

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. According to my list, it should be Gerald Walker next. Ridley, Rye, Stenton and finally Walker.

BILLY. I'm Casper.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. Oh yes. I should have seen you earlier, shouldn't I? Right. Now then, Casper, what kind of job have you in mind? *(Pause)* Well?

BILLY. Don't know, sir, haven't thought about it.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. Well you're going to have to think about it. Have you looked around for anything yet?

BILLY. No, not yet.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. Right then. Would you like to work in an office? Or would you prefer manual work?

BILLY. What's that, manual work?

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. It means working with your hands. For example building, farming, engineering, jobs like that, as opposed to pen-pushing jobs.

BILLY. I'd be all right working in an office, wouldn't I? I've a job to read and write.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. Well, if it's manual work then, you could enter a trade as an apprentice? You know, as an electrician, or a bricklayer or something like that. Well, what do you think?

No reaction from BILLY.

Of course, the money isn't too good while you're serving your apprenticeship. You may find that lads of your own age who take dead-end jobs will be earning far more than you; but in those jobs there's no satisfaction or security, and if you do stick out at it you'll find it is worth your while. And whatever happens, at least you'll always have a trade at your fingertips won't you?

Well, what do you think about it? And as you've already said you feel better working with your hands, perhaps that would be your best bet. It would mean attending Technical College and studying for various examinations but nowadays

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most employers encourage their staff to take advantage of these facilities and allow them time off to attend – usually one day a week.

He gets up from his chair, looks out of the window, and continues talking.

On the other hand, if your firm wouldn't allow you time off during the day, and you were still keen to study, then you'd have to attend class in your own time. Some do it for years – two or three nights a week from leaving school until their mid twenties, when some take their Higher National Diplomas or even Degrees. But you've got to if you want to get on in life. And they'll all tell you that it's worth it in the end.

(He turns round.) Had you considered continuing your education in any form after leaving school?

No reaction from BILLY.

I say, are you listening to me?

BILLY. Yes.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. You don't look as though you are. Now then, where were we? If nothing I've mentioned appeals to you, and if you can stand a hard day's graft and not mind getting dirty, then there are good opportunities in mining.

BILLY. I'm not going down t' pit.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. Conditions have improved tremendously . . .

BILLY. I wouldn't be seen dead down t' pit.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. Don't be put off by what you've heard.

BILLY. I wouldn't be seen dead down pit.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. Well, what do you want to do then? There doesn't seem to be a job in England to suit you. What about hobbies? What hobbies have you got? What about gardening, keeping pigeons or constructing Meccano sets or anything like that?

BILLY *shakes his head.*

No hobbies at all?

BILLY (*standing*). Can I go now, sir?

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. What's the matter Casper? I haven't finished yet.

Takes a form and begins to fill it in.

Half the time you're like a cat on hot bricks – the other half you're not listening.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OFFICER *picks up a booklet.*

Here, take this form. It gives you all the relevant information concerned with leaving school and starting work. Things like sickness benefits, national insurance, pensions, salaries, etc. At the back there's a detachable form. When you want your cards fill it in and send it to the office. The address is given at the top. Have you got that?

BILLY *is not listening at all by this time and very anxious to get out of the room.*

Well take it then . . . and if you have any problem getting fixed up come in and see me. OK? Right, Casper, that's all.

BILLY *running. The following scene happens whilst the Betting Shop is established.*

Scene 15

The Field and Shed, 4.15 pm

BILLY. Kes! Kes!

Jud . . .

Jud! Mother!

Kes! Jud!

Kes! Kes! Come on then Kes!

Scene 15

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