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MINING APPRENTICESHIP IN NORTHUMBERLAND:  
A STUDY OF YOUNG WORKERS' ASPIRATIONS AND AMBITIONS

T. Ellison

A Thesis submitted for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in the  
University of Durham

1974

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## A B S T R A C T

Between 1965 and 1971 the National Coal Board operated a scheme of training for boys entering the industry and this course was known as the Mining Apprenticeship Scheme. It was a nominal four years in length and the primary aim was to secure for the Board a steady supply of underground workers who had been trained in a comprehensive range of underground work and who would be suitably knowledgeable about aspects of the work to be considered for promotion to supervisory posts such as shotfirer, deputy, overman, etc.

Throughout its existence the scheme was dogged by high wastage in the form of boys voluntarily leaving before completion of training.

This thesis is a report of a study carried out in the South East Northumberland coal field of career aspirations of boys entering the Mining Apprenticeship scheme with a view to explaining wastage.

In normal usage in industry the term apprenticeship refers to a period of training after which an individual becomes eligible for skilled membership of a craft-type trade union, and in this sense the term was wrongly applied to the Mining Apprenticeship scheme as successful completion of it did not serve as a qualification for membership of any trade union.

The main conclusion of the study is that boys who typically entered the Mining Apprenticeship scheme aspired to skilled craft status and that whereas the Mining Apprenticeship was called 'apprenticeship' by the Board it did not in practice (unlike the Craft Apprenticeship training carried

out by the Board) offer such status upon completion. The boys who left the scheme went to jobs which might commonly be supposed to offer inferior prospects to those offered by the NCB but in the industrial relations sense they were little different in the minds of the boys from being a 'pit yacker'.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to the people whose help and cooperation enabled me to carry out this study.

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To the staff of the National Coal Board in the Northumberland Area for their willing cooperation, and especially Mr. D. Davis, the then Area Director, and Mr. G.L. Ashton, Head of the Operational Executive, for instigating the study.

To the various Youth Employment Officers and Staff of the Department of Employment and the Department of Trade and Industry who willingly gave their time to make information available.

To the various Headmasters and Teachers at the schools which I visited and, most important of all, the Schoolboys and Apprentices who cooperated in a most patient and friendly way throughout the course of the study.

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P R E F A C E

Sources of Information

This study has relied a great deal on information obtained from informal sources, much of it by word of mouth.

As this was a study of a specific locality, it has not been possible to draw on nationally published information to illustrate a great many points. Where, for example, figures have been required to illustrate points relating to the job market in the area covered by the study, published figures have usually been too general or lacking in specific details to be suitable. Where this has been the case detailed figures have generally been made available from the records of the various responsible bodies. In this respect the officers of the Department of Employment, the Youth Employment Service, the Department of Trade and Industry have been particularly helpful, not only in providing statistical information but also in making themselves available for their impressions and views on a variety of problems. The Youth Employment Officers in the area were particularly helpful in these respects. In the text of the thesis, reference is made to the view of at least one writer on the subject that the views of Y.E.O.'s are largely impressionistic and therefore of limited usefulness. This report (Chapter 10) contains a perhaps dis-proportionately long section on the work of the Y.E.S. in S.E. Northumberland because it is my view that the service is a very important (if passive) element in the juvenile job market in the area and that the views of Y.E.O.'s (impressionistic or not) are not to be ignored if one is to understand the world into which a child steps when he leaves school.

The schools questionnaire was put to boys in three schools in the

area but in addition to being allowed to do this I was able to have informal meetings with headmasters and teachers in these and in several other schools. Generally speaking the staffs of these schools were wholly sympathetic to the problem of school-leavers in getting suitable jobs and conversations with them were helpful in gaining insight into the particular problems of the area.

Regarding information, both statistical and impressionistic, relating to the mining industry the officials of the Board made this freely available and they also gave their time freely to discuss the industry in general as well as particular points. Not only was I given free access to officials in the Area Headquarters of the Board, but also to personnel at the Mining Training School as well as Training Officers at the various pits. Also I was able to talk as much as I wished with a large number of adult workers and juveniles in addition to the Mining Apprentices who formed the main sample. Many of the interviews with apprentices in the sample were conducted at their place of work and away from the school-like atmosphere of the Mining Training School, and this freedom to move around was extended to underground where I had only to ask to be taken down. I also accompanied a group of Mining Apprentices on their one week's project training at a field study centre in Northumberland.

The point I most wish to stress in this preface is that whilst reading all the literature I could find which was relevant to the subject of the study, I have relied heavily on information acquired by mixing with people in the industry as far as attitudes and beliefs in the industry are concerned. This is mainly because, although there are some excellent descriptions of mining community culture in the literature, I do not believe that the 'mining community' is a phenomenon which appears in exactly the same form wherever it happens to be. For example, even between Northumberland

and Durham coalfields there are very significant cultural differences reflected both in the organisation of institutions such as the NUM at county level and the attitudes and values of the miners themselves. Also, I was able to interpret the nuances in statements by people in the area by being related by birth to quite an extensive number of mining people in Northumberland - not so as to be blinded by proximity but close enough to understand the way they use the English language.

## INTRODUCTION

At the latter end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century the phrase 'the workshop of the world' was applied to Britain, and this phrase was true particularly of the North East of England compared with other parts of Britain. It was in that period of history that the great boom in industrial innovation and expansion following the start of the industrial revolution was taking place, and this expansion was based on the production of steel ships and of railways, and the manufacture of powerful machinery.

Perhaps the major catalyst in this growth of modern industry was the development of communications by land and sea, facilitating as it did not only the local transportation of machines and materials, necessary for the heavy engineering industries to grow, but also opening up the entire world in terms of exploitation of natural resources existing in countries on the other side of the world. For example, the cotton industry of Lancashire required not only the development of machinery to produce cotton goods on a large scale - the sort of scale which was necessary for Britain to hold the position of suppliers of cotton goods to the majority of the world's markets - but it also needed to be able to import the raw cotton from the colonies in sufficient bulk to feed the industry.

The development of mechanised transport and heavy engineering began mainly in the North East of England by virtue of the ready availability of the two main raw materials which it required. These raw materials were iron ore and coal. The Coal industry had been thriving in the area for centuries but the increasing demand for coal spurred on the development of steam powered railways initially to overcome the difficulties of moving coal about within the coalfield and carrying it to the

ports from where it was exported to other parts of the country, and with very little delay the building of railways was expanded to improve the transportation of materials, products and people to all but the most remote areas in Britain.

The explosive force with which industry grew, based on the availability of power and raw materials, together with advances in technology is reflected in the structure of the North East's industry. It became the main centre of the coal, iron and steel, shipbuilding and heavy engineering industries. Towns such as Consett in North West Durham grew rapidly to significance as the iron works was developed, based on the presence of large deposits of both coal and iron ore, and the pattern of population changed drastically as mining villages were built in the coal field areas of Northumberland and Durham to house the large numbers of coal miners, many of whom were immigrants from other parts of the British Isles. The banks of the three main rivers in the area - the Tyne, Tees and Wear - became crowded with shipyards and engineering works. Shipbuilding grew not only because of the existence of the industries it served, but also because it facilitated itself the development of shipping for other purposes. This grouping of interdependent industries produced an organic complex of industries which enabled the North East to make an important contribution to industrial growth in Britain and enhanced the claim of Great Britain to the title of 'workshop of the world'.

Largely because of the growing dominance in recent years of industrial techniques and resources which are not particularly readily

available in the North East, the South East of England is the area where the majority of Britain's industry is concentrated. The North East, left holding an overwhelming capital commitment (in terms of both plant and human capital) to the traditional basic industries, has faced a continuing decline in prosperity during the first half of the twentieth century as the demand for its products has declined. Having helped to establish the necessary preconditions for the growth of modern technology, the North East, by virtue of that growth has in turn found itself in a position where its industrial structure and much of its resources are now redundant. For a variety of economic and political reasons Britain has invested its modern technology in such a way that the resulting situation is one where the so-called modern industries are concentrated in the South East and Midlands, and very little modern industrial development takes place in the North East. An example of the 'negative feedback' of technological advance as viewed by the North East has been seen in the decline of shipbuilding in the area. Spurred on largely by the closure of the Suez Canal in 1956 a great deal of effort was made to build larger sea-going tankers than hitherto in order that the economic disadvantage of carrying oil from the Persian Gulf oil countries via the long sea route could be overcome. One result of this effort has been that oil tankers of over 250,000 tons are currently built on the river Tyne. Apart from the fact that the number of locations in Britain where this type of shipping can be built on a competitive basis is very small (probably limited to the Tyne) the actual resources necessary for the building of the ships in labour terms have not increased proportionately. This is because the capacity of a vessel increases in proportion to the cube of its dimensions and therefore doubling the size of a ship (in terms of carrying capacity) by no means doubles the amount of work required in building it. In addition to the comparative reduction in the amount of employment generated in the building of modern ships, the amount of employ-

ment in other areas of the industry has similarly declined. This is because a large part of the work of the shipyards of the Tyne and Wear is not only building ships but also repairing them, and apart from the fact that the number of ships which customarily return to their original river for periodic maintenance is declining as ships get bigger, it is doubtful whether many of those being built in the North East are capable of being repaired there simply because of the lack of places where they can be accommodated for repair.

The repercussions of developments in shipbuilding are also felt by other industries in the area and in the region. Steel is an example of this. Because of the greater bulk carrying capacity of modern ships the economic viability of plants such as the Consett Iron and Steel works is threatened as it becomes a feasible alternative to import high grade iron ore from countries such as Canada rather than utilise the relatively low grade ores on which the plant has hitherto depended. In this case it is argued by many that the comparative advantage of cheap high grade ore from abroad outweighs that of having local coals for smelting. It then follows that new investment in the industry is likely (if judged on purely economic grounds) to be located as near as possible to the point at which the ore enters the country.

The other traditional industry in the North East which has undergone drastic change is that within which this study was carried out, namely the coal mining industry.

#### 'The Coal Industry'

The changes which have occurred in coal mining are more apparent and in many ways more far-reaching than those which have taken place in the



region's other industries in that the social consequences of the technological changes and decline in the use of coal have had more fundamental effects on mining communities. The main factors causing the decline of the coal mining industry in Britain have been the emergence since the second world war of a wider range of alternative sources of power than previously and the changes in techniques which have been introduced to the industry in the attempt to maintain coal's competitive share of the fuel market. These have meant that not only has the share of the fuel market supplied by the industry declined in absolute terms but also that the number of men employed in mining has been reduced in relative terms as the process of getting coal has become more capital intensive with the introduction of extensive mechanisation at the coal face. Figure 1 shows the decrease in men employed relative to output since mechanisation in 1957.

#### The Northumberland Area

This study was carried out in the Northumberland area of the National Coal Board which for all practical purposes covers the South East Northumberland coal field, and this is an area which has been particularly hard hit by the pit closures which have accompanied the decline in the industry. In this area 42 collieries were closed down between 1957 and the year when the study was carried out (1970), and the decrease in jobs in the industry has been very sharp in the last five years of this period. Table 1 shows the fall in numbers employed by the Northumberland Area of the NCB between 1960 and 1966. (March figures taken from NCB Statistical Summary.) Table 2 shows figures obtained from NCB census of Industrial workers employed by the Board (excluding Brickworks, By-Products and Open Cast Executive) at September 1970.

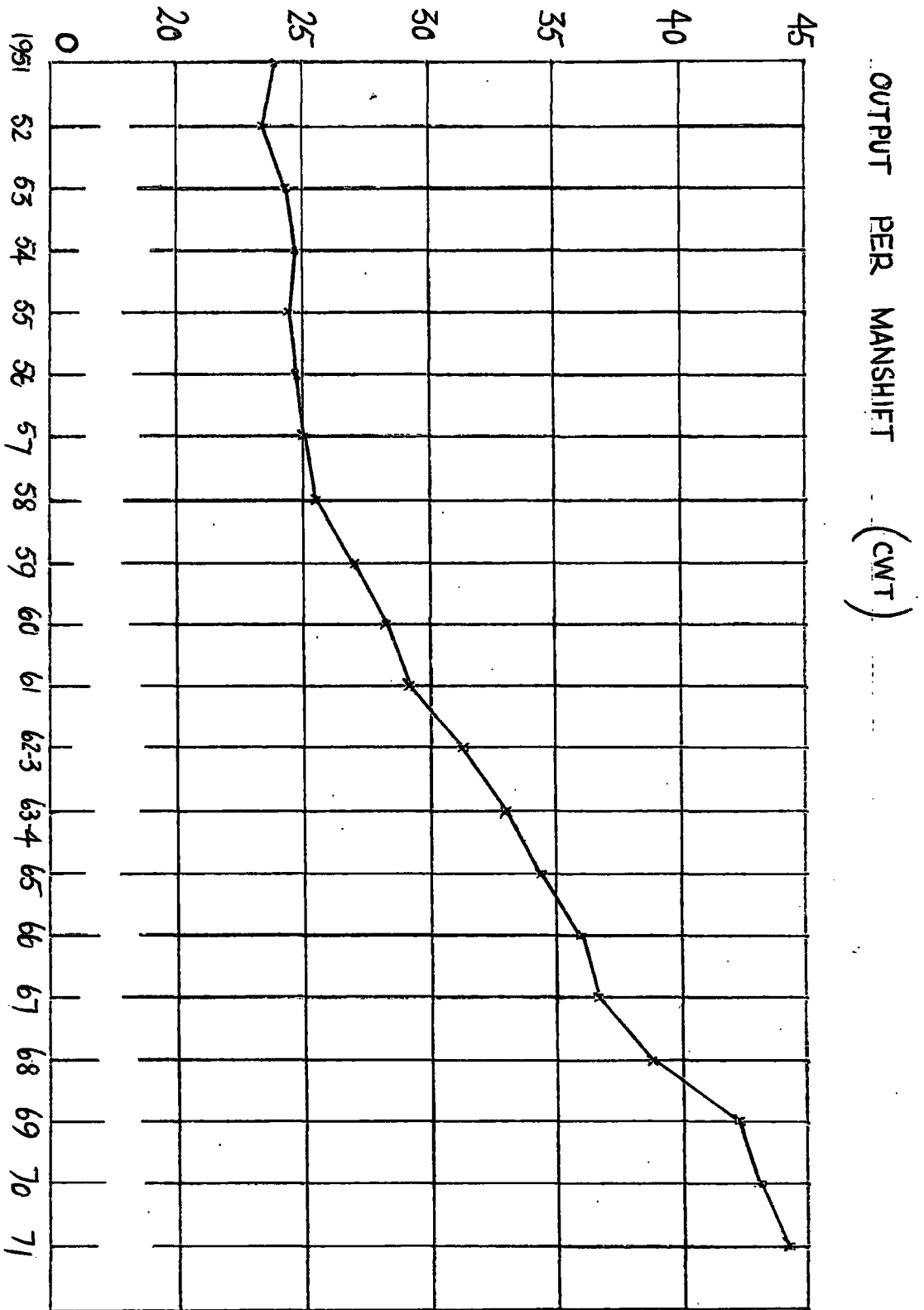


Figure 1.

Table 1

Men on Books	1960	1966
Faceworkers	12,324	8,957
Total Directly employed in Mine	34,263	25,265
Total Industrial	37,570	28,484
Total Non-Industrial (excluding Brickworks, By-Products and Open Cast Executive Personnel)	2,803	1,813

Table 2

	1970
Men on Books (total)	13,724
Colliery Associates	719
Ancillary (Transport, Housing, etc.)	1,000
Other Industrial (Cleaners, Caretakers, Gardners, etc.)	108
Total Industrial	15,551

The male population of the County of Northumberland (Active and Retired, Aged 15 years and over) given by the 1966 Sample Census was 273,750. Of these, 185,720 were employed in Non-skilled, semi-skilled and skilled manual occupations. Of these, in 1966, 15.33 per cent were employed by the NCB. By a crude extrapolation of population trends from 1966 to 1970, together with the figures shown in Tables 1 and 2, this proportion may be taken to have dropped from 15.33 per cent to about 8.373 per cent in 1970.

The significance of this for the working population of the area is clearly obvious when one looks at the distribution and type of communities which have existed alongside the industry. South East Northumberland was mainly agricultural before the great expansion of mining in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century and although the other main industries like shipbuilding and heavy engineering grew up as an agglomeration of

industry on the banks of the rivers the majority of workers in the coal mining industry lived in small highly specialised communities near to the collieries in which they were employed. This obviously meant that pit villages were built scattered about throughout the coal field and formed communities which were usually isolated to a greater or lesser extent from the rest of the area's population. Although pit closures have greatly reduced the number of mining communities in the area they have not really altered their general distribution except that the active part of the coal field has contracted away from the densely populated urban areas along the river Tyne.

The visitor to the villages where there have been pit closures can see immediately the drastic effects on them; large numbers of houses stand empty and the general level of apparent activity is low. The general feeling about these villages where the local pits have closed, is that they are in the process of dying off as there is no alternative employment for the people who are made redundant by the coal mining industry and these people either move to other coal mining areas or simply remain unemployed. The decline of the population in the mining village also leads to the decline of the standards of services available as local traders lose their customers and so the process of dying is compounded.

#### The Paradox of Labour Shortage and the Mining Apprenticeship Scheme.

What may be seen as paradoxical in this area is the fact that although the level of skill required in the worker in the mining industry has increased since the increase in mechanisation (and, therefore, one might suppose, so has job satisfaction increased), and the general shortage of jobs in alternative forms of employment to coal mining are fewer, the National Coal Board has experienced considerable difficulty in maintaining its labour force at the required level both in terms of absolute numbers

and in terms of skilled workers. In spite of the fact that the NCB is one of an increasingly small number of employers in the area offering jobs for school-leavers which involve a relatively high level of training and in many cases apprenticeship, it has been hard for it to attract and retain sufficient numbers of boys who have left school in the area. The extent of this difficulty from the point of view of the mining industry is suggested by Table 3 which shows wastage rates in the Mining Apprenticeship scheme in the Northumberland area of the NCB.

Table 3

---

<u>Number of Apprentices on Books (1970)</u>		
1.	At beginning of year	382
2.	At End of year	376
3.	Average number on books	379
<u>Recruitment during year</u>		
4.	From school	57
5.	From outside industry	90
6.	Transfers	-
7.	Total	147
<u>Voluntary Wastage from Scheme (By Year of Apprenticeship)</u>		
8.	Year 1	36
9.	Year 2	18
10.	Year 3	6
11.	Year 4	20
<u>Total Voluntary Wastage</u>		
12.	Number	80
13.	As a % of (3)	21%
<u>Total Wastage (i.e. Transfers Voluntary and Involuntary - all years)</u>		
14.	Number	116
15.	As a % of (3)	31%
16.	Number of Apprentices completing training during year	37

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(Source: NCB Northumberland Area Records)

In the case of the Craft Apprenticeship scheme nearly all of the wastage occurs after the apprentices have finished their course of training, but in the Mining Apprenticeship scheme wastage occurs right throughout the training period and a substantial proportion of mining apprentices left during their first year of apprenticeship. On the whole, the Mining Apprenticeship scheme has not been very successful from the Board's point of view. From its inception in February 1965 till December 1969 there were 400 non-completed Mining Apprenticeships. At the end of 1969 there were 253 first year apprentices, 106 second years, 57 third years and 24 fourth years in the Northumberland area. Of the 253 mining apprentices recruited in 1965, 228 had left by December 1969.

Wastage from the scheme is partly accounted for by boys transferring to Craft Apprenticeships, partly by transfers to other jobs within the industry, and partly by boys leaving the industry altogether. A detailed analysis of wastage in the year preceding the study is made in Chapter 7.

In Northumberland from 1965 up to the end of 1970 a total of 87 Mining Apprenticeships were completed from an overall intake of over 2,000. It is in this scheme (the Mining Apprenticeship scheme) that the problem of wastage is most acute from the long term point of view of maintaining a steady flow of progressively trained recruits to meet the demands of technology and changes in working methods. The pressure of changing technology on craft workers is certainly considerable from the point of view of maintaining a level of craft competence, but it is even greater on non-craft workers. The general level of skill has risen in non-craft jobs, particularly underground, the economic consequences of interruptions in work flow are greater than before, and the NCB is very concerned to maintain a workforce where a supply of supervisors can be recruited from among

men who have been thoroughly trained in the full gamut of modern mining techniques and procedures.

The Object of the Study

It has been the object of this study to look for explanations for the lack of success of the Mining Apprenticeship scheme. It has been to find out exactly how the scheme is seen by boys involved in it and how they react to it, and see what can be said about the general situation facing school-leavers in the area and what part the scheme occupies in the area's job market. In short, the aim of the study is to find out what the boys were looking for when they left school, and then to find out why the scheme did not measure up to their expectations of it.

Firstly, however, in order to understand the Mining Apprenticeship scheme it is useful to look at the overall training policy of the National Coal Board.

CHAPTER 1

THE NATIONAL COAL BOARD TRAINING POLICY.

The training policy of the NCB matches in comprehensiveness the wide range of activities of the Board and most jobs in the industry have specific training procedures which are laid down as part of the overall policy. Where there are not sufficient numbers of individuals to justify the internal organisation of training courses, the Board selects suitable courses at independent educational establishments and encourages individuals to attend them. In addition to relying on outside bodies for certain courses of training, a close liaison is maintained between Local Education Authorities and the NCB Training Department in the planning of courses, to the extent that in centres such as Ashington there is almost complete integration between the LEA's Further Education staff and the Boards Training Department. Because of the extent to which the various training schemes rely on the participation of the LEA staff in Ashington, the staff of the local technical college claim, and are allowed, a hand in the selection of candidates for some courses on the grounds that the success of their contribution to training is largely dependent on their ability to judge the suitability of individuals for the more theoretical aspects of their course. The extent of this involvement of the LEA is illustrated by the fact that during the course of this study I was not able to establish with any certainty whether the Ashington Mining Training school was in fact owned by the NCB or by the Northumberland Education Authority and it took some time to become clear about which members of the teaching staff there were employed by the LEA and which were employed by the NCB. Most of the LEA staff involved in the scheme, although employed by Northumberland County Council, had at one time been employed in the mining industry.



The overall standards of training requirements are laid down by the Mining Qualifications Board which is a statutory body on which are represented the NCB, the various professional institutions, and the trade unions in the industry. This board vets training courses for all qualifications in mining ranging from low-skill routine operations to surveying, colliery management etc. In other words, no man may work in a mine without his training having been approved by the Mining Qualifications Board.

As mentioned above, the scope of the NCB's training policy matches the scope of its activities. In addition to getting and disposing of coal the Board's activities include various things such as the manufacture and marketing of bricks from waste products, and besides the peripheral industrial activities there is the administration of the extensive housing and farming estates which were taken over in the course of nationalisation in 1947.

Leaving aside what might be called extra-mining activities of the NCB it can be seen that there is a wide range of work directly related to the getting, marketing and transportation of coal. At the pit-head as well as underground there is a wide range of skills required for the repair, maintenance and operation of a large variety of industrial equipment and all levels of manual skill are represented. Also, the numbers of people involved are large in spite of closures, as shown by tables 1 and 2.

### Types of Mining Skills

The skill types required of mining workers can be put under three main headings; namely, mining skills, craft skills, and professional skills. This classification largely reflects the system of Industrial Relations

which exists in that the skills falling under the heading of Mining are actually those skills which are not regarded by Craft Unions as being subject to their regulation, and the Professional skills are non-manual and beyond the scope of the Craft Union regulation.

It is, however, useful to adopt this loose classification quite independent of the industrial relations factors in that it draws a meaningful distinction between the types of training requirements of various jobs in mining.

In the case of manual mining skills the levels of ability required vary. There are a large number of specific jobs which come under this heading ranging from those which require on the part of the incumbent a high level of initiative, knowledge, and experience, to those which only require a modest amount of skill and little or no initiative. For example, a man may be employed as a linesman, whose job involves routine operations related to the use of lines to ascertain the straightness of underground roads (or gates in the area's vernacular). He is responsible directly to a mine surveyor and makes periodic checks on datum points supplied by the surveyor by stretching strings along the length of the road and monitoring the extent of any distortion due to subsidence. This job demands a specific course of training but not a particularly high level of individual initiative. On the other hand a man may be employed as a shotfirer and this job demands a lot of experience and knowledge together with a high level of individual initiative, involving as it does, a heavy responsibility for safety as well as for economic operation of the face.

An indication of the seriousness with which the NCB treats the question of adequate training is the fact that for jobs such as gate end supervisor (usually a shotfirer), the incumbent must be qualified at least to the level of deputy. (A deputy is a supervisor who is responsible

either for a District or a roadway underground - a district is a separate face together with roads leading to and from it. A deputy in charge of a district is known as a district deputy and one in charge of one of the two associated roadways is called a Roadway Deputy.)

Because of the emphasis which is placed on training, a separate department exists within the NCB for the administration and planning of training facilities and methods.

Every colliery has its own training officer who also acts as the mine personnel officer and it is his responsibility to ensure that the training policy of the Board is carried out, and that each individual mine worker gets the training to which he is entitled. Partly because of the need for high standards of safety and partly because of the constant changes in technology within the industry, formal training is emphasised with regard to mature miners as well as young beginners, and as a man proceeds through his career in the mine he is trained for each new task that he may be required to do and for each new piece of equipment which he may have to use in the course of his work. In fact, promotion in the industry is generally conditional on the individual's ability to show that he has been properly trained to do the job for which he is applying in the way of promotion. Information relating to the level of ability of each miner is kept in his personal dossier which is held by his training officer and which follows him from colliery to colliery if he transfers. By this method training officers are theoretically able to form objective judgements of the suitability of individuals for particular tasks in the mine. In practice, of course, the judgements of his supervisors also carry a lot of weight when it comes to questions of promotion. The training policy of the NCB extends beyond the commitment to giving formal job training at the place of work and at technical colleges, and allows individuals to be released on a part time basis to attend technical college to study courses

which may not have immediate relevance to their own jobs in the pit. Also, this facility is not restricted to people within a specific age range. Indeed, during the period covered by the present study, the training officers of Northumberland's mines were attending a part-time day release course at Ashington Technical College which was not immediately related to their work.

Unlike the jobs which come under the heading of Mining manual skills, the craft jobs do not have the same degree of specificity to mining, although the craftsman underground does need to have a certain amount of experience in mining and to understand the principles of mining from the point of view of appreciating the potential hazards to safety which could be caused by the equipment for which he is responsible. The main feature, however, of the craft job in the mine, whether for surface work or for underground work, is that the individual who holds the job is trained in such a way that he could do similar work in other industries where similar equipment is used. Most of the skills which are controlled by craft unions are represented in the mine. Some examples of these are: electricians, mechanics, fitters, blacksmiths, bricklayers, carpenters and joiners, etc.

Many of the jobs which come under the heading of Professional skills are those which actually require qualifications of professional institutions. For example, a mine surveyor must have passed the Higher National Certificate examination in surveying. Some other jobs under this heading require qualifications which are more specific to the industry as in the case of the Colliery Manager's Certificate. The feature which separates them from the other two categories is the fact that they are non-manual and not subject to the regulation of craft unions, regardless of whether or not they are specific to mining.

The first group of skills (mining skills) are treated by the NCB as two distinct categories as reflected in the training courses leading to them.

Firstly there is the Mining Apprenticeship scheme which is an extended and integrated course of training which leads to a certain level of qualification, but not for a specific job.

Secondly there are the other courses of periodic training for various grades of workers. This type of course is not only given as an initial course of training for new entrants to the industry but is also given to update workers' knowledge of current techniques or to train them for promotion or transfer to other duties. This latter type of training is given where and when it is required and is not subject to a definite integrated sequence as in the case of the Mining Apprenticeship. Any mining industry worker may be required to attend training for some particular aspect of his job, or he may be offered the opportunity of attending some further education establishment on either day, or block-release.

Training for craft skills is given under the Craft Apprenticeship scheme, and many of the professional skills are acquired through the Student Apprenticeship scheme.

The details of the various apprenticeship schemes are described below.

#### The Mining Apprenticeship Scheme

This is the scheme which is of particular interest for this study because it is in this part of the NCB's training system that most of the difficulty is experienced from the point of view of maintaining recruitment and completion rates.

As already explained, the scheme was inaugurated in 1965 as a scheme for training young workers to become skilled coal face workers. As also explained above, there are a number of jobs underground which, whilst

not being skilled in the craft union sense, do require a thorough knowledge of the machinery which is used and the ability to work safely and competently in what is always a potentially dangerous situation. Apart from the particular knowledge required to carry out the tasks associated with specific jobs, it is essential that any underground worker must receive a basic training merely to enable him to move about underground without endangering his own life and possibly the lives of others. It is for this reason that in the Mining Apprenticeship course, as in all training courses for potential underground workers, the NCB insists on a definite minimum period of training and nobody is allowed to be alone underground without first having spent at least twenty days underground under the close personal supervision of either an instructor or an escort. Also, all people allowed to move underground without supervision must have been trained in the use of safety equipment and procedures for emergencies.

When these basic requirements of training were incorporated into the Mining Apprenticeship scheme in 1965 this was to be the only way by which school leavers would be allowed to proceed to face work. Older entrants to the industry (people who were over the age of eighteen) could be given the basic minimum training for working on the face.

It is mainly from amongst skilled miners that the Board attempts to recruit minor officials and supervisors. This is because it is necessary for anybody with authority underground to be face trained himself. Because the number of workers in the appropriate age range were becoming scarce in the industry for promotion to deputy and overman, it was seen that it was necessary to find some way of attracting school leavers into the industry to be trained as potential face workers and subsequently provide a supply of potential under-officials. So, on the basis of a dual necessity to train new entrants and to retain suitable young workers for future promotion, the Mining Apprenticeship scheme was introduced. The reasoning behind it

was based on the assumption that school-leavers would be attracted by the promise of being taught a skill. This assumption was made because of the popularity of the craft apprenticeship scheme, and the implied preference on the part of young workers for jobs where they would learn a trade.

Given similar wastage rates for the scheme as had been experienced in the Craft Apprenticeship scheme, the intake of Mining Apprentices would have been adequate to maintain a good supply of skilled men on the coal face.

