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THE REMUNERATIVE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

This year in Halifax we have initiated a Work Experience Program, unique in the area, involving students of the Grade IX Adjusted Classes. The students in these classes, approximately one hundred, are in the low average range of academic aptitude.

The aims of the program are to give the students a realistic experience in the world of work; acquaint them with what an employer expects of them and their responsibility to their employer. The program should help students develop acceptable techniques for job interviews. Should the student meet with success in his job it could possibly lead to permanent employment at the end of the school year.

The benefits accruing to a student in such a program are both of a vocational and educational nature. The fact that the student is being paid gives him a certain measure of independence, a feeling of security and accomplishment.

The students are released from school one day a week to work in industry as regular employees of a company.

They are paid the company's basic wage or the minimum wage, whichever is more convenient for the company. Because of the fact that the students are being paid, the employers feel they can demand excellence of the students. This in turn results in close supervision on the job.

Without the enthusiastic support of the business community this program could not have become a reality. Manpower was extremely cooperative, while labor unions, when approached, gave their support without hesitation.

The first step in organizing the program was contacting various firms and assessing the jobs these companies were willing to make available.

Most of the companies provided the protection of Workmen's Compensation. The question arose, however, what protection was available to children working in firms not covered by Workman's Compensation? After much consultation the Board felt that an accident policy, payable above and beyond the benefits of Workman's Compensation should be carried giving added protection to each child in case of accident or injury while on the job.

As jobs became available students were selected for job placement by the guidance counselors according to their interests and abilities.

The guidance counselors and teachers of the Adjusted Classes did an excellent job of preparing the students for the Work Experience Program.

The students filled out forms for their Social Security Numbers, and discussed do's and don'ts of interviews with personnel officers. In certain cases some role playing was done. Discussions of what employers expected

of employees and their responsibility to the employer proved to be invaluable to the students.

The guidance counselor (more or less for moral support) accompanied the students when they went for their interviews. He met the student's supervisor who would be giving the counselor an evaluation of the student.

The students are not rotated just for the sake of rotation but if a student is *not* happy in his place of employment or an employer is not happy with him the student is moved. This policy was arrived at in consultation with the employers. They felt that some idea of stability and long range planning was a more important ingredient in the world of work than exposure to a variety of jobs. Business seemed to be saying, "You look after character development and we will train them on the job."

The guidance counselors visit the employers every third week and the student is evaluated on the following points:

- (a) Willingness to work
- (b) Cooperation
- (c) Ability to follow instruction
- (d) Attitude towards other employees
- (e) Courtesy
- (f) Punctuality
- (g) Grooming

It is too early to evaluate the programs adequately but so far the results have been encouraging. Attendance at school has improved. This was an unexpected outcome of the program. In many cases students have been asked by their employers to work on weekends and have offered full-time employment during the Christmas Holidays.

These students are experiencing success so long denied them in school where academic achievement is the standard for success. This feeling of success is, of course, accompanied by the realization that "I am a worthwhile person."

PROGRAMME A LA FOIS EXPERIMENTAL ET A LA FOIS REMUNERATEUR

B. WALKER

Grâce à la coopération entre l'école et l'industrie, des étudiants peu doués du point de vue scolaire trouvent du travail une journée par semaine. Toutes les trois semaines, le conseiller de la main-d'oeuvre visite les employeurs. On évalue alors les progrès des étudiants et on attache une grande importance à leur comportement et à leur loyauté.