

THE BOY IN INDUSTRY



THREE ARTICLES
OF INTEREST & VALUE
TO
EMPLOYERS

WITH A FOREWORD BY
RIGHT HON. DR. ADDISON, M.P.
THE MINISTER OF MUNITIONS

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FOREWORD

THE problem of the welfare of boys in industry is not new. It has for many years past engaged the serious attention of those who devote their energies to social effort. Various movements have enjoyed a very considerable measure of success in spite of the difficult and elusive nature of the problem, but there is still need for continued action. The number of boys between the ages of fourteen and eighteen engaged in various occupations in this country is approximately 1,250,000, and their young shoulders are gallantly helping to support the burden of war.

The following pages are written as the result of a long and varied experience in dealing with the special needs and difficulties of the working boy. The scheme proposed is therefore based upon a thorough knowledge of those whom it is designed to benefit.

I commend this study to all who are concerned with the position of boys in industry—parents, employers, social workers, and teachers—in the hope that the problem to which it is directed may be brought nearer solution.

Christopher Addison

THESE articles appeared originally in the columns of the "Daily Telegraph," and are reproduced in this form by courtesy of that paper. They deal with a problem of such importance to the future of industry and of such immediate interest to every employer, that it has been decided to reprint them in this more permanent and easily accessible form.

It is hoped that all employers of boy labour will co-operate with the Ministry of Munitions in carrying out the recommendations and suggestions. Further information can be had on application to the Ministry of Munitions, Welfare Section, 6 Whitehall Gardens, London, S.W.



THE BOY IN INDUSTRY

Number One

POINTS IN THE PROBLEM



IT is the almost universal opinion of social workers and others who are interested in the growing generation that all is not well with the working boy. For some reason or other, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, he is allowed to deteriorate. He is the eternal problem. Agencies, committees, workers have tried for years to devise methods by which to check him on the slippery downward path, and he can be checked—when he is caught. But he is unstable, wilful, elusive, and it is this very instability which creates the problem. The age is a critical one, the most critical one in his career, and he is receptive to influences both good and bad—chiefly bad.

It is a curious commentary on our present-day methods of training the young that the ordinary boy

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alone is allowed, at the age of fourteen, to escape from discipline and control altogether. The well-to-do boy is just beginning to take advantage of the educational facilities which are offered to him; the very poor boy is drafted off into a Poor Law home or some other institution where he will receive careful guidance and instruction; the exceptionally clever boy is allowed to take up a scholarship; whilst, if a boy commits a crime, he is offered, perhaps, the best chance of equipping himself for his life's work. The ordinary boy, in the great majority of cases, is allowed to pursue his way without control, supervision, or guidance.

To-day the problem of the adolescent boy is greatly intensified. It is only necessary to read the daily papers to hear from workers, magistrates, munitions tribunals, the same story—the boys are out of hand. The absence of the father's control (in spite of the criticisms levelled against fathers, before they went to the war, for their indifference and lack of control); the dearth of boy workers connected with various social and educational agencies, Scout troops, clubs, brigades, etc.; the payment of excessive wages; the engaging in men's labour; the long hours of work in some trades, and the irregularity of work in others; the restlessness of the times; are all factors which tend to deprive the boy of steadying influences at a time when he is in sore need of them.

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INDUSTRIAL BATTLE

THE boy of to-day—we have said this so often, but never with so deep a meaning—is the citizen, the father, the workman, of to-morrow, and this deterioration is a vital matter; but upon whom are we to place the blame? The social worker blames the employer; the employer blames the school; the school in turn blames the home; the home blames the boy, and whilst mutual recrimination goes on within this vicious circle, the boy is overlooked. Efforts are made by agencies of the most admirable kind throughout the country to rope him in; he is bribed by the Churches; he is tempted by philanthropists; he is offered every inducement to come within the scope of their beneficent activity, but in the end the very boys who are most eagerly desired, refuse, for the most part, to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. A few of the desired ones become keen members of something or other for a time, but some of them only for a time. Discipline, mild though it is, becomes irksome, and the organization is forsaken. He joined as a volunteer—he leaves as a volunteer. Workers confer, and debate, and discuss, and sometimes give up the struggle in despair—the boy proceeds along manhood's road unfettered.

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There is no doubt whatever at the end of the war we shall be face to face with stern, hard opponents in a great industrial battle. It will not be a question of competition of shop against shop or trade against trade, neither will it wait upon the settlement of internecine disputes between various industrial organizations. It will be a long, hard struggle between nations, and, unless industry in this country is thoroughly organized in every department, then this country will never again march in the van of industrial battle. Many people are living in a fool's paradise to-day, for they have built around themselves an unassailable wall of fancied perfection.

PRIDE IN WORKMANSHIP

THE argument, a fallacious one, is this: The wonderful organization for manufacturing munitions of war which has grown up since the beginning of the war is almost miraculous; the standard of workmanship is higher than it has ever been in our history. "Before the war we used a foot-rule," said an engineer the other day; "now we use a micrometer." Therefore, runs the argument, because of this improvement, we shall more than hold our own in the coming peace

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trade which is bound to follow the war. This is due to our insularity. Let it be remembered that just as we have improved the standard of our workmanship, so, too, have we been compelling other nations to do the same, and when the competition comes it may be on a higher plane, but it will be no less severe.

