

Mr. Ellis, you pointed out, and I think rightly so, that a substantive proportion of our unemployment problem is the young people. I am persuaded, as Senator Douglas brought out so well, that this is true. I am wondering if one constructive way of solving this situation and contributing very greatly to the long-term reduction in unemployment is not to do all we can to persuade the States to increase the age at which students leave school from 14 to 16 up to a higher level as they in their best judgment can do it; combine this with a much more vigorous vocational education program and a dovetailing of this in cooperation with management, labor, and others, so that when young people leave the school there is a job for them available.

Now, one of the things that President Conant, former president of Harvard, brought out in his book was that in communities where this is done—and there are many communities in America where they do that—there is very little problem of youthful unemployment.

Now, if we could somehow use what influence we have, here, the President and Members of Congress, to work on the States to do it, it seems to me we would do two things. No. 1, we would reduce unemployment; No. 2, we would solve a very vital problem of training more skilled people in a technological society. Is that not correct?

Mr. ELLIS. I think you are going in exactly the right direction. It takes time, of course, but we have made a start in that direction when we began to put this greater stress on mathematics and science in the schools, and pointed out the shortage of engineers and the high salaries they receive when they finish the training. We are trying to pull them through the school system. And it is all to the good.

It would of course also be desirable to increase the level of vocational training which would be importantly at the high school level rather than the college level, because unemployment is a very definite function of lack of skill.

If you can provide more skill in the jobs where there are shortages of people for the jobs, you can increase employment. And in that connection, I would like to point out that the fact that we have 4 million unemployed does not mean there are no jobs available. Some of those people prefer not to work at the jobs that are available.

I think that is another point that we must keep in mind: that there are a lot of jobs available in this country, but for some reason people prefer not to take them.

I think you are going in exactly the right direction. Let us increase the level of skill of our young people, particularly the ones that now drop out of school.

I do not take the figure for June 1962 as typical of the labor market. Many of those boys and girls reported as unemployed in June are merely looking for summer work. They are going back to school in the fall.

Senator PROXMIRE. I know. I am seasonally adjusting all these figures, and in October, November, and all during the school year there will be millions of those teenagers who will be out of school and out of work.

Mr. ELLIS. Look at October, for example, when the schools are in full session. I think you are going in the right direction. Let us increase the level of skill of these boys and girls.