

PRESSURE TO TRAIN AND PRESSED INTO TRAINING:
THE FINDINGS OF THE 1937 VICTORIAN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SURVEY
AND SUBSEQUENT TRAINING INITIATIVES

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Introduction

Rarely are the occupational fortunes and aspirations of a sizeable, historically significant, but non-elite group, available to the historian. Fortunately information collected during the 1937 Youth Employment Survey in Victoria still survives and provides one such rich source of information. The intention behind the survey was to identify 'youths' between 18 and 25 who had missed opportunities for 'normal' employment or who had been educationally disadvantaged during the Depression years 1929-1934. The ultimate aim was to provide them with the opportunity for technical training. According to the organizers it was 'not necessary' for a 'lad to be unemployed to be considered in any proposed scheme', those employed in 'dead-end jobs' were also considered eligible (Giles, 1937, p.1). Although the survey was organized through a special government committee the government of the day had not, at the time, made any financial commitment to the training of the youths who responded. Furthermore, there was to be very little room for choice of training in the scheme that was set up a year later.

The single-sided survey form simply sought the applicant's, age, address, educational qualifications, employment history and preference for occupational training. The main historical sources of data that have been located comprise four, out of a possible six, reports on the survey and subsequent training program, and a progress report on the first 1000 applicants given as evidence at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers on Youth Employment, held in Melbourne on 5 February 1937. The original completed forms can not be located which means that it is necessary to rely on statistical summaries. Even so the existing information provides a unique profile of a self-selected population of young males actively seeking new opportunities,

The problems associated with secondary statistical sources in history are many. They include inconsistent classification, lack of rationale for classification, missing data and errors in transcription and calculation. However, the complete absence of the latter and the relatively easy comparability of data reported at four different dates and at different points in the data analysis, inspire confidence in this particular data source. So too does a knowledge of the fastidiousness, more than average statistical skills and

expertise in occupational analysis of the person who tabulated the data and prepared the reports (Holbrook,1990). Nonetheless the limitations of the raw data also have to be borne in mind, including the possibility that the respondents embellished the facts or misunderstood the survey questions. The simplicity of the survey tends to dispel most concerns about the latter, but given that youths may have had something to gain from making their cases seem worthy of special consideration, the reliability of the data must be further queried. One mitigating factor is the size of the response group. Over six thousand youths responded within the set period and a further two thousand at a later period. To conclude, the simplicity of the survey, the large numbers, and the consistency and accuracy of classification and calculation when taken together tend to suggest that generalizations can be made from the secondary sources with a reasonable amount of confidence.

Background to the survey

The complex nature of the events that led to the initiation of the Youth Survey and subsequent youth trainee scheme have been dealt with in detail elsewhere (Holbrook 1987, 1988). In brief, by 1936 it had become clear that youth unemployment was not going to disappear as economic conditions improved. Unemployment had placed a huge financial burden on the states and this, in addition to the belief that there was a shortage of tradesmen and that unemployment was at root a problem that could be solved through technical training, prompted state governments to pressure the Commonwealth to provide for a huge injection of funds into technical education. The public outcry arising from continued youth unemployment provided yet another source of pressure. Finally, those bodies with publicly acknowledged expertise in dealing with youth unemployment during the early thirties (for example, the Boys' Employment Movement in Victoria) were arguing, very convincingly, that a considerable lessening of youth unemployment could be achieved if a specific group of young unemployed were targetted and provided with sufficient short-term training to enable their rapid assimilation into the workforce. For the Commonwealth this approach presented a neat and timely political solution to a thorny problem and could also be used to appease the technical education lobby. Such a scheme was also attractive because it would have a finite life and would not infringe on state rights because it could utilize existing institutions (Holbrook 1987, pp.201-5, pp.257ff).