We have digressed—the boy has been forgotten in our pride of workmanship. (“This is one of the latest automatic lathes. It will work true to the ten-thousandth of an inch.”) There’s the rub. We have organized our industry, in so far as the machine is concerned, but the boy—the future brain and controller—is left out; he is merely a “hand.” But unless something is done, and done soon, to train and improve the human worker, we shall perfect our machinery in vain. Our future depends not so much on the quality of our “output” as upon the quality of the human worker. How are we to improve the boy? How is he to be attacked? Shall we leave him alone, until some day he thrusts himself upon our attention a broken, discontented, dissatisfied man, embittered in every relationship because in his earlier days he was never allowed to count for anything at all? Is he to be left entirely to the mercy of those influences which warp his understanding and dull his judgement? That is poor business at best.

Fortunately, there is no need for pessimism where

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the boy is concerned if only he is given a chance. He is not at heart a lurking menace, an Ishmael, to be repressed and kept under. He is capable of the highest endeavour, of the greatest sacrifice, if only his energies can be directed and controlled. Effort so often lies in the direction of attempting to dam his energy altogether until it bursts out into tortuous channels. "We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as a paralytic. He is an individual annihilated, not disciplined." So wrote Dr. Montessori.

APPEAL TO THE BOY

IN recent years we have seen attempts made to control and direct this energy rather than destroy it, with the result that when the various agencies, boys' clubs, scouts, brigades, were named a few months ago in the House of Lords, during the debate on the "Training of the Nation," the very mention drew applause from the listeners. Most people agree that all these agencies, in so far as they have been able to make their appeal to the boy, have made a deep impression upon his life to-day, but they are unable to reach the

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bulk of the boys. The boy, we stated above, is elusive—he escapes. But why not bring the boy under a similar influence just where he is bound to be, *i.e.*, in his work? He has been used to supervision all through his school days until he reached the childish age of fourteen. He does not resent guidance, control, supervision, but yet he is deprived of it just when he is in greatest need.

Let us endeavour to show when and how this supervision can be applied—a supervision wide, friendly, sympathetic, yet robust and virile on the industrial side. The idea is not altogether new, for it is regarded by some of the best organized firms in the country as a very essential feature of their administration. The amazing thing is that it finds a place in so few concerns to-day.

We have referred to the deplorable deterioration of the working boy between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. That it exists there is little doubt, but the difficulty is to trace the cause and apportion the blame. Now, there is a fundamental evil which is responsible for much of this deterioration, which is, that work, and especially manual work, is despised in the mind of the boy. A great deal is written and spoken of the dignity of labour, but very few attempts are made ever to impress upon the boy that such dignity exists or is possible of realization. Why is it

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possible to wreathe about the Army, the Navy, and various other public services so wonderful a glamour? How is it possible that while the working boy is slowly deteriorating, the public school boy is slowly developing and stiffening his character?

The working boy deteriorates partly because industry, which should fill his life, and draw out of him all that is best, is despised. It is not given its legitimate place in his early training. In the elementary educational system the clerk type is too often held up to the boy as the ideal type, which is partly due to the fact that teachers are largely ignorant of industrial organization and method. The quiet, studious boy is the pattern and the example. He is given the greatest care and attention by his teacher. He represents the line of least resistance. The boisterous spirit is quelled, or, proving irrepressible, is sent to a reformatory or training ship, where his latent energy can find an outlet. The creative instinct is strong in the boy of twelve, but it is rarely encouraged. It has always been a matter of some wonderment to the writer that boys are so rarely taken, as part of their school training, to factories and workshops where various industrial processes can be observed. To watch an article grow, bit by bit, from the raw material to the finished article, be it wood, or metal, or fabric, is fascinating to a degree. Instead of this valuable stimulus, visits are paid

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to museums and galleries; valuable, no doubt, in the training of the boy, but dead, past things with which to fill up that portion of the time which authority allows to be spent outside the actual school premises.

INTEREST IN WORK

THE result of this neglect is that the boy never realizes that work can be a noble thing, or that there can ever be any dignity in labour. We remember once overhearing a conversation between a set of boys who had just left a service at which the subject treated was the "Dignity of Labour," and at which the quoted hymn was sung. Afterwards they were discussing the somewhat unusual theme:

Work is sweet, for God has blest
Honest toil with quiet rest,

and it was summed up in the words of one of the party, "Gawd, what a bloomin' caper." The approval of the rest of the party was signified by the raucous laughter which followed. Work as anything more than drudgery—a means to an end—was an idea they had never contemplated.

It is possible that a more wholesome interest in work is being stimulated to-day by the wholesale

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manufacture of munitions; good if it is, for unless the reproach of labour can be removed, unless it is allowed a place in our daily life and conversation, little can be done to impress the boy once his school days are over. Mr. Benn, in a recent book, quotes a story which, in spite of the fact that it deals with another type of boy, is well worth repeating in this connection:

There is a story of a conversation between the scion of an aristocratic family fresh from a public school and the general manager of one of our leading railways. "Do you hunt?" said the boy. "No," replied the railway magnate. "Then you shoot?" "No, I am afraid not." "Oh! then I suppose you fish?" "No, I regret to say I cannot even claim that accomplishment. "Well, then," continued the youth, "if you do not mind my asking, what do you do with your time?"

