

Teens' Misdeeds Hurt Others, Too

YOUTH unemployment frequently has been blamed as a cause of teen-age crime. Teen-age criminals also might be a cause of youth unemployment. The good suffer for misdeeds of others.

Many employers have had unfortunate experiences with teen-agers, due to thefts, dishonesty, unreliability and attitudes that defy training or supervision.

Such faults might be traceable to "soft discipline" at home or at school.

Their lack of training shows up as lack of interest on the job, rudeness, immaturity and sloppy attire. They may receive passing grades at school in spite of their irresponsibility but when employers are investing cash in wages, fringe benefits and taxes, they expect, and are entitled to receive, production and dependability.

Recently, sociologists observed that the median age of the United States population has risen to 29.4 years and is still going up. They

related it to cycles in the birth rate and interpret the aging pattern as a sign of a more mature people.

Criminologists have gone further and predicted a drop in the crime rate, because there will be fewer young people and young people commit "a disproportionate number" of serious crimes.

Such reasoning might be regarded as wishful thinking. People can grow older without maturing or becoming honest.

Federal laws effectively prevent most youngsters from learning much about work on the job until they are 16 years old. By then, they may have acquired habits of idleness and a notion that "easy money" either comes from Uncle Sam or comes from taking what someone else owns.

During the past summer hundreds of millions of dollars were divided among a few hundred thousand teen-agers through government made-work programs. What was accomplished is not known, but

many businessmen are convinced that such jobs are of little value as an introduction to the business world.

Youth unemployment may increase if the pending minimum wage law is enacted. Historically, each increase in the minimum wage level has been accompanied by an increase in teen-age unemployment. They are priced out of the market.

Educators have been debating whether academic subjects should be taught without job training or job technology should be taught with minimum attention to academics. Probably both sides are right, depending on the youngsters.

One authority pointed out that 80 per cent of all jobs do not require college degrees. Ironically, jobs that tend to remain unfilled are those which could be used by people willing to work and learn as stepping-stones to better jobs.