

## STUDENTS who quit high school become a liability to themselves and



Delinquency is 10 times more common among dropouts.

In Russia, education is compulsory, curriculum much more advanced than here.



**F**RANK WAS 16, a sophomore in a Passaic, N. J., high school, and the only son of a widowed mother who supported him by working as a cleaning woman.

Frank was an average student, but a good son. Feeling that he was a burden to his mother, he quit school and started looking for work. Luckily, he lived in a community that had the conscience to cope with his problem and the program to solve it.

At the employment office, the counselor, instead of outlining job openings, tried to persuade Frank to return to school. Frank was shown statistics proving that opportunities were far greater for high-school and college graduates than for dropouts. He was impressed but adamant. "We need the money," he said simply.

Frank took a series of tests which showed he had above-average intelligence and potential. He was told that only his attitude toward school—his belief that it was holding him back—kept him from being a better student. Surprised, he agreed to take the counselor's advice.

The high school and Passaic civic groups cooperated. The school arranged Frank's classes more in line with his aptitudes. Civic groups got him a part-time job and found his mother a better-paying one. His material needs satisfied, Frank returned to school and later went on to college. He now has a promising career before him.

Frank's problem is fairly typical nationwide. The solution, unfortunately, is not. As a result, the dropout problem is becoming increasingly serious—to the individual student, his community, and the nation itself.

Take any five students in any high school in the country. If they reflect national averages, one will graduate and go on to college; two will graduate and get jobs as skilled or white-collar workers; the remaining two will drop out before graduation, ill-trained for anything but the most menial jobs and all but useless to the nation in a changing world that's demanding more and more education.

Therein lies the problem. Business, industry, and especially national defense are continually growing more complex. New knowledge, new skills, more adaptability, and greater flexibility will be needed

by larger and larger numbers of workers—an estimated 23 million new workers by 1965. But at the current rate, more than 40 percent—almost half—of the nation's future work force will be ill-equipped to meet the challenge of the next few decades.

The problem is first an individual one. Surveys show that even in an expanding economy less than half of all employers even consider hiring non-high-school graduates. In one area, of 71 occupations listed with vacancies, all required high-school graduates or better.

One executive said pointedly: "Our average worker uses \$12,500 worth of equipment. In a field getting more competitive all the time, we can't gamble with young people who don't have the background to profit quickly from advanced training."

The worst feature, however, is that the dropout cuts off his own chances of finding out just what his aptitudes are, seldom staying in school long enough to take more specialized courses, especially vocational courses, which could help identify them. This, most authorities agree, is probably the major cause of the nation's wasted, undeveloped talent.

Those who stay in school long enough to identify their talents profit most. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that high-school graduates earn an average of \$30,000 more in a lifetime than dropouts, and college graduates \$50,000 more.

**T**HE COMMUNITY also has a stake in promoting education. The government recently surveyed 30 cities, in some of which more than half the population had a high-school education or better; in others more than half had less than a high-school education. The survey showed that sales in the better-educated communities averaged about \$200 more per person per year!

Industry also has an investment in education. Areas which tolerate lower educational levels will always suffer lower-quality workers and lower-quality industry—or no industry at all. A four-year study of a chronic dropout problem in Harrison County, W. Va., showed a direct relationship with another problem: chronic unemployment.

Communities have still stronger motives for keeping their teen-agers in school: their tax dollars.