It was against this background that the Dunstan Government in Victoria appointed a Youth Employment Committee to undertake a survey of unemployed youth. It was a move that

was due, in no small part, to some particularly fierce debate in the Assembly and the threat of a no confidence motion arising from the youth unemployment issue. It needs to be stressed that an election was looming in Victoria and also one at the federal level. Politicians were getting strong messages from their constituents that youth unemployment could no longer be tolerated. The messages took various forms, including the criminal waste of human resources, the financial burden the unemployed imposed on their parents and the fact that a vocal proportion of the unemployed youths were articulate middle class boys with good qualifications. Some of them wrote letters to politicians and the press about the callousness of government and the personal appeal of communism under such circumstances. This development in particular, provided a compelling reason for the government to take positive action. The fear that youth would become dangerous was a deep and unshakeable one for those who supported the status quo (ibid.)

In order to undertake a survey of unemployed youth the Youth Employment Committee called on the expertise of the Boys Employment Movement (BEM). Indeed, eight of its members were on the committee of the latter. The BEM had been set up in April 1931 to find jobs for unemployed males between the ages of 14 and 19. The work of the BEM was also closely associated with that of the vocational guidance movement in Victoria. G.R.Giles a science graduate whose research background included an occupational survey of industry in Victoria, was its secretary. The BEM had successfully liased with industry and had placed in excess of 12,000 youths by mid 1936 (ibid., p.177).

A survey was deemed necessary because no one knew the exact dimensions of the unemployment problem. In addition, the BEM outlined a scheme for training the respondents which included short, free courses of intensive day or evening training at 'suitable' centres for employment in skilled industry, in commerce, and in rural occupations'. The interesting thing is that this was actually printed on the top of the youth employment survey form. It made the form an application for training as well as a survey instrument and pre-empted government support. When the survey was launched there was no promise that employment would be secured for the successful applicants, let alone entry into training, because there was no guarantee of funds for anything other than the survey itself. At the same time as the survey was being planned in late 1936 there were some developments at the Commonwealth level. Prime Minister Lyons announced in November that a joint state and Commonwealth meeting would be held to consider the problem of youth unemployment but once again there was no guarantee of funds. Thus, a Victorian scheme to assist unemployed youths was launched strongly

enough, but there were significant unknowns affecting its trajectory.

The purpose and scope of the survey

There was concern that, because of their 'unhappy experiences', a significant proportion of young men would not 'register'. Consequently an enormous publicity drive was organized intent on making registration a community concern. Publicity was directed 'not merely toward youth', but also towards those interested in youth (Giles 1937, p.1). The survey had all the hallmarks of a recruitment drive and was launched on 26 January 1937 by the Premier and publicity continued until 9 March. Addresses by Giles were broadcast by ABC radio and other special broadcasts included one from the Sunday afternoon Service at Wesley Church and another from a meeting of Melbourne Rotary. Churches were an important target for the survey and relevant information was fed into church papers of all denominations. Public statements of support were delivered by the President of the Legislative Council, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and other prominent parliamentarians; Archbishops Mannix and Head, the Vice Chancellor of Melbourne University, the Director of Education, and many representatives of public bodies. Public leaders were circularised and copies of forms were sent to them. Every parliamentarian, minister of religion, head teacher of a private or state school, scout troop leader and, public assistance committee received such information. So did every police station, municipal council, post office, benevolent society, forestry and relief camp, militia unit, and mostly everyone that could be thought of who was 'interested in, or engaged in, welfare work among youth' (Giles 1937, page 2).

Every day a coupon was printed, free of charge, in the Sun. Over 2,800 youths completed and returned them. In most other newspapers around the state space was given to appeals for youths to register and for progress reports on the volume of responses and for case descriptions. All radio stations apparently helped with publicity along with many municipal authorities. Posters and a supply of forms were made available in confectionary shops through the Cadbury, Fry Pascall Company and posters were also displayed on every railway platform and in trams in Melbourne, Ballarat and Geelong. It would seem that few members of the public would have been unaware of the drive. The posters invited their co-operation in helping the committee to achieve its objectives. For those without a sweet tooth, or not using public transport, posters were also in every post-office, municipal building, drill hall and generally on walls and in windows. wherever 'persons interested in youths' were 'likely to view

them. At least 30,000 forms were sent out (ibid., p.3, pp.14-15).

