

When Work Interferes With Pleasure

A CHRONIC disease called "job burnout" has been added to the list of reasons why people slow productivity or quit their jobs.

Two identifiable causes have been found: handouts and laziness. There might be others, such as inordinate desire for leisure time activities. Work could interfere with pleasure.

Job burnout probably existed in past generations, when 12 hours a day and six days a week were normal employment stints. Many of those jobs involved vigorous manual labor or tedious handwork.

In today's industrial world, electronic devices have eased the exertion and work days have been shortened to eight hours or less, with time out for coffee and rest, and two days a week off. Many jobs are so easy that workers may be mistaking boredom for burnout. Management directions and computerized operations may have eliminated the challenge of achievement.

This might not bother some people, because jobs no longer are central to their lives or their livelihood. Human nature seems to dampen en-

thusiasm for accomplishments when people know they can eat whether or not they contribute something useful to society.

Soon after a child learns to dress himself he begins to learn to avoid work. By the time he reaches employment age of 16, his broadest experiences may be in watching TV, riding school buses and playing.

With both parents employed in order to earn enough to pay for home labor-saving devices, children may have little opportunity to learn discipline and responsibility. Parental apathy may be to blame. The result is often flabby, overfed, underexercised individuals.

If a child happens to have natural aptitude for doing things worthwhile, our society discourages him. Rigid labor laws and other rules make it difficult for him to learn about professions and businesses which he might want to consider for a career.

Dick Wilson, who coaches little league ball teams in Ponca City, said he has had undisciplined youngsters on his squads who had

no experience whatever in fulfilling responsibilities. A boy who has had no responsibility for performing simple household tasks may have a hard time learning to be responsible for covering second base.

Unemployment is a continual topic of political and business discussions, but full employment probably never will be achieved. Some people seem to prefer unemployment. They are satisfied to draw unemployment pay and welfare benefits that may add up to nearly as much as their job take-home pay after income and Social Security taxes.

The nation's biggest employee-benefits consulting firm, William M. Mercer, Inc., reported last month on a survey of chief executive officers of 434 major firms. The conclusion: Sloth is driving out good old American greed as a work incentive and is the major factor in slowing productivity gains.

"There are too many people who wait for the weekend," said Mercer's spokesman. A big majority of the companies surveyed thought that salary increases do not produce sustained productivity gains.