boys and 4 girls did not start work until 1 year after leaving school. Other girls who did Commercial Courses started at various stages throughout the year.)

Approximately one-third of the boys, half of them apprentices, received between £2 10s. and £3 0s. a week. This category included most of the builders, painters and decorators, and woodworkers, the two clerks, two of the three plumbers and several other boys in various jobs. Three of these boys were entitled to free or cheap meals, but only one took the opportunity. Eighteen boys received between £3 and £3 10s. a week: 6 of them were apprentices. One boy was a painter/decorator, 3 were butchers, 3 were shop assistants and 4 boys were employed in steel and engineering. Only 11 boys received more than £3 10s. a week: the occupations of these boys included van-delivery, railway porter, cutlery worker and steel and engineering. Two of the boys were apprentices, but both were employed by their fathers: 1 whose wage was over £8 a week, pointed out that he was "getting more than he should be" (that is, more than the laid-down rate). Only 8 of the 46 apprentices for whom there was information received over £3 a week: on the whole, apprentices in steel and engineering and apprentice motor mechanics received lower wages than apprentices in other trades. The number of boys engaged in any one occupation other than steel and engineering was small, so that generalizations must be tentative: however, it is clear that there are appreciable variations in wages paid within different occupational categories—whereas one van boy may receive less than £3, for example, another may be paid over £4.

Twelve girls received £2 or less a week. With the exception of two girls who were children's nannies and who were given board or main meals each day in addition to their wages, all of these were girls receiving training (most as nurses and hairdressers) and are more properly regarded as students than as wage-earners. In spite of the fact that such a large number of girls received low wages, fewer girls than boys received £2 10s. or less a week—one-quarter of the girls as compared with one-third of the boys. Nearly one-half of all the girls received between £2 10s. and £3 in their first jobs, and about one-quarter received over £3. Fewer girls than boys received high wages—7 girls compared with 11 boys received over £3 11s. a week. The overall picture for girls is to an extent misleading in that 7 girls had studied a Commercial Course for nearly a year before entering their first jobs, and were thus sixteen years of age when they started work as well as having extra qualifications, whilst 5 girls had attended courses lasting 3 months before entering employment. Of the 24 girls who received over £3 a week in their first jobs, 11 had done Courses before starting work. If these girls and those earning less than £2 a week who were training, are excluded, it can be seen that there is a

tendency for girls' wages, whatever the occupation, to cover a narrower range than boys. The belief was fairly common amongst children and parents that factory girls are more highly paid than girls in other occupations: this was not the case. Although the only girl to earn more than £4 10s. a week was a piece-worker in a cutlery factory, no other factory worker earned more than £3 10s. Most factory girls received between £2 11s. and £3, as did the majority of shop assistants and most untrained clerical workers.

Wages One Year After Leaving School

One year after they had left school the majority of children had received rises. The exceptions were boys and girls who had only recently started work and 15 boys and 7 girls who were expecting rises in the near future. Employers varied in their policies with regard to the time of increasing young people's salaries. Some gave rises on the employees' birthdays, some after they had been with the firm a year: others gave rises at a set time each year (after the termination of the firm's financial year), and a few (especially small firms) awarded rises in accordance with progress made. A few boys had received small rises as the result of national industrial wage awards.

Most children had had wage increases of between 5s. 0d. and 10s. 0d., but some had been given considerably more than this. Regular overtime or production bonus payments received by 7 boys and 11 girls at the time of Interview 3, are included as part of their wages. Only 6 boys received £2 10s. a week or less: 4 of them were expecting rises in the near future. More than two-fifths of the boys had wages of *over* £3 10s. a week, and more than one-quarter of all the boys received over £4. Twelve of the apprentices received over £3 10s. a week. Of the 9 boys who received over £5 a week, 5 were steelworkers, 1 was a woodworker, 1 a plumber, 1 a factory worker and 1 a messenger. Two of these boys (one earning over £8 a week) were apprentices, both of them working for their fathers. Three of the 4 boys who received wages of over £8 a week were steelworkers who did shift work (which they started when they attained the age of 16): although their wages varied in accordance with piece-work rates, they averaged approximately £8 10s. for morning shift, £9 10s. for afternoon shift and £11 10s. for night shift. Boys and girls who earned approximately £4 a week or more were subject to income tax, but in most cases only a small sum was paid.

Rather more girls than boys (11 compared with 6) received wages of £2 10s. or less (two received board in addition to their wages and the other girls were receiving training). Whereas over two-fifths of the boys were receiving over £3 10s. a week only one-quarter of the

girls were paid this amount: and only one-tenth of the girls, as compared with one-quarter of the boys, had wages of over £4. No girls received more than £5 a week.

The range of wages for girls is still much more narrow than that for boys: although it is wider than was the case with regard to the first jobs obtained. Excepting the girls who were undergoing training fewer girls than boys received low wages. A substantial number of boys, apprentices in particular, had lower wages than girls, but fewer girls than boys received high wages. Considerable variations in wages paid within the same occupational categories for boys and girls are still apparent. Whilst it would clearly be wrong to suppose that fifteen-year-old children have not shared in the increased prosperity of teenagers in recent years, it would seem from the present research that most children in their first year or so at work, whether or not they are apprentices, do not receive such high wages as is commonly supposed. The expenditure of such children does not depend only upon the wages which they earn—it is the amount of pocket money which they are allowed which is important in this respect. This is discussed in Chapter 15: suffice it to say at this point that many parents considered that they were financially worse off when their children started work than they had been when they were at school because their sons and daughters made bigger demands for food, clothing and spending money than previously, demands which their wages did not cover. Bus fares to work took up an appreciable amount of the wages of many children. In the jobs which they had one year after leaving school, one-third of the boys and girls paid fares of up to 5s. 0d. a week, whilst a quarter of the boys and one-third of the girls paid between 5s. 0d. and 10s. 0d. In their first jobs, a substantial number of children with wages of less than £2 10s. paid fares amounting to nearly 10s. 0d. a week.

Very few children expressed dissatisfaction with their wages. To most of them the £2 or £3 a week which they received when they first started work seemed a lot of money. As the year progressed, some boys and girls did become dissatisfied with their wages, and this was one reason why boys and girls changed their jobs. But dissatisfaction with wages was not the most important reason for job changes, and was of far less importance than many believe.

HOURS

Information was not obtained at Interview No. 2 about hours worked, and the following analysis relates to jobs one year after the children had left school. Few children who changed jobs had an

appreciably longer or shorter working week as the result of doing so, and it may be assumed that the general picture relating to the first jobs obtained differed only slightly from that which obtained at 12 months.

TABLE 27
BASIC HOURS WORKED — ONE YEAR AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL

	Boys	Girls
Up to 40 hours a week	20	39
41-44 hours	51	46
45 and over	25	10
Not applicable and no information	4	5
Totals	100	100

On the whole, girls had a shorter working week than boys, but there were considerable variations—10 of the girls worked 45 hours a week or more, whilst 20 boys worked 40 hours or less. Whilst there were some broad relationships between occupations and hours worked, many children in the same sorts of jobs worked different hours. Approximately one-half of both boys and girls worked between 41 and 44 hours a week. Boys who worked 40 hours a week or less included those who were “staff” employees, such as Quantity Surveyor Trainees, Laboratory Assistants and clerks. Three boys who worked shifts in the steel industry had a 38-hour week. Two-fifths of the girls and one-fifth of the boys worked 40 hours or less a week. Apart from girls who were attending Courses (and who would have longer working weeks when they had completed their training) this category includes several of the hairdressers, some office girls and many factory and warehouse workers.

Most of the boys who were employed in steel and engineering worked between 41 and 44 hours a week: many of them were subject to Trades Union and Employer agreements which enforced a 42-hour working week. Other boys in this category were in a variety of occupations. Comparatively few of the girls were clerical workers, but there were a substantial number of factory workers and shop assistants. Boys who worked 45 hours a week or more included a few in the steel and engineering industry (none of them were working for the large firms), builders, a painter/decorator, a plumber, motor mechanics, a shop assistant and van boys. Most of the 10 girls who worked 45 hours a week or more were shop assistants.

Approximately one-half of both boys and girls worked a 5-day week, whilst the remainder, with the exception of shop assistants (most of whom worked all day Saturday but did not work on Thursday afternoons) finished work at mid-day on Saturday.

Factory girls started earlier than shop assistants and clerical workers, but they finished earlier in the evenings. Most of them had a shorter break at mid-day, and this enabled some of them to finish work by 4.30. Office girls and shop assistants usually did not finish until between 5 and 6 o'clock in the evening. The earlier finish was a big attraction to girls since it left a long evening for leisure time and also gave time to get dressed up before going out. Many boys who worked in factories also finished early in the evenings—some finished at 4.30. Even boys who did overtime in the evenings were able to finish work before 6 o'clock. Shop assistants started later in the morning than factory workers and finished later. On the whole they worked longer hours than girls in other occupations. Several shop assistants disliked having to rush to get home, have a meal and change, when they wanted to go out in the evening. Most office girls started at about the same time as shop assistants, but finished earlier: the majority of office girls worked a 5-day week.

Only a few children did regular overtime: some who had the opportunity said that they did not wish to do it. They preferred to have more leisure time and were not attracted by higher pay (or their parents allowed them as much pocket money as they were desirous of). Several children said that their parents did not like them to do overtime. A few children did as much overtime as possible and this in several cases exceeded what was statutorily permitted. Small firms in particular are able to evade the statutory conditions about overtime for young people, and whilst children are not forced to work overtime they may themselves be anxious to do it. One labourer, for example, had been working 14 hours a week overtime since reaching the age of sixteen. The defence which was offered by one firm which was prosecuted in Sheffield in 1960 for allowing boys to work as much as 70 hours a week was that the boys had wanted the extra money.

Apart from those children who worked overtime regularly, a few did an hour or two from time to time. Several children did voluntary, unpaid overtime—one motor mechanic was so interested in his work that he rarely left before 6.30 in the evening, although he could have left at 6 o'clock.

Two boys were employed on delivery work and worked most Sundays, and 4 worked on shifts which included a night shift. The shifts worked by the latter were, 6 a.m. until 2 p.m., 2 p.m. until 10 p.m., and 10 p.m. until 6 a.m. In addition, a few boys and girls worked un-

usual hours: a van boy, for example, started work at 6.50 a.m. and finished in the afternoon at times varying between 2 o'clock and 6.30. Hairdressers also worked unusual hours—on some evenings until as late as 8 p.m.

Whilst the children had been used to "working" less than 30 hours a week when they were at school the overwhelming majority seemed not to have found the longer hours at work to be distressing (although long holidays were missed). This is remarkable since the time away from home was considerably longer than had been the case when they were at school: for most, school was within easy reach of the home, but this was not the case with regard to the places of employment of a considerable number of children. The time which children took to get to work varied from 2 minutes to over 40 minutes. Twelve boys and 20 girls took over half an hour to get to work, but two-thirds of the respondents got to work in about 20 minutes. Three-fifths of the boys and three-quarters of the girls went to work by bus: the remaining girls walked to work, whilst one-fifth of the boys walked and one-fifth cycled.

More of a shock than the number of hours worked was the time at which children had to get up in the mornings. Many, girls in particular, did not have to change their habits much as compared with when they were at school. They started work in the mornings at about the same time as they had started school. Furthermore, a substantial number of boys had delivered newspapers in the mornings whilst they were at school and this had necessitated rising early. However, nearly two-thirds of the boys and nearly one-quarter of the girls had to get up before 7 a.m. when they started work. Most children soon got accustomed to the new routine—one boy said that "after a while it comes natural—I've woken up at 6.30 on Saturdays, when I don't work." A few boys and girls revelled in the early rise: the mother of one girl said "she gets up without being called, and calls her brother up. She leaves the house much earlier than she need." But some continued to have difficulty for a long time. One boy said, "Mother starts calling me at 6, and Father takes over at ten past. I get up between then and half past. To think that I thought 8 o'clock early when I was at school!" That other children had difficulty in getting up was pointed out by their parents: the father of one boy who did shift work in a steel works remarked that his son was "a bugger to get up in the mornings". Some parents would tolerate "no messing about": one father said, "I get him up at 6.45 to make sure he has his breakfast before he goes to work." The majority of children were punctual: some children pointed out that they were not expected to start at the hour which was laid down, and a few children said that other workers

did not keep to the hours. One boy stated that he should have got to work by 9 o'clock but arrived at ten past instead—only about a third of the people at work arrived on time and the rest were anything up to three-quarters of an hour late: the boy observed, "other people break the rules so I do not see why I should not". Another boy spoke of the practice of "pinching time". He worked in a factory in which clocking-off time was five-past-five. He considered that the odd five minutes was silly, and asked "Why not 5 o'clock?—they wouldn't lose anything." He went on to say that, in fact, the firm *did not* lose anything—that is to say, he and other youths finished at 5 o'clock, the more sensible time. On the other hand, some children arrived at work earlier than was necessary. One hairdresser said that she liked to arrive ten minutes before she was due to start so that she could get herself "organized", and other children were of the same disposition.

The time permitted for lunch breaks was not always rigidly enforced. The break varied from half an hour to an hour and a quarter, but the "official" time was in many cases not adhered to. One boy remarked that his official time was three-quarters of an hour, but his "unofficial" time was one and a half hours. He hastened to put the matter in perspective by pointing out "that you have to give and take". Sometimes, he said, he only had half an hour for lunch. (He "gave" a quarter of an hour occasionally and "took" three-quarters of an hour usually.) On the other hand some children had less time than they were entitled to at mid-day: a butcher's boy said that although he was supposed to have an hour, usually he had less because the shop was not closed at lunch time.

A few children went home for the mid-day meal. Some had a meal in the Works Canteen or in cafés which were near to their work. About half of the boys and one-third of the girls took sandwiches. One girl who was entitled to cheap meals at her place of work pointed out that "you have to queue and this takes all your dinner hour". She, like other girls who worked in town, preferred to go window shopping at mid-day rather than "waste" the time eating. It was, furthermore, the normal thing in the homes of many of the children for the workers of the family to take "snap" for mid-day, and to have a hot meal when they return from work in the evening.

METHODS OF FINDING JOBS

At the beginning of their last term at school, two-fifths of the children had taken steps to find jobs: about half of them had done very little, but—urged on by parents, teachers and the Y.E.O. Talk, or because they were keen to start work or worried about finding jobs—they had made some effort. Eleven children said that they had work arranged, but in four cases the jobs did not materialise. Twenty-one children had interviews arranged—usually as the result of action taken by parents and other relations. Most of the children who had not taken any steps said that they would do so before the end of term, but they had no sense of urgency and were vague about when they would take action—the end of term seemed a long way off. A few had been intending to start looking for work, but “kept putting it off”: they did not want to face up to the task. Some children thought that “it’s no good starting to look too early—they won’t give you a job unless you can start straight away”: this proved to be the case with several children who applied for jobs some time before the end of term. Fifteen children said that they would not take steps until after the School-leaving Interview—a few because they genuinely wanted advice, most because of procrastination: it was convenient not to have to bother with thinking about work yet awhile.

Many children were casual and only slightly interested. It was all a bit of a bore: “I don’t know when I will start looking, or how”, said one boy, “We talk about it a bit at home, but it doesn’t go much further.” Inaction was associated with the belief that so much depends upon luck—if you are lucky you get a job easily, if you are unlucky you do not. “Luck” was thought to be of central importance. Some children were saddened by this and cynical: others were heartened, for luck may reduce the burdens of life and is an excuse for doing nothing, for sitting back and awaiting events.

There was a failure to plan ahead, and to think out courses of action: one boy who wanted to be a coal-miner did not intend to put his name down at the pit because there was a long waiting list, and “if your name is at the bottom of the list you wouldn’t stand a chance”. He assumed that he would have a better chance if he did not put down his name at all, and therefore proposed to do nothing.

Children and parents were quite capable of saying one thing and doing another without realizing that there was any inconsistency.

Just under one-quarter of the boys and girls envisaged help from the Y.E.O. in finding work. Some thought that it was the Y.E.O.'s business to deal with this, and that it was therefore sensible to leave it to him. A few proposed simply to await instructions—all they would have to do would be to report to the firm to which the Y.E.O. sent them. Since it was the Y.E.O.'s responsibility why waste your own time and energy? Many children did not think of the Y.E. Service at all, and most of those who did were vague about how the Y.E.O. might help them. Some regarded the Service as a standby, something to turn to if all other methods of finding work failed. The feeling was fairly widespread that the Service was very much second best, and some children intended to make no use of it at all—"From what I have heard", said one boy, "the Y.E.O.s don't seem very enthusiastic about you: they think you don't matter if you don't go to grammar school. They think any old job will do for you." The distrust of Y.E.O.s' motives has been referred to above, and children were afraid that they would be made to do jobs which they did not want. The Y.E.O. was dismissed, also, as yet another official, intruding upon one's personal affairs and making life more complicated: the best policy with such people was to steer clear of them. Several children took the view that the Y.E. Service was only used by people who were not able to help themselves—social inferiors who had not the ability to stand on their own feet: the Service was linked in parents' minds with ideas of the "Labour Exchange" and unemployment—parents did not want their children to be seen seeking help from that sort of place, as if they were unable to get a job by their own initiative.

The Y.E. Service did not, then, loom large in children's minds at this stage, even as a job-finding agency: after their School-leaving Interviews, most children soon forgot about the Service. Informal ways of finding work came more readily to mind. One-third of the children had "someone on the look-out" for a job—in most cases a parent or relation, but including friends and neighbours. (Several children were sceptical of offers of help from friends—"people say these things and then it doesn't come off. I prefer to try for myself.") Fathers were expected to play a larger part in finding jobs than in formulating choices—they were out and about more than mothers and had contacts with people at work. Mothers were expected to help merely through talking with neighbours and shopkeepers and by accompanying daughters on job-finding expeditions. Mothers were "keeping their eyes and ears open", in case they "heard of anything". This provided a ready excuse for some children to do nothing them-

selves about finding work. Several boys and girls were unable to say whether or not their parents were making any attempt to find work for them, or whether they proposed to do so. There was a lack of interest as well as much vagueness. A girl thought that her father "might" have been to see the head teacher to discuss a job, but was "not sure", whilst a boy did not know whether his father had received details of a training scheme for which he had written several weeks previously. Another boy "thought" his father had arranged an interview for him.

Other methods of seeking work which were envisaged included looking at newspaper advertisements, though not many in fact did so consistently. A quarter of the respondents said that they would set about finding work by calling on the "off-chance": a few of them had definite firms in mind, but most were vague about where they would call and when. This method of seeking work was in keeping with the overall outlook upon life of many children—the belief in luck, the rejection of planning: other methods required thought and were tiresome.

TIME OF FINDING FIRST JOBS

Three-quarters of the children who intended to start work immediately after leaving school (that is, excluding the boys and girls who stayed on for a year or attended full-time courses) started to look for employment before leaving school: the efforts of many of them were spasmodic and lacked urgency until the last week or two before they left. All but a few of the remaining children started to look for work within two weeks of leaving school. Most of the children who delayed their search for work *could* have started as soon as they left school: three-quarters of the respondents who were prevented by their dates of birth from starting work until at least a fortnight after leaving school had begun to look for jobs before leaving. Delays in looking for work were due mainly to indifference, lethargy, lack of knowledge about how to set about it, the desire to have a holiday before starting a job, and in a few cases to a shying away from the idea of becoming a worker—it was so frightening.

A half of the boys and girls obtained jobs before they left school, and just over a half of these had been offered the jobs at least a fortnight before they left. Of the children who had not found jobs before they left school (50 boys and 38 girls) one half of the boys (23) and two-thirds of the girls (25) found work within a fortnight. Nine boys and 8 girls had not found work four weeks after leaving school, but some of these had not tried very hard.

TABLE 28
NUMBER OF JOBS APPLIED FOR

	Boys	Girls
Applied for first job only	29	20
Applied for 2-4 jobs	40	37
Applied for 5-10 jobs	18	20
Applied for over 10 jobs	8	4
On Courses, remained at school and no information	5	19
Totals	100	100

A substantial proportion of children were successful in their first applications: the figures include many children whose jobs had been arranged through "influence", and who themselves had been required to take little action. Most children soon had jobs arranged, however. No matter how vague and haphazard they had been, when it came to the point children managed to get settled fairly quickly and easily: parental forces were rallied, and also help from other relations and friends. The lack of difficulty in finding jobs was in large measure due to the facts that there was no overall shortage of employment in Sheffield and that children were "not choosy"—they were prepared to take whatever job they came across. First choices were not sufficiently important to withstand even modest rebuffs, and children who were rejected in their first attempts for such work quickly gave up hope and applied for any type of work. Even so, over one-quarter of the boys and girls who were seeking work applied for five or more jobs, and one boy estimated that he had tried for between twenty and thirty (most of them by calling on the off-chance). There were various explanations for the difficulty of these children in finding work. Some respondents were determined to get their first choice jobs and kept plugging away until they found such work or were finally disillusioned. (Several children applied for only a few jobs for the same reason.) Some children, in their own words, "had bad luck"—"nothing seemed to go right". Others persisted in applying for jobs for which they were unsuited, whether through lack of ability or lack of physique, or because advertisements specified older and experienced persons. Several boys and girls were loath to attempt to impress an employer (or the idea did not occur to them), and were scruffy and nonchalant when they applied for jobs (often this did not

affect children's chances, but some employers discriminated more than others). Children were unsystematic in their search for work, furthermore: they applied here and there on the off-chance, and followed up vague, and often false information from friends and neighbours. There was, in consequence, much wasted effort.

TABLE 29
METHODS OF FINDING JOBS

	Boys						Girls		
	All jobs			Apprentice- ships			All jobs		
	Ist job	Left Ist job	Job at 1 year	Ist job	Left Ist job	Job at 1 year	Ist job	Left Ist job	Job at 1 year
Sent by Y.E.O.	31	16	25	13	7	9	23	11	18
Help from									
father	23	5	19	15	4	10	6	0	7
mother	3	0	4	3	0	4	5	4	6
other relatives	6	2	8	3	0	4	8	3	5
friends	8	2	13	6	2	5	11	5	8
head teacher	2	0	2	—	—	—	1	0	1
Newspaper advertisements	5	3	7	—	—	—	10	6	11
Called on the off-chance	18	7	15	7	2	7	16	5	21
H.M. Forces	3	1	3	2	0	3	—	—	—
Advertisements in shop/factory window	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	0	2
Sent by proprietor of Course	0	0	1	—	—	—	11	1	10
Sent by Commercial Employment Agency	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	0	1
Not started work									
Nursing Course	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	0	4
Commercial Course	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	0	1
Unemployed (1 boy) and stopped working	0	0	1	—	—	—	0	0	3
No information	1	0	2	—	—	—	1	1	2
Totals	100	36	100	49	15*	42	100	36	100
Influence used	25	1	28	15	1	16	19	5	18

*Four apprentices who left their first jobs were apprentices in their jobs at one year.

Methods of Finding Jobs

Thirty-six boys and 36 girls changed jobs during the year: methods of finding first jobs and jobs at one year are shown in Table 29, which also indicates the relationships between methods and job changes.

The table relates to successful methods of obtaining jobs, and analyses the first jobs obtained irrespective of the time when they were found: it includes, that is to say, children who remained at school and those who attended courses before starting work.

The Youth Employment Service

Thirty-one boys and 23 girls obtained jobs for which the Y.E.O. had sent them to apply. Thirteen of these boys and 6 girls received Employment Cards which the Y.E.O. had sent to the school for distribution. Such an arrangement can represent useful co-operation between the Y.E.O. and the school, but there are dangers: the procedure can develop into little more than a haphazard device whereby children receive cards which are unrelated, or only tenuously related, either to their choice or to the Y.E.O.'s recommendation. One boy, for example, said, "The Y.E.O. sent some cards and I took one to go to a factory"—as if he had participated in a lucky dip. A girl had since heard that whilst she was absent from school the Y.E.O. had sent a card there which was intended for her. Because she was absent, the card was returned to the Y.E.O. and the girl heard no more about the job. The remaining children who were placed by the Y.E.O., 18 boys and 17 girls, called at the Bureau after they had left school to seek help. They remembered that they had been told at their Leaving Interviews to do this if they had not found employment by the end of term. In fact, 12 of the boys and 7 girls had made no effort to find work until they left school. Some of these children were surprised and others a little annoyed that they had not received Employment Cards: 1 boy remarked, "I had an interview at school and told him what I would like to be, but the card never came through." It had not occurred to him to seek work by his own efforts. Several respondents went to the Bureau only as a last resort, having been unsuccessful with other methods: a few of them were explicit that they had not wished to make use of the Service and regarded doing so as a mark of failure or ill-luck.

Half of the boys (17) were placed in Steel and Engineering, and the remainder in a variety of jobs: over a third (13) became apprentices. The girls were evenly divided between Office, Shop and Factory Work, with one girl becoming a Hairdresser, one a Seamstress and one a Children's Nanny. The fairly general belief amongst parents

and children that the Y.E.O. has *only* second rate jobs to offer is refuted. Apart from the 13 boys who became apprentices (5 of them had not aimed at apprenticeships), several others entered jobs in which they received training: some of the 6 girls who entered office work were likely to have the opportunity of learning shorthand and typing, 2 respondents became salesgirls, and the Hairdresser was an apprentice. Nevertheless, some of the boys' apprenticeships did not merit the title and many of the children were placed in semi-skilled and unskilled work. Five boys (but no girls) were placed by the Y.E.O. in jobs which did not accord with the recommendation at the School-leaving Interview—3, for whom semi-skilled work had been recommended, were placed in unskilled routine work: 1, who had been recommended to do unskilled work, was placed in semi-skilled work, and a boy for whom motor mechanic was recommended was placed in a job in a steelworks. The latter left the job after one morning: the other four boys were still in their first jobs at the end of a year, but two of them were very dissatisfied with the low level of their occupation.

The Y.E.O. is obviously limited in his placing of children to the jobs which are notified to him. The large firms with a high proportion of apprentices get more than enough applications for jobs without calling upon the help of the Y.E.O., who, in consequence, usually advises boys who are suitable to apply direct to the companies. It is clear that a high proportion of the jobs which are most sought after are not notified to the Y.E. Service—more boys obtained apprenticeships through their fathers (many with the help of influence) than through the Y.E. Service, whilst 7 boys who called at firms on the off-chance were given apprenticeships. Many employers do not think of informing the Y.E.O. of vacancies—and are perhaps unaware of the existence of the Service. Others have a low opinion of the Service, believing that it has only the worst children on its books and that the Y.E.O. does not vet children before sending them to apply for jobs. Some employers who notify the Y.E.O. of vacancies do not do so at the best time—instead of gearing their intake to school-leaving periods they may delay, with the result that the more able children have found jobs earlier: the Y.E.O. may then have only children of lower ability to send to apply for the jobs. This reinforces the view amongst employers that the Y.E. Service can only help them if they want unskilled and feckless labour. To complement the children's view that only the worst jobs are on offer at the Bureau there is, then, the employers' view that only the worst children are to be found there: this obviously gives rise to a vicious circle. Table 30 shows the Intelligence Grades of children who were placed in their

first jobs by the Y.E.O. Some very able children sought the help of the Y.E.O. and there were many worthwhile jobs to be obtained through the Service: it is also true, however, that there were jobs which offered little, and children who had little ability and not much willingness to work hard. The jobs and the children were not always matched.

TABLE 30
I.Q. GRADES AND PLACEMENT BY Y.E.O.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Totals
Boys placed	4	8	15	4	31
Totals in grades	22	32	33	13	100
Girls placed	5	8	9	1	23
Totals in grades	31	33	29	7	100

Nine boys and 5 girls who went to the Bureau for help in finding work after leaving school actually got their first jobs by other methods. Several of these respondents were grateful for assistance which they had been given—usually advice about the sorts of occupation in which there were likely to be vacancies at the time. One boy was especially pleased because the Y.E.O. had sent him a letter a month after he left school, when he had still not found work, asking him to go to the Bureau for an interview. A few boys and girls felt that the Y.E.O. had not helped them at all, however, and were resentful that, having taken the trouble to go to the Bureau, they had not found work in this way. Some children were at least partially responsible themselves for not getting jobs through the Service: although they were told at the Bureau to keep calling until such time as they found employment, they “soon got fed up” and stopped going. One boy did not know that he was supposed to keep going—having attended once and been sent to apply for a job which was not offered to him, he thought that that was the end of the matter as far as the Y.E. Service was concerned. Some of the misunderstandings which arise result from the fact that children do not necessarily see the Y.E.O. when they go to the Bureau: a clerk may deal with them, especially on visits subsequent to the first. Whatever the reasons, some children had a low opinion of the way they had been dealt with—“they don’t give you a chance to explain: all they do is give you a card and say, ‘Go and try there.’” There was some criticism, too, from children who had not been

offered the first jobs for which the Y.E.O. sent them to apply. Twenty-two of the 54 children who were placed had been sent to at least one other firm previously by the Y.E.O., and another 22 children had been unsuccessful in applications made either as a result of calling at the Bureau after leaving school or of receiving Employment Cards from the Y.E.O. before leaving. In some cases it was the children's fault—they did not take steps to impress the employer and were untidy or indifferent. In other cases the employers had failed to make their requirements clear to the Y.E.O. and the children were not suitable. Y.E.O.s are in a difficult position: if they are fair to the employer by giving him a choice of applicants, they disappoint those children who are not given jobs. Children thought in terms of the Y.E.O. *offering* them jobs rather than sending them to *apply* for them: they were thus surprised and sometimes resentful when they were unsuccessful, or found that the job had already been taken—"They have you trail up to the Bureau for nothing", said one girl, indignantly, "for when you get there they either have nothing to offer or else they send you after a job which is already taken." The Y.E.O. has to take the blame from children for lack of good jobs and from employers for lack of good children. Some of the children who had not sought the assistance of the Y.E.O. in finding work, and who had not received Employment Cards through the school, replied with an emphatic "No" when asked whether the Y.E.O. had helped them in any way—sometimes with traces of spite. It is no *use* expecting help from such people, they thought. The Y.E.O. had failed to contact one girl whom she had promised to get in touch with: to the girl this typified what invariably happened when dealing with people who were in a position to do you a favour—"they treat you like muck". Other children answered the question with a wry smile—"No!"—of course they wouldn't do anything—all those promises and the fuss and talks and interviews, and what happens? You have to find a job for yourself. But this is no more than you might have expected. If you want anything done, you'll have to do it yourself in the end. On the other hand, a few children "did not bother" to apply for jobs for which the Y.E.O. had sent Employment Cards, because the work did not appeal to them ("I just didn't fancy it"), or out of lethargy ("I didn't get round to doing anything about it"): nor did they trouble to inform the Y.E.O. that they had not followed up his suggestion.

That more children did not make use of the Y.E. Service in finding jobs is due to the facts that most soon found work by other methods which came more readily to their minds, that they forgot about the existence of the Service, and that some were prejudiced against it. A

few children were deterred from going to the Bureau because the Y.E.O. had told them that he would prefer them to find work by themselves. It is difficult for the Y.E.O. to strike a balance between informing children that he is there to help and giving them the impression that they need make no effort themselves. Shyness, embarrassment, and even a sense of guilt may also deter a child from going to the Bureau. One boy, for example, had told the Y.E.O. at the School-leaving Interview that he had a job arranged. The job did not materialize and the boy "felt a bit of a fool", and also felt that he was causing unnecessary trouble. As a result, he delayed going to the Bureau until a month after he had left school.

Of the 31 boys and 23 girls who were placed in their first jobs by the Y.E.O., one-half of the boys and nearly one-half of the girls left during their first year. This represents a higher proportion than that relating to any other method of finding work with the exception of newspaper advertisements, where the numbers involved were much smaller, and help from friends in the case of girls. Measured by the number of subsequent changes, then, help from the Y.E.O. proved to be a no better method of finding employment than any other method, and a much worse method than most: many of the jobs notified to the Y.E.O. have a high rate of turnover—the work is not attractive. If it were, the employer would soon fill vacancies without contacting the Service. And many of the children who made use of the Service were not good workers: they had not taken much interest in finding work and had not started to look for jobs until some time after leaving school—it was too much of a bore.

Some children who changed jobs made use of the Y.E. Service to find subsequent employment (some had found their first jobs by *other* methods): the boys who changed more than once were particularly inclined to turn to the Service. The 11 boys concerned were involved in a total of 37 jobs during their first year at work: the Y.E.O. was responsible for finding 14 of these jobs—precisely the same number as were found by calling on the off-chance. The 8 girls who changed more than once made use of the Y.E.O. and calling on the off-chance, but also relied a lot upon help from friends and relations and upon newspaper advertisements. Although these children made a great deal of use of the Service, however, its overall rôle in finding jobs declined: by the end of the year 43 children were in jobs in which the Y.E.O. had placed them as compared with 54 in the first jobs. The number of apprentices fell from 13 to 9. Some children who had originally been placed had hard feelings about the Service for reasons which were discussed above: "When children leave their jobs", said one boy, "it is because they have been shoved into them by the Y.E.O.

They just send you a green card and you have to go for an interview—you have no choice.” At the firm where this boy had first worked the employer “didn’t really say much—he sounded as though he was just looking for lads that would work, not good lads to teach them something”. That’s all the Youth Employment Service would do for you. A girl refused to go to the Bureau because of her experience when she first left school. She had wanted to be a shop assistant and felt that she had not asked for much (“I *only* wanted a shop job”)—but she was sent after a job in a warehouse. Her view was that you would have thought the Y.E.O. could have managed *that*—she wasn’t asking for the earth. But even this small hope remained unsatisfied and the Y.E. Service didn’t bear thinking about. Another boy declared that “If you rely on them, you get nowhere”, and yet another stated that he had “not much faith in the Y.E. Service.” The Y.E. Service is not making clear to children what its aims are.

After a month or two at work, furthermore, children were more sophisticated in the world of work—they preferred to find jobs by themselves instead of asking the Y.E.O. to help, and they were more familiar with places and people to contact. Many children who had used other methods to find their first jobs did not think of going to see the Y.E.O. when they changed jobs. Most respondents were soon fixed up in new jobs by other methods. Had the employment scene been less favourable, not only would fewer children have left jobs, but, probably, a higher proportion of those who did change would have sought the help of the Y.E.O. A substantial number of children who changed jobs had forgotten all about the Y.E. Service and they did not think of going to the Bureau, especially since they did not mind particularly what job they entered next—they did not wish for *guidance*. (A youth who was out of work for six weeks “did not know owt about the Y.E. Service”.) Children were unaware, furthermore, that the Service existed to help young people up to the age of eighteen—they thought that it was meant only for school-leavers.

Vocational guidance is, properly, a continuous process: it is as important for a child to receive guidance when seeking subsequent jobs as when he is first starting work. The Y.E. Service is at present not fulfilling this rôle any more adequately than its task of counselling school-leavers.

Help From Relations

Parents and other relations played a great part in finding work for the respondents: one-third of the boys and one-fifth of the girls obtained their first jobs in this way, about the same number as were placed by the Y.E. Service. Fathers (23) were particularly important

with boys, though they were in less familiar territory with girls' jobs (6). Over two-fifths of the apprenticeships (21 out of 49) were obtained through the help of relations, and fathers were especially important in this respect also (2 of the 15 boys who obtained apprenticeships through the help of fathers were employed *by* their fathers).

Thirteen boys and 3 girls entered employment at the places where their fathers worked, whilst 2 girls were found jobs as clerks at factories where their mothers worked (as a machine operator and a cleaner respectively). "Word of mouth" was an important means of finding work—mothers heard of vacancies through enquiries of neighbours and at the local shops, fathers in conversation with friends on the way to the football match or in the bar of the local public house. The fact that a relation had heard of a vacancy was usually sufficient for a child to apply, irrespective of the nature of the work—although some relations confined their enquiries to occupations in which the children were specially interested. This was particularly notable with regard to jobs found by fathers for their sons. Apart from mothers and fathers, all kinds of relations played a part—brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. Fourteen respondents were helped by such relations.

Job changes were significantly small amongst those boys who had been helped by relations, only 7 out of 32 leaving their first jobs. This is largely explained by the fact that relations were able to arrange "good" jobs. In a few cases, however, it seems likely that children who might otherwise have changed jobs were deterred from doing so because of the fear of incurring parental wrath or displeasure: but this was not an important factor. Help from relations continued to be important to children seeking jobs subsequent to the first.

Help From Friends

Eight boys and 11 girls obtained their first jobs mainly as the result of help from friends. In the case of boys the friends were mostly adults who were known to the family (the lady next door, for example, or the man from up the road), whereas girls were helped more by personal friends of about the same age. Girls at work often have information about vacancies, especially those employed in factories which tend to have high turnovers. Indeed, the girls often know before the management knows—the "secret" that a person is going to leave is spread among the girls but withheld from the Supervisor. Girls are thus able to pass on information so that an applicant appears on the scene precisely when someone is required. Assistance from friends was sometimes forthcoming as the result of deliberate action by them—they

made inquiries and kept their eyes open: in other cases, the help was of a casual nature—"My brother's girl friend's sister happened to mention that she knew there was a vacancy. It just came out in some way". Sisters' boy friends and brothers' girl friends were quite prominent in job-finding: although not engaged to each other, they spent a lot of time in each others' homes and entered readily into family counsels—even though the courting had begun only recently and was likely to last for but a few weeks. The importance of neighbouring is indicated by the remarks of one boy who said that "a lady who is a friend of some people who shared the same yard as us" put in a word for him at the place where she worked, even though he "did not know her very well". In areas in which neighbouring is not practised, offers of information and help seldom occur: and when they do they are likely to be regarded as "interference". Help from friends and neighbours is a method of obtaining work which is conducive to children taking any sort of job—friends do not practise job-analysis or assess the suitability of individuals: and the children think that if there is a job going they might as well take it. Some "good" jobs were obtained through friends, however—6 of the 8 boys obtained apprenticeships and only 2 of these left during the year. Boys who were helped by friends to find their first job were, indeed, remarkably stable—and many who used other methods to obtain their first jobs were assisted by friends when looking for work subsequently. Girls were much less stable (5 of the 11 changed jobs) and made rather less use of friends during the course of the year.

The Importance of "Influence"

By influence is meant more than simply dropping a hint and putting in a good word. It amounts to the ability of a person to make use of special connections in order to arrange a job for a child: the use of influence was the decisive factor in one-quarter of the boys and one-fifth of the girls getting their first jobs. The work was obtained, that is, not on the basis of the merit of the children (though many had merit), but through the position of the persons who exercised the influence. A job was created for one boy to do his father a favour—the manager of the firm where the father worked said that "he would take the lad, though he didn't really need anyone". Similarly, a boy who became an apprentice engineer with a large steel company described how "Dad got the job for me—when dad first asked, the Machine Shop boss said he would have to ask one of the Heads. The Head said that a job *must* be found for me." Subsequently difficulties cropped up and it was doubtful whether there would be a job available—but "one of the managers asked *why* there was not a job for

me, so I got one after all". Another boy said, "Dad arranged an interview for me—he called it an interview, but really it was just going to see the Supervisor who is a friend of his." It is not only employer, manager and foreman who can exert influence: the father of one youth was able to "get him in" by virtue of his office as Shop Steward. Influence was, if anything, more important in large firms than in small. There are ways of getting round bureaucratic machinery for setting on labour—even when the system involves examinations. (Personnel Managers sometimes feel exasperated when a Departmental Manager circumvents the established system by offering a job to the son of one of his staff, or to the daughter of a friend whom he meets at the Golf Club.)

Twenty-five boys and 19 girls obtained their first jobs with the help of influence—children were classified only if influence was of *major* importance. Fathers were very important, but so, too, were other relations and friends. Fifteen boys became apprentices, many of them in the "better" jobs. One boy said that it was so common for apprenticeships at the large steel firm where he worked to be filled by the sons of employees that when he started worked he was asked several times, "What department is your father in?" It was assumed that his father worked there—as the boy said, "I had no relations there, but practically everyone else had: they all seemed to slide in." One criticism which is made of the widespread use of influence is that this detracts from the ability of the Y.E. Service to place children properly: there is clearly some justification for this view, but "influence" was not unsuccessful in placing children happily. Another criticism is that the practice is unfair to children who cannot call upon influence—and this is undoubtedly so, even though many of the children who were helped by influence were also competent. There is a marked tendency for jobs which are most sought after—such as Hairdressing for girls and Motor Mechanic and the best apprenticeships for boys—to be filled by the exercising of influence. Some very able children felt this keenly, and so did their parents—"It's a pity when a lad is really keen on a particular job, and good at it, that he can't do it. It seems wrong that others get jobs through influence even though they haven't got the merit: lots of lads worse than Ted have got better jobs." On the whole, however, parents and children accepted the use of influence as a fact of life—there was nothing could be done about it. If there was resentment it was rather because they had been unable to call upon influence themselves than because of a belief that "pulling strings" is an undesirable feature of the way of life.

From the employers' point of view there are some clear advantages in taking on young relations of trusted employees—people of known loyalty, dependable and of good health. It is not unreasonable for a firm to assume that the son of a skilled man will have a knowledge of and interest in the trade which will make him, like his father, a valuable worker (boys who obtained jobs in this way were especially stable in their jobs). It is not, however, only people who have given loyal service who are able to make use of influence: in many cases children were found work simply because they had useful contacts—jobs were thus obtained through “knowing the right people”, and irrespective of ability for the work. Only one boy who obtained his work through influence changed jobs: influence continued to be important, and the number of boys helped in this way rose during the year. Although 5 of the 19 girls left their jobs, the total at the end of the year was reduced by only one.

Newspaper Advertisements

Five boys (no apprentices) and 10 girls obtained their first jobs through advertisements in the local newspapers. These are substantial proportions—especially for girls—but distinctly fewer children obtained work in this way than had expected to do so at the time of their first interview. On examining the advertisements more closely they found that only a few of the long columns referred to school-leavers: and many children shirked writing letters in reply. Some of the respondents wrote unsuccessful applications, and several of them were indignant at the failure of advertisers even to acknowledge the receipt of their letters. Some of the boys and girls who did obtain jobs in this way applied for them because the advertisement “caught their eye” or “looked interesting”—they did not, that is to say, confine their attention to occupations which they aimed at: but children who make use of newspaper advertisements are by no means the only ones to discard their first choice of work when the opportunity of other jobs occurs. Over half of the children who obtained jobs through advertisements changed them, but by the end of the year the total number in work found by this method had risen from 15 to 18.

Called on the “Off-chance”

This was a very important way of finding work and was used successfully by 18 boys and 16 girls: the figures include 3 boys and 5 girls who wrote to apply for jobs on the off-chance. It has been noted that this method was also used unsuccessfully by many more children, and some of those who eventually found work in this way had made many fruitless attempts previously. Calls were sometimes made selectively

—that is, at firms which were known to do the sort of work in which children were interested—but often calls were haphazard: boys and girls called at firms near their homes, or which they happened to pass whilst out shopping in town. The casual way in which many apprenticeships are obtained is underlined by the fact that 7 boys were given such jobs as the result of calling on the off-chance. One girl was offered a job in a Government department as the result of calling in one day when she “happened to be walking down the street and came across the building”. She was asked to return in three weeks to take a test. There is a big demand amongst girls for jobs in this department—the salary is comparatively high and conditions are good. The girl’s informal application was not only successful but achieved more rapid results than is usual when the normal channels—of writing letters and filling in forms—are followed. A fairly high proportion of children changed their jobs (12 out of 34), but the method remained important during the year—especially for girls.