According to the returns for the 1933 census, 15.2 per cent of the 59,276 Victorian male breadwinners aged fifteen to nineteen years of age were unemployed, and similarly 25.6% of the 73,586 twenty to twenty-four-year-old breadwinners (Holbrook 1987, p.77, pp.347-8). Giles, who had access to raw census data, reported that 12,291 metropolitan youths, and 9,347 eighteen to twenty-three-year-old youths elsewhere in the state, were unemployed. Giles estimated that some 6,000 metropolitan and 4,000 rural youths were unemployed at the time of the survey or about eight per cent of the male population in that age group (Giles 1936). Thus the survey was targetted at some 10,000 unemployed youths plus others in temporary, dead-end jobs.

The academic, employment and work preference profile of the applicants

The responses came in rapidly. By the end of the first week 1,250 forms had been returned, 2,000 by the end of the second and 2,600 by the end of the third. Some 3750 forms had been received by 25 February. In the second and third weeks a greater number were reported as coming from the country. Giles provided the press with some detail on individual cases. For example, the youth of twenty-four who left a private school with an intermediate certificate in 1930 and could only get casual work; another with a technical certificate who could only get eight months work since 1934; one ex-prefect from a private school who had only obtained three months work in six years, and one boy from a country technical school who had just two months work in four years (Age 1937).

By 31 March 6,097 applications had been received, although not all of these were from those in the eighteen to twenty-five age group. A small number of respondents were over thirty years of age, and quite a few were married (Giles 1937, p.3, p.7, 1937b, p.12). The Youth Employment Committee described the first 7,108 applicants as the 'original' group (Giles 1939, p.3), however, most of the surviving information deals with the first 5,000 applicants processed, including a specific breakdown of the first 1,000. Consequently the following analysis is based on the data for the 5,000 and compares the first 1,000 responses (group 1) with the subsequent 4,000 (group 2 obtained by subtraction). During the following commentary on the information in Tables 1 - 4, indications of significance have been determined using Zubin's Nomographs for Testing the Statistical Significance of Differences between Percentages (Oppenheim, 1973 pp.287-92).

As a general guide to statistical significance, when comparing large groups of more than 1000, percentage

differences of five per cent or greater would indicate statistical significance, and for smaller groups (100-200) percentage differences of more than ten per cent would probably indicate that the percentages were statistically significantly different.

Table 1 provides the age and geographical distribution of the respondents.

Table 1. Geographic and Age Distributions Showing Number and Percentages of the First 5000 Respondents a

Age	Urban Groups			Rural Groups			Both Groups		
	1	2	Tot	1	2	Tot	1	2	Tot
18	118	258	376	62	164	226	180	422	602
%	15.5	8.9	10.3	25.9	14.7	16.7	18.0	10.6	12.0
19	112	316	428	42	160	202	154	476	630
%	14.7	10.9	11.7	17.6	14.4	15.0	15.4	11.9	12.6
20	124	394	518	47	201	248	171	595	766
%	16.3	13.7	14.2	19.7	18.1	18.3	17.1	14.9	15.3
21	142	530	672	26	168	194	168	698	866
%	18.7	18.4	18.4	10.9	15.1	14.4	16.8	17.5	17.3
22	78	494	572	24	158	182	102	652	754
%	10.3	17.1	15.7	10.0	14.2	13.5	10.2	16.3	15.1
23	86	394	480	20	116	136	106	510	616
%	11.3	13.7	13.2	8.4	10.4	10.1	10.6	12.8	12.3
24	80	272	352	13	89	102	93	361	454
%	10.5	9.4	9.7	5.4	8.0	7.5	9.3	9.0	9.1
25	18	174	192	3	41	44	21	215	236
%	2.4	6.0	6.1	1.3	3.7	3.3	2.1	5.4	4.7
26+	3	55	58	2	16	18	5	71	76
%	0.4	1.9	1.6	0.8	1.5	1.3	0.5	1.8	1.5
Tot	761	2887	3648	239	1113	1352	1000	4000	5000

Note a. Category 1 identifies the first 1000 respondents and Category 2 identifies the next 4000 respondents for

both the metropolitan and rural groups.

Source: 1. Proceedings and Decisions of the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers on Youth Employment, 5 February 1937, p.6.

