

POPULATION

The Unemployment Army Grows

Never Before Have So Many Young People Been in the Labor Market; Never Competition for Jobs So Keen

By **MARJORIE VAN DE WATER**

AS the academic processions disappear with the passing of June, commencement will be observed in places far removed from the campus. Employment offices will form their own processions of something like 1,075,000 high school graduates many of whom will be looking for jobs this summer and of an added 145,000 college graduates who will join the search.

Never before has the search for employment been shared by so many young people. Never before has the door to industry's personnel offices been battered by so many knocks. Never has such a large army been prepared to do the work of the world—to grow food for the hungry, weave cloth for the naked, and build shelter for the homeless.

For despite the growing numbers of old people in the United States, and despite the dwindling numbers of babies coming into the world here, the number of young people reaching productive age is steadily and rapidly increasing.

It is estimated that among the farm population of the United States, the present generation will see 3,800,000 youths reach the age when they can put hand to the plow in excess of the number matched by those leaving the field for retirement or death.

Starts on Farm

For it is down on the farm that the whole problem of unemployment has its start. There, birth rates are high. There, schooling opportunities are limited. There, are growing up large numbers of young people who are now, or will soon be, hunting for jobs.

Where can they find them? Not more than a half or perhaps only a third of the young people growing up in rural areas will find farm jobs open for them. And even this small number is being cut into by improved agricultural methods.

Half the farms in the nation were not needed in the boom year of 1929 to feed and clothe the non-farm people. This inferior half produced only 11 per cent. of all the products sold or traded.

Man power is not in demand in the great farming areas. Nor is it likely to

be in the future, judging from present prospects. Not more than a fifth of the excess can find jobs there.

During the depression years of 1930 to 1935, a back-to-the-land movement brought many jobless men from the city to the farming area looking for work. They did not find it in the corn, cotton, or wheat belts. These great commercial farming areas actually lost farm population during that time.

Before the depression, when a boy became old enough to look for a job, if he had ambition he went to the city. The city, with a relatively smaller number of growing children, had also a relatively smaller number of maturing youths, and could hold out opportunities to a great many of the farm surplus. So to the city they went. And young people of the large families of the South went to the North.

Thirty Per Cent. Leave

This trek is illustrated by figures showing what happened to natives of the State of Kentucky. In 1930, nearly a third, 30 per cent., of the 3,300,000 born in Kentucky were living outside their native state. Two-thirds of those had gone north and were living in northern and northeastern states.

The trek was greatest from the poorest lands. But the Great Depression changed all this. No job in the city means no food and no home, so with the crash in 1929 there began a general song of "Carry me back" to Virginia or Kentucky or some other farm area, usually the place which the boys in better times deserted to seek their fortunes.

Thus the back-to-the-farm movement meant, in general, a back to the poor farm movement. The new migrants from the city did not go to prosperous lands but to farms that had been previously deserted and that were incapable of supporting the population they already had.

Meanwhile, there occurred no lessening of the numbers of young people growing up on the farms. Not counting migration to or from the city, the depression years from 1930 to 1935 saw an increase of just one million in the rural farm group of working age.

Two million rural young people were forced to accept public relief during these years instead of becoming self-supporting as they should under proper social conditions.

With the return of better times, there began another migration to the cities, but the latest Census Bureau figures show that again the tide has turned.

But the city already has its own excess of young job seekers. Although the rate is dropping with lowering birthrates, it will be ten or more years before the number of young people reaching the job-hunting age is down to match the number of oldsters that might be expected to vacate jobs through death or retirement.

Peak Reached

According to Dr. T. J. Woolfer, Jr., coordinator of rural research of the Works Progress Administration, who is authority for these estimates, the early 1930's saw the greatest expansion of the number of job-seekers that the United States is ever likely to experience.

In the years from 1930 to 1936, just at the time when the nation was hit by severe hard times and reduction in employment, the peak of increase in the population of working age occurred.

More than three million young men and more than three million young women were added to the job-seeking lines during that time in excess of those who left the working group by the roads of old age or demise.

"This increase of employables occurred at a time when industry was least able to absorb them," Dr. Woolfer said. "This is one of the chief reasons why the numbers applying for public relief continued to increase through the early months of 1935 although industrial employment steadily improved from 1932 through 1936."

It may seem strange that such an excess of job seekers should occur after a decade of declining birthrates, but that becomes understandable when we consider that the decrease in number of births would not make itself felt in the employment ranks until 18 or 20 years later.

