

- Liberal secondary education should be taken up in any additional time for a high school course rather than vocational or specialized education.

THE PROBLEM OF LENGTHENING SCHOOL COURSES

The most important questions to be considered, however, in any movement to raise the school-leaving age are: 'What will be done with the additional period of education, and what purposes will it serve?' It is generally agreed that what has traditionally been called 'elementary education' does not furnish an adequate intellectual capital for life. Hence it is doubtful whether an additional year of the same type of education would justify the prolongation of the period of compulsory school attendance.

There is, however, another argument against using the extra year for further elementary education. This argument is that elementary education, being intended for the masses, is different in quality from the education given to the privileged minority in secondary schools. It is a part of the dual sys-

tem of educational organization which makes very little provision for equality of opportunity.

For more than 30 years a movement has been under way to reorganize educational systems so as to provide a common foundation for all, together with some form of secondary education adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the pupils. It is as part of this movement that the raising of the school-leaving age — for the present to 15 years — acquires significance. The common foundation is to be carried on to about the age of 11, and is to be followed by a variety of types of secondary education for all, occupying about four years. The differentiation of the types of secondary education would be gradual, in order to avoid premature specialization.

The issue, then, is whether the unit of secondary educa-

tion made possible by the raising of the school-leaving age should be liberal and general in character or vocational and special. The answer to this question is to be found in the character of modern industry, in which the emphasis is gradually being placed on adaptability rather than on some form of specialized skill. Industry is looking for young persons of intelligence and character, and will itself provide or supervise the specialized training that may be needed.

There is, however, a far stronger argument in favour of general or liberal education. This is based on the demands made upon each individual as a citizen, worker, and human being. As a worker, he needs a broad education to compensate for the repetitive activity characteristic of most modern occupations. As a citizen, at any rate in a democracy, he is expected to understand and participate in political matters which today embrace not only national and international affairs, but social and economic problems of growing complexity. As

a human being he enjoys more leisure than ever before in history, and should be given a foundation and a start for the cultivation of a variety of interests.

Because of the greatly increased range and variety of intellectual ability, a greater variety of types of secondary education will have to be developed than is at present available. Two difficulties arise here. The first is to avoid imitation of the traditional academic types of secondary education, either through inertia or in order to claim the same prestige for the new as for the old types. The second is to devise methods for discovering the abilities and aptitudes of pupils at the age of about 11 and allocating them to the school best adapted to their needs. The real purpose of providing equality of educational opportunity may be defeated when it comes to allocating pupils, because of the prestige enjoyed by the older academic types of schools and courses. It will accordingly be necessary to leave room for the transfer of pupils to the

courses or schools most appropriate for them if an error in allocation is discovered. This, in turn, means that the raising of the school-leaving age, while it makes possible a reorganization of school systems based on the ideal of providing equality of educational opportunity and, therefore, different types of schools or courses adapted to different abilities and aptitudes, also involves the provision of arrangements for the guidance of pupils.

It may appear that this discussion, which began with a consideration of the question of prolonging education, has traveled far a field. But no other course is possible

unless the prolongation is intended as a method of keeping young persons out of the labour market for an additional year, to be devoted to further elementary education. The raising of the school-leaving age or the prolongation of education cannot be considered without reference to all the other implications involved. Those implications entail social and economic as well as educational considerations. In any attempt to answer the question 'what will be done with the extra time?' these considerations cannot be neglected. — *By I. L. Kandel in Studies on Compulsory Education.*

GLASSES

The old porter looked at the thick lenses of the student's spectacles and announced proudly, "Sonny, I'm 79 years old and never use glasses."

"You should," the youth advised him. "It is very impolite to drink out of the bottle."