2. Interim Report to the Youth Employment Committee 31 March 1937, Table I, p.4.

What were the characteristics of those who sent their applications in earliest? Firstly they had a somewhat younger profile than the second group. About 50 per cent of group 1 were between 18 and 20, whereas in the second group 37 per cent were in that age range. The most pronounced difference between groups was for 18 year-olds (18 as compared to 10 per cent). The number of 22-25 year-olds was 11 per cent higher for the second group. For the Total group 40 per cent were in the age range 18 to 20 and 54 per cent in the range 21 to 24, indicating a significant difference between the percentage of younger and older applicants. The large representation of younger respondents, particularly in the first week, may well have occurred because they were registered with the BEM in Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong and the officers of this movement would have registered them with the survey as a matter of course given that the two committees were so closely related.

Given that the first 1000 responses were received in the first week it is not surprising to find a slightly greater percentage of the first group came from the urban area than the second. For the total group more than 70 per cent came from urban areas. Compared to the distribution of the total Victorian population, of which about about 54 per cent lived in the metropolitan area (CBCS 1933,p.73), respondents from the urban area were significantly over-represented. Reasons for the strong urban bias could include the intense publicity in urban areas, the location of youth and adult employment agencies in urban areas, and the possibility that a greater proportion of the unemployed resided in urban areas.

Eighteen per cent of group 1 were eighteen years-old and 26 per cent of the rural respondents in this group were that age, however there was no significant difference between groups in the percentage of rural 18 to 20 year-olds (30 and 35% respectively).

All young males of 17 and over in unskilled occupations were at risk of being stood down in favour of younger and cheaper labour (Holbrook, 1987, pp.60-65). Were young rural youths particularly susceptible to this or were they simply keen to seek an opportunity to escape to the city as was often the case? (Holbrook 1987, pp.224ff) Table 4 shows that 50 per cent of rural respondents were employed at the time of the survey, only about three per cent of them in rural pursuits,

and less than three per cent were deemed suitable for employment in rural occupations.

Table 2. Educational Qualifications Showing Number and Percentages of the First 5000 Respondents a

Age	Leav +	Int Cert	Merit to Int	Int Tech +	Int Tech Cert	Jun Tech Cert	Tech no Cert	Comm no Cert	Below Merit Cert	Tot
18	12	38	314	2	12	24	66	30	104	602
%	2.0	6.3	52.1	0.3	2.0	4.0	11.0	5.0	17.3	
19	42	70	298	-	14	28	68	44	66	630
%	6.7	11.1	47.3	-	2.2	4.4	10.8	7.0	10.5	
20	28	92	348	2	20	46	96	74	60	766
%	3.7	12.0	45.4	0.3	2.6	6.0	12.5	9.7	7.8	
21	34	56	336	8	34	30	104	94	170	866
%	3.9	6.5	38.8	0.9	3.9	3.5	12.0	10.9	19.6	
22	26	70	260	10	38	22	114	72	142	754
%	3.5	9.3	34.5	1.3	5.0	2.9	15.1	9.5	18.8	
23	22	46	218	8	22	24	122	58	96	616
%	3.6	7.5	35.4	1.3	3.6	3.9	19.8	9.4	15.6	
24	12	20	150	2	8	14	70	40	138	454
%	2.6	4.4	33.0	0.5	1.8	3.1	15.4	8.8	30.4	
25	8	12	66	-	2	10	38	22	78	236
%	3.4	5.1	28.0	-	0.9	4.2	16.1	9.3	33.1	
26+	-	2	18	2	-	4	16	8	26	76
%	-	2.6	23.7	2.6	-	5.2	21.1	10.5	34.2	
Tot	184	406	2008	34	150	202	694	422	880	5000
%	3.7	8.1	40.2	0.7	3.0	4.0	13.9	8.8	17.6	100

Note a: Leav=Leaving Certificate, Int=Intermediate, Tech=Technical, Jun=Junior, Comm=Commercial, + = above

Source: 1. As for table 1.
2. *ibid.*, Table II, p.4.