Other Methods

Head teachers were responsible for placing 3 children, as the result of direct contacts with employers. Eleven girls obtained jobs through the proprietors of the Commercial Courses which they had attended: the guarantee of employment which is made was, indeed, an inducement to some girls to take the course—and parents also were affected by this. Two girls who applied for jobs advertised in the windows of a shop and factory respectively, saw the advertisements by chance. The boys who entered H.M. Forces wrote to apply in the first place: one did so as the result of an advertisement in a comic, one had been advised by his father, and the other had been told how to set about applying by the Y.E.O.

Interviews with Employers

The initial contact with employers is likely to have some effect upon the attitudes of children to their jobs: and the way in which young people are taken on obviously has much to do with whether or not children are given jobs for which they are not suited or incompetent, or take jobs which are not related to their interests. Some employers take care over their selection procedures, but it is quite clear that the majority are very casual over the whole business. The parents of only one-fifth of the boys and girls were present when their children went to apply for jobs: a few more parents had seen the employers separately beforehand when they used their influence to arrange the jobs. Some employers complain of the lack of parental interest, and the parents of several respondents attended at the

request of the employers. Some parents who would have liked to accompany their children did not do so at the insistence of their sons and daughters—"He wouldn't let me or his father go with him. I thought that if he felt like that it was best not to interfere or insist", said one mother, whilst a boy explained, "I knew some lads from down the street who worked there. If they had seen me with my Mum or Dad they would have called me a cissy and jeered." A few fathers did not attend because they could not get time off from work, whilst mothers were prevented from going because they had younger children to look after. But most parents did not think of going—they were not interested, or did not see any point in being present.

Some employers—in both large and small firms—were thorough in their methods of taking on young workers: 10 boys and 2 girls took examinations in addition to being interviewed. All of the boys became apprentices at large steel firms which are annually faced with problems of selection because they receive considerably more applications than they have vacancies. Several employers spent a lot of time discussing interests and aspirations, explaining the work and describing the set-up in the firm. A few showed children round the factories and introduced them to other employees. Efforts were made to dispel false beliefs about the jobs, to temper children's romantic ideas with down-to-earth facts. One Personnel Manager concluded the interview by asking a girl whether she was "prepared to take the job on".

This was in great contrast with what usually happened—employers made little or not effort to explain, assumed that the children would want the job, whatever it involved, and in any case were of the attitude, "take it or leave it". Thus, many children whose approach to life is that of "taking things as they come", or who were indifferent, if not cynical, in their attitudes towards jobs, were sustained in their outlooks by the apparent lack of concern of employers when offering them work. For other children, to whom going to apply for a job was the culmination of weeks of hope and excitement, the casualness of the employers was an affront to their estimation of the importance of the occasion. The majority of children were offered jobs—and accepted them—without any explanation being offered about the work or the firm: all that had been said was "O.K.—start on Monday", and "We'll see how you make out". Children came away from interviews with jobs—but only a dim idea, or none at all, of what the work was. One boy who knew that he would work on a capstan lathe did not know what this was. The few children who thought of asking questions were for the most part too shy or nervous to do so. Several boys and girls who were told that there were no jobs in the occupations of their choice but were offered alternative jobs

accepted because they did not like to say "No"—and therefore entered work which they did not want and knew nothing about.

In some industries, employers are accustomed to a very high turnover of juvenile labour—girls especially are forever coming and going: there is never a shortage of labour but never a surfeit, so employers do not "waste their time" on selection (not realizing that the failure to select adds to the rate of turnover). But it is not only routine, unskilled and semi-skilled jobs which are involved: many boys who obtained apprenticeships and many girls who became office workers were scarcely questioned—they were merely told when to start. By not spending more time when selecting children, employers bring upon themselves bad workmanship, and then waste time in deploring the quality of the younger generation. They also lead boys and girls to a belief in the insignificance of the employees, a realization that their services are not highly valued. Some firms who make use of the Y.E. Service assume (often wrongly) that the Y.E.O. has done sufficient vetting of the applicants whom he sends for the jobs, but even when the employer is content to accept the Y.E.O.'s judgement it may be thought that the child is entitled to some explanation of, and introduction to, the work. A large number of employers appear to have no policy with regard to taking on young people—*ad hoc* decisions are made as and when vacancies occur. The firm may advertise for an experienced person and accept an inexperienced one without question. Trial and error is preferred because it is less immediate trouble—in the long run unsuitable workers are either sacked or the employer puts up with work which, whilst inferior, is good enough to get by with. This casual attitude of employers is not due to a labour shortage—they do not, on the whole, have to take what they can get (some employers do): it is due mainly to a deeply ingrained indifference towards young employees, who are regarded as but extra units of production—the young worker comes very low in the scale of priorities for employers' thought and interest.

CHAPTER 8

JOB CHANGES DURING THE
FIRST YEAR AT WORK

OVER one-third of the respondents (36 boys and 36 girls) left their first jobs during the year: 11 boys and 8 girls had at least three jobs, and 1 boy had five. In addition, 2 girls stopped working during the year, 1 because of pregnancy and the other on being taken into the care of the local authority. The employment position in Sheffield during the children's first year at work was at no time serious and tended towards prosperity in the latter half of the year.

Occupations: Boys

Only 10 of the boys who changed jobs were in the same occupation at the end of the year as in their first employment (several of these had had intermediate jobs in different occupations). Thus, one-quarter of *all* boys changed their *occupations* during the year. Steel and engineering was the occupation most affected by job changes: this is illustrated in Table 31.

TABLE 31
ANALYSIS OF JOB CHANGES — BOYS

	First job	Out	Between	In	Job at one year
Steel and Engineering	40	15	5	2	27
All other occupations	60	11	5	24	73
Totals	100	26	10	26	100

It was to be expected that this industry would account for many of the changes, since two-fifths of all boys entered it. There was a far higher proportion of changes than in any other sort of work, however, one-half of the boys leaving their first jobs. Fifteen of those who changed left the industry altogether and 5 moved to other firms within the industry. The movement was from *all* types of firms: 4 of the boys were from large steel firms which had elaborate organization for initiation and training. No single reason accounted for the exodus

from steel and engineering: although twice as many entered this work as had aimed at it, only a few of the subsequent moves represented adjustments to original job choices. Some boys were undoubtedly shocked by the vastness of the industry and sought light and air in place of dirt and noise (4 became van boys, where they were "not closed in" and "could move about"). The movement away from the industry also reflected a resentment at the dominance of steel: boys rebelled at the thought of "being stuck in steel for the rest of their lives" and determined to prove that *they*, at least, could stand up against what many regarded as inevitable. The only other occupation much affected by job changes was van-boy: 2 of the 4 boys left for jobs with better prospects, whilst 5 entered this work in search of freedom of movement, the open air, higher wages and undemanding work.

Fifteen of the 49 apprentices left their first jobs, but 4 of them remained apprentices. Most of the 11 boys who ceased to be apprentices were from the lower I.Q. Grades: only 1 out of 18 in Grade 1 was involved: 4 were from Grade 2, 4 from Grade 3 and 2 from Grade 4. With regard to level of work as a whole (in terms of skill and prospects) about half of the 36 boys moved to jobs of the same level, one-quarter moved to a higher level and one-quarter to jobs of a lower level.

Occupations: Girls

Twenty of the 36 girls remained in the same occupations—although the actual tasks performed in many cases were different (a factory worker operated a machine in her first job and packed knives in her second, for example, whilst a shop assistant changed from green-grocery to baby garments).

A high proportion of moves involved shop assistants and factory workers. Many of the girls working in offices had attended courses and

TABLE 32
ANALYSIS OF JOB CHANGES — GIRLS

	First job	Out	Between	In	Job at one year
Office	34	3	6	1	31
Shop assistant	24	4	5	9	29
Factory & warehouse	22	5	8	4	21
All other occupations	20	4	1	2	19
Totals	100	16	20	16	100

had therefore not been at work very long, so that they were much less likely to have changed. The 3 girls who left office work became shop assistants: the respondent who entered office work had been a salesgirl (1 other salesgirl became a nurse). There was no movement between office work and factory work—a fact which confirms the hierarchy of jobs, with shop assistant in the intermediate position. The job changes resulted in the overall relationship between I.Q. Grades and occupations becoming more clear-cut, with brighter girls in office work and duller ones in factory work: but there was still a considerable amount of overlap.

Length of Time in First Job

There were no peak periods for leaving jobs. Most children gave their jobs longish trials—only 6 boys and 3 girls left their first jobs within four weeks of starting.

TABLE 33
LENGTH OF TIME IN FIRST JOB

	Boys	Girls
Up to 2 weeks	4	0
2-4 weeks	2	3
1-3 months	9	7
3-6 months	5	9
6-9 months	7	11
9-12 months	9	6
Totals	36	36

The reasons for leaving jobs clearly have some bearing upon the time at which the change is made, and there was a wide variety of reasons for leaving. The relationship between reasons for leaving and time of leaving is not necessarily close, however—one boy who left mainly because of difficulty in adjusting to work did so after only four days, for example, whilst another stayed on for over a month. There was a tendency for girls to remain in their first jobs for a longer period than boys: boys were less patient, expected more from work, and were less prepared than girls to “give a job a trial”.

Analysis by I.Q. Grades

A substantial proportion of children in all I.Q. Grades changed jobs, with the exception of boys in the top Grade, in which only 2 out of 22 left their jobs.

A high proportion of girls in the top I.Q. Grade did change: 8 of the girls in this grade were still attending courses or had attended courses lasting for nearly a year, and 2 others had attended courses for three months. The number of girls who had been at work a year was, therefore, only 21, and of these nearly one-half changed jobs. Frequent job changes of both boys and girls were mainly associated with children from the lower Grades. This does not, of course, mean that such children are innately susceptible to job-changing, but rather reflects a lack of guidance and advice where it is perhaps most needed.

TABLE 34
JOB CHANGES ANALYSED BY I.Q. GRADES

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Totals
Boys:					
Left first job	2	10	18	6	36
Had more than 2 jobs	0	3	7	1	11
Totals in grades	22	32	33	13	100
Girls:					
Left first job	10	9	15	2	36
Had more than 2 jobs	1	2	4	1	8
Totals in grades	31	33	29	7	100

Analysis by Schools

Differences between schools and areas were revealed less in the numbers concerned than in the reasons for job changes. Children from Schools A and E generally changed after more thought and to more purpose than most children from the other schools. The highest proportion of changes occurred in School C, where over one-half of the boys and girls left their first jobs: there was a large number of children at this school who were indifferent to work, and parents were inclined to allow the children to do as they pleased.

Job changes were not related to attitudes to leaving school and starting work: children who changed jobs were similar in these respects to those who did not do so—some liked school, others disliked it, some had looked forward to starting work, others had been reluctant to do so.

TABLE 35
JOB CHANGES ANALYSED BY SCHOOLS

	A	B	C	D	E
Boys:					
Left first job	6	8	11	3	8
More than 2 jobs	0	4	3	2	2
Girls:					
Left first job	4	9	11	10	2
More than 2 jobs	2	1	3	2	0

Relationships of Job Changes to Aims at First Research Interview

In general, job changes bore little relationship to original aims. Only a few of the many children who entered work other than that aimed at moved to jobs which conformed with their aims—4 boys and 3 girls: and in several of these cases the moves were a matter of chance rather than of deliberate policy. Changes by boys showed a definite trend away from first choice jobs—of 12 boys whose first jobs were in accordance with their choice and who changed employment, 7 were in a different sort of work at the end of the year. This trend was less emphatic for girls. Even so, 5 of the 15 girls whose jobs were in the category of their first choice and who changed were in different occupations at the end of the year. Several children found that the work of their choice did not come up to expectations and deliberately sought a different kind of work—there was a tendency not to distinguish between the *occupation* and the particular *job*, and to reject the former even though it was primarily aspects of the latter which were disliked.

Most children still took the jobs which they could find most easily, and accepted whatever happened to turn up—they remained ignorant about overall vacancies and drifted, indecisively, from one occupation to another. The methods used to find work thus continued to be conducive to jobs being taken which were not related to aims. Some children had a positive wish to “give something else a try”. But only exceptionally did they subsequently make any assessment of the changes which they *had* made. This was a “hit and miss method”, but without awareness of what would constitute a “hit” and little interest in whether or not they missed.

Relationship of Job Changes to Y.E.O. Recommendation

Eight boys and 4 girls moved from jobs which the Y.E.O. had recommended to other sorts of work, and only 3 boys and 4 girls

moved from other work to jobs which the Y.E.O. had advised. The latter cases were a matter of chance rather than design. Indeed, the job changes as a whole, including those which were in conformity with Y.E.O.s' recommendations, were with very few exceptions made *without* reference to those recommendations. Children who were placed in jobs subsequent to their first by the Y.E.O. did tend, more than children who used other methods, to take jobs in accordance with the Y.E.O. recommendation.

Reasons for Job Changes

Reasons for leaving jobs were complex: in only a few cases was there a *single* reason. Satisfaction with work is itself dependent upon a complex of interacting influences—a lot can be tolerated if the other girls are sociable, whilst a long journey and a low wage may not deter the youth who is keenly interested in his work. So that even children who left mainly because they were dissatisfied with the pay would probably not have done so had there not been other aspects of the jobs which they disliked. On the other hand, dissatisfaction with one aspect colours the outlook to the job as a whole—because prospects are poor, children may be quick to seize upon any supposed affront by the foreman, for example. Table 36 relates to the *central* reason for leaving jobs, when there was one (many children were generally dissatisfied): the reasons for leaving subsequent jobs followed the same pattern, but with rather more emphasis upon dissatisfaction with wages. Many of the *main* reasons were subsidiary reasons for other people.

Generally Dissatisfied

No single factor could be pinpointed in the cases of 9 boys and 9 girls: they "felt generally fed-up". They did not dislike being at *work*, but they could not stand their particular jobs. One example is a boy who left an apprenticeship at a steel firm after a month. He did not like the work—routine machine operating and making the tea: he did not like the surroundings—all was noisy and closed in, and whilst he knew that all factories are dirty, this one was exceptionally so: and he disliked the men, who were "a bit rough, and swore a lot". A girl who was similarly unsettled also had a list of grievances—there was "no future in the job": she did not arrive home in time to go to Evening School (she should have finished at 5.15 p.m. but invariably had to work later): the office was dirty, her clothes got soiled and the people were "rough and common but thought they were someone. They were snobs, but didn't have anything to be snobbish about". Most of the children who left because they were generally dissatisfied

TABLE 36
REASONS FOR LEAVING FIRST JOBS

	Boys	Girls
Generally dissatisfied and unsettled	9	9
Dissatisfied with prospects	11	1
Dissatisfied with wages	4	0
Dismissed	3	6
Difficulty in adjusting to work	2	1
Lack of interest in work	1	1
Unhappy personal relationships	1	3
Dissatisfied with hours	0	4
To join friend at another firm	0	1
More attractive opportunity occurred	3	5
Health reasons	1	2
Work "too dirty"	1	2
No information	0	1
Totals	36	36

stayed in their jobs for at least two months—they "gave it a good try". Several of these children said that they "felt out of place": in small firms people ignored them, and in large firms they felt isolated amongst so many people, were unsure about "who was who" and "who did what"—this, in several cases, in spite of undergoing initiation courses. Some children, too, felt that they had been "messed about"—one boy considered that he had been "diddled out of joinery" because his firm put him in the Welders' Shop instead of the Carpenters', whilst a girl who was transferred from machine operating to packing took this as a sign that the employers did not care about her wishes. Children were resentful that although they did not ask or expect much from work, they got even less than they asked. Having few rights at work, and not counting for much, they stood up for those rights which they were determined on—especially that of "not being messed about". The only form their protests could take, however, was to ask for their cards. Several children were indignant because they thought the employers were unfair—"If you do more than a certain amount one day the Supervisor expects you to do the same the next day". In contrast, some boys and girls disliked the fact that so little was expected of them, feeling that their work did not count. They did not know whether they were doing their work well or badly—no one bothered to tell them, no one seemed interested. Modern industry often does not require good, careful work—anything goes so long as it does not fall below certain low standards: particular effort or ability goes unappreciated, and the individual unpraised. The dis-

satisfaction of 3 children was in part attributable to their incompetence—a hammer driver in a steelworks, for example, “always struck the hammer either too hard or too soft”, and the “tellings off” which resulted got on his nerves.

Some of the grievances which led to children leaving their jobs could have been cleared up had the employer been informed. Children are nervous and afraid of approaching the bosses, however. And they do not, in any case, think of resolving problems by finding out more facts—their minds function essentially on the basis of opinions, rumours and speculation. Instead of asking for information, children harbour grievances and allow seeds of doubt to grow. Finally they leave, without any explanation being given or sought.

Dissatisfaction with Prospects

This was of central importance to 11 boys but only 1 girl. A shop assistant said that all he could look forward to was £8 a week plus commission, and whilst his present wage was sufficient that was no good for the future: a van boy had been threatened with his notice when trade fell off once, and thought it best to find more secure employment. Most of the boys were dissatisfied that they were not learning—they wanted jobs which gave them opportunity for training, so that they would have some skill for the future. An apprentice builder, for example, left his job because he “wanted to learn about bricklaying instead of just digging holes all day”. A boy who hoped to be an apprentice fitter said that he was “not satisfied with the firm or its attitude”: when he raised the question of an apprenticeship the firm “avoided the issue”—he knew he “wouldn’t get anywhere with that firm”. (The boy’s mother said that the firm had a reputation for being an “up to 16” firm—it employed youths at low rates of pay under the pretext of offering them apprenticeships, but failed to do so when they reached the age of sixteen.) Other boys who did not aspire to become apprentices did want to learn *something*, and felt deprived of even this modest ambition. One or two of the children who were dissatisfied with their prospects were not very able, but most had genuine grievances. A few might have been impatient: had they stayed at the firm they might have received more training after a while. The majority who thought that they were “getting nowhere” had given the jobs fairly long trials, however—9 of the 11 boys had spent over three months in their first jobs, and 7 over six months.

That only one girl left her job mainly because of dissatisfaction with prospects is an indication of the irrelevance of prospects for most girls: the girl left her routine office job to become a shorthand-typist, after studying at Evening School, Advance in clerical work often in-

volves changing jobs, and probably several more office girls would move to new jobs when they had gained more experience.

Dissatisfaction with Wages

Only 4 boys and no girls left their jobs *mainly* because of dissatisfaction with wages. Three of the boys earned £2 10s. a week or less and one received £3. The second job which the latter boy entered carried the same wage, but he soon moved to another job in which his wage was £4. The other boys received higher wages in their second jobs, 2 of them getting over £1 a week more. Girls were less likely to change because of wages since comparatively few received low pay, whilst other jobs were unlikely to result in a considerably higher wage. Several of the job changes subsequent to the first were made primarily because of the wish for a higher wage: one girl who was transferred from a machine which assembled scissors to one which stamped "Made in England" on them found that the move resulted in a reduction of £1 a week in her bonus, and therefore left. Several children who left their first jobs mainly for other reasons were also dissatisfied with their pay. Boys in unskilled jobs were dissatisfied if their pay was low: they did not object to doing unskilled work, or to relatively low wages as such, but they thought that there was no justification for the two together. That wages were an important subsidiary reason for job changes is indicated by the fact that one-half of the boys who changed jobs received at least 10s. 0d. more a week, and 12 out of 18 received over £1 more. Less than a third of the girls earned higher wages—5 received 10s. 0d. more, and 5 £1. Some children, disillusioned with their first jobs, came to the conclusion that they might as well go after as much money as possible in the next—"That's all that counts". However, many of the boys left jobs in which the pay was relatively low (though the changes as a whole were spread fairly proportionately amongst all the wage categories): for these children, any future job other than in the same occupation was likely to have higher wages.

Wages, then, are a necessary but by no means decisive element in job-satisfaction: other factors are of equal or greater importance to most children. Even so, it might have been expected that rather more children would have been dissatisfied with wages than was the case. That there were not more results from the fact that the amount of spending money was often not dependent upon the size of the wage: many children with low wages received high spending money—some parents, indeed, made a special point of allowing high pocket money to apprentices because they were aware that high wages might be an attraction.

It could well be that during the second year at work—from the age of sixteen to seventeen—when the youths are developing more rapidly into men, coming into contact in leisure time with older people, and starting to go in for girl friends seriously, that the desire for more spending money than their wages permit or their parents allow prompts a larger number to leave their jobs in pursuit of higher wages.

Dismissed

Of the 3 boys and 6 girls who were dismissed from their jobs, 1 boy and 3 girls were redundant. One boy was sacked because he “kept having a lot of time off”, and a shop assistant because she “took a Saturday off to go to Blackpool”. The other children were dismissed for poor workmanship and indifferent attitudes to work. In many firms these attributes go unnoticed or are tolerated, and children soon learn how to do just enough work “to get by with”. Some employers are reluctant to dismiss young workers—“I have had him up before me once or twice because he made a bloody mess of every job I put him on”, said the manager of one factory, “He just hasn’t got it in him and he has a rotten home life”. The manager persevered, however, and the boy became a loyal—if not very proficient—worker. One other boy similarly settled down after having been given a chance.

Difficulty in Adjusting to Work

Only 2 boys and 1 girl left because of difficulty in adjusting to work—though rather more than this experienced difficulty. The actual jobs which these children left were to a large extent irrelevant to the decision to leave—no matter what jobs they had entered they would have found it difficult to settle down. The mother of 1 of the boys, who himself gave as his reason for leaving that the oil at work upset him, was nearer the mark when she said that “fright” was the real explanation.

The decision to change jobs in many cases reflected the ability to cope with the world of work rather than problems of adjusting to it: children had the *confidence* to change jobs. But several children who did not take to work so easily sheltered, unhappily, in the jobs which they had, in preference to launching out again into the unknown.

Lack of Interest in the Work

Only 2 respondents left their jobs mainly for this reason, but for some other children it was also important: a few had embarked on a quest for interesting work which would lead to many job changes but no satisfaction—because of the children’s lack of ability or the scarcity

of interesting jobs. Comparatively few children expected interest from their jobs, however—and the lack of it was therefore not a sufficient reason in itself for changing jobs. Most of those who placed great importance upon having interesting work had taken more care in choosing their first jobs to find work which appealed to them.

Unhappy Personal Relationships

One boy and 3 girls left their jobs for this reason, which was also important for several other children. Relationships between 1 boy and his foreman were particularly strained, and the boy left after an argument. The boy objected to the foreman standing over him, and when the foreman said, "This is the way to use that shovel", the boy handed the shovel over with the remark, "Do it your bloody self". (The boy's father supported the action, saying, "You did right, son—don't let any boss tell *you* what to do. Any boss who treats you like that needs a 16-inch collar"—he is, that is, "a big head".) A girl complained about the chargehand who was "always telling tales about you": the chargehand was "only nineteen herself", and the respondent thought that one so young should not give herself "airs" in front of girls who were only a few years her junior—just like the prefects at school. Not all the blame can be put upon other people: one boy who told his foreman that he "could not get on with the other men" was told in reply that "they are a good lot, and if you can't get on with them, you won't get on with anyone".

Dissatisfaction with Hours

Four girls left their jobs because they disliked the hours. One did not like having to start early in the morning. Two girls found working in the early evening irksome. Girls take a long time to prepare themselves to "go out": yet many girls have less time than boys for getting ready and have more things to do—travel home, change dresses, apply make-up. They did not like to rush. One shop assistant disliked working on Saturday afternoons. On the whole, shop assistants did not complain about working on Saturdays, and several said that "you soon get used to it" (some shop assistants did not work on Saturday afternoons).

Apprentices

The 15 boys who left apprenticeships did so for a variety of reasons. The 4 who went on to other apprenticeships all left their first jobs because they were not learning as much as they wished or because no interest was being shown in them. Several boys who ceased to be apprentices left for the same reasons—if *that* is what being an appren-

tice meant they would have done with it. Several were generally unsettled and one left because of ill-health. Only 2 boys left *primarily* because they wanted more pay (the employer of one of them was puzzled and dismayed—the boy was interested in the work and had developed skill at it: but this was not enough to hold him).

The drift away from apprenticeships was not, then, primarily the result of dissatisfaction with pay. It is often suggested that high rates of pay in non-apprentice jobs attract boys away from apprenticeships. But it has been seen that few boys are attracted to their *first* jobs by high wages—to most, even £2 10s. seems a lot of money in prospect. It is only when they have taken jobs which have relatively low wages that some are attracted to jobs with higher wages, and then there usually has to be another source of dissatisfaction—in particular, with apprentices, the feeling that no progress is being made. Boys in this study who left apprenticeships were less concerned about the wages than about the belief that they were “getting nowhere”, “learning nothing”, and had “no prospects”. Praise of apprenticeships had been sounded in the schools and by the Y.E.O.: this was the way to progress, this should be the height of ambition for every young worker. But in the event, boys found that it was a big let-down. They were “so-called” apprentices. No one seemed to care about them and the work which they learnt to do was at best semi-skilled. Boys felt too nervous to ask the foreman about their prospects—or if they plucked up courage to do so received a gruff or non-committal reply. In the view of these boys the bluff had been called—apprenticeships were not worth having after all. Boys would be less ready to turn to jobs with higher pay if they had apprenticeships in substance as well as in name: in regretting the lack of training of young people in industry thought might be given not only to the danger of wasting national resources, but to the disillusionment of those boys who thought that they were to be taught and found that they were to be ignored. Many apprentices who remained in their jobs did so not because they were receiving training, but because apprenticeships are valued for what they can lead to rather than for what they are. Other boys would have left had not strong parental pressure—and a tradition of skilled work in the family—influenced them to stay. Boys from families in which there was no such pressure or tradition left.

Some job changes were made after a lot of thought and as a deliberate policy, but the majority of children changed in an aimless way—they were not clear in their own minds about what they disliked in the first jobs, did not define what sort of work they would prefer, and did not seek their next jobs in a systematic way. Casualness was related to the short-term nature of children's thoughts: few

looked ahead beyond a few weeks. Rather than considering what job they liked, seeking such work and then handing in their notice, many boys and girls left their jobs (or handed their notice in), and then set about finding other work as quickly as possible. As a result, they again took the first job to "turn up". One boy who left his first job in a cutlery firm because he disliked the work itself, the noise and the dirt, thus found himself back in a cutlery job a year after leaving school and after three jobs in the interim period. Many children, however, were not seeking "something better"—they just "felt like something different": anything different would do, if only because it meant a change of scenery. For a few children who left their jobs, the decision was very much in the balance—something happened at work (an argument, being sent on an errand in the rain) to tip the scales and they left: some children who did not leave their jobs came very close to doing so—lethargy, not knowing how to set about finding another job, and uncertainty about what sort of work to do accounted for them staying, not the pull of their jobs.

Parents' Attitudes Towards Job Changing

There were many differences in the attitudes of parents towards job changing: the parents of most of the children who had changed (and many of those who had not) raised no objection to changes. A substantial minority of parents considered job changing to be wrong in principle. Some believed that job changing was the mark of a lack of moral fibre—"sticking at a job" was an indication of strength of character, leaving it showed a weak will and an inability to face up to life. Some parents argued that "it has a lot to do with the way lads are brought up": the fact that their sons had not changed jobs was taken as a tribute to the home life which they enjoyed. Changing jobs was also unacceptable socially—parents did not want their children to be like those down the road who were "forever chopping and changing". A few parents were against job changing on the practical ground that, in the words of the father of one boy, "You never get on in that way. It is best to settle to a job. Those who change only get jobs in the same lines and never progress".

Some parents thought that job changing was sensible, but only if much consideration had been given to the matter—there must be very good reasons for moving. ("We made it clear to him that he was not to change jobs too often—for we don't believe in that.") At all costs, a child must be prevented from drifting from one job to another. Usually such parents insisted upon a prolonged trial being given to the first job—"You don't know whether you will like a job or not until you have been there for a while". One mother recalled that her

daughter had sometimes come home to dinner and cried and said she would not go back—but the mother “made her go back and stick it”, until it became clear that the girl could never like the job.

Several of the parents of children who changed jobs encouraged them to do so, being themselves dissatisfied with the work—as one father said, “He was just doing labouring and if there is one thing we don’t want in this family it is labourers”. Very few parents were dissatisfied with their children’s jobs, however—most did not think in such terms. But of those who were dissatisfied only two or three insisted on their children changing jobs. The rest took no action, usually because they did not know what steps to take or through inertia, but in a few cases because of a wish not to force their views on the children.

Parents took no special stand, simply acquiescing in their children’s decisions. There was little or no discussion in the homes prior to the child leaving his job, and several parents were confronted with a *fait accompli* (though girls more than boys hesitated to take the step of leaving a job before at least informing their mothers—generally, girls were allowed less independence in such matters). Parents were merely concerned for the children to be happy—or not unhappy—at work: if a child did not like his job the obvious thing was for him to leave. A few parents thought it was inevitable that many children *would* change jobs—“What can you expect when so little is done for them when they start work?” Parents thought that the whims of the adolescent had, in any case, to be accepted (“They can’t seem to settle down at that age, can they?”). A few mothers and fathers were of the opinion that their children were “made that way”—“He’ll never settle”, “You’ll never change him”. What does it matter if a child changes a job, in any case—what is so important about work? There were parents who had been so buffeted by life that they now instinctively “looked on the bright side”—whatever was, was best. This was much more simple than arguing with a child or trying to work out what was the best plan. Parents were doubtful, too, of their *right* to give advice, recognizing that it could so easily do more harm than good—“You never can tell”, said the mother of one boy, “All my children have been stable in their jobs except one boy. He went from one job to the other. Now he has settled down and has got the best job of them all.” How, then, could she recommend her youngest son not to change jobs? Several parents could not see that anyone would *expect* them to have an opinion about their children’s job changes: the children had their own lives to lead, and it was their business how they led them,

Some parents remarked that their children were a lot happier in their subsequent jobs than in their first ones—"He seems more settled and better in himself—more healthy", said one father, and a mother said, "She is more contented: the neighbours have noticed it, too. In her first job she went off her food. I used to get upset as well as her." On the whole, parents were either well pleased with the job changes or had no special viewpoint. Only a few children were criticized for having left their first jobs, and the criticism usually arose because of failure to find new jobs quickly.

Unemployment

Over one-third of the boys (15) and over two-thirds of the girls (25) had no unemployment on leaving their first jobs. Many had found new jobs before leaving their first, some starting to seek new employment whilst working off their week's notice. Children who had more than two jobs for the most part had no more than a few days' unemployment between subsequent jobs.

Of the 21 boys and 11 girls who had some unemployment, most were out of work for a week or less, but 4 boys and 2 girls were unemployed for over a month, and 1 boy and 1 girl for two months. Lengthy unemployment resulted in the case of 1 girl from the determination to get the work of her choice: in the remaining cases it was a combination of vagueness about what action to take and the use of chancy methods. One boy, who had obtained his first job as the result of calling on the off-chance at a firm which a neighbour had suggested to him, was at a loss to know what to do when no similar suggestions were forthcoming after he left his first job. Although he was unemployed for six weeks, it did not occur to him to go to the Y.E. Bureau. During the six weeks he applied for two jobs on the off-chance. The time just passed, the youth not knowing what to do and receiving no advice from parents or anyone else—he was "bored" and "fed up". Eventually, the milk roundsman "put him on to" a job.

That so many children had no unemployment reflects the favourable employment position, and also the fact that a large proportion of those who changed jobs were not seeking the sort of work for which there is most competition—and were, indeed, prepared to take anything that was going. There were plenty of jobs available for girls in particular—and the girls were less reckless than the boys when changing jobs, taking more care to arrange the next employment before leaving the first. If they had not done so, fathers would have wanted to know why. The boys were thought to be entitled to more independence in this respect.

PLANS AT ONE YEAR AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL

Short-term Plans

Ten boys definitely intended to change jobs in the near future at the time of their last Research Interview, and 7 were undecided. Of these 17 boys, 8 had left their first jobs during the year, 4 of them having had more than two jobs. Seven girls definitely intended to change their jobs, and 11 were not sure whether to or not: these 18 included 5 girls who had left their first jobs. Probably many more children would change than were at that time thinking of doing so. Children who at Interview 2 made such remarks as "It's lovely and I want to stay as long as I can", left the jobs within a week or two: many children do not look far ahead—when they say that they will stay in their jobs for a long time, they often merely mean that they are unlikely to move for at least a month or two.

Eighty per cent of the boys and girls, then (including all but 3 of the 42 apprentices) either definitely intended to stay or had at that time no thought of leaving. Some of them were well aware of the possibility that they might decide to change their jobs at some stage—"The job is alright, but I don't know that I'll stick it all that long. I don't know why—I like the job, and the people are alright. But I might decide to leave." Many children had no plans simply because they did not think about work—as one boy said, "I don't really know whether this job I've got is the one I most want to do. I never thought much about it." Even children who knew in the back of their minds that they would have to change their occupation when they were older (for example, van-boys) preferred not to think ahead that far. It was not necessarily procrastination. Some children had a positive philosophy which repudiated doing today what could be left until tomorrow: they preferred to live for the moment—"I don't think into the future a lot", said one boy, "I take it as it comes."

Over half of the respondents definitely intended to remain in their jobs at least for a year. Many of them were satisfied with the work—enjoyed it, and felt that they were progressing and mastering a trade. Some were so immersed in their jobs that the future was a matter of irrelevance. This was true of several boys in skilled work, like the carpenter who fondly sharpened his tools—but a good example is a farm worker who dismissed a question about his plans for the future with some amusement, saying, "Me! no plans at all." Season would follow season, the seeds would be sown and the harvest reaped. The sun would rise and set, and there would be tasks to do. Such identity with work was, however, rare. Several children had "got used to the work" and did not wish to change for that reason. ("Once you've had a job for a year or so it grows on you.") Others thought that their

jobs were "as good as any", and some thought that it was "too late to do anything about it now"—the die was cast.

Long-term Plans

Three boys and 9 girls had long-term plans in connection with employment: 1 boy wanted to enter H.M. Forces when older, as did several girls: 1 girl wanted to become a nurse and 1 a policewoman. Two shorthand-typists had definite plans to apply for posts with more responsibility when they were a few years older. The 2 remaining boys were very keen to get ahead—"There is no point in sticking at one job all your life. I want to get on."

Several other children had more limited ambitions—to become chargehands or foremen or supervisors: some hoped for promotion in their present firms, others thought they might have to change jobs. But none of these had definite plans. A number of youths and girls pointed out that theirs was not work in which there were prospects of promotion—a warehouse assistant said that all he could hope for was to become a storeman in time. Many others had no idea about the likelihood of progressing in their jobs, not understanding the scope of their work or the organization of their firms. Children were not dissatisfied because there were no opportunities for promotion: they had never thought of being anything other than ordinary workers.

Children who were uncertain about whether to change their jobs, in the short-term or the long-term, with very few exceptions did *not* think of consulting the Y.E.O. Many of those who definitely planned to change their jobs did not know how to set about doing so. What the job pattern of the children as a whole will be ten years after they have left school can only be speculated upon. Probably a high proportion will have changed jobs, some of them being in occupations such as window-cleaning and driving, which are not open to young people. Most of the girls will probably be married with children. What does seem clear is that the job pattern will depend as much, if not more, upon fortuity and aimless or uninformed drifting as upon deliberate intention and design.

CHAPTER 9

THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

WITH a small number of exceptions, boys and girls quickly settled down at work. "After two or three days", said one girl, "it seemed as if I had been working there for years"—whilst a youth described the ease with which he adjusted to work by saying, "When I got there I put on my overalls, and then we all sat down and had a cup of tea." Three months after leaving school, most children were acclimatized to the world of work, although some were not satisfied with their particular jobs. The ease of the transition was referred to by many parents, often with some surprise and relief: many children, too, said that starting work came as much less of a shock than they had expected. As long as a year after leaving school, however, there was still a handful of children who had *not* got used to being at work.

Nervousness and Excitement

Whilst only a few children found starting work to be very difficult, most had to face up to some problems. Boys and girls worried needlessly about small things, such as whether they would report to the wrong entrance of the factory, and what would happen if they did. Many worried about whether they would be able to do the work—a worry which is to a large extent explained by the fact that no one had told them, when they applied for their jobs, what tasks they would be expected to do; the worry was reinforced when children arrived at work because everything looked so strange and complicated. There was a fear of doing something wrong and of what the consequences would be: in several cases fear brought about the feared result—"I was ever so nervous and couldn't do a thing right: I kept dropping things and forgetting what I had been told, and having to go back and ask." Some children had their doubts removed by employers, who told them "to take things easy at first, and not worry"; but others had to try to keep up with a machine or a conveyor belt right from the start, and they wondered whether they would *ever* learn to do the work properly.

Children worried less about the work than about meeting strange people. Some respondents were fortunate in this respect—one-fifth of

both boys and girls started work at firms where relations or close friends were employed, and although they were often not working together (especially in the large firms), it was often the case that someone had been asked to "keep a friendly eye" on them. In addition, nearly as many children had acquaintances—neighbours or people who had left school before them—at the firms where they worked: in such company children "did not feel out of place". There were very strong family connections with the firms at which several respondents worked: the people known to one girl included an aunt (who had arranged the interview for the job), an uncle, her sister, her sister's boy friend, two cousins, the lady who lived next door, a girl from down the street and her aunt's neighbour in the next road. Knowing other people at work could increase children's nervousness rather than reduce it—one girl was conscious that the other assistants in the local shop were assessing her ability and was afraid lest they would tell the neighbours of her shortcomings, whilst several boys thought that older youths went out of their way to "make them look small". One quarter of the boys and girls started at the same time as other people—either one or two or, at the larger firms, an intake of a dozen or more. Several children found that being one of a group was helpful—"I was a bit worried at first," said one boy, "but since I was with the other lads we got talking, and I felt better." One youth found himself working at a circular saw with the boy he used to sit beside at school. Children who start as members of a group may take longer to adjust to work, however, being treated by other employees as people apart. In such cases the group may react by perpetuating itself: one girl said that she and the other packers who started at the same time "went round in a bunch and didn't talk to the others much". As a group, they knew little about what went on in the factory.

Even children who had friends and relations at work tended to feel nervous of meeting people, however—they had to pass through what one girl described as "the gradual process of getting accepted, before, suddenly, you find you are one of them". Whilst most children felt "not too bad", some were extremely nervous—one girl said that she "did not know where to put herself for embarrassment", whilst another said, "I was so shy I could hardly speak and so nervous I could not eat my dinner." There was a general feeling that it was "natural" to be shy about meeting people, and a belief that everyone was the same in this respect. Shyness was associated primarily with meeting older people, but starting work involved many children for the first time in serious contact with members of the opposite sex who were a little older than they, and some felt embarrassment at this.

Nervousness was associated with excitement. Several children spent restless nights before their first day of work: one boy was so excited in the morning he fell off his bicycle. Some children arrived at work well before time: buses were caught half an hour early to avoid the risk of being late. The excitement was to reach a new intensity at the end of the week, when the first pay day arrived. "I felt odd when I was handed my wages," said one boy, "I felt I was quite someone." Underlying the nervousness and excitement there was, in most cases confidence: no matter what others had said about work being difficult, children approached it with assurance—if there were problems, they would be overcome. Some boys and girls set off for work scorning excitement and worry. Work was not something to get in a fluster about. Such children were soon joined in their ranks by others, when the initial excitement wore off—when machines had lost their magic, overalls had become commonplace, lipstick a habit, and work a bore.

Initial Reactions to Work

Many children had only a vague idea of what to expect in their jobs—because they had not been told, because they had not given the matter thought, or because they entered different work from that which they had been told about or to which they had given thought. As one boy said, "I did not really know what job to expect, though I knew I would be working on a machine of some sort." Some children were made proud by the fact that their jobs involved more than they had anticipated (a decorator, for example, was amazed to find that four or five operations were required to clean and paint a door): they took pleasure in pointing out that "there is more to this job than you would think". There were various other features of work which took children by surprise.

One aspect which impressed many children was the free atmosphere at work. People could walk about and talk, and chew and sing and smoke—"they let you do as you want, so long as you get the work done". Unofficial privileges and tolerance in such matters as time for clocking in and length of tea breaks were a pleasant surprise to children who recalled warnings about the toughness of the world of work. Many boys and girls were relieved to find that time passed so quickly. To others, however, the first few days at work seemed as if they would never end. There was little variation in the tasks set them and insufficient work to keep them occupied—and they lacked the knowledge or initiative to do jobs of their own accord: all these things helped to make the day drag. Only a few children found work to be a physical strain to start with—arms, legs or heads ached at the end of a long day operating a machine or dealing with customers. Fatigue re-

sulted more from the use of previously unused muscles than from having to work really hard, but tiredness was a real problem for a few children. One youth was troubled so much that he told his work-mates about it: they assured him that he would soon get used to it. Another youth, always out and about when at school, wondered whether life would ever be the same again: "I felt ever so tired. You don't know what to do with yourself when you get home. You don't know whether to go out or stop in." If he stayed at home he was bored, and if he went out he was so tired that he could not enjoy himself. Work was a big let-down for several girls. They had expected, as one father put it, that work would be "a picnic": but they found that it was not so glamorous after all—"I went to it expecting too much, and thinking I would become somebody overnight. I was pinning my hopes too high." Several boys had expected to be put on odd jobs to start with, and were surprised that they were given important tasks to do ("I used a paint brush on my first day!") whilst others who had expected to begin to learn a trade right from the start were surprised (and often disgusted) to find themselves sweeping and scrubbing, fetching and carrying.

Most children did very little during their first days at work. Many regretted this, because they were eager to get down to the job, and because time dragged. Some employers deliberately gave only a few tasks, hoping that the children would get to know their way around by watching. But other employers left children to their own resources because they had failed to plan for them, and were preoccupied with matters which they regarded as more important. In consequence, shop assistants did a bit of dusting and then watched the other girls all day, boys spent hours sitting down beside machines to watch how they were operated. These were days of disillusionment for many. Expecting to do a man's job, boys were given a message to run or told to sweep the yard out. One apprentice chronicled his initiation to skilled work with disgust: "I was put straight on a machine and shown what to do. Then at 9 o'clock another lad showed me how to mash tea—how much sugar and milk to use, and that. At 12 o'clock I had to make the tea for half past, and again at 3 o'clock, and at 5 o'clock I had to sweep up. In between times I was doing odd jobs."

One factory worker had not realized that manual operations are still important—he had thought that "machines did all the work nowadays". But more common was surprise, and sometimes wonder, at the extent of the machine age, and the vastness of its scale. Youths who had some idea about steel and engineering factories were yet amazed at the weight of the billets and the number of screws turned out in a continuous flow. A salesgirl could scarcely believe that so

much money and goods exchanged hands in one day. People who have previously thought of cattle only in terms of grazing pastures and train trips through the countryside might share the astonishment of the butcher's boy who said that "a cow doesn't look half as big in a field as it does when you are cutting it up". The world of work is altogether larger than the world of school: everything is bigger, faster and noisier.

Such were the aspects of work which struck children most forcibly when they first started. One boy was less surprised by any of these factors than by the amount of tea people drink: after three months at work he had still not fathomed this adult habit.