As table (3) indicates, however, although the numbers of boys entering the scheme appeared to be adequate, the wastage rates since the scheme's inception have been so high that the Board is barely able to maintain sufficient strength.

The intended length of Mining Apprenticeship is three and a half years or less, but in practice the majority of Mining Apprentices do not complete their training within this time if they complete it at all. Rigid age limits are applied and apprenticeship must be completed by the time the apprentice reaches the age of twenty one. Because of the degree of flexibility in the length of time taken for Mining Apprenticeship, a boy may sign indentures up to the age of eighteen. Training, as in other schemes, is carried out according to a pre-determined programme and alternates periods of work at the boy's own colliery where his tasks are rotated and supervised, with periods of formal classroom and workshop instruction at the Mining Training School at Ashington. In the classroom at the training school some of the instruction is given by NCB staff and some by LEA staff. Apart from the basic instruction in the principles of safe working underground and the use of safety equipment (including first aid), Mining Apprentices are taught basic mathematics and elementary principles of engineering and coal mining. Also, whilst at the training school, boys are given games and P.T. periods. (A detailed outline of the Mining Apprenticeship Training

Programme is given in appendix 1.)

In the first stage of training (induction training) new Mining Apprentices are given certain tests including intelligence tests, and on the result of these tests are separated into three groups: A, B, C. Provision exists for four groups which would also include a group D. The boys are offered the opportunity of attending technical college on a block release basis for further education, but usually only if they score above a certain mark in the intelligence tests. Because of the NCB's obligation to make facilities for further education available to all apprentices up to the age of eighteen, those who are not given the opportunity to go to technical college are given further education at the Mining Training School where they are taught by LEA staff. This is with the exception of those boys who are not considered capable of benefitting from formal classroom education. Generally these boys score very badly in the tests which are given during induction training and in some cases are unable to read sufficiently well to be able to take advantage of further education. They are given, in order to satisfy the Coal Board's obligation to them, what the Board calls Project Training. For this they spend two weeks in the classroom at the training school where they are taught to read a map and a compass, and also something about the geology and history of their county, and then they go for a week to an expedition centre in Northumberland. During this week they are under the supervision of members of the Ashington Technical College staff and go out on map-reading exercises in the country, usually finishing their walks at some place of historical interest. In the evenings they draw pictures of some of the places they have visited or write essays about what they have done during the week.

The course which Mining Apprentices who go to college attend is the City and Guilds of London Institute pre-craft course which is common



to all craft courses. In 1970, of 25 boys who opted to go to Technical College, 6 continued to the end of the course.

Vacancies in the Mining Apprenticeship scheme are advertised, like those in the other NCB schemes, at collieries, in the press, and at Youth Employment Offices, and applications for Apprenticeships are made direct to the area headquarters at Ashington either by writing direct or by obtaining forms from the training officers at individual pits.

Unlike the other apprenticeship schemes selection is not by a committee but boys are interviewed by a single member of the industrial relations staff at Ashington, possibly with another member sitting in. As no previous qualifications are required, selection is based largely on the impression made by the boy on the person who is interviewing him, subject to his ability to read examples of notices that are shown to him. Such a notice may be worded 'Danger - High Tension - Keep Off' and printed in large red letters. All a boy needs to do is pass this test and to give some assurance that he intends to stay with the coal board at least until he has completed his apprenticeship. In practice, any boy who gives the appearance of being a 'good lad' at the interview is offered an apprenticeship.

The apprenticeship actually begins when there are sufficient boys to justify starting an induction course at the Mining Training School. Then, as near as possible to the apprentice's sixteenth birthday (underground visits are not allowed until the age of sixteen) he goes to the training school for his basic training. This is done when there are about forty or fifty boys old enough to begin basic training which includes some instruction in the underground training gallery at Ashington colliery. The induction course lasts for two weeks and the basic training lasts for twelve weeks - six underground and six in the training school.

Apprentices are not eligible for face training until they reach the age of eighteen, so if their age does not coincide with the schedule of training from the time when they start their apprenticeship the actual time before they begin face training may vary considerably. It is carried out at one of four central training collieries in Northumberland.

The apprenticeship is terminated with a forty day period of improvership when the apprentice works, if possible, at a pit of his own choice and then, on completion, a certificate of training is given to him to say that he is a skilled miner.

#### Craft Apprenticeship

This scheme exists to train apprentices in the various craft trades employed by the NCB. At present the trades which are covered by NCB Craft Apprentice training are: Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, and Turner-Machinist, and, when schemes are finally arranged, there will be provision for apprentice training for Blacksmiths, Platers and Welders.

The jobs which these apprentices are trained to do are maintaining coal-getting machines, conveyors, locomotives and winders at collieries and, at coal preparation plants, and maintaining the automatic coal washing equipment. At NCB workshops the work includes repairing and rebuilding mining equipment.

Vacancies in this scheme are advertised in the same way as those in the Mining Apprenticeship scheme and applications are accepted from boys who are already working in the industry as well as boys who are outside it. Whether a boy who is applying for a craft apprenticeship works in or outside the industry, his application is seen by the head of the Mining Department at Ashington Technical College and considered in conjunction with a

report or testimonial from his school headmaster. The vetting of applications for craft apprenticeships by the LEA staff is a comparatively recent practice, and the acceptance of recommendations for shortlists for interview from the Technical College staff is because of the need to assess the likelihood of a particular boy having the necessary ability to reach at least the level of C.G.L.I. Craft Certificate. This is a minimum recommended level of academic success for Craft Apprentices and it is on the C.G.L.I. course that they begin their further education, but boys who do well in the first stages of this course are encouraged to transfer to the National syllabus to study for Ordinary National Certificate. The apprentices who study for Ordinary National Certificate or the C.G.L.I. Technician's certificate are usually those who left school with some qualifications. This avoids to some extent the repeating of work done already whilst still at school, and still allows boys who left school without certificates to take on a realistic level of study.

Practical training is carried out at NCB training centres, including the Mining Training School at Ashington, as well as at Technical College. It follows a pre-determined programme and records are kept throughout the apprentice's training of his progress both at work and at college.

The length of the Craft apprenticeship is normally between three and four years and must be contained within strict age limits laid down by the craft unions. Only in exceptional circumstances can a boy begin a craft apprenticeship after he has reached the age of seventeen, and he must always complete it by the age of twenty one.

The selection committee for craft apprentices is composed of NCB representatives, a trade union representative, and a representative of the Local Education Authority.

No definite level of competence is stipulated before an apprentice

can be given a certificate of completion, but the NCB is, however, concerned to make sure that a craft apprentice does reach the highest level of skill that he is capable of.

The NCB craft apprenticeship is generally regarded as a very high standard of training and the boy who completes it is regarded as a skilled worker in his trade. Mainly for this reason an NCB craft apprenticeship is highly sought after by school leavers in the Northumberland coal field area who wish to become skilled workers. Its popularity is reflected in the high number of applicants for vacancies in the scheme.

This apprenticeship has the characteristics of a true apprenticeship. It is insisted upon by the craft unions as a precondition for doing craftsman's work in the coal mining industry and as far as the unions are concerned the only definite specifications are in respect of age limits and length of training, but not content. In this respect it is, from the union's point of view, a time-serving process and no test of competence is insisted upon by them. Whilst the unions do not in practice limit the number of boys taken on as craft apprentices they reserve the right to do so.

#### Student Apprenticeship

This is taken to include the Student Apprenticeship schemes in Mining, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, in addition to National Apprenticeship schemes for Mining Surveyors and Engineering Draughtsmen. These schemes represent the highest level of training carried out by the National Coal Board and are designed to provide the industry with an adequate supply of trained engineers, surveyors and draughtsmen, and the people engaged in them are expected to progress through the various levels of management and technical posts in the industry.

The Student Apprenticeship Scheme is open to boys up to the age

of eighteen, but in exceptional circumstances boys may begin their apprenticeship at higher ages than eighteen. Indentures are signed by the apprentices and their parents and a certificate of training is given to them on completion of the apprenticeship. The technical education level of these schemes is to Ordinary National level and then apprentices may either follow a three year sandwich course leading to National Diploma or a two year part-time course leading to Higher National Certificate. In some cases scholarships are awarded to apprentices to study for a C.N.A.A. degree.

In the case of the National Apprenticeship schemes for Mining Surveyors and Engineering Draughtsmen, the level of technical education required to be reached by apprentices is Ordinary National Certificate level for draughtsmen and Higher National Certificate for Mining Surveyors.

The length of these apprenticeships is usually about five years (including a six-months probationary period), or longer if necessary to complete training, except in the case of the Engineering Draughtsman apprenticeship which must be completed by the time the apprentice reaches the age of twenty one. The course of training follows a stipulated pattern and includes periods spent in a variety of different departments within the Board. This is in order that Student Apprentices should be familiar with the various problems and responsibilities of these departments; an aspect of their training considered to be especially important in view of the possibility of their rising up through the different levels of management within the industry.

Of the Student Apprenticeships, the one which does seem to have the characteristics of a true apprenticeship in the craft sense is the Engineering Draughtsman scheme which is subject to regulations laid down by agreement with the Draughtsman's and Allied Technicians' Association

and is subject to a definite age restriction. The status of the other schemes is ambiguous, and it appears that they are schemes of training instigated by the NCB to their own specifications, although some agreement exists between the various trades unions and the Board regarding their administration and content. All of them have standards of competence which must be attained by apprentices, and any apprenticeship under these schemes can be terminated at any stage by the Board if the apprentice fails to maintain a sufficiently high standard of technical and academic progress. In this respect the Board will only allow one examination failure during the whole period of training (not at each level).

The numbers of boys recruited to the Student Apprenticeship schemes is very small in relation to the overall number of young people recruited into the industry, and in the student apprenticeship schemes at any one time the number of apprentices in the Northumberland area is in the 30's. For this scheme a candidate is not considered suitable unless he is judged to be at least C.N.A.A. or H.N.D. material. Vacancies in these schemes are advertised in the press, at Youth Employment Offices and on Colliery notice boards and anybody with the necessary educational standard is eligible to apply for an apprenticeship. Sometimes boys are taken from the craft apprenticeship scheme if they do very well at the G2 level at Technical College, but they compete equally with outsiders for vacancies on the schemes. It is with a great deal of caution that boys are transferred to the Student Apprenticeship schemes from the Craft Apprenticeship scheme because it is felt by the Board that although some boys may have the necessary academic ability, they may not have the necessary ambition to successfully follow the course through. Between 1965 and 1969 three craft apprentices out of 1167 went on to student apprenticeships. It would appear that the methods of selection for these schemes are fairly efficient in view of the fact that only half a dozen or so have failed to complete their training. This may

be compared with the figures given by Williams referring to failure rates at technical colleges, and the suitability of course choices (Williams, 1957).

Referring to the City and Guilds of London Examinations, she points out that although the number of passes at final level is about 60-65 per cent there is no way of knowing how many boys fail to get as far as taking the examination. She refers specifically (p.165) to one college which she studied having one group (Motor Vehicle Work) of 33 boys who showed much better results than boys on other courses. This group had an initial intake of 33 and 30 went on to do the second year course. Eighteen passed this and proceeded to the third year and 12 gained Intermediate City and Guilds. She contrasts this (p.167) with a group of boys learning Hand Composition. '106 began the course, of whom 16 ultimately passed Intermediate City and Guilds'. In this section Williams compares several groups of Technical College Students studying a wide range of different subjects. Of course, reasons for variations in performance in courses may be numerous (e.g. quality of teachers and facilities) but it is clearly obvious that much is to be gained by boys' sights not being set too high - either by themselves or by their employers.

Candidates for student apprenticeships are selected by committees consisting of representatives of the NCB, the trade unions, and the Local Education Authority.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROBLEM OF WASTAGE

When the National Coal Board came into existence in 1947 it set up an Operational Research Executive. The function of this department was to apply the techniques developed during the war for identifying operational problems (in advance if possible) and seeking out optimal solutions to them. The range of problems with which the executive concerns itself is wide and takes in such things as long-term market strategies, world-wide availability of resources, as well as seeking optimal distribution and storage systems etc., and constantly reviews and assesses the effectiveness of existing operations. One of the things with which it concerns itself is planning of future manpower requirements. The Manpower planning takes into account predictions about productive expectancy of mines in the area, demand for various coal products, natural wastage of manpower due to retirement, etc., and attempts to arrive at recruitment figures such that fully trained labour becomes available in the right quantity at the right time.

The recruitment policy includes a preference for juvenile labour straight from school over 'green' adult labour. The main reason for this is that it should be possible to train school-leavers in the whole gamut of mining work so that as they reach the required age they should provide a supply of suitable material for promotion to supervisory jobs. These jobs, such as overman, deputy, shotfirer, etc., are ones which carry a heavy responsibility for safety as well as problems of maintaining production in sometimes difficult, and always unpredictable circumstances and require of their incumbents a high standard of training and as full a knowledge as possible of the different aspects of mine work.



When the Mining Apprenticeship scheme was started in 1965 with the object of meeting this need for a continuous supply of trained workers, the Board hoped, by basing recruitment figures on projected manpower needs, to do away with the need to recruit adult labour. The wastage referred to above has dogged the scheme and the problem is expected to become increasingly acute if only because of the shortage of people suitable for promotion to supervisory jobs.

From the point of view of the Board these wastage figures have various implications apart from the one referred to above of planning for a flow of supervisory workers. The main financial implication of these figures is that a high proportion of expenditure on training face workers represents a dead-loss in that a high proportion of the skill provided is not put to productive use within the industry. This means that the unit cost of training skilled face workers is inflated and in the process the Board may be said to be carrying part of the training burden of outside companies at best, and at worst, by virtue of the non-transferability of Mining Apprentices' skills to the jobs they typically go to, the wastage represents an absolute waste of training resources by the community. In the case of boys who drop out of the scheme but stay in the industry to do unskilled jobs, it means that their training has been unnecessarily expensive. On this point though the general feeling of people concerned with the administration of the scheme was that training in excess of the skill requirements of a particular job in the pit was not wasted as much of it had direct bearing on the safe working of the mine and therefore a more reliable and competent 'unskilled' workforce.

There are also implications for the scheme itself in that wastage may cause some feedback which compounds the difficulties. An example of this is the necessity for building projected wastage figures into manning

requirement forecasts. If through a chronic wastage problem it is necessary to recruit members in excess of those actually expected to complete training, bottlenecks may occur in the scheme where, for example, apprentices are due to commence face training. These bottlenecks may in turn aggravate the wastage problem and thereby contribute to a vicious circle situation. The importance of this is suggested by the belief expressed by some apprentices spoken to in the course of the study (both inside and outside the scheme) that the Board uses Mining Apprentices as cheap labour. This belief was justified in the minds of some of the boys who held it by reference to the fact that they were employed on a variety of tasks where they had been led to expect that they would be at a more advanced stage in their training by that time. A number of people associated with the scheme expressed the view that bottleneck problems were exacerbated by the agreement that face workers transferred from other collieries should be guaranteed a wage equivalent to 90 per cent of their previous earnings for a certain period. This meant that when face workers were transferred from other pits where they had been made redundant they were put onto face work straight away in preference to Mining Apprentices who felt that they themselves should have progressed to that work.

It was felt by some people associated with the scheme that wastage problems were further aggravated by short-term palliative measures such as employing green adult labour. This was seen as making long-term problems of manpower planning more difficult, and at least one document written by a member of the Board's management expressed the view that Mining Apprentice recruitment should be based on the principle of need (and manpower projections) rather than block recruitment. This would mean that continuous recruitment would take place throughout the year instead of only during the summer and thereby some of the bottleneck problems would be avoided.

Perhaps more far-reaching and important than the implications for the Board from the point of view of financial and planning problems, are the implications of wastage for the Mining Apprentices themselves. For them it means that up to the point at which they leave the scheme they have been unsuccessful in securing a job which has offered what they were looking for. Indeed, it will be argued at a later point, for many of them the point of leaving the scheme marks the point at which they finally acknowledge failure to establish themselves on their chosen course through life.

#### The Reaction of the NCB to Wastage in the Scheme

The reaction of the Board to wastage difficulties with the scheme has mostly been one of surprise because, given certain assumptions about the aims and ambitions of school-leavers, the scheme offered a considerable addition to the range of jobs available to the boy leaving school. Apprenticeships are very popular among school-leavers and here the NCB was offering an apprenticeship involving a very high level of training. No expense was to be spared in training skilled miners and the career opportunities were not inconsiderable, offering as the scheme did, preferential promotion prospects to successful apprentices. Not only has promotion to the rank of deputy traditionally been accompanied by high status in the mining industry but the faceworker has also traditionally enjoyed relatively high status in the industry. To achieve the rank of deputy the ex-mining apprentice would have to demonstrate a certain level of personal competence for the job and therefore promotion was not guaranteed, but progress to becoming a face worker was guaranteed on completion of the apprenticeship. The assumption that the opportunities open to the ex-Mining Apprentices reflected the real ambitions of mine workers is clearly evident in the NCB's reasoning in instituting the Mining Apprenticeship scheme. This also leads to the assumption that the scheme would attract school-leavers and that, once engaged in

the scheme, apprentices would be strongly motivated to see the apprenticeship through to a successful conclusion.

It was evident from conversations during the course of the study with adult workers in the industry who were not directly concerned with the scheme that the same assumptions and beliefs were quite widely held. Where these adult workers were not aware of the failures of the scheme they tended to talk very enthusiastically about it as offering a means of satisfying ambitions which they themselves presumably held. Where adult workers knew about the wastage problems they expressed surprise. Of course the number of adult workers spoken to about the scheme by no means constitutes an extensive sample, but the general impression gained from older workers in the industry was that to become a face worker is a respectable achievement meaning, as it does, membership of the highest income group of non-craft mining workers (excluding 'professional' grades). In fact, one can mix quite extensively with mineworkers and talk generally about status systems in the mine without the 'elite worker' view of the face worker being seriously challenged. Similarly with deputies. Whilst many people who were spoken to (including Mining and Craft apprentices) were ready to make disparaging remarks about deputies as a class, they responded with discernable pride when asked about any relatives or friends who were deputies. This, of course, is not hard to understand if the two apparently conflicting attitudes are seen on the one hand in the context of the inherent management/shop-floor conflict and, on the other hand, as formal acknowledgment of an individual's success in a recognised hierarchy.

The point which I would wish to make here is that the assumptions about school-leavers' aspirations being similar to those of adult workers in the industry formed the basis of justification for introducing the Mining Apprenticeship scheme as the main vehicle for recruitment to skilled mining

jobs. Also (a point which will be expanded below), that failure of the scheme has been seen primarily by the Board, as due to its internal imperfections rather than being due to the weakness of the basic assumptions underpinning it.

### The Status of the Face Worker

Before going on to describe the way in which the NCB has sought to explain Mining Apprentice wastage it is worth pausing to consider the question which is raised by questioning the basic assumptions in the Board's training philosophy with regard to aspirations on the part of individuals to face worker and supervisory status. The question is, if the view of the mining career structure mentioned above is apparently held by established workers in the industry, are there reasonable grounds for supposing that the same should not be true for school-leavers? In other words, what exactly is the status of the face worker, and how widely held is the belief that it is high?

In the past, when miners were highly paid workers and the extent of mechanisation in the mine was less extensive than it is today, it may be reasonable to suppose that the face worker who earned good piece rates might have been highly regarded by at least some sections of the mining community. Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter (1956) refer to the standing that an individual had amongst miners in the days when earnings were closely related to individual output and physical ability. They, however, were writing in the 1950's and subsequent developments in the industry have largely removed the opportunity for one individual face worker to earn substantially more than his fellows.<sup>1</sup>

A danger which must be avoided when considering the status of individuals in the mining community is that of jumping to conclusions based

on such things as standards of personal excellence as based on the notion of an absolute scale of morality, and vague notions such as the dignity of human labour. A somewhat extreme expression of this 'romantic' interpretation of status in the mining industry is given by Zweig in Men in the Pits (1949). Most certainly there is some evidence that a certain respect is afforded to the man who has a reputation for working hard and supporting his family at a high standard of living in a community where there are few alternative ways of succeeding in life, and there is much to suggest that such a virtue is indeed incorporated into the morality of the mining community. This sort of thing, however, can only be properly understood if looked at in a historical perspective. There are many people in the Northumberland coal field, who are not terribly old, for whom early experience of married life in the mining community was one of a harsh struggle for bare economic survival. The vernacular itself, in some ways, hints at this. For example, a miner's wife who is late middle aged or elderly commonly refers to her husband as her 'man'. She might say 'Widow so-and-so had a good man'. In the same way a miner may have a 'good lass' (wife). This is suggestive of (and borne out by conversation with elderly people in the community) a relationship in marriage where each partner's excellence is measured in terms of his or her positive contribution to the success of the family as an economic as well as domestic team. A man was 'good' to his wife if he worked hard because that meant a degree of economic certainty, and a woman was 'good' to her husband if she made good use of the money he earned and made sure that he returned from work to a meal and a bath. The point here is to emphasise that the individual miner's status in the community is most fully understood in terms of his ability to succeed in down to earth economic terms rather than as a heroic and dignified toiler. To the extent that heroism survives in mining community culture it is probably confined to achievement in such pursuits as leek-growing, pigeon racing, lurcher breeding,

etc. Important as these activities are in the area, they again are probably most clearly understood in their historic context of offering ways for the individual to demonstrate his superiority over his neighbours in a situation where everybody does similar work and opportunities for economic achievement are limited.

#### Face Worker Status and School-Leavers' Aspirations

The problem we are faced with here is that of defining the status of the face worker as a factor which influences the career decisions of school-leavers and to this end it is useful to make the distinction for analytical purposes between the economically determined status situation and status derived from 'every typical component of the life of men that is determined by specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honour' (Bendix and Lipset, 1954, p.68). In other words, it is argued, a discrepancy exists between the assessment of the desirability of the face worker's job as implied by the actions of the NCB and older mineworkers, and as implied by the actions of school-leavers, and this discrepancy is most realistically explained in terms of the economic aspects of the job.

I do not wish to explain away the existence of status hierarchies in mining communities which are based on non-economic factors but merely logically to abstract an 'economic' hierarchy. 'Economic' in this context is taken to include not only level of earnings, which may be temporary, but also such factors as long-term security. For instance, the choice of a job which offers a lower level of income but a good long-term security may be seen as an economic choice.

I would wish to refer to the fact that a plurality of status hierarchies exist and that an individual may simultaneously subscribe to more than one set of possibly contradictory criteria. For example, an

individual may subscribe to the idea that the face worker's job is a high status job whilst not seeing it as a suitable job for himself.

Also, it is fair to suppose, the individual's own ambitions will change according to his circumstances. Each achievement or failure in the employment hierarchy will determine the feasibility of previously held aspirations and may act as a reinforcing factor or cause him to review his ambitions and aim his sights either higher or lower than previously. This would account for the fact that young adult workers in the non-craft trades praised the Mining Apprenticeship scheme whilst admitting that their own aspirations as school-leavers had been to become craftsmen. In a long conversation with one such boy (aged  $18\frac{1}{2}$ ) he described how he had been a Mining Apprentice but had left when he realised that it wasn't going to serve him as a 'back way' into the Craft Apprenticeship scheme. He had altered his ambition to that of becoming a soldier but had found that he couldn't stay off probation long enough to get into the army and went working as a labourer in the construction industry where he said he was able to earn £40 a week some weeks. Becoming disillusioned with the rigours of life in the construction industry he had gone back to the NCB to work underground and seriously regretted not having completed his Mining apprenticeship. He had finally come round to seeing the job of face worker as a highly desirable one. Of the actual Mining Apprentices met in the course of the study (excluding the main sample who were all first years) there seemed to be two main groups: those who still interpreted the job market in terms of craft status being the lowest that was desirable, and those who had previously thought nothing of the prospect of becoming a face worker but had rearranged their scales of values to put such a job at a high level. One boy who had drastically altered his view of the prospects offered by the industry chatted at length about his own career. He was not in the first year sample but was aged twenty, and a third year



Mining Apprentice. One year previously he had been involved in the setting up of his colliery Youth Involvement Club and had himself organised the setting up of the Club Committee. Apart from playing for the colliery football team his activities included taking children from the local orphanage to the pantomime. He had worked at various jobs including long distance furniture removals before finally joining the Mining Apprenticeship scheme. (His training Officer, after finding out about this conversation, said that for the first year of his apprenticeship he had been 'impudent and unhelpful'.) This boy now said that he eventually hoped for a managerial job and praised the Mining Apprenticeship scheme highly for offering opportunities for boys with 'different kinds of ability'.

Reference group theory and the theory of Relative Deprivation offer a useful way of explaining these shifts in aspirations and the discrepancy between older workers' valuation of the face worker's job and the school-leavers'.<sup>2</sup>

#### Relative Deprivation and Mechanisation

There have been very substantial changes in the relative numbers of craft and non-craft workers in the industry over two generations. Figures were not available from NCB records to show how the actual proportions compare, but the changes have undoubtedly been very extensive. With the introduction of mechanisation of the industry in the 1950's the process has been one of shedding non-craft labour to a very large extent and employing greatly increased numbers of craftsmen to service and repair the machinery.

The older workers who now speak highly of the prospects offered by the Mining Apprenticeship scheme will have grown up and entered the industry at a time when craft workers in the mine were comparatively rare.

The picture that emerges from reminiscences of older workers is one where craftsmen were the elite few and the vast majority of mineworkers were 'unskilled' manual workers. The main avenue for acquiring status for these workers was to perform well as a face worker and earn above average wages. Legend in Ashington is that the area's Mechanics' Institutes in pre-war days were extremely close elitist clubs and indeed, much of the educational facilities which they were responsible for providing in the early part of this century were aimed at giving the children of craftsmen the sort of education which would enable them to follow their fathers into craft jobs.<sup>3</sup>

Even the non-craft workers had their own ways of keeping competition at bay and nepotism often played quite a considerable part in an individual's becoming a face worker. Also, for most boys leaving school in mining communities, the very question of career 'choice' was an academic one. Amongst miners who are still well below retiring age statements such as the following from an instructor at the Mining Training School are not unusual:

'When we were lads there was no option but to go into the pit. We were all friends together and we knew we would go into the pit. When I was a lad my father was expected to take me along to the pit when I left school and if he didn't he would lose his job and we might have lost the house. I didn't dare to try to say to my father that I didn't want to work in the pit. He made damn sure I worked hard and was at work on time because if I was a bad lad the manager would send for me and I knew that if he sent for me I was losing my job, and my father would come home and wonder what was going to happen to him. My father was really employing me because if he took me into his working it meant that he was entitled to double tub allowance.<sup>4</sup> Even if I didn't get any coal he would still earn more and that was how he was employing me'.

What this sort of story indicates is that for the older generations of miners an individual's reference group in respect of forming career aspirations would have been the ordinary 'unskilled' miners. Realistic comparisons of achievement could be made within this group and in terms of these

comparisons the attainment of face worker status could be deemed a considerable personal achievement. Craft workers were in a minority and were in any case organised to maintain their elite position and therefore their inclusion in the average school-leavers' reference group would have been unrealistic. Simply stated, the majority of school-leavers would compare their lot with other boys with the same sort of background and aspirations to craft status would not have been feasible for the most part. This group would have been like the Military Police Corps in the 'American Soldier' study in that promotion was slow and therefore frequency of relative deprivation was low.

For school-leavers in 1970, however, the position is different. With the greater demand for craft workers in the mine there is obviously a comparably greater demand for young recruits into the Craft Apprenticeship scheme. This means that craft apprentices are not recruited from a very small minority of families but comprise a significant part of the school-leavers in any one year. The effect of this from the point of view of reference groups is that any boy's friends may become craft apprentices and therefore at the point of leaving school the individual's career reference group may well include craft workers and aspiration to craft status does not appear unrealistic. Therefore, like the Air Corps members in the 'American Soldier' study relative deprivation may be frequent when individuals fail to get craft apprenticeships.

So then, it can be seen that the apparently contradictory views of school-leavers and established mineworkers are quite understandable in terms of relative deprivation.

The question of the importance of craft workers in the individual's reference group may be left to a later point where it will be fully explained.

Another factor which is relevant to the status of the face worker is one which is commonly acknowledged among older workers, but for which no awareness could be detected among the first year Mining Apprentices who were the subject of this study. This factor is the way the mineworker starts at the bottom in terms of earnings, works his way up to high earnings at the coal face and then, when he gets too old to keep up the pace, reverts to datal work which is relatively lowly paid.

CHAPTER 3

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS BY THE NCB  
AT EXPLAINING WASTAGE IN THE SCHEME

Reference has been made above to the effects of certain internal features of the Mining Apprenticeship scheme on wastage: features such as the feedback effect of guaranteed wages for displaced face workers, palliative measures such as employing green adult labour, etc. As also mentioned above the Board has attempted to explain wastage entirely by referring to factors operating within the industry and various recommendations have been made on the strength of these explanations. On the whole, the NCB's attempts to right the situation have been restricted to tinkering with the scheme without making any fundamental changes to it, or questioning the basic assumptions underlying its existence. As explained above, the main assumption that school-leavers might typically aspire to face worker status and, in this connection, wastage was a result of the scheme not fulfilling its promise of giving this status on schedule.

There is, of course, an element of truth in the statement that wastage is affected by internal factors. Boys do in some cases acquire ambitions to become face workers, but what is problematical is the stage in the apprenticeship (before or during) at which this becomes a basis for action, and to what extent it becomes a dominant ambition. The following extracts from NCB paper AMO/P (69)6 show some of the findings of a study of the reactions of boys to internal features of the scheme.

- '4. An analysis of over 7,000 jobs which the apprentices had done since commencing at the pit shows that 49% liked the jobs they had been given to do 33% did not mind and 18% disliked them.
  
- '21. It is, perhaps to be expected that there would be differences in the attitudes of the juveniles and old boys: the younger boys would be looking more to the jobs they could be doing during planned job rotation while the older boys would also be looking towards the end of their apprenticeship, and after. A quarter of the boys, aged 18 and over, wanted the chance of doing their face training and/or face work.