The great majority of school students in Victoria between the wars left at fourteen years of age. Eighty-three per cent of young people aged 14 to 19, and 54 per cent of fourteen year-olds alone, were not receiving education at home or in school (Holbrook 1987, p.47). Most received their merit certificate and left. The merit certificate was awarded for satisfactory completion of grades seven and eight, and the intermediate was gained through the process of examination usually after four years of secondary school after which the student could then go on to do the Leaving Certificate in a High School. Technical schools had equivalent levels of qualification.

Table 2 shows that of the 5000 applicants 44 per cent had attained no more than merit level and only about 16 per cent had qualifications at or above intermediate certificate level. Nearly 41 per cent had no certification. Only 21 per cent had done some technical schooling. Consequently many of the applicants would have required considerable training to raise them to a skilled technical level. The percentages for the first 1000 respondents starting with the leaving certificate were: 5.4, 8.4, 33.6, 1.4, 3.0, 7.0, 6.5, 3.7 and 31.0 per cent respectively. There is a marked difference in academic profile in both groups. There is a difference between groups for respondents with less than merit certificate that is statistically significant. Thirteen per cent more of group 1 were in that category. Moreover, 17 per cent of the first 1,000 were High or Public School graduates as compared to the 11 per cent for the total group (Giles 1937, p.5, Mackrell, 1937, p. 6).

The most striking finding is the degree to which the younger respondents out of the 5000, were better qualified at the top and middle levels. For example, about 28 percent of 18 and 19-year-olds had no certificates, compared to about 43 to 45 percent of those 20-23 and over 55 per cent for those older than 23. These differences are clearly significant.

For all age levels with the exception of those 25 and over, the most common educational qualification was that between merit and intermediate. The most common educational attainment among the 25+ group was below merit. Once again there is a distinct difference between the 18-20 and older group. The 18 to 20-year-olds were generally better educated, although the 18-year-olds provide an anomaly because some 17 per cent had not attained the merit certificate.

In conclusion it is clear that the older the respondent the lower the qualifications. Those who were in their late teens during the depression without good qualifications became known as the disinherited class. It was this group that governments wanted to assist and skill. The survey also highlights two extreme groupings as well. A small very well educated 18 to 20 year old group and a pocket of very poorly qualified 18-year-olds.

Table 3. Employment by Age for Groups 1 and 2 and Total Group Showing Number and Percentages of Respondents^a

Age	Employed			Unemployed			Total
	1	2	Tot	1	2	Tot	
18	74	168	242	106	254	360	602
%	40.6	38.9	40.1				
19	42	196	238	112	217	392	630
%	27.3	41.2	37.8				
20	49	237	286	122	358	480	766
%	28.7	39.8	37.3				
21	30	236	266	138	462	600	866
%	17.9	33.8	30.7				
22	20	166	186	82	486	568	754
%	19.6	25.4	24.7				
23	17	169	186	89	341	430	616
%	0.9	33.1	30.2				
24	21	97	118	72	264	336	454
%	22.6	26.9	26.0				
25	4	60	64	17	155	172	236
%	19.0	27.9	27.1				
26+	-	34	34	5	37	42	76
%	-	47.9	44.7				
Tot	257	1363	1620	743	2687	3380	5000
%	25.7	34.1	32.4				

Note a. Category 1 identifies the first 1000 respondents and Category 2 identifies the next 4000 respondents.

Source: 1. As for table 1
2. *ibid*, Table 3, p.5.

The very great majority of the respondents were unemployed about 74 per cent in the first group and 66 per cent in the second. The 18, 19 and 20 year-olds and in particular the 18-

Disabil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	-	13	-
Total	100	2228	576	164	15	756	360	1107	949	4259	1900	

Note a: The first preference for training of the first 5000 respondents

b: the rationale for these classifications is not fully known

Source: 1. Interim Report to Youth Employment Committee, 31 March 1937, Table IV, pp.5-7

2. Interim Report to Youth Employment Committee, no.2, 20 May 1937, Tables I and II, pp.6-15.

The survey asked respondents to specify their preference for training and the preferences of the first 5,000 reveal that 23 per cent wished to enter sales, clerical work, advertising and commercial art, and 55 per cent opted for a wide variety of industrial applications. Clearly the survey tapped the aspirations of many young males who were keen to try their hand at something different, with vehicle, aircraft and metal industry mechanics emerging as favourites (Giles 1937b, pp.6-15).

