

ENGINEERING OFFERS A FINE CAREER

Firm With 100 Apprentices

Sept 15, N. and J. 1961

THE Stroud Company of T. H. & J. Daniels Ltd., at Lightpill may be over 120 years old but the thoughts and methods being applied there are as up-to-date as any to be found in this country.

At present 100 apprentices are being trained at the Daniels works, the training department has been extended to accommodate twenty-five apprentices annually and the company offers the opportunity of reaching up to a university standard of technical education. In addition, provision is made to train and upgrade Daniels staff so that they can earn more for themselves, as well as being of more value to the company.

AT THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

The annual intake of twenty-five apprentices occurs in August. About a third of this number come from the Stroud Technical College and Daniels are always pleased to see such lads. These students have completed a one year special pre-apprentice training Course for school leavers who go to the College at the age of fifteen, then join industry when they are sixteen years old.

In addition to those boys who are joining Daniels from the Technical College, the secondary technical schools also submits quite a number and so does the grammar school. This year there has been much more interest from the latter, perhaps due to the fact that a technical career is a worthwhile one to follow in this technological age.

Having joined Daniels in August, the boys go into the new training school for the first six months, three of which are probationary (all appointments with this company incidentally are subject to a three months probationary period). During the time in the Training School, the boys are essentially engaged on practical work such as fitting and machining. They also attend lectures in the school classroom, weekly film shows and even visit other establishments to learn not only about

engineering but also industry in general, finance, current affairs, etc.

INTO MAIN WORKS

The whole object of this six months period is to assess the student in conjunction with the type of career he may best follow. Out of twenty-five trainees, about ten are generally selected to become technicians and fifteen to follow a specialised craft. The boys are indentured after the three months probationary period, then go into the Daniels main works at the end of the six months.

Up to the first six months, training is identical. After that, each apprentice follows his special bent, and, it must be emphasised, there is every opportunity for a boy to improve himself from one grade to another. Courses are arranged according to grade. There are courses on various practical engineering subjects available in the Daniels works. There are outside courses under the auspices of the Gloucestershire Education Committee and there are, of course, the courses held regularly by the Stroud Technical College. Some students attend Gloucester and Cheltenham Technical Colleges for special courses.

All Daniels apprentices attend either day release or sandwich courses. In the former case, the student goes to the Stroud Technical College one day a week, while in the latter case will spend six months full time at a College and six months in the factory.

AT A UNIVERSITY

There are many other courses, such as those for a diploma of technology and, at the moment, Daniels have one apprentice at

Cardiff University. Technical apprenticeships generally take four years to complete and craft apprenticeships four and a half to five years, according to ability, and educational qualifications.

What do they do when they finish? The answer to this question is that in modern industry one never finishes. Keeping abreast with new technical trends always continues. This does not mean that once an apprentice, always an apprentice. Most of the top technical, supervisory and senior executive positions at Daniels are held by ex-apprentices.

In addition to training apprentices, Daniels also help operators to better themselves as previously mentioned. This scheme has only just started and the first two operators trained from an un-skilled to a semi-skilled capacity. As well as training adults, Daniels also train youths - not as apprentices but purely as operators. Should these trainees show aptitude, they are given the opportunity to attend college courses and up-grade themselves.

STILL EXPERIMENTING

Although one of the first companies in the district to initiate apprentice training many years ago, Daniels openly admit that they are still "experimenting." Recently Daniels sent two youths to Bristol on a new Government training scheme and they are also currently running commercial courses for eight girls. Another experiment, only started this week, is the decision to send three trainees (two boys and a girl) on the National Certificate Course of Business Studies at the Stroud Technical College. This is a pre-accountancy course but, as is well known, the accountants and the technicians will be running the business of the future.

Finally, all such training represents acts of faith by a Company. They also represent considerable financial investment and it is to the credit of T. H. & J. Daniels that they do not insist on any trainee remaining with the Company. Perhaps this is why most Daniels employees choose to do so.