

GILBERT'S "What Young People Think"

# The Trouble With Teeners Is Adults, Say Parents In A National Survey

By EUGENE GILBERT, President of the Gilbert Youth Research Co. "The trouble with kids today is . . . How often have you heard people begin a conversation with those words and a sad shake of the head? Teen-aged troubles seem to be on everyone's mind these days, especially the parents of teen-aged children. All right, then, what is the trouble with kids today? What makes them so different from when you and I were young? We decided to find out by making a special survey limited to parents of teen-aged children, a switch from our regular studies which are devoted to the opinions of teen-agers themselves. Our first question was: "What do you consider the single worst influence on the lives of your teen-aged children?" It turned out to be a block buster. Kissing to the bait with what seemed like pent up fury, the parents we interviewed blamed the troubles of their teen-aged offspring on everything from rock 'n' roll to progressive education. The leading culprit, so adjudged by 57 per cent of the parents, was the "low moral standards of our society."

human nature for people to follow the trend of the times and want to do what others do." **More Trouble Makers** Second place on the teen-aged trouble list went to bad companions, with 29 per cent of the parents interviewed citing it as the single worst influence on our youngsters. Bad companions, according to Mrs. Joan Hopkins of Iliou, N.Y., mother of three teen-agers, "don't even have to be close companions for their influence to be felt. I notice defiance and fresh talk after the briefest contact with companions of somewhat looser morals." Mrs. M. Dee of Boston noted that her two teen-agers "tend to go along with or imitate their companions, good or bad." Added Ramsey Collier of Atlanta, Ga.: "If kids continue to follow the leader like a troop of elephants joined trunk to tail, we won't need a third world war. They'll murder themselves." The influence of television and movies on teen-agers was considered worst of all by 11 per cent of the parents. Next, with a 3 per cent vote, was rock 'n' roll music. Progressive education drew a 1 per cent vote. Other influences cited, most of them dealing with parents themselves, included working mothers, divorce, lack of home training, dwindling emphasis on manners and courtesy, tendency to escape parental responsibility by "packing kids off" to summer camps, etc., and the publication of crime news.



**PARENTS** blame their own contemporaries for leading the young astray, which they imitate in their own lives." The influence of religion and church activities was regarded as the most important by 25 per cent of the parents interviewed. "Spiritual influence," said a Minnesota mother, "helps keep children on the right track all their lives." **Many Suggestions** Similarly a Peekskill, N.Y., mother of three teen-agers commented: "My son has been an altar boy for six years and my two daughters sing in the choir. Such close association to the church stays." Best influence answers from the remaining 2 per cent of the parents visited by our interviewers across the country were pretty evenly divided among such factors as school training, YMCA and scout work, good companions, supervised reading and entertainment, neighborhood environment, hobbies, etc. After picking what they regarded as the best and worst influences on their teen-aged children, the parents were given an opportunity to offer some suggestions for keeping their kids out of trouble. Again, there was no hesitancy about putting forward ideas, even where they themselves were on the receiving end of the remedy. One parent urged "forced education" to teach all mothers and fathers "how to understand their own children. I don't believe in forcing people to do things, but how else would you get them to go?" Other suggestions included censorship of movies, TV and magazines, raising legal drinking and driving ages, more community recreation programs, closer supervision of companions, stricter school discipline, controlling off-color song lyrics, more church activities for young people, getting more parents interested in YMCA and scout work, tighter divorce laws when children are involved, and in general more participation on the part of parents in the lives of their children.

To Mrs. Philip B. Wilson of Long Beach, Calif., the mother of two teen-aged boys, our society has deteriorated because of "too much freedom. Young people observe adults doing the very things they are told not to do." **They Blame Themselves** In blasting the moral standards of modern society, many parents put a heavy portion of the responsibility and the guilt on their own shoulders. "There is not enough respect shown to parents by teen-agers," said Mrs. Joan Messina of Flushing, N.Y., "because there is a lack of love, patience and understanding on the part of parents. Without these, the child is confused, feels that no one is interested in him or really cares at home. Before long, he gets the attention he craves by causing trouble. Then it is that the parents wonder why and where they have failed, but they look for the fault in the child instead of in themselves." In another strongly worded indictment, Joseph Greenstein of New York City, the father of two teen-agers, lashed out at parents "who think it's smart and modern to let a child grow up without restraint or guidance." Teen-agers, insists Mrs. George Hingson of Portland, Ore., are only as good or as bad as the society in which they live. "Their habits, their attitudes, their disposition all have been formed long before they become teen-agers." In the same vein, Mrs. B. H. Frederich of Crevecoeur, Minn., mother of two teen-aged children, warns that "we can't expect our children to be any better than what they see all round them. It's

contemporaries for leading the young astray, help them to see and grow." **Questions Asked** What do you consider the single worst influence on the lives of your teen-aged children? Why? What do you consider the single best influence on the lives of your teen-aged children? Why? What do you think should be done to influence the lives of teen-agers for their betterment. **Next Week: Teeners Bank On Cultural Exchange To Save World Peace.** Distributed by AP Newsfeatures

## Administration Gives Full Support To Minerals Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — The administration has thrown its full support behind the controversial domestic minerals subsidy bill now before the House—something of a last-minute change of position. The Interior Department today made available copies of a letter Secretary Seaton sent Republican House members Friday in which he said: "This measure has the full endorsement of the administration." Previously the administration had approved the principle of the measure but had favored lower subsidies. The bill provides for stockpiling purchases of domestically produced copper; stabilization payments to domestic producers of lead, zinc, acid-grade fluorspar and tungsten; and incentive payments designed to maintain a small domestic production of beryl, chromite and columbitantantalum. "This department has the basic duty to help maintain a healthy domestic mining industry," Seaton wrote. "We believe the domestic minerals stabilization plan, if enacted, will permit the orderly readjustment of domestic production to normal commercial markets, with a minimum of interference to our friends and allies abroad." "I am hopeful that we can count on your support for this measure. Without this legislation, domestic industries producing these commodities would face an uncertain future, to say the least." "The capacity of these industries will be needed for our foreseeable future requirements in peacetime and in a national emergency, should one arise. To replace this capacity in the future would require many times the expenditures necessary to maintain it today."

## Engineers' Report Favors Proposed Coal Power Plant

ELLENSBURG (AP) — A generally optimistic report on a proposed coal-burning power plant in the Roslyn-Cle Elum areas was released Tuesday by an engineering firm, which hedged its comments with questions on inflation. The firm of H. Zinder & Associates analyzed the project for the Kittitas County Public Utility District, which proposes to sell steam plant power to industries or utilities. The Zinder report says hydroelectric projects now under construction will provide all power needed by utilities until after 1963. After that, it said, the product of the proposed coal-burning plant, combined with off-peak hydro power, "should compare favorably in cost with power from a number of non-federal hydroelectric projects being considered."

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