Helps and Hindrances to Settling Down

The Carr Report recommended that induction courses should be arranged by employers for all young workers, not just for apprentices: the employer's responsibility was to introduce the new worker to the work-place as a whole, to familiarize him with his particular tasks and the people with whom he would be working, and to inform him of safety precautions⁽⁴⁶⁾. A small minority of firms at which the respondents worked had formal induction schemes: for boys these were confined to the large firms in steel and engineering, and for girls to large factories and department stores. Some formal induction courses are over in a morning, others last for a fortnight or more. The aim of induction may be confused in the courses with training—so that young workers are made familiar only with the operations which they are expected to perform rather than with more general aspects of work. Some schemes are orientated less towards the needs of the young person than towards the direct needs of the firm. Shop assistants are taught how to use a till, for example, but not told where to find the lavatory.

The impact of induction courses appeared in most cases to be negligible. Whilst a few children welcomed the scheme because it helped them to find their way about, others were bored and impatient to get on with real work—instead of being *told* about it and treated like schoolchildren. Some managers share children's doubts about the value of induction courses: the manager of one of a chain of stores told a respondent that "she was lucky, really," because through an administrative oversight she had been put straight onto the job instead of going on a course. Several children considered that the courses were irrelevant to work itself—and a few showed cynicism at the fact. Their induction courses had painted a bright picture of work and its satisfactions, but one which was unrealistic. After a fortnight of fantasy the young worker began the dull routine of clock-watching and

either forgot the induction course or asked himself who the employers thought they were kidding. The induction courses had been focused towards a world of work which existed, if at all, only in the imaginations of the employers. Some employers made a special effort to introduce young people to work in an informal way, and to give them confidence: the employer of one youth went out of his way to welcome him, saying, "I hope you will be happy here" and congratulating him at the end of the day. ("You made that block of sausages exceptionally good.")

The majority of youths and girls were accorded no such attention, and were given only a minimum of information about work by those in charge. They were not shown round the works, either formally or informally, and not told properly how to do their tasks, or how their jobs were related to the work of other people. Some were taken to—or directed to—their immediate bosses and then left. The immediate bosses were likely to say "Watch that man", or "I'll come and see you later": nobody gave them a clear lead. No one pointed out where the canteen was, or the times for lunch or how long the breaks lasted. Children were shy to ask questions, and were perhaps rebuffed if they did—one apprentice said, "As the youngest, you are sent here and there with messages and you don't know who the people are or where to go; and if you ask, you are played hell with for asking too many questions." In consequence, children felt "lost" and "just floating". Busy with other things, bosses forgot about the new lad, or acted as if they had done so. One youth was made distinctly aware that the boss rated him of little importance: as he was being shown upstairs to the employer's office, the employer shouted down, "Don't bring him to me—take him downstairs. I've got work to do." Children who were made to feel unwanted by explicit statements, or implicitly by being ignored, were clearly not encouraged to take a pride in the firm, or to regard work as an important and noble occupation. Work was, as a result, treated with the lack of respect to which they had themselves been subjected. Some firms took the view that young workers should be left to their own resources, to sink or swim: if a child has "got it in him" he will make good. Employers rarely attempt to define what "it" is, however, or to assess just what relevance "it" has to the work involved. It should be emphasized that some children were grateful that they had been left to find things out for themselves: they "did not want a lot of fuss". They appreciated being accepted without special comments or arrangements, for this sustained their longing to be treated as adults. This desire is so strong that attempts by employers to inform them through induction schemes may be resented.

Informal help was of considerable importance: the other workers did much to set young people at ease or to make their lives more difficult. A delivery-van boy subsequently found that, in order to help him during his first few weeks at work, his driver had done twice as much work as was expected of him. Some children were treated to a hail and hearty welcome, others were accepted into the work-group without fuss—"they treated me like anyone else, as though I had been there ever since they had". The fact that people at work all talked to her a lot at dinner time did more to assist the adjustment of one warehouse girl than any induction scheme could have hoped to have done. It came as a considerable surprise to many children that other people at work were so kind, understanding and helpful, that they were "right sociable" and "not a bit nasty": expecting "everyone to be awful", they in the event found that they "made stacks of friends straight away".

It has been noted that most children felt nervous about meeting new people: that the majority overcame the ordeal results from the efforts made by ordinary workers to help them, and also the tenacity of the children themselves in facing up to the new situation. For some children met with intentional or unthinking hostility—"The men used to be in groups, and I was left in the background", said one youth, and another stated, "The other people wondered who I was, but they didn't say much—we hardly talked." In firms with a large number of employees and/or a high turnover, it is not unusual to see new faces, not a matter for special interest or action. In some jobs, young people are not expected to stay long, and informal attempts to strike up harmonious personal relationships seem to be a waste of time: the other workers had no curiosity to satisfy. Small work-groups may be actively hostile to the newcomer—the young office girl is compared unfavourably with the friend who has just left. Resistance to someone new is coupled with regret that the old order is changing. One girl encountered resentment because the other people thought that she had been appointed to a better job over their heads. In a few cases the initial friendliness of other workers, themselves caught up in the novelty of having someone different about the place, wore off quickly. Friendliness and tolerance turned to indifference and possibly impatience at the new lad's lack of knowledge and his clumsiness. ("It gets on your nerves, all these questions: and by the time you've shown him how to do a job, you might as well do it yourself.") Thus, one youth reported, "they were alright for the first few days, but after that they just couldn't be bothered, and I was left to it".

Adjustment to work was made more difficult to the extent that

children's insignificance was stressed. The nature of the work sometimes made this unavoidable—shop assistants felt that "everyone" was watching them, and that their lack of expertise was made obvious, since they had to show their change to a senior counter assistant to check that it was correct ("You feel so small"). No matter what their jobs, however, children felt that they were being weighed up—"You feel strange, being looked at and taken in". Some children felt that the borderline between interest and inquisitiveness had been transgressed: one girl had difficulty in controlling her emotions even at the memory that "everyone in the office asked what my family was like, and about my hobbies, and were nosy in general. They were all eyeing me up and down." It was as if she were a curious specimen.

At the first research interview, half the boys but only a few girls had expected that initiation tricks would be played on them when they started work: several children were apprehensive, but most were undisturbed. Full of suspicion, some boys thought that they detected tricks on their first days at work when none were being played: "every time somebody said something, I thought there was a catch in it", said one youth, whilst a painter and decorator "treated it as a joke and did nothing" when he was told to fetch a Turk's Head (a type of brush). Tricks were played on only 16 boys and 2 girls. Several boys were threatened with sexual interference (initiation tricks sometimes involve painting the testicles and penis), but all the tricks played were characterized by mildness and lack of imagination. One boy was "grabbed by the arms and legs and dropped into a large cardboard box", another was pushed into wet cement. Only two boys were seriously disturbed by the tricks. One was made "thoroughly miserable", because the men "kept getting on at him" rather than because of the severity of the tricks: he felt unwanted. The other youth was made unhappy by the threat that his trousers would be taken down and that he would be painted. He refused to go to work, and "cried and cried" when his parents insisted that he do so: there was a long family argument, and much distress. When the youth did agree to go to work, all that happened was that someone poured water down his trousers ("the funnel trick").

Most tricks were a sign of friendship rather than of hostility, and were not much different from the everyday jokes which are part of the world of work—"they kid you and you kid them": it makes life a bit less boring. Far from causing distress, tricks were in many cases welcomed—as a sign of being accepted. (The need for a trick was overcome when one apprentice builder fell through the ceiling of a new house on his first day, to general acclaim. The other men "laughed their heads off", and the respondent felt "one of them" thenceforth.)

Children thought that it was "best to laugh it off" and "not show anyone that you are upset": one boy who had been painted and had distemper thrown over him said, "I took it and laughed, and they never seemed to bother me after that." A few boys were already looking forward to the time when new recruits joined their firms, so they could administer the tricks.

Initiation tricks have never been a big problem for girls: it would seem that they are now much less common for boys than in the past. Various explanations were offered by respondents and parents for this—piece-rates allow "no time for larking about" (tricks were alright in the employer's time, but not if they were going to interfere with earnings): managements "don't tolerate it like they used to"—partly because of pressures on production, partly because of dangers. Another reason is that youths are more able to stand up for themselves, being stronger than 14-year-old school leavers. (One youth drew attention to his moustache which, he said, "puts two years on you.") Boys and girls are "better able to take care of themselves"—in the words of one mother, "they are wider now than they used to be and they won't be taken for mugs".

The Year in Perspective

As the first year at work progressed, children developed, and by the end of the year all but a few noticed substantial changes in their way of life. Some felt that they were "only just beginning to grow up" and others already looked back to their "greenness", "childishness" and "immaturity" when they first left school. Most felt "years older" instead of just one year: but the time had "flashed by". For the majority, the year had passed smoothly—"a very happy time" for some, "outstanding" for others. Some spoke of "ups and downs"—one youth had "made one or two slip-ups, but survived", whilst it took another several months and a broken arm gained in a fight to simmer down from a "happy-go-lucky chap" to the "more level-headed bloke" that he now was. Most, even of those who had changed jobs, felt that the year had brought few problems: one youth in his third job remarked cheerfully, "It has been a good year—I have not been out of work much." He had nothing to complain about. Many children had not expected a lot from work, or had grown during the year to accept that work offered little positive satisfaction. If nothing catastrophic had happened to them, they therefore adjudged that things had gone well.

There had been few changes for some children, either because they had indulged in adult activities whilst still at school or because they persisted in children's leisure pursuits: chocolate and mum still

meant more to some boys than cigarettes and girl friends, whilst some girls blushed at the thought of going out with a youth. Parents averred that "He's not changed a bit, our Joe" and that "Jill is the same as ever". Other children's activities had changed not so much in kind as in degree—they followed the same pattern in their leisure time, but more intensively: the cinema was visited three times a week instead of twice, 10 cigarettes were bought each day instead of 5.

Many things were now open to children which had previously been barred to them because of lack of money or because parents withheld permission. Now boys and girls were able to do grown-up things—"At school you used to think it was something to go to an over-16 picture. Now it's nowt": and "there are plenty of things to do now, like smoke, drink and have a motor bike. You could do nothing like that when you were at school". Looking back, indeed, it seemed that "at school there is not much you *can* do": children wondered how they had managed to endure those stodgy, unexciting days. Girls were particularly pleased to be able to wear fine clothes and cosmetics: "At school, if you wore lipstick and that in the evenings", said one girl, "you must not show a trace of it. But at work you wear it all day—it's just natural." Girls spoke of "going to work dressed up" and contrasted this with school where "you could never wear anything that was 'best'." There was in many cases a freedom, at last, to choose their own clothes—with all the welcome worry about colour, style and "whether it suits". The floppy gym tunic and faded cotton frock were cast aside: mother might frown about a skirt that was too flared, but at least she no longer insisted upon "horrid", "sensible" shoes.

Boys and girls rejoiced in the feeling of being grown-up. Several youths were proud of the surging manliness which hard jobs helped to evoke in them: calloused fingers and a sweaty forehead were the valued marks of a hard day, and youths were proud to bear them. Respondents felt "less childish"—"more adult and sensible": "we don't play marbles now", and "we are not so daft in the way we behave". A girl said that she "didn't romp in the streets now" and girls in particular ceased to go about in gangs (though more boys were in gangs, which helped to tone down the initial impact of work by helping to perpetuate old activities and acting as a barrier to new ones). One youth said, "I feel older just lately than I did before. I have no wish to mess about now—like kicking a ball about on the waste land. Now I prefer to mooch around, sitting on the front door-step, or going for a walk, or going to the pictures by myself."

The wage was valued not just for what it enabled children to *do*, but for what it enabled them to *be*. At last they felt themselves to be independent ("a bit of cash in your pocket makes you feel bigger").

Children no longer had to suffer the indignity of having to ask parents for money—"I don't have to ask Dad for more money every time I go out." Parents granted more freedom in many spheres—"You can come in later at night and nowt is said about it." There was also much more freedom at work than at school. With more enthusiasm than any other topic roused in him, a van boy averred that "there's nowt wrong with work. It's better than school. There is no-one to watch you all the time." Similarly a butcher's boy—"at school you are under people's command more, and there are more rules and that. But work is smashing", and an apprentice engineer, "at school it is all 'Yes, Sir', 'No, Sir' and sticking your hands up all the time—at work there is no 'Stop talking, boy' as soon as you open your mouth."

Parents noticed the changes which work had induced in their children, saying that it had "brought them out, made them more confident". Indeed, parents contributed in large measure to the changes, by allowing more freedom and perhaps encouraging it—a girl remarked on "the way my Mum talks to me—about things she didn't mention before". Adult things were now discussed, like the price of nylons and the best cut of beef. Children were taken into the family counsels over matters such as the pattern for the new curtains (which the earnings may have made possible) or where to go for next year's holiday. Some parents treated their children differently as a matter of policy: "We treat her as a young adult now. When she was at school she had to be in by a definite time, and if she was out we knew where to find her. Now we allow her discretion and have faith in her, and it is for her to realize that she must justify this trust." One girl was expected to show an interest in politics now: when world affairs were discussed at home, the parents tried to draw her in—and she "tried to look as though she were interested and taking it all in". The different treatment at home was manifested in many different ways. One girl pointed out that "If I did anything wrong, they used to play hell—now they take no notice." Children were no longer "picked on" at home to run errands or "nagged at" for being untidy: "Older people", said one youth, "no longer chin at me for the slightest thing." Another youth said, "I don't get shoved out of the easy-chair so quickly now. They can't put excuses to me now. They can't say 'Come on, I've been working all day, let me have the seat'." Girls found that even affectionate older brothers began to show signs of realizing that they were no longer babies—"At *last* my brother thinks I'm grown-up, though he still lectures me about talking to strangers: but he has always done that." The fathers of some girls were less ready to recognize them as grown-up: one girl was particularly impatient of her father's refusal to acknowledge her budding womanhood, saying,

"I feel older and more confident, but my father still fools around as if I were a five-year-old." Would the clown never come to his senses? If only *he* would grow up. Younger brothers and sisters could also be difficult, being quick to explode pretensions, and disinclined to accept that big sisters had changed overnight from school children to grown-ups. It was not easy for those girls whose work required a sophisticated appearance—such as office workers and salesgirls—to maintain their bearing in familiar surroundings and among people who knew them as they were yesterday. Airs and graces were cruelly parodied, and sophisticated stances gave rise to sniggers rather than acclaim. Nevertheless, parents tended no longer to treat the respondents as "objects", did not discuss them in the presence of neighbours as if they were "things" rather than persons—remarking how tall they had grown or how restless they were. Girls became full members of the street gossip circle—"When you are at school, people just ask you how you are getting on. But when you are at work they find more to talk about with you."

Some parents were reluctant to admit to themselves that their children were growing up: it made them feel old, especially if the child was the eldest or the youngest. School-leaving was thus a landmark for the parents as well as for the children, and some parents "felt a loss"—their children's desire for independence left them high and dry, wanting to be depended upon but no longer needed. For mother, too, there was often a reversal of her erstwhile rôle. At school, the child was mother's servant—to run errands, clean shoes, look after the baby and be told what to do. When the young person started work, mother became the servant, and in exchange for the weekly pay packet served up a hot evening meal, got up early to pack the lunch and in general tended to the needs of the worker. A few parents found the transition period a worrying time—indeed, rather more parents were upset than children. They were not satisfied that a decent job had been found, and they did not understand their children: the mother of one girl said to the Interviewer, "You probably know more about her than I do now—girls of that age don't tell their mothers anything." Several parents did not know how to handle the situation—"I'm glad for her to be at work and out of the house. For when she is at home it is like hell on earth." One father objected that his son now tried to tell *him* what to do, whilst a mother pointed out that her son was bigger than she, and "difficult to control at times." The father of one girl thought that the transition process was more difficult now than for his generation, for "everything now has greater momentum—all is pace, and noise and rush. I feel it myself sometimes: it must make things hard for the young people. Even though there was a

shortage of food and money at home in those days, things were not so complicated as they are now." The majority of parents coped with the position, however, most of them without discussing plans or formulating policies: they, like their children, took things as they came.

The status of being a worker was a considerable attraction to the majority of respondents: it carried independence, freedom—and respect from others. "People *listen* to you" said one youth, and a girl said, "In shops, they used not to bother about you at all: now they serve you quickly": and, "other people say 'excuse me', instead of just rushing past". People who did not accord the deserved respect—such as neighbouring small boys—could be ostentatiously ignored. One boy indicated the joys of his new status by saying that "You can go in the pictures now without being moved about": children in his local cinema were told by the usherette to move up in their seats, to make room for adults to sit together. No longer would *he* be pushed about. Several girls were surprised to be addressed in the way appropriate to their new status—"It seemed funny to be called Miss Brown, instead of by my Christian name": it was agreeable to have one's new status confirmed. Comparisons were made with "wretched" school-children—"I feel a lot older and better", said one youth, "when I see the kids going to school, and there's me with a knapsack on my back". With ill-concealed contempt, another youth confided "I look at the lads at school and see how I was a year ago," whilst a girl "wondered if she were like that once". Feelings of superiority were reinforced by memories of the hardships of the life which was led at school "stuck behind a desk all day". Now, as workers, youths and girls were part of the real world—"When I see the other people going to work on the bus sitting all around me, I think, 'I'm one of those'," said one girl: and a youth stated, "I like wearing my working clothes, and strolling down Attercliffe Common with my mates at dinner time." Was this not the essence of being grown-up?

The "Gap"

It is often alleged that there is a "gap" between the world of school and the world of work, and that the transition from the one to the other is necessarily a harsh experience for young people. Pictures have been drawn of a "dangerous crossing over no-man's land", and of "the blackest, most neglected age of approaching manhood."⁽⁴⁾ The above discussion has indicated that most children felt differences in their way of life consequent upon starting work. What were the new situations to which youths and girls had to adjust themselves? There were obvious differences in the daily routine—longer hours, and perhaps a long journey at each end of the day. The "atmosphere"

of the firm had to be assimilated—often with little or no help by way of reception or induction. Young workers had to familiarize themselves with the practices and restraints of the work group: they might be immersed in a vast mass of employees, or in close contact with just one or two. The work-rate required by employers had to be learnt—and the accepted rate amongst employees. Some boys had to acclimatize themselves to “rough” and “filthy” language: girls had to understand that one manager did not welcome a smile and another did. Adjustment, then, is not just a matter of getting used to the world of work in a general sense—being a worker, being independent—but also of getting used to a particular factory, office or shop, and to the people who work there.

Only a few children found that this was a trying time, however. Looking back over their first year at work, about one-quarter of boys and girls thought that there was a difficult gap between school and work, but all except 8 youths and 4 girls said that they had overcome the problems with little suffering. Statements of employers and parents confirmed that this was a difficult time for only a small minority. Even those children who had difficulty in finding jobs, or who were unable to get the jobs which they had set their minds on, and who might therefore have been expected to be at a low pitch of morale, did not find that this was a particularly trying time. Difficulty in adjusting to work was a major factor affecting job changes in only a few cases. Such “shock” as there was on starting work was, then, taken by most children in their strides: although a few children were still unhappy at the end of the year, most of those who found things difficult at first soon settled down. Several children who were not disturbed by the process of transition nevertheless regarded it as a *serious* time. For starting work was an irrevocable step: there was no going back—“I couldn’t believe it,” said one boy, “you are at school, then suddenly you are at work, and there are years before you until you are 65.” It was a sobering thought.

One argument which alleges a difficult gap between school and work suggests that the school is child-orientated and work adult-orientated: the school-leaver has been used to one way of life and is now confronted with a totally different environment. From the comments of many children, however, it is quite clear that “child-orientation” in practice often means (at least to the children’s way of thinking) emphasizing the inferior status of boys and girls: and schools continued to be *child*-orientated when they were dealing with *youths*. Child orientation meant “being bossed about”, “treated like kids”. School was therefore regarded with something approaching contempt—to assume that the school’s orientation upon children ill-fits them

for the adult world of work is to assume that the school has a far greater influence upon children than in fact it has. The respondents were not prepared to be treated like children—and so far from being ill at ease on this score when they started work, they were relieved and thankful that they were at last treated as grown-up. For they had felt grown-up for a long time.

In another sense, school was less child-orientated than is often assumed: individual children often received more attention at work (particularly if they were members of small work groups) than had been the case at school: with classes of over forty it is scarcely to be wondered at that children were not treated as individuals at school. "At work", said one youth, "they treat you differently. They tell you how to do a thing and show you how to do it. But at school if you did a thing wrong, you were told off or caned, and not shown how." For the most part, children expected no special interest to be shown in them at school or at work—and for the most part their expectations were fulfilled. It is also argued that work contrasts with school in that at the latter there is teacher to turn to in time of need. In fact, the independence of work was welcomed—no teacher looming large over your every activity all the time. At school, if children sought teacher's help it was usually in connection with things that did not interest them—such as a difficult sum. The things that you enjoyed doing were done without teacher's help. And many children found it easier to seek guidance from their workmates than from their teacher—the former were approachable, were, indeed, equals. To them you could say "'ere, Jack" instead of "Please, Sir". Children did not lean on their teachers at school—and when they got to work they felt far from helpless, lost and bereft of a mentor. There was more feeling about school having denied the opportunity for self-reliance than about work requiring children to stand on their own feet. In many homes, furthermore, children are expected to stand on their own feet from an early age. They had learnt to look after themselves as a result of being left to look after themselves. This had made the tendency of teachers to treat them as kids all the more repellent to them, and the assumption at work of self reliance all the more acceptable.

Children were glad, also, to escape from the authoritarian structure of the school—the everlasting "Please, Sirs" and "Yes, Sirs", and being confined to a desk or regimented from one class room to another ("Form twos: lead on!")—"I do things on my own, instead of the teachers saying, 'Now line up outside and don't make any noise'." From the acerbity of the comments of many children, it would seem that school had in the pupil's view acted as a restraint upon freedom

rather than an instrument for widening horizons. Those who are askance at the thought of young people leaving the happiness of school for the competitive jungle of the world of work would do well to ponder the words of one boy, who said, "Work is better than school—I don't know why: it seems more friendly." Children were not afraid of entering the free-for-all of the working world, but keen to leave the bonds of school behind them. The foreman was not so eagle-eyed as the teacher: at work "it was not all 'bend down my lad'." In any case, the foreman had other things to occupy his mind—you could get out of his way easily. Nor were you *obliged* to work for a particular firm—you could ask for your cards, and leave. At work you were not punished or ridiculed if you made a mistake—you were not called out in front of the class and "made to feel a fool". Lack of ability was not harped on, either explicitly or implicitly, at work. You were not placed at the bottom of the list in an order of merit.

To many children, the values of school had always appeared irrelevant to life as it is actually lived, but the values of work fitted in with those at home and in the neighbourhood. Effort, enthusiasm and loyalty were advocated at school, but laughed at, or frowned upon at work. The beautiful and spiritual were insisted upon at school, whilst at work ugliness and materialism prevailed. In addition, many children had got into the habit at school of only doing what they were told—no more—and were in no way shocked to find that this standard was common at work. In general, furthermore, children entered jobs in which the norms and values of the home were approximated to—middle-class youths and girls veered towards jobs in which middle-class speech and manners obtained: the Y.E.O. channelled middle-class children in this direction, recommending "socially acceptable" jobs, and parents put vetoes on warehouse-work and labouring. Several of the boys and girls who *did* find the transition difficult were children from middle-class homes whose attainment, ability or luck had been insufficient for them to get jobs of the level to which they aspired.

Whilst there was a lot of talk at school about *purpose* in life, school itself appeared to some children as futile. Several children were deeply impressed by the opportunity for fulfilment with which work provided them, but which they had not found at school—one boy said, "I feel different in myself. Liking work so much makes a difference in my character. At school, I resented going—I wasn't bothered and didn't care. But now, I can look forward to going to work." Even if children were not keen on their jobs, they could see some point in the work: they had something to show for their activities at the end of the day. And so far from school widening horizons and

work restricting their lives, many children felt that the opposite applied—"your mind opens out a lot more. You look at things in a different way. You view things with a wider scope."

Neither school nor work meant a great deal to a large number of children: work was no more of a challenge to them than school had been. The "gap" was to them no more than a moderate change in routine. At the same time, most of the changes were welcome to all but a few children—improved status, more independence, better treatment at home, more spending money. Beside these, the transitory problems of shyness and nervousness at starting work counted but little.

CHAPTER 10

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK, OTHER EMPLOYEES AND "BOSSSES"

NEARLY all of the children were glad to be at work, for the reasons discussed in the last chapter: but work itself was not a main source of satisfaction in the majority of cases. What was important was the status which being a worker conferred.

Attitudes Towards Work One Year after Leaving School

Just under one-third of the boys and girls were enthusiastic about their jobs and had an earnest desire to do well: work was "smashing", "grand" and "wonderful", something which was enjoyed in itself. Several of these children spoke of having "clicked into the job"—"I have taken to it and I feel that the job was made for me, and me for the job." School was regarded as a preface, of little significance when compared with the really important business of life, that of making a career. Work had a positive value for these boys and girls, and they approached it with a will.

For the remaining children, work had no strong appeal, and for many it was simply accepted as something which had to be done—"You get used to it", and "in any case, you've got to do it". Children did not understand the idea that work might be enjoyable—was not work the opposite of leisure? In leisure, you do as you like and enjoy yourself. At work you do what you are told, and can only hope that it is not *too* hard and boring. Newspapers, television and radio, parents and neighbours never spoke of work as a source of satisfaction. On the contrary, if work was mentioned it was usually because of a conflict between management and labour. The aims of trades unions were, surely, higher wages and shorter hours. Whoever heard of a union leader talking about *enjoying* work? The fact is that work is something which you have to "stick at" from eight in the morning until five at night: it is something to "put up with". There were plenty of things in life which were more important, and you work *in order* to live—"You get paid for it and it helps to pass the time", and it is less unattractive than school. But that is about all that can be said for it. Several children were very grudging in their attitudes:

underlying their outlook was a resentment that they were "putting money into other people's pockets". They were determined to make no more effort than the minimum required—to take an interest in one's work would savour of selling the other employees down the line, of giving the boss even more value for the wage he paid than he extorted already.

Most of the children, then, expected little from work—and it was for this reason that the majority were "satisfied". A job was satisfactory if it was not intolerable, if there were no cause for serious complaint. The approach was summed up by an apprentice toolmaker, who said, "I take it as it comes. You must not expect much, then you won't be disappointed." Asked in what way his job interested him one boy replied, "Interest? You don't go to work for that." It was a meaningless question to him, out of tune with his conception of what work was about. Another youth referred to various aspects of his job, including wages, other employees, distance from home and hours: when asked what he thought about the actual work he was non-plussed and finally said, "I suppose it's alright. I've never really thought about that." Work was "alright"—what more could you ask or expect?

A substantial number of children accepted work in the same resigned way as they accepted everything else in life: nothing was of special interest or importance—school, work or even leisure activities. They did not much care where they went or what they did. One job was as good, as bad, or, to all intents and purposes, the same as the next. This helps to explain the lack of regret of children who moved from jobs which offered the chance of learning a trade to dead-end jobs. Both sorts of job were just "work" to them, and as such of little importance. Children did not think about work—they just did it. That work was unimportant was also indicated by the lack of discussion about it at home or with friends. One respondent who had been going out with her boy friend on four evenings a week for several months looked surprised when she was asked what the youth did for a living. She pondered for a while before being able to recall that the youth had mentioned the name of his employer only the other day. She had forgotten the name and did not know the youth's occupation—who wants to talk about work, anyway? What a way to waste your leisure time! Thus, children made few demands upon their jobs, and if their jobs made few demands upon them they were satisfied. One youth who "liked" his job loaded bottles on a continuously moving belt: the work was clean, the wage not unsatisfactory, and the job did not require much effort, so he was satisfied. A warehouse worker summed up his feelings in the words, "It's alright I

suppose: the time drags sometimes, but it is alright, and it is near home. You can't expect much more from a job."

Such attitudes to work were reinforced by the attitudes of other employees and by management: it seemed to be generally accepted that work was a necessary evil. Fellow employees, especially if paid on a piece-rate or bonus system, had little esteem for a quality job. In consequence, jerry-building had its equivalent in most occupations. Young workers soon realized that work was not a matter for pride. Interest in work was soon crushed. Children came to realize, by observation and from what other workers told them, that many employers did not want high standards, but *passable* standards, and compliance rather than initiative. No one had explained what it was all about, so that many children did not know, and did not care, what their firms did. When a hammer driver was asked what work was done at his factory, he turned to a youth who was passing by and said, "You'd better ask him, he knows better than me." But the other youth was even less well-informed, and when he replied, "We make steel", the respondent retorted, "Don't be a twat—the steel is made when we get it." It was all a bit of a mystery—but not a very exciting one. Production processes in many factories are broken down into simple tasks, which allow no discretion, which stultify interest and which confer no dignity. The process and the product are more important than the worker. Children knew that they counted for little, that they were easily replaced, that *anyone* could do their jobs. But work is work, and you must put up with it.

Work, then, might be welcomed eagerly, simply accepted as a fact of life, or reluctantly accepted because there is "nought" you can do about it. Given these premises, 85 per cent of the boys and girls stated that they were satisfied with the jobs which they were in one year after leaving school. Children tend to state that they are satisfied with the jobs which they have at a given time, and they have quick changes of mind—the many job changes in the first year at work are evidence of this. Whatever the job, however, there were various sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Sources of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

The importance of *wages* has already been discussed: it was the over-riding motivation for only a few boys and girls, but was of fundamental importance to all ("When every day brings you nearer to pay-day the week seems to go quicker.") Several children criticized others whom they knew who were concerned primarily about wages. One boy had had heated arguments with some friends:

I told them that I don't care if their wage is higher than mine, for I've got prospects. They may be getting lots of money now, but it will be my turn to laugh later. They say to me "You want a job where you will get money and can save up for a motor bike," but I'm not interested in that. Anyway, they don't like their jobs. They're not interested in them enough to like them, and the only time they talk about work is when they tell me how much more money they get than me. That's all they think about, their wage.

This youth was quite convinced that he got more satisfaction out of the knowledge that he was learning and the assurance that his prospects were good than his friends got from their wages, however high they might be. *Hours* were accepted by the majority of children as reasonable, but a few girls disliked having to work on Saturday. Some children were very *interested in the actual tasks* which they did—several boys were in jobs which were closely related to hobbies: the occupation—electrician, joiner, typist, shop assistant—was of utmost importance to them, and in many cases other aspects of the job (distance from home, length of lunch break) were dismissed as irrelevant. They were absorbed in their work, and took a pride in it. The enthusiasts for work included several children who were doing seemingly dull and routine work: they were interested in it primarily because they were competent at it, and had proved to themselves that they were masters of the tasks which they did. Most children gained little interest from the nature of the work itself, however—including some youths who, having been accepted for apprenticeships, thought that the battle was won. Now they could plod along until their apprenticeship had been served: the *trade* did not hold their attention.

Several children were *proud of their firms and occupations*. This feeling was evident in a few of the boys working for large steel firms, and other children identified themselves with their firms in a similar way. One girl, for example, referred to the high reputation in Sheffield of her employer, and speaking in terms of "we in the wallpaper trade", talked about the collection for the new year. Several children, too, were glad to be doing jobs which were of *service to the community*. A cutlery worker who made surgical goods derived a similar satisfaction to a nurse who was learning how to tend patients: a few boys working in steel took satisfaction in the thought that the industry was basic to the economic well-being of the country. *Variety in surroundings or in tasks* was referred to by several children as a good feature of their jobs. (A gardener delighted in the fact that in his job "you might be mowing the lawn one day and the next planting out or cleaning the drains.") Conversely, lack of variety was a big source of dissatisfaction—with considerable understatement, one

cutlery worker said that she was "a bit fed-up with being on the same operation for nine months". Very important to many children was that the job did not require a lot of thought or effort—they were well pleased if their work was *easy to do*. The prospect of a job which required thought, decision making and concentration was frightening, and they much preferred the simple, routine, unvaried work which was well within their capacity and in which they were free from worry. One girl had settled down so happily to serve behind the chocolate counter in a multiple stores that the thought of just moving to another counter was disturbing to her. Many children complained that they *did not have enough work to do*: even if they did not exactly like the work, it passed the time, and was less boring than doing nothing. One boy recalled that when he was an apprentice electrician he often had little to do—he spent all of one day standing at the bottom of a ladder and was so bored that he felt more tired at the end of the day than he did when he was working hard. A substantial number of apprentices, including some in large firms, found themselves left very much to their own devices: indeed, in several firms apprentices were regarded rather like supernumeraries, on the strength but not required for the job in hand. Apart from the boredom of having no work to do, what children found hard to bear was the requirement to keep up the pretence that they were occupied. A shop assistant protested that if there was no work the manager *made* some, and the assistants had at all times to behave as if they were working. This youth had hit upon the device of walking round the store with a piece of paper and looking at things, trying to give the impression that he had something to do. It all seemed pretty futile to him. Some children gained satisfaction from the *belief that they were trusted and were in responsible positions*, and that they had some *independence*. Some piece-rate workers, for example, liked to feel that they were able to stop work for a while, walk around and have a chat and still get through their work—they were, albeit to a very limited extent, "their own bosses". There was, too, a desire to be *noticed and appreciated*, and to be doing something which made a *definite contribution*. A large number of children, including apprentices in large and small firms, were denied these satisfactions. Several boys who were doing pre-apprentice years at large steelworks were employed as office boys and messengers until they reached the age of sixteen and started their apprenticeships proper. Most of them disliked this, scorning non-manual work and being impatient to get down to the real thing—to don overalls and get on to the shop floor.

Comparatively few children had contact during working hours with people apart from those at work. Many of those who did have such

contacts—van-boys, painters and decorators, shop assistants, were the main occupations involved—welcomed the fact. A painter and decorator was quite excited about this aspect of his work (“You meet all different sorts of people. Some are posh and some are ordinary”), and a van-boy often compared notes with a friend who was in the same occupation. (“We talk about women customers and their different ways: they dress differently at home than when they go out—you wouldn’t recognize some of them at times.”) Some shop assistants found the customers to be a source of irritation rather than of pleasure, however. “My only dislike”, said one butcher’s boy, “is awkward customers—women who don’t know what they want, or who ask for something costing 6*d.* and turn it down because it costs 7*d.* And young housewives don’t know the names of joints—they just ask for a piece of beef and expect you to know what to give them.” Several girl shop assistants found that customers were often rude and awkward. (“I could throw something at them, but you have got to keep your temper.”)

On the whole, then, factors other than the nature of the work were most relevant to satisfaction and dissatisfaction: of special importance were relationships with other employees and with the “bosses”.

Relationships with Other Employees

The quality of the relationships with other people at work was a matter of great importance to all children: the fact was explicitly recognized by many, who made spontaneous references, when asked how they liked the jobs, to “getting on alright” or “not getting on very well” with other workers. Dealing with other people of different backgrounds and experiences, of different ages and of the opposite sex, all within a context in which a *modus vivendi* had to be established, was for most children a totally new situation, one which they had not been exposed to at school: at work “you have got to get on with other people” and “you *must* learn to co-operate”.

The nature of their work involved some children in close co-operation with one other person: for these boys and girls relationships were crucial to satisfaction with their jobs. Partially because they were not interested in the tasks which they performed, furthermore, many children looked to the other workers for sociability, a pleasant atmosphere compensating for the boredom of the work. Girls, especially, were concerned to have “nice people to work with”. One girl explained her choice of warehouse work by saying that she “likes to talk a lot”: her job as a packer occupied only her hands, leaving her free to think and talk about other matters. Some work groups were obviously very amiable: but others were the opposite, and several

respondents referred to the "nasty atmosphere at work"—everyone had tight lips, and a smile during working hours was regarded as gross dereliction of duty, if not patently wicked. Or, the other people were actively unfriendly—"everyone is catty" and "people talk behind your back". Some children "felt left out of things"—no one asked them to join the Works football sweep, or, in the case of girls, passed on "secrets". One youth reflected sadly, that "you might think they weren't wanting you around". Even in the midst of a very large number of people the young worker may feel lonely and unwanted. Most children struck up friendships, however, and most were able to ignore those people whom they disliked. Many boys and girls expressed the view that the majority of people are fundamentally "decent". Wherever you work, you are "bound to come across *some* people who are awkward—you always get the odd one or two": and even in the happiest of places, there are "odd rows" from time to time—it is accepted that wherever there are human beings there will be strains in their relationships. But on the whole people are "alright to get on with".

At some firms, the noise of the machinery was such that "you can't hear yourself talk". Occasionally people shouted remarks to each other, but conversation was restricted to meal breaks. Some children, in contrast, did jobs which allowed them to keep up a constant stream of chatter, teasing, singing and laughter. Co-operative work—on an assembly line or in a rolling mill—may lead to an identity of interests (especially if a group bonus scheme operates), but gives opportunity for conflict as well as harmony. The interactions between the work itself, the work group and the material environment in which the work is done are indeed no simple matter to analyse: the importance of the setting is well illustrated by the remarks of an office girl whose firm had moved to a new building. The girl regretted the change, saying, "I don't like the building so much, and our group is not on its own now. It is still the same job and the people are the same. But it is not as homely now."

Some children worked for firms which employed a large number of young people of about the same age: usually there was a lot of contact between the young workers in the canteen and perhaps at Training School. Many boys and girls had little contact with people of their own age at work, however. A substantial number of respondents preferred to work with people of the same age. A gap of just a few years seemed a major one: one girl lamented that the youngest person in her office, apart from herself, was aged nineteen. To girls who look upon women of thirty as "old", even the person of nineteen or twenty may appear middle-aged. There is some tendency for older

women at work—many of whom have children of the same age or older than the young worker—to treat girls as if they were school children: this leads to resentment, and several respondents explained their antipathy towards women at work with such phrases as “She’s old enough to be my mother.” So far as these respondents were concerned, “young” was synonymous with “nice”, and “old” with “nasty”. Whilst many children had happy relationships with older people at work there was undoubtedly a considerable amount of actual and potential tension arising out of differences in outlook, standards and interests between the generations.

Many of the complaints about older people were related to their tendency to give orders. Children disliked being told what to do by people whose only status derived from the fact that they were older and had worked at the firm for a longer time—“It’s how they speak to you. They will be *asking* you to do a thing in a way, and yet *telling* you to do it really”: “Just because they have been there longer they think they know it all and can tell you what to do”: “At times there is more than one boss.” There was most scorn for the older worker whose own ability was doubtful, and for workers in jobs which required little skill, but who “tried to tell” the young worker what to do and how to do it. Youths and girls had no illusions: work was easy, required no skill and little effort. The charade of older people acting as if they had expertise led to contempt rather than respect. Long years of doing semi-skilled and labouring work or work such as storekeeping make little difference to the competence with which a job is done—there is not much to learn, and the “knack” and “know-how” are soon acquired. In such jobs, indeed, the young and active person may be more effective than the older man—he can carry heavier loads, run errands more quickly and revel in climbing ladders. Relationships between old and young employees are obviously strained when the assumption of the older workers that they know best is openly or by implication challenged. Even in skilled jobs the young apprentice may nowadays know more about certain aspects of the work than the older man—the young painter and decorator can learn much about the craft at Day Release School and Evening School, which his senior has never heard about. The man who has mixed paint intuitively for thirty years does not take kindly to the youth who, with yesterday’s lesson fresh in the mind, explains precisely why his elder has not got quite the shade he was aiming at.

There was a widely held belief that all older workers—men and women—were a “queer lot”, fussy, interfering, unpredictable and moody, and “so blinking serious”. “Some of the older ones get narky”, said one youth, “for example, if they shout at you and you don’t hear,

or if you do anything wrong". Men and women "nag at you and keep reminding you of this and that, and play hell with you if you forget anything". One girl confided that, at her factory, "the younger ones are alright, but the older people are always in a mad rush to get things done, and it gets a bit bad tempered at times". Set in their ways, older people think that things must be done as they have always done them—if young people try other methods the older workers criticize them, criticism which youths and girls interpret as "deliberately trying to be awkward", and "going out of their way to make things difficult". To all these shortcomings of older people must be added those of pessimism, cynicism and gloom. Disgruntled that they have not "got on" themselves, they blame everyone and everything, and approach their work with a sense of grievance which damages the enthusiasm of the keen young worker, and which "gets on the nerves" even of those who do not expect much from work.

Friction with older workers was more a characteristic of girls than of boys. Boys and men, perhaps, have more in common than girls and women. Football, cigarettes and fishing are mutual points of interest at fifteen and at fifty. There is no such core of common interests for the young girl and the middle-aged woman. The latter having given up the interests of her younger days in order to rear a family, finds herself at the age of fifty with new interests, interest only in her children, or no interests at all. Boys were more likely to be able to ignore men whom they disliked, furthermore, whereas girls' jobs often involved them being closeted with older women, in shop, office or factory. The older women have little sympathy for the interest which many girls have in lively dancing and "pop" singing. These activities are denounced as noisy, sexually provocative and anti-social. Women drink in the headline news about crime, immorality and irresponsibility, and accept a grossly distorted image of the younger generation. All teenagers are looked upon with suspicion, being held guilty until they may prove themselves innocent. Men and women constantly dwell upon their belief that "children have it a lot easier nowadays" than was the case in their own childhood. Whilst they rejoice in this with regard to their own children, the ease of life is looked upon as a danger so far as other children are concerned, a source of weakness of character. Today's children "don't know what a good day's work is", "would never be able to stand up to the strain of a really hard job", and "in general have far too easy a time of it". Young workers sense that older people are unsympathetic towards them and arguments sometimes flare up. One of the sparking points for girls was dress. What the girl takes to be smart, the woman denounces as "flighty" or "fast", if not downright immodest. In their first year at

work girls are "touchy" about their dress, being not too sure of themselves: they may make mistakes—but for an older woman to point them out gives rise to fury. Women who offered advice on dresses, colour of lipstick or hair style were regarded as "interfering old so-and-so's". Suggestions were regarded as attempts at "picking you to bits". Stiletto heels, furthermore, appear all the more outrageous to the woman whose feet find even sensible shoes to be distinctly wearying towards the end of the day, and whose ankles are no longer sufficiently trim to permit other than sensible shoes in any case. The girl, also, has tonight to look forward to, a date at the cinema, the dance at the weekend, boy friends and marriage in the future. Work is something temporary. For the older woman, there are dishes to be washed when she gets home at night, and ironing to be done. The only outing she can look forward to is a visit to the Working Men's Club with her husband on Friday night. Work stretches away into the future, and despair is felt more easily than hope. The girl's world is very different from the older woman's.

A substantial number of children referred directly or indirectly to social class: there was a definite preference to work with "the same sort of people as yourself". People from a similar social background could be relied upon to understand your point of view. The explanation which one youth gave for liking the other employees so much was that "they are average—not high class, but working people, easy to get on with". Children preferred not to have contact with the staff: the manual workers on the shop floor were alright, but not so "the high-ups, who think they are it". The office staff were regarded as "stuck-up"—"they are snobs and don't even talk to the men in the Works". In the factory you were equals and met a nicer sort of person than those upstairs who "think they are better than you". People who behaved in a familiar way—who were "rough and ready"—could be liked, not so the "staff", who "acted superior". A few children, on the other hand, allied themselves with the superior staff and repudiated the roughness of the ordinary workers. Scorning to mix with them, they spoke scathingly of the lack of initiative, lack of ability and the "common" behaviour of the ordinary worker.