- \*31. Three quarters of the boys were opposed to change either because they thought they "should be allowed to stay on job liked" or because of their "dislike of constant disturbance, after settling into job", 11% of the juveniles complained that they were taken off job before becoming competent and 9% of all boys thought there were too many boring jobs.
- \*33. The table shows that almost a quarter of leavers were in four jobs which appeared among the top six jobs disliked. Stone dust spreading 10.3%, transfer point attendant 9.3%, coal preparation plant 2.1% and screens/picking belt 1.0%.
- \*43. 86% said they liked doing different jobs and of the 11% who did not like job rotation, three quarters wanted to stay on the job they liked, and disliked constant disturbance.
- \*46. The period spent on a job does not seem to affect satisfaction adversely which suggests perhaps, the early attainment and capture of jobs they would like to do, successful integration into the work group, adaptation to the working environment or simply, a dislike of change. Some boys like to stay in the job they are doing because they don't know what the next job is going to be like. Other boys like to keep changing because no matter how much the present job is liked at least they know how long to go.\*

No firm conclusions appear to have been reached concerning the overall suitability of the scheme from the point of view of the boys. Some of the points were borne out in the course of the present study and in particular that referred to in para.21. On the whole, though, the impression gained from the boys was that the various aspects disliked were not sufficient to affect fundamentally their decision to complete or discontinue their training.

A point which may be referred to here is that made by W.W. Daniel (1969) that there is an important distinction to be made between satisfaction in a job and satisfaction with a job. In other words an individual boy may be satisfied with the work he is doing but may also be dissatisfied with the fact that he is doing it from the long term point of view. Similarly a boy may detest the work he is given to do as an apprentice although he values the end result of doing it. If this distinction alone is accepted it follows that explanations of success or otherwise of a training scheme

are unlikely to be found by concentrating on internal features of the scheme. In para. 21 of the extract the reference to older boys looking towards the end of their apprenticeship, together with references above to bottleneck problems may be seen to be relevant to the end result of the scheme - whether it fulfills its promise - and not to internal factors. Some idea may be gained by a study of the type quoted above of the relative strength of factors likely to push boys out of the scheme, but factors pulling them out of it can only be guessed at.

That unintentional consequences of the overall manpower policies of the Board could have some effect on the attitudes and beliefs of workers in the industry - beliefs which could have some influence on the success or otherwise of the scheme - was recognised partly by some individual personnel concerned with the scheme. The tendency appeared, though, to be towards explaining away those beliefs and attitudes which were not apparently rational. It was apparent during the study that beliefs may be held which, even though not necessarily based on fact, do have some influence and should be recognised. For example, one such belief is that held by many boys that being a Mining Apprentice puts one in a preferential position when it comes to obtaining a craft apprenticeship. This belief was given by some boys in the sample as being the main reason for joining the scheme and was based largely on advice received from relatives and friends in the industry. It was also expressed by some school-leavers in the area. It would appear though that in reality the opposite may be the case and that a boy may jeopardise his chances of a craft apprenticeship once he becomes a mining apprentice. At best, there may be some advantages to be gained by being inside the industry from the point of view of access to information about craft apprenticeship opportunities. In view of the part played by the LEA staff in selecting craft apprentices it is likely that all candidates are assessed largely on their personal merits - i.e. ability, performance at school, etc. (This point will be referred to at length

below when considering the decisions necessary on the part of school leavers.) Other such ill-founded beliefs were revealed by boys in the course of the study and it was apparent that their importance was greater than the NCB personnel wished to recognise.

It was apparent that more could be said about wastage in the scheme if a longer-perspective view was taken of it. It had to be seen in the context of the total job situation in the area and this in turn had to be seen as a particular case in the context of the national job situation.

By seeing the scheme as an isolated entity no answer was offered as to why mining apprentices enter the industry and the scheme in the first place except in terms of arbitrary assumptions about their aspirations. Nothing was really found about how the scheme compared with alternatives, i.e. Where does it sit in the spectrum of desirability as perceived by school leavers?

Do boys choose it as a desirable opportunity or do they apply 'by default' or for misguided reasons?

In other words, what comes before and what is expected to come afterwards?

The scheme is not explained in internal terms as a transitional period between choice and goal which is what, essentially, any period of training must be seen as.

Seeing a course of this type as a vehicle moving towards a destination, there are certain questions we may ask about it and about people who embark on it, with regard to the destination and particular choice of vehicle.

If an individual sets out on a course of action he may:

- (1) have a definite objective; or,
- (2) have no definite objective.



The objective cannot be assumed from the course of action because he may have a definite objective but choose an inappropriate course of action. In the case of the Mining Apprentice he may have a definite ambition but the Mining Apprenticeship may be appropriate to that ambition, inappropriate (less than best), or irrelevant. Also, his ambition may change during the course of training with the result that an appropriate course of action has become inappropriate, or vice versa. If an individual abandons a course of action it may be:

- (a) the course of action was appropriate to the objective but has become intolerable; or,
- (b) he has changed his objective; or,
- (c) he has found the course of action to be inappropriate for the objective he still holds; or,
- (d) the course of action was not related to any definite objective (he has failed to choose); or,
- (e) the course of action was an end in itself.

On the whole, the NCB's attempts to explain wastage have been restricted to the possibilities expressed in (1) and (a) - i.e. that the Mining Apprentices who leave had the objective that was appropriate to the course of action taken in entering the scheme but it had become intolerable in itself.

The questions asked in this study have taken regard of the other possibilities outlined.

CHAPTER 4

THE STUDY

The main part of the fieldwork consisted of a study of 46 young boys entering the Mining Apprenticeship scheme from the point of view of explaining wastage in terms of factors which were seen to be relevant. By seeking to find the answer to a specific problem of wastage in this scheme it has been possible to identify the more important factors and to assess the relevant importance of them not only for the mining apprentice but also for other boys leaving school and seeking work in the area. Although some of the factors are general ones in that they bear on problems of job choice and the transition from school to work for children throughout British society, the study is essentially a local one, concentrated on the South East Northumberland coal field. Where reference is made to wider, more general aspects of the problem, it is from the point of view of assessing their significance for boys in the particular area covered by the study. For example, where some generalisations are made about the work of the Youth Employment Service, and the observations of authors writing about different parts of the country are referred to, the main reason for looking at them is their relevance to the boys in the study. Also, the institution of apprenticeship has ramifications and significance on a national scale and is an important feature of the system of industrial relations in Britain, but over and above this, it has a particular relevance for boys in any one part of the country and its importance must also be seen in the light of the boys' own perception of it and their response to its existence.

In addition to looking at institutions affecting the decisions and opportunities of mining apprentices, the views and opinions of people outside the scheme were sought and one such group of people were 126 boys

in the 4th year at schools which were typical of those previously attended by the mining apprentices.

The study was carried out during the year 1970-71 with the co-operation of the Northumberland area of the National Coal Board and in the course of it the progress of 46 mining apprentices was observed in detail through their first year in the scheme from the date of their commencing induction training. These 46 boys were selected on the basis of their forming the bulk of the summer intake (1970) and were the whole of two consecutive groups of induction trainees at the Ashington Mining Training School. Ashington Mining Training school is the centre of training in the Northumberland area and with the exception of some periods during training which are spent at the Mining Apprentices' own pits, and, in the case of some boys, at Ashington Technical College, the entire course of formal training is carried out there.

There were alternative ways in which the sample could have been selected and they could, for example, have been selected on a random basis from boys at various stages in their apprenticeships with different amounts of experience of the scheme and making available the views of boys of different ages. It was felt, however, that the sample taken would be the most useful one. Reference to the records kept by the Board showed that the boys in the scheme came almost without exception from a very limited number of mining communities and had previously attended the same schools in the area (these were nearly all secondary modern schools), and in terms of home location and educational background the 46 boys were quite typical. Insofar as the study was taking wastage in the Mining Apprenticeship scheme as a focal point, the fact that a significant proportion of it happens during the first year of apprenticeship meant that a sample based on any other criteria may have included an unduly large proportion of boys who were not likely to leave the scheme. In other words a sample including,

say, third year apprentices, would have already lost most of its potential leavers. Another important consideration was that it was anticipated that reference would have to be made to institutions and people outside the scheme and limited resources dictated that the sample should be kept to a manageable size if any meaningful conclusions were to be drawn on the basis of a thorough study of the boys in the sample.

Contact was maintained with the boys by means of a series of questionnaires and interviews starting in their first week of induction training and continuing throughout their first full year in the scheme (more precise details of questionnaires etc., are given in Appendix). Every effort was made to avoid being identified with the Board's management and judging by the way most of the boys opened up on some questions during the study it is likely that the views they expressed were their own and were not the views which they felt the people in charge of the scheme would think ought to be expressed. Throughout the year the NCB officials gave every facility for visiting boys engaged on their various tasks and for talking to them at length about their work and what they thought about it. Also it was not difficult to find adult mineworkers who were willing to talk about the industry in general and scheme in particular. This also applied to members of management and the training officers at the various pits as well as those at the Mining Training School who were willing to talk candidly about the future prospects and methods of training of mining apprentices. Other useful impressions of the scheme were given by Ashington LEA staff concerned with the scheme. Outside the scheme impressions of it and its place in the juvenile job market were obtained from Youth Employment Officers in the South East Northumberland area as well as some school careers masters.

The schoolboys mentioned above were asked to answer questions in connexion with a survey of school-leavers' aspirations and were not given any indication that the study was in any way concerned with the mining industry. In this way it was felt that any views they expressed concerning the industry were spontaneous and were not influenced by any desire to give 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

A study of this scope, whilst being concerned with a particular local problem both in terms of geographical location and in terms of the specificity of the group of actors to be studied, must make reference to other, wider, areas of study. These, broadly speaking, are of three sorts. There is the process of childhood development by which a child acquires his predisposition towards certain perceived career possibilities, the process by which he translates his career predisposition into action after leaving school, and the job market itself into which he enters. The available knowledge concerning these elements is, for this study, taken as given except where it has been necessary to test its validity and relevance for the particular circumstances and for the people involved.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT SORT OF BOYS ENTER THE SCHEME?

An examination of the records kept by the NCB concerning new entrants to the industry showed that the towns from which boys were recruited were limited in number. These towns were, except in the case of an extremely limited number of individual recruits, mining communities or towns where the predominant industry is mining. Some people had entered the industry in the past from communities which used to be dependant upon mining as the chief source of employment but where this had ended, so had recruitment from those towns and villages. An example of a location drying up both as a source of new entrants to the industry and as a place of mining work is Wallsend. With the closure of the Rising Sun colliery there were a number of miners transferred to other collieries but recruitment of new labour to the industry from Wallsend ceased to all intents and purposes. Another such example is the Wideopen area on the edge of the North Newcastle suburbs. Up to the time of closures of pits in that vicinity there had been no particular difficulty in recruiting new labour to the industry in the face of competition from other employers in the greater Tyneside area.

So then, contraction of the industry has been matched by a corresponding contraction in the number of localities from which new labour is recruited. This is shown by the fact that NCB records cease to contain details of boys from particular communities after closure of pits near those communities.

The conclusion that most immediately springs to mind is that recruitment to mining is based on people entering the world of work at the nearest pit to home and when the home pit closes more distant pits are not seen as prospective workplaces. This, however, is not borne out

by examination of which pits new entrants choose to work at. The NCB operates a special bus service in the coalfield which is timed to coincide with the Board's shift-working system and a large number of miners travel quite considerable distances to work. Of course some of the long journeys to work by miners can be explained by the fact that they have been made redundant at their home pit and have to move further afield to other pits. For the boys in the sample, though, the average journey to work was several miles and a significant number had chosen to work at pits which involved journeys taking them past pits which were nearer to their homes. This may be compared with the typical case (according to some Youth Employment Offices) where a boy strongly resists working outside his own town or community. An instance is a boy in Whitley Bay who had a strong desire to do agricultural work but would not travel outside the town.

The home communities of the boys in the sample are representative of those which currently provide sources of new entrants.

The NCB's records show also that boys entering the Mining Apprenticeship scheme typically come from Secondary Modern Schools. In the sample one boy had attended grammar school and this meant that grammar school boys were over-represented in the sample because, on the whole, grammar school entrants to the scheme represented less than 1 per cent. The proportion of special school boys in the sample was typical for the period since the scheme began in 1965. Table 4 shows the actual schools attended by the boys in the sample.

The one boy who went to a grammar school is the boy who is referred to as not wanting to work at the local pit on page 69. He had obtained no certificates at school and had spent  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years working as a labourer for a number of building contractors before entering the scheme.

Table 4

	No. of boys
Amble County Secondary (Navy)	1
Newbiggin County Secondary	9
Bebside County Secondary	3
Princess Louise Road Secondary	4
Newlands Secondary Modern	4
Wideopen Secondary Modern	1
Guide Post Secondary	1
Bedlington Station Secondary	2
Forest Hall Secondary Modern	1
Westridge County Secondary	6
Hirst East Secondary Modern	3
Hirst Park Secondary Modern (Boys)	3
Bothal County Secondary	2
St. Benedict R.C.	1
Wooler Secondary Modern	1
Bedlington County Secondary	1
St. Bernard Biscop. (R.C.) (and Gallowhill Special School)	1
Ralph Gardner Secondary Modern (and special school in Middlesex)	1
Bedlington Station Grammar School	1

He shared the same kind of ambitions and attitudes as the rest of the boys in the sample and said that he had hated being at grammar school. The reason given for this was that 'they were all snobs at that place'.

Few of the boys had any evidence to show of educational achievement and when asked about certificates they had got from school, the majority of those giving positive answers mentioned such things as swimming certificates, football certificates etc. Two boys had taken Northern Counties exams and one of these had passed in two subjects and the other in five subjects. Two boys had some C.S.E.'s. One of these had six and the other had eight. The boy with eight passes in C.S.E. transferred to be trained as a surveyor in the NCB early in his first year of Mining Apprenticeship.



A belief widely expressed by people concerned with the scheme was that most of the boys entering the scheme were amongst the least intelligent and least capable school-leavers. It would certainly appear that typical entrants to the scheme had not shown themselves to be very intelligent in terms of the tests which had been applied within the educational system they had recently left, and had shown themselves to be amongst the less capable at competing for desirable jobs. Leaving aside doubts as to the objectivity and reliability of means by which intellectual ability is measured in the educational system, it is necessary to stress that the sort of attributes which put a boy at an advantage in the process of competing for a job are by no means certainly the same attributes which determine his capability of performing the job. There is no evidence available on which reliable generalisations about employers' criteria for selecting young workers can be based (except, perhaps, their great faith in educational certificates) but the impression gained from observing selection interviews of Mining Apprentices was that apart from the basic skill of reading (necessary in view of the importance of written warnings in the mine) the boys were selected largely for their smartness and politeness to the interviewers. Some of the boys clearly lacked ability by any standards but a large proportion, judged by different criteria, may well be shown to be very capable and one would not attempt to make a case for arguing that the young worker material available to the scheme was of such a generally low calibre as to threaten the scheme's success. A small number of boys were encountered who revealed sometimes stupidity, and sometimes a home background such that they had developed personalities which hopelessly impaired their ability to get on with their fellow apprentices. Some revealed when being questioned about their ambitions that they had been quite convinced by their parents that they were too stupid to do any but menial jobs.

One boy in particular (by no means typical in the sample) may be taken as an illustration of the sort of problem boys the scheme may encounter, suffering from an unhappy combination of poor home background and low mental ability. This boy had previously attended what he described as a 'boarding school for backward people'. He had obtained a first aid certificate and a Duke of Edinburgh Award and had spent a year looking for jobs before applying to join the Mining Apprenticeship scheme. He had been encouraged by his parents to go into mining in the belief that it would 'make a man of him' but he himself had no particular wish to be a miner. He said that if a better job came along he would take it but was happy to carry on as a mining apprentice without looking for another job. His ideal choice of job was to join the army but when asked why he had not tried to join he gave reasons such as 'I haven't got the brains', and had similarly not applied for a Craft Apprenticeship because he 'just knew' he hadn't the brains. He was quite confident that he would get on all right with the other boys and with the men at the pit when he first started his training, and in view of his very pleasant personality it seemed likely that he would. This confidence on his part was, however, short-lived. When the boys entered the Mining Training School for induction training they were kitted out with their working clothes and helmets. In cases where the overalls were too big the boys were told to ask their mothers to turn them up for them, but this boy was unable to get his mother to turn his overall legs up at the bottom and this was amusing to the other apprentices and evoked expressions of annoyance from his instructor. It appeared that his mother was always either out in the evenings or drunk after spending the mid-day session in the club. Also the boy was ridiculed by the other boys because when they were getting changed into their overalls they saw that he always had a dirty vest on and in addition to this his father had cut his hair one evening and had made rather a bad job

of it. Two boys in particular (a very tall and a very short boy - the class comedians) lost no time in attaching the nick-name 'Taggy' to this boy and he was effectively ostracised by the rest of the intake. This boy left part way through his first year and it was only possible to ascertain from another boy who was friendly with him that he spent most of his time in bed. He was not, at the time the study ended, making any serious attempts at finding another job as far as could be gathered from his friend.

Another boy may be taken as an example of some of the boys whose understanding of the situation they had put themselves into appeared to be slightly confused. This boy asked for his cards after starting his apprenticeship the previous day. He objected to being escorted at lunch time although this was in paid time and he was on his way to get a free lunch at Ashington Colliery Canteen. He said it was just like the army in that he was 'getting schooling etc., just to be a yacker'. He didn't have any objection to education as 'it's all knowledge', but he saw a miner as being a 'yacker'. He was afraid, so he said, of signing papers and committing himself as he had done in the army (he had been in the army as a piper for 1 year, and before that he had spent one year as an apprentice butcher) and he could not be convinced that he would not need to commit himself for another six months. He believed that he would not be committing himself if he took on an apprenticeship to be a fitter which was what he said he wanted to be. As it transpired, he was trying to withdraw from the scheme as he was led to believe that his father could fix him up with another job elsewhere within the Board, but in a job which would necessitate his being interviewed by the same department that had interviewed him for the mining apprenticeship. On the NCB form which he was asked to fill in on the first day of his induction training he wrote:

AMBITION: Runer. To have a car.

REASON FOR ENTERING THE INDUSTRY: Is a good job, good pay, you get your coal.

In addition to the fact that a large proportion of boys in the scheme came from mining communities, a lot of them came from mining families, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Father is, or has been in mining	per cent
Is	50
Different job now, but was	17
Unemployed, Deceased, Retired, but was	18
Hasn't been or isn't	15
Total of boys connected through their fathers	= 85

Table 6

Relatives or friends in mining prior to boys joining scheme	per cent
Father + others	50)
Brother(s) + others	13)
Other relatives + others	28)
Other relatives	5)
Friends	2
None	2

No accurate information was available as to the typicality of the boys' families within their communities. In some of the communities a proportion of mining jobs had been replaced by other types of jobs whereas in others they had not. In other words there is no way of knowing from the data obtained whether boys entered the industry from an exceptional type of mining family (or limited group of families) within what, as inferred above, is an exceptional type of community. There did appear to

be some significant link between type of family and joining the scheme, but this point will be discussed at a later point when considering the influence of parents on school-leavers' career decisions.

CHAPTER 6

THE APPRENTICES ENTERING THE WORLD OF WORK

The coal mine as a place of work has its own peculiar characteristics. Apart from the actual mining activities which take place underground, the pit head is a place where a variety of activities are taking place. The various workshops such as the blacksmith's shop, the 'Dowty' shop where the pit props are serviced and repaired, are scattered about wherever there is space for them. The entire colliery area is likely to be criss-crossed with railway tracks, and there is usually to be found a timber yard where wooden pit props are stacked, sometimes a brickyard where bricks are made as a by-product from the pit waste, and in most cases the whole area is dominated by the winding tower and wheel. Each colliery has its own character and appearance; sometimes it looks rather like a factory complex with modern buildings, but usually there is a jumble of buildings which have been built with no overall plan in mind as the activities of the pit have grown. At the majority of mines the pit head buildings are mostly quite dilapidated and hardly ever have they been built for the purposes for which they are now used. It is often, if not usually difficult for the visitor to find the building he is looking for in the jumble of first-aid sections, training buildings etc.

The facilities also vary quite considerably. At some pits there may be large and pleasant canteen facilities with the latest types of bath facilities, whereas at others these facilities may be very rudimentary and housed in makeshift buildings.

Although the National Coal Board is a nationalised enterprise and all pits are governed from a central authority, the physical location of the individual miner's work varies considerably, and this is likely to

accentuate the tendency for the miner to identify with a particular colliery rather than with the industry. Identification with a particular pit dies hard according to the adult miners who were asked about this during the study, and this is just as likely to stem from the very distinctive physical characteristics of each pit (including underground conditions) as from other, social, factors. Underground, some pits can differ from others almost as much as on the surface, and familiarity is gained by the miner with the particular types of rock, geological faults, etc., and the techniques which are most appropriate to working a particular seam. Indeed, it is obvious to anybody being shown round a pit by a man who works there that his underground world is full of landmarks and he knows them in the same way as the farmer knows the trees and ditches on his farm. Apart from the individual character of the colliery in question the sense of identity of the individual mine worker is reinforced by the traditional overlap of home community with the work community.

Historically this stems from the geographical isolation of collieries and the fact that coal mining communities grew up (often from scratch with groups of immigrant workers) around the colliery. In addition to this there were barriers to commuting between pits other than the one associated with one's own community. The most obvious of these was the ownership of colliery houses by the colliery owner which meant that a man ceasing to work in the local pit would often have to leave his house also. As pit communities developed, leisure institutions also developed on the basis of membership of both colliery and community. Working Men's clubs in the coal field area in the past traditionally recruited membership on the basis of which pit an individual worked at. The ramifications of this basis for the development of leisure institutions are extensive and even today in areas where all the local pits have ceased to operate much of the social life of individuals is focussed on a

particular club. It is through the club that much of the social involvement of members of mining communities takes place. It is there that miners and their wives meet and exchange gossip and most of the traditional pastimes are organised through the club. Apart from activities such as day trips for pensioners and children the competitive activities such as leek growing, flower and vegetable growing etc., are very important. These competitions are almost exclusively club-based. It is rare, for example, for a member of one club to enter a leek in the leek show competition organised by another club. Even in Ashington, where pit communities have grown over the years into a conglomeration with no clear geographical separation, an individual usually belongs to the club which his family traditionally joins and which originally was associated with a particular pit at which his forebears worked, and the importance of the club has survived to the extent that there are still only three pubs as against 36 clubs in Ashington.

In many industrial companies the line of authority is reflected by the physical location of the places where the various managerial officials work. It is not uncommon to find a hierarchy of office accommodation which more or less reflects the hierarchy of authority which is represented by the people who work in them; the higher up the managerial ladder a person is the better will be his office accommodation. This kind of thing, however, is not so evident at the pit. Management officials work in any buildings which are available and it is not usually possible to guess an individual's status by looking at his office accommodation, and neither are all the managerial functions carried out from within the same building. In other words, there is not usually a central office building where authority is seen to reside. It is perhaps also a characteristic of the particular form of bureaucratic organisation of the NCB that with a standardisation of posts there arises a variety of personal specifications for



people who fill them whereas the actual substantive duties carried out by them vary. It is for these reasons that the 'company' as manifested by the people in authority can take on a vague and abstract character. Authority is always present, but it is often very diffuse and may be sensed rather than seen. This aspect of the industry is strengthened by the fact that officials and managers have always tended in the past to be recruited from amongst people who have worked their way up in the industry. This means that there are few of the class differences between different grades of workers that are to be found in some other industries. One is often told by miners with whom one talks that 'so and so' used to work with me on this job or that. The effect of this is to engender a social atmosphere at the pit where face to face encounters are between social peers who are only differentiated on the grounds of authority held at work, and the upbringing of individuals has been shared by their work colleagues. This may change in the future but for the time being the way to the lower rungs of the managerial ladder is by working one's way up from the coal face, except in the type of job where specialised professional skill is required and these jobs are comparatively few in the mining industry. To the outsider who visits coal mines the nature of social relations is seen by the way officials of quite high status interact with people who are much lower in the NCB hierarchy than themselves.

The ways in which authority in the mine is manifested has a significant effect on the apprentices and their attitudes towards their work. Mining is an industry where social relations between individuals of most levels are gemeinschaft relations. The people (adults) with whom Mining Apprentices work are people who have grown up in the same way as themselves and there is complete cultural understanding between them. To the training officers the boys are seen as young people first and then as workers. One training officer said: 'I treat the lads as if they were

my own sons and try to advise them accordingly. If I think they are in the wrong job I will tell them so, and although it isn't my job to bring them up I soon put them right if they are being bad lads'. This is also evident in the reverse. The apprentices behave with the older men as they would be expected to behave with older members of their own family, and this behaviour is probably considerably reinforced by the fact that older miners usually address younger ones as 'son' or 'hinny' even if their christian names are known to them. In this way apprentices are socialised into accepting, or at least coping with, authority at work. That is to say the community at work is an organic community into which the young worker becomes integrated and social control is exercised as much by social pressures as by the formal authority structure of the organisation. If this is not so, at least the formal authority structure is supported to a significant extent by the organic nature of the work community.

The paternal nature of the authority which is held over the apprentices and the great importance of moral approval of the older members of the industry is very clearly illustrated by the way discipline is kept at the Mining Training School. The kind of thing that brings censure on the young entrant is rude behaviour, or such things as going to the pub at lunchtimes. When an apprentice is reprimanded for arriving late at work, it is in terms of moral rather than legal rational considerations. Compliance with the rules of behaviour there is often secured by threatening to withdraw the use of the darts which have been provided by the Local Education Authority at break times. Authority is also maintained sometimes by arbitrarily sending a boy home early with consequent loss of pay if he insists on misbehaving - even in this situation the boy will be addressed by his christian name if not 'son' or 'hinny'. Of the numerous personnel concerned with the training of apprentices who were

interviewed in the course of the study, only one spoke disapprovingly of what he called the 'paternalistic and 19th century way in which the boys are trained'.

In an attempt to find out how the apprentices reacted to authority at work they were asked how they got on with the bosses, and then asked if they had been at all surprised. Nearly all of them said that they got on very well with the bosses, and a typical reply to the question about their being surprised was: 'Yes, I was surprised. Before I started work I thought bosses were some kind of monsters with big whips - you would think so the way my dad talks about deputies - but most of them are just ordinary people like my dad'. Indeed, in some cases their fathers were somebody else's bosses. Some boys went so far as to say that they positively liked their bosses and that 'they are all a canny lot'.

It is hardly surprising in an area where a large part of the local culture developed with the industry which employs the majority of the male population that work relations should be shot through with wider social characteristics and vice versa, and statements about the dynamic relationship between work and culture may appear to be somewhat platitudinous, but the influence of these factors on the ease with which young workers are socialised into their work roles should not be taken lightly. The gemeinschaft social relations into which the young entrant to the world of work in coal mining enters, are of importance for understanding his behaviour subsequent to his starting work at the pit, if not for understanding why he starts there in the first place.

Because of the strong cultural link between community and work one would suppose that the apprentices would develop strong ties with the industry, and not be so likely to leave it without a very strong pull from outside. Another interpretation, however, is that this link

reinforces the apprentice's culture, and when he leaves the industry he is not necessarily breaking any strong ties. The importance of friendship ties resulting from relations which have developed at work is not known as a factor for explaining lower wastage rates amongst young workers in other industries. Some indication is suggested though by the evidence gathered in the course of various studies relating to the importance of having friends working at a particular factory when it comes to some young people choosing jobs.

The transition from school to work is, for the young mine worker, a comparatively smooth one. For the first two weeks (and longer if basic training follows on from induction training directly) the Mining Apprentice is in an institution which differs hardly at all from the school he has (in the majority of cases) just left. He goes from one classroom to another in the mining training school but there are some relatively minor differences. He now gets paid for going to school and is more strongly obliged to turn up every day. Thirty-seven per cent of the boys who were interviewed during their induction training said that they did not really feel any different from when they were at school. A further 7 per cent said that they felt different but not a great deal. Only 56 per cent said that they really felt that they had started work.

After leaving the training school they go to their respective pits (knowing that before long they will be back at the training school for further training in the classroom) and here they are put under the close personal supervision of the training officer who details them to particular jobs as part of their job rotation and they are rarely out of sight of someone whose main objective is to train them and help them along. This may be contrasted with the impersonal and probably traumatic way in which many young workers in other industries are thrown into the alien world of work.

From the very beginning the process of socialisation in the mining industry is a fairly smooth and painless one for the boy who has been brought up in the world outside amongst mining people. He has usually grown up hearing pit talk in his home between his father and brothers and uncles, and when he actually starts work he finds that the people he is working with, and under, are the kind of people he has known all his life.

Of course some boys did find that there were some difficult aspects to starting work. When questioned about whether or not they thought young people starting work have any particular problems to cope with the majority said that they thought not. Some, however, said that they had been quite worried when they first started by the fact that they were sometimes sent to fetch things and they did not know where to find them and were afraid to keep asking questions. This is a difficulty that was referred to by Carter in his studies of young workers (1966, and esp. 1962, Ch.9).

Although adults with whom the apprentices worked were usually, according to the apprentices, wanting to be as helpful as possible to them, it was no doubt impossible for them to anticipate everything that an apprentice might not know about work. This problem is in all probability more common than Mining Apprentices themselves realised. When the ones who said that they saw no problem were asked about specific ones they did in fact sometimes agree but had not recognised them as problems. There is some danger of overstressing the importance of this type of problem as the solution of it may be such a source of satisfaction to the young worker that it really, in any meaningful terms, ceases to be a problem as such. This refers to the fact that a sense of becoming a working man may be derived for the young worker from becoming familiar with the world of work which

has previously been the province of adults and to which they themselves have never previously belonged. One or two Mining Apprentices did say, however, that they had been made quite unhappy by the way older miners had pulled their legs when they first went to their collieries to work. This further suggests the importance for the Mining Apprentices of having been brought up in a mining community. Whereas, when it is mentioned in the literature, the lack of knowledge about objective facts about the work situation (e.g. where particular things are kept) is taken to constitute a serious problem for young workers, the problem of social adaptation is not given so much prominence. It seems likely that when a boy suffers because he has his leg pulled by older workers it is because he is not equipped, socially, for coping with a situation where he is being challenged by people who are not his customary peers, unlike some apprentices who were seen to excel in humorous banter to the extent that they could have been said to be pulling the legs of older workers and instructors. This feeling of personal inadequacy in maintaining social relations with strangers must undoubtedly be a very important factor in explaining why some young workers in industry are made profoundly unhappy during their first few weeks or months at work, whilst problems involving objective facts of the situation are relatively unimportant except in so far as they may put pressure on the youngster's ability to cope with the situation socially, and in mining as already suggested, this kind of strain on social skills of the young apprentices is comparatively slight.