Because the committee received so many applications guidelines had to be set to deal with them. The first set of guidelines sorted the respondents into the groupings in Table 4 above. The Committee's assessment of the results of the survey was that a number of youths already held 'suitable' employment (eg, the 142 in the professional classification. Others had qualifications too low for technical training, and others wanted immediate employment of any type. So four categories were identified: those ready for immediate work (presumably including those whose qualifications were too low for training), those who would benefit by a short refresher course in their then current occupational area, those in need of training and those already employed (Giles 1937b, p.5).

Fifty-two per cent of the total urban and 30 percent of the total rural groups were classified as suitable for immediate employment and 26 and 50 per cent respectively were classified as already employed. Both differences are statistically significant and show that unemployment was much more prevalent among the urban group and, taking the findings from the information in Tables 2 and 3 into account, hardest on the older respondents with lower qualifications.

The percentage of respondents from urban and rural groups classified as ready to receive training in the industrial area was 88 and 81 per cent. However, only 15 respondents were classified as ready for training in commerce and all of these were rural respondents. Some 42 per cent of the urban group

classified as ready for immediate employment, as against 30 per cent of the rural group were classed as ready to enter the commercial field whereas roughly equal proportions were classed as ready for employment in industry and a further 19 per cent for process work.

If there were any young hopefuls attempting to escape farming they would have been disappointed with their classification and 5 per cent of urban respondents classified as ready for work were classified into rural occupations. The number classified for training in rural pursuits was extremely small.

Finally it can be seen that the occupational classifications of the respondents roughly mirrored the distribution of occupations aspired to by the first 5000. The main areas were commerce and industry.

By mid 1937 the youth employment committee was of the opinion that the survey had not provided enough detail to choose those who would be given the expensive opportunity of training. Only 1275 applicants had been classified as potential trainees yet there was an increasingly strong chance of substantial Commonwealth funding. This in turn meant such a small group of trainees would possibly reduce the payment. It was thus decided to interview about 4000 of the respondents, excluding those outside of the age range of the survey, those deemed as suitably employed, and ironically, those with the lowest qualifications. In conclusion, as the preceding statistical analysis has shown, those likely to be the most eager for training, the most desperate, and the least employable, were automatically excluded.

The provision of Commonwealth funds and the emergence of a traineeship scheme

A special allocation for the relief of unemployed youth was made out of Loan Council funds in mid 1937. The States Grants (Youth Employment) Bill made available 2 million pounds on the condition that the states used the money to provide facilities for the training for, and placing in, employment of male persons between the ages of 18 and 25 years. There were no hard and fast rules laid down as to how the states should disperse the amount, though principal features were expected to be the supplementation of wages 'pending the complete efficiency of trainees', training for technical, agricultural and mining pursuits and for any additions to plant, building or equipment that was necessary (Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates 1939, p.997). Because the Commonwealth also specified that jobs for trainees would be subsidized, effectively creating 'cheap labour', the Labor Movement was against the scheme from the start.

Anticipating huge amounts of money the Youth Employment

Committee planned for the training of 3,800 youths at a cost of 480,000 pounds, including sustenance payments, over three years and requiring 220,000 pounds for the first year alone. What they were offered was considerably less, 55,000 pounds from the Commonwealth which the state government offered to meet pound for pound (Commonwealth of Australia 1937, pp.3-4)

Cutting the scheme back to size the committee decided to offer 1200 applicants full time day training in technical school for up to 18 months, followed by further similiar training period in industry, and to offer a further 600 applicants full-time general day training for three to six months followed by training in industry or commerce and part-time evening training in technical schools for six to nine months. The up to 18 month group was to be partially trained to '40-50% efficiency', and the other group to '80% efficiency'. The on-the-job training was to take the nature of subsidised employment. The subsidy would equal the difference between the award rate and the efficiency level (Giles 1937c, pp.1-2.)