Another point which may be referred to here is the lack of correlation between the boy's earlier training and his future work. We are not going to attempt here to deal with suggestions for increasing or improving this correlation, but it is a matter very frequently referred to by employers when questions of juvenile labour are under discussion. The lack of intelligent interest, for example, in metric measurements, which are daily growing in importance in the engineering world, is one modern instance of the lack of correlation referred to.

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HIS FATHER'S TRADE

AGAIN, in spite of the valuable work which is being done by After-Care Committees and Juvenile Advisory Committees in endeavouring to place the boy in industry according to his suitability, the boy is still allowed far too much scope in choosing his work. He escapes at the age of fourteen from school and control. He is free, and up to a certain point it is a good thing that he should be allowed a certain amount of independence and initiative. It may be good that the boy should be allowed to stand on his own feet, but too often the boy of fourteen is credited with too much intelligence. The exceptionally clever boy will get to the top without any assistance on the part of social agencies, but we are not dealing with the exceptionally clever boy; we are attempting to deal with the ordinary boy who requires guidance, control, and leadership, even though he has reached the age of fourteen.

Too often to-day he is compelled to follow his father's trade, not because he is suitable—he may be absolutely unsuited both physically and mentally—but because it happens to be a tradition. Or there is a demand for juvenile labour in a particular shop, and

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he is able to drop into a berth without any trouble or effort. He is a free agent. Attracted by a notice on a factory door, he interviews a timekeeper, and is handed over to a foreman, who has neither time nor knowledge to be able to specialize in questions of suitability. He wants a boy for a job, and he takes the line of least resistance—the first boy to apply is taken on, without reference or inquiry. This is the first downward step in the boy's career. That which costs him nothing to enter is regarded as nothing—work is the least important factor in his life.

Imagine the turmoil in a small boy's mind. Yesterday, a child, he left the shelter of his school. To-day, a man, he enters, without preparation, warning, or guidance, the confusion and bustle of a workshop, rolling mill, or ship-yard. Small wonder if he is thrown completely off his balance. He becomes one of a multitude, a "hand." He knows nothing of the part he is to play, either in the world or in his work, and there is none to teach him. He enters his work without reference being made to his parents, or to his past experience; from henceforth he is left without any real control. He is yet but fourteen years of age, but he finds himself regarded as a man, and the sooner he apes man's follies the better. So the boy argues.

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SYSTEM OF CONTROL

WHAT is required to-day, and it finds a place in many of the best organized concerns in the country, is a more highly developed system of engagement and control. The boy should not be allowed to take this most vital step in a slipshod, haphazard way. His engagement should be a very formal, showy thing. He should be interviewed by a special officer of the firm who is alive to the importance of the work he is doing. Each boy should be asked to produce his Employment Exchange card; inquiries should be made of the Juvenile Advisory Committee; references should be taken up, parents consulted, and a record should be kept of his history and previous educational achievement. And, above all else, he should be told something of the nature and meaning of the work he seeks to engage in. This is by no means a complicated process. Moreover, such a scheme offers a chance of selection, *i.e.*, the fitting of the "round peg into the round hole," a work which does not lie within the province and knowledge of the foremen, but which is more than well worth while adding to any firm's organization.

Again, it is of vital importance in these early days

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of a boy's life that the recommendation of the visiting doctor should be noted. (All boys under the age of sixteen years are, by law, examined by a doctor on their entry into a factory.) The doctor inscribes the result of the examination in a register provided for the purpose, but it is rarely referred to afterwards, and the recommendations lose their value. A boy may be suffering from incipient eye trouble, a doubtful lung, a hernia, which renders him unfitted to perform certain types of work, and it should be somebody's business to see that such things are not overlooked or forgotten. From the lowest motive it must be worth while to preserve the health of the boy worker, but it can only be preserved if the boy is under observation.

We found a boy one day swallowing small, live frogs, and when asked for an explanation of this somewhat noisome habit, he replied that he had a diseased lung, and had been told that frogs would eat the affected parts. It was difficult to decide whether more to pity the frogs or the boy, but though the actual circumstances were unusual, yet the ignorance of simple physical facts underlying that boy's action is widespread. How then are these matters to be dealt with, and in what way is the boy to be brought under this wider control and supervision at the most critical juncture in his life?

Number Two

HIS PLACE IN THE
FACTORY



IT is frequently stated to-day—so frequently that it has become a commonplace—that there is a lessening of the sense of parental responsibility. This statement may or may not be true; it is not under criticism here, but since it is often mentioned by employers and others, it is well to inquire whether employers are in the habit of consulting parents before a boy is engaged. Are they, the parents, ever given a chance of exercising responsibility in this most vital episode in their boy's career? Here and there firms can be found which take care to enlist the parents' interest in the boy's future, and is it strange that where this custom is in vogue the firms are also highly developed on the industrial side of their organization?