Carter (1962) found in his study of 100 boys and 100 girls leaving school in Sheffield that most children adjusted and settled down at work very quickly although before starting work most of them were 'vague, nervous, and badly informed about what to expect' (p.197, 1962). In this connection he refers to the recommendation of the Carr Report (1958) concerning Induction Training. That is, that children should be taught

about safety, the performance of tasks, procedures, etc., and should be told about the people with whom they will be working. An example of the sort of problem seen by Carter was that some of the children he studied were not told how to find the lavatory. He points out that many induction courses paint a bright picture of work and its satisfactions, but a picture that is unrealistic. He also stresses that jokes and tricks played on young workers are not necessarily hostile. It seems likely that this sort of thing is a normal part of the process of socialisation into the work role and where the approach adopted by an employer towards the treatment of young workers is a sensible one, the social strain on the young worker is lessened by the fact that he is not required to enter an adult role immediately, but the transitional role of the child in industry. Indeed, throughout industry, there are quite well-defined norms governing the attitudes and behaviour of and towards, new entrants to the work situation.

Partly as a result of the way the Mining Apprenticeship scheme is designed, the transition from induction training to actually working in a productive capacity at the colliery tends to be particularly smooth. From the first encounters with the staff of the training school during induction training the boys get some feel of the kind of people who are going to be their superiors at work later on when they get to their own collieries. From there, they go to their collieries where they are put under the wing of their training officers whom they likewise find to be paternalistic towards them, and within a very short time they are back at the training school from where they carry out their practical training in the training sections of Ashington Colliery. At all stages during the early part of their apprenticeship mining apprentices are under the more or less direct supervision of personnel who are exclusively charged with their training and wellbeing as trainees. Even when they are doing the job rotation

part of their training at their own colliery they are rarely if ever put under the charge of people whose primary concern is with immediate productivity. This gradual transition into the productive situation may be compared with that of boys in many other industries who, sometimes immediately, and usually after an extremely short space of time find themselves working under an older worker whose first concern is to produce output and only incidentally to see to the training of new workers. Indeed, for many young workers the transition is immediate and absolute, and from their first day at work they have to demonstrate that they are earning their wages. These, of course, are usually the young people who enter straight away into unskilled and menial jobs, with no pretence of training.

Whilst the social relations in the coal mine are characterised by relations which are affective, diffuse, collectivity oriented, and ascriptive, and the existence of gemeinschaft relations mean that mining apprentices are more easily integrated into the authority structure of the industry, it does not follow, of course, that all social interaction is harmonious and that there is no room for personal conflict. By virtue of the very ease with which the cultural and personal relationships of the community are carried over into the work situation some personal conflicts and feuds find expression at work which would not do so in an industry where the workers are drawn from a less solidary population. When a boy works in a different industry from his father he may never come face to face with the conflicts which exist between his father and his contemporaries, but in mining there is a distinct likelihood that if a boy goes to work at the same pit as his father and his father is on bad terms with some of his workmates then the boy will tend to be drawn into his father's battles. The great majority of the boys interviewed said that they had no objection to working with their fathers, or at the same colliery as them, and those who did say that they would rather work at a different pit said that it was because they would not feel free to swear,



and generally behave as they would want to if their fathers were not likely to see them. One apprentice who chose to travel some distance to work rather than work at the same pit as his father had previously worked did not offer any reasons for his choice, but some instructors speculated that it may have been because a miner of the same name, and possibly related to the boy, had been involved with a particularly unfortunate incident in which another miner had been killed, and that if this was so the boy would prefer not to work at a pit where the connection would be made by the other miners between himself and his relative. A small number of apprentices, when questioned about their relationships with their bosses referred specifically to difficulties which they were experiencing as direct results of their fathers' differences with particular deputies. The most extreme cases of this amounted to open victimisation of the apprentices by their supervisors. One described the way in which his friend, whose father had previously fallen out with his deputy, was sent out of the pit and lost pay for taking an unofficial break underground when the rest of the men with whom he was working were doing exactly the same but were not disciplined for it. The most bizarre example recounted by an apprentice who was interviewed is described in the following extract from an interview:

How do you get on with your bosses?

'O.K. really.'

Some of them are perhaps a bit awkward sometimes?

'Yes.. One of them is. He picks on me.'

How do you mean picks on you?

'Well it all started with my grandad. He used to have rows with this deputy and him and my father hate each other and are always fighting. When I came here to work and he heard what my name was he said I'd been pinching his potatoes from his allotment. I said that I didn't know who he was and why should I pinch his potatoes?

When I was sitting down and eating my bait he struck a match and set light to all my hair.'

The apprentice had the protection of his trade union representative in his relations with the deputy in question and said that he had not had any more trouble with him after this incident, but it serves to show that personal conflict stretching over three generations can survive in a working situation where son follows father into the same industry and into the same pit. Whilst these personal conflicts which are inherent in the mining/work community situation may be seen by management as disruptive and an impediment to the smooth operation of productive processes, they may also be seen as reinforcing the solidarity of the work community and, from the point of view of the young entrant to mining, an aid to locating himself in the intersubjective world of shared meaning into which he moves when he starts work. If the gemeinschaft relations which exist between people of different levels of authority in the mine may sometimes mean that he starts off from a position of antipathy, on the whole, because there is a common element of morality brought into the work situation from outside, he may tend to become integrated more quickly and more completely into the organisation and to interpret relations of authority more easily. The family in the mining community can also work as a positive reinforcing influence on the young miner. Because his family knows and understands his work and the social relationships which he participates in at work there will be less grounds for contrasting comparisons to be made between the way he lives at work and the way he lives at home. An apprentice's mother, if she was born into a mining family, will herself have grown up hearing all the talk about pit life and will identify strongly with her kin as miners, and will tend to accommodate the demands which he may make in respect of odd mealtimes and the need to take food to work with him etc. For the young worker the moral and material support of his family can be

important in making the adjustment from being a school boy to becoming a miner. Nearly all the boys in the sample said that things had changed at home since they had started work. In most cases it is the mother who takes responsibility for the wellbeing of the children and it was in her treatment of them that most of the apprentices had seen changes. In some cases the main difference had been that they were allowed more freedom generally since starting work and were free to go out in the evenings, for instance, and not have to ask their mothers for money and not to have to say where they were going or what time they were going to be in. The symbolic significance of this change of attitudes on the part of mothers is possibly greater than the actual difference it makes to what boys do in their spare time. When asked about what they did in the evenings and at weekends only one or two boys did things that their mothers might previously have disapproved of. Nearly all the boys did not stay out later than they had before they started work or spent a great deal more than they had when they were dependent on spare-time jobs, or their mothers' handouts for spending money. What boys repeatedly referred to was the fact of not having to ask their parents for money and of being able to buy their own clothes, etc. An important change at home for some boys was the fact that whereas they had previously had to wait for their fathers to come in before being given their evening meal, once they had started work themselves their mothers would put their meals on the table when they returned home from work, even if they were the only ones eating at that particular time. The initial reply to the question of how things had changed at home now they had started work was frequently: 'She treats me like a working man now'.

The overall impression gained from talking to the boys in the scheme as well as older miners was that the transition into the world of work was a more or less painless one. Many of the social aspects were

already familiar to most of the boys and the more practical difficulties of adjustment to the job were lessened by the way in which the training programme was designed to ease the boys gently into a situation where they were answerable to the employer for the efficient performance of work tasks. Also, there was the common understanding between the personnel responsible for training and the boys receiving it.

CHAPTER 7

BOYS LEAVING THE SCHEME

During the course of the study eight boys left the scheme. Three of these left the industry voluntarily, one transferred to another area, one left the scheme to stay on the surface, one transferred to train as a surveyor, one was taken away to approved school and another was sacked for misconduct. The details in the same order of their leaving were as follows:

Boy 1.

This was the boy referred to on p.54 who was unable to get on with the other boys. At the conclusion of the study he was still not working.

Boy 2.

This was the boy referred to on p.55 who was leaving because he believed his father could fix him up with a job in another department. At the time of the study ending he still appeared to be out of work.

Boy 3.

This boy's father was a bus company proprietor and after leaving school he had gone to work for his father as a semi-skilled mechanic. He wanted to be a skilled mechanic and had no intention of staying with the NCB and had a record of leaving home without his parents' permission. He had twice succeeded in getting work, at Leicester and at Amble, but both times had been brought back to his parents by the police. He expressed dislike for his parents. The following extract from notes describes the event of his leaving.

'Was told at Ashington that (...) was wanting to drop out of the scheme because he didn't like working underground. Arranged to see him at hour o'clock but found that at ten to four he had been

'thrown out of the classroom by (instructor) because he had told the other lads to go slow (they had nearly finished what they were doing and (...) said "take your time lads and make it last".

(Colliery Training Officer) had come down to the Mining Training School presumably to get together with (Head of Training School) about (boy).

(Boy) was in an empty classroom. He was very bitter and said "they are pushing me around because I don't want to work underground. They said to give it a try. Well, I have tried it for two weeks and I can't stand it". (Why?) "I feel too shut in - no I don't mind the darkness - I just don't want to work underground, it's dangerous. There is a job in the brickyard I want to do and they say I can't have it because I haven't stuck in. That's rubbish because I have worked as hard as anyone. (Training Officer) hasn't said I don't pull my weight. Perhaps for the first week I was a bit unsettled, but after I got settled down I worked as hard as I was supposed to. I wouldn't mind if I could speak to (Training Officer) without that bloody (Training School Head) butting in on me all the time. Are you going to tell this to (School Head)?"

(No)

"Well he said you were going to tell him everything I said. He is going to phone my father and tell him I am not pulling my weight."

(Who is?)

(Training Officer.) My mother is very bad with her nerves and if my father tells her and she has a heart attack it will be the last phone call he makes because I'll take my 12-bore and blow his bloody head off - and my father's. It's all right for him because he's got a home to go to that's his own but I haven't. I've got to go back to my parent's house. Still if my father hits me this time I'll hit him back. But I don't suppose that's a good idea. They'll all go running to the probation people."

(Why?)

"Because I leave home."

At this point he suddenly got up and went out of the room saying he was going to see (School Head).\*

At the time of the study ending this boy was working for his father as a semi-skilled mechanic.

#### Boy 4.

This boy transferred to the Midlands area of the NCB as his parents were moving to that area.

Boy 5.

This boy had spent a period as a sugar boiler in a sweet factory, and then an apprentice glass-blower. He didn't like practicing glass-blowing ('I kept getting burned') and had left to go on the dole. He got fed up with this and after going to see the Youth Employment Officer every week for three months had agreed to become a Mining Apprentice. He took a liking to working in the timer yard at the pit head and had transferred from the scheme to stay in this job on the surface. He was quite happy with his surface job and did not feel he was missing anything by leaving the Mining Apprenticeship scheme.

Boy 6.

This was the boy who is referred to on p. who had some qualifications from school and who transferred to become an apprentice surveyor. Previously he had been very disdainful about the Mining Apprenticeship Scheme and believed that he was part of it as a result of the sheer perverse injustice of fate.

Boy 7.

This boy was taken away to approved school for breaking and entering. He was described by the Head of the Mining Training School as a nice lad, and it had been agreed that he should take up his apprenticeship where he had left off when he had finished his sentence. He himself was happy about the scheme and intended to come back to the scheme.

Boy 8.

This boy generally complained about the scheme. He believed that it was 'All a confidence trick' and that the NCB was using it to get cheap labour. He generally failed to take his training seriously and cynically misbehaved. He was sacked and said that he intended to hitch-

hike to Luton where he had a friend who might get him a job, and then possibly to Jersey.

These boys were unexceptional for having left when they did as a lot of the other boys in the sample quite openly said that they would leave if a better opportunity came along or if they did not get on with the scheme and very few showed any signs of strong commitment to the scheme. Sixty-five per cent had said that they would leave for another job and of the remainder who had not said this many had become too old for apprenticeship elsewhere and could not think of a better job in the circumstances. In fact, only 26 per cent indicated positively that they would not leave for another job.

The only two of these boys who expressed any intention of staying in the scheme were the one who went to approved school (and quite possibly was pleased to say that he was coming back) and the boy who was transferring to the Midlands and staying in the scheme when he got there. Of the ones who left the scheme altogether none believed that they were passing up any special opportunity by doing so, and boy (8) above condemned the scheme not for the way it was administered, but for what it claimed to offer boys who entered it.

The following list shows the age of boys who voluntarily left the scheme during the full year preceding the study, and also shows the jobs they went to after leaving. This information is taken from the records kept by the NCB and there was no practical way of checking the actual jobs these boys went into and it is only possible to assume that where jobs were stated by the boys who were leaving it was because they felt sure of getting them, if they did not already have them arranged,



Table 7 Mining Apprentices Giving Notice during the Year Preceding the Study (1969-70)

Reasons given	Prospective job
<u>Aged 15</u>	
Had got a better job	Training as a chef in the merchant navy
<u>Aged 16</u>	
Gave notice after being reprimanded for misconduct	None
(2 boys) Didn't like mining	None
Wants fresh air	Merchant Navy
Doesn't like underground	Armed forces
Parents leaving area	Not known - possibly another pit.
Disliked Training School	Puroh Milk
Doesn't like the industry	Alcan (construction)
<u>Aged 17</u>	
Wants a change	Mineral Water firm
No reason	Brentford Nylons
Unsettled	Army
Wants to go in Army	Army
None given	Blyth Co-op.
Sick of Mining	None
Wants to go in Army	Army
Fed up	None
Fed up	None
Got Maritime Engineering Apprenticeship	-
None given	None
Doesn't like mining	Armed forces
No future in Mining	Merchant Navy
Unsettled	Armed forces
Doesn't like discipline	Army
Leaving area	None
Leaving area	None
Wanted a change	Tailoring factory

contd....

Table 7 contd.

Reasons given	Prospective job
<u>Aged 18</u>	
Joining Army	Army
Doesn't like underground	Bricklayer
Wants to leave industry	Construction
No future in mining	Alcan (construction)
Fed up	None
Ill health	None
Family moved	Not known
<u>Aged 19</u>	
Leaving area	None
No reason given	None
Doesn't like night shift	None
Fed up	Male Nurse
Fed up	Bus conductor
Fed up	Bus company
Wants more money	Construction
Fed up	Bus conductor
Emigrating to Belgium	Not known
To join Army	Army
No reason given	Not known
<u>Aged 20</u>	
Better standard of living	G. Angus - Cramlington
Wanted a better job	G.P.O. Office
More security	Butlin's camp - catering
Bad knees	None
No reason given	Not known
More security	Vauxhall Motors - Luton
<u>Aged 21</u>	
No hope of getting on coal face	Harbour and General

In addition to these boys there were others whose ages had not been recorded by the Board when they left. These went to the following jobs:

To work on farms (2 boys)

Mineral Water firm

Confectionery firm

Bus company (4 boys)

To work in hotel

Parents leaving the area (2 boys)

A further boy left because his friend was killed at work.

Table 7 is summarised in Table 8:

Table 8

Type of job	A G E							Age not known
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Forces/Merchant Navy	1	2	7	1	1	-	-	-
Distributive	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Construction	-	1	-	3	1	-	-	-
Food Manufacturing	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Nursing	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Transport	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	4
Clothing/Textiles	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Engineering/Manuf.	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Telecomms.	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Motor Manufacturing	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Agriculture	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Hotel/Catering	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Apprenticeship	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
None/Not known	-	3	6	3	5	2	-	3

Some boys left the scheme in the year 1969-70 but did not leave the industry as shown in table 9.

Table 9 Mining Apprentices who withdrew from the scheme and stayed in the Industry (But not to 'Craft')

Aged 17

Health reasons	Stayed on surface
Fell out with instructors	Stayed on surface
Did not like underground	Stayed on surface

Aged 19

Disliked face work	Stayed underground
Disliked face work	Stayed underground as linesman
Disliked face work	Stayed underground
Fell out with instructors	Stayed underground on supply work

Aged 20

Disliked face work	Stayed underground
Health reasons	Stayed on surface

Age not known

Reason not known	Moved to other pit
Reason not known	Moved to other pit

There is no way of knowing which jobs the boys mentioned above would have preferred to their mining apprenticeships had they been asked whilst they were still in the scheme. The jobs to which these boys did go to can, however, be compared with the preferences stated by the boys in the study when asked about which jobs they thought would be better from their point of view than the Mining Apprenticeship. These 'better jobs' are shown below:

Table 10 'Better Job' choices of boys in Sample

Armed Forces	3 boys	Police	1 boy
*Fitter	4	*Sheet Metal Worker	1
*Motor Mechanic	5	*Any skilled	1
Work with Animals	2	*Travelling and skilled	1
*Bricklayer	1	*Joiner	2
Driver	1	*Electrician	4
More money/overtime	3	Butcher	1
*Mining Craft	4	Don't know	4
*Welder	3	None - not applicable	4
Deputy (Mine Supervisor)	1		

Jobs marked \* involve Apprenticeship

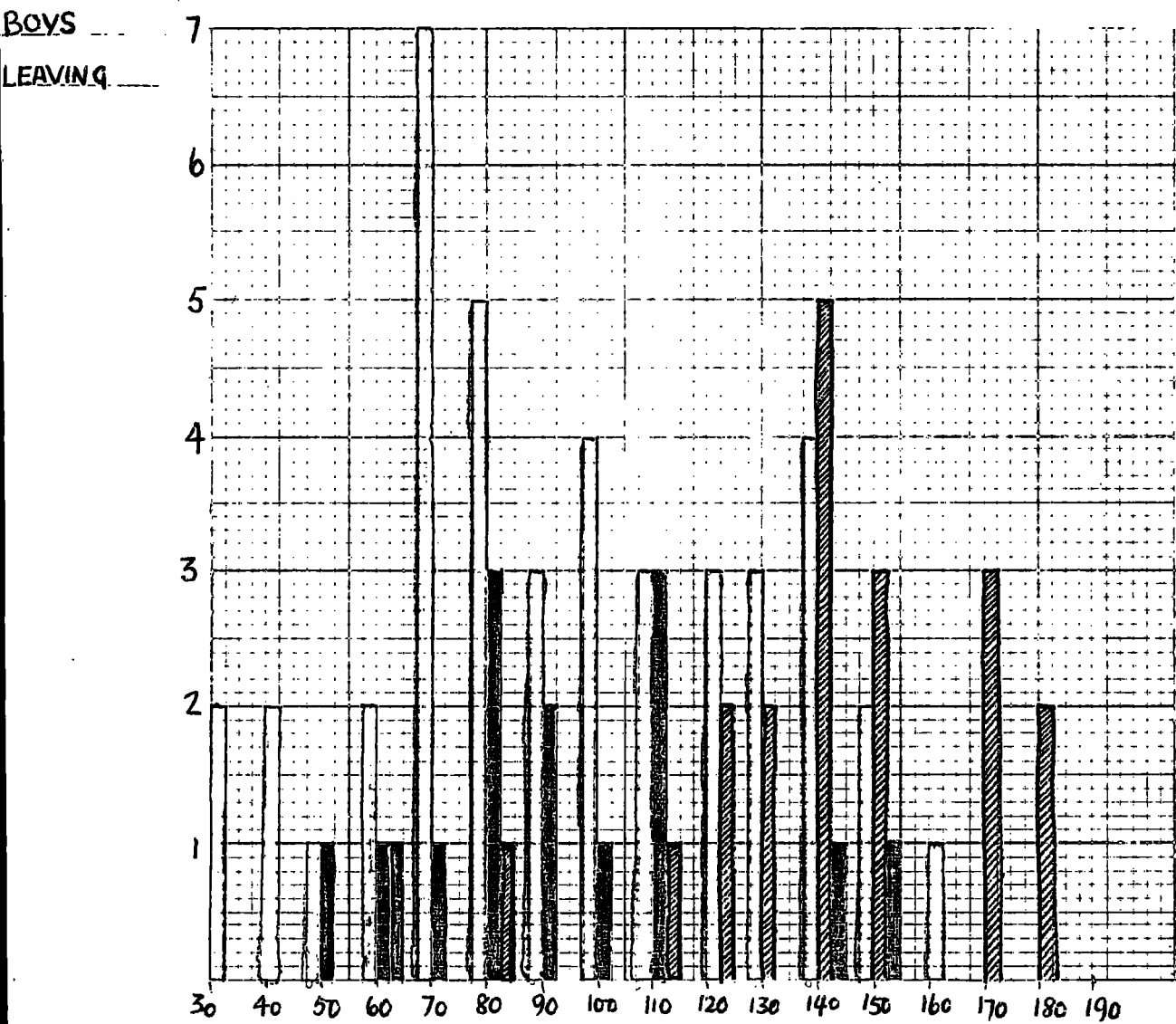
Of these jobs 26 are skilled in the craft sense and a proportion of the others involve a definite skill. Comparing these preferences with the jobs to which boys leaving the scheme in the year preceding the study went it can be seen that there is a discrepancy between the number of skilled job preferences which might be expected and the actual number of skilled jobs entered by the boys who left. In fact very few of these jobs (for example, armed forces) can be assumed to have offered the boys any real degree of training. Certainly it can be assumed that no boy leaving the scheme after his seventeenth birthday will have obtained a craft apprenticeship as there is an almost universal age limit of 16 years imposed by trade unions in Britain. Of the boys in the sample who left during the study only one went to a more progressive job, and he was the one who went to train as a surveyor.

As mentioned above it was suggested by some people concerned with the administration of the scheme that it was only boys of low mental ability who were available to the scheme, and it was further suggested by some that the boys who left the scheme were the less intelligent ones - the inference being, one suspected, that the ones who left did not have the intelligence to see how much they were giving up by leaving.

An analysis was made of the performance in the 'I.Q.' test which is administered to boys joining the scheme during induction training, by the boys who left the scheme between 17th January 1969 and 16th January 1970. This is shown in Fig.2.

Fig. 2 shows that the 'I.Q.' performance of boys dismissed from the scheme followed a more or less normal distribution, that of boys transferring to craft apprenticeships was skewed to the right, and that of boys leaving the scheme voluntarily was skewed to the left. This, however, is as one would expect. Intelligence may not be assumed to be

Fig. 2.



PERFORMANCE IN 'I.Q.' TEST

N = 42

□ VOLUNTARY LEAVERS

N = 14

■ DISMISSED

N = 20

▨ To CRAFT

a factor in determining whether a boy will behave in such a manner that he will be dismissed by the Board; hence the normal distribution. Performance in the test is taken as evidence when a boy applies to be transferred to craft apprenticeship and therefore the right hand skew is to be expected. By creaming off the more 'intelligent' boys for the Craft Apprenticeship scheme this leaves a depleted population from which the remaining voluntary leavers are to come - hence the left hand skew.

If it were assumed that the majority of boys entered the Mining Apprenticeship scheme for reasons other than those assumed by the Board, and if it were found that the majority of them had definite preferences for skilled status acquired through craft apprenticeship, the following hypothesis could be formed.

The Mining Apprenticeship is seen by boys who have failed to get craft apprenticeships outside the industry as a possible 'back door' way into the NCB Craft Apprenticeship scheme. The ones who succeed in transferring to craft apprenticeship have achieved their objective but the ones who do not get craft apprenticeships and become too old to compete for one elsewhere no longer see the Mining Apprenticeship scheme as having anything to offer them and they take the first reasonable alternative that comes along. This hypothesis is not inconsistent with the figures shown above, and the boys who do not leave the scheme after becoming too old to complete for craft apprenticeships may stay because no alternative of sufficient pull comes along or because they have rearranged their preferences such that the job of face worker has become a desirable one.

CHAPTER 8

THE JUVENILE JOB MARKET

In order to test the hypothesis outlined above it is necessary to construct a typology of jobs available to school-leavers, or otherwise construct a model of the job market so that the meaning of craft apprenticeship as a job opportunity can be understood, and so that a preference for craft apprenticeship can be seen as a basis for action. Such a theoretical description of the job market can be made by reference to empirically observable facts of the situation, but account must also be taken of the contribution made to its continued existence by the subjective interpretation of the real world by the actors concerned. In other words the particular position of craft apprenticeship in a scale of desirability of occupational openings can be described with reference to the Industrial Relations constraints of the system, but its continued position in that scale can only be described by reference to the actors' interpretation of, and reaction to, its existence. The continued survival of an institution such as craft apprenticeship depends on its ability to offer as an end result something which is sufficiently attractive to offset the sacrifices which it entails. What craft apprenticeship offers is access to a particular category of manual work - that is to say, skilled manual. 'Skilled manual' in the industrial relations sense is that work which involves time-served membership of trade unions which traditionally operate closed shop agreements with employers.<sup>5</sup>

Working in a craft occupation offers, by virtue of closed shop agreements, a certain degree of job security and income level because outsiders cannot undercut the rate for the job by offering to do the work for less money and also enables workers to impede attempts by employers



to replace them with machines or otherwise introduce arbitrary changes in working methods. The actual level of income and job security guaranteed by membership of a craft union is not, however, greatly higher than that offered by a wide range of other occupations. In times of recession craft workers do have rather more resistance to redundancy than unskilled and semi-skilled workers but the threat of unemployment is still a real one, and many craft occupations are carried out in industries such as manufacturing and capital goods which are sensitive to recessions in trade. Printing is one of the few craft occupations which tend to ride out periods of recession. Generally speaking the most secure occupations in this respect are those such as public service and commerce where union control over numbers and types of workers entering the industry is rare. Many of these secure and tolerably well-paid jobs are accessible to boys of modest educational achievement and Youth Employment Officers in the area believe that many of the boys who enter less secure manual occupations could compete equally for these jobs, including some boys who enter the Mining Apprenticeship scheme. The boys in the sample were questioned about whether they had tried to get non-manual jobs and, if not, what their reasons had been. None of them had seriously contemplated the possibility of non-manual jobs and the reasons given fell into two categories: either they required more intelligence than the boys thought they had, and would be too demanding intellectually, or they were 'snobs' jobs'. The main objection to non-manual jobs of the less secure and less lucrative type (e.g. shop assistant) was that they were 'cissy' jobs or not manly enough. In criticism of the better non-manual jobs the most emphasis was placed on the class differences between them and manual jobs.

One of the implications of this, if the boys encountered in the sample were typical of their class of school-leavers, is that a

certain section of the school-leaver population enters the job market with a definite predisposition to a definite category of job. In other words, part of the socialisation of school children takes the form of conditioning to look on a certain class of employment as desirable and feasible. (A discussion of the theory of job choice is left to a later point.) The NCB manager responsible for selection and training of boys for the Student Apprenticeship scheme maintained that on past experience when boys who originally aimed for the craft apprenticeship level of job had, or subsequently acquired, qualifications to enable them to be offered a student apprenticeship, when given the opportunity of doing the course usually failed at some stage to complete it. This person was firmly convinced that this type of boy lacked the ambition and confidence in himself to complete the training regardless of inherent mental ability in intelligence terms.

Ideal Job Preferences

The ideal job preference of the boys in the Mining Apprentice sample and the final year schoolboys are shown below. These preferences are those which were given by boys in response to the question 'If you could have any job you liked in the whole world, what would it be?'. (They were not given by the boys as desirable alternatives to their present jobs.)

Table 11      Ideal Job on Leaving School (Schools sample)

N = 126	%
Non Skilled ) Semi-Skilled)	4.5
White Collar	2
Forces/Merchant Navy	14
Skilled (but not Apprenticeable)	19 (Technician, Gamekeeper, Teacher)
Fantasy (or not Realistic).	24 (such jobs as: run a pub, pilot, technician in an underground lab., footballer, pop-singer, manager of own large firm)
Apprenticeable	37

Table 12            Ideal Job on Leaving School (By realism)  
(Schools Sample)

N = 126	%
Realistic - i.e. feasible w.r.t. educational achievement	75
Unrealistic	13
Depends on luck - i.e. hard by systematic means, e.g. footballer, artist	11
None given	0

Table 13            Ideal Job Preference (Apprentice Sample)

	N	%
Forces/Merchant Navy	5	10.85
Apprenticeable	32	69.44
Pit Management	2	4.35
Police	1	2.17
Butler, Pilot, Footballer (2), Parachutist, Captain of a big liner	6	13.02

(Leaving aside present age, all of these except the six jobs at the bottom of the table are feasible and attainable by systematic means, given a chance after leaving school.)

It can be seen from these ideal choices that few of the boys chose in fantasy jobs which were significantly better than those they actually intended to try to get. Most of these jobs which were a lot better than what they actually hoped to get were not the sort that could be obtained by systematic methods such as studying for qualifications etc., but were the type of jobs which depended on luck or some special personal ability (or both). The frequent choice of professional footballer may or may not be due to the fact that two famous footballers were brought up in Ashington (Jackie and Bobby Charlton), and they therefore symbolised the possibility of a working class boy achieving fame through football. It can also be seen that the ideal preferences of the boys in the Mining

Apprentice sample were on a more mundane level than those of the boys who had not yet left school.

Ely Chinoy (1955) found that 40 per cent of the working class school leavers and 23 per cent of the Middle Class school leavers he questioned chose in fantasy 'occupations of comparative low prestige and low rewards' (p.112).

Chinoy also refers to similar findings by A.B. Hollinshead (1949). Carter (1966, p.136) points out that in his study of school leavers 'Ideal jobs were dismissed from the mind, permanently or temporarily, without regret, disappointment or impatience'. Also, (W. Liversedge, 1962, p.24) referring to the realism of some young people in Britain states: 'Indeed the fantasy choices of these boys are at a distressingly mundane and realistic level; the majority rarely leave their immediate world. We had expected that in their flights of fancy they would select the more exciting occupations such as pilot, professional footballer, explorer, pop-singer, or even the old fashioned engine driver. Instead we have the boy who expects to be a labourer in the brick yard choosing the same job in fantasy, and the potential rubber moulder, who, when offered the whole world from which to choose, still wants to be a rubber moulder'. This similarity between fantasy choices of school leavers and the jobs they actually aim for is referred to throughout the literature and serves to indicate the extent to which school leavers are conditioned to face the job market with a predisposition towards a particular type of job in terms of feasibility etc.