In about twenty years in the future, we may have a stabilized population of those of working age when the new recruits will just about equal those drop-

ping out of the picture. But that doesn't help with present problems.

In 1930, New York, New Hampshire and Rhode Island were the only ones to have a stationary working population, although New England and the Pacific Coast states have less than one per cent. of increase. The greater part of the country has an annual increase of from one per cent. to 3 per cent. in the number at working ages.

Employment pressure is greatest in Utah, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Oklahoma and Texas. The rate there is over 3 per cent. For every thousand male workers on North Carolina's farms, 36 new recruits are ready annually to step into the employment line, besides those needed to replace men who are stepping aside.

In the drought states, if there were no migration, the pressure for jobs would be tremendous. As the children now under 18 years mature, over a quarter of a million youths will reach working age in excess of those needed to replace the older men withdrawing from the group in productive ages.

Along about 1955 we may expect this particular problem to be reduced, but in the meantime something must be done for these thousands of young people.

Lack Training

One of the greatest difficulties of the problem is the lack of training of so many of these young people. Large families, high birth rates, and the later maturing of large numbers of young people are most frequent where incomes are at the lowest ebb. High school facilities are completely lacking in large rural sections of the United States. Grade schools are likely to have short terms, poorly trained teachers, and limited facilities.

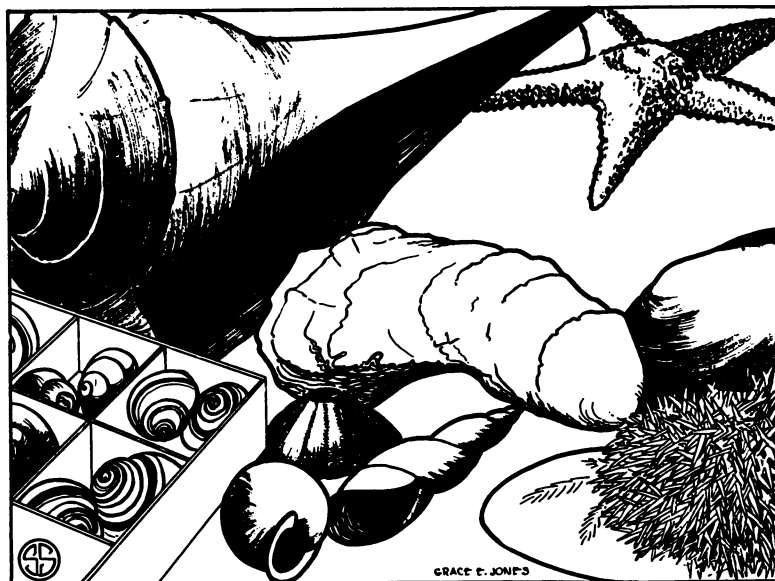
Of the rural youth who were on relief and were out of school, almost one-third had completed less than seven grades of school. Only one-fourth had gone beyond the eighth grade. They were fitted only for work on the farm or for unskilled labor.

A permanent CCC, which would enroll all young men when they left school and which would offer training fitting them for some sort of skilled work and which would also give training in citizenship, has been proposed as a means of removing large numbers of young people from competition for jobs.

Such government programs as that of student aid through the National Youth Administration are also designed to keep young people in school longer and so leave the jobs open (Turn to page 30)

Inexpensive Summer Fun You Need Only Eyes and Hands To Collect Shells

(Fourth of a series of 12 articles. Next week—Collecting Mosses)



Eyes and fingers are only essentials for collecting shells. Smaller shells may be kept in boxes like that at lower left; cardboard strips make very good partitions. Besides the two great classes of shells as represented by snails and oysters or mussels, collectors at the seashore will also find interesting-looking starfish and sea-urchins.

SHELLS, together with other beach trophies like starfish and sea-urchins, are among the most interesting objects a young collector can gather during a summer's holiday weeks, yet they are also among the easiest things to collect and take care of. Nothing is needed to capture them but eyes and fingers, and the simplest kind of boxes will do for their housing.

To be sure, dealers offer attractive trays, and these are very good if you really go in for a full-scale shell cabinet. But at the outset, ordinary small cardboard boxes will do for small shells, and cigar boxes or even larger containers for the heavier varieties, like conch and turret shells from the seaside, or river mussels from inland streams. For the very tiniest, most delicate shells, it is

For more information

send this coupon

to Science News Letter, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Please send me **Bulletin 4**, containing additional information about collecting leaves and your list of books and leaflets on the subject.