As to finding places for the trainees the outlook was gloomy. Employers as well as the Labour Movement were unco-operative if not hostile. Leaders of industry and commerce who were approached argued that it was wage and apprenticeship legislation not the depression which had led to youth unemployment and that it was the married man with the family who deserved first consideration. It was also suggested that when the trainees reached 40 to 50 per cent efficiency the committee should interview individual employers to secure the necessary jobs. As to who should provide the employment, the employers argued that the government should take the lead and employ the trainees as well as increase the quota of apprentices within the public sector. A dichotomy of views emerged on the structure of the training, but employers agreed that the aim should be to raise the trainee's skills only to such a level that they would become employable. Even so Giles could not secure any guarantee of employment from the employers even if such guidelines were to be followed (Giles 1937b, p.2, pp.4-5).

The Committee endorsed the levels of training and efficiency suggested by the employers and the idea that first preference should be given to married men. In addition it was decided that the second preference would be given to the oldest applicants subject to their having the necessary ability, and that special consideration be given to country applicants. The latter seems to have been something of a hang-over from the aims of the BEM which had had a strong rural placements goal since inception (Holbrook, 1937, pp.237ff).

Because all those respondents who were employed at the time of the survey were excluded from consideration for

training, even those in unskilled dead-end jobs, it followed that virtually all of the trainees would be on sustenance. Expediency also dictated that if a person was employable, in any sense of the word, then the committee would attempt would be made to find jobs for, rather than train, them. So in order to be a trainee the person had to be unemployed, older, well educated, but not educated to a point of immediate employability. They could not have their heart set on entering a completely new calling if it was incompatible with their previous education or occupation, or if it was incompatible with the expectations of the the committee or their interviewer (training for professional positions, for example, was excluded). Finally the potential trainee from the original survey had to be stalwart because it took a year to set up the first class! The inability on the part of the committee to organize satisfactory arrangements for on the job training, combined with a problem in finding instructors, held the scheme up until mid 1938. The first class, in motor mechanics, did not begin until 9 March 1938 .

The committee decided that the first classes would be in the areas of blacksmithing, bricklaying, cabinet making, carpentry, electrical fitting, electroplating and polishing, motor body building, motor mechanics, moulding, painting and decorating, panel beating and turning and fitting and sheet metal. Given the wide range of trades possibilities this was an extremely narrow field, but one within the capacities of the technical education system.

Commercial classes were notably absent but it would seem the pressure of numbers, and the fact that unemployed public school graduates demanded such classes caused them to be included (Holbrook 1987, p.295). Of the first 5000, 1170 aspired to positions in commerce but only 15 were recommended for training prior to the interview and finally 63 were offered commercial training in 1938. Only 6 applicants of the first 5000 had aspired to electroplating as a career, 50 specified painting and decorating, 16 preferred sheet metal work and none specified moulding (Giles 1937b, pp.6-7).

The committee's choice of trades was determined by what they considered to be in demand, which in turn was largely based on the opinions of employers. This limited vision for implementation was a far cry from the position they had taken with respect to the rationale for the survey. Consequently their expectations and those of the applicants were bound to conflict.

Table 5. Summary of Action Taken with Respect to Applicants
(End of 1938)

Classification	Metro	Country	Total
In training at date	358	253	611
Refused training	282	164	446
In subsidized employment	11	3	14
Terminated training	34	11	45
Transfers	10	8	13
Total offered training	695	434	1129
Awaiting training	452	178	630
Not rec'd for training	792	366	1148
Rec'd for immed training	136	20	156
Rec'd for Medical Exam	18	23	41
Rec'd for Psych Exam	21	23	44
To be interviewed	320	250	570
Total current registrations	1739	850	2589
Offered training	695	434	1129
Current Registrations	1739	850	2589
Under Age	85	176	261
Over Age	78	23	101
"Dead File" (Failed to reply to communications, withdrawn, and placed in employment)	3134	1082	4216
Applic living in other States	-	-	14
Total Applications	5731	2565	8310

Source:
Youth

Reproduction of Table III, Interim Report to
Employment Committee, no.4, January 1939, p.9.