What hours and journeys have been spent by

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members of After-Care Committees, Apprentice and Skilled Employment Committees, Juvenile Advisory Committees, in persuading parents to allow their boys to accept a low wage in some skilled trade in view of the better prospects offered later on in life. But, apart from the few parents who come within the scope of the operations of these agencies, how many are ever given a chance of hearing, not just from a social worker, but from one who comes armed with the authority of the firm to which the boy has applied for a job, of the evils of the "blind alley" occupation? Interest in his career will never be taken either by the boy himself or by his parents until they are called in to co-operate with the employer. The excuse is sometimes made that the parents of the working-class boy take no interest in their children. This is hopelessly wrong. They are never allowed to bring their dormant interest into activity. Never? Well, the war has altered many views, and, amongst others, this, that parents have been shown by a grateful country that their boys do matter, and it is with a sense of pride that this recognition has been received. Is it quite impossible to foster a like pride, both on the parents' and the boy's part, in his share in the battles of peace? At any rate, it is worth while trying.

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CO-OPERATION OF PARENTS

It is the custom of some few firms to send notes, complaints, or reports, to parents when things go wrong. A boy loses time, or commits some offence, and notice is sent to the home. The result of this simply is that the firm's relationship is regarded as an unpleasant thing, connected only with disagreeable matters, in the same sort of way in which the Creator is, by so many people to-day, brought into prominence only when a child has been mangled by a motor-'bus. It would be well if quarterly—or at any rate annual—reports were sent to parents, approving the boy where approval is merited, as well as those blaming him where blame is earned.

There are many advantages in enlisting the co-operation of the parents, advantages which are mutual. On the one hand, the home can be consulted on the state of the boy's health, on his liking, or the reverse, of the job he is engaged upon, and complaints of hours and fatigue can receive a sympathetic hearing; whilst, on the other hand, the boy's faults, the losing of time, the keeping back of money, etc., can be checked and remedied. The knowledge, too, in the boy's mind, that his actions are noted, cannot but

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help to keep him up to the mark, especially (and it is important that it should be so) if the observation is made by one who is trusted by him—a man of sympathy with, and knowledge of, boy nature.

But apart from the question of interesting the boy's parents in his career, there should be a much greater interest shown in his doings by the firm itself. After all, employer and employed are working on a mutual basis, but since in these complicated modern days they rarely meet on common ground, the way is left open for mutual suspicion and mistrust to enter. A careful record of time-keeping, earnings (when on piece-work), industry, attendance at technical schools, etc., should be kept, and once a year the boy should have a chance of being interviewed by one of the heads of the firm, in order that he may be made to feel that he counts for something to the firm by which he is employed. In trades where designs are continually changing, or where there is room for improvement in actual operation, it is found that interest is stimulated in workmanship if prizes are offered for suggestions which prove of value. The actual workman is often able to make most useful suggestions for improving methods, or increasing output, and facilities should be provided for fostering this very valuable aid to efficiency. In many forms of repetition work of an unskilled nature there are, of course, fewer possibilities

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of suggestion, but at the same time it should not be an impossibility for prizes to be given to stimulate industry, time-keeping, etc. The offer of a week's holiday for perfect time-keeping is an inexpensive one, but it acts as a wonderful stimulus to the youthful worker.

MEANING OF AUTHORITY

THE complaint is frequently made that the juvenile boy worker is restless and unstable, and that it is difficult to get him to settle down to his task. This is true, and will doubtless remain true until the crack of doom. "Boys will be boys" wherever they chance to be, in industry or out of it, but at the same time it frequently happens that this restlessness, when excessive, is due to causes which can be obviated. A boy may be suffering from genuine fatigue due to some hidden physical trouble; his home conditions may be such that he starts off for the day's work badly rested and ill fed. He may be bound to some uncongenial task, and is filled with a feeling of utter boredom—a genuine, explainable feeling, or he may be suffering from some injustice inflicted on him by a thoughtless foreman (and, after all, foremen are only human), or he may be under the evil control of a brute. In

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some quarters to-day the idea still prevails that a foreman's chief work in life is to curse and bully the men and boys who are working under him in the mistaken belief that such an attitude increases output. The idea is a hopeless one, and, on the whole, is being given up in favour of a much more rational conception of the meaning of authority.

Again, it sometimes happens that the boy has got a grievance, possibly some little trivial thing which is spoiling his work. He wants to air it, to give it voice. Left pent up, it is going to unsettle him, and it will magnify in importance day by day. There should be a possibility of outlet somewhere, so that the very human boy may have a chance of getting rid of the grievance, which probably only requires to be ventilated in order to be removed. But whatever the cause of the boy's restlessness and unsettlement, it is more than likely that it can be remedied if only an attempt is made to trace it. After all the boy is in the factory to work, and if, by sweetening the conditions under which he works, a better, more contented workman is produced, it must pay the firm in every way.

