

Rules Discourage Teen Employment

IN THE DAYS before the child labor laws, liberal allowances, minimum wage laws and excessive government regulations, most youngster had many opportunities and compulsions to learn how to work.

Our present system makes it possible for young people to graduate from college without ever having been employed.

They may have had little encouragement to notice particularly the occupations of people around them. Their perception of work often is superficial and they may be vacuous about choosing a career.

In a few weeks, thousands of high school graduates will leave their classrooms forever. Due to stresses that have disrupted their education and lack of work training early in life, a large part of them will be poorly prepared to earn a living.

Much has been written about the limited ability of these young people to read, write or do arithmetic. Employers will verify this lack of skills,

and they also will tell of reluctance by many to accept on-the-job training for work they are hired to do.

Youngsters may have little or no idea about how to apply for a job.

Laws prohibiting the hiring of youngsters under 16 years old may protect them from overwork and prevent them from learning how to work.

Such laws do not protect youngsters from acquiring habits of idleness and mischief, such as vandalism, or from robbing and stealing to get money they want to keep up with affluent friends.

Minimum wage laws are said to prevent exploitation of workers, but every raise in the minimum pay scale has made it more difficult for the young, the unskilled and the less competent to find employment.

Instead of being employed at \$1.50 or \$2 an hour, which might be the worth of their production, millions of these people, and especially teenagers, are unemployed at \$3.10 per hour.

Other regulations, such as racial guidelines and limitations on questions employers may ask applicants, add to difficulties of young job hunters. Employers may be unable to discover what they can do.

Many in government bureaus seem to have the idea that no job should be more difficult or complicated than another, and that no worker should be any more competent than the next one.

The logical conclusion of this reasoning is that nobody should be more productive than his workmates, and that everybody ought to be paid the same rates, under government supervision. That would be absolute Socialism.

The American way is to allow employers to hire those who are willing to work, permit them to pay the better producers more, and to reward honest, loyal workers.

If this way were allowed to function freely, there would be fewer unemployed, and a lot more teenagers could find jobs.