Just under one-quarter of the respondents made special friends at work, and spent some of their leisure time with them. Most of them went out with their workmates very occasionally, however. Only 2 boys and 1 girl attended Sports or Social Clubs associated with the firms where they worked, and there seemed to be no demand for such clubs amongst children employed by firms which did not have them. Children preferred to keep leisure separate from work, and liked to restrict their friendships at work to the work setting. Work was often

the only common link: outside working hours, interests were often quite different—model making as opposed to dancing, cinema as opposed to rock climbing. And whereas a few years' difference in age may be irrelevant to activity at work, it often makes a considerable difference to leisure interests. Most respondents found that youths and girls who were a few years older than they were "going steady", and therefore had their evenings occupied. An important obstacle to spending leisure time with people from work was the distance of homes from work and from each other—this made meetings difficult. There was some flirting at work, and one girl had a steady boy friend: but on the whole there was little contact between youths and girls.

Attitudes Towards the "Bosses"

Some children worked at firms where the employer and the immediate "boss" were one and the same person—several girls in shops, for example, and boys employed by small building firms. The majority of children worked at medium or large firms, however, and had little contact with the employer or with anyone of managerial level. Most of them received their instructions from a foreman, chargehand or supervisor, or from their "mates". For a substantial number of children, contact with bosses at the intermediate and even at the lower levels, was rare. Having been shown how to operate a machine the factory worker just carried on with the job, only occasionally receiving fresh instructions. Some factory and warehouse workers were told what to do by one of the older employees in the work group ("there is a lady who tells us what to do—we call her Madge"). Some of these youths and girls were unable to say who was in charge of them. There were always jobs waiting to be done, and they got on with them in their work group, not thinking to ask themselves what organization lay behind their activities.

In several of the large firms where respondents worked the hierarchical system was manifest—separate eating places, lavatories and car parking spaces made it plain that some people were superior to others. The Managing Director—if seen at all—stood out in his dark suit, the middle levels of management were obvious in their tweeds, and the foreman could be identified by his brown or white overall. The young worker, in his blue boiler suit, was thus reminded that he and his kind were separated from other levels in the social structure of the factory. In most firms, however, contrasts between bosses and workers were much less marked.

Some children showed considerable respect for the bosses ("They are all good gentlemen") and confidence was expressed in the ability

of the management ("They know what they are up to"). There was admiration for the man who "knows his job", who "has got to the top"—"he is one of the nicest managers on the firm. He came up the hard way. Things were not given to him on a plate—he got on by his own hard work". There was as much resentment as respect, however—bosses were a class apart, "people with their noses up in the air", people who "thought themselves better". They were to be treated with suspicion. ("My boss is like all bosses—money mad, and couldn't care less about people.") "Posh accents" were scoffed at. The denigration of authority was related to the belief that only those who got their hands dirty earned their wages. The manual worker finds it hard to conceive that the administration and management perform any useful function ("Sitting on their bottoms all day"): the men who sit in the Board Room are believed not to know what a capstan lathe looks like, never mind how to operate it. There is no knowledge of the problems with which the bosses have to deal. Any attempt by a boss to close the gap between management and workmen was usually resented. As one youth remarked, "I don't see the boss very much and when I do he doesn't speak. I like it that way." The father of a boy who remarked that he "never speaks to the boss" applauded his son's wisdom, saying, "It doesn't pay—not with most bosses it doesn't." It was really a question of not fraternizing. Most children were indifferent to the higher level bosses and many were oblivious of their existence. The occasion had never arisen for them to have dealings with or think about them.

A substantial number of boys and girls were enthusiastic about the men under whom they worked—their immediate bosses. The latter were judged by a variety of criteria. Many children were nervous about meeting the boss before starting work and afraid of him when they did start—they expected him to be severe. Very few found this to be the case, and boys and girls were accordingly surprised—"He mixes with you for a laugh and a joke", said one boy. Children welcomed such friendliness because it made work more pleasant, and also because it was a sign that they were taken notice of, not disdained by those in charge. Some children who worked for small firms were on especially good terms with their employers—in small stores, girls found that they were "treated as one of the family". Children were known by their Christian names. ("The boss is fine—I get on with him well. He calls me George.") Children especially liked bosses who were "ready to get down to a job themselves" instead of "just sitting back and watching"—"He is a lovely chap," said one labourer, "he is not one of those who just stand there telling you what to do. He gets a shovel and does a lot of work himself." Bosses who were not so

superior that they would not condescend to do the jobs which the worker did were respected.

The boss who was "fair" was much appreciated. If he were not *too* strict, did not expect *too* much, then the children would play their part. The good boss was one who settled a dispute with justice and then forgot about it—"If there is trouble, you have one big row and then it is all over." The definition of "fairness" was stretched by one youth. He said, "I have nothing to grumble at with the job, except the bossy gaffer. He can be O.K. if he wants to be, but usually he doesn't. And he is O.K. if you get up close to him—if you creep. But only two of the men do that, and I'm not one of them." The youth went on to complain that he had been reprimanded twice by the boss: he had "been caught"—"We work on benches which have protective screens, and on Saturday morning the gaffer thinks we are doing 'homework' under cover of them. He comes to check up, and that gives me the pip. Mind you, I *have* done some 'homework'—just welding bits of metal together to make a fishing rod stand for my mate, and that sort of thing. But that's all." He considered it only "fair" that the boss should turn a blind eye when he did "a little bit of homework"—(after all, everybody does it): instead of accepting the position and trusting the employees to use their discretion to keep the homework within limits the boss was ever eagle-eyed. "It's a poor thing", the youth concluded in a grieved tone, and with unconscious irony, "if you can't be trusted by your own gaffer."

Tolerance was also applauded in a boss—a typist said that the chief clerk was "nice and understanding, especially if you make mistakes". Children liked bosses who let them know where they stood—who explained what was and would be expected of them: it has already been emphasized that comparatively few children had bosses who did this. A few words of encouragement meant a lot—"You couldn't wish for a nicer boss. He is most appreciative when you do a good job." In this respect, too, many bosses defaulted and children complained that their effort was taken for granted or not noticed at all. When the father of one girl said that he thought that her boss valued her work, she exclaimed bitterly, "He wants to show it then!" Interest in work met only with rebuffs, and children were convinced that their work did not matter much to anyone—no one cared whether they did it well or badly.

Boys and girls objected strongly to bosses who stood over them all the time, watching and appraising. A shop assistant complained of her boss because of "his way of prowling—he will stay hidden behind a display set, for example, spying on what is going on". Another shop assistant protested that her boss was "suspicious of everything you do",

and "never takes her eyes off what you are doing". A youth was incensed not only because his boss was in the habit of "creeping around" to see whether employees were working hard, but because the boss then "talked behind your back instead of telling you to your face if you had done anything wrong".

Whilst quite prepared to obey the instructions, children objected to bosses who assumed an air of superiority which was out of proportion with their true status. If the foreman tried to behave like a "big boss" instead of "like what he really is—an ordinary working man", then the young worker was both unimpressed and less inclined to cooperate. The worker does not object to receiving orders from one of his own class provided they are given without pretensions of gross superiority. If the boss attempts to exaggerate the proper distance between himself and the ordinary worker the seeds of resentment and of disrespect are sown—"The Supervisor is alright, I suppose, but I don't think much of her. She isn't very different from us, and when she is talking she just speaks ordinary. But when she asks us to do something she puts it on—she puts 'h's' where they shouldn't be, and that." The pretensions of authority and superiority from people of their own kind are anathema to the young worker as to the old.

The boss was, then, much more acceptable if he was, as one youth put it, "one of us"—on the workers' side rather than the employers'. If the immediate boss had the ways of the ordinary worker, spoke and dressed like him, lived in the same sort of house and had the same interests, his authority was respected. A youth gave the highest praise when he said, "The foreman is O.K.—he is just like any other bloke in the factory." (One apprentice builder dissented from this view, allying himself with the superiority of the foreman—"I get on well with him. He is a cut above the working-class. He has tea out of a silver pot, while the rest of the men have theirs out of cans. He is not popular. But I think he is the best chap on the firm.")

All the boys worked under male bosses. A study of supervision in industry has suggested that women supervisors are not popular amongst female labour, partly because of the traditional dominance by men, partly because women suspected female supervisors of being unfair, and of basing their actions on personal feelings rather than on the relevant factors⁽⁴⁸⁾. Many of the girl respondents felt some antipathy towards female bosses—whether they were much older or just a few years senior. There were complaints of bosses being "catty" and "spiteful": one factory girl said, "The manageress is terrible. She favours one person without favouring the others. Soon after I started work she said I had been in the toilet too long, and I said I hadn't. Anyway, she is there for a quarter-of-an-hour herself." Many boys

were in jobs in which they could escape, if only for a few minutes, from the surveillance of a boss whom they did not get on with: girls found it less easy to escape and stored up their resentment. Girls whose bosses were men seemed glad of the fact: men paid them more respect.

Inconsistency in bosses' behaviour was deplored just as it had been in teachers'—"Sometimes she's alright, sometimes she is a tartar and nags, nags, nags. Either you are not doing what you should, or you are doing it wrong. She will natter at you for ages and then forget about it—but I don't forget so easily." A youth protested that his boss was "laughing and joking at one minute and grumpy the next". Children tended to be tolerant of their bosses' shortcomings, however, and some were generous in their judgement. "She has a pretty face, but it's as if it were made of granite", said one girl, "I think she is awkward because she is getting on and has never married". Another girl explained that the supervisor "has rows with her husband" and in consequence was "not up to the mark, really, and tries to take it out of us". A youth pointed out that his boss had "a lot of worries and sometimes takes them out on us. He lets his worries wander into his work". It was recognized that "we all have our faults", and that the nature of the boss's duties inevitably set up some sort of barrier between him and the workmen.

In general, children much preferred their bosses to keep out of the way: the less they had to do with them the better. This enabled boys and girls to feel that they had some independence—they liked to be "left to it to get on with the job". A warehouse packer was glad that in her firm "we don't see much of the boss, unless he wants something done, or something has gone wrong". The best boss was one who "gets on with his own work, whilst other people get on with theirs". This made life easier, but was not conducive to children learning more about their jobs or how they were progressing: but then, most had no wish for such knowledge.

CHAPTER 11

THE NATURE OF THE WORK, TRAINING AND PROGRESS

It has been noted that many children were surprised to find that they were not under constant pressure at work, and that they were more liable to boredom than to fatigue. (One office girl found time to do her Evening School homework during working hours, and usually had an hour to spare in the mornings.) In some occupations, however, boys and girls were kept busy. Several shop assistants in particular referred to the stresses of their work. At off-peak periods there were always jobs to be done, such as arranging displays of goods, making up orders, and tidying the shelves. During rush hours assistants were "run off their feet". A salesgirl on the perfume counter of a department store said that on Saturdays she and two other girls on her counter dealt with three hundred customers between them, and a girl who had left a job as a shop assistant to become a nurse found her second job to be far less tiring.

Nature of the Work

There was more variety in many jobs than had been expected. Hairdressers who knew that they would do washing and cutting had not anticipated tinting, dyeing, and styling. An apprentice builder gave a long list of the things which he had to do—building chimney stacks, slating roofs, fixing fireplaces, plastering ceilings. A plumber had to deal with sink units, bathroom suites, and drainpipes—and was surprised to find that plumbers were concerned with gas fittings as well as water pipes. Gardening had come to mean a lot to one youth, who spoke about the many jobs connected with nursery and landscape work: he was pleased also that he had recently started to operate and service agricultural machinery—motor ploughs, seeders, hedge-cutters and so on. There was more to be learnt, then, than children had anticipated—even van boys discovered that there were invoices to attend to and orders to take. A few boys and girls graduated to positions of responsibility during the year. A warehouse worker was in charge of a section of the stores (he was helped by "his lad"), a shorthand typist acted as secretary to two travellers, and was, in her words, "on my own and able to deal with the work in my own way". The

salesgirls now had their own "books"—they were established and had charge of their own counters.

But most children found that their work involved very few tasks. Shorthand typists took down the same sort of letter hour after hour, and clerks constantly sorted through the same filing cabinets or stuck stamps on the same buff envelopes. Little was demanded: one boy described his work succinctly as "lugging T.V. sets about". Warehouse workers stacked cartons in dozens or scissors in grosses. Packers put cutlery into cases day after day, and machine operators punched holes in pieces of metal week after week. One girl described her work as follows: "You each have a station, and you fill up cartons which go past you on a conveyor belt. The main thing is to fill your section of cartons up quickly." Some jobs could be organized to give a little more variety—the boss might arrange this, or operatives could decide amongst themselves to move from one task to another: but many jobs did not permit of much variation. Several boys looked upon the routine nature of their work as but a prelude to better things to come. They accepted the odd jobs and uninteresting tasks as inevitable. ("You have to start at the bottom" and "someone's got to do the dirty work.") This was considered to be part of the natural order of things: a motor mechanic cheerfully explained that he "mostly did greasing" *because* he was "an apprentice, like".

All but a few children were well able to cope with the tasks which they were set to do. Some boys and girls were elated: they were "getting on smashing" and "doing marvellous", they felt themselves to be in the right jobs and considered that they had "found their vocations". Other children, whilst satisfied that they were competent at their jobs, were more cautious—an engineer, for example, said that although he was "picking the work up bit by bit" there was "ever such a lot more to learn". There was no cause for complacency. Many children pointed out that their work was so undemanding that *anyone* could cope with it—"it's a piece of cake", said one machine operator. There was little regret that the work was so simple: the expressions which children used to describe their progress in their jobs—"alright", "not too bad", "fair"—were as colourless as the jobs themselves. The few children who did find it difficult to keep up with the pace of their work usually muddled through—aided by the fact that the boss remained unaware that they were struggling, and therefore did not remonstrate with them. Two children did leave their first jobs primarily because they were unable to do the work to the satisfaction of their employers, however.

Few employers—or immediate bosses—took the trouble to discuss the young worker's progress with him. In some jobs "progress" is

scarcely an applicable term since the work is so simple. But in other jobs in which there were things to be learnt, no one told boys and girls whether they were doing their tasks in the correct way or whether they were doing well or not. This applied with equal force to apprentices as to workers in semi-skilled jobs. Several boys had been told by their employers that they would be taken on as probationary workers and that they would be kept on if their work was satisfactory. None of these respondents was dismissed, but all remained uncertain about whether their work was of the required standard.

Training and Progress

After a year at work one-fifth of the boys and girls thought that they had "learnt a lot". Eight boys and one girl who were in occupations in which there was plenty to learn felt that they had made very little progress, and others were dissatisfied with the amount that they had learnt. The remainder said that they had learnt sufficient to cope with their jobs, many of them pointing out that there was little to learn.

The respondents who said that they had learnt a lot were in various occupations. One butcher stated that he had learnt "all about the anatomy and physiology of animals and about book-keeping and the commercial world", and another said, "I have learnt a tremendous lot—mostly about cutting up, but also about management and buying meats. In about six months' time, I reckon that I will be able to do the job well enough to be left in charge for a day or two." A property repairer had learnt tiling, fixing doors, bricklaying, and how to dig holes. ("That may sound silly, but it is not as simple as people think, and different jobs—for example, drains—require different types of holes.") A gardener eagerly illustrated his knowledge of the names of plants, and spoke about the times for sowing various seeds, and how to prune trees, and lay out a flower bed. A youth in the R.A.F. proudly displayed his merit stripe, awarded "for proficiency in examinations", and several clerks indicated their knowledge of office systems.

Several of the boys who thought that they had made good progress were undergoing formal training in the large and medium-sized steel and engineering firms. Some Sheffield companies have high reputations for their training schemes; much money and attention is devoted to apprentices particularly. A welder who had been given formal training was very pleased with his progress—"Oh yes! I have learnt a lot. When I first started welding, I didn't know a thing about it, but since then I have done a lot of tests. The foreman shows me what to do, and then I have a go myself. When I pass, I go on to the next test." An apprentice draughtsman was very pleased, too, that he had "learnt

a lot of formulas and about how to set drawings out, and how to do blueprints”.

Most of the children who considered that they had learnt a lot had not undergone any formal training at work. Their employers, foremen or fellow workers had taught them about their jobs during the course of their everyday tasks. There are criticisms of this means of teaching a trade, mainly because training is unsystematic and because the good craftsman is not necessarily a competent teacher. “Standing next to Nelly” or the principle of “thee watch me” can be a successful way of training, however—successful not only with regard to the acquisition of skills but also in inducing an interest in and an affection for the craft such as is perhaps less likely to derive from the more formal atmosphere of a training school. Several boys were very grateful to the men with whom they worked for the help which they had given. This is not to argue that “standing next to Nelly” is sufficient for the training of young workers—but that there can be value for the entrant to employment in working closely with experienced craftsmen who are kindly disposed towards them is a fact which is frequently overlooked. Whatever the quality of the organization for training, and whether young workers receive instruction formally or informally, encouragement or lack of encouragement by the bosses and other workers has a great bearing upon the progress made.

There were a substantial number of children who learnt little during the first year at work, not because there was little to learn, and not because they had no inclination to learn, but because no provision was made for training. Children who felt that they *had* learnt a lot displayed an enthusiasm which could well pay dividends in the quality of their work. Feeling that they were “getting somewhere”, they applied themselves eagerly to their jobs: it was the feeling that they were “getting nowhere” that led to an indifferent attitude in other children.

The 8 boys who thought that they had learnt very little worked in steel and engineering, and the girl was a clerk. These were the extreme cases: there were many other children who had not learnt much. A little thought by the employer could have made these children a lot more satisfied with their progress—factory boys could have been moved from one machine to another, for example, or girl clerks could have been introduced to other branches of office organization. One girl protested bitterly that “you could stay at that firm all your life and still be only a junior. They don’t care about the girls. They won’t let you go to day release—though some of the boys go—and they aren’t even interested whether you go to night school or not. They don’t teach you anything.” A few children who were disappointed

with their rate of learning thought that they might be given more opportunity during their next year at work, but in most cases it seemed clear that the employers had no plans for their future progress.

The majority of children were in jobs in which there was little to learn, however. A warehouse worker stated that "there is a limit to what can be learnt in this job—it is not like a trade", and a store-keeper said, "I have not learnt much. I know where things are kept now, but there is not a lot to learn in this job—it is not a job where you can learn things." Another boy said, "All I had to learn was how to put bottles on a conveyor belt", and a cutlery worker reflected, in a matter-of-fact way, "I have learnt to put scissors together, which took about a fortnight." If that was what was meant by learning, she supposed she had learnt something. These children had not been taught their jobs—"You just pick it up as you go along." A few children who felt that they had made progress during the year knew that there was now nothing more to learn in their jobs—no more was required or desired of them.

It has been noted that many of these children were pleased that their jobs were undemanding, and they were well satisfied that they did not have to tax their minds to learn about their work. Learning was something which they had disliked when it was forced upon them at school, and work was welcomed as an escape from the necessity to learn. Other employees often bolstered up this attitude, for they treated the young person who revealed a desire to learn and progress with ridicule: older men took the view that the ordinary worker stood little chance of advancement, and that work should in any case be accepted as what it was—an imposition, rather than as something which could be interesting. Enthusiasm in young workers was therefore smiled at, and cynical remarks were made, such as "They'll find out before long"—they will find out, that is, that work is to be tolerated and endured, not enjoyed. Most young workers accepted this outlook as valid, and had no wish "to get on" or to "feel you are getting somewhere", such that some of the respondents had. The questions which many of these boys and girls asked themselves when confronted with a contemporary who felt that he was "getting somewhere" were "Where is he getting?" and "Why does he want to get there?" So far as they were concerned, it was all a matter of wasted effort and self-deception.

Four of the 42 apprentices at the time of Interview 3 had started work within the last few weeks, having remained at school for an extra year. Eight of the remaining 38 had changed jobs during the course of the year, but all except a few of these had been in their jobs for several months: 30 boys had been apprentices in the same jobs for

the whole of the year. Only 10 apprentices thought that they had learnt a lot: the remainder thought that they could have learnt a lot more (though many were not disappointed that they had not), and 4 boys considered that they had learnt "next to nothing" during the year. (Some employers give more training after boys have reached the age of sixteen, looking on the first year as a chance for them to get orientated to work in general.)

Several of the boys who thought that they had learnt a lot had undergone formal training at the steel and engineering works where they were employed: one apprentice pointed out that the training school at his firm was "supposed to be the best in Britain, and probably in the world": the youth was proud about this, and he said, "You do get good training at this firm, and although the training school has been going for some years, you work on the newest equipment." Several boys were impatient with the formal training schemes in which they were participating, however. Training was a bit too much like school, and they were anxious to "get down to the real thing"—they would have been more enthusiastic, and probably more susceptible to training, if they had had the opportunity to spend more time during their first year with the men on the jobs. Many young workers were prone to regard training schemes as pointless and would have preferred to feel that they were at least making *some* contribution to production. There was some dissatisfaction in the large firms about lack of training, however: although the facilities may be there, it is easy for young workers to get lost, or to be overlooked, when there are such a large number of employees. Furthermore, immediate bosses—foremen and chargehands—may not share the management's enthusiasm for training—they are more interested in getting efficient production immediately, and so far as they are concerned, the quiet apprentice who gets on with whatever task he is set (no matter how long he is left on it) is preferable to the keen apprentice who is forever asking questions and wanting to be shown how to do things.

Some of the boys employed by large steel firms were pre-apprentices during their first year at work. One aim of this scheme is to provide the opportunity for young workers to become acquainted with the overall organization of the firm and its many and varied activities. A few of the pre-apprentices were very appreciative of this opportunity: one youth, for example, said that he had worked in various departments, "helping out and learning", and had learnt a lot about many different processes. He now knew where and how his particular job fitted in. Such movement from department to department is not usually part of a co-ordinated scheme, however—and learning is dependent upon the goodwill of foremen rather than be-

ing part of an organized plan. Other youths did not have this opportunity of familiarizing themselves with the factories: intending draughtsmen and pattern makers found themselves doing a year's work as messenger boys in the offices. They may have gained some knowledge about the administrative side of industry, but this was no compensation to them when they were straining at the leash to get on to the factory floor. What they wanted was to get a pair of overalls on and take a micrometer in their hands. To spend the day in running messages, sorting files and fetching tea was no satisfaction, and a year seemed a very long time to have to put up with this. Several pre-apprentices thus considered that their first year at work was wasted—"playing around with odd jobs".

Another aim of the pre-apprentice year is to provide an opportunity for selecting boys for particular trades in accordance with their preferences and performances (at Day Release classes and Evening School as well as at work). It would seem that the pre-apprentice year often offers little direct evidence about the children's suitability for particular jobs, and many boys had little opportunity for familiarizing themselves with different trades—thus one boy said:

I think it bad that, wasting a year. If they knew where you were going at sixteen they could put you in that department for a year. If they didn't, they could give you, say, three months in different departments. It was just a waste of time being in an office. I did not learn anything. It is of no use unless you are interested in clerical work. Some of the lads were in the sheet metal department—but even they found they did not do a great deal—they just helped on odd jobs. I would rather have done that, even though it is not much better than being in an office. From what my friends say, I think that most people feel the same about this year.

In smaller firms, some employers went to a lot of trouble to ensure that apprentices received training: apprentices were regarded as very important employees. One youth who worked at an engineering factory recalled how displeased his employer had been when he found him sweeping up round the machines. The employer told the workman who had given the instructions that the labourers were there to do that sort of thing. Apprentices at his firm were there to learn, not to do odd jobs. But most employers did not bother to organize training for their apprentices. An apprentice bricklayer said that his boss's attitude was that "You are not being paid for talking": youths were expected merely to do what they were told, not to ask questions. "Training" amounted to no more, in a large number of firms, than watching the next man and "picking odd things up as you go along". There was no "teaching" or instruction.

Several apprentices stated that there was little to learn in their jobs: many apprenticeships are, indeed, out of line with modern

methods of production. An apprentice fitter, with five years still to serve, said "I have learnt everything that is necessary—there is not much to learn, and I could not learn much more." He was substantially correct. There is considerable evidence, notably that presented by Kate Liepmann, that former crafts are now simply "one skill" jobs, and that others are to all intents and purposes de-skilled because machinery has replaced operations previously done by hand⁽⁴⁹⁾. The level of skill which is attained is dependent, furthermore, not just upon the trade which is involved, but upon the nature of the firm's specializations. An apprentice fitter in a firm with a limited range of products may thus learn only some aspects of the craft. In some skills, indeed, apprentices do little more than act as operatives for five or six years, until they are qualified by time to be called skilled men.

Ironically, whilst some apprenticeships do not involve the acquisition of much skill and do not have comprehensive training associated with them, a substantial number of non-apprentices are in work which involves both skill and responsibility—this is particularly true in new occupations, for example in the chemical industry⁽⁵⁰⁾. In the present study, several youths who were not apprentices were receiving far more training—both formal and informal—than were many apprentices.

The national need for skilled manpower is undisputed, and the demand amongst young people for the opportunity to train—though by no means universal—is certainly not lacking. Some Sheffield firms are at the forefront in the provision of training for young workers. A number of these firms hold annual prize-giving ceremonies, attended by young employees, their families and friends, and by representatives of local education authorities. At these ceremonies awards and presentations give tangible expression to the value which the firms place upon training. There is also in Sheffield a scheme for the nomination of an "Apprentice of the Year", who is chosen from a short list of candidates who are interviewed by a committee which includes the Youth Employment Officer and the Master Cutler.

Firms do not exist, as schools do, primarily to educate young people: they exist to produce goods and make a profit. Yet many firms, especially those with large labour forces, do devote much money and effort to training their workers. If there is no alternative supply of skilled labour, it is an economic necessity for a firm to train its own men, but many firms devote more energy and resources to their training schemes than economic necessity alone would require. It is a mistake to assume that private companies are completely lacking in responsibility towards their employees and the community as a whole,

and although training schemes are operated essentially with the well-being of the firm in mind, some companies do regard their work in this field as a social service. Firms may widen the scope of their instruction beyond that which is necessary for their own requirements, for example—to give a broad training which would ensure that the apprentice will, at the end of his course, be competent to work in any other firm in the industry. Firms may also train a number of apprentices in excess of their own requirements, gearing their intake to the firm's capacity for training. This constitutes a service to other firms in the industry who make no contribution to the training of the workers from whose skill they will eventually benefit: and firms are not loath to poach skilled men from competitors. Whilst large firms recognize that there is an indirect gain to them arising out of the prestige of their training schemes—the “good name” is a commercial asset—there is some feeling that they should be given substantial tax concessions to offset the cost of the schemes, and as a recognition of their service to the economy.

The provision of training is an expensive business. Wages of apprentices are not so much less than those of production workers, compared with earlier years, and the wages for apprentices who are granted one day at Day Release Classes are for a four-day week. The small firm, with high labour costs in relation to production, may therefore find it very difficult to devote much time to training its young workers—and it cannot afford non-productive workers. The employer's task is to get the job on hand done as quickly as possible, furthermore, and he often does not have time to bother himself about training. Small firms which depend primarily upon sub-contracting and ancillary work are in any case unable to provide the comprehensive training which apprenticeship implies. Some small firms have accordingly co-operated in the provision of group apprenticeship schemes, whereby a youth is apprenticed to one firm but undergoes some of his training with other firms in the group.

In Sheffield the Cutlery Apprenticeship Scheme was inaugurated in 1954 to provide for the training of youths employed in the industry: the Youth Employment Service played a leading part in the organization of this scheme, and Sheffield's Youth Employment Officer acts as Secretary. (The Youth Employment Service also played a prominent rôle in establishing the Sheffield Forges Co-operative Training Scheme, for training youths in the craft of forging steel.)

The provision of training in Sheffield by individual companies, and in group schemes with the co-operation of the Youth Employment Service and the local education authority, thus compares favourably with other cities. The training of young people is a national problem,

however, and the fact is as obvious in Sheffield as it is elsewhere. The setting up of a sub-committee of the National Joint Advisory Council in 1956 to consider the recruitment and training of young workers in industry was a recognition of the existence of this problem, and the report of the sub-committee (the Carr Report)⁽⁵¹⁾ gave an indication of its extent. As a result of the recommendations of the Carr Report, the Industrial Training Council was established in 1958 to keep the recruitment and training of young workers under review, to encourage and assist industries to train workers and to disseminate information about training. The Carr Report approved the principle that the "industrial training of apprentices should rest firmly with industry."⁽⁵²⁾ It is felt by many that the Industrial Training Council is distinctly ineffective and that it certainly does not measure up to the needs of the nation. It is argued by some that the training of young workers, particularly apprentices, should be the responsibility of the state. That there are many deficiencies in the training of youths and girls at work is quite clear. The work of Kate Liepmann and Lady Williams⁽⁵³⁾ has indicated the anachronisms of the apprenticeship system and its inflexibilities (resulting in *unadaptable* workers at a time of rapid technological change), and has shown the hollowness of much that passes under the name of training. Inadequacies are apparent in large and small firms, in skilled occupations and semi-skilled, for boys and for girls. Many children are capable of better jobs than are available to them. In his speech to introduce Commonwealth Technical Training Week in May 1961, the Duke of Edinburgh made the following comment: "In 1960 in Great Britain 550,000 young people aged 15-17 entered employment. 420,000 of them went into unskilled jobs. I refuse to believe that this is the right proportion either for the individuals or for the country as a whole."

It is well to realize that many of the 130,000 who entered skilled jobs were doomed to receive training which was deficient in quality and quantity.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Most children were familiar with the idea of Evening School at their first interview but only a few knew about Day Release—remarks such as “What’s that?” and “Never heard of it” were common. A small number of children were at this time keen to attend Evening Classes—“I am determined to go, and to keep my attendance up,” said one boy, “though this is easier said than done.” Some children recognized that there were jobs in which attendance at Evening School was required: although they were willing to go if necessary most of them hoped to find jobs where this was not the case. Further education was regarded rather as a medicine, not to be taken unless prescribed—and with rather a nasty taste. Several boys and girls stated bluntly that they had no intention of entering jobs which would involve giving up their evenings. After a day at work they would want their evenings free—“Night school is wrong,” said one boy, “that is supposed to be your leisure time.” A few children took the view that Evening School once or twice a week could be a relief from boredom (“it passes the time”), and thought that they might go if they had nothing better to do (“provided it is on a different evening from popping night at the Youth Club”). Most children wanted to have done with school and learning altogether, however. This was true of many who liked school, as well as of those who disliked it: for “much as you like school, you don’t want that sort of thing when you leave”. The view was that school had had its chance, and could only blame itself if it had not taken it—it was no good expecting children to go to Evening School to make up for what school had failed to do. Boys and girls were quick to seize upon adverse comments about Evening School—“My mate went, and he didn’t think much of it.” There seemed to be no point in wasting one’s time.

Attendance at Classes During the First Year at Work

Approximately two-fifths of the boys (43) and one-third of the girls *at work* (26) went to Evening School, Day Release School or both during their first year at work. Some did not keep up their attendance for long.

TABLE 37
ATTENDANCE AT FURTHER EDUCATION CLASSES

	Boys	Girls
Had attended Further Education Classes	43	26
Had attended Evening School Classes	34	23
Had attended Day Releases Classes	28	6
Had attended Evening School and Day Release	19	3
Had attended Evening School only	15	20
Had attended Day Release only	9	3

Approximately one-third of the boys and girls *at work* attended Evening School during the first year (since 17 girls were on full-time courses for at least part of the year, the proportion of all girls who received some form of further education was about the same as that for boys). Twelve of the girls attending Evening Classes went to private Commercial Colleges. Six of the boys and 8 girls stopped attending classes before the end of the year. The weekly attendance of those who completed their courses is shown in Table 38.

TABLE 38
WEEKLY ATTENDANCE AT EVENING CLASSES

	Boys	Girls
Attended 1 a week	10	5
Attended 2 a week	7	7
Attended 3 a week	11	3
Total	28	15

Just over one-quarter of the boys (28) and only 6 girls attended Day Release Classes during their first year at work. Five of the boys stopped going when they changed jobs, and the privilege was withdrawn from one girl because of her failure to attend Evening School. (The girl had no wish to attend, and regarded Day Release as an imposition.) As throughout the country, very few Sheffield girls attend Day Release Classes. Employers, parents, and the girls themselves did not visualize Day Release as concerning them. From the employer's point of view, Day Release was not regarded as a sound investment, for the girls would soon leave to marry, and if they returned to work later on it would probably be for a different firm. In any case, most girls were in jobs in which vocational education was not applicable.

There were no straightforward relationships between either occupation or level of skill and attendance at classes. Boys doing similar work might or might not go to Day Release or Evening School, depending largely upon the employer's policy. Whereas several respondents in semi-skilled jobs participated in further education, many apprentices did not do so. Half of the boys who attended Evening School (17 out of 34) and half of those who went to Day Release Classes (14 out of 28) were employed in steel and engineering. Other occupations in which some boys were granted Day Release were woodwork, building, painting and decorating, plumbing, butcher, coal mining, G.P.O. messenger, and shop assistant. In a few trades, classes were provided from the age of sixteen and several boys expected to attend them during their second year at work.

Only one-half of the boys who had been apprentices at some stage during the year had been to further education classes. One-third had been to Day Release School. Some had been apprentices for only a short time, and the employers of others recommended them to start classes at the age of sixteen. Of the 34 boys who remained apprentices for the whole of the first year (30 stayed at the same firm and 4 changed from one apprenticeship to another) only 19 had attended classes.

TABLE 39
I.Q. GRADES AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Boys	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Totals
Attended classes in first year at work	13	15	12	3	43
Totals in grades	22	32	33	15	100
Girls					
Attended classes in first year at work	12	7	6	1	26
Attended full-time course	9	6	2	0	17
Totals in grades	31	33	29	7	100

Most of the girls who went to Evening School and Day Release School were office workers who were learning shorthand and typing, but other occupations included hairdressing, shop assistant, florist and seamstress.

A higher proportion of children from I.Q. Grade I attended further education classes than from the other grades—a reflection of the types of work entered and of personal inclinations. But attendance was by no means confined to respondents in the higher grades.

Expected Attendance During Second Year at Work

Whereas some children were quite definite that they would attend classes during their second year at work, many were vague about the position. It is most unlikely that all of those who thought that they might attend classes would do so, and the following analysis must therefore be treated with considerable reservation. More reliance can be placed upon the figures relating to Day Release than on those concerned with Evening School.

Half of the boys (53) and one-quarter of the girls were either definite or thought that they might attend classes during the second year at work. Forty-eight boys and 21 girls envisaged going to Evening School, and of these, 23 boys and 7 girls had not attended Evening School during the first year at work. Four boys and 1 girl had intended to go to classes the previous year but had failed to enrol in time. (Many children relied upon friends and neighbours for information about when to enrol for classes, and some were given false information. Notices in newspapers and on posters were not seen or not read. Only one of the respondents who had been too late to register had made any arrangements to ensure that he would not miss the course in the following year. He had asked a neighbour to remind him to enrol—"The missus in the house next door works as a cleaner at one of the schools and she is going to let me know when I can sign on.") Some children had changed during the year to jobs in which classes were advised or required. Several boys were in occupations in which courses were not provided until the age of sixteen. The figures include 2 boys and 1 girl who remained at school for an extra year. Some of the boys who had attended Evening School three nights a week during the first year at work expected to start Day Release Classes during the second year and then to attend Evening School only once a week.

Twenty-nine boys and 7 girls expected that they would attend Day Release Classes during the second year. Nineteen of the 29 boys and 4 of the 7 girls had attended Day Release Classes during their first year at work. In addition, 12 boys thought that they would be granted Day Release at some stage. These figures fit in broadly with the national picture—the Crowther Report points out that roughly one-third of all boys in employment under the age of eighteen attend Day Release Classes, but only 8 per cent of the girls⁽⁵⁴⁾.

It is to be expected that a somewhat higher proportion of Sheffield youths would attend Day Release Classes because the steel and engineering industry lends considerable support to the scheme, and because large firms are more able to grant the privilege. Girls do not have a greater chance of attending Day Release in Sheffield than elsewhere.

Fifteen of the 27 boys employed in steel and engineering expected to attend further education classes: only 9 thought that they would be going to Day Release Classes. Totals in other occupations were small; 7 of the 9 boys in building, painting and decorating expected to attend (5 of them at Day Release school). All 5 butchers thought they would go (1 at Day Release), both plumbers expected to attend Day Release, as did 1 of the motor mechanics (the other 2 intended to go to Evening School).

All except 6 of the 42 apprentices at Interview 3 expected to attend further education classes during the following year. Over one-half of them (22, plus 3 in H.M. Forces) thought that they would attend Day Release School, and another 6 thought that there was a reasonable chance of doing so at some time in the future. Even if all of the latter did go to Day Release school eventually, however, one quarter of the apprentices would not have this privilege. Of the 16 apprentices in engineering and steel, 8 expected to go to Day Release and 5 to Evening Classes: 3 did not expect to attend either.

One-quarter of the boys in I.Q. Grade I (6 out of 22) and one-half of the girls (15 out of 31) had no intention or expectation of going to further education classes during their second year at work.

“Wastage” of Students

There is a high wastage rate amongst part-time students in this country. The Government pamphlet *Better Opportunities in Technical Education*⁽⁵⁵⁾ referred to a “disturbingly high” proportion of students who do not complete courses or who fail to pass the examinations at the end of them, and the Crowther Report provided clear evidence of wastage—especially after the first year or two.

Of the 34 boys who attended Evening School during their first year at work, 6 stopped going before completing the year, and 2 more did not intend to go during the following year. Of the 23 girls who went to Evening School, 8 ceased to attend during the year. Three more girls did not intend to go to classes during the second year, but this was because they had completed their typewriting courses. The other children who gave up attending classes did so for a variety of reasons—some changed their jobs, some found it too much of a rush to get there on time, some thought that the lessons were irrelevant to their work, and some were dissatisfied with their progress. Most of them (like many who continued to attend) had never been more than half-hearted in their approach to further education. Decisions to stop going to classes were taken lightly—boys and girls failed to attend one week because they were “fed up”. They perhaps told themselves that they would go the following week, but when the time came round

they "did not feel like it" or did not want to risk having to explain their previous absence. One boy stopped going because there was a 'bus strike, and "just didn't get round to going again after that".

Of the 28 boys who went to Day Release Classes during their first year at work, 5 stopped before the end of the year and 4 more did not expect to attend the following year. Job changes accounted for this wastage. One girl stopped attending during the year because her firm was not prepared to let her go, since she refused to attend Evening School: and 1 other girl did not expect to go the following year because she had changed her job.

The Further Education Examination

At the time when the respondents were in their last year at school it was possible for pupils to sit an Evening School examination which gave exemption from the first year courses to successful candidates. (The examination has since been amended in several ways: it is now designed specifically for children at school, and it is held during school hours, instead of during the evening.) The examination consisted of papers in English, Practical Mathematics, Science and Geometrical Drawing. Most girls who sat the examination took only the first two subjects.

Of the respondents, over one-half of the boys and one-third of the girls took the examination. Not all of those who entered for it sat all the papers (one was taken ill, others "got fed up" and "did not bother", and a few forgot to attend).

TABLE 40
FURTHER EDUCATION EXAMINATION

	Boys	Girls
Took the examination	55	33
Pass in 4 subjects	16	—
Pass in 3 subjects	12	—
Pass in 2 subjects	18	18
Pass in 1 subject	4	13
Pass in 0 subject	5	2

Most of the children entered for the examination were from the top two I.Q. Grades, but a substantial minority, 11 boys and 4 girls, were from Grade III (there were no candidates from Grade IV). Seven of the Grade III boys and 1 girl passed in at least two subjects. A substantial number of children who were competent to pass the examination did not take it. Less than one-third of the boy candidates passed

in all four subjects, and only just over one-half of the girls passed in both subjects. The high failure rate was in accordance with the overall results for the examination. (Of 3,288 papers taken by boys and girls in 1958, 999 were failed, and results in 1959 were similar⁽⁵⁶⁾.)

As a link between school and further education, the examination could not be counted as a considerable success. Only 25 of the 55 boys who took the examination went to Evening School during their first year at work. Another 4 went to Day Release Classes only, and 3 remained at school for an extra year. Thus, 23 boys who took the examination did not continue their education. Nine youths who did *not* take the examination *did* attend Evening School during their first year at work. Generally speaking, at least 3 passes are required for boys to gain exemption from the first year Course at Evening School. Of the 28 boys who passed in 3 or 4 subjects, only 15 went to Evening School during their first year at work, and some of them did not benefit from this "exemption". Eleven of the 33 girls who took the examination went on full-time courses when they left school (2 of them gaining scholarships to a Commercial Course organized by the local authority on the basis of the examination). Ten girls who took the examination attended Evening School (5 who passed in two subjects, 4 who passed in one subject and 1 who passed in no subjects). Thus, 12 girls who took the examination did not continue their education either full-time or part-time. Twelve girls who did *not* take the examination *did* go to Evening School. Thus, many children who attended Evening School (or Day Release School) during their first year at work had not taken the examination, whilst many who had passed it did not continue their education at all, or did not start attending classes until their second year at work and therefore lost the advantage of exemption from the first year of study. The examination had most relevance for boys likely to enter technical trades, notably steel and engineering; several youths went into occupations in which the further education courses were unrelated to the examination subjects.

There was much indifference about the examination—most children attached little significance to it; competent children took the examination and failed because of lack of interest and effort. A substantial number of children soon forgot that they had taken the examination, and were ignorant of and unconcerned about the result.

Some children (and possibly their teachers) regarded the examination less as a link between school and further education than as a qualification which might help in finding employment. But most employers were unfamiliar with the examination, and none appeared to take much account of it. One apprentice engineer who gained

exemption from the first year said that his employer wanted him to start the Evening School course "right from the beginning"—for "then he knows I have covered the lot". The employer had not heard much about the examination at school, and was doubtful of its value.

Though not especially effective as a link between school and further education such examinations may perform a useful function if, and insofar as, they give purpose to children in their final year at school. Probably a School Leaving Examination could achieve that end more satisfactorily. It is strongly felt by many people, of course, that the introduction of examinations to secondary modern schools—especially for children below the top level of ability—merely betokens the entry of these schools into the academic "rat-race"—and bedevils any attempt the school may otherwise make to provide an education which is suited to the needs of its pupils, and which is not orientated towards an examination syllabus.

Attitudes Towards Further Education

Some children were enthusiastic about Evening School and Day Release School. The most earnest boys and girls were those who wished to progress in their jobs. They thought that the discipline and effort which studying demanded were well worthwhile: one youth who hoped eventually to become a draughtsman cited the experience of his uncle, who "only went to an ordinary school, but then went to night school and kept at it. He lost his hair over it but he succeeded, and he has now got letters after his name." The respondent was keen to follow his uncle's example. Another youth ridiculed the attitude of three of his friends who had refused an opportunity to train as rollers in the steelworks because they would have suffered a loss of earnings in the short-run—"They don't want to go to Day Release because they would lose money on piece-rates: but they will never get far in life if they can't be bothered to study". (Although loss of earnings through attendance at Day Release School might be appreciable at a later age, fifteen- and sixteen-year-old boys did not suffer much in this respect: one steelworker received a bonus of 30s. 0d. for the four days which he worked; his take-home pay was over £4 a week.) Several youths were encouraged in their studies by the thought that they were privileged: one machine operator contrasted his own good fortune with that of his friends, whose employers did not grant Day Release and who therefore "had to make it up by going in the evenings". Since his firm played its part, he was determined to do his best.