In a firm where in the early days of the war shell fuses were being made the employees were working extraordinarily hard and well. A boy engaged on a simple yet important operation was anxious to have an afternoon off in order "to see the pictures." It

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was his only chance of spending his superfluous cash. He asked his foreman whether he might have the next afternoon free. It was a natural request for a boy to make. The foreman, an enlightened man, told the boy that he could go—he had been working well. “But,” said the foreman, “the fuses are badly needed at the front.” During the dinner hour on the following day the foreman casually remarked to the boy that he would be away during the afternoon. “No,” said the boy, “you’ve made me too uncomfortable.”

Is it surprising that in this particular firm an excellent relationship exists between masters and men, and, moreover, it is interesting to note that even in war time when higher wages can be commanded in neighbouring shops there exists in this firm a waiting list of would-be employees.

WASTING MONEY

It would prove a fascinating study if one were to examine the various schemes which have been started since the beginning of the war to encourage thrift amongst the many juvenile workers who are earning wages greatly in excess of those prevailing in peace time. That there is a need for inculcating thrift is

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evident to any who keep their eyes and ears open. The extravagances in dress, the crowded places of amusement, the gramophones and pianos in which war earnings have been sunk, are all manifestations of an utter lack of appreciation of the need for saving. Well-meaning people have attempted to provide facilities by purchasing scrip vouchers, etc., for the purpose of retailing them to those who might be persuaded to set aside part of the superfluous earnings, but they generally find that much stock remains unsold. For the most part, the results have been disappointing. To the boy money has little value, apart from its immediate spending power. Once he handles solid cash, it is a constant source of worry to him until it can be converted into something tangible. But if his wages can be tapped at their source; if he can be persuaded to set aside a certain weekly sum—money he never handles—he is much more likely to begin to save. Here, again, is a work which the employer alone can do. Facilities may exist for banking money; notices may be posted throughout the shops urging the boy to save; patriotic appeals may stare him in the face from every hoarding, but they are utterly useless unless the appeal can be followed up by personal effort and persuasion.

It can be done, either in the way suggested above—*i.e.*, by urging the boy to sign a paper agreeing that

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a certain weekly sum shall be stopped out of his wages, or a saving scheme can be successfully run within the factory itself by arranging for collectors to visit the boys immediately after the payment of wages has been made. In itself, this may seem a trifling, unimportant work—it is probably much more important than many people imagine; the question is, how is it to be managed when firms are harassed and worried by a thousand troubles, and who is to be responsible for organizing such an endeavour?

THE MID-DAY MEAL

THERE is the important question of his physical well-being, which depends very largely upon his feeding. It is almost proverbial that working-class families are careless and uneconomical in their methods of purchasing and cooking foodstuffs. Since the days when sanitary dustbins were invented, and a regular collection of house refuse instituted, the study of the contents of these dustbins has been a fascinating one to the writer. They stand each morning in rows in the poorer parts of our cities, awaiting the collectors, and they reveal, with an utter absence of shame, the culinary extravagances which prevail in the homes o

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the working boys. He is carelessly, though expensively, fed at home, but left to himself away from home he is equally thriftless during the day in his expenditure in food. Fried fish, with much vinegar, would form, if he had his way, his staple diet. Sometimes, if the mother is thrifty, he carries food to his workshop. In the evening a shepherd's pie or a steak pudding is made and packed. It remains overnight, wrapped in a cloth or basket, in a crowded, stuffy room. The following day it is carried by train or tram to the place of work. It is jostled about and broken on its journey. There may be facilities for heating it at one o'clock; there may be a mess-room where it can be eaten in comfort, but it is just as likely as not that it will be eaten cold in a corner of the workshop, dusty, unappetising, and stale. It is equally possible that the morning's work, on a stuffy, clammy day, has robbed the boy of his appetite. He longs for something lighter than the stodgy dish he has had tucked away beneath his lathe; but he has no choice—carried food, or nothing—and frequently it ends with the latter. Surely, the very human demand for comfort and choice of meals is worth considering, even if the person under consideration is only a working boy.

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UTILITY OF CANTEENS

IF the best is to be made of the boy he must be encouraged, and his parents persuaded, to the view that it is to his advantage in every way to make use of the facilities offered in the firm's canteen. It may be urged that the best place for the boy to take his meal is at home; that it is cheaper to feed a number at the family table than it is for the mother to parcel out sundry small sums to the various members of the family for their canteen meals. We partly agree; it is largely true, and where the workers are living near their homes it is possibly an advantage, but we have in mind the thousands of boys who live either too far away or who for other reasons are unable to take part in a midday family meal.

There is no doubt whatever that where a well-equipped canteen exists, and where the workers are given a chance of sharing in its management, the results both to the employer and employed more than justify the labour and expense involved. If half the amount of care spent in choosing the fuel for the factory power plant were spent upon the feeding arrangement of the workers, it would solve in a very large measure the very unsatisfactory physical de-

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velopment of the modern working boy. Compare the condition of any fifty boys of eighteen years of age (and development at this age is not as rapid a thing as development at fourteen can be) on joining the Army and their condition six months later. Can it be doubted that regular meals, plain though they may be, make for physical efficiency? How is this fact to be brought home to the boy, and in what way are the advantages of the works canteen to be pointed out to the parents? It can only be done by a human agent.