The actual types of job which the Mining Apprentices in the sample tried to get when they left school, and the hoped for occupations of the schoolboys who were questioned are shown below.

Table 14      Types of Jobs tried for by Mining Apprentices  
before joining scheme

	N	%
Several (including Craft)	35	76
Several (not including Craft and mostly unskilled)	9	19.53
None	2	4.35

Table 15      Jobs seriously hoped for by boys still at school

	%
Professional Footballer	0.75
Technician/Technical	15.75
Forces/Merchant Navy	15.75
White Collar	15.00
Professional (Teacher, Banker, Librarian)	6.72
Industrial Chemist	0.75
Management	1.50
Chef	0.75
Police	0.75
Gardener	0.75
Unskilled Factory Work	0.75
Apprenticeable	40.78
None/D.K.	00.00

It can be seen that 76 per cent of the jobs chosen by the Mining Apprentices on leaving school were skilled manual jobs. For the boys still at school this figure was 41 per cent.

On the question of whether they would have definitely preferred a Craft Apprenticeship 78 per cent of the Mining Apprentices said they would. Fifteen per cent said they had no preference for a craft apprenticeship and 7 per cent had no preference either way.

Some of the boys who stated no preference for craft apprenticeship did, however, say that they would be applying for one at the next

opportunity. This sort of inconsistency between answers may be explained by the possibility that some boys who said that they did not prefer craft apprenticeship did not want to appear foolish by stating unrealistic preferences. Some of these boys had been thoroughly convinced by other people (their parents mainly) that they were stupid and good for nothing.

In all, 67 per cent of the Mining Apprentices' sample said that they would apply next time for a craft apprenticeship, and of those who had stated a preference for craft

33% had applied already

39% had not

22% had been too late to apply

6% had been too old anyway.

Some of the boys had spent a significant length of time looking for jobs before entering the scheme. Questioning revealed that they believed that they could have gone straight into the Mining Apprenticeship scheme but had preferred to try for other jobs first.

Table 16 Time taken from starting to look for a job and entering the scheme

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No Gap	3 boys	6 Months	3 boys
1 Month	2 boys	Don't know (probably a few weeks)	14 boys
2 Months	21 boys		
5 Months	2 boys	Over 1 Year	1 boy

---

Whereas the views about craft apprenticeship of the Mining Apprentices were tempered by the reality of having left school and entered the job market in search of one, the views of the boys who were still at school may have been slightly less reliable as one would argue that they had never actually found themselves in the position of looking for jobs (however, the date of their being questioned was sufficiently near to their

leaving date for many of them to have started tentative efforts towards finding jobs or, at least, discussing the problem with parents and others).

Some significant information is available from the schoolboys, however, regarding their attitudes towards the mining industry. In the course of questioning them great care was taken not to give any indication at all that the study was in any way concerned with the mining industry. For the initial question the boys were asked to write down their answers to questions on duplicated sheets of paper which again gave no clues as to what the enquiry was about, apart from wanting to know what jobs they would like to do. In response to the question 'Is there any job you particularly don't want to do?' over 60 per cent answered 'Mining'. At a later point they were actually asked 'Would you work in mining?'.  
3% wrote yes  
88% wrote no  
9% wrote 'yes for a craft apprenticeship'.

For those who replied 'No', typical answers were:

- 'I would rather leave the area'
- 'The pits will soon be closing down'
- 'Not unless I was desperate'.

Some boys wrote 'NO' in very large letters and sometimes with embellishments.

It was not possible to get any reliable indications from boys already in the scheme to compare with the attitudes to the industry expressed by the schoolboys, as many of them, when questioned about their previous attitudes, showed a certain vagueness and a tendency to rationalise in view of the fact that they were now members of the industry and therefore previous attitudes were of purely academic interest. It is likely, however, in view of the length of time spent looking for alternative jobs, together with reports by Y.E.O's of boys looking for other jobs

and then saying 'very well then, give me a form for the pit', that their attitudes had been similar to those expressed by the schoolboys. Some indications of their present attitudes to the industry were given when they were questioned with a view to finding out what their long term ambitions were in the industry, and to finding out what influence the possible future opportunities resulting from completing Mining Apprenticeship training had had on their decisions to enter the scheme. One thing that most could see clearly was that they would earn high wages as face-workers. As far as the importance of the possibility of becoming a deputy was concerned (when questioned in the early stages of their first year) none, with the exception of 2 or 3 boys, were able to show that they had any clear understanding of the hierarchy or had any ambition to progress in any career structure. (In conversations with boys towards the end of the first year, however, it was clear that a large proportion of them had acquired some understanding of the career structure.) It was also noticeable towards the end of the year that most boys had acquired an understanding of the function of the Trade Union, whereas in the early stages none of them had any idea at all about this except a belief on the part of some boys that trade union representatives were people who 'send you for your dinner' or 'tell you when to go to work', etc.

It is reasonable to suppose that the boys in the sample had attitudes to the industry prior to joining the scheme that were hostile to, or apathetic about it and that joining the scheme was not motivated by aspirations to progress within the NCB career structure (as shown by the lack of evidence of any understanding of it). Where the scheme offered anything to individuals it was high earnings on the coal face and even when the career structure was understood at a later stage only eight boys gave any indication that they could see themselves as deputies.



in the future. Further evidence that promotion to supervisory jobs was not seen as a reason for joining the scheme is suggested by the fact that no boy, in discussing these jobs in relation to himself, talked about it in terms of systematic progression through training and they all (including the eight who aspired to the position of deputy) referred to the possibility (or otherwise) in terms of luck, 'getting in with the bosses' or whether or not they saw themselves as suitable to occupy positions of authority.

Attitudes of both schoolboys and Mining Apprentices towards the industry were clearly coloured by their perception of the long term prospects of coal mining as a source of employment, and the biggest single reason for not wanting to work for the NCB appeared to be lack of long term security. This impression gained from interviewing the boys was also supported by Y.E.O.'s who were unanimous in believing it. They particularly reported a widespread conviction amongst schoolchildren that the industry is insecure in the long term, and that this conviction was based largely on the experiences of the boys' relatives and friends, and the fact that they had witnessed a large number of pit closures in the area.

The point has been made by representatives of the NCB that no employer can offer absolute security and that the mining industry is probably more secure than most in the long term. Also, a fact which one would suppose is to be reckoned with by potential recruits, is that in the short term the Board makes a serious effort to accommodate workers who are sick or disabled by finding suitable alternative work and by facilitating transfers to other collieries when there are redundancies. These points were put to Mining Apprentices when discussing the future of the industry and none of them disputed them, but typically countered 'Yes, but the pits are all closing'. Together with these points is the point

referred to earlier that the Mining Apprenticeship scheme offers an extremely high level of training, but the views of the boys were predominantly coloured by the history of pit closures in the area and a lack of interest in acquiring non-transferable skills. As it happened, during the time of the study the NCB was short of labour and was recruiting older miners (one reported to be 63 years of age) who had in some cases previously been given redundancy payments but the boys did not see this as convincing evidence, particularly as there were rumours current about closures at the pits where older miners were being recruited. The importance of the effect on school-leavers' perception of the prospects of the industry of pit closures is strongly suggested by the experience of the YEO at one town in the area where large redundancies had most recently occurred. It had been possible for this particular YEO to interest only two boys in the industry during the year of the study whilst most of his clients had been the sons of miners. One of these two boys had gone into the Craft Apprenticeship scheme and the other had gone into the Mining Apprenticeship scheme but had declared that if he didn't subsequently get a craft apprenticeship he was definitely going to leave the industry. Previous to the closures in this YEO's area it had been a good source of recruitment to mining. This evidence suggests that at least in the minds of the boys who were questioned about it the mining industry is not one which offers a secure future. Also, in spite of the high standard of training given to Mining Apprentices, and the presumption made by the Board that supervisory staff should be recruited from ex-mining apprentices, the scheme itself is not such that the rewards it offers are sufficient to attract boys into the industry. The absolute level of skill achieved by Mining Apprentices is high, but the skilled status desired by the boys is that recognised by the trade unions as craft skill. There is very clear evidence that the most common preference was for Craft Apprenticeship and that this preference was expressed

not only by boys prior to leaving school, but also by boys who were already embarked on the Mining Apprenticeship training.

It can be supposed that Mining Apprenticeship is not seen as an alternative on the same general level of desirability but is seen as a significantly less desirable course.

#### The Actual Juvenile Job Market

Table 17 is derived from figures supplied by Y.E.O.'s in the area. In compiling the table 'Apprenticeship' is taken to mean training which normally gives membership of a craft type trade union. 'Planned Training in Addition to Induction' includes Mining Apprenticeship which does not fall under the definition used above for 'Apprenticeship'. Seaton Delaval is in the geographical area of the coal field and is a town which, prior to extensive pit closures in the vicinity, was an important source of young recruits to the Mining industry. Of the 1970 school leavers, three went into the NCB Craft Apprenticeship scheme and one went into the Mining Apprenticeship scheme. It can be seen that a higher proportion of boys from Seaton Delaval went in apprenticeships, professional training, and white collar employment than in other Y.E.S. areas in the coal field. This is due in part to boys getting jobs in the new industries in the area, including the firms along the Newcastle/Coast Road. According to the Y.E.O. in that area boys tend to travel greater distances to work in preference to working in mining. The figures for Ashington are shown as being typical for the Ashington, Blyth and Bedlington Y.E.S. areas. It can be seen that the distribution of opportunities for boys in these areas is heavily skewed in favour of 'Other Employment' (mostly unskilled) and 'Planned Training in Addition to Induction' (mainly Mining Apprenticeship), compared with the other areas shown.

Table 17 Types of Occupation Entered by School Leavers, Summer 1970  
(From Information Supplied by Y.E.O.'s in the Area)

Y.E.S. Area	Apprenticeship	Professional	Clerical	Planned Training in addition to induction	Other Employment	TOTAL
Seaton Delaval	38	5.4	13.3	13.3	30	100
Ashington*	12.5 (18.2)	- (1.6)	1.4 (4.2)	33.3 (24.6)	52.8 (51.4)	100
Wallsend	37	5.4	2.7	22.5	32.4	100
Whitley Bay	41.6	-	17.7	6.1	34.6	100
Average	32.3	2.7	8.8	18.8	37.5	100

\* Figures in brackets are average figures for the main  
Coal field Y.E.S. areas:- Blyth, Bedlington, Ashington  
and Seaton Delaval.

Whitley Bay is a largely residential town on the very fringe of the coal field. No boys entered the mining industry from that town in 1970 and it shows the highest number of apprenticeships and white collar jobs of the areas shown. Wallsend is a town in which mining used to be an important source of employment but now no mining work is carried out there. Also, no boy from Wallsend entered the industry in 1970. The comparatively high number of apprenticeships in Wallsend is mostly accounted for by the existence of shipbuilding and marine engineering firms in the area.

Using the criteria normally adopted by the Y.E.S. in compiling official returns, table 17 would appear as below.

Table 18. Types of jobs entered by school leavers Summer 1970 by Y.E.S. definition

	Apprenticeship	Professional	Clerical	Planned Training	Other
	(Per cent)				
Seaton					
Delaval	40	4	11	25	20
Ashington	47	-	1.4	21	30.6
Wallsend	58	5.4	5.4	10.8	20.4
Whitley Bay	47	3.5	14.5	12	23
Average	48	3.2	8.1	17.2	23.5

The differences appearing between tables 17 and 18 arise out of the customary inclusion by the Y.E.S. of such jobs as apprentice hotel manager under the heading of 'Apprenticeship to skilled occupation'. In other words, Y.E.S. definition of skill refers to the actual skill content of a job and not to whether it is skilled in the normal industrial relations meaning of 'skilled' as applied in table 17. The main effect of these differences in definition is to weight the figures in favour of 'Apprenticeship' and against 'Other Employment' where, for example, an assistant storeman may be described as 'apprentice storekeeper'. This

makes comparisons between areas difficult if based on figures published nationally as it is likely that many areas with their own specialised industries may or may not return figures showing inflated numbers in some occupations. The extent of discrepancies arising out of differences in definition is suggested by the fact that Y.E.S. figures for jobs entered by school leavers in summer of 1968 included 2,037 apprenticeships in mining against 101 courses of Planned Training (U.K. figures - D.E. Gazette, May 1970), whereas the figures given by NCB Northumberland Area records for the same year show 202 Craft Apprentices compared with 346 Mining Apprentices.

The overall distribution of male occupations by industry in the S.E. Northumberland Area at June 1968 is shown in table 19. (Figures obtained from Department of Employment Regional Office.)

Table 19 Occupation by Industry - Male, Aged 15 and Over,  
S.E. Northumberland, June 1968  
(Classification by 1958 Standard Industrial Classification)

Industry	Number	% of Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing S.I.C. I	1,055	2.8
Mining and Quarrying II	15,558	41
All Manufacturing III to XVI inclusive	5,602	15
Construction XVII	4,965	13
Gas, Electricity, Water XVIII	1,228	3.2
Transport, Communication XIX	2,357	6.2
Distribution XX	1,876	4.9
Insurance, Banking, Finance XXI	318	0.8
Professional and Scientific Services XXII	1,892	5
Miscellaneous Services and Public Administration XXIII and XXIV	2,831	7.5
Not Classified by Industry	221	0.6

In 1966 in Northumberland 15.3 per cent of the male population was employed in the mining industry. By 1970 this figure had fallen to 8.4 per cent. These figures represent a drop in numbers from 28,484 to 15,551 - a drop of 12,933. The total number of jobs lost (all industries) to men between 1966 and 1970 was:

in Ashington 16,719 (population has also fallen but not proportionately)

Seaton Delaval

Blyth

Bedlington Station

There has been a wide variety of new industry into the area since 1960 but D.E.P. estimate a ratio of about 60:40 male:female jobs, against a desired ratio of 80:20.

This means that the jobs provided by the 29 manufacturing firms which moved into the area between 1960 and 1969 were roughly in the ratio of 60:40 male:female. The view on this expressed by a representative of the D.T.I. in Newcastle was that, given the nature of new industrial development in the country, and the present powers of the D.T.I., it would be over-optimistic to hope for anything significantly better. He referred to 'the clothing manufacturers looking for cheap labour' and pointed out that most of these buy up old cinemas, churches, etc., and thereby escape regulation by the D.T.I. Only one development licence had been refused by the Department and this had been for a clothing manufacturer wishing to employ females in the face of an existing shortage of female labour in the area. Representatives of the D.T.I., the D.E.P., and the Y.E.S. expressed regret that they had insufficient control over employers moving into the area and therefore some employers established businesses with official assistance on the basis of their promising to employ the desired ratios of male:female labour whereas, after starting business they were not obliged to keep this promise and frequently broke it. An example of

a firm which did keep its word about employing men in what was considered to be women's work is Wilkinson Sword Ltd., at Lynemouth.

Cramlington New Town was intended as a focal point for new industry in the area to replace jobs lost in mining, but it has become a commuter town for people working in Tyneside and has failed to attract sufficient new industries to make any significant improvement in the area's job market.

Although the area unemployment figures are high there are pockets of intense labour shortage within it, and this fact was referred to by representatives of the D.T.I. and the D.E.P. These pockets of shortage are mainly for skilled (craft) workers and technicians but are not as severe as they are in places such as Team Valley and Birtley on the south side of Gateshead in County Durham. These shortages exist at the same time as general unemployment because of the age and skill distribution of the unemployed men in the area. For many of the traditional skills of the unemployed men in the area there is no demand anywhere.

Construction work currently accounts for a significant number of the jobs in the area. The actual number rose between 1960 and 1969 by 1,344. A closer examination of the figures shows that over this period, for example in Bedlington Station, the number of jobs in construction fell from 1,322 to 520 - a drop of 802, or about 60 per cent. At Seaton Delaval, on the other hand, the number rose from 215 to 1,392 in the same period. Therefore the biggest alternative source of employment to mining is not only transitory and migratory in the short run, but also transitory in the long term as the current phase of construction work such as the North-umberland Spine Road is completed. This also means, again, that official statistics (Y.E.S.) showing proportions of school leavers in the coal field area and going into apprenticeship or to other forms of progressive employment paint a slightly optimistic picture in view of the number of apprentice-



ships which are in the construction industry.

In addition to the way new jobs in the area are divided between men and women the great majority of them are (according to Y.E.O.'s and the D.T.I.) semi-skilled or unskilled as technological advances are incorporated in the factories from the very beginning. Charles Levinson, Secretary of the International Chemical Workers' Union, estimates (1972) that 65 per cent of modern capital investment is of a kind that directly leads to redundancy.

This means that these employers are not offering the type of long term career opportunities which have been shown to be preferred by school leavers. In fact, many of them will not employ anybody under the age of eighteen, and this accounts for the way some boys (reported by Y.E.O.'s) after leaving school mark time in a variety of dead-end jobs until they are eighteen and old enough to try for work in the factories. The boys in the apprentice sample as well as the boys still at school showed, on being questioned, that they bore no unjustified optimism about the range and number of opportunities open to them. They did have an imperfect knowledge of the actual details of the job market but they had a good understanding of the overall situation.

Table 20 shows the replies of boys at school to the question 'What is the second biggest industry in the area?'. (They had already stated that mining was the biggest industry.) The question to which Table 20 shows the answers specifically asked for the boys to name the second biggest industry. In fact, 43 per cent of the boys named a firm, 37 per cent actually named an industry, 1 boy named a job, and 7 per cent said 'factories'. The remainder were the boys who gave no answer.

Table 20      Second Biggest Industry in the Area - Replies  
of Schools Sample

Industry	No. of Boys
No Answer	48
Textiles	8
Alcan/Smelting	20
Iron and Steel	4
Metals	1
Minerals (Soft Drinks)	2
Factories	16
Car Industry	3
Electrical	2
Heavy Engineering	2
Light Engineering	4
Shipping	14
Shipbuilding	6
Oil	2
Construction	1
Tourism	1
	<hr/>
	N = 134

For both groups of boys there was evidence that their understanding of the situation in a detailed way was limited to the immediate vicinity of their homes, and their views about existing jobs were dominated by the existence of the nearest big employer. An illustration of this is the belief held by boys who lived near the Alcan Smelter site that it would offer alternative opportunities in the future and it was there that hope lay, if any. This, of course, was allowing more significance to the existence of the site than it warranted. In fact a workforce of about 2,500 was employed on the site during this period and this workforce consisted of construction workers. The final number of people expected to be employed when the smelter is operational is in the region of 600, and this is said by some authorities to be an optimistic estimate.

A very large proportion of both groups felt that the situation for school leavers was bad in Northumberland and was likely to get worse rather than better.

Table 21                      Future Prospects in the area

Good	10%	)	
		)	22%
Fairly good	12%	)	
Bad/will get worse	53%	)	
		)	72%
Bad/will get better	5%	)	
		)	
Quite bad	14%	)	
Not sure/don't know	6%		6%

Examples of replies to question about prospects in the area were:

'Good if you've got qualification'

'Bad - coal can only last a few more years'

'Bad unless more factories come'

'Good because there are new factories'

'Not good for unskilled workers'

'Quite good as long as people are prepared to stay at school and learn a trade'

'Not enough industry'

'All the jobs are for women'

Most of the boys who were optimistic were those who lived within easy travelling distance of Cramlington and pinned their hopes on the influx of new factories into the area. As suggested above, the future prospects of the area in terms of opportunities for school leavers is not likely to be significantly better as a result of new factories moving in in view of the employment policies of these firms.

The boys who mentioned factories saw them as offering good opportunities although examination of the actual jobs they provide shows that they were not the sort of jobs for which the same boys had expressed preference.

### Theoretical Description of the Job Market

For analytical purposes the available job opportunities may be described as a range of discrete groups of types, and these groups can be usefully defined in terms of empirically observable factors. Job opportunities for school-leavers may be classified in a variety of ways, for example in terms of Standard Industrial Classification, in terms of likely future income and security, or by a large number of alternative criteria.

For the purposes of this study it was felt that the most useful classification from the point of view of deriving explanations was that which had the most meaning and provided the most plausible basis for action for the actors concerned. In other words, a classification was adopted which was meaningful in terms of the boys' interpretation of, and reaction to, the job market which they perceived at the time of the study, and also provided a basis for explaining the actions and attitudes of people giving advice to the boys as well as the employers who gave them jobs.

In the study the job opportunities open to school leavers were grouped in the following way:

#### Boys' jobs involving:

1. Periods of systematic training, usually accompanied by contractual obligations, or articles, and leading to professional qualifications such as Associate Membership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. The NCB Student Apprenticeship scheme would come in this category.
2. Periods of formal or informal training involving further education and requiring a more or less high standard of technical knowledge and culminating in work such as technician, hotel manager, etc. Such a job may be that of an architect's draughtsman which requires a high degree of specialised knowledge without involving associate membership of a professional body.

3. Further education (usually) leading to progress within a career structure more or less determined by the individual's demonstrated ability. An example of this type of job would be that of bank employee with the opportunity of becoming a bank manager. Such a career structure is one without built in structural limits and is open, subject to the individual's capability, to the highest levels. This type of career structure is also typified by some civil service departments and by some managerial structures in industry.
4. Apprenticeship, with or without further education or serious formal training, leading to 'time served' membership of an organisation. This is the craft apprenticeship which leads to full time served membership of a craft type trade union. The NCB Craft Apprenticeship scheme is in this category.
5. Periods of formal training (with or without further education) leading to a specified level of skill and allowing access to structurally determined levels in the career structure. The NCB Mining Apprenticeship scheme is typical of this category in that it leads to a level of skill specified by the Board and is a factor in determining suitability for promotion to definite levels of managerial status.
6. Periods of training (usually without further education) leading to a rigidly specified level of skill and providing no preferential access to promotion opportunities. Such a job is one where an individual is trained to perform a particular task such as might be involved in assembly work, or certain jobs in the mining industry.
7. No training at all, i.e. unskilled work, the performance of which requires a level of physical and mental ability normally to be assumed in any individual leaving the educational system.

Of course the above classification is by no means exhaustive and in reality will reveal inconsistencies in that some jobs will have

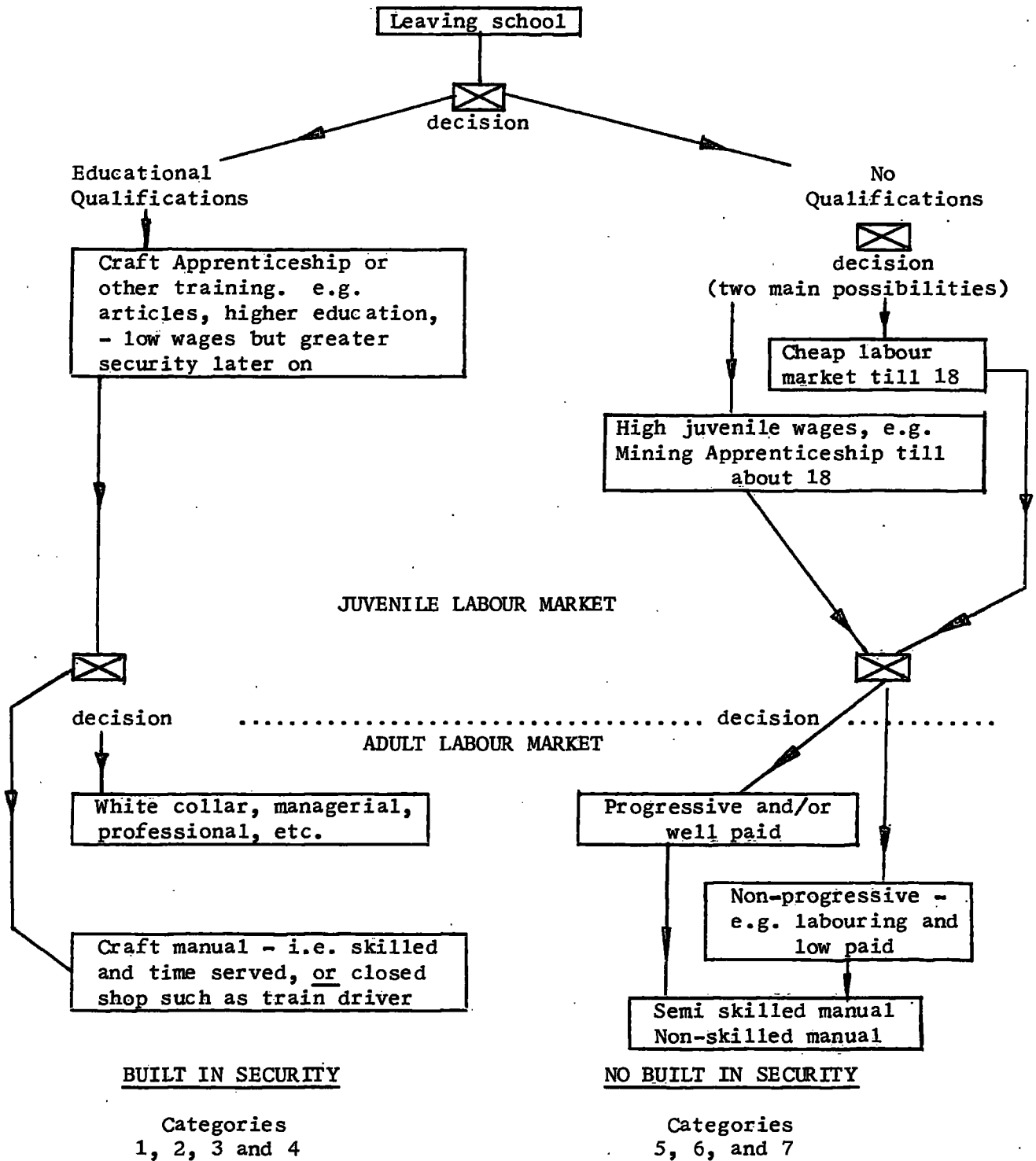
characteristics ascribed to more than one category. It was, however, felt to be useful for the purposes of this study and, for example, it enabled some sort of sense to be made of employers' reported methods of selecting potential juvenile employees. Many of the observed factors and constraints within the job market and upon which this classification was selected were subjective judgements on the part of the participants and where actors' common subjective interpretation of their situation were internalised to the extent of becoming objective constraints. In other words, the logical test of usefulness of a classification of this sort is whether it can be empirically seen as forming a basis for action on the part of an individual.

An important methodological problem is involved with the use of such a prior definition of the job market structure in that there is some risk of seeking data selectively such that it will itself justify the chosen classification. Also, of course, there is the risk of seeking information in such a way that the respondent perceives the framework and replies accordingly and perhaps in a way which is inconsistent with the model which he himself takes as a basis for action. In practice this difficulty was resolved by taking care to leave the terms of reference as revealed by questionnaires and interviews as open as possible.

The study revealed that some people (a very small number of the boys and some adult workers, mainly) whose views were sought did not in fact share the selected definition of the job market structure, but enough evidence was revealed to show that some consensus did exist amongst most of the people involved. In any case, it served as a reference point from which to explain certain individual's actions, even where these individuals apparently had a different conception of the job market. The actions of The actions of the Board itself in respect of training policy are usefully

explained in terms of the divergence of its view of the job market and that postulated as the consensus.

Using the above classification it is possible to construct a schematic description of the job market facing the school leaver, taking account of employment policies of employers, policies of organisations such as trade unions, etc.



The above description of the job market allows two main directions for the school leaver: either he travels down the right hand side of the diagram in which case he misses certain decision points/choices and finishes up in the non-secure part of the adult labour market, or he takes the left hand direction, faced with a series of alternative decisions and finishes up in a more or less secure occupation. As already recognised this schema has its weaknesses but, broadly speaking it divides the courses of action (and their consequences) open to school leavers in a meaningful way.

The meaning of non-secure as applied to the right hand side of the diagram is that, even if circumstances may cause a job to have secure long-term prospects, this security is not dependent upon any special market power (arising out of scarce skill or membership of a protective organisation) and therefore is fortuitous.

The original decision point, or the point of leaving school is not clearly defined. This is because at the time of the study the statutory minimum school leaving age was 15. This meant that for the boy disposed towards craft apprenticeship there was a real element of decision in that by leaving school at 15 he might join the queue as soon as possible or, by deciding to stay at school an extra year with the possibility of getting educational qualifications he might be better equipped to get an apprenticeship. Failing to get qualifications after staying at school for another year, however, would leave the boy with no comparative advantage vis-a-vis other 15 year old leavers and dangerously close to the upper age limit set by union apprenticeship policies.

For convenience the term 'decision' is used loosely. In a more rigorous description of the situation it would need to be more carefully defined, but broadly speaking it can be seen as two basic components: there is the actual conscious decision that may be made in



choosing between several objective alternatives (e.g. which firm to apply for for training), and there is what may be called a predisposition towards a particular range of objective alternatives. In these terms an individual boy who tries to get a craft apprenticeship and fails, and then elects to enter the Mining Apprenticeship scheme with the hope of getting into the craft apprenticeship scheme at a later date, may be said to be acting on a 'decision' (or choice) in accordance with a predisposition towards craft apprenticeship.

The kind of factors affecting the development of predispositions towards certain categories of work are discussed in a later section which deals with the theory of job choice.

The hypothesis outlined on p.83 may be re-phrased in terms of the diagram on p.107.

The boy who fails to get into an opening which lies on the left side of the diagram is left the alternative of an opening on the right hand side. Mining Apprenticeship lies on this side of the diagram but offers (at least in the minds of the boys in the sample) a possibility of reverting to the left side. Failing this possibility materialising and, given the employment policies of alternative employers in the area, the boy decides to opt for the Mining Apprenticeship as the safest and most lucrative place to be pending his eighteenth birthday when the other, more desirable, alternatives on that side of the diagram become available to him. Alternatively he may lose his predisposition towards craft work as he acquires a preference for the opportunities offered by completion of his Mining Apprenticeship.

