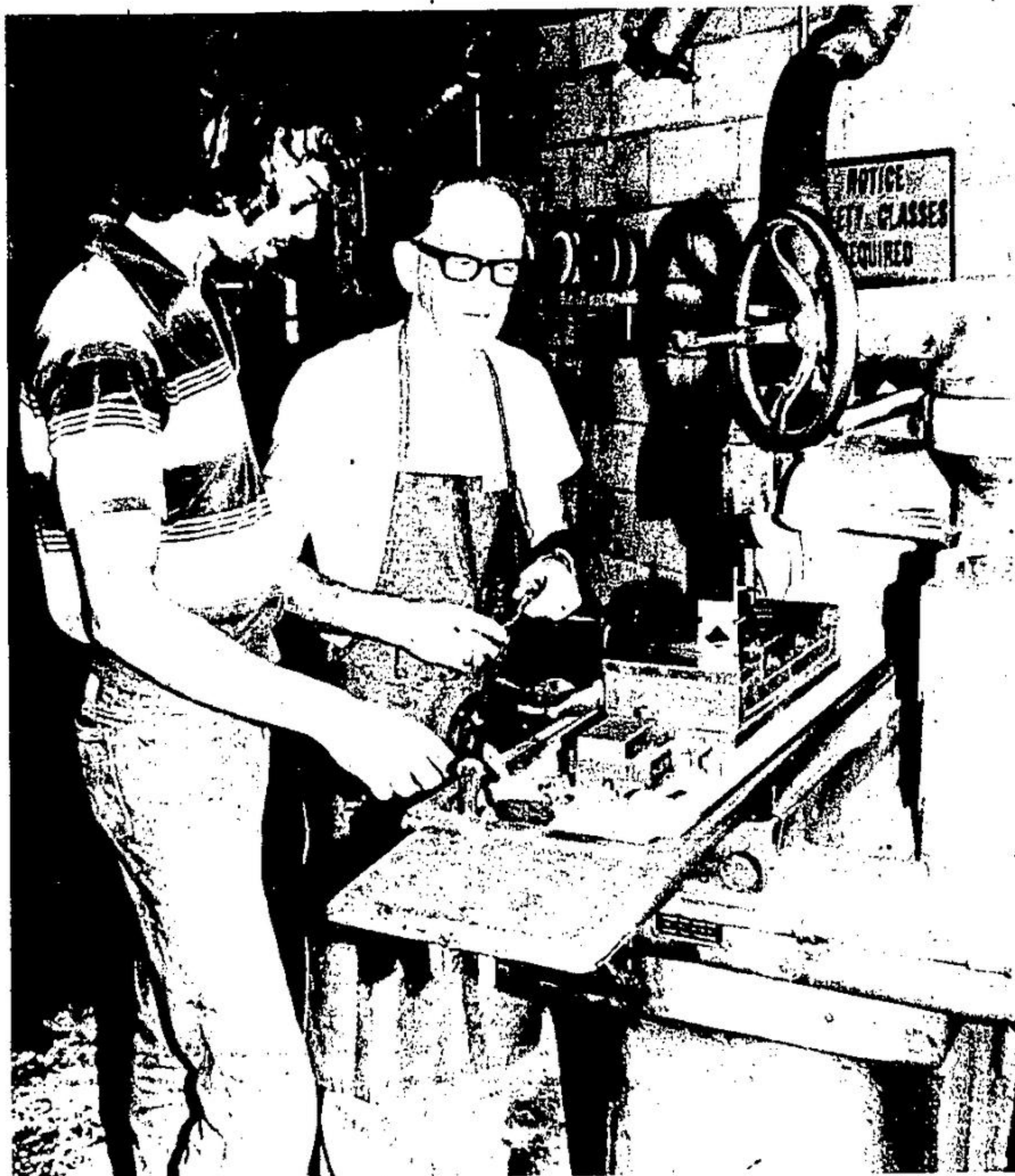


Apprentices answer industry's needs

4 ministry of education program places 800 Halton workers where they're needed most



Kevin Jenkins (left), shown here with journeyman Rod King, is one of three apprentices at Smith and Stone. The other two are Rod White and William Harrison. Smith and Stone began training apprentices in January of this year, after drawing up an

agreement with the union, Peter Ross, who is in charge of the program, says apprenticeship training is in its infancy at Smith and Stone but "it's a good beginning."

(Herald photo)

By LORI TAYLOR
Herald Staff Writer
About 40,000 people in Ontario are "earning while they're learning", and about 800 of those are in Halton Region.

Industry is crying out for skilled tradespeople, and it's becoming apparent that the only way to find these people is to set up and run individual training programs.

That's where Mike Jackman comes in. Mr. Jackman is an industrial training consultant with the Apprenticeship branch of the Ontario ministry of education, responsible for this area.