TRAINING OF LADS

THERE are two more subjects to which we must refer before we make the suggestion as to how the training, influencing, and developing of the boy are to be accomplished. The first is his education, and by this we mean education on broad, wide lines. To place education in these critical years, or, for that matter, in any years, on a utilitarian basis is disastrous. Education must fit the boy not only for his future place in industry, but also for his future position in the world as a citizen and a father.

On the industrial side present methods of education are chaotic, even in many places where attempts are

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being made to provide educational facilities; on the civic side they scarcely exist. Boys are too frequently left to pick up knowledge where they can, but there exists a real unwillingness on the part of adult workers to impart their knowledge to juveniles. A foreman, who, when asked some weeks ago to show a boy how to perform a certain operation connected with the manufacture of a shell, retorted, "I am d——d if I do," was merely summing up tersely the attitude of many adult workers of to-day. On the other hand, efforts which are made to stimulate interest in technical classes outside the works frequently begin and end with the posting in the works of notices referring to such classes in local schools. The boy may read them with passing interest, but he is a very exceptional boy if, as the result of a casual scanning of a prospectus, he enrolls himself as a pupil. Besides, it is almost impossible to expect the boy of to-day to make the effort required for assimilating knowledge at the end of a long and strenuous day in the workshop. In some few firms in the country the boys are allowed a certain amount of time off during working hours for the purpose of attending day classes in technical schools; others are allowed to leave work early; and it is desirable in every way that there should be a very wide extension of such practices. Evening classes, when working hours are long, so often fail to

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achieve any useful purpose, from the sheer physical inability of the boy to profit by them. In one provincial town recently boys were permitted by the local education authority to leave school at the age of thirteen in order to work in local munition factories, on condition that they attended a continuation school on two evenings in the week. That the rule has become a dead letter is not surprising.

Number Three
A WORKING
SCHEME



WHAT is needed to-day, above all else, is a very close co-operation in various industrial centres between the works and the technical school, for both have totally different functions in the training of the workman. In places where skilled workmen are required there should be within the works a place apart—a schoolroom if you will—where all boys can be placed when they are first engaged. There they should be under the care of a definite master, who will instruct them in the various processes connected with the trade of the firm. One important point to which we would refer in connection with this matter is the fact that while the master in such a class is enabled to keep in closest possible touch with current trade processes, “costs” and “time” are carefully considered; points on the

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commercial side which are of vital importance in days of competition. In a very few months a boy begins to show an aptitude for a particular trade, and from these boys can be chosen, when the foremen require assistance, those who are most likely to prove successful in their particular shops. This is being done in some few workshops in the country to-day, and the method is appreciated by those who have the later handling of juvenile labour. At any rate, if nothing else is accomplished, this system offers a chance of selection, and it is a thousand times better than to allow a boy to choose his own trade or follow a particular trade simply because it happened to be his father's before him. Also, such a method enables a boy to gain an insight into the meaning of the operations the firm is engaged upon. The drudgery of work is often emphasized because a boy is never allowed to see the ultimate result of the tiny, and perhaps monotonous, operation he is engaged upon. As a result of the prevailing haphazard style of placing boys in work, he may be engaged for weeks or months on some simple repetition job which is of the dullest possible nature. If he can be shown the complete plant or engine in which his little job is going to bear a part, it is bound to stimulate his interest in the work he is doing

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TECHNICAL TRAINING

THE obvious criticism of the foregoing suggestion is that it is impossible for every boy to become a skilled workman. We hear the voices—we have heard them for so long—saying, “We must have hewers of wood and drawers of water.” We agree, but we make this appeal—that every opportunity should be given to the boys to become something more. If, for any reason, they cannot take advantage of the educational facilities offered, by all means let them earn their living in the less skilled ways. After all, we are pleading, not for philanthropy, but for efficiency in industry.

Technical school training is essential lest the boy's mind should be atrophied by too much practical work, but he must be encouraged to attend the technical school if good is to result, and inducements should be offered to stimulate him to assiduous study. An excellent method of co-operation between the firm and the school can be fostered by the sending of terminal reports from the school to the firm. These reports, showing each boy's position, progress, etc., can be posted in the works for all to see, and upon the result prizes, which may consist of money, tools advancement, or attendance at a summer camp, should

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depend. If a report of the boy's progress can also be sent to his parents their interest is also ensured.

The complaint is sometimes made by firms who spend money and trouble on the training of their workers that their neighbours poach upon their preserves, and take away their boys when they are trained. This is sometimes, unfortunately, true, and it might be well for employers to consider whether it would not be an advantage to bind all their boys in the way that apprentices are bound in places where they are being trained to-day. There is little doubt that in such a matter firms would in a short time receive the active co-operation of the parents, and ultimately, in skilled trade firms, only the better and more intelligent type of boy would find a place.