The evidence gathered in the course of the study supports this hypothesis. A preference for craft apprenticeship has been demonstrated as has a widely held belief in the efficacy of Mining Apprenticeship as a

'back door' entrance to it. Also, the types of jobs entered by boys leaving the scheme, together with the lack of evidence that any of the boys in the sample has seen the prospects offered by completion of the scheme as sufficient reason for entering it, strongly support the conclusion that it was not seen as a course of action towards a directly related objective (except as the 'back door' objective) but, rather, as a temporary situation for its own sake. Some boys were met who were in later stages of their apprenticeship (e.g. the boy mentioned in connection with the Youth Involvement Committee) and who demonstrated a keen enthusiasm for the prospects offered by the scheme but no similar views were found amongst boys in the sample.

The lack of understanding of the function of trade unions (and therefore of the direct relationship between the system of Industrial Relations and the labour market) does not refute the conclusion that preference for craft status is a major factor affecting job preferences of some school leavers. Neither does the lack of detailed knowledge about actual job opportunities in the area lessen the validity of conclusions based on evidence related to boys' feelings concerning the job market about the importance to the boys of getting craft apprenticeships after leaving school.

CHAPTER 9

HOW THE DECISIONS ARE MADE

What has been said up to this point assumes the Mining Apprenticeship scheme existing within a system of external constraints, and a predisposition on the part of the boys concerned towards a particular type of job, i.e. Craft Apprenticeship. Apart from a description of the evidence relating to the existence of this predisposition and the reasons given by the boys for not preferring feasible alternatives which may be seen as desirable by the outside observer, nothing has been said about the processes by which the boys acquired their predispositions. Many of the assumptions made, and the factors taken as given, would themselves form subjects of useful research and the study of the whole area of juvenile job choice would benefit from the development of a comprehensive theory of job choice, probably building on what is already known about the Sociology of Education.

The literature on Youth and Work suffers from the absence of any generally accepted theoretical basis. A result of this is that instead of systematically building a body of knowledge such that each successive study may be used to verify or refute conclusions drawn in previous studies, we have a disjointed collection of studies in which the theoretical frameworks used are almost as numerous as the studies themselves.

Also, apart from the lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework the practical approaches of different researchers vary and not enough work in this field has been concentrated on acquiring data from the children themselves. As Keil et al. (1966) state, '... much of the literature is based on impressions gained by teachers, personnel managers, Youth Employment Officers, etc.' '... although valuable in themselves give only a partial insight'.

A further criticism of the literature is made by Maizels (1970) who points out that most studies have concentrated on job preferences stated before leaving school. A notable exception which she refers to is M.P. Carter (1962) which is a report of a study made of 100 boys and girls in Sheffield over the transitional period between school and work and makes a serious attempt to take account of the influence of factors such as home environment and parental aspirations.

Maizel's study covers this transitional period and she concentrates heavily on information gained from the children themselves, but she uses an inadequate theoretical framework. She uses Reisman's 'Tradition Directed', 'Inner Directed', and 'Other Directed' to explain job choices of adolescents.

Tradition Directed refers to situations in which family or neighbourhood traditions are such that no other choice is seriously considered.

Inner Directed refers mainly to the individual's own talents and interests.

Other Directed refers to choices made with primary reference to outside sources of information or advice or to considerations of prospects, security and position.

The following table is reproduced from p.94 of Maizel's study.

Table 22 Reasons for Original Job Preference (% of Total) (Boys)

---

Inner Directed

Good at subjects required or associated with intended work	23
Always wanted this kind of work ... ..	22
Like some special feature of the job ...	13

Other Directed

Job Prospects ... ..	19
Others suggested and advised ... ..	8

Tradition Directed

Parents, relatives, etc., in same or similar work	11
---	----

contd...

Table 22 contd.

Other Reasons

Alternatives not attractive or suitable	...	6
Didn't know what else to do	... ..	3
Don't Know	... ..	1
No Answer	... ..	4
		<u>110</u> (sic)

It can be seen that the use of such a theoretical framework presents serious difficulties for a study of this type. If the framework were adopted prior to seeking information it would introduce the methodological problem of forming questionnaires and interviews such that responses were not constrained by the subjects' perception of, and desire to conform to (or vice versa) the implied frame of reference. Alternatively, if it were adopted afterwards as a framework within which to place the data there could be a serious need to rationalise the subjects' responses to make them fit. Either may be the cause of a need for a 'residual' category containing a significant proportion of subjects.

In the case of the present study the use of this theoretical framework (or one like it) would have made it difficult if not impossible to say anything meaningful about the boys' career choices. For example, a boy who nurtured an ambition at school to become an electrician may have tried hard at school to develop the subjects required by the job and become good at them, thereby reinforcing his ambition. This process of positive feedback may have started at an early age so that he could not recall having any previous ambitions and in his reverie he may have dwelled upon particular features of the job. Also, this preference may have been reinforced by his being familiar with the fact that he knew it to be a secure job offering good prospects of advancement and that he had been encouraged and advised by others to keep this ambition. His father may have been an electrician or the family tradition may have been one of unskilled pit work, thereby encouraging his parents to advise him to find a better job such as

working as an electrician. Also, coming from a mining community, he may not have been aware of any alternatives which would give him the same degree of security, earning power, and satisfaction. In other words, he could have been placed into any one category or all of them depending on what particular thoughts occurred to him as worthy of utterance or emphasis when being questioned about what his original ambition had been. Also, in the course of the present study a marked tendency was shown by some boys to rationalise about their ambitions and a framework of this type would have been inclined to draw on this tendency.

Another point is that it may be useful to know not only what a child's job preference is, but also how that preference came to be formed. Also, it may be useful as in the present study, to know to what extent that preference forms a basis for action, whether it is a preference which can reasonably be translated into achievement, and also whether it falls into any particular category of occupation when looked at from the point of view of class associations etc.

An early approach to the problem of the theory of job choice is given in E. Ginzberg et al. (1958) in which job choice is described as a developmental sequence with three phases:

periods of fantasy choice

tentative choice

realistic choice.

This approach allows for the existence of external job market constraints on choice as seen by the individual child but does not allow for account to be taken of the allocative nature of the social system within which he acts.

Keil et al. (1966) express dissatisfaction with the idea of concentrating on job choices and suggest a theoretical framework which allows the allocative nature of the system to be recognised and the phrase 'job

entry\* to be substituted for job choice. They list factors which are to be considered in explaining job entry:

Family

Neighbourhood

Peer Groups

Education received

Influence of Mass Media

Extent of formal vocational guidance

Their theoretical framework is described as follows:

(a) Socialisation of the young person into the world of work.

(b) Previous work experience.

(c) Wider social influences.

(a) + (b) + (c) go to make

(d) formulation of a set of attitudes towards, and perceptions about work.

(a) + (b) + (c) + (d) determine

(e) The actual job entry which results in

(f) Experiences as a worker which determine

(g) Adjustment/non-adjustment for the young worker. This is expressed by either a measure of satisfaction, by a reformulation of (d), by ritualised dissatisfaction or by job change. They then go on to list significant factors in two categories:

Formal

Informal

and refer to 'core' attitudes such as:

Intrinsic - work valued for itself

Extrinsic - work valued as a means to an end; career - work as a status provider.

This categorisation of factors as formal or informal, and the assumptions of intrinsic and extrinsic 'core' attitudes may be attractive for purposes

of exposition but must to a large extent be arbitrary and therefore of dubious use in the formulation of a generally applicable theoretical framework.

In fact, R.L. Chester (1968) says that what Keil et al. describe is at a low level of abstraction and should be called methodology and not theory. He says that it deals with adjustment after the decision to terminate education and does not allow for personal variables such as I.Q., specific attitudes, etc.

Chester rearranged Keil et al as follows:

- (a) Those socialising experiences of the young person which are relevant to education and work
- (b) personal variables
- (c) facilities and provision which assist rational choice.
- (a) + (b) + (c) result in
- (d) the reformulation of attitudes, expectations and assumptions regarding his occupational and educational future.
- (a) + (b) + (c) + (d) lead to
- (e) entry into either:
  - (i) a job or
  - (ii) a Further Education situation, and from this,
- (f) actual experience leads to a situation of:
- (g) adjustment or non-adjustment which can be expressed by an index of satisfaction, by a reformulation of (d), or by mobility to another work or educational locus.

This theory accommodates the idea that the end result of the social forces acting on a child is that he is allocated to an occupation and that, as Chester says, 'Allocation begins in primary education with a series of decisions, each one further categorising the child'. 'By revising Keil



et al. into a wider and more general form transition into work may be examined within a framework which also permits examination of similar transitions and forms a bridge between certain aspects of Industrial and Educational Sociology which draw on common material. It permits an array of a mass of divers material, and by specifying gaps in knowledge such a framework serves both interpretive and heuristic purposes and leads to the avoidance of abstract empiricism'.

The use of the term 'decision' is not precluded by the theoretical framework suggested by Chester. For example, the decision to leave school may be made on the child's behalf by parents or others or by the child himself by simply taking the next most natural step in the circumstances, or simply going along with the system - i.e. acting on the presumption of a decision made on his behalf by others. This is consistent with the idea of an allocative system but still allows for account to be taken of decisions. The importance of this for the present study is that whilst recognising the allocative nature of the system I would wish to maintain that analysis of boys' behaviour in relation to the Mining Apprenticeship scheme can still be usefully made by reference to their actions as individuals and that the conclusions regarding wastage stated above (Ch.8) would still be valid in the context of such a system. With regard to (g) in Chester's formulation (satisfaction, reformulation of (d) - mobility to another educational or job locus) one would also wish to include (g) from Keil et al., i.e. Ritualised dissatisfaction in order to allow for the possibility of staying in a job after having reformulated 'attitudes, expectations and assumptions regarding his occupational and educational future'. Indeed one would refer to the point made by W.W. Daniel (1969) regarding the separateness of three elements: job choice, job satisfaction, and quitting a job; also the fact that a craft apprentice can draw on future status whereas a mining apprentice cannot. The point of this being that

any theoretical statement about the actions of young workers must take account of the possibility of extreme dissatisfaction with a work situation (resolved possibly by ritualistic behaviour) which is seen as transitional towards a highly desirable situation. With this kind of approach we can explain, for instance, the socialisation of boys into mining in terms of earlier socialising experiences and no contradiction arises out of saying that Mining Apprentices are very easily socialised into the job but try very hard to leave.

#### WHO HELPS TO MAKE THE DECISIONS?

In this study attention was concentrated on the declared intentions and preferences of boys who either had left, or were expecting to leave school at the next opportunity. In other words, from the point when the decision had been made to leave school and also about what sort of job to apply for.

Some attention was paid to the part played by parents, teachers, Y.E.O's and various others in helping the boys to articulate these decisions and to act on them after they had been made. Parents, school teachers and relatives and friends, generally speaking, were concerned with both the making of the decision and with the first steps in translating the decision into action. Youth Employment Officers on the other hand were mainly involved only at the stage where the attempts were being made to get chosen jobs.

#### Parents

One would suppose that the part played by parents in forming career decisions is by far greater than that played by other people. It was, however, difficult in practice to find out with any certainty exactly what form their influence had taken.

It is quite probable that few of the parents of boys who were interviewed had any very clear idea about the actual working of the job market and the actual job opportunities available. Also it is likely that few of them (having left school several years before the system of school examinations now in existence) understood very clearly the relationship between the various qualifications with which their children's generation leave school and the sort of jobs they can expect to get with them. As far as one was able to gather from asking the boys about their parents' understanding of the educational system (as well as from the opinion of Y.E.O's) most parents merely had a vague notion about certificates from school meaning a better job after leaving. In the case of nearly all the boys encountered in the study the final calculation in this respect was to be made on the basis of no qualifications.

In conversation with the boys (only boys in the scheme were interviewed at length on this subject) it was clear that on the whole mothers showed more interest than fathers in their sons' careers, to the extent that some boys denied that their fathers had shown any interest at all. An illustration of the attitude taken by some parents is given by the following incident recounted by an NCB Training Officer. This particular Training Officer did a certain amount of youth work outside his job and generally took an interest out of hours in boys who got into trouble at work. On one occasion he went to an apprentice's home to find out how he was getting on after being hurt at work and the boy's father did not turn round from the newspaper whilst the Training Officer was in the room. The Training Officer did not believe that this behaviour on the part of the man arose from any resentment or suggestion that the Training Officer was interfering. He believed that it was a fairly normal reaction for many fathers who believed that the affairs of their children were the exclusive responsibility of their wives. This, of course, is not to say

that all fathers were disinterested in their sons' problems.

Most boys did not believe that their fathers knew a great deal about what career possibilities existed except that when they worked for the NCB they had a pretty good understanding of how to go about getting certain jobs. It was probably from their fathers that they acquired most of their knowledge concerning the relative desirability of craft apprenticeship.

Assuming that parents did not have a lot of detailed knowledge of the job market their influence on their sons may not necessarily have taken the form of actual advice, but it may have been that the boys simply perceived from a variety of clues what their parents' expectations of them were. The parents may have actually given them encouragement to try for certain jobs or discouraged them from trying for others. In other words, the boys internalised, to some extent, their parents' expectations of them based on their (the parents') understanding of the criteria.

As far as mothers were concerned, the majority of them had shown a considerable willingness to help their sons in any way they could but this will almost certainly have been by offering general support and encouragement rather than explicit advice. Some boys said that their parents had merely told them to stick in at school and mention has already been made of the negative influence of some parents who were said by the boys to have convinced them that they were not capable of getting good jobs. Basil Bernstein (1958) states: 'It is the inability of working class people to conceptualise that makes them incapable of choosing good jobs.'. Also, Carter (1962) refers to much parental advice being about smartness and punctuality ('beliefs' and 'feelings', p.94). Carter's point is valid in that he refers to the fact that working class parents, whilst possibly having a reasonable conception of the advantages of certain jobs, do not know by what procedures these jobs are obtained and may there-

fore, provided their children behave correctly, assume that the normal working of the system will ensure that they enter the best jobs available to children with their abilities. Bernstein's point, however, is of doubtful validity and is itself informed by an inability to conceptualise the obstacles (given an absence of contact with people in Middle Class occupations) to finding out not only what particular jobs entail but, more important, by exactly what processes these jobs are obtained.

Whilst not being able to offer detailed advice, many of the parents of the boys in the sample positively supported their sons, as mentioned above. Eighteen of the boys in the sample had been accompanied by one or both of their parents to the interview for the job. For fifteen of these boys it was their first or second attempt to get a job. After a boy had had more than one job prior to applying for a Mining Apprenticeship there was a definite tendency for him to go by himself for his interview. No comparative figures are available on this point but one might suppose that 39 per cent is a fairly high proportion of parents accompanying boys to interviews. In addition to those who were accompanied some boys said that someone would have come with them but could not get time off work to do so. This implied some sort of interest in their sons' jobs even if they were unable to give a lot of advice in choosing them. Altogether probably half of the boys' parents would have been willing to go with their sons when they were applying for jobs. The finding with regard to mothers taking the biggest share of responsibility for their children's future is similar to that mentioned by Carter (1966, p.52).

#### Tradition in Mining

On the subject of the influence of parents on children's job choices Carter (1966) has something to say about tradition. He says (p.64)

\*Assuredly there are strong family ties to certain occupations - generation succeeds generation into dock-work, to the pits or into the Steel industry or agriculture\*. He also points out in his Sheffield Study (1962, p.94) that some families were proud of associations with big firms but few boys wanted to follow their father's occupation. There was no evidence in the present study of pride of association with the NCB, or particular antipathy on the part of boys to doing to same job as their fathers.

Tradition is often referred to in respect of sons following fathers in occupations in such a way as to imply that an association with a type of work is continued because it is for some reason(s) seen as desirable by the actors concerned that it should be so. Of course tradition may be continued in a passive way but it may arise out of a chronic inability to discontinue it although it is not seen as desirable, or, as Mays (1954) puts it, it may continue as a result of '... inertia and tacit acceptance of existing conditions' (p.154).

It was difficult in the present study to be quite clear about the exact nature and importance of traditional association with the mining industry; in other words whether traditional links with the industry tended to support or militate against boys going into the industry, independent of other factors affecting their choice.

In reply to a question about their parents' attitudes to their (the boys) going into the industry, the 46 boys in the Mining Apprenticeship Sample gave the following replies:

Table 23

PARENTS HAD:

---

No Objection	...	...	19(boys)
Strongly encouraged to join the scheme	...	...	6
Agreed as a way into craft	...	...	5
Not liked it but not objected	...	...	3
Been persuaded	...	...	5
No interest	...	...	7
D.K.	...	...	1

---

These figures would suggest no overwhelming objection to the industry but the possibility exists that parents whose children went into the scheme were partly drawn from a minority of parents who had no objection to mining, did not understand the scheme, or were disinterested, etc. Tables 5, 6, and 24 may be interpreted to support the assumption of a traditional affinity for the industry.

Table 24      Who suggested applying for Mining Apprenticeship?

---

Parents/Uncle	41%)	48%
Brothers	7%)	
Friends	13%	
Youth Employment Officer	7%	
Schoolteacher	-	
Self	33%	

---

But a questionnaire was applied to 134 final year boys at a number of schools which were representative of the schools formerly attended by boys in the Mining Apprentice-sample. The results of this showed that 46 per cent of these final year boys had fathers who worked in mining. Sixty-one per cent of the total were being positively discouraged by their parents from entering the industry, and 52 per cent of this proportion were the sons of miners.

In other words, 69 per cent of miners who had sons in this (schools) sample positively discouraged them from going into mining.

The rest of the family, friends etc.

Tables 25 and 26 below show the extent to which other relatives and friends were reported by the boys to have influenced their decisions to join the scheme.

One can imagine that conversations and general contact with brothers and friends would be quite considerable and, particularly when

age differences are small, brothers would be part of an important reference group. Also, it is not surprising that uncles should be comparatively influential as compared with fathers as one gained the impression from many of the boys that an uncle would often be more ready to chat with his brother's or sister's son than the boy's own father would. The findings differ from Carter (1962, p.94) who found that brothers, friends and neighbours had very small influence on boys' career decisions.

As shown in table 25 below some of the boys in the study came from very large families, but no significant relationship existed between family size and the decision to leave school, unlike Maizel's study (1970, p.41). Similarly no significant differences were found in relationships to career ambitions and family size.

Table 25

No. of Boys	No. of Siblings
18	0-4
21	4+
5	8+
2	15

Of the boys with 4+ siblings, 10 had mining fathers and a further 6 had fathers who were retired, deceased, or unemployed but had been in mining.

Ferguson and Cunnison (1951, p.30) relate family size to poor post-school performance and a higher incidence of boys in stop-gap jobs, but in the present study there was no evidence that boys from larger families were approaching their working lives in any significantly different way from the boys with few relatives living at home.



CHAPTER 10

THE WORK OF THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND ITS  
ROLE IN THE COAL FIELD AREA OF NORTHUMBERLAND

The actual role and influence of the Youth Employment Service of the Department of Employment in the Northumberland area is hard to ascertain with any real certainty (but whatever the form of its influence it is undoubtedly extensive). This uncertainty results partly from the dual nature of its official role.

In any area covered by a Youth Employment Office there exists a finite number of vacancies for school-leavers and young workers up to the age of 18 who are the group eligible as clients of the service. As well as this finite number of occupational opportunities there exists a finite number of young people available for employment. These are the essential facts of the situation in any Youth Employment area and from the point of view of the industrial system the functional role of the Y.E.S. is to reconcile these two quantities. It is to try to match the demand for labour with the demand for work by acting as a market place for juvenile labour where the Y.E.O. acts as a mediator. Officially, the chief task of the Y.E.S. is 'vocational guidance based on full information about the person and also job requirements' (The Work of the Y.E.S. 1953-56. A Report by the Y.E.S., p.6).

The employer of juvenile labour looks to the Y.E.O. to introduce to him children of the type he wishes to employ, and relies to a greater or lesser extent on his ability to recommend the child who most suits his requirements. The young person, on the other hand, looks to the Y.E.O. to inform him of and recommend him for the best job available. In other words, each party to a placement (the child and the employer) expects the

Y.E.O. to serve his or her best interests and these do not always coincide. The employer will normally want the most capable labour whereas the Y.E.O., if he acts in the best interests of the child, may try to induce the employer to give an opportunity to a child of slightly less ability but who is adequately capable of doing the job. This conflict of purposes sometimes leads to the Y.E.O. being accused of simply acting in an allocative capacity rather than advising and helping children to obtain the best possible employment with their available talents.

To a large extent, however, the Y.E.O. is usually quite restricted in the degree to which he can work in the interests solely of either side of the job market. The actual freedom he has to help young people in a realistic way depends largely on the number and variety of jobs available in his area and obviously in an area where there is a shortage of jobs generally, as well as a narrow range of different types of jobs, it is quite conceivable that he will have to advise some young people to apply for jobs which are not ideally suited to them. This factor may also work in reverse against the employers in an area. If there is a high demand for children of particular abilities then they may be obliged to employ children who they would not normally have preferred. In the coal field area of Northumberland in fact, where industry is by no means characterised by diversity or employment of large numbers of skilled workers, and demand for jobs exceeds supply in general, there are some employers who are unsuccessful in employing the types of young workers that they would wish to, although of course these employers are in the minority. So there are definite structural limits to the freedom of the Y.E.O.

In addition to these structural limits imposed by actual numbers of opportunities and young people to take them, there are certain customary,

traditional and value based constraints. For example some jobs are only considered suitable for some types of children regardless of real ability actually to do them. Apprenticeship is an obvious example of this. If two boys with equal ability to follow an apprenticeship both apply but one has educational qualifications whereas the other has not, it is generally true that the one with the qualifications will get the job. In the case of an apprenticeship offered by a firm who customarily only take boys with certificates for training, the Y.E.O. might justifiably hesitate to try to get a boy with no qualifications into that apprenticeship. More than one Y.E.O. who was interviewed in the course of the present study made reference to the fact that their ability to do their job depends largely on their maintaining the good will of employers in their areas, and if they persistently referred boys to some employers who had their own ideas about suitability of types of school-leavers for jobs, they would cease to cooperate with the service. These were generally firms who offered training in highly desirable jobs and would not have to rely on the Y.E.S. to keep them supplied with applicants for jobs. (There is no legal compulsion for firms to notify the service of vacancies.) A. Beveridge (1963, p.44) refers to a problem in connection with Y.E.O.s being accused of making unsuitable recommendations. He refers to a survey carried out by the Institute of Y.E.O.s which revealed that one fifth of employers failed to give details of the employment to boys when they engaged them. Of the four fifths who were told, more than one-fifth found the job different from what they had been led to believe. Beveridge points out that in some cases the boys probably misunderstood but maintains that it is probable that some were misled.

Beveridge also mentions firms complaining for instance that the boy the Y.E.O. sent for a craft apprenticeship is not up to standard. When

the Y.E.O. refers to his records he sees that the employer actually asked for a boy for the stores because he normally started his apprentices off in the stores.

Some Y.E.O.s in Northumberland also referred to the fact that in situations where the number of opportunities is strictly limited and they judge some employers to be offering comparatively good opportunities in the circumstances, they have difficulty in persuading some boys to take these jobs. Such jobs may be of the semi-skilled variety in some of the new factories which have been established in the area and some boys will not take them because they consider them to be 'women's work'. Apart from the fact that cultural attitudes to work may cause some jobs to be considered women's work whereas in other areas the same judgement may not be made, a number of jobs in the new industries in the area are in fact jobs which women would normally be employed to do. At least one factory in Northumberland which manufactures razor blades has a policy of employing men to do certain jobs out of deference to the employment situation in the area although they would normally consider these to be jobs for women. The nature of jobs which are coming into the area does in fact represent a matter for some concern on the part of the interested authorities in respect of the type of labour force employed.

Related to this point is one made by Liepmann (1960, Ch.VI) with reference to the value of apprenticeship for boys and parents. She points out that because apprenticeship is so highly valued it is hard for the Y.E.O. to persuade boys to discriminate between good and bad employers. ('Bad' employers being those who mislead boys or otherwise disregard the boys' interests by, say, getting a boy to commit himself to an apprenticeship which turns out to involve insufficient training.)

This view is borne out by Y.E.O.s in South East Northumberland who find that (not only in respect of apprenticeship) some boys judge jobs by the categories they fall into rather than by the particular merits of the jobs themselves. Of course this is not to be marvelled at in view of the lack of real knowledge that many young people have about what constitutes a good or bad job before actually encountering the problems that can arise out of doing a bad one. Indeed, in the case of some companies the Y.E.O. himself may be hard put to it to ascertain the quality of a job that is being offered. Apart from difficulties for the Y.E.O. in obtaining previous information about a job or an apprenticeship that is being offered there are serious weaknesses in his ability to follow up reliably children he has helped to place in jobs. Information about how jobs turn out is obtained by asking children to return cards to the Y.E.O. stating whether they are still in the jobs in which they were placed, the nature of the jobs, etc. There is no compulsion for the children to return these cards and normally only a small proportion of children do so. However, the cards which are returned may convey erroneous information. A boy may obtain a learnership which is described as an apprenticeship, or a job 'leading to apprenticeship at a later date'. As Liepmann points out, the Y.E.S. definition of apprenticeship is a very wide one and includes not only proper apprenticeships but also learnerships which are apprenticeships only in name. Also, there are jobs leading to apprenticeship at a later date and some boys may be taken on in excess of the number who will actually receive an apprenticeship but when these boys return their cards to the Y.E.O. they quite rightly say that they have the prospect of an apprenticeship. The problem for the Y.E.O. in this respect is to keep the trust of both the boys and of the firms.

The way in which Y.E.O.s become aware of jobs which are available for young people is by canvassing firms in their areas, and when a firm is

on good terms with an officer they may telephone or write to ask for boys or girls to be recommended to them. As there is no obligation on the part of employers to tell the Y.E.O. what sort of people they employ the Y.E.O. has very often to accept the description of jobs as given by firms or guess from the nature of the business of the firm as to exactly what type of training is likely to be given to juvenile employees.

Some Y.E.O.s gain, over a period of time in an area, a very thorough knowledge of local employers, but for one who is new in a particular office there is a necessary period of relative ignorance until familiarity is gained with the area. Some believe that the firms which they don't have on their books are small shops and tiny firms which do not really make any difference to the overall job market. Some firms do not know the Y.E.S. exists and some others are suspicious of it and see it as a form of government interference. This suggests that one facet of the Y.E.O.'s function requires some ability to present himself or herself as a benevolent and disinterested agent rather than as an official.

Where Y.E.O.'s areas join onto each other the relative skill and background knowledge of one of them can make a considerable difference to the success of his colleague in the next area. For example, Y.E.O.s are not restricted to placing children in jobs in their own official area and a successful one may be able to poach jobs from the adjoining area. In this way, particularly in built up areas, two adjoining Y.E.S. areas may reveal widely different juvenile employment figures. This unofficial poaching may of course cause some pressure on boys and girls in the area which is being poached.

One thing which acts against the Y.E.O. always obtaining a complete knowledge of his or her area is the career structure within the Y.E.S. An

officer who wishes to move up the promotion ladder may well have to move to another district in order to do so. Two officers in Northumberland suggested that this may have a very profound effect on some Y.E.O.s because by the very nature of the job it involves a constant element of failure in that there are always some children who do not find the jobs they are looking for. In this way the job of the Y.E.O. is never completely delimited and having come to grips with the situation existing in one area the only means of career advancement may be by moving to another area and confronting the same problems over again. Some Y.E.O.s move out of the service into other branches of the civil service, or as in the case of one in the district, to work as a personnel manager for one of the big employers in the area. This course of action does not reflect badly on the officer who leaves the service as in areas such as S.E. Northumberland a particular kind of personality is necessary to reconcile the need for self-protection against the knowledge of almost inevitable failure with the need for sympathetic appreciation of the problems of the young clientele. This requires a nice balance between involvement and dissociation which may, for some people, be hard to achieve. One Y.E.O., however, described himself as a professional Y.E.O. and felt very strongly that his job was to work on behalf of the boys and girls rather than on behalf of the employers. This sort of confidence in the approach to employers is likely to grow in the Y.E.O. who gets to know the area well and gets on good terms with local employers, and an officer who is known and respected by local employers is sometimes able to overcome at least to some extent the preconceived ideas of employers about employing certain types of young people.

The way the Y.E.S. approaches the problem from the children's point of view is to visit the schools and talk to children in their third year at school so that by the time the children are due to leave they hope to have gained their confidence. Nearer the time of leaving school children

are seen individually and on the basis of information about themselves efforts are made to advise them about the best jobs to apply for. Also, some Y.E.O.s do part time youth work or otherwise maintain links with organisations and see this as a valuable means of making better contact with the children. It is especially valuable after they have started work because if they do not return their cards the Y.E.O. is able to find out from them what they are doing at work and in the case of those who do return their cards it offers an opportunity of checking the accuracy of descriptions of jobs. The degree of contact with school-leavers obviously varies partly with the number of children in any one Y.E.O.'s area, and the extent to which schools cooperate. One officer said that the secondary modern schools let her see their lower streams as much as she wants but think that for their brighter children careers advice is not so important. More than one Y.E.O. stressed the implications of this by pointing out that some boys are so much influenced by parents and teachers that they go into jobs which the Y.E.O.s know to be unsuitable, and it is therefore felt to be important for them to try to contact all school-leavers. It is also felt to be important from this point of view to make sure that firms asking for boys with qualifications are in fact going to give them work which occupies them and does not make them frustrated.

Some Y.E.O.s referred to what they called interference by school teachers and one in particular complained that he has a job stopping some school teachers from interfering and getting boys placed in unsuitable jobs. One gave the instance of a boy who was placed in a machine minder's job by his school teacher and became so bored that within two weeks he had left and gone to the Youth Employment office. He was a very capable boy and there was no difficulty in getting him fixed up with a very good apprenticeship. Another example was a boy with some C.S.E.s who was fixed up by his teacher with a job in a fish and chip shop.



