

To-day, when there are more boys offering than there are positions available, employers or prospective employers are better enabled to make a selection of the human material. It has been represented to us, as appears from the above statement, that employers prefer youths not over the age of sixteen, the reason given being that the older boys are stated to have grown careless and indifferent, are difficult to teach, hard to control, and appear to resent the more elementary duties of the beginner. We, however, appeal to employers not to prejudge nor to condemn the older boys, and suggest that they are at least entitled to a fair trial. The idea that these boys are failures should be combated as evidence is not wanting that they are, where given a fair trial, making good. The position is not hopeless for these boys, as from their age they should naturally be better developed and more physically fitted to undertake farm work, and their case should be substantially met by the farm-development schemes we have outlined elsewhere. In view of the difficulty we have outlined, we suggest that local organizations should concentrate on placing boys of from seventeen to twenty years of age on farms.

Penrose Farm Scheme for Boys.—The Wellington Boys' Employment Committee purpose taking up again in the coming year the experiment known as "The Penrose farm scheme," where arrangements were made for taking one hundred boys into the country for a period of four weeks and a half, and introducing as many of these boys as possible to farm-work. During the coming period the association purposes concentrating on teaching boys of seventeen to twenty years of age something of farming pursuits, which will enable these boys to receive a special training and fit them for a place on a farm. The secretary reported to us that his executive was having difficulty in obtaining boys suitable in character and experience for farms, and that there were nearly fifty boys on the waiting-list anxious and willing to go on farms, but in every case they were unable to carry out the duties required by the farmer, which would show the desirability of providing facilities for the training of some of these boys to fit in with the requirements of the positions offered.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE.

R. C. Davidson in his work "The Unemployed" makes the following statement: "For thirty years we have known from well-established evidence that the haphazard methods of entering into employment are a serious blot on our industrial system." With the view thus expressed we are wholly in accord, and suggest that it will be an important step to appoint on organizations dealing with the unemployed-boy problem a person who possesses not only a knowledge of industrial affairs but who has also a sympathetic conception of the difficulties that beset the entry of a young life into industry. We noted with pleasure the steps that have been taken in certain centres in this direction where vocational guidance officers are doing excellent work. Much good may be accomplished by directing into proper channels natural aptitudes for certain vocations and inspiring the will to work and succeed.

IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR DAILY WORK.

The habit of irregularity is easily acquired, but difficult to lose; we therefore suggest that where technical-school facilities and other training occupy only a small portion of the week, some such scheme be inaugurated as has been adopted at Timaru, where boys under the supervision of skilled tradesmen make step-ladders, barrows, and such articles. This will assist in the development of habits of industry, and provide a day's work every day.

INDUSTRIAL MATTERS.

Prior to the passing of the Apprentices Act in 1923, the conditions under which apprenticeships could be entered into were set out in the awards of the Court of Arbitration. The awards provided for fixed periods of apprenticeships (usually five years), wages, hours, &c. (see for example, Engineers' Award, Book of Awards, Vol. XXIII, page 1169, clause 15). As a result of the war and the conditions arising therefrom unskilled labour had, prior to the slump of 1921-22, been receiving as much as and in some cases more than skilled labour, and there was therefore no inducement to boys to enter into apprenticeships in the skilled trades, particularly as they received a considerably higher commencing wage in an unskilled or "blind-alley" occupation than in a skilled trade.