Faced with a relatively narrow choice of training and no guaranteed prospect of employment in the trade specified for them by the committee, many youths decided to reject the offered training. This literally stunned committee members who could apparently only think in terms of any training was better than none and that this was a great opportunity for the youths (Giles 1939, p.8). In fact a new round of applications were sought in 1938 expanding the number of applications to 8310.

After a sub-committee recommendation on 10 January 1938, one year after the survey, 2,686 metropolitan applicants and 873 country applicants were contacted to report for an interview, after agreeing 601 and 291 respectively did not

turn up. Unsuitability of time could not have been the problem entirely because some interviews were rescheduled (Giles 1939, pp.3-4). Moreover Giles personally visited country districts so that applicants wouldn't have to travel.

According to Table 5 above, by December 1938, only 358 metropolitan and 253 country youths were in training, 446 had refused training, 14 were already in subsidized employment, 45 had terminated their training and 13 had managed to organise a transfer from one sort of training to another, suggesting some sort of flexibility in the system. A further 630 were awaiting training after interview.

By this later stage selection criteria were more severe. Interviewers had to decide if the depression had been the cause of the applicant's dilemma, if not the application was excluded. Another reason for exclusion was if the applicant had left school before the depression and not attempted to pursue training. In addition if the applicant was, at the time of the interview, in an occupation in 'harmony' with their qualifications and apparent abilities, or if they were not sufficiently qualified to undertake training for skilled employment, they were excluded (Giles 1939, p.4)

Those applicants who had been desperate for jobs were very likely those excluded on educational grounds, the youngest had been excluded on age grounds and in favour of married 'men' not 'youths, and finally, those who had needed employment to survive would certainly have been defeated by the lag between the survey and the initiation of classes. Even some of those who took up the training gave it up,, some to go to jobs they had found themselves, others because they could not meet the demands of the courses. Many of the courses were part-time and trainees could not find time to attend. In all a total of 8310 applications, 69 per cent of which were metropolitan, had been received by the beginning of 1939. Only 14 per cent had been offered training, 630 were apparently waiting and half the total had given up, been passed over or had moved on. Some 1000 of the latter group had been placed in employment through the auspices of the BEM and by 1940 even those engaged in training were enlisting in the defence forces.

By the end of 1940 of the 998 trainees classed as in training 19 per cent had left, most had found employment and ten had been dismissed. Sixteen per cent had enlisted, the rest were reported as being employed through the traineeship scheme, all having completed some training. Only 12, all agriculture students, were still in class.

Conclusion

Information collected during the Youth Survey in 1937 showed that the majority of respondents were from urban areas and

that although the first to apply were generally younger, the total group of 5000 was characterized by a greater percentage of respondents of 21 and over, not really youths at all, and that the difference between the 18-20 and 21 and over group was statistically significant. With respect to academic qualifications age was also a strong indicator of difference, there being a statistically significant difference between those with certificates and those without, with the older group significantly less educationally qualified. The great majority were unemployed yet the 18-20 year-olds who responded most quickly showed a greater and statistically significant level of employment than those who responded later. The majority of the applicants wanted employment in areas of industry or commerce, but at the individual level were diverse in their aspirations as represented by a wide range of occupational preferences.

The youth traineeship scheme that was organised to provide training for the youths surveyed, was presented as having certain aims that were in effect more liberal in concept than in practice. Youths were asked for their preferences but in effect it was never deemed possible, or desirable, to meet such preferences, and financial limitations and problems in establishing training, compounded the conceptual inflexibilities underpinning the operation of the scheme. The inflexibilities were largely tied to the definition of what made an applicant suitable for training, the latter being interpreted as mainstream trade training. Herein, lay the basis for rejection of many applicants by the committee and also the basis for the rejection of the courses offered by 40 per cent of those selected by the committee. Nor is it possible to underestimate the importance of fatigue as a reason for many youths dropping out of the scheme. The profound irony connected with the survey and subsequent training scheme is that the major proportion of those who were first to apply, the most desperate, and the least qualified to get positions with any sort of long-term prospects, were excluded and yet they were the ones the scheme sought to identify and which the community was most concerned about.

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