On the whole, though, Y.E.O.s thought that teachers try very hard to help and advise the children even if some were somewhat misguided about the best kind of help they could give. The main weakness in the system was not wilful or malicious action on the part of the teachers but the lack of contact between Y.E.O.s and teachers in schools. However well meaning the teachers are, it is the Y.E.O. who has access to hard facts about the local job market and some Y.E.O.s felt that if they could have more contact with children whilst they were still at school and to advise them about career possibilities, the teachers could give more valuable advice and encouragement to boys and girls who had a rough idea already about what they want to do. In other words not to try to influence the choice of job, but to offer help and advice after the choice has been made. Some teachers do not take their job as careers teacher seriously as is pointed out by Y.E.O.s as well as in the literature (see, for example, Carter, 1962). In some cases the job is held because it carries special responsibility pay and in Carter's words, 'much of the information about careers is left to moulder in a cupboard in the staffroom'. What some Y.E.O.s argued for was doing away with careers teachers as they exist at present (teaching as a main duty with careers advice as an additional duty) and replacing them with full-time careers counsellors. It must be stressed that all the careers teachers who were met in the course of the study appeared to have a very sincere and deep concern for the dismal career prospects facing their pupils when they left school. Some, however, appeared to be quite considerably better qualified than others to give useful advice about careers in manual occupations. One, for example, was the woodwork teacher at his particular school and had himself served an apprenticeship as a joiner and had worked in a variety of industrial situations before becoming a teacher.

The extent to which careers advice is necessary for school children varies between different types of schools and streams in schools, as stated

by some Y.E.O.s, although the level at which the line should be drawn and above which advice should not be seen as so important is problematical. As pointed out above, some secondary modern schools feel that their top streams do not need advice whilst some Y.E.O.s feel that efforts should be relaxed in respect of Grammar schools and concentrated at all levels of Secondary Modern schools. This again depends on the particular school in question. At one school visited during the study, because it enjoyed comparatively low pupil:teacher ratios, each child attended periodically a conference of all the school teaching staff in the staff room where his particular employment prospects were discussed with reference to his personal preferences, and joint decisions were made about what subjects etc. he should concentrate on. As a result of this a comparatively high proportion of boys in this school had quite elaborate career plans and a good idea of what they were going to do in the way of work when they left school. The school in question was a Roman Catholic school and the comparatively low proportion of catholic children in that area meant that it enjoyed considerable advantages over the neighbouring schools where careers advice did not appear to be given a lot of prominence. In general, the Youth Employment Service is used by a minority of school-leavers, and more intensively by some than by others (The Work of the Y.E.S. 1959-62, 1962-5, and 1965-8, H.M.S.O.). Carter (1962) p.94 believes that the influence of the Y.E.O.s is not generally very great as there is no great contact between them and school-leavers. As pointed out earlier, the exact nature of the Y.E.O.'s role and influence in S.E. Northumberland is difficult to ascertain. The Y.E.O. is best seen as someone who interprets the job market for the young person when he cannot do it adequately for himself. The criticisms commonly made of the service, mainly that it acts to allocate young people to certain jobs, are not very well founded in view of the objective constraints of their job. The job market has

only a certain number of desirable jobs to offer and boys in the lower streams of Secondary Modern schools are in a very weak competitive position, however well informed they may be. Y.E.O.s cannot conjure up good jobs out of thin air and sometimes they have to compromise to an extent in order to gain or maintain the goodwill of an employer. The weakness is really in the system which makes it necessary to curry favour with employers and with the people in authority in the educational system, together with lack of resources in the form of staff. The system which exists is one which recognises a mode of grading jobs which is accepted not only by employers but also by prospective employees, and therefore Y.E.O.s are in a very weak position to change it. It is for this reason mainly that the Y.E.O. is best seen as an interpreter of the system. All Y.E.O.s interviewed stated that in their experience the majority of boys and girls they interviewed had a good understanding of the sorts of jobs they could expect to get with their abilities and educational achievements. They believed quite emphatically that the idea of a fit between educational achievement and career possibilities came across to them from the children and not the other way round. They also believed that in many cases the children had weighed their relative educational advantages very finely. These children interpret the system for themselves and the influence of school teachers and parents is generally so great in reinforcing their own view of their own career prospects that they do not feel a need to seek advice from the Y.E.S. The Y.E.O.s did, however, believe that if they could make closer contact with these children that they may be able to persuade some to choose a more appropriate course of action in obtaining their chosen jobs.

For example some children are encouraged by parents and teachers to stay longer at school, sometimes with the chance of getting perhaps one CSE or one GCE in the expectation that they will be in a better position to get an apprenticeship. What this often means in practice however is

that by the time they leave school at sixteen they are in the position of having to find an apprenticeship right away before they are too old, whereas if they had left at 15 they would have had a year in which to find the job they were looking for. Also, the Y.E.O., because he knows what the real prospects are in his area and is in a position often to compare non-apprenticeship jobs offered by some employers with the available apprenticeships, may advise a boy to take one of these jobs which he judges to be comparatively good for someone with the particular child's educational achievement but because he blindly seeks an apprenticeship the boy may move from one dead-end job to another until he is too old for an apprenticeship and may have to face a future of unskilled work of the worst kind. The Y.E.O.s interviewed did believe that in the case of the minority of boys who leaned most heavily on their services had benefited greatly from their advice. In the words of one Y.E.O. 'Only a few of the children respond to my follow up and then for a variety of reasons, but for the ones to whom I "get through" I believe I have probably been a lot of help'.

The actual jobs which children in the South East Northumberland area went into are shown in table 17.

As already suggested the truth of the picture given by table 17 is somewhat problematical because of the definitions of types of jobs used by the Y.E.S. and the incomplete nature of the information gained by the follow-up enquiries.

In this area the extent to which the Y.E.O.s were responsible for these children going into these jobs is not known but Carter (1962, p.125) analyses the coincidence of the choices of 100 boys in Sheffield before leaving school and the recommendations of the Y.E.O.s. This analysis is shown in table 26.

Table 26      YEO's Recommendations and Children's Choice of Work

	Boys	Girls
YEO's recommendation = children's choice	86	85
YEO's recommendation different from children's choice	10	14
No choice	1	0
No interview	3	1
TOTAL	100	100

Then, on p.180 he analyzes the length of time spent in their first jobs by 36 boys and 36 girls.

Table 27

	Boys	Girls
Up to 2 weeks	4	0
2 - 4 weeks	2	3
1 - 3 months	9	7
3 - 6 months	5	9
6 - 9 months	7	11
9 -12 months	9	6
	36	36

Of these children 11 boys and 8 girls had at least three jobs within the first year after leaving school, and one boy had five.

This suggests that although the Y.E.O.'s recommendations coincided with 86 per cent of boys' choices a significant proportion had not entered jobs which they were happy in, and therefore some doubt is thrown on the usefulness of the Youth Employment service in some cases. Carter further states (p.192) that over one third of the boys had no job to go to when they left their first job.

(p.194) Only three boys and 9 girls had long term plans in connection with employment and what does seem clear is that the job pattern will depend as much, if not more, upon fortuity and aimlessness or un-informed drifting as upon deliberate intention and design\*.

Of the 650 children studied by Maizels (1970, p.104), only 7 per cent gave the Y.E.O. as the chief source of information about intended jobs. This suggests, as Maizels points out (p.122), that the Y.E.O. is more important in helping to find jobs than in choosing jobs. She also points out that among the children she studied those who had the most favourable views of school make the most use of official services such as the Y.E.S. This pattern was found also in the present study. Although very few mining apprentices said that the Y.E.O. had influenced them in their job decisions, of the children questioned before leaving school about the 'best way to get a job', 59 per cent gave the Youth Employment Officer. It may be concluded that the importance of the Y.E.S. is as a clearing house of information and an agency by which previous choices of occupation can be realised rather than as a guiding influence, but there is a distinct danger of underestimating its overall importance. Given the existence of a body of conventional folklore relating to occupational decisions and customary scales of eligibility for jobs the Y.E.S. functions as a useful focal point in the system. Even if children make unhappy decisions about their careers the process of executing these decisions is made comparatively easier by the existence of a passive source of information. In addition to this, even if the children do not wish to be guided by the Y.E.O. in their decisions his potential for influence is probably greater than is acknowledged in retrospect by young workers as, having chosen their careers, they have to rely more or less on the Y.E.O.s to sift the information relating to the jobs available in their chosen fields.

#### Y.E.O.s and the Mining Apprenticeship Scheme

The N.C.B. tries to keep in touch with the Y.E.S. in the area and to enlist the support of Y.E.O.s in recruiting mining apprentices. Some training officers in the Board maintain very friendly contacts with

individual Y.E.O.s and keep them informed of opportunities for young people in the industry. A lot of this cooperation, however, serves to maintain a good flow of information about N.C.B. Craft Apprenticeships and other more desirable jobs so that Y.E.O.s are able to make well informed recommendations to boys seeking these jobs, but does not yield very much in the way of Y.E.O.s introducing recruits to the Mining Apprenticeship scheme.

The Y.E.O.s in the district were questioned about how they see the scheme in relation to the rest of the juvenile job market and how they judged the reaction of school leavers to the scheme. Some responded by asking why any boy should want to go into mining and pointed out that the majority of young people were opposed to working for the N.C.B. except as craftsmen and then, some Y.E.O.s felt, not with a view to staying in the industry, but to moving to another firm when they had served their time as apprentices.

Most Y.E.O.s never suggested mining apprenticeship to boys except as a last resort, or as a safety net or alternative job. This is partly because they know from experience that boys are biased against working in the industry and some say they will take a job in mining and do not turn up and do not go back to the Youth Employment Office if they think that pit work is the best they are likely to be offered. They suggested various reasons why boys should not want to do a mining apprenticeship apart from the inherent unpleasantness of going underground to work in the pit, and one said that in her view boys were not fooled by the fact that it is called an apprenticeship. This, she said, is giving it a glossy coat in order to make work in the pits appear attractive. The Y.E.O. for one area suggested that one reason why boys do not want to work in mining is that it often seems when there is one employer dominating an area that

boys are reluctant to work for that employer. In her area the big local employer is the shipyard and boys will accept a job in the yard and not turn up for some time. What they have been doing in the meantime is looking around for another job and it is only when there is obviously nothing better that they turn up at the shipyard. This Y.E.O. believed that it was the employer's dominance that put young people off rather than the nature of the work as many boys do not have any idea of what they want to do in terms of actual work tasks but simply want to be fitters, electricians, etc. Carter (1962, p.132) refers to the fact that in Sheffield where a major industry is cutlery it was very rare for a boy to choose to work in that industry in spite of extensive cooperation between the industry and the Y.E.S. in the area. There is no available evidence as to the extent of this tendency to shy away from the dominant employer in an area and it may well be that in the case of some industries the opposite is the case. In the case of Shipbuilding, Coal Mining and Steel industries it is fair to say that working conditions in these industries are probably much less attractive on the whole than in the majority of other industries. Another factor is that where a town is dominated by one industry it is often the case that a lot of the work offered is of an unskilled nature. In addition to this, where a large proportion of the population in a locality work for the same employer (as in the case of Shipbuilding areas) boys are likely to gain a considerable amount of informal knowledge about the work by overhearing what their parents and neighbours say and there is likely to be little mystery attached to the work. Also, by being well informed about daily events current affairs in a place like a shipyard a boy is likely to be even more aware of the superiority of craft type jobs by comparison with non-craft jobs especially in terms of status and pay.

In the case of mining it is possible that the main reason why



boys do not show any interest in the industry is that they believe it to be dying. This belief is often reinforced by parents who put up opposition to their children going into the industry. Indeed, some Y.E.O.s stated the opinion that (especially in mining areas) the children were often not making their own choice but echoing their parents' choice and basing their judgments more or less entirely on their parents' opinions. It is, of course, true that the future of coal mining is more likely to decline or stay the same size than to expand, and people who live in the coal field have witnessed the closure of 42 collieries in Northumberland alone since 1957, so it would be surprising if there was no doubt in people's minds about the future prosperity of the industry. In fact, in 1971 the N.C.B. was trying very hard to increase its labour force in view of a general shortage of coal. The extent to which the Board was trying at the time of the study to expand production was suggested by the fact that men of nearly retiring age were being taken on to work in the mines. In one case a miner of 63 years of age who had previously been made redundant by pit closures was taken back on the colliery books. This shortage of labour and coal was pointed to by the N.C.B. as evidence that boys' fears of insecurity of mining are groundless but in fact, according to one Y.E.O. it is this very shortage that underlined the unpredictability of employment in mining and people in the coal field know this. One fundamental source of uncertainty about the future of mining is its dependence upon the Central Government Fuel Policies and boys and their parents have seen the results of changes in fuel policy at first hand and are not easily persuaded by N.C.B. publicity which shows the industry as a strong and secure one. Many of the parents of school-leavers, particularly in some parts of Northumberland, have themselves suffered redundancy and unemployment as a result of pit closures and even if the N.C.B. predictions about the future of mining in Northumberland are correct it is hardly surprising if parents in the area try to dissuade their

children from entering the mines. (Since the time of this study, and following the miners' strike of early 1972, the Northumberland County Council has itself declared a policy of using oil heating in the county's schools instead of coal. It is estimated that the losses of sales resulting in this decision will be roughly equal to the output of Ashington Colliery for one day of every week.)

The influence of this aspect of mining work is indicated by the very fact that young people who otherwise are unable to formulate any long term career plans and choose jobs without knowing what the work involves should place importance in the long term prospects of the industry to what would sometimes appear to be an obsessive extent. An illustration of this is that numerous mining apprentices who did not disagree with the proposition that mining could give them a secure future for the rest of their working lives still objected to mining because of pits closing down. Whilst acknowledging the certainty of continued employment in mining on a rational level, their thinking about careers in it was clearly based on an underlying belief in the insecurity of it.

As far as the 46 boys in the sample were concerned, only three said that the Y.E.O. had suggested that they should apply for a mining apprenticeship (see Table 26). The majority of them said that suggestions that they should become mining apprentices (61%) had come from kin and friends. The members of their families given most credit for influence in this respect were fathers and uncles, many of them miners themselves. On the basis of this we could say that the decision to apply for a mining apprenticeship had originated in 93 per cent of cases (43 boys) from within the family. However, on the question of advice 44 out of the 46 said that they had received advice from a variety of sources including the Youth Employment Officer. Also, of the 135 children questioned whilst

still at school about the best way to find a job 79 (59%) said the Youth Employment Service. This does not mean that they were referring to any individual or that they had had any actual contact with the service's officers. The phrases used in many cases were: 'The Youth Employment', 'The dole office', the labour exchange, etc. It might be supposed that the Y.E.O.s had a hidden influence in spite of the fact that they were only given credit for the suggestion, or for being the main source of advice in a small number of cases but this must also be seen in juxtaposition with the fact that of the 46 mining apprentices studied, 78 per cent stated a definite preference for a craft apprenticeship and 67 per cent intended to apply for one at the next opportunity. A further 5 per cent would only be prevented by the fact that they were too old for craft apprenticeship anyway. For these boys the advice and the decision to apply for mining apprenticeships were based on a desire eventually to become craft apprentices, so it is doubtful whether these boys were influenced a great deal by the Y.E.O.s. In addition to the indirect connection between intentions and joining the scheme, for nearly half the boys mining apprenticeships were not their first jobs.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

Several main conclusions may be drawn from the information gathered in the course of this study. In regard to the specific problem of explaining the failure of the Mining Apprenticeship Scheme to attract and retain sufficient boys for it to fulfil its basic function, the simplest conclusion which may be drawn is that discussed above in terms of the hypothesis that boys entered the scheme not out of a desire to achieve what the scheme promised them on a formal level, but as a means to an end which was external to the scheme itself. In other words, they had an objective in joining the scheme but this was not that which was intended by the N.C.B. - namely to become skilled face workers.

Regarding the inability of the N.C.B. to find a satisfactory explanation of the scheme's failure, examination of the factors on which they focussed their attention suggests that too much emphasis was placed on internal features of the scheme and too much reliance was placed on the correctness of the assumption that the boys' chief objective was to become faceworkers. Clearly there was a need to look beyond the internal characteristics of the scheme itself and the way it was administered. This is not to say that internal features of the scheme were irrelevant, but that dwelling on them would only reveal a very incomplete explanation for its failure. (Indeed, in the year after this study was carried out a revised scheme of training was introduced with broadly similar aims and, from conversation with the boys in the sample, the impression gained was that the possibility of its success appeared at least slightly more promising than the existing scheme. This revised scheme is described in Appendix 2 along with the results of brief discussion with some of the boys about it.)

Not only was it necessary to look at the scheme from outside of itself, but also to look outside the industry and to see the Mining Apprenticeship in the context of the labour market existing in the area. This was basically because the statements made by the boys who were questioned on the subject of job choice revealed some consideration of a wide range of factors. In other words, a job in the coal industry was only one of several possibilities and in the search for a suitable job it was only considered as such.

As well as seeing the scheme in the context of the range of opportunities existing in the area, conclusions about the actions of the boys were only described in any meaningful way by taking account of the meaning of the word 'Apprenticeship' which was accepted (if only implicitly) by the boys. This meaning, as explained above, was a period of training undergone as a necessary precondition to full membership of a craft type trade union. With specific reference to the scheme it may be concluded that the boys concerned did not accept it as 'apprenticeship'. The facility offered to the forming of a meaningful explanation of wastage in the scheme by accepting this point about the 'true' meaning of 'Apprenticeship', suggests that in any study concerned with career aspirations of boys leaving school the importance of the meaning for the actors of institutions such as Apprenticeship must be recognised. If the N.C.B. had given more thought to the suitability of applying the description 'Apprenticeship' to the scheme they may have spent less time over pondering on the reasons for its failure. A more fruitful approach from the Board's point of view may have been to seriously review the end product of the course of training and adjusting what it offered to the requirements of the boys. In all fairness to the Board, however, this was apparently at least partly what informed the introduction of the revised scheme in 1971.

Also of importance in understanding the preferences of the boys with regard to jobs was some understanding of the system of Industrial Relations which operated, and particularly the local Industrial Relations structure. Although the boys clearly had no detailed understanding of the operation of the system, many of their views relating to the desirability of particular types of work could only be properly explained in terms of the constraints on the job market imposed by the existence of some trade unions and their policies.

Another very significant conclusion which may be drawn from the study of wastage in the Mining Apprenticeship scheme, is one which has wide implications for the whole question of industrial training policies. This conclusion is that there is in any training policy the potential for a greater or lesser degree of inherent conflict of interests. As already suggested much of the Board's problem concerning wastage in the scheme arises from a divergence of views between the boys and the Board concerning the object of training. From the boys' point of view the object of undergoing training is to acquire future market power as a seller of labour. From the Board's point of view the object of providing training is to ensure a supply of labour with sufficient expertise to enable the commercially efficient operation of the enterprise. As far as true apprenticeship is concerned this inherent conflict of interests is reconciled by the existence of a system of industrial relations which enables certain groups of workers to maintain closed shop agreements with employers throughout industry so that the rewards of serving time as an apprentice comprise both a certain level of income in the short-term and a degree of job market security in the long-term. Generally it is necessary for employers to offer high rewards in terms of high income and/or job satisfaction in order to induce entrants to the labour market

to undertake long periods of training. In the Mining Apprenticeship equation it would appear, from an examination of the industrial relations system, and the evidence gathered from boys in the course of the study, that the rewards offered did not balance the disadvantages of undertaking the course of training.

NOTES

1. The reason why the introduction of mechanisation has led to the present financial arrangements is basically that mechanised coal-getting does not lend itself to a piece-work system of payment. The need for long un-interrupted productive runs at the coal face means that a piece-work payment system may encourage the face worker to look to his own individual output, with little incentive to leave the face and machinery in a satisfactory state for smooth continuation of work between shifts. The payment system was adapted to modern methods of production by progressive stages from the first Daywage Structure in 1955. In 1966 the National Power Loading Agreement was signed between the N.U.M. and the N.C.B. and between 1968 and 1971 negotiations for the Third National Daywage Structure were completed, thereby bringing all grades of non-craft workers onto the Daywage system of payment.
2. The term 'relative deprivation' was originally coined by the authors of The American Soldier, the large-scale social psychological study of the American Army which was carried out during World War II. The authors of The American Soldier do not give any rigorous definition of relative deprivation, but its general sense is immediately apparent.
3. Not only is the occupational structure in Ashington reflected in the social institutions such as working men's clubs, mechanics institutes, pubs, etc., but even the housing - much of it built when Ashington was merely a collection of mining settlements - reflects the social order of the old days. Rows of small houses run in parallel lines with deputies' and other undermanagers' houses (with gardens) situated such that they command a view along the rows. Even in leisure hours the ordinary miner was under the eye of his superiors.



4. 'Double tub allowance' refers to the fact that under the old piece-work system a face worker's output was constrained partly by availability of tubs which were allocated on the basis of the number of people in a working.
  
5. Closed shop in this context means 'pre-entry' closed shop; not to be confused with post-entry closed shop or union shop. For an individual to work in a pre-entry closed shop it is necessary for him to have prior membership of the organisation which imposes the condition, and in Britain this organisation will, almost without exception, be a craft union, and membership is dependent upon the individual having served his time as an apprentice. An example of the rare exceptions to this is the occupation of train driver where a person does not have to serve an apprenticeship first but does have to take his turn by working his way up through the less desirable grades. The union shop, or 100% shop agreement is such as exists between the non-craft sections of the National Union of Mineworkers and the NCB. This is a post-entry agreement whereby an individual gets a job with the N.C.B. on condition that he joins the N.U.M. immediately after starting. It does not restrict entry but makes continued employment conditional on union membership (see H.A. Turner, 1962, pp.233-51).

APPENDIX 1

NOTE ON APPRENTICESHIP AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

Apprenticeship, as what is ostensibly a formal mode of training, affects a definite range of industrial occupations in terms of skill. That is, it affects skilled manual trades whose trade unions administer the regulations relating to numbers of apprentices, duration of indentures, etc. The manual occupations which are not traditionally regarded as skilled are not subject to apprenticeship in that a term of indentured apprenticeship is not a necessary precondition to working in these occupations. The craft unions also vary in their attitudes to apprenticeship. The ones which represent workers with a higher level of skill are more concerned and more able to maintain the system than the ones representing lesser skilled workers but the exact policies of the various unions are often not explicit and are sometimes ambiguous. Where the base of unions has been broadened by admitting non-craftsmen this is particularly true and Liepman (1960) points to the fact that in the case of some unions this has led to unions representing divergent interests with regard to apprenticeship policy.

Entry into certain non-manual professions (e.g. Accountancy, Law, Medicine) is in first appearance by a similar process in that it is necessary to serve a stipulated period of training whilst being party to binding agreements with employers as, for instance, in the case of accountancy where a stipulated period of articulated training must be served before being allowed membership of the relevant professional association. These entry requirements, however, differ in important fundamental respects from apprenticeship, and these differences will be considered in some detail below.

In modern industrial Britain there is also a very wide range of skills which are practiced on the basis of the individual's having the ability to do the work, without reference to prescribed periods of training (apprentice-

ship, articles, etc.). In the modern business corporation people are employed in jobs requiring a high standard of professional ability as for instance in the field of company law without their having previously been articulated to members of professional institutes. Factories employing maintenance electricians must normally do so on the understanding that the electricians have served their time as apprentices, but in the same factories the bulk of production work may be carried out by electrical technicians and semi-skilled workers who never had to serve an apprenticeship, and whose level of skill may cut across that of the electricians.

We can see then that the existence of apprenticeship as an institution affects only certain parts of industry - namely those parts which are subject to organised trade union control based on traditional crafts.

Liepman (1960) quotes the Webbs as saying of apprenticeship that 'in form and in purpose it is exactly the same as it was before trade unionism was heard of' (p.147).

The best way to see how this institution which is now the 'Cornerstone of trade union policy' (p.147) fell into the hands of the trade unions is to trace briefly its historical development from its earliest days.

#### Historical background of apprenticeship

Early references to apprenticeship occur in the 13th century which was the period when the Craft Guilds were breaking away from the Merchant Guilds.

The craft guilds sought to control the practice of their trades by laying down conditions for training and by restricting entry into them. They decreed that no-one would be allowed to work in a trade without first having been apprenticed for seven years to a master craftsman and the terms

of the apprenticeship were laid down in detail. Apart from stipulating a period of seven years indentures, the guilds regulated the conditions of service and as the apprentice lived in his master's household, these included rules relating to moral conduct as well as hours of work and cost of indentures. The guild saw that obligations on both sides were carried out and acted as arbiter in any dispute between master and apprentice.

Towards the end of the 16th century the level of trade and the development of new industries made it difficult for the guilds to maintain their control over the supply of labour and in an attempt to restrict the supply of skilled labour they raised the cost of indentures until the government intervened by fixing upper limits to the cost of indentures in 1536.

In 1562 the Statute of Artificers became law. This law laid down a list of trades for which apprenticeship was compulsory and stipulated a minimum of seven years training. A person of any age could be apprenticed. The Statute of Artificers, although it did act to protect the guilds and their monopoly of trades, was not only brought about by concern for the craftsmen who were wishing to maintain their level of income, but it was also brought about in an attempt to relieve the weight on the poor law. It allowed for the children of the poor to be apprenticed to a master craftsman up to the age of twenty four in the hope that they would be assured of a future outside Poor Relief. This system gradually broke down because the law could not be enforced in the face of industrial change. As new industries developed and activities in traditional crafts increased, it was not possible to maintain an adequate supply of new labour into the crafts. This was for two main reasons. Firstly the law fixed the number of boys who could be apprenticed at any one time and, secondly, new trades were developing which were not specified in the statute, and therefore could

not have apprentices in the normal way. By the beginning of the 19th century the laws of apprenticeship were being abused on such a large scale that the judiciary was unable to enforce the law and it was repealed in 1814.

Apprenticeship continued to exist after this date but was not controlled by law and employers used indentures, which were still legally binding, to ensure a supply of cheap juvenile labour. The trade unions were developing during the 19th century after the Combination Laws Repeal Acts of 1824 and 1825 and although they attempted to control the employment of apprentices for the purpose of restricting the supply of skilled labour there was considerable resistance to it on the part of the employers. It was not really until well into the 20th century that union control of apprenticeship and the numbers of apprentices was accepted.

The trade unions now stipulate minimum periods of apprenticeship with upper and lower age limits, and lay down minimum ratios of journeymen to apprentices.

What we can see by looking at the historical development of apprenticeship as an institution is that it has since its early days been an instrument whereby the supply of skilled labour has been controlled by the sellers of labour so that the bargaining advantage of being in a monopoly position could be used.

Under the guilds the people directly concerned with the price of labour were the public to whom goods were sold, and in the modern system the function of supplying goods to the public has been taken over by the employers of labour.

It would be a gross over-simplification to say that the trade unions are the old craft guilds under a different guise, but their use of

apprenticeship control is essentially the same. Apprenticeship can be seen as the point where the demand and supply of labour are reconciled as a weapon in the hands of those who sell it. It is a valve through which new labour enters the various trades, and the rate of flow is governed by the market position of the sellers. Sometimes the valve may be left open, allowing an uncontrolled flow of labour, but the ability to close it again is held in reserve in case it is needed. The normal rules relating to apprenticeship are described below.

#### Length of apprenticeship

The normal length is five years although some unions (building unions for example) have relaxed this to four years. In some industries where the actual period of training lasts for, say, three years, this is followed by a period of 'improvership' during which time the apprentice is paid a proportion of journeyman's wages and is a period when he brings his practical skill up to the required standard. The length of apprenticeship does not usually reflect the amount of skill to be learned and most writers on the subject refer to this anomolous feature, but a fuller discussion of the meaning of the time period may be left at this point.

#### Age limits

Trade unions insist that apprenticeships should be completed by the time the trainee reaches the age of 21. After this age it is not acceptable for apprentices to be paid lower rates than journeymen and there are agreements governing the levels of apprentice pay relative to the full rates.

Another reason why apprenticeship must finish by the age of 21 is related to the legal character of indentures. As indentures are entered

into on behalf of the apprentice by the employer and his parents, he can repudiate them upon reaching the age of twenty one. Liepmann (1960) maintains that the legal status of indentures is dubious as they are a written document and not sealed, and therefore cannot be taken as a binding contract, but she points out that in practice they are seen as being binding on both parties. A. Beveridge however (1963, p.65), refers to a case at Redditch County Court on March 5th 1958. The court found for the plaintiff, Mr. Edward White of Windsor Works, Redditch, against Mr. John Nicholson, the parent of an apprentice, Paul Nicholson, who had broken his indentures by leaving the firm, and awarded the firm damages of £150 against the boy's parent. There is in fact no data available to show whether the number of apprentices who finish their training do so as a result of their seeing indentures as binding or out of deference to the system that guarantees them skilled (and therefore privileged) status upon completion of their apprenticeship. The power of indentures to secure a five year agreement will of course vary with individual circumstances, but some indication of the importance of the 'pay-off' for the apprentice with regard to completing his apprenticeship is given by the drop-out rates for craft Apprentices of about 2-3 per cent average in Northumberland area N.C.B. which show that there is a much stronger likelihood of a craft apprentice completing his training than a Mining Apprentice. In this case the 'pay-off' is a guarantee of security of employment, or simply power to bargain in the job market. For a five year apprenticeship which must be finished by the 21st birthday the maximum age at which a boy may begin indentures is 16 which is also the minimum school leaving age (15 at the time of the study) but in practice it is taken as the minimum age.

#### Probation

When an apprenticeship is preceded by a period of probation

(usually about six months) the indentures are backdated to the beginning of the probationary period. The idea of probation is to allow a boy to find out whether he is suitable whilst he is still young enough to seek apprenticeship in alternative trades if he is not suited. The provision for probation has some quite serious weaknesses. If a boy is kept waiting to be told that he is unsuitable for an apprenticeship until after he is about 16½ he finds it is too late to look for another apprenticeship. Also, a firm can abuse this rule in connection with national agreements for technical education. Some national agreements (notably in engineering) provide for apprentices to be granted day release to attend technical college up to the age of 18. By delaying the start of indentures for as long as possible a firm can cut down on the length of time during which apprentices are entitled to day release, and can also extend the period during which a boy is paid as a trainee.

The main weaknesses caused by rigid age limits and probationary periods was found by Liepmann (1960) to be greatly reduced by some firms in her study by the use of very careful methods of selection.

#### Apprentice/Journeyman ratios

Unions lay down rules relating to the maximum numbers of apprentices employers are permitted to employ as a proportion of the journeymen employed. In practice these ratios are not always enforced. Liepmann found in her study of printing, building and engineering that of those three industries it was only in printing that apprentice ratios were enforced with strict rigidity. In the building industry particularly, no regulation was exerted in this respect (Ch.VIII).

