

All young people would be required to complete sufficient academic education and job training to equip them for available full-time or part-time work opportunities when they leave school for employment or they continue with higher education but need employment.

Students of appropriate ages might be given school credits for working full-time or part-time, for limited periods; at approved jobs in industry, business or government. Such practical education and earn-a-living training would develop self-reliance, expose them to the realities of the world of work, teach them something about earning and managing money, and help them to think about and prepare for their future.

Thus every child would learn firsthand about our economy: what makes the wheels turn, why and how one must earn a living, the many commercial, industrial, technical, and professional opportunities that exist, and some important facts of modern life, including this: many people will have to undertake two or three careers in their working lives because our fast-changing economy makes more and more occupations obsolete.

In a matter of months of full-time vocational study and training, young people could be taught enough to fill part-time or full-time job vacancies in industry or commerce while they are getting an education, after they have completed it, or if they drop out.

All young people would be required to complete sufficient academic and job training to earn a living.

The work training and guidance, the content of vocational courses, and other work-related activities could be turned over to an agency comprised of representatives of various business, technical, and professional fields, labor, and government, as a public-private enterprise.

Through this agency, employers might be encouraged to adopt new patterns of employment and recruitment, especially in view of the fact that, within a year, half of the 200 million people in the United States will be under 25 years of age and their life expectancy will be much greater than that of any group of Americans in history. These facts have economic and social implications for all of us, and unless commerce, industry, labor, and government plan for effective utilization of this unprecedented manpower, those implications will soon become economic and social problems of unguessed dimensions.

A long word of caution. Over-emphasis on getting a "good job" (by getting a "good education") and too much warning about "dead-end jobs" can produce unfortunate results.

Obviously, a college education is no guarantee of a "good job," and not every young person is "college material." Equally apparent, there will continue to be millions of jobs, and self-employment opportunities that do not require years of academic study—and never will. Many of these pursuits may be characterized as "dead-end," but millions of Americans start in this way, progress to other work, and climb as near the top of the ladder as conditions permit, in the great American tradition.

Many others, whose limitations and circumstances prevent such progress, at least have the satisfaction of earning their own living, modest though it be, at tasks, that must be done in every town, city, and county in the nation, if the wheels of our economy are to be kept turning.

If shunning of "dead-end jobs" should increase and become widespread, we might find ourselves with additional hundreds of thousands of job vacancies and unrealized self-employment opportunities—as well as continued high-level, and increasing, welfare rolls. This because more and more individuals might be encouraged not to prepare themselves for so-called dead-end jobs, even though such preparation might involve a minimum of effort.

Today some of the few employables on the welfare rolls are beginning to say they will refuse to accept available jobs if those jobs are "dead-end." (If they do refuse and consequently are dropped from the welfare rolls, all of us will share the blame for their mistake in judgment—and for the subsequent suffering of their families.)

Certainly all of us should know and believe that working at whatever we can do, at whatever stage of our development, is being useful to others as well as ourselves and our dependents and is the truly significant meaning of "earning a living."