Many children were much less positive in their attitudes. The best that several could find to say of Day Release and Evening School was that they helped to pass the time—"It gets the nights over," said one

youth, "and there's nothing much for lads of sixteen and seventeen to do." Another youth said, "There is not much else to do in winter." Day Release was welcomed in that it reduced the evenings at school from three to one a week, and because it "made a change from work". Several youths regarded Day Release as the opportunity for a "scive"—a chance to do nothing and be paid for it. Others thought little about the classes, just going along at the appointed times, but without reacting in any positive way. A few refused to take further education seriously, regarding it in the words of one boy, as "all a bit of a lark"—it was pleasant to meet old friends and have a laugh and a chat. A substantial number of boys were grudging about their attendance, and some were determined to make as little effort as possible. ("I don't want any Certificates—I don't want to be a foreman, sitting in an office all day, filling in forms and drawing plans.") Evening School was particularly disliked by some. The classroom held no attraction after a day of being confined within the factory. At a time when interest in study might have been awakened by the spur of doing something different from schooldays, education became even more of a drudgery. Many boys therefore found attendance at Evening School to be a constant test of their will and patience. Some attended regularly ("I don't like it much, but I have to stick at it, I want to get on"), but others were irregular in their attendance. Sometimes they "just didn't feel like it", at other times the cinema, dance hall or Youth Club was too strong a temptation to resist. ("If the lads are going to the Palais for a dance I might decide to go with them instead of to classes—I don't feel like classes after a day at work. I feel like taking things easy.") All the time study intrudes so obviously into leisure activities, especially to the extent of three nights a week, most youths are likely to continue to regard it as a nuisance and a bore rather than as an opportunity.

Some children who were very active in their leisure time managed to fit Evening Classes in—although a smaller proportion of boys and girls attending Evening School went regularly to the cinema and very few went there as much as three times a week. An active social life may be conducive, or at least not prejudicial to success in part-time studies: the work of Ethel Venables on apprentices attending part-time Technical College courses suggests this conclusion⁽⁶⁷⁾. (Those children who complained most about having their activities curtailed were often bored and inactive during their leisure.) Classes that finished at half-past-eight or at nine o'clock left time for an hour or so in a coffee bar, so that the evening was not *entirely* devoid of leisure and freedom. The attraction of leisure activities accounted for many children not starting to attend Evening School, but was responsible for only a

few ceasing to attend: those who stopped going did so rather because they could see no point in the lessons, because they felt that they were not progressing, or because they changed their jobs.

A few parents were very keen for their children to attend classes, and some boys and girls attended only because of their parents' insistence that they do so ("Dad is dead-set on me going", said one boy, and a girl who was rather "fed up" with lessons kept going "because it keeps father happy"). An apprentice who failed the examination at the end of his first year at Evening School had been given strict instructions from a "furious" father to "buckle down" to his studies the following year: father was not prepared to tolerate any nonsense. Such parents insisted upon regularity of attendance. ("If I didn't want to keep it up, Mum would make me—she's that sort.") One youth had intended to go to watch Sheffield Wednesday play Moscow Dynamos one night, but his father "found out", led him to the bottom of the alley way between his house and the next and said, firmly, "Night school for you!" (When Manchester United were the opponents a few weeks later, the youth managed to evade his father and went to the match with six students from the same class.) There was a definite tendency for parents who had had a selective education to encourage their children to attend further education classes—three-quarters of the boys with parents who had attended selective schools went to Evening Classes, compared with one-third of the boys as a whole, and one-third of the girls as compared with one-quarter of the girls as a whole. Parental encouragement may lead to the success of the "plodder" who would otherwise fail in his studies. The less able child can make up to some extent for his lack of ability by application to the work, interest and regularity of attendance.

Few parents were enthusiastic about further education, however: most knew little about it, and whilst perhaps thinking that "education is a good thing" did not feel that it was of vital importance. ("There's no harm in Fred going if he wants to—I think it's quite a good idea, really", and "one night a week doesn't hurt".) The decision about whether or not to attend—and whether to continue once having started courses—was left to the children themselves.

Courses

Most boys who went to Evening School took the Technical Course. This consisted of four subjects—Mathematics, Science, Technical Drawing and English. The Course required attendance on three evenings a week, or one evening plus one full day at Day Release School. There were two levels: the Preliminary Course (for those who had not gained exemption through the Further Education Examination)

which normally led on to City and Guilds examinations, and the Preparatory Course which normally, but not invariably, led on to the Ordinary National Certificate. There were also specialized Courses for some occupations, for example painting and decorating, printing, and the meat trade. Most of the girls studied commercial subjects. A course in Shorthand, Typewriting and English took three evenings a week; another course, for copy typists, consisted of Typewriting and English and took two evenings. Most of the Evening Classes organized by the local education authority lasted for about twenty-five weeks, with a long break in the summer.

During the respondents' first year at work, Day Release Classes were held in temporary premises in various parts of the city: the College of Further Education is now housed in a central, modern building (there are plans for building more Colleges in Sheffield). Most of the boys who were employed in steel and engineering attended courses which aimed at preparing them for entry to the first year of National Certificate or City and Guilds Courses. Special courses were available for motor vehicle mechanics and electricians, for cutlery apprentices, and for clerical workers. Commercial courses were provided for girls. Day Release courses available at other colleges in Sheffield included painting and decorating, building, silversmithing, dress design and hairdressing. Normally children who attended Day Release classes were expected to go to Evening School one night a week. Most of the Day Release Classes involved attending one day a week for forty weeks of the year. Three girls and one boy who worked for the Co-operative Society went to classes organized by their employers, and attended for half a day each week.

At the beginning of their last term at school, only a handful of children had a sound knowledge about the courses available: the vagueness persisted after boys and girls had left school, and was just as evident amongst those who took the Further Education examination as amongst those who did not do so. The examination certainly did not make clear to children the way ahead. The girls knew precisely what courses they were taking, and how long they would last—there were no complications, since the object of learning shorthand and typewriting was quite clear. But most of the boys remained vague and even after a year of attending classes only a handful knew precisely what course they had taken, how many years the course would last, what subject options they had and what standards they would be required to reach. The majority had not thought about their further education in these terms. They had been told to attend classes by employers or parents, or they themselves felt in a vague and general way that it was a good idea to do so. They accordingly enrolled, but

it did not occur to them to give thought to the programme of studies or to the appropriateness of the course. They believed that all they had to do was go along to the classes. Even some of the most keen students were vague about their courses—an example is an apprentice plumber who was working hard for examinations which were to be held the following week, but who did not know the nature of the examinations (except for the subjects involved) and did not know what the next step would be. One youth in a clerical job vaguely wondered why he was not studying English. He had gone so far as to mention the matter to his employer, who had told him that it was “not necessary”. The youth accepted the reply, taking the view that it was not for him to reason why. The term “City and Guilds” relating to the examinations which most of the boys were working towards, meant little or nothing. Either boys had never heard of the examinations, or they had forgotten about them. Ignorance about the courses which their sons were taking was shared by the parents of most of them. Many of the boys who were expecting to start classes during their second year at work did not know what subjects they would study or how many evenings a week they would attend. Vagueness and ignorance were due in part to lack of interest and in part to not knowing who to ask for information (even the “obvious” plan of asking the teacher did not occur). Children were in any case inclined to the view that it was not their responsibility to make inquiries—they thought that someone would tell them what to do and when to do it. When parents cannot or do not advise, there is often no one else to help: friends are no wiser, employers are indifferent or unaware that the children are lacking in information and guidance, and the Youth Employment Officer is not seen. Contact with teachers (at Evening School especially) appeared to be limited on the whole to formal lesson time. If introductory lessons had been given at Evening School they were not listened to or soon forgotten. Silberston has pointed out in the national context that there is rarely any efficient provision for the transfer of school record cards or information based on them to the further education college⁽⁵⁸⁾. Whilst some colleges use preliminary grading tests, most are reduced to coping with an insurgence of young people, of ability and attainment which vary considerably, as best they can—with few facts to go on, and with only a few hours of registration time available. The Crowther Report suggested that further education establishments tend to accept young people for whatever course they declare themselves to want—“The position is in a sense akin to that of a public library—it issues the book a borrower wants, whether or not he is capable of understanding it.”⁽⁵⁹⁾ Undoubtedly some of the less able respondents were attending classes

which were unsuited to their needs and aptitudes: they found it difficult to follow the lessons.

Several boys spoke of the difficulty which they had in concentrating, especially at Evening School when they were tired after a day at work. "You can understand his feelings," said one father of his son, "When he has been out in the wet and cold all day on a building site, he doesn't like rushing around to get to Evening School, and he is worn out when he gets there." The evening meal—the main meal of the day—had to be bolted down, in order that children could get to classes on time. Some boys had long journeys: one attended a course which was held at a College on the opposite side of the city from his home: he had "a long trek home" when he attended classes, and was away from his home from 7.30 a.m. until well after 9 o'clock at night. Further education became a fatiguing struggle to keep up with lessons for a substantial number of children. Studying had never come easily to most of these boys and some had never studied seriously before. "You have to keep at it hard if you want to remember it," said one youth, "I find I can read two pages and remember, but when I have read the next two pages I have forgotten the first two." There was a tendency to rush homework and then to despair when low marks were obtained—the father of one youth said, "He likes to dash through his homework to get it done quickly, so it is not done thoroughly. And he gets annoyed and easily gives up, throwing it to one side if he gets stuck."

Many boys felt that they had made little progress during their first year of further education, especially those who attended Evening School only. (End of term reports were unrevealing or unread.) It has been officially recognized that "the need to provide extra time in the courses for craftsmen and technicians is urgent"⁽⁶⁰⁾; lack of time for studying was an important reason for the failure of children to progress as much as they would have liked. Evening Classes are a much less satisfactory way of learning than Day Release Classes, judged by examination results⁽⁶¹⁾. There was evident in some boys a resigned acceptance that their further education would involve a constant struggle against the odds, and this was typified in the remark of one apprentice that "You don't expect to pass the exam first time—you reckon to have three goes at it."

Lack of progress was also attributed to very different causes, however. Some boys found that others in the class were "miles ahead" of them—that the lessons were too advanced. One difficulty which faces the teachers is the low attainment of many pupils in basic subjects, especially mathematics: before they can proceed to parts of the syllabus in which the relevance to tasks done at work is clear, they have to

go over elementary steps. (It is of little avail merely to put the blame on the secondary modern schools, since often the same teachers are involved: a national shortage of Science and Mathematics teachers is one important reason for the low attainment of many children in these subjects.) One youth, a G.P.O. worker, attended the wrong classes: he said, "There has been no proper teacher for Science lately, so I have been put in to do the same Science as the lads from the steel-works, but that is no good for me". (Especially since the examination for which he was supposed to be preparing included Geography, which he was not studying, but not Science—at least, so he believed.) The youth had recently been to see his teacher, who was sorting the position out: but the session was nearing its close, and a year had been wasted. Some boys thought that the first year, at Evening School especially, was "a waste of time—you just mess about"—going through the motions of studying without actually learning anything. No new ground was covered compared with what these boys had done at school. Youths could see no relevance of their studies to the tasks which they did at work, furthermore. The connections between classroom studies and jobs done at work have to be made very clear before most children can perceive them: in some courses there is little connection, and in others the connection is not brought out sufficiently. Later in the course, students would probably have been better able to recognize the relevance of algebra to draughtsmanship and of geometrical theories to pattern making, but by that time many would have ceased to attend classes, in part because they "couldn't see the use of it". The courses were very disappointing to many: apprentices who would have been interested to learn about machines found that they were only offered the same old stuff—English, Mathematics and Science—"You don't get down to the *real* things". Education is judged by its practical value, and youths who still had some of the initial *élan* at having exchanged the pen for a spanner did not look kindly upon chalk and blackboard. Even Science lessons, at Evening School especially, tended to be "blackboard" lessons—lack of time and facilities precluded experiments and demonstrations. Some boys compared Day Release Classes favourably with Evening Classes in this respect—"You use machinery at Day Release School", said one boy eagerly, and another said, "At Day Release Classes you *make* things, you use a file and a drill and that sort of thing, so it is interesting." It was much better than Evening School, where all you did was sums and writing. Another criticism of both Evening School and Day Release was that the "theory" which was taught had no relevance to the way in which jobs were actually done. "What they taught us is different from the way my mates do it", said one youth, who was

more inclined to go by what his mates did—they had to do the work after all. A joiner distinguished three ways of doing a job—“how it used to be done” (that is, thoroughly), “how they teach you at night school” (that is, as if you had a week to do the job instead of half an hour), and “how it is actually done” (that is, in half an hour).

Whilst some boys were disappointed that the further education classes did not fit in with their jobs, others did not expect that there would be any connection. They realised that apprentices were required to go to school and that there were examinations to be taken, and they therefore attended lessons; but their object was to prepare for the examination rather than to learn more about the jobs. Work and education were placed in separate compartments. Education was undergone in order to become qualified, and was seen as an imposition by those in charge—to make things more difficult—rather than as a complement to what was done at work. Several boys were, indeed, quite sanguine about the irrelevance of their studies to their work, and inclined to ridicule the suggestion that the two could be connected—how *could* a bricklayer learn his job from a book!—“In this trade you learn twice as much on the job”, said a joiner, “You learn by seeing it done—it is better than trying to visualize it on paper.” An apprentice engineer was of the same view, saying, “I really do feel that you can learn more at work, watching a man operate a lathe, than being told how to do it at Evening School.”

Those who were dissatisfied with their progress, and those who were not much bothered (together these constituted the majority of the boys attending further education classes), were inclined to blame the teachers. Unsuccessful students are always prone to do this, of course, and it is probable that the criticisms of teachers and lessons often sprang from tiredness, lack of ability, the rush to get to school in the evenings, scepticism about the value of education in general and resentment at losing leisure time. But it seems clear that there was some substance for the complaints. After a day's teaching at secondary school, teachers may well feel fatigued themselves—the combination of tired teachers and tired pupils is not one which is conducive to interest or progress. Classes in the first year tend to be large and heterogeneous with regard to the ability, interests and occupations of pupils, and the teacher is seen for only an hour or two: it is therefore very difficult for the teacher and his class to get on easy terms with each other. Hence there were remarks like that of a youth who said, “No one cares much; the teachers aren't really bothered about you.” Another youth said that his teacher just puts things on the black-board, and says “It's no skin off my nose if you don't pass!” Boys resented particularly the teachers who did not treat them as adults—

who behaved as if they were talking to a class of schoolboys. Many boys went to Evening Classes which were held in the same schools as those which they had attended before starting work, and sat at the same (now even less comfortable) desks. Several boys made a distinction between Day Release School and Evening School with regard to this point, remarking upon the "more adult atmosphere" at the former: teachers credited them with being grown up—and there was less discipline. ("It is different from ordinary school—you can lounge about.")

There was, then, much dissatisfaction with further education classes; but some children were pleased both with the quality of the lessons and with the progress which they had made. Girls who studied shorthand and typewriting could see the direct relevance of their efforts to their jobs, and the progress which they made was obvious to them. Girls were also inclined to look more kindly upon Evening School because they expected to become competent within a year or two—classes did not stretch away interminably into the future, as they seemed to do for boys. Some youths who had found difficulty in mastering the work in their schooldays found that they were able to get to grips with further education courses *because* they were of a "practical" or "vocational" bias: they could now understand and also see the value of their studies. Several boys were enthusiastic about part-time classes, and a few found them of more relevance to the trades to which they were apprenticed than the tasks which they were given to do at work—"You learn more about painting and decorating at Evening Classes than you do by just sticking around doing things at work", said one youth. Another advantage of classes over work was that there was no pressure to get a job done—children were able to concentrate upon understanding a point thoroughly and doing a task properly, irrespective of how long it would take. At Evening School and Day Release School, furthermore, there was progress from one technique or theory to the next—whereas at work, for most boys, there was no *programme* of learning.

Employers' Attitudes to Further Education

Employers' associations at the national level tend to express support for anything designed to improve the education and training of young workers. Some employers' organizations participate in the drawing up of syllabi: in Cheshire, employers and trade unionists have co-operated in Working Parties which have drawn up lists of the craft skills which apprentices in certain trades should master, and which have recommended whether the main responsibility for imparting such skill should rest with the College of Further Educa-

tion or with industry⁽⁶²⁾. There are few examples of such whole-hearted joint activity between employers, trade unionists and local authorities, but in Sheffield as elsewhere, some employers are very interested in the further education of young workers, especially boys. Courses have been instituted as the result of the initiation of employers' associations, and have been designed in close co-operation with them (part-time Day Release Classes in the meat trade were started in Sheffield in 1960 as the result of co-operation between the Sheffield Butchers' Association and the College of Commerce and Technology, for example). At the level of the individual firm, some employers (both large and small firms) give considerable encouragement and practical support to Day Release schemes. There are many reports in the Sheffield newspapers of awards to boys and girls to mark their success in part-time studies. Nationally, as has been seen, about one-third of boys at work who are under the age of eighteen and only 8 per cent of the girls, attend Day Release Classes. In recent years, the numbers of children released have not appreciably risen, whilst the proportion of younger students (aged 15 to 17) as compared with all students attending Day Release Classes has fallen markedly (the total number of children in this lower age group has been increasing). The Crowther Report concluded that "From the point of view of an individual boy the situation is alarming. Since the war his elder brothers have progressively had a better chance of securing a job with Day Release—his own chance and his younger brothers' look like being worse. From the standpoint of the State the situation is also disquieting. It seems doubtful whether it can succeed even in holding the position to the present figure of release"⁽⁶³⁾. Provisions are inadequate, and some employers are doubtful whether the State is really serious about part-time education of young people and are thus inclined to let the matter slide themselves. The employers are primarily interested in vocational education, but non-vocational education also receives the support of some. A training centre "designed to provide recreation and discussion facilities for young people working in industry, and to teach them more about themselves", was opened in Sheffield in 1961. Situated in the countryside on the outskirts of the city, and built at a cost of £25,000, the centre was a joint project, sponsored by the Sheffield diocese and local industry, and supported by the Ministry of Education⁽⁶⁴⁾. Most employers, however, give little or no thought to the question of the further education of their young employees, vocational or non-vocational: and some reject the idea with scorn and even with anger.

Day Release is at present a "privilege" obtaining in some industries and not in others, granted by some employers and not by others. Job

changes within the same industry can result in the loss of the privilege. The majority of children—including many of the most able as well as many of the least—do not go to Day Release Classes. The criterion for attendance is the employer's policy, not the individual's ability or the skill required in his job. Most employers who grant Day Release do so because they regard the further education of their young employees as a sound investment for their firms: this adds a touch of irony to the idea of Day Release being granted as a "privilege".

Several respondents went to Evening Classes only after much encouragement from their employers, who were anxious for them to progress—for the children's own sakes as well as for the firm's benefit. Some employers had to deal with indifferent and unwilling youths—truancy from Day Release School is not unheard of. There was a tendency for boys to regard further education as their employers' concern—it was up to them to make arrangements, and tell them what to do: the children would wait until they were told. In some firms, employees are required to attend Evening School during their first year to qualify for Day Release in the second. Some respondents regarded this as an unjustifiable burden: a few who were granted Day Release during their first year did not look at all kindly upon going to Evening School on even one evening a week. Several employers thought that a day at school was sufficient, and did not insist on Evening School attendance. Jobs obtained through the Youth Employment Service were no more likely to carry the privilege of Day Release than jobs obtained in other ways.

The attitude of employers is clearly relevant to the outlook which young people themselves have towards further education. The enthusiasm at the Board Room level may not be shared lower down the scale—managers, foremen and other workmen (who are more directly affected by any dislocation caused by the absence of a youth at Day Release School) may neutralize the attempts of the employers to encourage boys and girls to study hard. Most employers were themselves indifferent, however: if they thought about further education at all, they thought in terms of its vocational use—and employers well knew that their young workers required no support from the classroom to do the tasks for which they were employed. Day Release was thus "not necessary", or a mere excuse for children to have a day off work at the employer's expense.

Some employers were impatient about the whole business. A youth comes to work *to work*, not so that he can go off to be educated (the word "educated" was uttered as if it were a pejorative term). The attitude is understandable in the market stall proprietor who employs

a big strong lad to work as a porter; but a large number of employers with apprentices have the same view. An apprentice builder, when asked if he attended Day Release Classes, replied, "No—the boss does not like the idea, and doesn't want me to go. He told me I was no good to him at Day Release—he wants me on the job." Employers felt, also, that youths *should* be at work, Day Release was, to them, yet another example of the molly-coddling which is at the root of so many troubles: no wonder there is so much juvenile crime when lads are sat at a desk instead of using up their excess energy by doing a job of work. And if you sent the feckless younger generation to school, what would happen? They would not try. What's more, "you *can't* teach some of them"—"They are incapable of learning." There is some substance in these charges. But the denunciation of young people is usually associated with the refusal to give them the opportunity and encouragement to show that the accusations are without foundation. "Bookwork" and "all that theoretical stuff" were in any case dismissed as unnecessary—many employers had never done it themselves, and no further proof that it was superfluous was necessary. They had done without it in the past, and would continue to do so. All that Day Release Classes do is to give young workers a fancy idea of their own importance, and make them loath to do the work for which they are paid. Employers did not want budding Professors—they wanted someone to do simple, routine jobs quickly and efficiently⁽⁶⁵⁾.

Many even of the employers who were not unkindly disposed towards further education (though not able or prepared to grant Day Release) were vague about the courses available. Several boys who asked their employers whether they should go to Evening School and what courses they should take received non-committal replies. Further education is integrated with only a few firms, and attainment at Day Release and Evening School has little or no bearing upon career prospects. It is scarcely surprising that young people are unable to see the way ahead or the relevance of further education to their progress at work, if the employers have not thought the matter out themselves.

Part-time further education is overwhelmingly concerned with vocational subjects at present. It is largely confined to apprentices (though not *all* apprentices). The children themselves could see some point in attending lessons which were related to their jobs (though many who attended complained that the lessons were not relevant). They were not prepared—with one or two exceptions—to study in preparation for a proposed change of jobs, however: they would take the pill of Evening School only if they actually had the jobs to sweeten

it, not realizing that attendance *might* improve their chances of getting the work of their choice. (The father of one girl who wanted to be a nurse, criticized her because she was not willing to study—"She wants to jump straight into a job without making any effort.") Very few children knew that there were classes which they could attend in non-vocational subjects—"hobby" and "interest" classes such as Art, Music, Foreign languages and Motor car maintenance (2 boys not included in the analysis of evening school attendance, and 2 girls, did attend Evening School Classes unconnected with their jobs). Any "liberal studies" element in Day Release Classes was frowned upon by many children: an apprentice joiner complained that lessons which he had to attend included English and Social Studies, which were "a waste of time"—"they are only knowledge, and are no benefit to you in your job". A youth who attended classes organized by the Co-operative Society said, "half was alright and half was a waste of time: learning about being a butcher was useful—but you are not wanting to tell the customer about what the Co-op was like years back".

There is much confusion over the question of further education for young workers. Some youths and girls are in jobs in which vocational lessons are essential if the work is to be done thoroughly, and others are in occupations in which vocational education could be of great benefit. But for many the position is less clear. A rapidly changing industrial scene requires an adaptable labour force, and there is a tendency for some educationalists to seize upon this fact as ammunition to support their plans for "liberal education". Determined that further education of some sort shall be provided, apologists for "general studies" argue that such courses will induce fresh attitudes towards work and capabilities to perform the varied tasks which the new age of technology will constantly present. *Better Opportunities in Technical Education* thus alleges that "there are many who do not need much specifically vocational training, but who would be better fitted for industrial life if they were able to take suitable courses of a general nature".⁽⁶⁶⁾ If the courses are "suitable" there is no argument: the whole question is whether adaptability can derive from general courses. Professor Alec Rodger (who has studied these matters) doubts whether it can: adaptability, in his view, will be achieved by teaching youths a variety of skills in detail, not by skimming the surface of numerous jobs, and least of all by ranging from Economics to English, and from Art to Citizenship, hoping that by some magic the variation in the subjects will lead to the ability to do a variety of jobs. In a commentary on the White Paper given to *The Times Educational Supplement*, Professor Rodger said, "What could

be woollier than the paragraph on craft courses and general courses? Adaptability in the modern world will not be achieved by courses in English and general courses, as the Minister seems to think, but by diversified training and experience. And these we cannot have until we shove aside a whole heap of nonsense about the demarcation of occupational territories."⁽⁶⁷⁾ Society must eventually face up to the task of providing suitable training: "liberal studies" are no substitute for proper training.

It must be accepted, furthermore, that there are very large numbers of children who enter employment in which neither skill nor great powers of adaptability are required. It is pointless to gloss over this fact by pretending that work makes more demands than it does. It is a waste of time to manufacture reasons why vocational education (or an education leading to adaptability) is required for the girl who packs scissors and the youth who delivers bread. Further education must, for these children at least, be justified on other grounds; it weakens a strong case to seek "economic" justification where none exists.

The 1944 Education Act laid down a policy for part-time education for all young people up to the age of eighteen. Non-vocational courses would be provided for those in jobs for which there can be no vocational education, and the non-vocational content for those who attend vocational courses would receive more emphasis. The substance of non-vocational part-time education is usually discussed in vague terms; "liberal studies", "general courses", "broad development of the whole mind", "moral growth" and "sense of responsibility as a citizen" are phrases which frequently crop up in this context, but which usually remain undefined. There is, indeed, little agreement about the aims of further education in the non-vocational sphere. The Minister of Education has estimated that by the 1970's up to one-half of young people are likely to be in jobs in which vocational further education would be inappropriate, whereas in 1960 only 1 per cent of the age group 15 to 18 were taking such courses—"We have hardly scratched the problem of educational content and organization for 40 to 50 per cent of the 15-18 year olds . . . We therefore have an enormous field of discovery in front of us: to know what to do with the non-vocational workers."⁽⁶⁸⁾ The need for research and experiment in non-vocational further education is clear. The priority which is at present given to technical and vocational training restricts the opportunity for, and the scope of, such experiments: very few students attend non-vocational classes, and not many alternative courses are organized (and the high rate of turnover in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs results in constant and considerable changes in student groups).

Most children are inclined to value education only if it has a direct bearing upon their lives, and their jobs in particular. Society has to decide if and how it can arouse in youths and girls a great deal more interest in educational activities than at present exists.

Eighteen youths and 11 girls who did not expect to attend Day Release Classes during their second year at work (29 boys and 7 girls expected to attend, and 12 boys thought that they might do so at some stage) said that they would have liked to attend such classes. None had a sense of grievance that they were unable to attend but several would have been keen and all were genuinely interested. Three of the boys and 5 girls had attended Evening School and expected to continue to do so, however—and their feelings about Day Release were not unaffected by the realization that they would have more evenings free. That the other children did not go to Evening School was an indication of the fact that their thirst for knowledge was not so compelling that it called for assuagement after working hours. With the exception of 3 boys (1 van boy and 2 labourers) all of these respondents were in jobs for which vocational courses would have been useful. The children thought in terms of vocational education except for one boy and two girls. One of the girls wanted to learn French and the other “would have liked to study English Literature, Geography and History, for when you leave school you have had it so far as these subjects are concerned”. The boy was embarrassed when he said that he “seemed to be lacking in education”, not because he was ashamed of his ignorance but because he was reluctant to admit that he felt education to be desirable: this amounted almost to a betrayal of his family and friends.

Of the remaining children who did not expect to go to Day Release School (half the boys and over three-quarters of the girls), the majority were indifferent about it or mildly disfavoured it. Few had thought about it seriously. But 18 youths and 20 girls were particularly strong in their wish *not* to go to Day Release Classes—“If I had a day off I’d like to go to the cinema, never mind school,” said one girl, whilst another girl said that if her employer were to insist on her going to classes “that would finish the job” for her. Day Release was regarded as more of a punishment than an opportunity. It is unlikely that there would be an overwhelming increase in numbers attending Day Release Classes if employers were compelled to let children go if they so wished (this would not be an easy arrangement to administer, however, and employers might decline to employ children who wished to claim the right to attend school).

For a large number of children, compulsory part-time education to the age of eighteen would be almost as invidious as the raising of the

school-leaving age. If not welcome, however, it would be more acceptable to them than another year, full time, at school. And if all people up to the age of eighteen had to attend, it would not seem such a childish activity. Indeed, if football teams and other sports could be organized there might even be attractions—especially if there were lessons about films and motor cycles and hobbies, like photography. There is no fundamental reason why history and geography should be dull, furthermore—and subjects like meteorology and astronomy could well spark off a flame of interest.

Even for the children who attend Day Release School and/or Evening School during their first year at work, the education provided cannot be regarded as a continuous process. For those who at present receive no further education, there is a major problem to be faced about the aims and content of courses. It is clear that nothing will result from vague talk about general studies or clichés about the young worker having to live in harmony with his employers and his fellow men. Further education cannot paper over dichotomies between factory and community, or discrepancies between private gain and public good: high sounding phrases have a hollow ring for the young worker. Nor can further education be charged with the task of doing what primary and secondary schools fail to do.

THE "FOLLOW UP" BY THE
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

THE Youth Employment Service has the responsibility of following-up school-leavers during their first year at work. In Sheffield the practice is to send letters to the children's homes, at a time which varies from three months to a year or more. The letter invites children to attend at the Bureau (with parents if they wish), or to return a form indicating occupation and employer, and asking for "Remarks on Progress". Between 50 and 60 per cent of the invitations issued in Sheffield are replied to, rather more than in the country as a whole⁽⁶⁹⁾. Comparatively few children who reply do so by calling at the Bureau personally.

Of the respondents, 84 boys and 97 girls were sent letters: only 47 boys and 58 girls replied, and only 8 of these boys and 4 girls went to the Bureau. Whilst many children definitely recalled receiving the letter, a large number could not remember, and still could not say after much jogging of the memory. Several who had received a letter and replied had forgotten all about it. This is an indication of the small impact made by the follow-up procedure. Many children had not comprehended the meaning of the letter and cast it out of their minds quickly: "Oh, I think I did have a letter", said one girl, "It invited me to go for a talk, but I never bothered." A youth roundly declared that he "did not think it required an answer". Some boys and girls assumed that the Y.E.O. only wanted to see, or hear from, them if they were out of work. They still thought of the Y.E.O. as a job-finder—what *other* reason would he want to see them for? In several cases parents had read the letter (addressed to the child) and dismissed it as unimportant. They had "not thought" to inform the child that the letter had come—the news was broken to some respondents only as the result of the Research Interviewer's question: parents then groped in their minds and recalled, after a struggle, that there *had* been "something come from the Education". The attempt to remember the *contents* of the letter, or to recall what action had been taken on it, defeated many, parents and children alike. "Now, *what* was it for", one girl asked herself, but to no avail. Even children

who became unsettled in their jobs soon after receiving the letter failed to recollect the invitation to go to the Bureau. Some respondents said that they "forgot" to reply, others that they had "mislaidd" the letter. Letters were not an everyday feature of the lives of most of the families: relations lived nearby and there was no need to correspond with them, rates were paid to the rent collector, the hire-purchase salesman called at the door. There was therefore no *system* for dealing with letters: if they were put on the mantel-shelf, father used them as spills to light his pipe, and if they were left on the table or chairs, babies got hold of them and screwed them up. They were easily mislaidd. Some children, backed up by their parents, tossed the letter aside as just one more attempt at interference into their private lives. These officials were always poking their noses into your business: they had to be endured at school, but now they could be treated with the contempt which they deserved. They were pen-pushers, doing no work of value, but keeping each other going by compiling forms and writing letters.

Children who went to the Bureau in response to the letter were motivated primarily by politeness, and gratitude that interest had been shown in them. They felt that they *ought* to go, that it was the proper thing to do. None of these respondents was accompanied by a parent. All were satisfied with their jobs, and, with one exception, had no questions to raise with the Y.E.O. The exception was a girl whose National Insurance position had been complicated: the Y.E.O. helped to sort the matter out. From what the respondents recalled, nothing much resulted from the interviews—"it was just a small interview with the lady. She said that she was pleased that I liked the work." Children were "told to go again if ever they wanted anything". And that was that. Nothing more was needed, since the children were satisfied with their jobs and had no educational problems to solve.

The letter made it easy for children to opt to reply in writing rather than attend in person, simply stating, "If you cannot call personally, will you complete the reply portion below and return it to me?": the invitation was for the evening of the *next* Friday, furthermore, and children tended, if they read the letter at all, to take it literally. If they could not manage the next Friday it did not occur to them that there would be no objection to them going at another time. Friday, in any case, is a night when the young wage-earner likes to go out—often it is pay night. A visit to the Y.E. Bureau to discuss work, of all things, is no counter-attraction. Several children referred to the inconvenience of the time, and some to the distance which they would have had to travel to the Bureau. It seemed a very long way to those

children who rarely went into the city centre. It is likely that a somewhat higher personal response would result if Y.E.O.s could hold Open Evenings in various districts—either in schools or Youth Clubs. The demand at present made upon the time of the small staff does not permit of any such development. Inconvenience of time and place were a minor factor, however. The main reason why children did not reply in person was that they were not interested. Most of those who replied in writing also did so out of politeness more than anything else. The form provided little opportunity for conveying information. Eight boys and 10 girls did say that they were not satisfied with their jobs, and the Y.E.O. tried to advise them, but several of the 20 boys and 37 girls who stated that they were satisfied were, in fact, unsettled at the time when they filled in the form, or became so soon afterwards (one left his job within a week of returning the form). This was also true of several of the 9 boys and 11 girls who made no comment. The form was filled in without thought. There did not seem to be much point to the letter, so far as children could see—either you had a job or you had not. What *remarks* are there to be made about a job? It was work, and that was all there was to it. It is fallacious to assume that those who reply to the letter are satisfied unless they state otherwise, and that those who do not reply are settled in their jobs.

The follow-up thus failed to establish contact with most of the respondents who, in terms of being unsettled at work or in terms of the likelihood of future job changes, could have profited from discussion with the Y.E.O. Such children were precisely those who ignored the letter or repudiated any idea of seeking help from the Y.E. Service. The present follow-up system is not without value—one Annual Report in Sheffield has stated that it is “a means of avoiding many unnecessary changes of employment”, and that “in numerous instances minor troubles have been adjusted by tactful approaches to the appropriate employers and problems have been solved which might otherwise have been difficult to overcome.”⁽⁷⁰⁾ The system is inadequate to its declared aims, however. The conclusions of this research are not unfamiliar to the Youth Employment Service: the National Youth Employment Council stated in 1956 that “in the opinion of a number of Youth Employment Officers, it is often those youngsters who are in most need of help or guidance who fail to respond, whether in person or in writing to an ‘Open Evening’.”⁽⁷¹⁾

Because of the inadequacy of this method of reviewing progress some other methods are used, the object being to trace children who are most in need of help. The other methods include contacts with employers (a very few employers provide the Y.E. Service with progress reports on each of their young workers), contacts with the Youth

Service, home visits and contacts with further education institutions. The Y.E.O. did get in touch with 2 girls, to whom help had been promised, during the year, and 3 youths and 1 girl went to the Bureau for guidance (that is, not primarily because they wanted another job) on their own initiative. Other methods of following up children do not appear to be any more successful than that of sending letters to them, however.

The Youth Employment Service is responsible for young workers until they reach the age of eighteen. The *Youth Employment Manual* recommends that all children should be followed up a few weeks or months after starting work, and again at the ages of sixteen and seventeen-and-a-half. In many areas, whilst all leavers are followed up at the first stage (though often not until they are sixteen years old), only those who are thought to be in need of help or advice are contacted subsequently⁽⁷²⁾. It is difficult to see how the Service is to know who *does* require advice unless all young workers are contacted, especially since the first attempt at a follow-up meets with only limited success. The Y.E.O. cannot forecast who will be in need of advice a year or more hence—certainly not with such accuracy that no-one escapes the net. The Ince Report stressed especially the importance of keeping in touch with children who enter “blind-alley” occupations—“Every placing officer knows that things being as they are, he must, however much he dislikes it, place boys and girls in jobs which of their nature are dead-ends”. The Report suggests that employers of such labour should be encouraged to permit children to attend day continuation classes, “so as to fit themselves for better posts later on”, and that the Youth Employment Officer should be “ready at the appropriate time to help (such young workers) on to a more progressive job.”⁽⁷³⁾ The Report points out that there are some occupations which recruit only adults, and suggests that “it is essential to join up employments”—“so that a boy can emerge from a non-progressive occupation to progressive work on reaching maturity. If by this and other means blind-alley employment can be shortened and made to lead to something more permanent and satisfying one of its worst evils will have been removed.” “Betterment Registers” may be kept by the Youth Employment Service so that children who enter “dead-end” jobs can be notified when better opportunities occur⁽⁷⁴⁾. No *special* follow-ups of respondents entering first jobs which could be described as “dead-end”, or of children entering occupations patently in different categories from those recommended by the Y.E.O., occurred during the first year at work. This applies to children who found their first jobs through the Y.E. Service as well as to those obtaining work by other means. Furthermore, several children whose

first jobs offered prospects (including apprentices) changed to "dead-end" jobs during the year. By the end of their first year at work, indeed—and it may be suspected even more so after two or three years at work—there have been so many job changes that the Y.E. Service is unlikely to be aware of more than a small proportion of those children who find themselves in dead-end jobs. The present methods of follow-up certainly do not succeed in keeping track of such developments. Follow-up is intended to ensure that the Y.E.O. is on hand when things start going wrong for the individual. But young workers—in particular those likely to meet with difficulties and unlikely to be guided by parents or friends—do not turn readily to the Y.E.O. Several children with special home circumstances—mostly coming from broken homes—made decisions about work and drifted from job to job, without any guidance from the Y.E.O. The children did not think of approaching the Y.E.O.—and the Y.E. Service was unable to ensure continuous contact with them.

Jephcott has argued that girls would benefit more from guidance given a year or more after they left school than from that given whilst they are at school. Writing at a time when the school leaving age was fourteen, she stated, "The age at which the particular girls of this book would probably have been most influenced in their choice of a career was (at a guess) when they were between 15 and 16½. While they were still at school their one aim was to start working and earning in almost any capacity. A year of full-time employment mellowed this attitude, and by 15 they realized something of their own potentialities and of the limitations and possibilities of their present job."⁽⁷⁵⁾ It has been seen that a few respondents were discontented at the end of a year at work—but, although they wanted a change, they did not know what to change to. Those who were planning to change their jobs at the time of Interview No. 3 had not been to the Y.E.O., and had no intention of going. Probably other children would have been more receptive to guidance by this time—and having some experience of the world of work would have been more capable through discussion with the Y.E.O. of deciding upon the sorts of work which would appeal to them and the sorts which they would find dull. They could then perhaps have made a new start. But they did not come into contact with the Y.E.O.—and those who did make a new start made it without his guidance. The new start had every likelihood, for many, of being just another false trail. Resettlement interviews for young men aged 20 who had completed their National Service indicated the enthusiasm of many to seize the chance of trying new occupations: an incidental advantage of National Service was this opportunity

which it gave to young workers of making a reappraisal of their position. Many of the respondents in this study would probably like to change their jobs at the age of seventeen or eighteen, and make a fresh start if they were given a jolt, if advice were offered to them. It is unlikely that the Youth Employment Service as at present organized will provide either the jolt or the advice.

Effective vocational guidance requires that all children are followed up at regular intervals during their first few years at work. The Youth Employment Service is not at present equipped for this task. The lack of an efficient system for reviewing progress helps to perpetuate a situation in which people spend their working lives in jobs which fail to satisfy them and in which their abilities are not tested or developed. And because the follow-up system is so limited in its scope the Youth Employment Officer is severely handicapped in his attempts to evaluate the success of his placement and guidance work.

YOUNG WORKERS
AND TRADES UNIONS

TRADES unions nowadays take an interest in all aspects of the nation's affairs, and the education and training of young people is a matter to which they have given considerable attention in recent years. Separately, and collectively through the Trades Union Congress, unions keep a watchful eye on conditions of employment as they affect young people. They are also concerned to encourage youths and girls to participate in union affairs, in order to consolidate membership and develop future leaders. Most unions have special provisions relating to the membership of young people, but practices vary from one union to another: the majority do not have separate youth sections, simply accepting youths and girls as probationary or juvenile members. The exact legal position with regard to the age at which a young person may become a member of a trade union has never been clarified, but it is generally accepted that no person under the age of sixteen may become a *full* member⁽⁷⁶⁾. Youths and girls under this age in principle are excluded from voting or participating in the union's business, and are not called upon to pay political contributions.

The T.U.C. has lent its support to pleas for the school-leaving age to be raised to sixteen. Unions have also declared themselves to be in favour of part-time day release, and have advocated that the young worker be regarded primarily as a "learner" who is in need of education and training, rather than as a unit of labour. The interest of unions in the training of youths and girls has led them to co-operate in the Industrial Training Council, but also to call into question the effectiveness of the Council. Unions have often found it difficult, however, to reconcile their desire for increases in the opportunities for the training of the young workers in skilled trades with the interests of particular groups of their own members. With regard to the general question of length and quality of apprenticeships, the trades unions have been seriously charged with being out of step with the demands of modern industry—at any rate at the point where words have to be transformed into actions. It is at the local level that conflicts between general principles and particular interests become

acute. The onset of the bulge has given rise to much thought amongst union leaders: the fear of adverse consequences for older workmen if young people flood into the labour market is mixed with the positive desire to ensure that the youths and girls will not be denied opportunities of learning skills. Trades unions in Sheffield, in the image of the national movement, concern themselves with social, educational and employment matters affecting young people. The Sheffield Trades and Labour Council, which co-ordinates the activities of the local branches of the unions, made a special study of the implications of the bulge and issued a report in 1958⁽⁷⁷⁾. The report showed concern at the possibility that children would enter dead-end jobs or remain unemployed, and made several recommendations in the field of education and training. Through the Trades and Labour Council, unions have participated in various study-groups and conferences, either within the movement or in association with industrialists and other interested persons called together to discuss various aspects of the life of the young worker. Measures taken locally to assist youths and girls include the operation of an information service for school leavers, and participation in careers and exhibitions and conventions.

Nationally and locally, then, trades unions take an interest in the welfare of young people: but the evidence of this study is that, at the shop floor level, few youths and girls are given a welcome to the world of work by their members. Most young people are ignorant about trades unions and remain thus throughout their first year as workers. Whatever might be said and done at conferences, when it comes to practical action the trades unions on the whole appear to be as indifferent to young workers as the workers are to them. And the ignorance of unions about young people is no less than the ignorance of youths and girls about the unions.