UNSKILLED TRADES

BUT there is another point in connection with the boy's education to which we must refer. Many boys will never become skilled workmen (using the word in its common technical sense), for there are many trades where wages are high and regular, and in which manipulative skill can only be acquired by watching and doing. Frequently such trades dominate an iso-

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lated district. Therefore, technical education makes no appeal either to employers, parents, or boys; but, and this is a point which requires much emphasis to-day—each boy is a potential citizen, and as a future citizen he must be trained. At the same time it must not be forgotten that in whatever trade a workman is engaged the success of that trade must ultimately depend upon the intelligence of each individual workman. Therefore, granted that the need for strictly technical training is not essential, we suggest that the boy should, at any rate, be given instruction in civics, elementary political economy, hygiene, etc.

To touch upon one vast question alone. To read the recent disquieting report of the Royal Commissioners on Venereal Diseases and to contemplate future generations growing up in complete and lamentable ignorance of vital facts of life and health is an appalling thought. Are these matters to be entirely overlooked by those whose future success in industry depends upon the efficiency and well-being of their employees? This is regarding the matter from somewhat low motives, but where higher motives exist there is not always the same necessity for attracting attention to the need, since it is already recognized.

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INTEREST IN WORK

IN connection with the education of the boy we have only dealt so far with his mental training, but it must not stop at this. There is need for development on the physical side too, if the boy is to become a well-balanced, well-ordered man. We have already referred to the fact that most people admit that the Scout, Boys' Brigade, and club movements have made a deep impression on the minds and bodies of the boys who have been fortunate enough to come under their influence. The difficulty is that these agencies are only able to touch a fringe of the boy population of this country. According to the census of 1911 there are about a million and a quarter boys between the ages of fourteen and eighteen engaged in various occupations in England, Scotland, and Wales. If these boys could be given facilities for healthy recreation through the medium of their workshops it would bear results of the highest importance, not only to the nation, but to employers as well. On the one hand, it would ensure a far greater number coming under health-giving influences; on the other, it would develop a feeling of *esprit de corps* in the works which is strangely lacking to-day.

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If a boy can be allowed to play, or fight, for his shop, he at once regards his place in industry from quite another point of view. If he can derive the benefit of a week-end in camp or a week under canvas in summer, in virtue of his membership of a firm, what keenness for the industrial community it creates, and what anticipation it arouses in his mind. It is an established fact that where an interest awaits a worker at the end of the day—it may be a round of golf with the elder—it acts as a powerful stimulus in the afternoon hours, when effort tends to flag.

That the discipline of games is well worth developing is the opinion of every worker among boys throughout the kingdom, yet there are employers to-day who gaze in disappointment and anger at grounds and institutes which are derelict. They were started off in great hope in order to encourage and help the juvenile worker. The whole thing failed, and so, too, did the employer's faith in human nature, in so far as it is exemplified in the boy. And the reason is not difficult to discover. The boy cannot organize his own games; he must be under friendly control and sympathetic leadership. Once grant him this, and the boy fast develops into a sportsman. Leave him to himself, and—well, in later years he can be found in his thousands, cursing the "goalie" or the referee for his share in bringing about the loss of the

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shilling he had risked on the result of the professional football match.

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

WE must sum up. It is admitted to-day that there is a deterioration in the working boy between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. This down-grade tendency is largely due to the fact that, under our present industrial and educational systems, he is allowed to escape from all control at the early age of fourteen, and so to fall under whatever influences he chooses, and they are generally the least edifying. It is also admitted that various social and recreative agencies—boys' clubs, brigades, Scouts—have made a deep impression on the boys with whom they have been able to get into touch. There are a million and a quarter boys engaged in various occupations between the ages mentioned above.

The boy is capable of great deeds if only he is given an opportunity. He needs leadership. Regard for a moment the heroism which has been displayed by the ordinary, neglected, working boy in the battle-line during the last two years. It is a heroism which has been largely inspired by leadership. If he is capable of showing it and of responding to the trust

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and responsibility placed in him, why is he denied the opportunity in the daily industrial conflicts in which he is compelled to bear a part? His enlistment in the Army is made a formal thing; his name and history are known; his health is cared for; he is carefully fed and housed; he is encouraged to develop a pride in his own particular regiment or company; he is warned against his most pressing temptations—how that letter of Lord Kitchener's has been treasured for its human wisdom!—his parents are not forgotten, and their pride is stimulated. He is cared for in body, mind, and spirit . . . and he finds himself a man. And the whole thing is summed up in two great words—"Patriotism" and "Leadership." He is allowed to strive for something outside and beyond himself—he is made to feel that he counts for something.

SPELL OF LEADERSHIP

THIS is the spirit required to-day in industry. The embittered relationships between employer and employed have largely arisen because the human aspect of industry has been overlooked. It is not because there is anything inherently wrong on either side. The evil to-day lies in the fact that the employer sees the

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worst side of the employee, and the employee only sees the carelessness and selfishness of his employer. On both sides there is a lamentable lack of understanding of each other's point of view. Time was when concerns were smaller, and it was possible for an employer intimately to know every one of his employees. They had much in common—the interests of one were the interests of all. To-day that relationship has largely broken down, and there is need for restoration.

