

A Word With You

NOWADAYS "education" is the magic word. It has always been a good stock-in-trade. At commencement exercises and at Rotarian meetings the theme "we must educate" never fails.

But today a new significance has been added. In this era of growing automation, the necessity of education, of training and re-training for jobs, is being stressed. The forces of industry, of government, and of the educational world itself, are being galvanized for this great effort. A concerted drive is under way to keep high school students from dropping out, and to get them to go through college.

In the days of our grandparents it was considered quite an accomplishment to go through eight years of grammar school. (Both Henry George and Oscar Geiger had less than eight years of schooling.) In the next generation completion of grammar school became more common, but graduating high school was a rarity. College was strictly for the upper crust. Eventually high school graduation became standard, and even during the Great Depression you had a fighting chance of getting a job if you could produce a high school diploma.

We're getting to the point (in these days of "prosperity") where a high school education is not considered enough to land a decent job. To the millions of youths who graduate from high school each year we can only say,

"You are not prepared to take your part in the economy. You are not trained for the jobs that are open. Go and get more education."

Imagine that! Twelve years of education is not enough preparation... just to make a living! There are already signs that a four-year college education is getting to be just so-so, and soon sixteen years will not be enough! A new Parkinson's law could be that "job requirements rise to meet the level of education."

It has been said that more training is needed today because there is so much more to learn in the complex modern world. But I think this has been over-rated. In the first place, children learn more on television — and in that venerable institution, the street — than they do in school. Also, one learns by doing, not by cramming for an exam. Besides, our economy is not at all ready for the super-educated people it claims it wants. College graduates find themselves in jobs that could be handled with ease by willing persons with an elementary education. Naturally if someone can display a sheepskin the law of supply and demand will favor him over the fellow who hasn't got one.

In short, unemployment is still unemployment, and it's still with us; and when there are more men than jobs it's going to be tough. More education is nice, but it's not the answer.

—Robert Clancy

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community — known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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