Contact with Unions

Only 36 boys and 14 girls had any contact with trades unions during the first year at work. Fourteen of the youths were employed in steel and engineering. Just over a third of those who had worked at any time during the year in this industry had had dealings with the unions. The unions are particularly strong and active in the steel and engineering industry in Sheffield, and it is a mark of the general ineffectiveness of all unions with regard to young people that even in this industry so few respondents were approached. Some of the apprentices had been advised not to join unions or were not permitted to do so until they had completed their training—but there is no ban on unions welcoming such boys to work, or helping them to settle down. A few of the boys had attended instruction courses organized

by their firms which included talks by trades union officials. Apart from steel and engineering, no occupation accounted for many of the boys who had been contacted by unions, and no patterns emerged. Eight of the 14 girls were shop assistants, 4 were factory workers and 2 were office workers.

Only one-third of the boys who had had contact with the unions, and two-thirds of the girls, had been approached officially by trades union organizers or shop stewards. Most of these children simply happened to be on hand when a union official was present on other business. Formal approaches to the respondents were concerned exclusively with recruiting members: they were made in a variety of ways, depending upon the nature of the work as well as upon the varying union policies—the methods appropriate to a large steel works, for example, are different from those suitable in the retail distribution trade. The method is important with regard to young people's knowledge about what they are being asked to do and also affects their readiness to join. The youth who is approached individually and asked to think things over is obviously in a different position from the girl in a warehouse, surrounded by workers, who is recommended by an official to enrol on the spot and "be like everyone else". One steelworker was given a pamphlet explaining the purpose of the union and told to take it home and discuss with his parents the question of joining. Several shop assistants were visited by an official who went from shop to shop recruiting new employees.

The unions' contacts with young workers are very much dependent upon the informal efforts of ordinary union members. In most cases in which children had been contacted in this way, there was no more than a brief and usually inconclusive conversation, often springing from a chance remark about a union. The topic was mentioned in passing and not referred to again. There was, that is to say, no union machinery to ensure that members would make a point of getting in touch with young workers—to greet them, to offer help or to promise information. The only "contact" which one youth had occurred when "a bloke came round for some money from the men, and my mate said, 'He'll be after you soon'." That is all that had happened and the youth's knowledge of trades unions was limited to an awareness that they collected weekly contributions. He had not thought to ask his mate what the contribution was for, and the mate had not thought to tell him (and perhaps did not know for certain himself).

Whether contact was made formally or informally, the position was often characterized by vagueness. A painter and decorator said, "I know there is a man in the shop connected with the union, because

he asked me before I was 16 whether I was 16 yet. He hasn't said anything to me again." The youth knew nothing more and had no wish to know more: presumably he would be asked after a lapse of time whether he was sixteen yet, and then asked to join the union. Things were in such ways left very much in the air by officials. One youth recalled that "about two months ago one of the men sent up a form for me, but there has been no reply yet. It was the man's idea, not mine. I don't know nowt about it." A few respondents took the initiative in approaching union officials, but received non-committal replies, or simply paid their dues and received their membership cards without further explanation. If interested in young workers at all, then, the officials were concerned only to enrol members, and most did not bother to give information about the unions or to discuss their purposes.

Respondents who Joined Unions

One year after leaving school, 15 boys and 11 girls were members of unions. Most had joined when they started work or soon after, but 6 boys did not join until they reached the age of sixteen. The majority of respondents were sixteen at the time of Interview 3: a few of them who were not sixteen thought that they might join a union after their birthdays, and probably several others would be asked by union officials to do so. At least one youth who had belonged to a union for the whole of the year was not eligible for membership under the rules of his union. The son of a shop steward, he explained, "You are supposed to be sixteen, but Dad got me in." The occupations of the 15 boys were as follows: steel and engineering, 7; van boy, 2; plumber; messenger boy; cutlery worker; shop assistant; warehouse worker; railway porter. Only 7 of the 42 apprentices were union members. The membership of one cutlery worker lapsed because the official failed to collect the dues: 5 other boys had been members, but left their unions when they changed their jobs. Six of the girls were shop assistants, 3 were factory or warehouse workers, and 2 were office workers.

Reasons for joining unions varied: only exceptionally were arguments for and against being a member weighed up. Usually the decision was made on the spur of the moment. Some joined because it seemed to them to be sensible to pay a small subscription in return for the protection and benefits which unions provided. About half of the children mentioned a specific benefit of membership when asked why they joined—"if you are on strike they give you money, or if the firm is not paying you the right wage the union will sort it out". Several of these boys and girls said that it was nice to have the

feeling that there was "someone at the back of you to help you out". Boys referred particularly to the dangers of industrial accidents: these are not uncommon in the steel and engineering industry. There are reports in the local press regularly of accidents and of legal cases in which compensation is being claimed. The unions were welcomed by some workers mainly because of the support which they gave in such cases. An apprentice welder had been reprimanded at work for his lack of caution—"A while back I went to work in a big drum, and one of the men said I shouldn't do that job unless I was in a union, for if I had an accident there would be no one to fight it." Friends and relations with bandaged limbs were also a reminder to boys that it was an advantage to be in a union. So much were the unions bound up in young people's minds with accidents and sickness benefits, that some respondents understood them only in such terms; hence the confusion of one girl who said, "I don't understand about unions, but I pay into the hospital fund each week if that's anything to do with it." At least 3 boys would not have joined their unions had there not been the threat of a strike during the year. They became members because it was expedient to do so in order to qualify for a weekly allowance if their wages were stopped. ("We all agreed to join so that we would get strike pay. It costs 9½*d.* a week. I don't have much to do with the union, though.") One youth joined because he had heard that the unions helped men to find work if they were unemployed.

Three boys and 1 girl joined on their own initiative, or as the result of the strong recommendation of their families. "My father made me join," said one girl, "I had no choice." The girl did not think that it was worth making a fuss about and was not much bothered either way. She did feel some misgivings, however, because she was the only girl at her firm who was a union member, and she felt that she was doing something behind her employer's back. Unable at first to state what the point of membership was, the girl eventually recited a series of benefits—"you know you are not being cheated on your wages", "you only work certain hours", "the bosses can't treat you just anyhow". So her father had told her. The irony was that this girl felt herself to be in no need of such protection—indeed, she emphasized how pleasant and understanding her employers were. The mother of one youth intervened when her son was questioned about his membership, saying, "I think you will find that he doesn't understand much about unions, but our family believes in them. They help you in an accident and will always fight your case. My son-in-law and my brother-in-law both had industrial illnesses. One was in a union and got compensation, the other wasn't and had no one to help him and got nothing. So we were all for young Tom joining." Generally,

union membership was not a matter for parental intervention, however: the subject did not crop up in such discussion as there was at home. Most parents either did not know or did not care whether their sons and daughters were members.

One boy and 3 girls who worked for the Co-operative Society were members of a union: 2 boys who had worked for the Society during the year had ceased to be members when they left their jobs. These children joined the union because their employers expected them to do so. ("I'm in because you *have* to join.") Only 2 respondents could recall having been given a brief outline of the implications of union membership (confined mainly to the amount of the contributions and of the resultant benefits). Two others remembered being given explanatory pamphlets, but neither had read them. The children who worked for the Co-operative Society seemed simply to have signed a set of forms when they started work which included a union membership form. ("They stop my dues out of my wages. They gave me a form to fill in. They just said, 'Here's a form—fill it in'.") They did not decide to join: rather did they automatically become members. They were not well informed about unions; asked what benefits she derived from membership, one girl replied, "I don't know yet, but I think I will find out." An exception was a girl who had learnt about the history of trades unions at Day Release Classes organized by the Co-operative Society: but she did not relate the lessons to her membership—the two things were separate parts of her life.

Two youths clearly thought that it was worth being a member for the sake of a quiet life: they had no wish to be the centre of disputes, and felt that the dues were thus worthwhile. One of them said, "You can go on all machines if you are a member, but there would be trouble if you went on some machines and were not in a union." Another youth was not a member but intended to join—"This is not a union firm, but I think it a good plan to belong for safety's sake. The men who start work at this firm are mostly in unions, and I feel that if I happen to change jobs I will not be at a loss to find another job if I am in a union."

Several children appeared to have joined because they did not like to say "No". One boy said, "A man wanted me to fill a form in, so I thought I might as well." Another boy stated, "A man asked me if I wanted to join, so I said 'Yes'." Asked why he had agreed, he replied, "I thought it was the best thing to say." He obviously felt that the 4d. a week which he paid in subscriptions was a small price for having avoided the embarrassment of making a refusal. Whatever other reasons there were, it was clear that most youths and girls who joined unions did so basically because other people at work belonged. They

wanted to be in the swim—or they did not want to be left out. (“The men at work decided to have a union, and someone came to the firm about it. They all decided to join, so I did too.”) The desire to conform deprived the unions of some members—one girl who was under pressure from her father to join refused to do so because the girls at work did not belong.

None of the children were enthusiastic about the unions: they simply happened to be members, just as others happened not to be.

Children who were not Members

The majority of these children had never thought about joining a union: that they were not members resulted from this fact, and the fact that no one had contacted them. It was not because of their age or because they had considered and rejected the aims of the unions. Some respondents did have particular reasons for not joining unions, however. With the exceptions of the youths in H.M. Forces, the student nurses and possibly a few children in other occupations, these respondents were not in jobs which fell outside the scope of union activities. Some children worked in particularly small shops, offices and factories where contacts with union officials—or even with ordinary members—were unlikely to occur. The employers of a few boys and girls definitely frowned upon the unions. The staff supervisor of a large stores said that there was no organized membership amongst her employees, and it was not necessary for anyone to belong since the firm looked after its workers and treated them well. Union membership by young people was discouraged, the firm taking the view that boys and girls were not in possession of the facts and needed a lot of guidance when they started work: all the unions would do would be to mislead and confuse children. A nurse (not at pre-nursing school) who said that she knew nothing about unions and was not interested in them, recalled the matron advising the nurses not to have anything to do with unions: “In my second week there, the matron sent for all the young nurses to ask if we were in a union—about three were. The matron said it was silly to be in a union. She did not say why—she just said it was silly, and not necessary.”

A few children would have joined if the union officials had shown more interest. A youth who asked his shop steward to obtain a membership form had heard no more from him. Several boys and girls, notably clerical workers, were under the impression that there were no unions for people in their occupation: had they known that there were, one or two of them might have joined. Two youths could see no point in joining unions, because their jobs gave the benefits which they presumed were the only *raison d'être* of the unions. Thus. a

butcher said, "There is one, but it's not worth joining: there are never any strikes in this trade, and I have good bosses in any case—so there is no need." The other, a factory worker, said, "There's no point—in this firm I'm paid if I am off sick." Two boys were not prepared to devote any of their spending money to union subscriptions—"You don't get much for your money as far as I can see", said one of them, "once you start paying, you have to pay every week, and even if it's only a shilling you could find something better to spend it on." One youth was suspicious of unions, and "from what he had heard" thought that they preached more than they practised. A girl said that she would not join because "most of their ideas are wrong. They tell people to go on strike and a lot of people don't even know what they are striking for. In any case, trades unions are Labour and I'm a Conservative." The family of one respondent was ill-disposed towards the unions, and the idea of the youth joining was never contemplated: on hearing the unions referred to in the interview, the youth's father muttered darkly about "Commies".

Several respondents associated trades unions with the workers, and set themselves in a class apart. One clerk emphasized coldly that there was no union in his work so far as he was aware, and that he would be surprised to find that there was one. Another youth pointed out that he was "really on the staff side": his mother said that if the staff were to have an organization it would be one of their own (and doubtless called an Association). Some girl office workers were offended at the suggestion that they might belong to unions.

Some children were impatient of trades unions: their information was picked up from cursory reading of the newspapers and glances at news flashes on television. Were not unions bound up with arguments and complicated things like votes and agendas and even wars? It was all so serious, and no one could hope to understand it all. It was not worth worrying yourself about it—"You see about it in the papers, but I'm more interested in what United did on Saturday, and how Yorkshire is getting on at cricket." In contrast, several respondents shrugged the unions off as rather amusing, and certainly not sufficiently serious to think about deeply. It struck one youth as funny that the men at work should bother themselves about membership cards, weekly subscriptions and rules and regulations. It all seemed a bit childish: men playing at organization like infants playing at shops. Another boy grinned broadly as he recalled the efforts of the men at work to win a wage increase from their employers. The contrast between the earnestness of the men's discussions—what they were going to do and what they were not going to do if the boss did

not comply with their demands—and the net result of their negotiations, which was that wages and conditions remained as they were, still gave rise to a chuckle. Their bubble had been pricked, and sheepishly they had returned to work—soon giving up the forlorn attempt to act as if they had really won the day.

A very generous estimate suggests that no more than one-third of the respondents—those who were members as well as those who were not—had a reasonably clear picture of more than one or two of the functions of trades unions. These boys and girls thought almost exclusively in terms of the sickness, strike and accident benefits which derived from membership. Ignorance about unions was often self-declared by members and non-members. One shop assistant showed blank incomprehension when questioned, and then said, "I don't know what a trade union is". It was as if a babe in arms had been asked for its views on the British Constitution. Asked about his wage, one youth said that he had recently had a 3s. 0d. "A.E.U. increase": when questioned about the meaning of A.E.U. (Amalgamated Engineering Union) the respondent said, "I don't know about it—all I know is that it was called an A.E.U. increase."

There was ignorance about the aims of the unions. Only 1 boy and 2 girls associated the unions with political activities. The Conservative girl has been quoted above: the other girl intended to vote Labour when she was twenty-one "because the Conservatives were more out for their own pocket, but Labour is for the working class". The boy disapproved of strike action. No respondent had been involved in educational activities associated with the trades unions (possibly the Co-operative Society employees who went to Day Release Classes should be regarded as exceptions). The nearest approach to cultural or social activity occurred in connection with a youth who, because he lived close to the headquarters of his union, was entrusted by his fellow workers to call with their subscriptions each week. In return for this service he received a few coppers from each of the men to enable him to have some beer at the union social club. The respondent was under age not only with regard to licensing laws but also to the regulations of his union. Moral, social, political and cultural purposes of the trade union movement were not known or not understood. But there was also ignorance about practical benefits—even members who knew of one or two benefits did not know about other entitlements. Some members repeated, parrot-like, benefits which officials had told them of but without comprehension: others could not mention one benefit and disavowed any interest in the matter. Ignorance was perpetuated by the confusion over deductions from wages: children did not understand them, and got mixed up over

contributions to sickness benefit clubs which were unconnected with the unions, and over savings clubs stoppages and insurance stamps, and repayment of loans for overalls. They were also confused about the cash payments to various people who came round collecting for the football competition, the sports fund, the annual works outing—and trades union dues. Thus, one girl would not rule out entirely the possibility that she belonged to a union: certainly she was in the Works social club, if that was anything to do with it.

There was no understanding of the organization of unions, even at the branch level. Many members knew no more than that they paid a weekly subscription to a man who came to collect it, but whose official position they did not know: some did not even know the official's name. Several boys and girls did not know the names of the unions to which they belonged. One youth thought deeply on being asked what union he was in and then said that he would fetch his membership card: a look of recognition did come over his face when he saw the name. Asked what the implications of membership were, he said that he did not know, although he believed the union was trying to get more money. One or two children seemed to have washed their hands of the whole business—they had no objection to paying their weekly contributions, but did not want to bother themselves more than that. They did not pretend to understand, and could see no point in trying to do so—the men who collected the money seemed to know all about it, so they thought they might as well leave it to them.

Lack of knowledge about unions and lack of interest was in many cases just another facet of lack of interest in work itself, and, indeed, was in some cases part of a general indifference towards, and cynicism about, life in general. But many children who were interested in and enthusiastic about their jobs—some of them prepared to spend several evenings a week studying in order to progress at work—were ignorant of trades unions and unconcerned about them. Many children, too, were not prepared to bother their minds with serious matters. One girl laughed outright at the idea of her giving thought to the subject of unions. In her laughter was the implied rebuke, "Don't be absurd—what have trades unions to do with life? What can they offer a young girl?" Other girls giggled an acknowledgement that there was a whole range of phenomena with which they were unfamiliar, and the trade union movement was one of these: but they were unrepentant—unions might be of interest to a few egg-heads who have nothing better to do with their time, but they had more important things to think about. Life can be serious or gay: if people elected for the

former, that was up to them, and their stupidity was no one else's business.

One or two youths did get some pleasure from their membership, feeling that this was another landmark, further indication that they were working men rather than school children. But most boys and girls gave little thought to their membership and derived little satisfaction from it. The lack of interest was exemplified in the attitude of one youth whose father had been a union official for many years. The youth was exceptional, in that he knew that unions had meetings and appreciated that they required organization. Asked whether he intended to take an active part in union affairs, he replied, "I'm glad to belong, for if I had an accident I might not get owt otherwise. But I wouldn't fancy being on a committee or anything like that. All the different meetings take up time. My father goes to meetings every Monday night, and sometimes doesn't get home until a quarter-to-seven." What union would be worth that sacrifice? The youth worked the same hours as his father—42 hours a week for 5 days and finishing at 4.20 p.m. But leisure time was precious.

If the term "trade union" meant so little to most children, it was at least recognizable to them as belonging to the English language. What they would have made of such expressions as "collective bargaining", "arbitration tribunal", and "unilateral disarmament" it was not, perhaps fortunately, the purpose of the present research to establish.

It is none the less remarkable that after ten years at school and in spite of constant coverage of union affairs in the press and on radio and television, so many children should be so uninformed. Some unions are very concerned about the lack of interest shown by young members: in particular there is disappointment at the tendency of girls, like their mothers, not to participate in union affairs—female emancipation has left women with the right to leave things to men, a right which they readily exercise. There is, of course, no reason why young people (boys or girls) should be any more interested in trades unions than their elders. Apart from the wider issues, however, unions are obviously not making much impact upon young people when they enter the world of work. The transition is made without their assistance.

CHAPTER 15

SPENDING MONEY

THERE were marked variations in the amounts of spending money which children received, both when at school and after they had left. Some boys and girls made do with less than 2s. 6d. whilst at school, others had over £1—and after a year at work several had less than 7s. 6d. whilst one youth received over £5 a week. Some parents thought that their children were being extravagant if they got through 10s. 0d. a week, others took the view that 25s. 0d. “doesn’t go far for a lad nowadays”.

Analysis of spending money is complicated, because policy and practice vary so much from family to family. Most children received a fixed sum each week, but a substantial number were given a fixed sum at week-ends and regular “extras” during the week—for the

TABLE 41
SPENDING MONEY*

	Boys			Girls		
	Int. 1	Int. 2	Int. 3	Int. 1	Int. 2	Int. 3
2s. 6d. or less	5	0	0	9	3	1
2s. 7d. to 5s. 0d.	21	1	0	38	7	2
5s. 1d. to 7s. 6d.	19	3	0	25	11	4
7s. 7d. to 10s. 0d.	18	20	8	11	31	13
10s. 1d. to 15s. 0d.	18	34	14	5	29	26
15s. 1d. to 20s. 0d.	10	34	30	0	10	33
20s. 1d. to 25s. 0d.	1	4	18	0	4	7
25s. 1d. to 30s. 0d.	1	1	15	0	0	3
Over 30s. 0d.	1	1	12	0	0	2
No regular spending money	3	0	0	5	1	2
No information	3	2	3	7	4	7
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Children who stayed at school and who went on courses are included.

cinema, sweets or ice creams. Regular extras are included in the analysis. Many children received "odd bits and pieces" during the week. ("I get what I can scrounge from Mum and Dad, and I sometimes make a bit on what Mum gives me for fares and dinner money", said one girl, whilst another stated, "My father gives me some during the week if I hug him nicely.") Sometimes, casual extras amounted to a considerable amount, but they are not included in the analysis. Several children did not receive a fixed amount each week—they were given "about" a certain amount, depending upon how well they behaved, what mood mother was in or how much small change father had. A few boys and girls, even after a year at work, were not given a basic amount but asked their parents for money whenever they required it: it was difficult to establish how much these boys and girls received on average. The parents of a few children regularly bought savings stamps for them in addition to giving them spending money: this is included in the analysis. Spending money consists, then, of the total amount received regularly for personal expenditure and savings: fares to work and money for meals are excluded.

Mothers were responsible in most cases for deciding the amount of spending money, but some consulted their husbands. Usually mothers gave the money to the children. Fathers "left it to the missus": as one of them said, "I have never had anything to do with that side of things—I believe it is a matter for the mother to sort out with the children." Only three respondents handed their wages over to their fathers. Mothers regarded wages as belonging properly to them—the children were entitled to spending money, and had earned it, but it was considered to be "right" for the wage to be handed to mother, who would then allow a certain amount of money. A few mothers made a distinction between the basic wage and overtime or bonus earnings—the latter were "earned in the children's own time" and therefore belonged to them and not to mother. Many boys and girls who received their wages in a packet handed it over to their mothers unopened, or left it for them in the usual place (usually on the table or mantel-shelf) each week. This was regarded by parents—and accepted by children—as the correct thing to do: as one youth said, "It's not that mother doesn't trust me. It's just that she doesn't think it right for young people to break into their wages." If children did break into their wages it was usually with mother's consent—in order to pay for their tea at work, or for the factory football competition: a few boys and girls spoke of "borrowing" from their wage packets to buy something on the way home from work.

Mothers took account of a variety of factors in deciding how much spending money to allow. The wage was of some importance, and

there was a tendency for children with higher wages to receive more spending money. But spending money was by no means always geared to wages; this is seen in Table 42.

TABLE 42
SPENDING MONEY COMPARED WITH WAGES AT ONE YEAR

Boys	15s. 0d. or less	15s. 1d. to 20s. 0d.	Over 20s. 0d.	No in- formation etc.	Totals
Wage of £3 or less	10	11	5	0	26
£3 1s.—£4	8	12	21	0	41
Over £4	2	6	19	0	27
No information, not earning etc.	2	1	0	3	6
Totals	22	30	45	3	100
Girls					
Wage of £3 or less	18	8	0	1	27
£3 1s.—£4	25	20	10	2	57
Over £4	3	5	2	0	10
No information, not earning, etc.	0	0	0	6	6
Totals	46	33	12	9	100

The mother's financial circumstances were another important factor: in several cases it appeared that fathers reduced their house-keeping allowances to their wives when the children started to earn, and mothers were in consequence less able to be generous with regard to spending money. Especially when there were several younger children, mothers found it was "a bit of a struggle to manage". Some families were in distinct financial difficulties. One youth was the sole wage earner in a family of six: his invalid father said, "we are glad of the money, for I can't work. There are three other children, and we'll be glad when *they* are at work. Frank does overtime to help the family out. Before he was at work we had to scrape through on what we had, and we got into debt." A girl said that "with more money coming in, we are getting a few more things at home, more food and extras on the table", whilst the father of another respondent remarked that "It has made quite a bit of difference to us—the bit of money she brings home comes in very handy, and I can't deny it". Where there was no hardship, furthermore, some mothers found that now their children had started work "it was a bit of a fight". Sons, out in the fresh air all day or lifting heavy loads had unprecedented appetites—

they needed, and ate, "a man's meal" when they got home at night. Daughters had insatiable demands for clothes and nylons. "I was better off when she was at school", said one mother—"she costs *more* now that she is at work. She is always on the want. The old story is right—you don't make anything out of them when they start work."

Some parents took the view that they were entitled to "a little profit" out of their children's wage (it was partially for this reason that some fathers reduced the housekeeping allowance thus having more money for their own personal spending). Parents looked upon the profit as compensation for previous sacrifices. For years they had struggled to bring up the children on a shoe-string. Now father could have an extra pint of beer and mother could buy the new coat which she had been promising herself (and had been in need of) for several years past. "I have struggled for many years with four children to bring up", said one mother, "now two of them are at work and beginning to bring something in." At last a little harvest could be reaped—though parents were aware that the summer would not last long: sons and daughters would expect to go on board in a year or two, or would soon marry themselves off.

Other parents—less hard-pressed financially—liked to be generous in the amount of spending money which they allowed. They wanted their children "to have a better time of it" than they had had when young wage-earners themselves. Some of these, however, were rather rueful—they wanted their children to enjoy the prosperity which their friends had, but thought that, compared with pre-war days, things had gone from one extreme to the other. Children have it "so easy" nowadays—one father said, "This generation doesn't know it's born, compared with mine. A trip to some nearby fields with a bottle of lemonade and some sandwiches, and we thought we had been to Blackpool! A holiday outing would be a walk to the dams just outside the town—no bus fares! We had to work hard for ten shillings a week when we did start a job. We didn't expect much. I can remember saying to my father when I was eighteen years old, 'I don't want any spending money this week—I've been working over.' I hadn't had time to spend the last week's money." At least a few respondents had more personal spending money than their fathers, and a substantial number had more than their mothers. One father, for example, made do on the price of one or two ounces of pipe tobacco a week, whilst his daughter had 15s. spending money and 5s. to save. Even in an affluent age—and perhaps more so, when household goods and expensive holidays take precedence over an evening out with the men or an afternoon at the dogs or a football match—many fathers spend little on themselves. Mothers tend to fare worse than their husbands

—for they are presumed “naturally” to take their pleasures at home, and are not thought to “need” spending money in the way that father is thought to “need” a bit of leisure at the pub or a weekend on a fishing trip. (This is less true of younger mothers, who are more assertive of their rights and have become accustomed to hair-do’s, cosmetics and visits to the cinema.) Even if parents had some misgivings, however, they thought it was nice to be able to let the kids enjoy themselves.

A substantial number of mothers placed emphasis upon training their children—the amount of spending money was determined with the aim of “teaching them the value of money”. As one mother said, “I would give her more if there was a good reason, but she just spends it as soon as she gets it.” Mothers remarked upon the tendency for money “to burn a hole in the pockets” of their children, who must therefore be trained—“If he has a lot when he is young, when he is older and has family responsibilities he won’t be able to manage. Ten shillings is quite good enough for a lad of fifteen.”

Some parents thought that it was good training for the children to manage their affairs and therefore allowed them to pay board, instead of handing over their wages and receiving spending money in return. One youth and 2 girls paid board from the start, and at the end of the year there were 2 boys and 4 girls who did this (in addition, 2 boys who lived in lodgings paid board). In several cases the parents’ wish to encourage independence was mixed with a desire to avoid arguments about how much spending money to allow. At the end of a year at work, the 2 boys and 3 of the girls estimated that they were left with between 5s. 0d. and £1 a week personal spending money, after paying board and making provision for fares, meals and clothes: the other girl had 30s. 0d. spending money. The amount paid for board was more of a token payment than an economic price, and the boys and girls were also “helped out” when purchasing major items of clothing. Even so, the girls especially found that they were working on a tight budget (none had a wage of more than £4 a week). *At this age*, children who pay board tend to be no better off from the point of view of spending money than many other children, and worse off than some. To pay board conferred prestige and gave independence, however, and was considered by the boys and girls concerned to be well worth the struggle. The parents of two children had turned down requests to be allowed to pay board firmly, on the grounds that they were not old enough—“she’s just at an awkward age, and wouldn’t be able to manage properly”, one mother said, whilst another remarked, “I don’t believe in it. Jim is the sort of lad who would buy six or seven bars of chocolate, eat them straight off, and then not want

his dinner." Older parents based their decisions about board upon past experience: but some of the younger parents had not been certain what to do—they remembered what *their* parents had done, but things were so different nowadays. These parents tended to fall in line with what neighbours and friends did. Only a very few of the children who did not pay board wished that they were allowed to do so: at their age, most did not expect to pay board. Some children go onto board at the age of seventeen, but it would seem that eighteen is a more general age—girls then go onto a "woman's" wage, and youths also earn more. They are thus able to pay a reasonable sum for board and still have a substantial amount left for personal spending.

Also taken into account in deciding the spending money was the amount of money which had been allowed to older children, especially to those who were still living at home. Mothers liked "to be fair" to other members of the family. If an elder son were earning £4 as an apprentice and the young daughter £5 as a factory worker, mother was loath to allow more spending money to the girl than to the youth. This gave rise to squabbles in one or two homes. Very important, too, in deciding how much spending money to allow was the amount which other young people, particularly the respondents' friends, received: one mother who doubted her wisdom in giving her daughter £1 a week, for example, said that she "only gives her that much because her friend gets it".

There were sharp increases in spending money when children first started work, and by the end of the year—when the respondents were sixteen—there had been further considerable rises.

In their last term at school, half the girls but only one quarter of the boys received 5s. 0d. or less a week. Two-thirds of the boys and four-fifths of the girls received 10s. 0d. or less. That boys tended to receive more spending money than girls was in part due to the fact that many

TABLE 43
ANALYSIS OF INCREASES IN SPENDING MONEY

	Boys			Girls		
	Int. 1	Int. 2	Int. 3	Int. 1	Int. 2	Int. 3
10s. 0d. and less	63	24	8	83	52	20
Over 10s. 0d.	31	74	89	5	43	71
No information, etc.	6	2	3	12	5	9

more boys than girls did part-time jobs (37 boys compared with 13 girls). Most of the boys, but only 4 girls, delivered newspapers. The other boys ran errands for shop keepers on Saturday mornings, or cleaned cars: the girls worked part-time as shop assistants or did baby-sitting. Earnings from part-time jobs varied between 5s. 0d. and £1 a week. There was a marked effect upon the amount of spending money—two-thirds of all the boys who received over 10s. 0d. a week did part-time jobs, whilst 8 of the 13 boys receiving over 15s. 0d. earned at least part of the money. Several children suffered a small drop in spending money when they started work—instead of keeping their substantial earnings from part-time jobs, they were now only allowed part of their wages. Some children were entirely dependent upon their earnings for spending money, and a few gave some of their earnings to their parents. ("I give half to Mum, to help out".) Several parents took the view that a part-time job was beneficial to their children in that it accustomed them to contributing to their keep, induced independence and necessitated getting up early in the morning—it was thus a preparation for full-time work.

The number of boys receiving 10s. 0d. a week or less fell from 63 when at school to 24 when first starting work and 8 by the end of a year. The 83 girls fell to 52 and then to 20 by the end of the year. Increases in spending money usually resulted from rises in wages, but were also, in many cases, given on birthdays. Not all the respondents had had their sixteenth birthdays at the time of Interview 3, and not all had been at work for quite a year: 19 youths and 7 girls were accordingly expecting increases in spending money in the near future. The general picture shows quite clearly the trend for children's spending money to rise considerably towards the end of their first year at work, however. By this time, three-quarters of the boys and nearly one-half of the girls received *over* 15s. 0d. a week. No boys received 7s. 6d. or less, and of the 7 girls in this category 5 were not working.

The continuing tendency for boys to receive more spending money is partly explained by the fact that more boys received higher wages and fewer received lower wages. Also important, however—both at school and after leaving—was the view of parents that boys are *entitled* to more spending money than girls—this is linked with the attitude that husbands are entitled to more money than their wives. Girls are considered not to *need* so much money—although in fact they have as many, if not more demands upon their resources. Girls were often able to make up to some extent in kind what they lacked in money, however—mothers bought stockings for them, and sisters let them use their make-up.

Expenditure

The cinema took up all or most of the spending money of some children when they were at school. Then there were dances (for a few girls), fishing trips, "pop" discs, magazines, football matches and sweets. Some children "lived it up"—treating girl friends to the cinema, smoking a lot and getting through a considerable amount of money. But many children were quite content with very small sums of money, sufficient for an occasional visit to the cinema and a few chocolates. Gifts for mothers and baby brothers or sisters were often purchased by some children out of very slender resources—after giving 6*d.* to "our George" (aged 7) and 3*d.* to "our Jackie" (3) one girl was left "practically broke" each week.

There were new avenues of expenditure when children started work (more children went to dances, for example) and old activities were now done in a more expensive way—a better seat at the cinema, and more and bigger cigarettes. Many children found that expenses went up disproportionately to income—full fares were demanded on the bus ("It's 1*s.* 6*d.* if I go into town now") and nylons were a necessity ("You can't go to a dance in ankle socks"). Thus, one youth said, "I had 5*s.* 0*d.* at school and 10*s.* 0*d.* now—but the 5*s.* 0*d.* seemed to go further." One girl outlined her expenditure to illustrate how difficult it was to manage on 9*s.* 0*d.* a week: "Bus fares for leisure alone take a lot of money. Dancing costs 3*s.* 0*d.* and 2*s.* 0*d.* for fares and a drink. I go to the cinema about once a week, but a boy friend pays about two out of three times. I buy two hair shampoos a week at 7*d.* or 9*d.* each. And I have to buy combs and hair grips. My mother buys my nylons, but they are supposed to last for two weeks. If I ladder a pair soon after getting them, I have to pay for a new pair. Then there are birthday presents to save for and lots of odds and ends." Small wonder that many children made remarks such as "my money seems to disappear, just like that" and "I often wonder where it goes—all I know is that there is none left at the end of the week."

Money tended to drip away in bits and pieces—chocolate at tea break, lemonade at dinner time, a packet of biscuits and 3*d.* in the Juke box. One boy described the process—"If somebody at work says he is going to the shop and asks if you want anything, you almost always say 'Yes'. I try to save, and then find I've spent it."

The mother of one girl recalled her daughter going to the cinema with 10*s.* 0*d.* and coming home with only 2*s.* 6*d.*—the rest had been spent on admission, sweets, ice cream and orange squash. (The mother said that she bought her daughter's clothes—"If it were left to her, she would have none".)

Several children had expensive hobbies. The father of one youth said, "We know that photography costs a lot of money, but we would rather he spent his money on things like that than just fritter it away on small things". A boy pointed out that his motor cycle was expensive to run—"I had two pistons seize up last week. And 10s. 0d. only covers two gallons, which is a lot, even though it does 115 miles to the gallon."

Some children planned their expenditure carefully, so that they would "last out" the week—one youth said, "I work it out so that I have 3s. 0d. left on Thursday night: I spend this and then I only have to wait till Friday dinner-time, when I am paid". Others were much less successful with their planning ("I have 15s. 0d. and usually find it's gone by Monday"), whilst some made no attempt to plan. One girl regularly went on a spending spree on Saturday mornings—"I go out and buy all sorts of things—material for a skirt, stockings or make-up. It soon goes". She was "broke" when she returned home—but it was worth it, to be a lady about town, though only for a morning and not in the most fashionable district. Such children preferred to have a good time at the weekend and let the week take care of itself—"While you have the money you might as well spend it and enjoy yourself". With luck, Mother would lend them some in the week, or father would give them some. At the worst they could watch the Tele. One youth was often helped out by his friends when he had spent his own pocket money—"My friends sometimes buy drinks for me—they are very good, that way. I don't spend a right lot on drink, but it may work out expensive on a Saturday night. Sometimes just the three of us are together in a pub, and that's not so bad. But at other times there is a crowd of eight, and I may spend about 12 bob." It was when this happened that he ran short of pocket money later in the week and his friends helped him. More girls found budgeting to be a problem than boys—partly because boys tended to have more spending money, partly because there were more "essentials" (like cosmetics) for girls, and they were forever being tempted by odd bits of clothing. Even though many girls benefited from being treated to the cinema, they still found it a struggle to make ends meet.

At least one-fifth and probably not less than one-third of the boys smoked regularly at the time of Interview 1. By the end of the year half the boys (47) smoked regularly, and 7 girls. The number of cigarettes varied from one or two to a packet of 20 a day: some smoked only at weekends. All except 8 of the youths and 3 of the girls who smoked had over 15s. 0d. a week pocket money: 24 of the boys had over £1 spending money. The smokers, that is, tended to be children

receiving relatively high pocket money (several of them received gifts of cigarettes from parents in addition to their spending money). Most children adhered to the cheaper brands of cigarettes. The parents of a number of respondents regretted that their sons had started to smoke—one mother blamed it on “the young ladies at work setting him off”. Some parents firmly refused permission to smoke—“Neither me nor my husband smoke, so we won’t allow cigarettes in the house.” Most of the respondents who did not smoke needed no dissuasion, however—they were just not interested. Several children were outspokenly against smoking—“It is a habit which is hard to stop, so why start it?” demanded one girl, and one boy asked, “Why waste all that money?”

Most boys had no special interest in clothes, either when they were at school or after they had started work. Some were never more contented than when they were dressed in slacks and open-necked shirts: they disliked “dressing up”. One youth spoke of “All these lads walking about today in bright suits and new styles. They get up my back. I would rather not be noticed. I hang on to my old clothes as long as I can.” (He avoided activities for which he would have felt compelled to dress up.) A substantial number of boys did give a lot of attention to clothes, however, and a few were almost as preoccupied with ties and socks, shirts and suits, shoes and overcoats, as were the girls with their accoutrements. Mothers were responsible for the clothes of nearly all the boys, but about one-quarter of all the girls (including 10 girls whose pocket money was less than 15s. 0d. a week) purchased a considerable proportion of their clothing. Often the mothers acted as agents for these purchases, making a weekly payment to Clothing Clubs to cover the bulk of the family’s clothes. Most of the other girls made purchases of odd items—a sweater, nylons, underwear or a headscarf, some most weeks, others from time to time. Those boys who were interested in clothes also made purchases from time to time—if a tie appealed to them, or a bright shirt caught their eye: one boy said, “I sometimes have to pay for my clothes—for example, if I want a new pair of jeans when the pair I have got already is not worn out.”

If the amount which parents expended on clothes were added to spending money it is probable that there would be much less difference between the amounts received by boys and girls. The expense of girls’ clothes—especially stockings—was referred to by many parents: daughters made constant demands for new clothes—boys were content with the same hard-wearing trousers for ages, but not so girls with their shoes and dresses. Smart clothes were a necessity for certain jobs. One father pointed out that although his daughter

had £1 a week spending money, most of the rest of her wages went on clothes: he still had the burden of providing food and shelter. Stiletto heeled shoes "didn't last five minutes": one girl had discarded twelve underskirts because the colour had faded. Several mothers referred to their daughters as "clothes mad", and some girls seemed to think of little else. Caught up in the whirl of fashion, bargains, "good value", and colour, girls wanted something new each week. Clothes became not so much a joy as an ever-present problem: they *must* keep up with events—a coat worn once was appraised with doubtful eye, and a dress dismissed as "not my style". In spite of the interest in clothes, it is noticeable that very few girls did much dressmaking or knitting. (One girl often did make her own clothes because "they are better and cheaper and last longer".) The whole point about clothes, however, was to go out in them—and this left no time to make them. Making clothes was in any case felt to be a bit old-fashioned—a young girl does not want to spend her free time with a needle in her hand. (Mothers too—especially the younger ones—inclined to the view that it is "not worth" making clothes when "you can get them so cheap nowadays".) The result of their interest in and expenditure upon clothes was that many girls were very smart and colourful in their appearance, and added a splash of gayness to otherwise dreary surroundings.

Since in most cases mother paid for clothes—at any rate for the major items—she could have the final say with regard to choice. Sometimes buying clothes was a joint activity between mother and daughter, but with few exceptions mothers left the choice to their daughters. Some mothers did find it necessary to veto their daughter's choices from time to time, however. One girl found an unexpected ally in her father on one occasion—father said, "I don't interfere in disputes about clothes. I only interfere if a row looks like brewing up between my wife and my daughter. Then I act as referee. The other day my wife was doubtful about some clothes my daughter wanted. But I told her that she was the same at my daughter's age." Sometimes it was the sons who were thought to be in need of a restraining hand. The mother of one youth said, "When we go to choose clothes he starts off with choosing something which I don't think is suitable and then comes round to what I like. He said recently that he will be pleased when he can decide for himself what to wear. But I tell him that time will come when he pays for his own clothes."

Savings

At their first Interviews, just over one-third of the boys (36) made regular long-term savings, and the proportion increased to over two-fifths (43) by the end of the year. There were only 6 girls making long term savings when at school, but the number increased to 20—that is one-fifth—after a year at work. Long-term saving includes saving for its own sake—with no specific purpose in view (thus one boy who saved most of the 12s. 6d. which he earned by delivering newspapers said that it was “not for anything in particular, just for when I am grown-up”—he had £10 saved). It also includes saving for something permanent and expensive. One youth, for example, had saved £40 for a camera whilst still at school. The most notable savers, in terms of length of time and amount saved, were those respondents who had set their minds on motor cycles, scooters or motor cars. At the end of a year at work, 8 youths and 1 girl were saving for motor cycles, and 1 youth and 1 girl for scooters (2 youths already had motor cycles, and 1 girl had a scooter). Five youths and 1 girl were saving for motor cars—the girl putting aside £1 a week. For all of these children, the object of their savings was of great importance, and gave a purpose to their lives (2 youths had not been able to stand the pace, however: both had saved for motor cycles, but one had been tempted to spend the money on a holiday at Torquay with his friends, and the other had fallen for a tape recorder). Several boys were buying articles such as tape recorders and cycles on hire purchase—this has been included as long-term savings.

Some children found difficulty in putting aside 6d. a week, even when they were receiving sizeable amounts of pocket money. One boy regularly gave 10s. 0d. a week to his girl friend to look after, and explained, “I would never be able to save it”. Other children resented any necessity to *spend* more than a shilling or two—the mother of one youth asked the Interviewer, “Has he told you that he never goes out, and hoards his money?” There were higher proportions of savers amongst children receiving high pocket money: nearly one half of the boys who were making long-term savings at school did part-time jobs. Nevertheless, many children who had small amounts of spending money saved regularly. Many boys and girls receiving high spending money, furthermore, did *not* save. Saving was a habit with some children—there was a substantial core of savers who saved irrespective of whether they had high pocket money or low. Some parents encouraged them to save, and others insisted upon them doing so. It has been noted that some parents bought savings stamps on behalf of their children. “If she had £1 a week she would spend it”, said one mother, “so I give her 15s. 0d. and buy her a 5s. 0d. savings

stamp. What she doesn't see she doesn't miss." Saving was regarded as good training. On the other hand, hire purchase was frowned on by some parents and several refused to allow their children to obtain goods in this way—"Everything in this house is paid for", and "If you can't pay for a thing, don't have it is what I say." The objections were a mixture of concern for status, doubts about morals and caution about getting into debt.

There were fewer girl savers than boys because girls had less money, because they were less interested in such things as motor cycles and cars which required long-term savings, and because they were more attracted to immediate expenditure upon clothes and jewellery.

About a third of the children—rather more girls than boys—fairly regularly saved for short-term purchases (both when at school and after starting work). Short-term savings were for such things as Christmas and birthday presents (some girls always seemed to be saving for the latter), small items of clothing, fishing tackle, and—very important—holidays. At Interview 3 one boy had £6 10s. saved towards the spending money for a holiday at Blackpool with his friends.

Several children said that their attitudes towards saving had changed since starting work—as one youth said, "Now that I earn it, I appreciate the value of money more—at school when you get it, you just spend it." But some children who had resolved when at school that they would start to save when they began to earn had been unable to live up to their resolutions.

At the end of the year, over one-third of the boys and one half of the girls made no savings at all, long- or short-term. The short-term savings of many others were distinctly short-term and sporadic. On the whole, children who wished to save managed to do so, no matter how small their spending money. The non-savers had other priorities—clothes, football matches, cinemas, cigarettes, magazines, dances. One youth who had 30s. 0d. spending money a week said, "There is nowt to save *for*—at least, I've not thought of anything yet." The future was too far away, and was in any case unpredictable. If anyone could offer him a sensible reason for saving he would listen: but who could? Money is for spending, especially when you are young—you don't work all week at an uninteresting job for the "pleasure" of *saving* what you earn.

