

2936 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

The school, a residential training place, is a really good example of how seed money from federal funds can be used effectively and profitably by local and state officials working with educators and industrial executives.

During several hours conversation with more than 30 young men who were school dropouts and former delinquents in one way or another, I heard the kind of plain honest talk that explains more clearly than volumes of academic sociological studies exactly what these boys' problems are.

"I WORK BETTER with my hands than my head," said a palefaced, blond boy. "Here at this school they don't put the pressure on you to be what you don't want to be and can't be. They don't look down on you for wanting to be what you want to be."

"All that business about kids being equal is for the birds," said a youth about to be graduated from the school, where he studied mechanical drawing and with an industrial job waiting for him.

"I learned more math here at the drawing board than I ever did in school where most of the kids always were ahead of me. I just can't think so fast I couldn't keep up and the teacher just had to rush everybody along. My family is a mess and school was my chance to get away from them and ahead. But tryin' to go ahead at regular school and not learnin' a trade was too much, just too much!"

SAID A BOY with an intelligent face showing new-found maturity: "Everybody was telling us that if we didn't make it through high school and to college we'd be on the junk heap. My folks took out insurance to send me to college. They said they were giving me a chance to get ahead and do better than they did in life. Well, I've got a job waiting for me when I finish up here that'll pay me more than my old man is getting right now. I read better, write better, and talk better now and I like studying because I can see where it leads to."

Like all human endeavors, the present system at Mahoning School was arrived at by trial and error. Early mistakes are now corrected. I never saw a more self-respecting, disciplined, ambitious and purposeful group of young men than the "disadvantaged" youths now in residence at Mahoning Vocational School.

The pupil-teacher relationship is remarkably good.

It is not surprising that a veritable pilgrimage to Mahoning is taking place by officials in federal and out-of-state welfare departments.

Seventy-five percent of the so-called "problem" youths trained at Mahoning in courses lasting from six months to a year have found jobs and are keeping them.

"In vocational education," says Dr. Byrl R. Shoemaker, director of Ohio vocational education, "we weave together the principles of math and science, skills and technical knowledge into a mix which will help youth and adults to enter and adjust to employment opportunities or to upgrade themselves in their chosen field of work."

We should adopt new attitudes toward vocational education.

A terrible disservice is being done to our youth today, in my judgment, by intellectual leaders, insurance and banking executives, government and industrial leaders who keep on telling young people they are destined for poverty and inferiority unless they get a college degree.

Only 14 percent of young people become college graduates. Why not train the 86 percent so that they can answer the basic employment question: "What can you do?"

Today 60 percent of the American work force is in the service occupations. Why not train young people to fill and hold such jobs well and efficiently, always leaving the way open to advancement?

There always is "room at the top" for boys and girls determined to get there. But why neglect or mistreat educationally the vast majority filling the rungs of the ladder from bottom to top?

PART IV.—SUMMARY

We have reviewed in general terms the merits and success of our Educational System (Federal, State and local cooperation), the very basis of America's development into the strongest, most progressive country in the world. We discussed, again, in general terms, the trends and progressive nature of State vocational programs. Finally, we have given a more detailed report on examples of positive action in vocational education with regard to utilization and effectiveness of the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962. I would emphasize the value of the capable leadership at all levels of the existing structure