The provincial government oversees the apprenticeship programs in all fields. One of Mr. Jackman's main responsibilities is making sure the training facilities are adequate.

"When a person does it go out and knock on doors, and having found an employer willing to train him in a trade, he or she contacts us," Mr. Jackman said.

UNDERWING
The intent of an apprenticeship program is that the journeyman will take an apprentice under his wing and teach him the trade as someone taught him.

One-the-job training is supplemented by periods spent in the classroom, but the time spent in the classroom can be reduced under certain circumstances, Mr. Jackman said.

"When the boy applies to be an apprentice, then we have a look at what he's taken in academics and evaluate it," Mr. Jackman said. "We decide if he can be excused from a certain amount of the time he would otherwise be spending in school."

The province "buys" the related classroom training for each apprentice from Ontario's 22 community colleges. Not all apprenticeship programs are offered at each college, so there is a little travel involved.

GOOD JOB
"I think I'm safe in saying a good percentage, as many as 90 per cent of business people, are involved in training apprentices—and doing a very

good job," Mr. Jackman said. "We are turning out a very good product: A man taking apprenticeship training supplemented by community college courses, is second to none."

Halton has a lot of apprenticeship programs going on, primarily because of the region's large number of small businesses, which are traditionally involved in these programs.

"These places generally have up to five or six employees, and one or two apprentices," Mr. Jackman said. "Lately the bigger companies are starting to train people. They're finding it difficult to find skilled people and they realize they're going to have to train them themselves."

"The traditional source of skilled labor has been in the immigrants coming into the country, but they aren't coming any more."

While the number of skilled tradespeople available is decreasing, the need is increasing, Mr. Jackman said. The tool and die industry estimates they will need 7,000 tool and die makers in the province in the next few years.

OLDER, TOO
Other areas where people are needed are in industrial mechanics, plant maintenance and metal-turning industries, Mr. Jackman said.

Apprenticeship programs are not just for young people starting out, but can also open the door to a second career for someone who is unhappy with his or her present position, Mr. Jackman said. As an example, he described a young man, 25 years old, with a wife and two children, who is laid off. He can get into any one of a number of skilled trades through an apprenticeship program and earn enough to keep his family going while he learns a new job skill.

The re-training programs are working well, Mr. Jackman said. Apprentices are getting placed in jobs, "and that's the name of the game."

The number of applicants for apprenticeships has increased steadily over the years, but Mr. Jackman said the

program is not realizing its full potential. The ministry has increased its level of services throughout the province to keep up with the demand.

SMALL INDUSTRY
Halton Hills has been a good place for apprentices, with an influx of small industry and shops, Mr. Jackman said.

"Things are looking up, with small industries opening up all over," he said. "We're busy. We're always a going concern."

Apprenticeship programs are an investment in the future for both the employer and the apprentice, Mr. Jackman said.

"An employer has to be selective about who he takes in, because he has to train him and he has to devote his time to it."

An apprentice is guaranteed a certain wage progression throughout the period of his apprenticeship, which varies in length from one job to the next.

In the first year, an apprentice receives 40 to 50 per cent of a journeyman's wage, in the second, 60 per cent, in the third, 70 per cent, and in the fourth year, 80 per cent.

"Say a man started out as an apprentice to an electrician," Mr. Jackman said. "By his third year, he'd be making 70 per cent of a journeyman's wage, but by that time, he's

earning his way. In the early stages of his training, he isn't worth as much to his employer because he's still learning."

GET ALLOWANCE
An apprentice also receives an allowance during the period he or she is attending school.

require apprentices to pass an examination at the end of their apprenticeship before they can begin to practise their trade. A mark of 70 per cent or higher on a final examination will grant an apprentice an Inter-provincial Red Seal, which allows an apprentice to practise his or her trade in any province in Canada without taking further examinations.

Mr. Jackman has one recommendation to make to young people considering taking apprenticeship training—stay in school.

"Someone with a two-year construction course from a community college has more going for him than someone with a minimal education," he said. "I recommend that kids leaving school have a good hard look at community colleges, because these programs are offering skills to a technologist's level."

Anyone interested in learning more about apprenticeship programs can contact Mr. Jackman on Thursdays or Ross McIntyre on Wednesdays at 276-2486.

"I'm very satisfied with the way things are going in Halton," Mr. Jackman said. "The business in community in Halton is taking apprentices and doing a good job training them. I suppose we could take a few more, but that'll come in time."

Some of the trades in which apprentices can train are regulated by the province, and



MIKE JACKMAN

The federal Manpower office provides financial assistance to employers training apprentices, to help offset the costs of the training.

Some of the trades in which apprentices can train are regulated by the province, and

'School's open - drive carefully'

"Child pedestrian accident involvement peaks at ages five and six", states the Hamilton Automobile Club, launching its annual 'School's Open - Drive Carefully' program.