With only a few exceptions, children were satisfied with the spending money which they were allowed, both when at school and after starting work. The main thing was to have some independence, and spending money gave this. Some respondents found it a struggle, with all the demands made on the pocket of modern teenage society: but most managed—and usually mother could be turned to if the

position got desperate. A substantial number of children were glad, when they started work, to be able to help out at home: they had no thoughts of demanding higher spending money. Most children measured the fairness of their spending money by the needs of their parents and by what their friends received rather than by the amount which they earned. One girl declined a rise, and explained, "My wage went up when I was sixteen, but I decided I was getting too much pocket money anyway in comparison with my friends. I decided to leave it at 30s. 0d. until I needed more." Some respondents did feel that they were being exploited, and were a little resentful of having to hand over their wage packets at the end of the week. But most thought that their spending money—whether it was 5s. 0d., 15s. 0d. or 25s. 0d.—was "reasonable".

Many fifteen- and sixteen-year-old boys and girls who are at work are much less wealthy—and much less hedonistic—than is often assumed: this is especially true of the girls. Many children do not receive high spending money, and many who do, plan their expenditure with care, and with thought for others as well as themselves.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

CHILDREN differed considerably in their leisure activities both whilst attending school and after starting work. Some led quiet lives, and were content with their hobbies or watching television. But many boys and girls were "never" at home: they did not want to be "stuck indoors with the family" especially after they had become workers. Newly granted independence, then, allowed them to go and come as they pleased, without telling their parents where they were off to or at what time they would be back. Whilst the cinema, coffee bars and street corners accounted for many of the children who rarely spent an evening at home, a few of the boys and girls were very active in clubs connected with the churches which they attended.

The leisure activities of many children changed noticeably during the year: they had more money, made new friends and revelled in their new status. ("I can go to see 'X' films now, and last week I went to a public house.") With age, too, had come a more responsible attitude: "When we were at school", said one youth, "we used to do daft things like smashing milk bottles at night. But we use our brains now." Instead of just meeting friends in the neighbourhood and around the streets and parks, children got into the habit of dressing up and "going out". Cinema-going and dancing increased considerably whilst attendance at youth clubs fell off: the former were adult activities, the latter childish. Less time was available for leisure compared with school-days, and children valued all the more the time that they did have—"You let yourself go at nights, instead of just coming home and messing about." A few children were less active in their leisure time than when they were at school: after a hard day at work, they preferred "to take things easy" in the evenings. Several children found that Evening School attendance and homework left them with very little time for other activities. In spite of the many changes, much remained the same: boys, especially, seldom ventured out of their neighbourhoods (the local cinema was good enough for them) and only did so when they went on a fishing trip or to watch a football match. Many boys and girls followed roughly the same pattern of leisure activities as when they were at school, but in a more

intensive way—more frequent visits to the cinema, more expensive seats, more cigarettes and more sweets.

Leisure activities were the focal point of the lives of many children, giving a purpose which neither school nor work were capable of giving. Since the jobs of so many children were uninteresting they turned eagerly to the gayness of leisure time. But some children seemed unable to shake off the dullness of their working day. They had forgotten, or had never known, how to be awake to life. Bored at school and bored at work, they were bored, too, at home, at the cinema, in the streets and at the coffee bar. All things were approached in the same way, with reserve and passively: these boys and girls had grown to feel most at ease in situations in which little or nothing was expected of them, and now they looked for no other sort of situation and fought shy of doing anything which made demands upon their minds or bodies. Especially when their spending money was gone, there was nothing to do but "laze around" until next pay day.

Youth Clubs and other Youth Organizations

The number of children attending Youth Clubs and other Organizations declined markedly: the main break occurred within a week or two of leaving school.

TABLE 44
ATTENDANCE AT YOUTH CLUBS

	Attended youth club and/or other youth organizations		Attended youth club		Attended other youth organizations	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Interview 1	44	37	26	29	20	18
Interview 2	28	27	22	23	8	9
Interview 3	29	24	23	20	6	6

The decrease in the number of boys attending *Youth Clubs* was slight, but the number of girls fell substantially. The figures mask the important fact that there were considerable fluctuations in attendance at Youth Clubs: 45 boys and 44 girls attended Clubs regularly at some stage of the research (several others attended for very brief periods: regular attendance was defined in terms of several weeks

immediately prior to the interviews). The hard core of respondents who attended Youth Clubs at all three stages was small—only 7 boys and 8 girls. Of the 26 boys and 29 girls who attended regularly whilst at school, 17 boys and 13 girls lost all contact: some who had stopped going to clubs by the time of their second Interviews had resumed by the end of the year (allowance has been made for closure of Clubs during summer holidays). Twenty boys and 19 girls joined clubs after leaving school, but many of them soon left.

The facilities at the clubs differed considerably. Some had their own premises, with separate rooms for various activities. Others were held in school-rooms or Church Halls with the folk dance team constantly interrupted by the table-tennis players, and the drama group in a corner fighting a losing battle.

Most of the children attended once or twice a week, but a few enthusiasts spent almost all of their leisure time at Youth Clubs. Activities at some clubs were arranged on a weekly time-table, and children then tended to be selective. ("I only go on Table Tennis night: I'm not interested in other nights, such as Rock 'n Roll.") Some clubs were lively and their members full of ideas: many were pedestrian and uninspiring. One reason for the falling off in attendance was that the endless round of snooker, table-tennis and darts became tedious. On the other hand, some children fought shy of clubs which endeavoured to interest young people in new activities. At many clubs, children spent most of the time listening or dancing to "pop" records: girls often danced together, whilst boys huddled in a group and looked on. Many "Mixed Clubs" are characterized by segregation of the sexes. Several boys belonged to clubs primarily in order to qualify to play in the football teams. Although they went along one evening a week, they were not really interested in the indoor activities. Discussion groups were a feature of the programme of only two clubs attended by respondents. One was connected with a Church ("the boys talk about the girls, and the girls talk about the boys. Then we all talk about films, and we always end up on religion"). The other club was connected with the Labour Party, and was shortlived: whilst it lasted it was felt to be valuable by the respondent who attended, who said, "I was sorry when it packed up, for you can't discuss things with your parents, can you? Adults think, 'What do young people know about it?' The Club helped to spread your ideas." There is undoubtedly some demand for clubs which provide the opportunity for serious discussion together with social activity such as dancing.

A few members of clubs connected with Churches were on the committees which planned programmes. Most children had no wish

to "get involved" in this way, however—they did not wish to be tied to the clubs so closely.

Most boys and girls were unable to give a specific reason for ceasing to attend Youth Clubs: they "just stopped going", in rather the same way that children "just decided to leave" their jobs. Some Research Interviews were held at the height of summer, when evenings were long and cool: others took place in deep winter, when it was dark at 4 o'clock and the night was full of sleet and fog. In interpreting attendance at Youth Clubs (and cinemas and dances) the effects of the seasons have been taken into account as far as possible: it would seem that attendance at Youth Clubs and dances is little affected by the weather. The boy and girl who want to go to Youth Club or to a dance are not deterred from doing so by a cold night, nor attracted away by a fine evening. The demands of Evening School and homework had little effect on attendance at Clubs: those who were interested found time to attend. Several children stopped attending when the Youth Clubs closed for a brief summer break, and "never got round to going again". Others got bored with "the same old thing every night", and wanted to try something different: compared with the cinema the Youth Club was glum and uninteresting, and girls who were looking for boy friends knew that they stood a better chance at the coffee bars or dance halls (though one youth and one girl had turned to Youth Clubs by the time of their third Interviews as a relief from the boredom of dancing and cinemas). Children felt that they were too old for Clubs now that they had started work: they no longer wished to mix with school-kids. Clubs were, in any case, too much of a reminder of school, with their scrubbed floors, dark painted walls and white china. And there was always an adult there, watching over you. Several respondents stopped attending Clubs mainly because their friends stopped. One youth recounted his story as follows: "I stopped going because I broke my toe. Because I stopped, another lad stopped. Because he stopped another lad stopped, and then several others." By the time the youth's toe had healed, none of his friends were attending the club, and, as he said, "I didn't feel like going by myself." Shyness deterred several children from going along to clubs unaccompanied. One youth and five girls said that they stopped attending clubs mainly because of unfriendliness and roughness. There were "too many groups", "a few cliques who thought the club belonged to them" and "a rough crowd". The girls now had no patience with uncouth youths and declined to associate with them any more. Tensions in one club resulted in factions leaving *en bloc*—"no-one was prepared to do anything: there was no organization, and nothing got done. So

me and my mates left". Two youths left their clubs because they fell into arrears with subscriptions, and begrudged paying what they owed. This reluctance to pay arrears reflected a widespread view that a person should not have to pay to attend a Youth Club. Even 3*d.* seemed too much, if the hall was dingy and the entertainment slight. Children disliked being organized: they wanted to be able to come and go as they pleased and frowned upon attendance at clubs which claimed "loyalty" and "club spirit"—as one girl said, "the woman in charge said I should attend regularly, and not go dancing some weeks like I did. I didn't agree with that, so I left." Especially since they had less time for leisure when they started work, children did not like to feel tied down, obliged to attend. Some children, indeed, regarded the local Youth Club merely as a useful stand-by for evenings when there was nothing else to do, when spending money had run low: it was a place to go to when the only alternative was to stay at home. Much of the turnover resulted less from attributes of the clubs and of alternative attractions than from the attributes of the young people themselves: they could not settle down to one thing for very long. They wanted change, something new—though new things soon in their turn became old and boring.

Youth Clubs did not act as links between school and work for the few respondents who maintained their membership. Children did not turn to the club when they were unhappy or unsettled, when they changed jobs or felt like doing so. If anything, clubs tended to perpetuate "childish" activities rather than helping to introduce school-leavers to a more adult world. There were indications that, as they approached their sixteenth birthdays, even the regular attenders were "beginning to get fed-up".

Other youth organizations include Boy Scouts, Boys' Brigade, Army Cadets, Girl Guides, Girls' Life Brigade and St. John's Ambulance Brigade Cadets: it also includes several boys and girls who were studying for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Membership fell distinctly when children left school. Five of the 9 girls attending at Interview 2, and 2 of the 6 at Interview 3 had not started work—more free time, less spending money, and a less marked change in outlook on leaving school resulted in them maintaining contacts with these organizations for a longer time. The main reason for children leaving these organizations was the association with school children—young workers felt that they had "got too old for that sort of thing". The mark of growing up is to discard uniforms, especially if they were designed for children, and worn by boys and girls in the lowest form of the school as well as the highest. Army Cadet uniform attracted school children because of the association with

adulthood, but young workers felt no need for such a prop. The Duke of Edinburgh Award maintained its appeal and accounted for all but 1 of the 6 boys and for 3 of the 6 girls classified as belonging to other youth organizations at one year after leaving school. The Scheme catered for children of all levels of ability who were prepared to make an effort, and offered a wide range of activities—one girl who had passed her bronze award and was studying for the silver award included Interior Decorating, Ballroom Dancing and Help for the Deaf and Dumb amongst the activities in which she hoped to qualify. The Scheme attracted children who were unattracted by other organizations. The awards were not easily attained, and offered a definite aim in life. Boys felt that they were sufficiently worth working for to withstand the temptation to smoke (at a time when this was strong) believing that this would affect their chances of reaching the necessary standard in sport. The Scheme was not attractive to many children, however: it was too much like work—you want to relax in your leisure time, not tie yourself down to a lot of training and (worst of all) studying.

Cinema Attendance

Approximately one-half of the boys and girls went to the cinema regularly each week at school, many of them going twice or three times. The total numbers had increased by the end of the year, and rather more children—especially boys—went several times a week.

TABLE 45
CINEMA ATTENDANCE

	Attendance each week		3 times a week	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Interview 1	51	45	5	1
Interview 2	52	47	7	5
Interview 3	58	55	15	8

Whilst the trend towards more cinema-going is clear, the figures again mask fluctuations in attendance: thus, only 35 boys and 30 girls who regularly went to the cinema at Interview 1 were amongst the 58 boys and 55 girls who were going regularly at Interview 3. Attendance of some children was affected by the time of the year—some who went every week in the winter seldom or never went in the summer: since the Interviewing stages fell at various times of the year for

different sets of respondents, precise numerical analysis is not possible. Suffice it to say that changes of interests, "getting fed up" with going or with not going, and changes of friends were as important as seasonal changes if not more important in accounting for the fluctuations. At one or other stage of the research, about three-quarters of the children were regularly going to the cinema at least once a week.

There was, however, a solid core of cinema-goers, who went once or more a week as a regular event. It never occurred to these children *not* to go—"we go *every* Friday". Friday night was *the night* for the cinema. Come rain, come shine, irrespective of the film, on the same day and at the same time these children went to the cinema, usually to the same place. The assertion of one youth that "people usually go to the cinema more out of habit than anything else" was well founded. A substantial number of respondents went to the cinema three or more times a week regularly. Many of these were quiet, if not timid, boys and girls—and several went to the early performances and were home and in bed before it was late. Some went so frequently because they had no friends, and were too shy to make them. Their parents could see "no harm" in them going so often to the cinema, and thought more of the positive advantage that "it kept them off the streets". One reason why fewer girls went to the cinema, and why most of those who went did so less frequently than boys, was that they had less spending money—although some girls were regularly treated to the cinema by boy friends. The other main reason was that dancing was a greater attraction than the cinema to girls.

When they were at school, children usually went to their local cinemas—described as flea-pits in some areas, in spite of face-lifts in recent years. Many children continued to go to the local cinemas after starting work, but some now launched out into the wider world—into the city, where the cinemas were more plush and glittering. "The lads think it's bigger to go into town", said one youth, and several girls now disdained anything but the best. The preference for city cinemas was, indeed, more marked amongst the girls—they had been given the taste by boy friends who escorted them there, and it was in any case more of an occasion to dress up and parade in town instead of just slipping round the corner. The city centre was also a convenient meeting place for friends from work who lived in various parts of the city. Whilst visits to the city cinemas could be afforded at the weekends, however, many children found that the expense was too great during the week ("bus fares are such a lot, as well as paying for the seat"): it was usual, therefore, to fall back on the local cinema during the week.

With very few exceptions, children did not discriminate in their choice of entertainment—they chose the cinema rather than the film. Even though they had preferences (“I go every week—I like ‘Horrors’ best”), they went to the same cinema, week in and week out, taking whatever was offered to them. It is difficult to establish what transforms a picture in the minds of children from “alright” to “smashing” though it seems fair to say that the assessment has little to do with artistic or dramatic qualities. Tastes and critical faculties are not developed at school or in the home, whilst critics in local and national newspapers are not read. Some children look at film magazines, but learn little about films from them, being more preoccupied with the romanticized life stories of the “stars” than with the films themselves. Of most importance to many children are firstly the plot—films dealing with war, crime and sex are well-liked (not that there are many films that do not deal with at least one of these): and, secondly, the appearance of the star—not the performance, but his or her presence on the screen. Enjoyment of the film was at a superficial level, and many children were well-satisfied if the burden of the show was upon the sensational. For many, the film had no positive attraction—but it occupied the mind, was some relief from boredom and saved thinking about what to do. Those children who did not attend regularly tended to be attracted, when they did go, by the names of the stars, or as the result of being told by the girls at work that there is “a good film on”. Several boys and girls did set definite standards, however—they did not like to see “just *any* film”: one girl said, “I don’t like the pictures a lot. I like a good one—if the actors appeal or if someone recommends it. I like *Samson and Delilah*. But I am not the kind who goes regularly for the sake of going. I can’t sit watching a film all that time if I am not really interested in it.”

It is a mistake to assume that the only—or necessarily the main—reason for going to the cinema is to see the film. It is not only in cartoons and music-hall jokes that the back row is used for kissing and petting. The lighted foyer, too, is often a meeting place for youths and girls who lounge about in groups, with some horseplay. The youths whistle at the girls, or jeer at their friend who is skulking shyly in a corner awaiting the arrival of his first date. The liveliness outside the cinema continues when the young people go inside. For the local cinema is a place where friends and neighbours are met. Cinemas may be chosen or rejected on the basis of their clientele rather than the film which they are showing. One girl, for example, said, “I go with my friend three times a week. We don’t go to the *Ambassador*, because it is full of coloured people. And we don’t go to the *Regent*, because not many people go there, and it is usually old

people who do. We like the *Victoria* best—it's people of your own age more, there." Audience participation in the proceedings is not uncommon in many local cinemas—catcalls, hissing and booing enliven the proceedings. But some respondents felt such behaviour was "childish": one youth said, "I don't like going to the pictures in a gang, for there is continual talking and messing about. Sometimes when I go alone I meet people in the cinema—a gang will yell out, 'Hey! Bob! we're over here', and I will go and join them. But I prefer to go on my own—though I don't mind going with my girl friend." Some young people, on the other hand, go to the cinema precisely in order to meet other people—especially of the opposite sex. A girl explained that she and her friend were "on the lookout" for boy friends: the cinema was the obvious place to try, for "if there are boys sitting behind you, they torment you and ask if you have got any sweets. Then you get talking, and the boys ask if they can take you home." The film show is but a backcloth to the main business of the evening.

The cinema also provided the opportunity for displaying—and impressing upon oneself—the newfound status as a worker, an adult. The cheaper seats could be disdained: they were for school kids. Cigarettes could be produced and lighted casually—not with bravado or surreptitiously. One girl who rarely went to the cinema when at school now went four times a week, not so much because she liked the films themselves as because she liked to appear in public, arrayed as a young woman: "I don't know why I go so much", she said, "I like it better now, for I can wear lipstick and make-up."

Dancing

A few children went regularly to dances whilst they were at school: several girls went to the dance halls in town occasionally, and others went to the Saturday evening dances at the local Church Hall. The latter were often associated with Church or Youth Club membership. They lacked pretension, but were enjoyed by the girls—"it costs 1s. 6d. with records and 2s. 6d. when there is a band. We go there because the dance hall out our way isn't very nice, and we are too young for the ones in town." Parents who would not have tolerated the idea of their daughters going to a dance hall at this age were quite happy for them to go to the Church Hall, where they knew they would "come to no harm". Dancing was not an attraction to boys at this age: one or two had tried, but had soon stopped going.

After leaving school, more and more respondents became regular attenders at dances, and by the end of the year one-fifth of the boys and one-third of the girls were going at least once a week. The girls

TABLE 46
REGULARLY WENT DANCING

	Boys	Girls
Interview 2	6	20
Interview 3	20	32

were particularly enthusiastic—to go to *real* dances, at halls in town, was the surest sign to them that they had left their schooldays behind. There was a live band, instead of having to make do with a record player. And the atmosphere was grown-up—there were plenty of new faces, unlike the local dances, and there were no kids. Instead there was a considerable number of older youths. Dancing was an important activity for those who were seeking friends of the opposite sex, and continued to be popular when friends had been made—all except one of the girls who went dancing regularly a year after leaving school had boy friends, and half of them were “going steady”: half the boys had girl friends, though only one was going steady.

Many of the boys who went to dances did little dancing—they were too shy to ask the girls, especially if, as was usually the case, the girls looked older. Boys were conscious, too, that their awkward stumbling was a poor substitute for the competence of older youths who could dance properly. Boys were attracted to dances because of their desire to meet girls and be in their company: but they felt uneasy when they were there, and did not know how to handle the situation. They gained some confidence from being in a group, but not enough to launch them onto the dance floor. One youth described how he had stopped going to dances because he did not feel old enough—“I went with my friends once a week. We were fanatics, but we couldn’t really dance. It is really for older lads of 18 or 19. So we decided it was a waste of time, especially as we didn’t dance. Some of my mates kept it up. They say they enjoy it, but I don’t think they do, really. The rest of us packed it up. We won’t go again until we are older.” Partly to give courage, partly because it looked big, some youths drank beer on dancing evenings: this led to one respondent ceasing to go to dances with his friends—“I didn’t dance, but just went because the other lads went. I stopped because the other lads used to go to a pub at 7.30 and not leave till 8.30. I have never been in a public house in my life, and I don’t want to go in one. So I was left in the Dance Hall by myself. I got fed up with it.”

As well as wishing to meet boys, the girls liked the dancing itself. Many of them happily danced together: this was infinitely preferable

to being trodden on by the young-looking boys clustered in a corner of the hall. It should not be assumed that all girls who go to dances are lost souls, nor that they are waiting to pounce on a man and marry themselves off as quickly as possible. Several girls made scathing comments about local dance halls—being patronized by “common Teddy Boys and Teddy Girls”, they were places to avoid. Some girls did go to such dance halls—having affinities towards “Teddy girls”, or reluctantly because they could not afford to go to town more than once a week yet liked dancing so much. One of the latter complained that “lads who go there just stand around and push you if you go near, and throw lighted cigarette ends. They let too many in—and the lads are often drunk.” One girl stopped going to public dances because the people there were “so common”. The excitement of drink and fights which repelled girls beckoned some youths: “It is a right dump where we go. It is a rough atmosphere, and you can get a scrap there anytime you want. It is dead rough.” But it is lively, and at the very least it passes the time.

The idea of going to dances did not occur to most boys: some who had thought about going dismissed the idea because they felt too young, too shy or too clumsy. Others felt that dancing was a “cissy” activity. (“They tried to teach it to us at school, but I didn’t think much of it’.) Some girls, too, were not impatient to start dancing—they were happy to leave that for a year or two: the parents of several still withheld their permission.

Church

Eleven boys and 39 girls went to Church fairly regularly at some stage during the research period. Only 4 boys and 16 girls went to Church regularly at all stages. Of 10 girls who started to attend Church after leaving school, 2 had stopped by the end of the year. In addition, a few boys and girls went to Church occasionally (“it depends what’s on”, “I go on special occasions, like Easter, and if there’s something good on like the Messiah”, “I feel you should only

TABLE 47
CHURCH ATTENDANCE

	Boys	Girls
Interview 1	11	30
Interview 2	5	29
Interview 3	4	24

go when you really want to"). When they were at school, some children went to Church with their parents, but this was not usual when they had started work: children then went with their friends. Ten of the girls who attended at Interview 2 and 5 at Interview 3, had not started work. (They were doing courses: this association between Church going and courses is explained by the facts that many of the girls came from middle-class homes which co-operated with school and church, that there was less of a break in the leisure activities of these girls because spending money was not increased so much as with children at work, and school-day activities thus tended to be maintained, and thirdly that several of the girls on Nursing Courses were in part motivated towards this work by their Christian outlook—their wish to help others was related to their religious beliefs.)

The drop in Church-going is accounted for chiefly by the readiness of parents to let their children decide for themselves after they had become workers, combined with the belief—especially amongst boys—that to go to Church was a childish activity. Another reason was that after getting up early to go to work during the week, children felt like a "lie-in" on Sunday mornings. (Evensong was not considered as an alternative—"you want your evenings free".) Saturday night was often a late night—the big night out of the week—and boys and girls were therefore even more reluctant to get up on Sunday mornings. Parents were inclined to the view that a lie-in was of more benefit to their children—and that not only did they "need a rest" but they "deserved" it. The fact that the school-leaving age was accepted by some Churches as the appropriate time for its members to transfer from junior to senior activities—Sunday School to Bible Class, for example—meant that a break of some sort was necessary, and children took the opportunity of breaking away altogether.

The Churches held on more strongly to children who were members of Youth Clubs connected with them—about half the boys and girls who regularly went to Church at the end of the year also went to Youth Clubs or other youth organizations. Church going for many children was a "social" activity, a chance to dress up and meet friends, as well as a means of worship.

Television

One mother described her daughter's day as follows: "She gets up in the morning, goes to work, comes home, has a meal and watches T.V." For a few children, television was, indeed, the main source of leisure time satisfaction. Other children spent all of some evenings and some of most looking in. Television was watched in the interval between arriving home from work, and going out, whilst

having a meal, and between returning from the evening's entertainment and going to bed. The fact that so much time was spent in this way helps to account for the inability of many children to recall what they did in their leisure time—for the hours just passed away. For much of the time, television was watched and heard without really being seen or listened to—it was on loud and clear all the time, watched as it were with one eye, just as a blaring radio may be heard with one ear. It was a part of the home surroundings, rather than something to be turned to as a specific activity. It was not regarded as a special form of entertainment. Programmes were not selected—unless an almost automatic preference for the commercial channels be so regarded.

A few children were critical of television, one youth saying, "I don't watch it as much as I used to. I am too tired after work, and it's too boring. I prefer to read a good book." A girl said that she usually went into the next room when the set was turned on. These children scorned people who "had nothing better to do than stick watching it all night".

Reading

Only a handful of boys and girls read books at all: there were only a few or no books in the homes of most, and reading was not a habit. One youth regularly made use of the Public Library, but he and two girls were the only keen book readers. Whilst most children had the opportunity of reading a newspaper, either at home or by borrowing one at work, few did more than glance at the pictures and the sports pages. Boys who eagerly consumed football reports in the weekend newspapers were the most avid readers. Apart from these, several boys regularly took magazines dealing with their hobbies—woodwork and cycling, for example—and some looked at popular weeklies such as *Weekend*, and *Reveille*. Comics were read by some boys, but were even so regarded as "a bit daft", "stupid" and "not true". They simply whiled away a little time in an undemanding and not unpleasant way. The girls were not taken in by their main reading matter—women's magazines borrowed from mothers and aunts, and teenage love comics which gave love stories in strips, and which could be easily followed with a minimum of reading. It was recognized that the stories were fantasies—"they aren't true to life—they get together at the end of the story": in real life, if lovers argue they end up by throwing saucepans and swearing, not by embracing each other. But the magazines were diversions, and "there is no harm in them".

Reading was an effort, and only acceptable if palliated with pictures. In any case, children were not at home long enough for

reading, and when they were at home television demanded much less effort. As school children, few respondents had been in the habit of reading much outside the classroom: as the months passed by they got out of the practice of reading, and it became more and more—and eventually too much—of a task.

Sports

All the children took part in sports at school, but by the end of a year at work only a few boys and girls did so. Many children said that one of the biggest differences in their leisure activities compared with schooldays was that they no longer played games. One girl was in the netball team at work, and a few boys played football for their Works' teams. Horse riding, potholing and swimming were practised by a few children, and several boys were "mad keen" on cycling—road touring and racing. For the enthusiasts, maintenance of cycles took up a great deal of leisure time. ("Me and my brother are in the Cycling Club. We share one bedroom, my Mum and Dad have another, and the third is given over to two frames, four wheels, five handlebars, a saddle")

Several children had become interested in games such as golf, tennis and badminton, which until recent years were not usual amongst working class people. The newer schools had tennis courts and gymnasias in which new games were introduced, and the local authority made equipment available on hire in some parks. These games could be played in pairs or small groups: there was no need for organization.

Football was the most popular sport amongst boys, but only a few managed to play games regularly with the Works' team or the local Youth Club. The rest had to be content with "kicking a ball about" on waste land or in the parks. There is a demand for organized sport amongst youths who enjoy a game but are not expert. There is a national shortage of playing fields, and in Sheffield it is particularly acute. The problem is not just that of providing pitches, but also of organization. These youths had no experience of organization and did not know where to start. Possibly the schools could take the initiative in organizing Old Boys' teams on the grammar school model. And sport could make further education more attractive.

The two professional football teams in the city provided all the sport that many boys were desirous of, however: they much preferred to watch a match than to play in one. (It has been seen that Evening School was no counter-attraction when the "Owls" or the "Blades" were playing at home.)

Hobbies

Over one-third of the boys, but only twelve girls, claimed to have a hobby when they were at school. Model making was popular amongst the boys, as was photography—six boys did developing, printing and enlarging. Other hobbies included care of animals (pigeons and rabbits), nature study, piano and trumpet playing, and collecting football match programmes, cigarette cards, stamps, and books about the war. Two youths were keen train spotters. (“Some of the boys rag us, but me and my friend have travelled hundreds of miles. It is more than just taking down numbers—I know the history of all the trains, and I can tell at a glance what class an engine is. If I have an hour to spend, I’m off to watch trains”.) Girls’ hobbies were mostly of a domestic nature—especially cookery and sewing.

Hobbies were of special importance to only a small minority of children, however, and comparatively few hobbies were able to withstand the counter-attractions and new opportunities which opened up when respondents started work. One year after leaving school, the proportion of boys who regularly practised a hobby had fallen from over a third to less than one-sixth, and only six of the twelve girls then had a hobby. There was less time for hobbies, and children had less inclination and less energy for them after a day at work. Several youths, furthermore, had entered trades in which they were able to practise their hobbies all day (for example joinery and electrical work): they felt like a change in the evenings. The mother of one youth had insisted upon him giving up his hobby—“I used to collect stamps, cigarette cards and match boxes. But my bedroom got untidy, my mother played merry hell, and I had to throw the lot away.”

The really keen youths and girls continued with their hobbies. (“He is so keen on models and radios that his bedroom is like a workshop”.) Two youths started to attend Evening classes in connection with their hobbies, carpentry and motor car maintenance. More pocket money enabled the enthusiasts to develop their interests—expensive photographic equipment and tools were bought. One youth, who already had some affection for music of “the Handel- and Mozart-type stuff” planned to start lessons to develop his talent for “pop” music, with a view to playing in a dance band when more proficient.

Other Leisure Activities

A few youths and girls went to local “drink shops” several times a week: there they could buy minerals and listen to “pop” records played on the juke boxes. They were a favourite place for meeting

and talking. Some children often had friends round to their homes, to listen to "pop" records on record players, and several girls went to concerts in town when young singing stars performed. Older people often bemoan the interest of teenagers in "pop" singers, and "can't see anything in it" themselves, except signs of degeneracy. Several respondents shrugged their shoulders as they remarked on this attitude amongst their elders—old people just didn't understand. The lively music and gayness were enjoyed, and there was satisfaction amongst teenagers that "one of them" had "got to the top". (The humble origins and "ordinariness" of the home backgrounds of stars are plugged by magazine articles.) Several girls argued that the extent of the bobby-soxing which went on at "pop" concerts was grossly exaggerated: and, indeed, anyone who has witnessed the mass hysteria of grown men at Cup Ties would be left unmoved by the demonstrations at concerts given by teenage idols. Pop records are popular, though by no means as popular as the programme planners for radio and television may think.

Several boys went regularly to Snooker Halls. Some girls (and one youth) often went window shopping on fine summer's evenings and Saturday afternoons—the girls were interested in dresses and shoes, the youth in suits and shirts. Several youths were keen on fishing, and often went on excursions during the season: they saved hard for the fares, and to purchase rods and tackle. One boy belonged to the fishing club at his factory. At least one girl and two youths went regularly to Public Houses or Working Men's Clubs. One of the youths said, "I look older than I am, so I can get in a pub O.K. But I haven't really got a regular local." The other youth went to a Club most Saturday evenings—"It is like a club and a boozier all in one. I know the blokes who play in the skiffle group there. I usually drink glasses of bitter." The girl preferred lager and lime ("not gin—it makes me sick"). Her mother remarked, "shandy is enough for you, at your age", but did not seriously object. The girl met lots of friends and neighbours in the Concert Room of the local pub where she went with her boy friend every Saturday evening.

Visits to the theatre were unheard of so far as the vast majority of children were concerned—the idea of going to see a play, to those who could visualize it, was faintly ridiculous, and, to the boys, effeminate. One youth did go to the Repertory Theatre regularly, and another enjoyed Gilbert and Sullivan.

Time spent "hanging around"

Asked what he did in his leisure time, one youth replied, "I spend it hanging around—talking about girls and motor bikes." "Hanging

around" was one of the main ways in which time was passed, both when at school and after leaving. One girl summed up her activities, "Out in the street or watching T.V.", whilst another said, "When I don't go to the pictures I just hang around home or in the yard." A youth described his leisure activities as follows: "I do nothing much. Me and my friends walk to the pub and hang around there, or stand outside the shops. It's dead around here. A couple of girl friends have been hanging around recently—it's nothing serious. We go for walks with them, but we always end up where we started, outside the pub." For this youth, the most noticeable difference in leisure time compared with schooldays was that he now did not know how to occupy himself—"When we were at school, we used to arrange a game of cricket or football during the day, but there is nothing like that now. We never see each other until we have finished work, and then we just hang around, talking." Some children spent a lot of time cycling aimlessly about the streets—a short trip, a stop for a chat, and off again.

Not all the hanging around was desultory and pointless. There was pleasure for girls in meeting the neighbours and laughing and joking with them. There was relaxation for young people who had watched a moving belt all day just to stand and stare for a while, and watch the world go by. In neighbourhoods which offered little by way of the beautiful, boys in groups hung around watching the pretty girls. The small knots of boys with long side-boards and wearing jeans, and in animated discussion, were much more likely to be discussing a football match or a fishing trip than plotting theft or violence. Hanging around, in a leisurely way, was a relief from the pace of the working day.

Leisure Activities with Other Members of the Family

Several respondents spent most of their leisure time with their parents. ("Mum likes me to go out with her—she has no one else to go out with, and she likes to know where I am".) A few boys were great friends with their fathers, helping them to decorate the house, wash the car, or dig the garden, and accompanying them on fishing trips. Some girls went on shopping expeditions at weekends with their mothers, and occasionally mothers and daughters went to the cinema together. Most children went their own ways in their leisure time, however. Only 7 boys and 7 girls regularly went out with their parents when they were at school: after a year at work, the numbers had fallen to 1 boy and 2 girls. Several children whose parents had wanted them to accompany them on visits to relations rebelled—"It's dreadful, having to get all dressed up", said one youth, whilst a girl

said, "I don't go out with the family if I can help it: they mostly go to relations, and you have to be quiet." It was especially cissy for boys to go out with parents—"I don't like people to see me out with them", said one youth, "as if I was Mummy's little darling". The very idea of going out *en famille* seemed odd to many children. Nor was there much contact in leisure time with brothers and sister—if they were older they were probably courting, and if they were younger they were only school kids. Some girls did like to spend time with baby brothers and sisters, however.

Even when children stayed at home, there was rarely any joint activity in the family—such as discussions, cards or other games. The whole family might be present whilst television was being watched, but there was little inter-action.

Contacts with School Friends

One year after they had left school one-half of the boys and one-third of the girls were still in contact with people whom they had known at school—they saw them in the neighbourhood, in the street or at the cinema or Youth Club. The neighbourhood was the basis of friendships at school, rather than the school itself. ("My friends were friends because they lived near, not because we went to the same school".) Some friendships continued to flourish: one girl who often went out with boy friends during the week, made it a rule to set aside Saturday evenings to go out with her girl friend. A few youths still went about with the gangs to which they belonged at school. But most children who were still in contact with school friends spent little time with them after having left school, and went out only with one or two *special* friends instead of with a group. Many school friendships broke up altogether—"You go your own way when you leave school, and forget about all your old friends." Several girls who had pledged everlasting friendship when at school soon lost touch with each other. They did not see each other for a while, and the friendships fell through. New contacts—made at work or through participating in new leisure activities—replaced the old. New friends of the same sex were mostly of the same age, but there were exceptions. The special friends of one girl were all aged fourteen, whilst a youth had two friends aged twenty (he pointed out that he "could easily be taken for nineteen or twenty" himself). The main reason why so many girls no longer went out with their school friends was that boy friends had become a greater attraction. Many of the friendships between girls and boys were exclusive—and boy friends were seen so frequently that there was no time left to see other friends. Boys were less affected by this, but some referred to it as a

cause of the break-up of their friendships. ("My mates started courting, so I'm left more or less on my own".)

A few children felt lonely and cut-off when they first left school: one youth lamented, "I used to have lots of pals, and go to their houses. But now I just stay at home and watch T.V." The homes of several boys and girls were some distance from the school, and few school friends lived nearby. Children in residential areas who did not go to Youth Clubs had difficulty in making friends: boys and girls of the same age were at private schools or grammar schools, and it was in any case not the habit in these areas to roam the streets or hang around the cinema foyers.

The wish to keep work and leisure in separate compartments was widespread: it was pleasant, and sensible, to be friendly at work, but in leisure time it was best to get away from it all. At the time of the last Interview, one-fifth of the respondents (21 boys and 23 girls) spent some of their leisure time with friends made at work, but with few exceptions they went out together infrequently.

Friends of the Opposite Sex

During their last year at school, the majority of boys and girls took their pleasures separately. There was a fair amount of flirting, and a number of short-lived friendships. There were also some group friendships—several boys and girls meeting each other in the evenings. ("I have no regular girl friend, but me and my mates are friendly with girls in a crowd".) A few boys and girls were "going strong" with friends of the opposite sex, one or two girls having boy friends who were at work. The impact of some of the friendships was quite strong—the whole course of the leisure pursuits of one girl had been changed: "I *have* to like pop records, because my boy friend does (I prefer nice music, classical and opera). I like watching T.V., and he doesn't. He likes cycling and I don't. So we don't do either. We spend alternate evenings at his house and mine. I used to read a lot before I met my boy friend, and I used to go to the cinema with my mother before I started going out with him." A boy was very thoughtful about his friendship with a girl, and puzzled at the transformation in his way of life. He used to go to the cinema three times a week, but now did not go at all because his girl friend disliked going. Instead they stayed at home to watch television or do the girl's homework, or went to the local café, where there was a juke box. This couple had made a pact to save their pocket money—"I can't save, and she isn't much good at it." With such an unpromising basis on which to work, a desperate remedy was called for, and it was agreed that for every 2s. 6d. saved by the girl, the boy would save

5s. 0d. (he had more spending money). Saving was the girl's idea—the objects were to get together enough money for a holiday and to get into the habit of saving. With few exceptions the friendships were of a "school-child" rather than an "adult" type—activities included playing in the streets and parks, and visits to the local cinema or the roller skating rink. A few girls made more adult-type relationships with boys, going to the cinema in town, dressing up like older girls, and visiting the boy friend's relations. But on the whole relationships between the sexes savoured very much more of the school-room rather than of the bedroom.

During the course of the year, interest in the opposite sex awakened and developed. Girls, especially, turned their attentions towards the youths: the interest gained impetus towards the end of the year, by which time most children had reached the age of sixteen. One girl who at Interview 2 thought that "you have more fun with girls than with boys" now said, with a mixture of pride and shyness, "I'm courting". At Interview 3, one-third of the boys (34) and nearly two-thirds of the girls (60) went out regularly with a friend of the opposite sex. Six boys, and nearly a third of the girls (29) were "going steady". In addition, 2 girls were married, one of them having a baby. A "steady" friendship was one which involved regular meetings, was usually exclusive (no going out with other boys *or* girls), and which had been going on for at least several months. Many of the children who were going steady saw each other most evenings. The demands of one youth upon the attentions of his girl friend had resulted in the breaking up of the friendship—"she wouldn't come out every night, so I packed her up about a month ago".

Some of the friendships had continued from schooldays, but most had developed during the year. Several girls used the term "courting" to describe their relationship—it was, that is to say, on a serious level, not something trivial or light-hearted. One girl was engaged to be married (to a youth aged twenty) and another intended to become engaged during the next year. Several other girls showed obvious signs of wishing to be engaged. One girl said, "My boy friend is aged twenty. I only see him once a week, because he doesn't live in Sheffield. Oh! I wish I was engaged." Asked whether she really meant this, the girl replied, "Oh! I do! I don't know why—my friend is." The status of being engaged was important to such girls, almost independently of the man involved: it was particularly important if friends or girls at work were engaged. There was a nagging fear of being left behind, and even of being left on the shelf. Several girls expected to be married within a year or two, even though they had no one specially in mind at the time.

Most of the girls who were going steady—and all of the boys—had no thoughts of engagement or marriage, however, at any rate for the time being. They felt that they were too young for that, and although their friendships were serious, they were “not all *that* serious”. One girl had just ended a friendship with a boy she had known for a long time because, as she said, “We decided we were seeing too much of each other, so we called it off by agreement.”

Some girls felt strongly that marriage was a very serious matter, to be thought about carefully. A girl who had been going out with her boy friend, aged nineteen, for over a year, replied “I don’t know yet” when asked if they were “serious”. Other girls had no thoughts of marriage. They enjoyed the companionship of their steady boy friends, but the idea of making a permanent liaison had not entered their heads. A few girls had definite plans which precluded marriage—such as completing courses leading to careers—whilst others had firm views on the best age for marriage which set the date a long time ahead—five or six years. It was therefore much too soon to start thinking seriously about it. Five girls, all of whom had boy friends and one of whom was going steady, were emphatic that it was foolish to “get involved too seriously” at their age: three of them were on courses which would last for several years, and their views were heavily weighted by this fact. One student nurse, for example, said, “I meet quite a lot of boys, but I haven’t got a special one, and haven’t had for a year. I usually get fed up after about two dates—my friends say I am too particular. I don’t want to get married until I have finished my training, though I suppose I may change my mind later on. I am not really interested in boys much. I don’t think they fit in with nursing. There is too much work to do as a nurse. Boys of seventeen are mostly working and want to go out every night. But I have homework to do, and I don’t know until the evening comes whether I have it free or not.”

Another argument against being too serious was the need to make absolutely sure of one’s affections before coming to a decision—“I don’t think it is a good thing for a girl to tie herself too young. Two of the girls who left school in my year are engaged, and another is thinking of getting engaged at Christmas. But you never know—sometimes these things fall through.” For her part, she proposed to proceed with caution. There was a wish, also, to avoid being tied down—“I don’t want a steady boy friend. I think it is silly to go out with just one boy at the age of sixteen. And it is too young to marry at eighteen. You don’t see life, and you are stuck in the house all the time.” Another girl made the same point, saying, “I want to marry eventually. My mother recommends twenty-three or four; I

would like to marry at twenty or twenty-one, but I would not want to marry before then. I am firmly against long engagements. You hear of some people who are engaged for about four years—it goes on and on. I haven't got a steady boy friend. I don't like the idea, because it kind of ties you down—the boy expects you to go out with him every evening, and also on Saturdays, and to go everywhere with him. A steady boy friend expects you to drop off all your other pals." There are signs that some girls are tending towards more independence in their dealings with men, and that they will not be content to sign over their lives to their husbands on marriage. Having experienced the satisfactions of nice clothes, hair-do's and make-up, they are determined to remain smart and in control of events after they have married—they are not prepared to be bowed down with lots of children, and they will expect their husbands to take a fuller share than their fathers in the running of the home. But many girls still thought of marriage as the termination of independence, and for this reason desired several years "freedom" before becoming "tied down"—"there is no sense in tying yourself down too young", and "if you get serious too soon, you don't see anything of life".

(Children were questioned about age for marriage at the first Interview. Although the issue was not a real one for either boys or girls at that time, most children had some ideas on the matter. Over two-thirds of the boys and nearly as many girls thought that a girl should be at least twenty-one years of age before marrying, and 80 per cent of boys and girls thought that men should be this age. The chief reasons for not marrying before that age were that experience of life is necessary before coming to a decision, and that it was sensible for people "to have a good time whilst young" rather than being tied down—"It is disgusting for girls to marry at 17, 18 or 19," said one girl, "They haven't seen enough of life. All those years in front of them, landed with kids!" It was also thought that youths should get a "steady" job, and be on top wages before taking on the responsibility of a family. Probably, however, many of the girls, and at least a few of the boys, will marry at a younger age than they thought sensible at this time.)

It should not be assumed that all girls with steady boy friends—whether or not they had engagement in mind—were "flashy tarts", with tight skirts, bold breasts and bright red lips. Many, whilst taking great care with their grooming and appearance and doing all that they could to make themselves attractive, did not throw themselves at their boy friends, and a number would best be described as quiet, homely and self-effacing girls.