Reference has already been made to the complexity of trade unions' policies with regard to apprenticeship and it is impossible to say with any



certainty what the real objective of unions is in restricting apprentice ratios, but the best way to see it is probably, as has been suggested, not as a simple policy of keeping skilled members in short supply, but rather, as a bargaining weapon to be held in reserve. In times of unemployment it is quite possible that the unions who at present do not enforce ratios may then do so. This view is supported by the practice of admitting dilutees to unions in times of labour shortage. The engineering industry is one where, in the period after the second world war which was a period of labour shortage, increased membership in skilled grades was permitted by the unions by allowing semi-skilled workers to be upgraded. To abandon apprentice ratios completely would weaken the unions in the long term more than dilutionism as, if dilutees are kept in a separate register, these members can be expelled in time of job shortage whereas an unlimited number of apprentice trained journeymen would remove this possibility. Again it is stressed that union policies are largely undisclosed and very complex and thus one may only speculate as to their motives in certain respects. In addition to the vagueness which often surrounds union attitudes at national level there is often scope for local union personalities to have a strong influence in their own areas. As well as these formal conditions which are laid down by the trade unions there are certain other important features of apprenticeship in Britain. For example there is no test of competence demanded at the completion of apprenticeship. When the period of training is completed the employer simply endorses the indentures and hands them over to the apprentice who then enters the skilled labour market but without having to show the level of competence he has achieved. The question of content of training is left largely to the discretion of the employer and extremely few unions are normally concerned with the standard of training for apprentices. The printing industry is one where some pressure is brought to bear by the unions to ensure a proper standard of craft training.

The requirement of skill depends mainly on the type of business carried out by the individual employer. It is generally in the interests of the employer to de-skill jobs. That is to say that problems of labour availability would be considerably lessened if it were possible to break down jobs into semi-skilled components such that machines were responsible for most of the accuracy. The extent to which de-skilling is possible depends in the main on the force with which union apprenticeship policies are maintained. For some industries the employers are constrained to employ skilled union members to do what they themselves consider to be semi-skilled work and in these industries one would not expect employers to concern themselves too greatly with providing elaborate training facilities for their apprentices. In other industries, given the constraint of having to work within a framework of apprenticeship, employers find it in their interests to give as high a standard of training to their apprentices as they can.

The relevance of apprenticeship for training can be seen by looking at the problem from the respective viewpoints of unions and employers. Trade unions are not concerned with skill as a quantity but merely with maintaining the condition that members employed as skilled workers should have served a period of apprenticeship, so their main interest in it is as an instrument of market control and not as a means of imparting skill to young workers.

For the employers the concern is with maintaining a supply of skilled (meaning technically capable) workers. For them the existence of apprenticeship requirements means that if they are going to train youngsters in a skill it must be done within the framework of apprenticeship.

Liepmann's study (1960) showed that the value of indentures as a guarantee of good training for the apprentice is nil, and the extent to

which apprenticeship varies as a precondition for a worker obtaining craftsman's work between industries:

in printing	-	paramount	
in engineering	-	varied	
in building	-	at present not great	(Ch.VIII)

The building industry provides a good illustration of the relationship between recognised training needs and the strictness with which apprenticeship regulation is applied. Although there are some sections of the industry where unions are unable to insist that only time-served craftsmen should be employed, the National Joint Council for the Building Industry, a body on which both unions and employers are represented, recognises that there is a need for a formal system of training and has published details of a national training scheme which has been approved by both sides of the industry (N.J.C., 1971). Under the terms of this agreement common standards of training are recognised which may, incidentally, be undertaken within the terms of indentured apprenticeship. The sections of the building trades which have lost the most in the way of control are those sections where the industry has been most successful in introducing methods of work whereby relatively unskilled people can do the job, e.g. applying platerboards, plastic plumbing etc.

#### Technical education

This is a post-war development following the 1944 Education Act. Some industries make it compulsory (mandatory or strongly recommended) for member firms to allow apprentices to attend technical college up to the age of eighteen. In other industries more freedom is allowed to individual firms to decide whether to make this facility, and often technical colleges are not near enough to make attendance feasible and if they are accessible they may not provide courses which are relevant to the work done by some

firms. It is helpful here to consider the two main types of course which are offered, as opposed to the actual vocations covered by them. These are the National Certificate (N.C.) courses, and the City and Guilds of London Institute courses (C.G.L.I.). C.G.L.I. tends to be more closely related to the practical aspects of work and places a lesser emphasis on theoretical aspects. There are more C.G.L.I. syllabuses than there are for N.C., mainly for the reason stated above, i.e. more occupations can be covered on a theoretical basis by the N.C. because of its less specific nature. The general level of C.G.L.I. is lower than N.C. in the courses which normally affect apprentices. The City and Guilds Institute in fact sees it as its main function to keep in touch with the requirements of industry and to organise its syllabuses accordingly. This leads to a tendency towards greater divergence between the two as the level of N.C. tends to rise. This tendency on the part of N.C. is explained by Liepmann (1960) with reference to the fact that as it is a means of getting professional status it is felt necessary to 'keep down the numbers entering the ranks' (p.134). P. Venables (Tech. Ed., p.158) remarks that 'this ever-rising spiral is now acquiring an even steeper gradient, so that it is becoming increasingly difficult for students to reach professional status through this part-time route'.

Although C.G.L.I. Intermediate level is probably more suitable for a boy part way through an apprenticeship there are preferences which cause boys and their employers to choose O.N.C. Boys may feel that a National Certificate is a possible route to professional or semi-professional status, and it therefore is seen as more desirable than C.G.L.I. Some find themselves reaching the age of 18 having failed to reach even the first stage of the course they have chosen. Employers also have reasons for wanting apprentices to follow N.C. courses. Some feel that if they are to recruit people for higher administrative posts from ex-apprentices

the N.C. qualification is more suitable and in any case, some firms believe, the C.G.L.I. courses are poorly organised and in many cases duplicate the work done on the firm's premises. Liepmann (1960) refers to some training officers believing that if a boy tries to follow a harder course than he can handle (p.128), then he will realise his limitations and be more content to accept his place as a craftsman. But, she points out, 'The distressing and demoralising effects of failure' are not taken into account in this argument'.

Technical colleges also prefer N.C. to C.G.L.I. as it requires less space and training facilities and teachers normally prefer to teach a higher level of work, partly because their salary is dependent upon the level of work they teach (p.133).

Liepmann also refers to the clause in the 1944 Education Act (p.133) which states that a boy should as far as possible be able to choose his course. She suggests that colleges may interpret this too literally without giving sufficient regard to differences arising from differences in secondary schools. This enables boys to choose courses which are beyond their capabilities. Another factor which makes this possible is the fact that exemptions are sometimes granted from certain part of courses on the basis of previous examination successes which may not necessarily be strictly relevant to the course. Some indication that better attention could be paid to the choice of technical courses that apprentices follow is given by the very high failure rates in technical examinations. Referring to pass levels of 60-65 per cent for intermediate C.G.L.I., Williams (1957, p.160) points out that no records exist to show how many boys who do sit the examinations are making their first or second attempt. She gives examples of pass rates in different industries. In one college, of a group of 33 boys starting a course in Motor Vehicle work showed better results than most courses and '30 passed the first year test and went on

to the second year course. 18 passed this and proceeded to the third year and 12 gained Intermediate CGLI\*. Of a group of 106 starters on a Hand Composition course, 16 ultimately passed C.G.L.I. at intermediate level.

That something can in fact be gained by better methods of choosing more appropriate courses is illustrated by the example of the B.A.C. branch at Bristol which was studied by Liepmann (1960, p.128). They were faced with high failure rates among their students at technical college and introduced more sophisticated rules governing which courses apprentices should take. The result was that fewer boys failed their examinations and were able to progress in a more straightforward way than if they had to keep repeating a year. Liepmann (1960) suggests that a balance must be achieved between the theoretical requirements of skill and the level of theoretical teaching which is done in colleges. Williams (1957) sees that besides possible cause of high failure rates from teachers' attitudes and those of the pupils there can be other factors such as the distance an apprentice may have to travel or technical college. In some areas, especially those which are mainly rural, the journey to technical college will in many cases be a long and arduous one. Coupled with this is the fact that the attendance is for the most part during the winter, and a day at college can be a very long day for an apprentice to endure. Besides the journey to and from college it is not unusual for an apprentice to be expected to start classes at 9 a.m. and finish them at 9 p.m. and facilities for relaxation are by no means always provided.

Apart from matching boys' abilities with the course there is clearly much room for improvement in the way of making technical education available to apprentices on a realistic basis, either by providing more accessible centres with more realistic courses to offer or by extending the amount of vocational training given in secondary schools.

In some European countries the whole question of training young workers is tackled in a different way from the system as it operates in Britain. In France, for example, the colleges d'enseignement technique which are a cross between a school and a factory exist for apprentices over the age of 14. They attend for six months during which they are taught the elements of a number of trades after which they begin to specialise. After three years they are entitled to the pay of a skilled worker but only if they pass the examination which gives them the certificat d'aptitude professionnelle. Under this system the three year course of training does not automatically make an apprentice a skilled man. A further two years with his employer may also be necessary and if he moves to another firm after acquiring skilled status it is as a semi-skilled worker, and he must pass a test of competence before being given skilled status there.

In Germany attendance at vocational college is compulsory for one day a week for three years or until the end of apprenticeship (whichever is the longer) and there are also periodic tests. Also, with regard to competence, if an apprentice fails his final test of competence after two tries he is not given his skilled ticket. This final examination is given by the local chamber of industry and trade.

Simple comparisons between apprenticeship systems in different countries must, however, be treated with caution as trade union structures in different European countries cause apprenticeship to have different meanings. No European country has a trade union structure which is the same as that in Britain and apprenticeship does not play the same part in their union policies.

Training and Productive Work - The Cost of Training

It is one characteristic of Apprenticeship that employers attempt to balance the costs of training against the apprentices' contribution to productive work.

Some firms use apprentices as cheap labour as much as possible but others may be prepared to train young workers without being able to recoup the direct costs. It is difficult if not impossible to draw the line between the two extremes on a general level, and to some extent in the case of individual firms. As has already been mentioned, the reasons why firms employ apprentices as opposed to learners or non-apprentice trainees are related to trade union agreements which are not usually based on the true training needs of the firms. If we take the Engineering industry as an example we can see that in some sections of it firms will have an interest in training apprentices to a high level of skill whilst in other sections a low level of skill is required and apprenticeship agreements are more in the nature of a formality. In the latter type of firm there may be a higher likelihood of apprentices being used for cheap labour as special training facilities are less likely to be needed and the apprentices are not gaining any particularly useful skills. As a simple means of securing cheap labour, however, the employment of apprentices is not so effective as it used to be. The main reasons for this are that in some industries (including engineering) there are agreements to give boys time off work for attending technical college, and the gap between the wages of apprentices and skilled men has become less in recent years. This may lead to employers trying to cut down on the amount of practical training given to apprentices in an attempt to make a profit from employing them. Given, though, that there is a shortage of skilled labour (whether this means skilled or time-served is hard to ascertain) in the engineering industry, and assuming that this



shortage is in sections of the industry where real skill is important, the industry as a whole will tend to suffer from this kind of attitude towards apprentice training. The individual employer may hope that in the normal process of give and take he may secure the services of a man trained by somebody else if an apprentice costs a lot to train and then leaves the firm. It is for this problem of training an adequately skilled labour force that the institution of apprenticeship as a restrictive imposition from outside is to a large extent an irrelevance. The problem becomes one of the industry as a whole being able to agree to give and take without some firms having to make a disproportionate contribution to the industry's training needs.

For the individual employer it may not matter too much if an apprentice is expensive to train if he can feel fairly sure that he will retain his services as a skilled man when his training is finished. Also, Liepmann found, generous spending on apprentice training is made easier by subsidies or cost-plus contracts, and to large companies it may recommend itself on considerations of prestige, advertisement or tax advantage.

This question of what it costs the firm to train apprentices and how firms can regain their losses is influenced greatly by the contribution that apprentices can actually make to production. Liepmann (1960) and Williams (1957) found during their enquiries that the usual view is that an apprentice becomes a useful member of the work-force by the time he reaches 18, although one would expect this to vary with the amount of training that is given to him. For instance, when an apprentice is employed by a firm to do semi-skilled work cheaply, he may make a contribution to production much earlier. In addition to formal training though, a boy becomes more useful in his first year to two of employment simply by gaining in maturity and general understanding of work routines.

The assessment of the time needed before an apprentice becomes useful differs between foremen and top management, but Liepmann (1960) suggests that the time stated is likely to be coloured by pre-conceived ideas of the proper length of apprenticeship. As a rule though, an apprentice becomes useful to his employer well within the first term of his apprenticeship. It is during the second term that the employer can normally hope to regain what he has spent on training his apprentice.

It is here that we can see an important way in which the employer can turn apprenticeship to his own advantage. For the employer who is not interested in his workers having a high level of skill, a five year apprenticeship agreement gives him some freedom to take advantage of cheap labour. For the employer who wants his workers to have some skill the costs of the first three years of apprenticeship training can be offset by the output of the last two. As Williams (1957) points out, if the length of apprenticeship were cut from five years to three, employers would lose this means of offsetting their losses.

There are various ways suggested of removing the financial disincentives for employers to widen the scope of the training their apprentices receive. Some of these are based on comparisons with apprenticeship systems operating in other countries. For example, in the U.S. the Fitzgerald Act of 1937 provided for local Apprenticeship Committees to be set up so that unions and industries could work out apprenticeship schemes. These committees are financed by a levy on the wages bill of employers and unions also make contributions. Sometimes the apprentice is indentured to the local Apprenticeship Committee rather than to an individual firm, and this allows for some widening of the basis of his skill. This practice however is continued mainly as a way round the difficulty caused by agreements to lay off apprentices in a proportion to skilled workers rather than as a means of spreading apprentices' experience.

In France the colleges d'enseignement technique (formerly centres d'apprentissage) which work to maintain levels of skill in apprentice training are also funded from a levy on the wages bill of employers.

Williams (1957, p.197 ff.) suggests the use of group apprenticeship schemes as the quality of workmanship must be related to the quality of goods for the individual firm, but does not think that it should be a scheme whereby the authorities who would take responsibility for training centres could make a levy on firms on the basis of their payrolls. Rather, the authorities should bear responsibility for it as it is in the national interest that Industry should have an adequate supply of skilled workers. In connection with this she believes that there should be a kind of heirarchy of skill based on relatively low level tests of competence, and workers would be able to become better qualified by passing further tests.

Without discussing the question of how group training schemes should be financed, Liepmann (1960) also recommends that the State should take responsibility for seeing that the training needs of industry are met (p.198).

Following the Industrial Training Act of 1964 Industrial Training Boards were set up on an industry basis. The three main aims of the scheme were to spread the cost of training more equitably by means of the levy/grant system, to ensure an adequate supply of skilled workers, and to improve the general quality of training. The I.T.B.'s were constituted with representation by employers, employees, trade unions, and educational bodies. The D.E.P. provided secretarial facilities etc., until the Boards were able to maintain themselves and the rate at which they were established varied considerably. The Engineering and Construction Industries, for example, set up Boards in 1964. The ceramics industry board was set up in 1965 and the Carpet Manufacturing and the Agricultural boards came

into being in 1966. The board for transport and travel was not constituted until 1967.

### Apprenticeship as a Restrictive Influence on National Productivity

The main pre-occupation for Liepmann 1960, Williams 1957, and Wellens 1963 is with the fact that the existence of the institution of apprenticeship acts as a barrier to the degree of worker mobility that is demanded by the industrial system.

Liepmann and Williams recognise the fact that apprenticeship has many facets and involves various interests in Industry, and therefore do not advocate its abolition. They do, however, believe that age limits should be abolished and the whole system should be generally more flexible. Arguments against age limits, for example, refer to the fact that older workers, either through an acquired basic level of general knowledge of working practices, or through gaining extra maturity, are capable of learning a skill much faster than a 15 year old boy. Also, it would mean that boys who are not successful in starting an apprenticeship by the age of 16½ would not be out of the competition for skilled jobs. Reference is also made to the 1944 Education Act in this respect. Williams (1957, p.186) points to the fact that boys of higher ability are enabled to stay at school longer as a result of the Act and the ones who take advantage of this may still wish to become craftsmen but find themselves too old when they leave school. She suggests that there is some doubt as to how many boys who are capable of staying at grammar school would want to be skilled manual workers, and also asks whether it would be wasteful to employ more able boys in crafts. The main point that Williams (1960) in particular makes in connection with the 1944 Act is that if it leads to a reversal of a tendency for top management to come from the shop floor it will 'bring into being a system of social stratification of greater rigidity

than that from which we are now emerging' (p.194).

Viewed from the point of view of the training needs of Industry, then, the abolition of age limits in apprenticeship would probably lead to an improvement in terms of a widening of choice of potential trainees and to reduction in training costs brought about by the ability to recruit older apprentices who would learn more quickly.

Viewed from the point of view of the young worker, however, the question is much more problematical. The abolition of age limits taken together with the implications of the 1944 Act would indeed mean that boys who went to grammar school could still choose to become apprentices after leaving school at 17 or 18, and this may be seen as a good thing. It could be argued also that it would lead to a situation which is loaded in favour of the more capable boys and against those of less academic ability. In other words it would put more strength in the hands of the strong and take it away from the weak (boys of less academic ability may still make first class craftsmen).

It could be that the existence of age limits in apprenticeship prevents the development of a more rigid system of stratification than that predicted by Williams following the 1944 Act. Given that employers are constrained to recruit apprentices from a definite age group, there is an impediment to the allocation of jobs purely on the basis of individual ability. There does not appear to be a great deal of empirical evidence that the productive system suffers qualitatively as a result of such a constraint, particularly when one takes into account the problematical distinction between different levels of skill. In so far as the terms of reference include considerations of 'fair' allocation of jobs, however, there is some evidence that the influence of apprenticeship regulation is a positive one. (This argument leaves aside the question of the preferential position of skilled workers vis-a-vis non-skilled or semi-skilled

workers in terms of union membership. This is a different question.)

Wellans (1963) takes a more extreme view of 'the conflict between the vested interests of trade unionism in apprenticeship and the national interest' (p.87) and advocates the complete abolition of apprenticeship and the adoption of the 'spectrum principle of training'. He argues that the ideology in which the institution of apprenticeship has its roots has changed and the institution has become redundant. He believes that apprenticeship may continue to survive as a result of inertia and not because it is relevant for the ideology that brought it about in the first place.

Wellens also sees the 1944 Education Act as having stronger implications than Liepmann (1960) and Williams (1957). Referring to managers recruited from the shop floor he says 'In 1944, with one stroke of the pen, this supply was cut off'. (p.96). A more determined effort was made to carry the brighter boys forward to continued study. And it worked - helped by a tide of increasing prosperity and larger family incomes. These men now enter Industry at a different and higher level in the late leaver schemes and therefore bypass the apprenticeship scheme. This has left the foreman force without its traditional source of recruitment, since it has drastically and mercilessly reduced the quality of the apprentice intake at 15' (p.96).

This statement is similar to one made by Crawford and Sterland (1963). 'The 1944 Education Act has meant that all talented boys go straight to the top via university and technical education and therefore industry cannot any longer rely on supplies of boys with sufficient talent to become top managers coming into the industry by way of apprenticeship' (Ch.2). The wide variation in types of apprenticeship training and studies which have looked at the efficiency with which talented children

are selected within the educational system may suggest that a certain degree of caution may be desirable in respect of arguments of this kind. As Carter points out (e.g. 1966) there is a lot of evidence that the educational system does not in reality have the effect of giving educational opportunities to every individual in a way that enables him to make the most of his ability. 'The Robbins Report, for example, showed that there are plenty of potential university students who are at present denied the opportunity of higher education ... The Crowther Report and the Newsom Report endorse this appraisal with reference to children at the secondary and further education stages' (Ibid., pp.33-34). On the whole the literature dealing with apprenticeship is concerned with the economic implications of it and deals primarily with the problem of effecting a more efficient allocation of labour resources to the needs of Industry without, however, always placing the same degree of faith as Wellens (1963) in the 'economic master plan' (p.87).

There is a limit to the extent to which some writers see man as 'a cog in an industrial machine' (Wellens, 1963, p.85).

APPENDIX 2

THE NEW SCHEME

The following is the outline of the revised Mining Training Scheme proposed by the NCB Industrial Training Branch and adopted in the year following that in which this study was carried out:

\*New Proposals for Juvenile Mining Recruitment and Training

A recruit, depending on his potential and educational ability, would be selected either for the Mining Training Scheme or the Mining Craft Apprenticeship Scheme. The former is designed for those less-able recruits who are merely interested "in getting a job". The Apprenticeship Scheme is designed and intended for those who wish and are considered suitable for Underofficial and specialist posts. They must be able to follow a Mining Craft Course at Technical College. There will be inter-transfer between both schemes to enable late-developers to move into the Apprenticeship Scheme and those not making the grade in the Apprenticeship Scheme to be transferred into the Training Scheme.

Mining Training Scheme

First Year

2 Weeks Induction Training  
4 Weeks Surface Training  
10 Weeks Basic Mining Training  
6 Weeks Basic Engineering Training  
4 Weeks U/G District Training

Proficiency Test

Training in selected skill

Employment Underground

Second Year

Employment Underground

Mining Craft Apprenticeship Scheme

First Year

2 Weeks Induction Training  
4 Weeks Surface Training  
10 Weeks Basic Mining Training  
24 Weeks Basic Engineering Training  
2 Weeks Electrical Appreciation Training

4 Weeks U/G District Training

Proficiency Test

2 Weeks Non Vocational Training

Second Year

10 Weeks Job Rotation  
4 Weeks T/Centre Course  
12 Weeks Job Rotation U/G  
5 Weeks Introduction to Coalface work on Production Face  
17 Weeks Job Rotation U/G



Third Year

Employment Underground  
3 Weeks Operational Engineering  
Training  
20 Weeks Basic Coalface Training

(by about 18 years of age)

Fourth Year

40 Days Improvership  
In coalface employment  
or other skilled work

Third Year

Job Rotation  
4 Weeks T/Centre Course  
Job Rotation  
4 Weeks Pre-Coalface Training  
Proficiency Test  
20 Weeks Basic Coalface Training  
(by about 18 years of age)

Fourth Year

40 Days Improvership  
In coalface employment  
or other skilled work  
Formulated 'bridge' training and  
career development and training  
to fit them for an underofficial  
or specialist post.  
Objective To achieve Supervisory  
skills by age 21 years  
(It is hoped that there will be  
a lowering of the statutory age  
for appointment as an underofficial)\*

The details of the new scheme (The Mining Craft Scheme) as shown above were announced almost at the end of the period covered by the study and they were shown to the boys in the sample and the meaning of them was explained as clearly as possible.

The overall reaction of the boys to the proposed new scheme as it was outlined to them was favourable. However, due to the late stage in the study when the details of the scheme were made known, any serious discussion of its implications was only possible with about fifteen or so boys.

One thing that was immediately apparent in talking to these boys about the scheme was that they did not see the clear distinction between it and the Craft Apprenticeship Scheme that they saw between the Craft

Apprenticeship and the then existing Mining Apprenticeship scheme. Their views on this point could probably be summed up by saying that they saw it as occupying a position part way between Mining and Craft Apprenticeship, but leaning towards Craft Apprenticeship. It was clear at this stage that they still did not clearly see the true significance in the Industrial Relations sense of Craft Apprenticeship.

Things they found attractive about the proposed scheme included the amount of engineering training they would receive. Some boys appeared cynical about this, however, and did not believe that they would actually be allowed to use the tools and machines (that they might be taught to use during training) after training was completed. Another thing that appealed to them was the idea of being trained in 'supervisory skills'. The main reason given for this was that it would equip them for work outside the industry. One might assume that the prospect of entering the world of management constitutes a reasonable alternative to becoming a skilled craftsman, notwithstanding the views they had expressed previously in connection with white collar workers.

On the basis of what was revealed about the Mining Apprenticeship scheme and the boys concerned with it one would tend to predict that the Mining Craft Scheme would go the same way. This prediction would be made with a high degree of caution however, taking into account the initial reaction of boys to the announcement of the scheme. The main determining factor would appear to be the extent to which the boys themselves see it as offering real alternatives to skilled craft work in terms of status and transferability of skills - as, say, into management jobs in other industries.

A boy in the course of being trained to do a job which carries high status in his own eyes and in the eyes of his fellows does not yet enjoy the status to which he aspires. He can draw in advance, as it were,

on his future status and in this way he has some compensation for his present low income and position vis-a-vis qualified men. That is, he can say 'I am nobody now, but I will be somebody in X years time'. The effectiveness of this claim depends on the extent to which others recognise the truth of it. If a Mining Apprentice were to say 'I am nobody now but I will be an underofficial in some years time', his claim would lack credibility in that no obvious link existed in the minds of other people, partly at least because of the ill-defined process by which the transition was supposed to take place. If, however, the new scheme is seen to follow its declared course (and if successive stages are reached on schedule) and the explicit objective of imparting supervision skill is reached, then the claim to future status may carry some credibility. In other words the participant's ego will be secure by the ability to draw in advance on his future status.

APPENDIX 3

THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire No.1 (Answers obtained during 1st week of Induction Course)

Questions were put to the group as a whole and they wrote their answers down on a duplicated sheet with numbered boxes.

1. Name
2. Date of Birth
3. Home colliery
4. Address
5. Date of leaving school
6. Date of Starting Apprenticeship
7. Name and type of school
8. Certificates obtained at school
9. Father's job
10. Relatives or friends working in Mining
  - (a) Father
  - (b) Brother
  - (c) Relatives
  - (d) Friends
11. (a) Were you offered any other apprenticeship before the Coal Board offered you a Mining Apprenticeship?  
(b) If yes, what was it?
12. Did you have any other job before starting this one - if so, what was it?
13. Did your parents come with you when you came for your interview
  - (a) Mother
  - (b) Father
  - (c) Neither
14. Would you have preferred a Craft Apprenticeship?
15. (a) Did you apply for a Craft Apprenticeship?  
(b) Will you be applying for one next year?
16. Will you be disappointed if you don't get one?
17. Were you glad to leave school?
18. Who suggested that you should apply for a Mining Apprenticeship?
19. Did you have any advice from:
  - (a) Parents
  - (b) Brothers
  - (c) Friends
  - (d) Youth Employment Officer
  - (e) Schoolteacher

20. If a better job came along would you take it?
21. What might such a job be? In other words, what would you really like to be?
22. (a) Have you got the brains to do a Craft Apprenticeship?  
(b) If the answer is no, who told you that you haven't?
23. Will you join a trade union?
24. (a) If your father or brothers are in mining are they at the same pit as you?  
(b) If so, do you mind working with them?
25. Hobbies
26. How many (a) brothers  
(b) sisters
27. How long were you looking before you found a job and started work?

The following questions were put to the boys individually and their answers were jotted down and codified:

28. What did your parents think about your going into mining?  
Codified: (a) Strongly encouraged  
(b) Were pleased  
(c) Didn't mind  
(d) Didn't like it but didn't object  
(e) Objected  
(f) Didn't care
29. For this question the boy was shown a card and asked to read out loud the three things written on it, i.e.  
(a) Excited  
(b) Satisfied  
(c) No more than I expected  
and then he was asked which of these applied to him when he was offered a Mining Apprenticeship?
30. How do you think you will get on with the other boys?  
(a) very well  
(b) not very well  
(c) Don't know
31. How do you think you will get on with the men at the pit?  
(a) very well  
(b) not very well  
(c) don't know
32. Now that you have started training, do you feel as if:  
(a) You are still at school  
(b) You have started to work for a living

33. The boy was asked to study the following things printed on a card and to pick the three most important to look for in a job in order of preference.
- (a) Good money
  - (b) Chances to get on
  - (c) Working conditions (Hours, Holidays, Working Conditions)
  - (d) Interesting jobs to do
  - (e) Friendly workmates
  - (f) Good boss and good firm.
34. What is the most important job of the trade union?

### Questionnaire 2

As soon as all the boys had answered all the questions in questionnaire number one, this questionnaire was used as a basis for interviewing the boys in turn.

1. How do you feel about the future of the coal industry? In other words, do you feel that, if you stay in mining, you will have a job for life if you want it?
2. Supposing that you do not get a craft apprenticeship and you qualify as a miner, do you feel now that there would still be a job that you would be prepared to do until you retire? If we put it another way, can you imagine yourself being a miner until you retire?
3. What do you see the deputy's job as being?
4. Would you like to be a deputy?
5. You know that deputies are recruited from among people like you who are going to be skilled face workers. Do you think that if you are still a miner when you are 18 and old enough to apply, you would be interested in putting in for training as a deputy?
6. Do you think you have the qualities necessary to be a deputy?
7. You know that a deputy is a foreman and therefore one of the bosses. How do you feel about being one of the workers and then becoming a boss?
8. Would you agree that a deputy is a kind of team captain who leads his team on in doing a good job?

Questionnaire No.3

This was used as a basis for more extended individual discussions with the boys.

1. Mother's occupation
2. How many people in your house work for the NCB?
3. What did you do after leaving school and before starting work for the NCB?
4. What do you think about learnership for specific jobs (as opposed to apprenticeship) and what about supervisory training with a certificate at the end of it?
5. What do you think about the armed forces as a job?
6. When you were at school what did you hope you would do as a job when you left?
7. What sort of jobs are the best jobs? (also reaction to the suggestion of a job with higher status than those stated).
8. Do you expect your parents to help you to sort out your career problems?
9. Who is more important in this respect: Mother or Father?
10. Do you think you would have done a different job if you have lived in a different area? If so, where do you mean?
11. Is there a difference between Northumberland and the rest of the country with respect to jobs?
12. There is a shortage of labour in mining now. What do you think about that?
13. While you are doing your apprenticeship how will you feel if you don't start working underground at the time when they have told you you should?
14. If you changed jobs would you think it was necessary to consult your parents?
15. What is the NCB like as an employer?
16. Do you think there is a shortage of jobs for boys in Northumberland?
17. How do you feel about the prospect of doing shift work?
18. What do you think about the way boys are separated into groups in the Mining Training School according to how well they do in the intelligence test?





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