Why are so many children involved in traffic accidents? The Club cited recent research suggesting that:

- Children's small stature makes it difficult for them to see a traffic situation as it appears

to an adult, and also prevents drivers from seeing them.

- The visual development of youngsters is not yet complete, lacking in the ability to focus clearly.

- Children often have little experience in traffic environments, and frequently misunderstand instructions given to them by others.

The H.A.C. encourages vehicle operators to slow down in

the vicinity of schools, exercise caution where warning signs and flashing signals are in effect, and observe safe procedures in school bus loading areas. Remaining alert and adapting driving patterns when in the presence of young students is essential, particularly during those first hectic weeks of school.

Remember, School's Open - Drive Carefully!

Return to Malaysia

Ban Joo Lee's kamikaze bus drivers

By STEPHEN FROST
Herald Special

Leaving Phuket was a little confusing, to say the least. J.P. and I had to catch a bus to Hat'ai and spend the night there before taking a third-class train down to Penang Island to recuperate. Little did we know we would be recuperating from a simple two-day rip more than anything else.



Ban Joo Lee, the accommodation where the author and his friend, John Pladdy, stayed on the island of Penang, was located in the village of Batu Ferringi. Batu is basically a fishing village,

Around the World in 380 Days

Fourteenth in a series

kamikaze Thai. "We had thought that this would be a quick ride to Butterworth (mainland and port across from Penang). However, this weren't no exp-



ress. Turns out there isn't any such thing in third-class prices. "Our train stopped at every little hamlet and sometimes in the middle of rice paddies and

fields to pick up and disgorge natives along the way.

"No problem. We're used to these minor disturbances by now, and we're both fairly easy going, so we settle back and relax on the near empty train. We both have benches to ourselves, so it isn't hard.

HIPPY SUSPECTS
"At the border of Thailand and Malaysia (Pedang Besar) we had to get out and go through Malay customs, which happen to be the most officious and frustrating we have encountered so far. No sweat; smile and you get what you ask for.

"A sign in the customs office says only bonafide tourists will be allowed to stay while 'suspected hippies' (honest, that's what it says) will only get a transit visa.

"They even have a picture on the wall of what a suspected hippie looks like. Something like the picture in John's passport, taken nine years ago when he was young and good-looking. The customs officer kept looking at J.P.'s picture and then John and asking if this was really him. At the present time, he has short hair and a beard and looks rather scruffy.

"To get back to the point, when we get back on the train there isn't a seat anywhere. Seems the ladies from Alor Star, to the south in Malaysia, slip up to Pedang Besar and across the Thai border to shop for half the price they pay in Malaysia.

"Everywhere imaginable, wherever there was any free space, there were 40-kilo sacks of rice, bushels of vegetables, bags of fruit and detergents and other sundry items. Lovely; no seats and another four hours of stopping and starting.

"At any rate, J.P. commandeers a seat next to the only cute young lady on the train and when I help her move some groceries, she and John slide over and squeeze me in.

"Nice lady. She even shares her Chiclets with us. However, conversation was understandably limited.

"To my right was a huge old woman who bought enough food to feed a proverbial army. Three 40-kilo bags of rice, two baskets of veg, and God knows what all else. Seems she was stacking stuff away all the way to Alor Star.

that or she ran a bloody restaurant.

"Our once cozy, slow train had become a veritable supply train, which the Kymer's would have loved to get their paws on. Cramped, hot and uncomfortable, we began to mind all the stops.

"One thing that was very interesting was that the conductor came through with a man who charged the ladies extra money for all the goods that were occupying seats. All of a sudden, the food didn't belong to anyone. The uproar which followed was incredible.

"Anyway it was a relief to arrive here at Ban Joo Lee, and the hospitality 'Ah Seng and his wife provide."

The only problem when I arrived at Ban Joo Lee was that the cold I had been nursing developed into something rather more serious. One night was a temperature of 39 degrees centigrade, or about 103.5 fahrenheit for those of you who believe in a more accurate measurement; A French lady doctor diagnosed bronchitis. The next day I made it into town and the doctor said it was a respiratory tract infection. Fair enough. Paracetamol for fever, tetrics for the infection and cough medicine to soothe. The cost was only 50 cents Malay or 25 cents U.S.

EXPERT CARE
At any rate, with the young French miss' expert care, I was well on the road to recovery.

The remainder of our days at Ban Joo Lee, which is located outside Georgetown in the village of Batu Ferringi, were spent much the same as we spent them the first time we were there. Lazing in the sun, sleeping late, swimming in the



This country scene is typical of the view from the Butterworth-Bangkok Express or from one of the many buses that take tourists between Thailand and Malaysia. (Herald photos by Steve Frost)

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