Some girls were described by their mothers as "boy-mad"—they had a long succession of intense but short-lived "crazes". A girl who estimated that she had had seven boy friends over the past year was currently looking for another. Boys tended to be less intense, if not downright casual, over the whole business. ("On Saturday and Sunday nights I usually take a girl to the cinema—not a special one, but different girls".) Asked about the duration of his friendships, one youth replied, "Six weeks—that's long enough. I think you should have a change." The friendships of several respondents had been marred by squabbles. Still showing traces of pent-up wrath, one girl said, "I'm not sure whether I have a boy friend or not. Last night I clipped him because he was talking to other girls. But I'm not bothered—men aren't worth bothering about." The emotion in her voice belied what she said. One youth had argued with his girl friend because of her refusal to protest when her mother kept her in during the evenings to look after her younger sisters, so that she was unable to meet him so frequently. The less serious friendships usually ended without argument—"nothing happened—we just broke up. We didn't say anything. She just walked off." It had been fun whilst it lasted, but had not meant much to either boy or girl.

Activities with friends of the opposite sex varied, but visits to the cinema and dances were usual with those who were going steady: one girl went to dinner dances "quite a lot" ("a crowd of us go together—I have a generous boy friend"). Coffee bars were popular, but more so with those who did not have steady friends. A main attraction of the coffee bar was the opportunity it provided for striking up friendships, and for flirting: once a partner was found, couples went elsewhere. A few respondents went hiking and climbing with their friends in the Derbyshire countryside. Some boy- and girl-friends were regarded as one of the family and spent much of the time in the home, or visiting aunts and in-laws. Several boys and girls went away on holiday with their friends' families. Generally speaking, youths chose girl friends who were of their own age or younger: several youths had girl friends who were still attending school. Whilst they would have scorned to associate with school boys they felt no loss of status in mixing with school girls—indeed, their superiority could in this way be emphasized rather than questioned. With some boys, it was not so much a question of having a girl friend, as of having a friend who happened to be a girl. There were exceptions—and some boys' activities with girls took a definite adult turn. One youth took pride in being something of a "wolf"—

I talk to the lasses round here. But they are not much, except for Jean who is a nice lass. I took her friend out once, and got home late. I have a girl

friend—or perhaps I ought to say I used to have one. Anyhow, I saw her quite regularly. The trouble is she is a bit too old for me—she's 19. She didn't know I was only fifteen until we had been going out together for some time and I told her. She said she wasn't bothered, and as we had been going out for such a time, we might as well carry on. I went to her home, and met her friends and relations, and sometimes I baby-sat with her. I have not seen her lately. I put her on a bus to go home, and arranged to visit her home, but I never went. I've had two letters from her, but I haven't replied. I wrote yesterday, though, but I haven't got round to posting it. I also have stacks of other girl friends—cigarettes, beer and women are my life.

The youth later described the enjoyable holiday which he had recently had—"I had a different girl every night". When asked what they did, he said, "You've put me in a corner now", but when pressed, he said, "What comes naturally". Asked whether he met the girls at dances, he said, "It was difficult at dances, because there were three of us lads, but usually the birds knocked about in twos—this would have meant that one of the lads was left on his Jack. So we just went to one dance, and that was it." However, a street photographer had been able to come to the help of the youth and his friends—"There were a lot of boarding houses, and the photographer knew where the nice looking girls were. I met Blondie, then there were the twins, then there was another girl from Birmingham (or was it Burnley?) Then there was Jackie from London, and Joyce. We used to meet them on the sea front. The photographer would say, 'There are some nice ones up this road', and when we saw them, we put our thumbs up if we liked them, and down if we didn't." The outlook of this youth was in marked contrast to that of the respondent who politely and with deference "sometimes walked a girl friend home after Youth Club—to see her safely home".

The girls' relationships tended to be of a more "adult" nature than the youths'. Most boy friends were at least a year or two older than the girls, and several girls had boy friends of nineteen or twenty. These boy friends had higher wages and more spending money than the respondents—boys and girls—and this in part accounted for the more adult activities. But the actual relationship, independent of the activities, was more adult. Girls thought in terms of having a "young man" rather than a "boy friend", of "courting" rather than "knocking about with". The preference for youths who were older than themselves did not derive mainly, if at all, from calculation of material gain. As one girl pointed out, "Lads of the same age as girls don't act adult enough. Me and my friend have not got *proper* boy friends yet—we have been out with a few boys, but we are waiting for the

right ones to come along." "Proper" boy friends were older—those of the same age were not the real thing.

Some of the friendships had been struck up at school, others were with people who lived nearby and had been known to the family for years. Boys' friendships tended to be with girls from the same neighbourhood, but many girls had boy friends from farther afield, often met at dance halls in the city. The importance of the cinema for striking up friendships was referred to above: one youth said, "I met my girl friend at the cinema—I just got talking to her." Parks were also important meeting places, particularly for gangs of boys and girls, and the streets were the hunting ground for groups of boys—"I meet my girl friends by going round with a group of pals. We whistle them, and then get talking and make dates." Other children, in contrast, met friends through the Church and Church social clubs, as the result of formal introductions.

Some youths scorned girl friends because of the expense—"they keep you poor. I can't afford a tape recorder *and* a girl friend, and I prefer a tape recorder", said one youth, whilst another was equally blunt, remarking "I can't afford one, with a scooter to keep going." Several youths had learnt through experience—"I've had two or three girl friends, but they are too dear, especially if you are trying to save for a holiday." It was usual for boys to pay for entertainments when they took girls out—most girls did not have sufficient spending money left to pay their share, after having bought the clothes and make-up which were to catch the boys' eyes. One girl was treated to the cinema on five evenings each week by her boy friend, himself only seventeen years of age. Youths who did take girls out for the most-part *expected* to pay—it was the right and done thing: "I pay when we go out", said one youth, "who doesn't?" One girl said that she had offered to go shares with her boy friend, but had not pressed the point because she had "had her head snapped off twice" for doing so. Part of the young man's pleasure was to be able to pay for the girl friend. (One youth was an exception—"We meet our girls *inside* the cinema, so that we don't have to pay—craft, not daft—that's us.")

Another reason for not having a girl friend was the restriction of freedom which this involved: "I prefer to go out with the lads," said one youth, "you enjoy yourself more. You find that a girl always wants to see you every night. Girls always say, 'Where are we going tomorrow night?' You are tied down in that way. I prefer to make up my mind what I am going to do when the evening comes, not have it all planned out ahead."

Some boys and girls who would have liked friends of the opposite sex were shy, and rarely took the opportunity of meeting other young

people. Several boys who plucked up courage to go to dances with a view to finding girl friends were unable to go through with the ordeal—"I know it's silly, but every time I stand up I think everybody is looking at me," said one youth, whilst another stated, "I have an inferiority complex. I'm frightened to death of girls."

Many boys and girls had no inclination to go out with members of the opposite sex. They were just not interested—there was plenty of time for that later on. It had not occurred to them to seek such company. Boys were impatient of girls—"I don't think they are worth it" said one, whilst another blamed "women" for luring his friends away from him. These boys gained more pleasure from their hobbies or from playing football. Some respondents, too, were young in their ways, and the very idea of them having boy- or girl-friends was regarded as amusing by them and their families—they weren't grown-up enough for that sort of thing. A few boys and girls had been forbidden by their parents to have friends of the opposite sex.

The majority of the parents of children who had friends of the opposite sex were either unaware of the fact, acquiesced in it or were indifferent. "She'll just as likely be married next year" said one mother referring to her daughter, who had just said that she would like to become engaged. The mother was not thinking of the girl's current boy friend in particular. She knew that girls do marry young, and was well aware that her daughter might follow suit. It did not occur to her that this could be a matter for a positive policy on her part. Other parents acceded to their daughters' friendships only after satisfying themselves that the young men concerned were "nice", and after being assured that the friendship was "nothing serious". A few parents positively favoured their daughters having friends of the opposite sex—"a girl should have boy friends when young—not one, but a lot": it was regarded as sensible for a girl to meet different sorts of men, and it was believed that this enabled them to discriminate. But some parents were worried—it was not a good thing, they felt, for their daughters to spend so much time with boy friends, out together nearly every night. Yet if you say anything to them, they just flare up and go out all the more. Parents did not know what to do for the best. For there was the danger that if children were forbidden to have boy- or girl-friends, they would "do things behind your back"—"What I don't like, and will not have, is this street corner business." Perhaps the best policy, therefore, was to welcome friends into the home—at least you knew that they were not "getting up to mischief" then. One girl attempted to calm her mother's anxiety, telling her that there was "nothing wrong" in going out with boys, and giving a formidable list of irreproachable activities which her boy friends and

girl friends did together—hiking, cycling, swimming, bopping. Her words were an attack as well as a defence, and she spoke for many of her generation—girls could go out with boys without sinning: why were adults so nasty-minded and suspicious? You can have fun without breaking the Commandments. But mothers, with their eyes on the terrible things you read in the papers, were not convinced.

Parents were less concerned about their sons—partly because the youths themselves were less serious in their friendships with girls, but also because although a lad might get himself into trouble it was not such a complicated business. The parents of several boys were strict about this matter, however—there was “plenty of time for ladding and lassing” *after* a youth had learnt his trade. One father, very concerned about the dangers which beset modern teenagers and the temptations to which they are exposed, had reacted sharply when he discovered that his son had been “keeping company with a young lady”—in the words of the youth, “When Dad found out, he said he would kick me up the arse if he caught me with a girl again.” There was to be no nonsense in *that* family.

Time for being Home at Night

By Interview 3, one-third of the boys and three-quarters of the girls had to be in at night by a set time laid down by their parents. The time laid down was not necessarily an *early* hour—many were allowed out until 11 p.m. or later: but the time had to be complied with, as a point of discipline. In some homes to be “late” was regarded not only as wrong from the point of view of the child’s physical well-being, but also from a moral point of view: it was “right” and “proper” for a child to be in bed by a certain hour. As in most matters concerning the children, mothers were usually responsible for enforcing the decision about what time the children were to be in. Sometimes father was called in if the son or daughter was reluctant to comply with the mother’s instructions. In families in which the parents were young, father entered into the picture more—both in laying down rules and in ensuring compliance with them.

There were several reasons why many more girls than boys were subject to a laid-down time of being in. It was felt by many parents that girls “needed to be watched more” than boys—care was necessary to see that they “came to no harm”. If a late night were allowed once a week precautions were taken. (“When I go dancing it is 11.30 or later before I get home—my father meets me at the bus stop, as there is a dark lane leading to my house.”) More girls than boys spent their leisure time at cinemas or dancing in the city, furthermore, and had a long bus ride home. Dances often finished late, and

whilst many parents were prepared to let their daughters stay out "within reason" they were aware of the temptation to linger on, and therefore impressed upon their children that they must be home by a certain time. Whilst insisting that the stated time was adhered to, many parents thought that they were generous in the actual time allowed—they did not wish to spoil their daughters' fun by making them leave the cinema show before the end. ("If she is after 11 p.m., she is in hot water—11 p.m. is a bit on the late side. But it is a shame for a girl to have to leave a show before it is over, and I am not a spoilsport".) Rules were thought necessary, also, to combat the risk of daughters being kept out late by their boy friends. Girls were not necessarily required to get home earlier than boys, however—some were, but many girls had later nights than boys, especially at weekends.

In most cases where there was no laid-down time for being in, this was because the need did not arise. Children rarely went out or were always home early. As long as children were home at a "reasonable" hour, parents felt no need to enforce a formal rule. ("There is no special time—about 11 o'clock. I suppose if I were *really* late I would be played hell with.") Several respondents had imposed rules upon themselves, not wishing to be too late home because they had to rise early in the morning: one girl said, "the main difference from school is that I go to bed a lot earlier now". A few parents who did not stipulate a specific time for being in were concerned to know where their children were when they went out. ("We don't mind him being out late, so long as we know where he is—say in someone's house, but not out on the streets".) Some parents did not lay down a time for being in because they were indifferent, or did not consider it their business to interfere with their children's leisure activities—"I get in when I feel like it", said one youth, "It may be ten, or eleven or half past. It just depends." Another youth explained, "If I know I am going to be late I take a key, and sometimes I don't get home until getting on for twelve. But if I'm as late as that I don't really need a key, for it's 10 to 1 my sister will be there with her young man when I get home." "I can take a key and get in any time up to half-past twelve", said another youth, whose father added, "He can come in when he likes, so long as he doesn't make a noise and disturb me." A few parents reflected on how things had changed—"There was none of this staying out till eleven o'clock at night in my youth. I would have to get permission from my father, when I was eighteen years old, if I wanted to talk to the lads on the corner at *nine* o'clock."

Most children said that they stayed out, or were allowed out, until a much later time than when they were at school—"When I go danc-

ing I am not home until after eleven," said one girl, "but at school I was in bed by nine." A later time, or complete discretion, had been granted to children when they first left school, and in most cases another half-hour or more had been allowed when they reached the age of sixteen. After a year at work, some boys and girls were regularly in bed by nine o'clock, others thought that they had been cheated of their leisure if on just one night of the week they arrived home before eleven o'clock. Some thought that staying out as late as half-past-ten at weekends was a treat and a privilege, others thought nothing of staying out until after twelve every Saturday.

One-quarter of both boys and girls (25 and 23) arrived home at eleven o'clock or after on Saturdays or Sundays. It was exceptional for children to have more than two or three late nights a week (that is, eleven or after). Dances accounted for the late nights of most girls: more youths would have stayed out later if there had been "anything to do"—but after eleven or twelve there was "nothing left except to go home". Another reason why girls kept later hours than boys was that they tended to arrive home from work later than boys, because they finished work later and had a bus journey in the rush-hour: the business of getting ready to go out took time, and they therefore did not leave home until fairly late, compared with the boys.

The earlier nights of boys compared with girls was also related to the time for getting up in the mornings. Boys had heavier work and longer hours, and felt the need for more sleep. Sixty boys got up at seven o'clock or before, compared with only 22 girls. Nevertheless, many of the youths and girls who did get up early in the mornings also kept late hours during the week. Of the 60 boys who got up at 7 o'clock or before, 17 did not get in until eleven o'clock or after on at least one night during the week, and this was also true of 6 of the 22 girls.

When the question of time for being in was raised one respondent remarked, "Ah! the big problem!" In fact, there were very few cases of disputes between children and their parents on this subject. Youths and girls were content if, as was usually the case, they received the same treatment as friends and neighbours. But even the few children who were required to be home at a comparatively early hour—half-past nine, or ten o'clock—did not complain. Some parents praised their children for being "good about" getting in at night—saying that they "never had to wait up" for them. A few respondents—mostly girls—arrived home later than they were supposed to from time to time. Usually only a mild rebuke ensued ("nothing much is said, just a word of warning about not being late the next night"). But

admonition was in some cases more severe—"If I'm after a quarter to eleven, I've had it", said one girl, "I get a good telling off, and I'm made to stay in the following night, or be in by ten": another girl said, "If I am too late, my father and mother get mad, and go to the garden gate to wait for me." Punishment was not as forceful as when children were at school, however—"If I was late then, I really *had* had it. I was given a clip."

Parents' Attitudes to Leisure Activities

Most parents expected that their sons and daughters would want to do more adult things on leaving school, and most were prepared to allow them more independence in their leisure activities. Indeed, several parents were somewhat irritated by their children's persistence in "childish" ways, and wanted them to "get out more and mix with people of their own age". This was for the children's benefit, but also because parents found their own pleasure ruined if great big youths and girls were hanging about the house in the evenings—"he drives us mad", said the father of one youth, "going in and out of the rooms and fidgeting about".

Children's independence was often based upon a mutual trust or a shared idea with their parents about what was reasonable behaviour. But there were wide variations with regard to what was considered reasonable. Whilst one family did not consider two dances a week, a visit to the pub and a boy friend of twenty to be amiss for its daughter, the father of one girl wondered if he was not being excessively tolerant in not questioning his daughter's habit of going to the cinema once a week—although he thought that, on the whole, "there was nothing wrong in that". Some parents would not contemplate permitting their daughters to go to the cinema unaccompanied by a known friend, whilst others thought nothing of their girls going to Blackpool on the Works Outing, with crate-loads of beer on the coaches and numerous men, young and old.

Parents exercised some indirect control over leisure activities through their decisions about the amount of pocket money to allow—this, at least, placed limits on the amount of going out. Some parents, in addition, laid down definite rules—about friends of the opposite sex, cinema going and dances. Girls were more subject to such regulations than youths. Some were made to stay in once or twice a week to tidy their rooms, help with the housework and do their darning and sewing. Vetoes were in a few cases placed upon certain types of dress (boys were not exempt from this—one mother said that she "drew the line at arty clothes"). Whereas several youths had been away on summer holidays with a group of friends, girls were not given

this freedom—one girl who had hopes of going to Butlin's with a friend the following year, instead of going away with her parents, was given a chilly reception when she raised the matter. There is a tendency for some young people to interpret all parental advice as interference. When mother suggests that her daughter is overdoing the leisure activities a bit by going to the cinema five nights a week, the daughter may infer that her mother is a spoilsport who does not like her to enjoy herself. Some friction developed in consequence. But on the whole children agreed with, or at any rate accepted, the standards which their parents required—or the parents themselves were indifferent and set no special standards.

A few parents were very strict—one mother rightly said, "I reckon we are more strict with our boys than a good many parents are with their girls." These parents were genuinely worried about their sons "getting into bad company", and their daughters "getting into trouble". This was seen almost as a natural hazard—the dangers were presumed to be lurking just around the corner. Accordingly, a close watch was kept on children's activities: it was a proud boast of one mother that her sons "never went around with Teddies". Children—boys and girls—were made to dress smartly; scruffiness was not allowed.

Many parents, however, took no special precautions about their children's activities and laid down no laws. Rather did they feel that, with youths especially, there "is not much you can do". Young people were expected to sow a few wild oats, and the view was "let them have a good time whilst they are young". Mothers, looking back on their own lives with a sigh, believed that the opportunity for "a bit of fun" does not last long—soon their daughters would be burdened with children and a home to look after: and that would be the end of their enjoyment of life.

Many parents exercised no special control over their children's leisure activities because they were indifferent. Some, indeed, regarded the age of fifteen rather as the age of twenty-one is traditionally looked upon—after that age the youth (though less frequently the girl) is "on his own". He can please himself. The parent is not worried if he gets into trouble, but only if the consequence of that trouble inconveniences them—what with statements to the police and so on. It is the child's life—and it is for him to lead it: the parents felt that they have enough troubles of their own. In their homes it was every man for himself, and no worker had responsibility for any other. The degenerate physical environment in which most of these people lived—narrow, filthy streets, thick grime, the scarce grass bedecked by grey deposit, and walls chalked with dirty remarks—was

not conducive to feelings of responsibility or strict adherence to a particular moral code. The children were quite capable of looking after themselves, furthermore—girls were often more sophisticated than their mothers (“I have a hair-do in the salon on the corner every Friday: I can smoke whilst it’s being done”.)

Many parents, too, were reluctant to impose conditions upon their children’s way of life because they were uncertain themselves—being cynical, bewildered, or past caring, they could not offer a clear lead to their children. Some referred to rapidly dying values and pointed out that it was difficult to know what conduct was sensible and what was to be condemned. “Young people grow up so quickly nowadays”—it is no use trying to treat them in the same way as children of their age were treated in years gone by: “I notice the change”, said one mother, “because my eldest daughter is now 30. When *she* was 15 she would scarcely have been able to find her way about town, but my youngest daughter can find her way by herself almost anywhere in Sheffield. My eldest girl would not have dreamed of going dancing at that age.” Parents who thought that they ought to keep up with the times did not quite know what was “reasonable” for the modern teenager and what was not. They did not know where to draw the line.

CONCLUSION

THE aims of this book have been to describe and to clarify. The sociologist has no special claim, *qua* sociologist, to say what ought to be, to judge what is right and what is wrong. He can, however, provide the information and make the analyses on the basis of which such judgements may be made more adequately. The effectiveness of much of the machinery which society has set up to achieve its chosen ends remains the subject of speculation rather than of knowledge: the penal system is an example which comes readily to mind—time and money are spent on establishing apparatus which it is hoped will be the means to given ends (however vague the ends may be), but not spent upon assessing whether the apparatus is appropriate to the purposes for which it is set up.

In the field of education, too, the ends remain vague and the means are not assessed. The examination of the schools and the Youth Employment Service in the present research has suggested that both are achieving only limited success—perhaps it is more honest to say that they are in a large measure failing. In part this results from the inadequate allocation of resources. This study has also indicated the complexity of human social relationships, however, a complexity which no social machinery can ignore if it is to succeed, but which it is exceedingly difficult to take into account. There are no simple solutions to the problems which an industrial society presents—whether in the field of education, leisure, family life or employment. Life is complicated; the sociologist is concerned to unravel some of its complications. It is sometimes said that social research raises more questions than it answers: the author would be well satisfied with this verdict.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. An exception was 1956, when 395,500 children entered employment at the age of fifteen; see *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, 1957. The numbers of young persons entering employment are given annually in the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*: the numbers refer to Great Britain, and are drawn up on the basis of the calendar year. The numbers of children leaving school "for paid employment and other reasons" in England and Wales are given in the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Education and refer to educational years, ending 31 July. For the year ending 31 July 1959 (the year in which the respondents concerned in this study left school) the analysis of fourteen- and fifteen-year-old leavers by type of school attended is as follows:

All-age and secondary modern	351,786
Secondary grammar (including grammar-technical) ..	9,558
Secondary technical	6,357
Bilateral, multilateral and comprehensive (includes many "secondary modern" stream pupils)	15,778
Other secondary schools	14,433
Total	397,912

The figures are abstracted from Table 5 of the Statistics of Public Education given in *Education in 1959*, The Report of the Ministry of Education and Statistics for England and Wales, Cmnd. 1088, H.M.S.O., London, 1960, p. 140.

2. *Secondary Education for All: A New Drive*, Cmnd. 604, H.M.S.O., London, 1958, p. 4, para. 9.
3. *Education in 1960*, Cmnd. 1439, H.M.S.O., London, 1961, p. 17, para. 20.
4. Cf. *The New Secondary Education*, Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 9, H.M.S.O., London, 1947, reprinted 1954, p. 63:
 "To assume that the 'top layer' of intelligence will always go to grammar school would be contrary to the purpose of the 1944 Act. It should be possible for the brightest and ablest pupils to go to whichever type of secondary school will best accord with their interests, their special aptitudes, and the kind of career they have in view. There can be no useful selection on any other basis."
5. *Secondary Modern Schools: An Interim Report*, H. C. Dent, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1958, p. 22.
6. "Secondary Modern Schools," *Political and Economic Planning, Planning*, vol. XXII, No. 396, May, 1956, p. 75.
7. H. C. Dent, *op. cit.*, gives the exact proportions in January 1956 as secondary modern 75.4 per cent, grammar and technical 24.6 per cent. Approximately 3 per cent of all children go to technical schools, the remainder of the selected children going to grammar schools.
8. Alfred Yates and D. A. Pidgeon, *Admission to Grammar Schools*, Published for the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, by Newnes Educational Publishing Company, Limited, London, 1957, p. 144.

9. *15 to 18*, Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education—England, vol. I (Report), Ministry of Education, H.M.S.O., London, 1959, p. 72, para. 107.
10. *Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 2*, H.M.S.O., London, 1945, Reprinted, 1947, p. 24, para. 76.
11. *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
12. *Op. cit.*, p. 4, para. 10.
13. *Op. cit.*, p. 21.
14. *Op. cit.*, p. 472, para. 694.
15. *Op. cit.*, p. 190.
16. *The Crowther Report, op. cit.*, p. 472, para. 694.
17. *Ibid.*
18. A. J. P. Taylor, *Who Governs Britain? Is there a Power Elite?* (1) *The Thing, The Twentieth Century*, October 1957, p. 294.
19. *Op. cit.*, p. 5, para. 11.
20. J. E. Floud (Editor), A. H. Halsey and F. M. Martin, *Social Class and Educational Opportunity*, Heinemann, London, 1956, p. 139.
21. Cf. Basil Bernstein, "Some Sociological Determinants of Perception," *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 9, 1958, and, "A Public Language: Some Sociological Implications of a Linguistic Form," *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 10, 1959 and, "Social Structure, Language and Learning," *Educational Research*, vol. III, No. 3, June 1961.
22. Elizabeth Frazer, *Home Environment and the School*, University of London Press, 1959.
23. *Op. cit.*
24. Of 1500 modern schools which replied to a questionnaire drawn up by the Science Masters' Association in 1960, 65 per cent needed more staff for science teaching. There were 3837 modern schools in January 1960.
25. *The New Secondary Education, op. cit.*, p. 29.
26. *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
27. *Secondary School Examinations other than the G.C.E.* Report of a Committee appointed by the Secondary Schools Examinations Council in July 1958 ("*The Beloe Report*"), Ministry of Education, H.M.S.O., London, 1960.
28. "Young Persons Entering Employment," *The Ministry of Labour Gazette*, vol. LXVIII, No. 6, June 1960, H.M.S.O., London, p. 236.
29. *Ibid.*
30. It is not possible here to discuss overall changes in the occupational structure—resultant, for example, upon changes in technology or in economic power *vis à vis* other countries, or upon changes in the standard of living which have effects upon the proportions of manpower engaged in primary, secondary and service employment. Clearly such factors have implications with regard to the type and level of jobs available, and this is illustrated by current concern about the number of apprenticeships and the supply of technologists.
31. The numbers of children reaching the age of fifteen in Great Britain during the years 1945-72 are given in *The Work of the Youth Employment Service, 1956-1959*, H.M.S.O., London, 1959, p. 23, Table E.
32. In 1959, 128 of the 181 local education authorities operated the Service—43 out of 63 County Councils and 73 out of 83 County Boroughs in England and Wales; and 9 out of 31 County Councils and 3 out of 4

- Town Councils in Scotland. Cf. *Seventh Report from the Select Committee on Estimates—Together with the minutes taken before sub-committee E and appendices, Session 1956-57, The Youth Employment Service and Youth Service Grants*, H.M.S.O., London, 1957, Reprinted 1959, p. 13, para. 5.
33. The information in Table 2 is taken from the National Census tables. Compared with other large cities, Sheffield has about the same proportion of people in the two highest social classes as Birmingham and Manchester, but a rather lower proportion than Leeds and Bristol.
 34. Techniques and problems of qualitative interviewing are discussed in *Training Guide in the Techniques of Qualitative Interviews*, Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, 1948.
 35. Includes last occupations of fathers who were dead or unemployed.
 36. Cf. *The Times Educational Supplement*, 7 April 1961, p. 674.
 37. "Parents' Views on Education," *Political and Economic Planning, Planning*, vol. XXVII, No. 448, 23 January 1961, p. 19.
 38. *The Young Idea*, Conservative Political Centre, 1961.
 39. *The Beloe Report*, *op. cit.*
 40. Cf., for example, *Scientific Vocational Guidance and its value to the choice of employment work of a Local Education Authority*, Report of Research by E. Patricia Hunt and Percival Smith, City of Birmingham Education Committee, 1944.
 41. C. B. McAlpine: evidence given before sub-committee E of the Select Committee Estimates, *op. cit.*, p. 25, para. 156.
 42. *The Work of the Youth Employment Service, 1956-1959: A Report by the National Youth Employment Council*, H.M.S.O., London, 1959.
 43. Cf. H. C. Baker, *Human Factors—A Survey of Management Opinions*, Cutlery Research Council, CRO/HF/57/1, 1957. In a study of management opinions in the Cutlery industry, Mr. Baker found that 28 of the 49 managers who were interviewed believed that it was difficult to attract juvenile labour. The reasons which they gave included the better pay and prospects in other jobs, the influence of parents who recommended other sorts of work, the tendency for fewer cutlery workers to bring their sons into the trade, and the unsatisfactory nature of apprenticeship training schemes.
 44. *Interim Report of the National Youth Employment Council on the Employment and Training of Young People, April 1959-October 1961*, H.M.S.O., London, 1961, Table A, p. 14.
 45. *Ibid*, Table A continued, p. 16.
 46. *Training for Skill—Recruitment and Training of Young Workers in Industry*. Report by a Sub-Committee of the National Joint Advisory Council, published for the Ministry of Labour and National Service, H.M.S.O., London, 1958, p. 27, para. 78.
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 48. Elizabeth Livingstone and John D. Handyside, *Two Studies in Supervision*, N.I.I.P. Report No. 10, 1953, pp. 34-35.
 49. Kate Liepmann, *Apprenticeship: An Enquiry into its Adequacy under Modern Conditions*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1960.
 50. Advisory Centre for Education, *Where*, Spring 1961, pp. 9-11.
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54. *The Crowther Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 124, para. 191, and p. 330, Table 55.
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57. Ethel C. Venables, "Placement Problems Among Engineering Apprentices in Part-time Technical College Courses, Part II," *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 30, 1960, pp. 237-43.
58. D. M. Silberston, *Youth in a Technical Age*, Max Parrish, London, 1959, p. 77.
59. *Op. cit.*, p. 373, para. 537.
60. *Better Opportunities in Technical Education*, *op. cit.*, p. 15, para. 50.
61. *Technical Education*, Cmnd. 9703, H.M.S.O., London, 1956, para. 84, and cf. *The Crowther Report*, p. 362, Table 68.
62. Cheshire Education Committee, *Training for Skill*, 1961.
63. *The Crowther Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 352, para. 509, and p. 184, para. 283.
64. *Sheffield Telegraph*, Monday, 2 October, 1961.
65. Cf. James Brown, "Wastage of Evening Students at Technical College," *The Vocational Aspect*, vol. VIII, 1956, p. 115; Mr. Brown suggests that further education may make children resentful of doing simple and routine jobs.
66. *Op. cit.*, p. 9, para. 22.
67. No. 2382, 13 January 1961, p. 52.
68. Sir David Eccles, *The Crowther Report and After*, Opening Speech of the British Association for Commercial and Industrial Education, Spring Conference, 1960. *BACIE Journal*, vol. 14, No. 2, June 1960, p. 39.
69. Cf. *The Work of the Youth Employment Service, 1956-1959, A Report of the National Youth Employment Council, 1959*, p. 15, Table A (II).
70. *Seventh Annual Report on the Administration of the Youth Employment Service, 1957-1958*, City of Sheffield Education Committee, pp. 6-7.
71. *The Work of the Youth Employment Service, 1953-1956*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
73. *Report of the Committee on the Juvenile Employment Service*, H.M.S.O., London, 1945, p. 23, paras. 104 and 105.
74. *The Work of the Youth Employment Service, 1955-1956*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
75. Pearl Jephcott, *Rising Twenty: Notes on Some Ordinary Girls*, Faber, London, 1948, p. 133.
76. The Trade Union Amendment Act 1876 states in Section 9 that "a person under the age of 21, but above the age of 16 may be a member of a Trade Union, unless provision be made in the rules thereof to the contrary, and may, subject to the rules of the Trade Union, enjoy all the rights of a member as herein provided and execute all instruments and give all acquittances necessary to be executed or given under the rules but shall not be a member of a committee of management, trustee or treasurer of the Trade Union". The Chief Registrar in the *Guide Book to Registry of Friendly Societies*, 1933, para. 1346, has taken the view that the words "but above the age of 16" imply a prohibition against membership of persons under 16, but the point is not absolutely clear. In view of the doubt on the point it is generally assumed that

persons under the age of 16 may not be full members. It is the practice of some unions to accept such persons as juveniles, associates or probationers.

77. *The Prospects in Industry and the Working Conditions Affecting Young People Leaving School in Sheffield during the period 1958-1962*, Sheffield Trades and Labour Council.

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

FIRST INTERVIEW

A. *School*

- A.1. What do you think of school?
Will you be sorry or glad to leave?
What do you like/dislike about school? (apart from particular subjects).
What will you miss most?
Are you looking forward to leaving school most/least, or to starting work most/least?
What do you think about the school-leaving age of 15?
Do you think it should be higher or lower?
- A.1a. Why did you stay on at school?
- A.2. What do you think about the things you have been doing at school in the past year or two? (Prompt subjects. Likes and dislikes).
Do you think the things which you have been doing will be of use to you when you leave school? (What subjects will be most useful, and least useful? Why? Note also general concept of school and its relation to life.)
- A.3. How long have you been with the same classmates that you are with now?
What classes have you been in since you have been in this school? (What is their conception of the meaning of the stream which they are in?)
How do you get on with your classmates?
Have you any *special* friends in the class?
Are they leaving school at the same time as you?
How do they like school?
- A.4. Has anyone at school told you much about the different kinds of jobs that there are?
Have you read anything about the different jobs?
Have you been to any factories or shops on visits with the school?

B. *Knowledge of Work and Conditions*

- B.5. Have you any idea what work most men/women do in Sheffield?

What sorts of jobs are available at the moment for school-leavers?

What sort of work do people whom you know do?

What work do people in your area do?

What do your next door neighbours do?

What are your special friends going to do?

What are others whom you know about going to do?

B.6. If you could do just what job you would like, what would you choose?

Why would you want to do this sort of work?

Why do you think you would like it?

How long have you wanted to do it?

B.7. What job do you aim at getting?

Why do you want to do this sort of work?

Why do you think you will like it?

How long have you wanted to do it?

Do you know anyone who is doing the sort of work you want to do?

Has he/she told you much about it?

Could you tell me what the job would be like?

What would you have to do?

What are the pay and hours like?

Would you attend Day Release Classes?

What do you think are your chances of getting the work you want?

Will you be glad when you are settled in your job?

C. *Factors Affecting Decisions about Jobs*

C.8. Have you thought much about what job to take when you leave school?

Have you discussed it with anyone?

Has anyone at home said anything about it?

Have you talked about it with your parents?

C.9. Would you consider any other sort of work?

What things should a good job offer?

C.10. How and when will you set about getting a job?

When would you like to start work? (e.g. soon after leaving school?)

Is there anyone on the lookout for a job for you now?

What sort of job?

C.11. Will you go to night school when you start work?

C.12. At what age do girls in your area marry?

What do you think is a good age for girls to marry?
 Is it a good thing for a girl to carry on working after she is married?
 What do you think is a good age for a man to marry?

D. *Household*

- D.13. (i) Details of Parents' age, occupation, education etc.
 (ii) Other members of household, and their occupations.
 (iii) Other members of family not living at home and their occupations.
 (iv) Would you like to do the same work as your father?
 Or as anyone else living at home?
 Or as any other relation?

E. *House and Neighbourhood*

- E.14. How long have you been living at your present address?
 How far is it from the school?
 How do you get on with the people who live in your area?
 Are there any parks nearby?
 What sort of house do you live in (e.g. Council?)
 Where did you (your parents) live before?
 Do your parents come from Sheffield?

F. *Leisure*

- F.15. What do you do in your spare time?
 Have you any hobbies (extent of interest and knowledge.)
 Reading?
 Do you belong to any Clubs?
 Do you go to Church or to Church Clubs?
 Do you spend most of your spare time with friends, or at home with parents, or going out with the family?
- F.16. How do you manage for pocket money (Prompt—cigarettes, cosmetics.)
 Do you do a paper round, baby sitting, or other spare time job to make a bit of cash?
 Are you doing it to save for anything special?

SECOND INTERVIEW (CHILDREN AT WORK.)

J. *Finding the First Job*

1. Are you in the same job that you first took when you left school? *If "yes" carry straight on. If "no" refer the respondent to the first job which he did take and direct the following questions at the first job:*

2. What job are/were you doing?
3. How exactly did you get your first/present job?
Did you have an interview (other than with the Y.E.O.?)
When?
Who was there?
What happened?
4. When did you start (i.e. how many weeks after leaving school or after leaving previous jobs?)
Did you have much difficulty in finding work?
When did you first try for a job?
How many firms did you try?
5. Did the Youth Employment Officer help you in any way?
How?
6. What happened at your interview at school with the Youth Employment Officer?
Who was there?
What did they say?
What did you say?
What job did you tell the Y.E.O. that you wanted?
7. What job(s) did the Y.E.O. suggest to you?
What sort did he/she tell you to look for?
Did the Y.E.O. send you to apply for this job? Or for any other jobs?
8. Have you had any contact with the Y.E.O. since you left school?
9. What job were you actually aiming at when you left school?
10. *If present job is not first job obtained*
why and when did you leave?

K. *Finding Subsequent and Present Job(s) (i.e. for those who are not at present in the first job obtained)*
For subsequent jobs 1, 2, 3, etc. and for present job ask first
What was your (second, third etc.) job? And then ask all the
questions in Section J. with the exception of questions 1, 6,
7 and 9.

L. *Present Job*

1. How do you like your job?
Have you any special likes or dislikes?
Is it what you expected?
Is anything different?
Did anything surprise you?

2. What is the name and address of your firm?
What does the firm do?
What do you have to do?
How are you getting on with your work?
 3. What are the pay and hours like (i.e. gross—before stoppages, make this *quite clear*—and cf., bonus, commission, or any extras from piece-work, Lunch Vouchers?) How do your pay and hours compare with your previous job(s)?
 4. How long does it take you to get to work?
What is the distance?
 5. What are the people like at work?
Are there many young people?
What are the older people like?
What about the boss or foreman?
- M. *Initiation (for each job)*
1. What happened on your first day at work?
What did you feel like (nervous—confident?)
What happened when you arrived on your first day at work?
What other people were you put with?
Did anyone help you particularly?
 2. How did you get on at first with the other workmen—how did they treat you?
Had you been expecting anyone to play tricks on you?
Did anyone play any tricks on you?
 3. Did you have any friends or relatives working there when you started?
Did a friend (or anyone else) start there at the same time as you?
 4. Did anyone connected with a Trade Union speak to you about the Union at all?
- N. *Prospects and Plans*
1. Are you glad that you have left school? Would you rather be back?
 2. Have you settled down at work now?
 3. Do you want to stay at your present job?
 4. What are your plans for the future (if any?)
 5. What are the terms of your employment?
(Apprenticeship, trainee, etc.—specify contract.)
- O. *Education*
1. Why did you stay on until Midsummer?
Is what you did at school of use to you in your job?
In what ways?

- What school subjects are of use, if any?
2. Did you take the Evening School Qualifying Examination?
How did you get on?
 3. Do you go to night school? (Expand—frequency, subjects taken, whether they like it.) (Employer's policy or respondent's wish.)
If not attending—have you attended night school at all?
Why did you stop?
Will you start again?
When?
Do you intend to start next session?
 4. Do you go to Day Release Classes (or any other course, excluding Night school)?
How often? Is it likely that you will start later on (specify when).

P. *Parents*

1. What do your parents think about you having left school and being out at work?
2. What do they think about your *job*?

Q. *Leisure*

1. How do you spend your spare time now?
Is it different from when you were at school?
Do you see your old school friends?
Have you made new friends?
Who do you spend your spare time with (*N.B.* boy/girl friends)?
Most with friends, at home with family, or out with family?
Cinema, Youth Club, Church, Dancing (and as cf. when at school)?
2. About how much pocket money do you have each week?
How do you spend it?
(Savings—long or short-term?)
Do you pay for your fares and dinners and your clothes?
(About how much a week is spent in these ways?)
3. Do you feel different in any way from when you were at school—how do you feel about being out at work?

THIRD INTERVIEW (CHILDREN AT WORK)

S. *Employment*

1. Are you in the same job that you first took when you left school?
If not, list all the jobs in chronological order as follows: —

Occupation

Weeks in job

Weeks unemployed before starting next job

Wage

Hours

In respect of each job ask how it was obtained and the reason for leaving.

Did you do a Course, or stay on at School?

1a. How long did the Course last?

1b. Method of finding job—help from Proprietor?

2. Have you had any contact with the Y.E.O. subsequent to starting job 1?

Has he helped you in any way?

Have you been to the Bureau (other than for Insurance Card)?

Have you received a letter from the Y.E.O.?

T. *Present Job*

1. What do you like/dislike about your present job?

2. What do you have to do?

3. What are the people like at work (cf. the older and younger employees)?

4. What are the boss and/or foreman like?

5. Has anyone said anything to you about Trade Unions?

Are you a member of a Trade Union?

Is there one in your sort of work?

When did you join?

(Vague or realistic about T.U.s?)

6. What time do you get up?

What time do you leave home?

What time do you get to work?

How much are the bus fares?

7. What are the pay and hours like (gross, i.e. before stoppages)?

Any rise since first starting work?

Are you expecting a rise?

Overtime done now and when first starting work, etc. (cf. bonuses, commission, and any extras from piecework.)

8. Do you think you have learnt much about your job over the last year? What and how much? As much as you would have liked, etc.?

U. *Prospects and Plans*

1. Are you glad to be at work?

2. Are you glad that you have left school?

Would you rather be back?

3. Have you settled down at *work* now? (*N.B.* Not necessarily at this particular job).
4. Do you want to stay at your present job?
Is it the work which you would most like to be doing?
Do you plan to change jobs?
Have you applied for any other jobs?
5. What are your plans for the future, if any?
Do you think it likely that you will stay in this job for a matter of months, or of years—how many years (*or* at end of apprenticeship)?
What are the terms of your employment (apprenticeship, trainee, etc.)?

V. *Education*

1. Is what you did at school of use to you at work?
Or in any other way?
What subjects were of use?
- 1a. Do you think that the Course or staying on at school has helped you in any way?
Does it help with your job?
How much?
Are you glad you took the Course?
2. Do you go to Night school (frequency)?
What Course are you doing?
Will you be taking an examination?
How are you getting on with the Course?
Did passing the Night school examination help you in any way at Night school—were you able to start at a more advanced Course?
Why are you attending—own wish, employer's policy, parental persuasion, etc.?
If not attending have you attended night school at all?
Why did you stop?
Will you start again?
When?
Do you intend to start next session?
Did you go *regularly* last winter (frequency)?
Will you go next session?
3. Do you go to Day Release Classes?
If so, how often?
What Course are you doing?
How do you find it?
Is it likely that you will start later on? When?

If not attending could you go to Day Release Classes if you wanted to do so?

Would you like to attend Day Release Classes if you were able to?

What if it were compulsory?

W. *Parents' Views* (addressed to parents if they were there)

1. What do they think at home about your being out at work?
What do they think about your job?
What do your friends think about your job?

X. *Leisure*

1. How do you spend your spare time now?
Is it different from when you were at school (and on Course)?
Do you see your old school friends?
Do you see anyone regularly who was a *special* friend at school?
Have you made new friends (e.g. at work to go out with)?
Who do you spend your spare time with (*N.B.* boy/girl friend)?
Most of time spent with friends, at home with family, out with family, etc.?
Cinema
Youth Club
Church
Dancing
(Comparison with leisure time at school).
What time do you have to be in at night? as cf. school?
2. About how much pocket money do you have each week (and cf. on Course)?
Is this the same as you had when you started work?
If not, extent of rise and reason (wage rise, birthday, etc.)?
How do you spend it (savings—long or short term)—
Cosmetics
Cigarettes
Clothes
Lunches
Fares
} How much?
3. When you get your wage packet and bring it home what do you do with it?
4. Do you feel different in any way from when you were at school—how do you feel about being out at work?
New leaving age of 16? Reactions?

5. Some people say that leaving school and starting work is quite a big break for people—can you remember how you felt at the time?

Looking back over the last year do you think it has been difficult for you or easy—would you say that you have taken it in your stride, or have you come up against problems?

How do you feel about it now?

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