Let the experiment be made with the boys. It is being tried in many firms to-day, and where the endeavour exists it is regarded as a most vital feature of the business organization. When the boy essays to enter industry let him be met at the threshold by a human leader, who speaks to him with the authority of the firm. He will explain to him the importance of the life he is about to embark upon; he will make him feel that he really counts for something in the industrial economy. He will endeavour, by visiting the boy's home, to enlist the support and interest of the parents in all that makes for the boy's welfare and efficiency. He will watch over his health, his industrial progress, his education, and his recreation, and in the boy's mind there will be established a tradition of continued supervision, of friendship, and guidance, and that deplorable feeling of isolation which is re-

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sponsible for sending so many boys into difficulties in their early teens will be removed under the wonderful spell of leadership.

The appointment of such an officer and the establishment of so important an office in a firm may in time create a new profession, and well if it does so. After all, if the care of the child of between seven and fourteen demands a highly organized system of training, there is no reason why the later years of fourteen to eighteen should not also demand trained leaders, teachers, *παιδαγωγοί*, for the purpose of taking the working boy in hand during his most critical and receptive years. At the present time the scheme offers many possibilities of useful employment to invalided officers.

A SUGGESTED SCHEME

WE conclude with an actual working scheme on the lines suggested in these articles. Further information on the subject can be obtained from the Welfare Department, 6 Whitehall Gardens, London, S.W.

ENGAGEMENT

1. The supervisor would keep in touch with Employment Exchanges and After Care Committees according to the local arrangements for boy labour supply.

N.B.—All boys recommended by relations would also be referred to him.

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2. He would interview boys. Take up references. Explain nature of work. Place names on waiting list.

3. He would interview parents, and impress upon them the importance of keeping boys up to the mark in time-keeping, cleanliness, and education.

4. He would see that boys when engaged (in conjunction with heads of departments) filled up an engagement form, giving particulars of education, health, and character.

(Thus in three years, or four at most, all new boys would have been seen, but in the meantime he would complete records for boys already at work.)

5. He would deal with indentures where apprentices were concerned.

6. Where necessary he would keep a register of suitable lodgings, where boys coming from a distance could be housed.

PROGRESS AND DISCIPLINE

1. He would receive foremen's reports, an important feature of his work, since it tends to increase the foremen's interest in the scheme.

2. He would interview the boy from time to time.

3. He would send reports to parents, not only when complaints had to be made, but also on the boy's general progress, wages, timekeeping, etc.

4. He would also, in a friendly way, visit the home occasionally, in order to talk over the boy's health and his suitability for the work engaged in.

5. He would keep an eye on washing and lavatory accommodation, and, what is quite a valuable point, though it may appear to be trivial, he would encourage all boy workers to wear overalls. It is surprising how they make for self-respect.

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TECHNICAL EDUCATION

1. He might discuss the syllabus with the local education authority, and make suggestions as to subjects likely to be most helpful to the boy in his occupation.

2. He would persuade the boy to attend classes.

3. He would receive from the school reports of his attendances, and at the end of term would include this report on the progress card sent to the parent.

4. He would encourage and persuade the juvenile worker to attend school for general education, civics, simple political economy, hygiene, etc., and arouse the boy's interest in these important matters.

THRIFT

It is generally accepted to-day that, unless a boy receives personal encouragement, thrift schemes must fail, therefore the supervisor would endeavour to carry out one of the following schemes :

1. By the voluntary stoppage of a certain amount each week from wages.

2. By weekly collection.

3. By payment of a good conduct bonus through a banking account.

HEALTH

1. He would be present at the medical examination, and would note the doctor's recommendations.

2. He would observe home conditions.

3. He might be made responsible for seeing that the canteen and arrangements for heating food were adequate, and if necessary he would encourage the use of the firm's canteen.

4. He might be made responsible for seeing that the

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first-aid equipment was kept in good order, and that facilities for dealing with minor accidents existed in the various shops and yards.

RECREATION

1. He would be responsible for organizing outdoor games, and if a club-room existed he would naturally become the responsible manager.
2. He might be encouraged to start a works cadet corps or scout troop, and he would endeavour to arrange a summer camp.

COMPLAINTS AND DISMISSALS

Amongst many important firms there exists a very strong opinion that all cases of threatened dismissal should be heard by the supervisor before a boy is dismissed. It might be well if his home could be visited, and the boy interviewed before the ultimate decision was made.

IN firms where the number of boys is regarded as too small to justify the appointment of a special officer to undertake the scheme referred to above, it may be useful to state that a working arrangement can be arrived at by entrusting the duties to a present member of the Staff who may be interested in Boy problems. Certain hours might be apportioned to him for the purpose of dealing with the many matters covered by the Welfare Scheme.

In firms where no suitable employee is available for dealing with the Boy problems involved, it might be well when new Staff appointments are contemplated to engage a man possessing the right qualifications for this work in addition to those required for the particular office job for which he is being engaged.

In order to facilitate the starting of such schemes the Welfare Department referred to above has compiled a panel containing the names of men whose qualifications seem to fit them for the work, and this panel is at the disposal of employees who may be interested in the matter.

Enquiries should be made:

THE MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS

(*Welfare Section*),

6, Whitehall Gardens, London, S.W.

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