(O. 6639)

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REPLIES TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE EDUCATION OFFICER QUOTING

A2/2

London County Council.

Education Officer's Department,
The County Hall,
Westminster Bridge, S.E. 1.

14 NOV 1927

Dear Sir,

The Departmental Committee on Education and Industry has asked for the opinion of the Council on various points in connection with the recruitment for industry from pupils in secondary schools. The main question to be discussed appears to be whether the number of pupils entering industry from secondary schools is insufficient. If the number is insufficient, the further question arises whether the total number of pupils passing through the schools is too small or whether the number seeking employment in clerical work is too great.

Statistics in regard to the employments taken up by boys leaving secondary schools in London are available from information in possession of the Board of Education and it is not necessary, therefore, to trouble you to supply actual statistics. I should, however, be very much obliged if you could assist me by giving me your opinion on the following points as regards boys from your school:-

(1) Do boys who desire to take up clerical work on leaving school find serious difficulty in obtaining employment?

(2) Is the trend towards clerical work on the part of boys from your school due mainly (a) to a preference for that type of work or to (b) difficulty in obtaining industrial work?

If (a) is the preference due to (i) higher initial wages and (or) more easily foreseen prospects, or (ii) belief that the work is less arduous or more agreeable, or that it confers a higher social status than industry?

The Head Master,
Wandsworth County School.

P.T.O.

If (b), is this attributable to preference of employers for candidates leaving the elementary school at 14 over those who have completed a secondary school course to 16 or above?

(3) Do any appreciable number of your boys who intend ultimately to enter industry proceed (a) to trade school at the age of about 13 or 14 or (b) to polytechnics or technical institutes at the age of about 16? If so, how do the prospects of these boys in industry compare with those entering industrial employment after a full secondary school course to 16 or 18?

(4) How do the prospects of boys entering industry at 16 or 18 compare with those of similar age who have entered at the age of 14 directly from the elementary schools and work their way up?

(5) Have you experienced any difficulty owing to the age of apprenticeship in London being lower than the normal leaving age of secondary school boys?

(6) Is there any demand on the part of parents of boys of your school for a more distinctly industrial (as distinguished from clerical or professional) training in the secondary school?

(7) Are any definite steps taken to acquaint your boys with the opportunities offered by industrial employment? If so, I shall be much obliged if you will give particulars.

(8) Have you received complaints from employers of clerical workers that the knowledge of foreign languages of boys from your school is insufficient for the work required? If so, have the requirements been for better knowledge of languages now taught or for knowledge of languages not now taught?

Yours faithfully,

P. H. Slater.

Education Officer.

R 2/2. 18th November, 1927.

Education and Industry.

Dear Sir,

I beg to submit my replies to the questions raised in your letter of the 14th inst.

1. Boys who have matriculated do not often find serious difficulty in obtaining clerical posts. Those below the "General School" standard often experience difficulty in getting such posts unless they have personal influence.

2. In my opinion the trend towards clerical work is due to (i) higher initial salary and more easily foreseen prospects, (ii) belief that the work is more agreeable and (iii) that it confers a higher social status than industry.

3. (b) There are rare instances of boys proceeding to polytechnics at about sixteen years of age. There is not sufficient evidence to enable one to compare their prospects with those of the boys who stay longer at a secondary school.

4. After the first two or three years in an industry, that is, after learning the rudiments, the better equipment of the secondary school boy gives him a distinct advantage.

5. No, or very little.

6. No.

7. Yes. "Parents Evenings are arranged from time to time when particulars are given of the various careers open to boys.

8. No.

Yours faithfully,

The Education Officer,
The County Hall,
S.E. 1.

Head Master.