

EMPLOYMENT AND
WELFARE OF JUVENILES

TO
MY FATHER AND MOTHER

THE EMPLOYMENT AND WELFARE OF JUVENILES

A HANDBOOK FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN
CHOICE OF EMPLOYMENT AND AFTER-CARE

BY

O. BOLTON KING

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PREFACE

THE probable near revival of active participation in social work, more especially as an adjunct to the educational organisation of this country, together with the added interest in those forms of social undertaking concerned with the young wage-earner which has been brought about by the recent changes in choice of employment activities, have prompted the writing of this book. On every side is heard the remark, ever increasing in insistency, that the money spent on our educational system is, to a great extent, wasted because once the child has left the elementary school it is no one's business to keep an eye on him; and, again, it is ever more frequently said that a huge waste of human material takes place because not enough effort is made to sort out workers, particularly while young, into the occupations for which they are most fitted. These trends of thought are reflecting on our social work among adolescents, and to meet the demand more and more paid and voluntary workers are being drawn into the work. The author hopes that to some small degree this book may be of assistance to such workers as these. The field to be covered is so large, and the method of dealing with it at present is so vague and ill-defined, that to give a complete account would be impossible. The present book aims only at giving the more im-

portant facts, and in showing the lines along which development may be possible.

Although many of the views expressed in this book reflect those of the Committee which I have the privilege to serve, it should be clearly understood that all expressions of opinion do not represent the policy of that Committee.

I have to thank the many public authorities, firms, and individuals who have in one way or another made the writing of this book possible. In particular, I would record my deep indebtedness to the *Educational Times* for permission to utilise portions of my articles which have been published in it, and to Mr. E. W. Hurst, Dr. Alexander, Mr. W. H. Bolam, Mr. E. H. Carter, and last, but not least, to Professor J. J. Findlay, my father, and Mr. Percival Smith, for their painstaking suggestions and criticisms.

BIRMINGHAM, 1925.

INTRODUCTION

It has been a pleasure to read the manuscript of this book while in the making, and I will endeavour to set down the impression that it leaves on my mind, as I look back on the conditions prevailing sixty years ago when our grandfathers first set out to take "care" for the children of England.

The task, as they conceived it, was to introduce the resources of the State, central government and local government both, to *supplement* the philanthropic and voluntary efforts of those whose intelligence and wealth had been evoked on behalf of school children. As soon as the enterprise took serious shape, men were met with that thorny problem of political philosophy, the claims of the State against the rights and duties not only of individuals but of corporate groups to whom the welfare of the young was of capital importance.

The institutions of religion were unhappily placed in antagonism to the officers of State on behalf of the "voluntary" principle, and they fought a losing battle: chiefly because the magnitude of the task demanded resources which could only be found by resorting to the compelling powers and the unlimited purse of the State. For a time the victory of the so-called "secular" power, the bureaucratic official organisation of education, seemed absolute.

Among many "progressive" people the conception of voluntary effort in education appeared to be a relic of a bygone age. A collectivist theory of national organisation appeared to be the only reasonable basis

for the organisation of social forces: the prestige of School Boards, L.E.A.'s Departments and Boards of Education advanced by leaps and bounds. A great public "service," embracing not only the elements of culture but the resources of medicine and hygiene, had come to the aid of millions of children, and the nation has been grateful for the intervention of the bureaucrat.

But as we now look back upon this history, we see that the very success of the system paved the way for a revision of the philosophy on which it had been based. To Mr. Bolton King, and to all enlightened administrators who are now working in the public system, "voluntary" is by no means a term of reproach; on the contrary, his exposition assumes, as a matter of course, that many types of volunteer effort are welcomed by local and central authorities as essential to the efficiency of the public system. Here and there, no doubt, there are still to be found a few members of committees, a few directors or inspectors still obsessed with a simple faith in the sufficiency of the machine, but they are losing influence year by year. For, as I have said, success has opened the way to a larger view. Not that our renewed acceptance of the voluntary principle is in any sense a reversion to pre-School Board times; Church and State have, on the whole, found a path of compromise which enables religious freedom to be reconciled with State authority over children. We are by no means reactionary, but we have discovered that education means far more to us, lays far greater obligations upon the body politic than were accepted, or could be accepted, by those who laid the foundations of this great edifice. In three directions at least one can observe profound changes, and all three are displayed in the pages of this book.

Firstly, in the basic idea of what schooling can achieve. The organisers of the last century fixed their attention on curricula, on scholastic attainments, on "results." To-day we by no means despise these factors in the process, but we are now far more conscious than they were of what we call the social, environmental elements in the making of a character. The children, especially in our congested areas, need something that we call "care," not only care of body, but kindly interest in matters of the individual life, in what we vaguely call "welfare"; the playground with its out-of-school interests, the child's home-life, loom large.

