

Radiator, timing case, petrol pump, distributor and oil-pump drive, valve mechanism and cam followers must be removed before the cam-shaft is withdrawn and the damaged timing gear taken out and a new gear fitted. All the units are replaced, the engine timing adjusted, and the distributor and valves set. Philip has done this difficult job unaided on three Holden engines, and each one started immediately and ran smoothly when the work was completed.

Because of his mechanical ability and confidence to do running repairs on the road, Philip has been given work as a truck driver and yardman with Culburra Hardware Co.

Philip's chief interest is in panel beating, but this is not taught at Nowra. However, welding is one aspect of repair work, and arrangements were made for Philip to attend the electric and oxy-welding class. He started during the last term last year, and his instructor told me that Philip is making progress as good as any other student.

One very important facet of all this activity is to create interest in and prepare the ground for youths leaving Nowra High School to proceed to an apprenticeship at some trade. In fact two Aboriginal lads from this district commenced boiler-making training with Australian Iron and Steel as a direct result of the automotive course and a visit to the Apprenticeship School. It is now felt by all concerned that an important "South Coast Break-through" has been made in this field of Aboriginal education.

As the Chief Secretary and Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr E. A. Willis, aptly observed recently:—

"Apprenticeship training is to me like a three-legged stool, which cannot stand if one of the legs is missing. These three very essential legs are the boys themselves, their parents and the industrial employers of the State."

In the case of the eleven Aboriginal boys at Australian Iron and Steel Co. at Port Kembla (reported in *Dawn*, July, 1965), the "three-legged stool" toppled, and there is now an urgent need to discover some of the multiple reasons for this failure. It could range from simple home-sickness, to complex psychological and emotional maladjustments, together with an absence of emotional weaning.

Future selection of boys for apprenticeship training must be made with *much greater* regard to these five things:

1. General intelligence (I.Q. as high as possible);
2. Good scholastic record of achievement to 4th Form;
3. Sound mathematical ability;
4. Emotional stability and strong character; and
5. Ready willingness to observe all the obligations involved in a five-year apprenticeship.

Information about the first three items will be provided by the headmaster of the boy's high school. The other two points will be investigated by the Institute of Industrial Psychology and/or the Department of Child Welfare, through essential tests for emotional and personality traits.

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Because the young person usually does not have a very clear picture of conditions of work or the obligations of workers, he should be supplied with a copy of the Apprenticeship Agreement form of the employing company. As well, he should be given a summary of his training for the five years, rates of salary, bonuses, gratuities, living away from home allowance, and all other relevant information.

All this checking and testing should be made, together with an assessment of both parents and home conditions, *before* the lad is nominated for an apprenticeship, and *only then* could we assert that the Aboriginal content of the "three-legged stool" was reasonably sound. (A study of all Aboriginal apprentices has begun and findings will be made public when the study is complete.)

As I see it, Aboriginal youths, because of faulty family outlook and lack of discipline, are not sufficiently weaned emotionally to travel long distances from home and relatives to where they are apprenticed. Because of this, it is *most* desirable that the boys be trained at the technical college nearest their home.

#### Philip examines an electric arc-butt weld

(Photos courtesy Nowra Studios)

