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What Does Youth of B'ham Worry About?

Students Reveal Their Problems In School Poll

Editor's Note—The glorious unconcern of high school boys and girls is deceiving. Youth has its somber moments and thinks more deeply than outsiders sometimes realize. Lloyd Chapman, instructor at Baldwin High, undertook to find out what Birmingham's students are thinking about, and the results of his study are outlined in the following interesting article written for The Eccentric's Forum.

BY LLOYD CHAPMAN

When a young person graduated from high school in 1900, 1914, or 1927 he usually had little difficulty securing a position which would enable him to keep busy and occupied. Usually he worked 10 or 12 hours a day, spent a little time in recreation and then to bed. In those "good old days" little thought was given to the problem of youth. These young people found it comparatively easy to work their way out for a living.

History Has Not Repeated

Today, history has not repeated itself. Today, positions are not

mentioned, are the problems suggested by these young people.

PROBLEM	No. times mentioned
Insecurity	10
Social acceptance	10
Future occupation	10
Lack of sense of value	5
Need for college information	5
Boy and Girl relationships	3
Parent's lack of understanding	3
Drinking and Smoking	2
Recreation	2
Too many things to do without dissipation	2
Correct sense of right and wrong	2
The war	1

Although there are 13 things mentioned as youth problems they are all directly or indirectly related to the first three: insecurity, the problem of social acceptance, and how to prepare for the future. And the latter problem certainly cannot be separated from the first one of insecurity. In fact many leaders today are emphasizing the fact that most of the youthful extremes that are so evident today can be traced to this fear, this uncertainty, this feeling of insecurity. Where there is insecurity there is apt to be skepticism, distrust, a lack of a sense of values, and doubts about right and right living.

One of the students demonstrates this fact when he says: "Most of us have not yet become accustomed to the ways of the world. The average boy has been pampered, shown each step of the way, so that if we were put out on our own I fear it would be tragedy. The majority of us haven't any particular standard to live up to, or any ambition to fulfill. As a result we wander aimlessly through 12 years of school, we graduate and then begin to look and think about what we would like to do. I think there should be a few years in which we would know what we are capable of working for so that there would be this wasteful, heart-breaking wandering around."

Another student, a girl this time, writes: "The first thing I know in life is where you are, where you are going, and how you are going to get there—that is what the young people of today don't know."

Still another student cries: "Give us information about work that we are capable of doing when we are through with school, and if possible give us some assurance that there will be positions available in it when we have completed our training."

Through these statements and many others run similar discouraging notes. But there is also revealed a desire to be shown, a willingness to work, and a realization that it will not be easy. Most young people are keenly aware that they must prepare themselves for life and they anxiously await a little encouragement and guidance. But one young man interjects a very discouraging, yet pertinent and challenging point of view, when he writes, "Youth today feels very insecure because our elders have brought to our minds the problems of our civilization, economic, political, and social, which they themselves have not been able to solve. If they can't, how can we?"

In other words the problem of insecurity evident in our young people can be traced directly to the uncertainty, the lack of purpose, and insecurity noticeable in the adults they are supposed to emulate. After all, the Roman civilization fell because each succeeding generation could not solve either its own problems or those of their predecessors. If we are to assist the youth of both Bir-

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DR. RULE

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Such questions as "Why Michigan and the country over in the solving of their difficulties and problems, we must first convince them that we, their parents and teachers, are capable of solving our own. If we can provide the youth of America with the same opportunities, the same chances for success, the same certainty of a good, steady vocation as most of their grandfathers had, this major problem of insecurity will be taken care of and along with it all the other problems which are related to it."

The schools are attempting more and more to assist these young people in the solving of their problems, to give them confidence in their ability and in the future, and to lead them to fertile occupational fields. But the schools can't do the job alone. They need the cooperation and sympathetic understanding of every parent, community leader, and all others in this momentous—yet extremely important task.

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