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A Potential Investment.

James M. Dodge, the President of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, in a speech at the commencement of the Willamette Trade School in Philadelphia, which is printed in St. Nicholas, took the novel view of a boy that he represents a "potential investment," and urged his ambitious hearers to "invest in themselves.

According to Mr. Dodge the average boy at 16 is worth \$3,000—that is, he usually earns 5 per cent interest upon that sum, \$3 a week. Anyone can calculate his own "capitalized" value by this rule: As many thousands invested as his salary per week amounts to for 50 weeks, allowing two weeks for vacation or illness.

The boy who goes direct into a machine shop, according to Mr. Dodge's figures, increases his capitalized value to \$7,400 at 19, when he finishes his three years; to \$13,200 at 21 when he becomes a full-fledged workman, and to \$15,000 at 24, beyond which time his value and his earnings do not vary much.

Making a plea for the trade school, Mr. Dodge traces the value of the lad who enters it, and by learning principles instead of set tasks which do not vary, increases his capitalization much more rapidly. He enters the shop at 19 at \$12 per week, or capitalized at

\$12,000. At 24 he is getting \$20 per week and at 27 he is getting \$25 per week, representing a value of \$25,000 and is still mounting. In his case there is no limit to the possibilities.

Perhaps the 5 per cent basis is rather too high for capitalization, because there is always the risk of sudden death and the certainty of death eventually. But so is there in these days danger to the man who has \$25,000 invested at a rate as high as 5 per cent. Safe investments rule lower.

Why should a young man learn his trade better in a trade guild than as an apprentice in a shop? asks Mr. Dodge.

"It has been said that a three years' course in a trade school, in which an average of but a few hours a day devoted to actual manual work, can in no way compare with three years' time spent in actual work in a shop. I feel that this is a popular error.

"In shop work a man may spend months in repetition of the same task, to no ultimate advantage to the worker. Instead of his skill being quickened it is dulled. He very quickly acquires the skill which is unconscious in its operation, and, like the old lady with her knitting needle, he can talk to a fellow-workman or think and dream about far distant places and matters without in any way