

FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

In certain parts of today's school system, girls appear to adapt relatively easily to the educational environment, while boys experience considerable difficulty and suffer a much higher rate of failure, according to a report issued recently by the Department of Labour. The study, entitled "The Transition from School to Work", was prepared by Professor Oswald Hall, Professor of Sociology, Department of Political Economy, University of Toronto, and Professor Bruce McFarlane, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Carleton University, Ottawa.

Started in 1961, it traced the experience of a group of Canadian 21-year-olds in a "typical" Ontario community as they passed through the secondary-school system and entered the world of work. In this community, the educational records of all those born in 1940 were studied to find out when they had left school and what their level of achievement had been. These facts were related to the students' personal background and, where possible, to the sequence of their jobs and periods of unemployment.

GIRLS HAVE THE EDGE

The authors concluded that the system "seems geared to the requirements of girls; boys fare badly in it - in all years and both the academic and vocational courses". In the vocational sense, the authors found, the system prepared girls admirably for careers in the work world. "The skills learned in school," they continued, "seem ideally adapted for transfer to the job with little time delay. For the boys, it is otherwise. Those who drag along to senior matriculation are in many ways unfitted for university work. If they choose school-teaching, they find themselves in a girl's world. If they head for a strictly masculine type of work, the skilled trades in industry, they find that their jobs have little connection with prior schooling. There seem to be few places where skills learned by boys in school, even in vocational school, can be applied to a specific job."

To illustrate this situation, the report observed: "The contrast between boys and girls is indeed startling; the graduate of a stenography course can start work immediately as a full-fledged stenographer; the graduate of a four-year course in mechanics starts as an apprentice."

BACKGROUND AND ACHIEVEMENT

A second major finding of the report concerns the relation between academic success and the socio-economic background of the students. In Paulend, the fictitious name of the community chosen for this study, about three-quarters of the school population came from homes of manual workers. It was found that the majority of children from homes of non-manual workers enrolled in academic courses, only 27 per cent being enrolled in vocational courses. Thirty-eight per cent of the students from non-manual homes went on to senior matriculation.

On the other hand, half the students from families of manual workers enrolled in vocational courses.

And, of the students from "blue-collar" homes who did not follow the academic curriculum, only 14 per cent managed to reach senior matriculation.

EARLY EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES

A third major finding of the report relates to the experience of those leaving the school system to enter employment. The authors reported that the initial period of transition from school to work "does not seem to have been a very painful one for most of the sample (in terms of unemployment, or employment opportunities), 88 per cent of whom found jobs within the first month of leaving school," They added, however: "While most of the school-leavers were able to find their first full-time jobs with relative ease, many were not successful in finding jobs which offered an extended period of full-time employment."

Three-fifths of the students who went to work had never been unemployed. A fifth suffered some unemployment (three months or less after once holding a full-time job) and an equal proportion suffered substantial unemployment (over three months after their first full-time job). "The boys experienced unemployment more than the girls, one-half of them having been unemployed for some period during their relatively short working career; and one-quarter of all the boys being unemployed for periods totalling over three months," the report added.

CANADIANS IN YEMEN

A new abbreviation is becoming familiar in the Middle East - UNYOM, standing for United Nations Yemen Observer Mission. Once more, under the blue UN flag, elements of the Canadian Army and of the Royal Canadian Air Force are engaged in logistic and air support of a United Nations peace mission - this time in the troubled country of Southwestern Arabia. Five Canadian army officers are already in Sana, the Yemenite capital, as part of an advance-party of 38, contributed by 14 nations, who were flown in with their equipment by RCAF "Caribou" and United States Air Force "Hercules" aircraft.

DIGGING UP ONTARIO'S PAST

Extensive excavations will be carried out this summer at Fort St. Joseph, on St. Joseph's Island near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, by members of the University of Toronto Anthropology Department, as part of the regular archeological programme of the National Historic Sites Division of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. A number of archeological students will take part in this three-month project, the budget for which has been set at \$12,000.

Artifacts from the excavations will be studied at the University of Toronto before being sent to the Historic Sites Division in Ottawa. The investigations will aid the Historic Sites and Monuments Board in assessing the historical significance of the fort and associated trading posts, and determining possible future development of the area as an historic site.