Name.....

Street.....

Address.....

City and State.....

State.....

From Page 27

for older men and women, at the same time giving the youngsters the advantage of additional training.

The competition becomes less keen as we go up the scale in jobs, but even for college graduates the outlook is none too good in 1938.

The top-ranking third of the June seniors at most colleges had jobs waiting for them when they graduated, but the remainder of the class had to get out and hustle for their means of bread and butter, it was revealed by a May survey by the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company of 78 universities and technical schools.

Jobs for this year's college graduates are from 10 to 60 per cent, fewer than last year, although starting salaries are almost as good, they found.

Most schools hope that from two-thirds to three-fourths of their graduates may have found work by fall, and they feel that any improvement in business conditions would quickly absorb many entire classes.

The majority of present employment calls are for salesmen in the general business and insurance fields, and for accountants, it was found. The oil and petroleum industries were the biggest bidders for engineering school graduates. Several schools reported that governmental agencies, state and federal, offer the most active employment demand for their graduates now, with highway, relief and social service work mentioned most frequently.

A good many plan to go on with graduate study because employment is scarce, but on the other hand, increasing numbers of old alumni are coming back and asking for aid in getting new jobs, having lost those held, in many instances, for many years.

What is the permanent answer to this youth-employment problem? Many experts are putting their heads together in the effort to find it. Particularly in the NYA, government officials are battling the problem.

Some possible remedies for those in the farming regions where the situation is most difficult have been proposed by Dr. Carl C. Taylor, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

To reduce the birth rate would perhaps be advantageous but would have no immediate effect on the problem, so, skipping that alternative, he goes on to more practical measures.

First is the development of a live-at-home type of farming which would provide for production for home use.

"The promotion of such a system of farming is not, as some argue, an attempt to turn back the pages of progress," Dr. Taylor said. "It is an attempt to write the greatest degree of security under the lives of millions of farm families who have their destinies in their own hands to a greater extent than any other segment of our national population . . ."

"The direct result of not doing this in the South, where the standard of living is low, and population maladjustment is more obvious, is the absence of milk, eggs, and fruit in the diet of cotton producers. The remedy is the production in the South of these products for home consumption."

Farming of this type does not provide much money income, but it does permit an independence and security not attainable by the person who works for a wage.

Another remedy is a combination of farming with another type of occupation—a handicraft or part-time or seasonal employment. A recent tendency toward decentralization of industry has taken

Books

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER will obtain for you any American book or magazine in print. Send check or money order to cover regular retail price (\$5 if price is unknown, change to be remitted) and we will pay postage in the United States. When publications are free, send 10c for handling.

Address Book Department

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

2101 Constitution Ave. Washington, D. C.

factories to the farming regions.

During the depression, the number of available industrial jobs in the east south central states actually increased by about 7,000, despite the decrease over other parts of the country. If minimum wage legislation increases labor costs in this region this tendency may not continue, however.

Finally, by cooperation of various agencies of the Government and interested private organizations, young people of the nation can be aided to obtain vocational guidance, training for skilled employment and handicrafts, be guided to suitable regions for best opportunities, and through such a set-up as the CCC, be given the chance to develop physically and socially until such time as they can secure useful, self-supporting employment.

This article was edited from manuscript prepared by Science Service for use in illustrated newspaper magazines. Copyright, 1938 by Every Week Magazine and Science Service.

Science News Letter, July 9, 1938

GEOLOGY

Yellowstone Geysers Put on Good Show This Season

GEYSERS in Yellowstone National Park, spectacular enough at all times, appear to be putting on a special show this season. Old Faithful has been spouting to unprecedented heights. Recently an eruption reached the height of 223 feet, which is 73 feet above its 150-foot average and 32 feet higher than its previous record of 192 feet.

Grand Geyser has taken a new lease on life, with 200-foot eruptions at thirty-hour intervals. The Giantess, largest of all geysers, has erupted four times in nine months, which is about double its usual rate.

National Park Service observers are not yet certain whether there has been a general increase in geyser activity or simply a shift in underground water flow, increasing the activity of some at the expense of others.

Science News Letter, July 9, 1938

This Handy Coupon

IS FOR NEW OR RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

To Science News Letter, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Please start renew my subscription to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER for 1 year, \$5 2 years, \$7

Name.....

Street.....

Address.....

City and State.....

State.....