

Graduates Eager for Job

at £4 a Week

Professional Men's Plight

DIFFICULTY OF RE-EMPLOYMENT

Less Pay Than Artisan

SYDNEY, Saturday.

"Applications invited for managing legal clerk, state salary required . . ."

The advertisement brought a shoal of replies, of which 60 were from highly suitable men, including qualified solicitors and graduates B.A. and LL.B. Any number of them were eager to take the place for £4 a week.

The managing clerk's job was sought by fully a dozen qualified solicitors. Among them many had taken either one or both of the university degrees of B.A. and LL.B.

Others were experienced law clerks, with from 10 to 15 years' experience with firms of solicitors in high standing.

Looking over a bunch of more than 50 applicants, one could pick two or three who (reading between the lines) were apparently of the type which never gets past the fringe of responsible work.

The overwhelming majority, however, were evidently men of good repute and experience, and had been well worth their £500 to £600 a year in established offices.

In their general average they were hungry to get the billet at £4, £5, and £6 a week. One hesitantly named a salary of "£2 or £4"; one said £3 10s; 10 of them would take £4; a greater number £5. Very few had the temerity to go higher.

Mostly were men in their early prime, 30 to 40 years old, and married.

That £4 a week, which so many were prepared to accept, is only 12/6 a week higher than the basic wage for manual labor.

But it was the salary asked by some who had become fully qualified solicitors, and were trying (evidently in vain) to earn a living in their own professional practice.

GETTING OLD

Their articles and their university education cost several hundreds of pounds, and some years of intensive study. But they do not today command the pay of an artisan aged 21.

Technical men may have even a worse time. How many openings exist for engineers and draftsmen with the stoppage of public works and the long paralysis in the building trade? Worst of all is the hardship of men who are growing old.

A fully qualified engineer, now forced on the dole, advertised his desire to be made mechanic and electrician for any large block of flats or offices, with casual work thrown in, and all he wanted in return was a small room to shelter him.

He borrowed the money to pay for his advertisement. But he received not a single reply.

Old-time managing clerks, head clerks, head salesmen are hopelessly out of their employment. People like these are met almost every day. It is two years, three years since they lost their former places; sometimes business was slack with the firm, here and there the firm went bankrupt.

ENGLISH EXAMPLE

Maybe the committee under the new Stevens scheme will find employment for such men. The chairman (Sir George Julius) must know very clearly the present plight of technical, professional, and executive classes who are unemployed.

A little more than a year ago in England a small attempt was made to organise something in the interests of the "executive" unemployed. A number of clerical and professional men formed the British Executive Employment Society.

Men of the executive class form the staff of this society.

It admits unemployed "technicians" and "executives" for a subscription of 5/ a year, and it is joined also by similar men who are in employment. They are called "associates," and pay a double subscription of 10/ a year.

NEW WAYS OF WORK

The energies of the society are devoted to finding employment for its members.

Banks and commercial houses gave help with donations of money and office equipment, and a clubroom was established.

The society claims to have put a number of men into berths, and has directed others into new ways of making a living.

Last January the Prince of Wales visited the clubrooms and so gave the society a fine boost in public sympathy.

A similar society would do no harm in Sydney and might do much good.

If the club were formed here as in London and wanted Prince Henry to pay a call, he would without doubt be glad to follow his brother's example.