Secondly, the obligation to educate has extended beyond the "elementary" age. No longer do we distress ourselves with "Cockerton judgments" (how absolutely these brave conflicts of the 90's are passed out of mind!). Our latest legislation stretches its control, or hopes some day to extend, over "the young person" until he can stand on his own feet, not at thirteen or fourteen, but at eighteen years of age. How little did the founders of our system, the Kay-Shuttleworths and Forsters, realise the strength of the new social forces that are now operating in the public mind! They saw to it that the little children gained the elements of knowledge; and for them and for their day that was enough. Now we are called upon to think of after-care, of employment, of the whole life and experience of our boys and girls when they emerge from the classroom to face the shop and the factory.

For, finally, these expansions are real problems; they are actually pressing upon officers of State because the seed has ripened into harvest. The themes that Mr. Bolton King handles come out of the nation's needs—the needs of a nation bred up in the people's

schools, and now *ready for more*. Education grows by what it feeds on, and its demands are insatiable! Of course, there are doubters and protestants: a Geddes axe is flourished, and for a time timidity prevails; but few will now question that the mind of the English people is set seriously upon the progress of education—to an extent that is new in the experience of our race.

It is on these grounds that the State—*i.e.*, the community as organised in its public machinery—finds itself compelled to seek alliance with the voluntary worker: compelled to think out a new philosophy of relations between the volunteer and official. The official himself is of one mind with the volunteers: they are, each and all, “social workers”—paid, unpaid, or partly paid—members of committee, teachers, helpers, clergy, all alike are servants of the State, working in an organisation which may be complex, but which, when understood, gives every worker his opportunity to add his contribution to the grand achievement.

It is the purpose of this book to show how these varied operations are being conducted in one portion of the field of education. Mr. Bolton King does not attempt to cover the whole area of educational administration; for that purpose several volumes would be needed. But he has fastened upon one of the two fields which, at this epoch, have caught the popular imagination—the needs of the young wage-earner. The other field is concerned with the little bairns before they enter the primary school, and one hopes that he will see his way before long to set forth, both for the public who provide the volunteers and for the teachers and organisers of nursery schools, the provisions made for those of tender years.

CONTENTS

| | PAGES |
|--|---------|
| PREFACE | v |
| INTRODUCTION BY PROFESSOR J. J. FINDLAY, M.A., M.ED. <i>(Sarah Fielden Professor of Education in the University of Manchester)</i> | vii |
| CHAPTER | |
| I. THE DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANISATION OF "AFTER-CARE" AND "CHOICE OF EMPLOYMENT." | |
| Development in the United Kingdom—In Other Countries—Division of an Area—District Committees—Subsidiary Functions of the Care Committee—Play Centres, etc.—Camps—Bibliography | 1-17 |
| II. AFTER-CARE. | |
| The Scope of After-Care—Providing a Helper with Particulars of his Charges—Obtaining Contact with the Child—Home Visiting—Introduction to Clubs and Other Organisations—Types of Clubs—Other Forms of Social After-Care—Juvenile Delinquency—Industrial Schools' After-Care—Social Investigations—Medical After-Care—Special Schools' After-Care—Educational After-Care—Bibliography | 18-45 |
| III. CHOICE OF EMPLOYMENT. | |
| Unaided Selection of a Vocation—Effects on Industry of a Proper Selective System—Vocational Guidance and Vocational Selection—Eliminating the Unfit—Individual Differences—Methods of Selection and Examples—Research—Employers—Bibliography | 46-87 |
| IV. CONTINUED EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIP. | |
| Vocational and Cultural Training—Curriculum—Central Schools—Junior Technical Schools—Junior Day Technical Schools—Schools of Arts and Crafts—Evening Schools—Works' Continuation Schools—Other Day Continuation Schools—Apprenticeship—Bibliography | 88-127 |
| V. THE SOCIAL WORKER. | |
| Social Service—Unattached Workers—Student Workers—Attached Workers—Recruiting and Training Voluntary Workers—Honorary Officials—The Paid Official—Bibliography | 128-143 |

| CHAPTER | PAGES |
|---|---------|
| VI. THE LAW RELATING TO THE INDUSTRIAL ADOLESCENT. | |
| Law as a Social Science—The Law and Adolescence— The Children Acts: Parts II. and III.—Reformatory and Industrial Schools—Juvenile Offenders—Borstal Institutions—Medical Fitness for Employment—Age for Employment — Working Conditions — Working Hours—Wages—The Education Acts—Bibliography | 144-167 |
| APPENDIX | |
| I. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE | 168-170 |
| II. SOME SAMPLES OF TESTING SUITABILITY FOR CERTAIN OCCUPATIONS | 171-179 |
| III. PARTICULARS OF COMMON TRADES | 180-240 |
| INDEX | 241 |