

Discovering America With Maxine Davis

Youngstown, Ohio, Sept. 1.—Tony Picatti was one of four boys hanging around the filling station where I stopped to minister to my car on a sunny Saturday afternoon.

The streets were black with people, crossing and recrossing with an Olympian disregard for possible consequences of a pedestrian encounter with a truck. There were grizzled workmen and fat mamas herding strings of excited children. Girls wandering arm in arm in faded odds and ends of their summer finery. Old women with huge market baskets. Hucksters yelling, "Watermelons! Peaches, fine peaches!" There were lines formed at the doors of gaudy movie houses and groups listening to radios bleating at store entrances.

Just Doing Nothing.

None of this interested Tony and his gang. They sat, leaning against the wall, shiny of hair, dull of eyes, seeing nothing, doing nothing, planning nothing.

"What do you do weekdays?" I asked him.

His reply, if scarcely gracious, was at least succinct. "Nothin'," he said.

"What do you want to do?"

"I want a job."

"Has your father got a job?"

"Yeah; on relief."

"How long have you been out of school?"

"Three years. An' I been around to every factory, and I answered every ad, till I just give up. But say, lady," and here Tony noticed the District of Columbia license tags on my mobile mountain of mud, "this here Youth Administration I seen about in the paper, Roosevelt, he gave it 50,000,000 bucks for fellas like me. Will it give me a job "

Administration Aims Vague.

I couldn't tell Tony a thing. I've been asking every administrator appointed since I've been on the road, before and after the meeting in Washington which was supposed to clarify and instruct and plan. But to this day I am ignorant as Tony.

But I have heard a great many questions. Boys like Tony want to know what it's going to do to help them.

College and university executives wonder when it will get well under way. Because they understand that the FERA scholarships, which have enabled thousands upon thousands of young men and women to work their earnest way through school, will be issued this year through the Youth Administration. The last few institutions of higher education I visited the college authorities were in the dark as to the number they would have, though applications from anxious boys and girls, eager to learn whether they could win one, were piling high on their

desks. And almost time for the opening of the fall sessions!

In many States the educators and experienced workers with boys and girls had no idea who the newly appointed administrator was, or why he was selected for this important post.

Many of those whom I interviewed were utterly barren of ideas, though alight with idealism. Almost all of them were young, and though eager to help their colleagues, ignorant of the State's resources, agencies, personalities or the avenues for cooperation.

Most of them were agreed that the aid for schooling was the most important feature of it. But here in Ohio, the school systems aren't offering much. A committee appointed by Gov. Davey to survey the State's department of education has just advocated that Ohio schools get rid of "frills and furbelows," specifically listing extension of music teaching and vocational education.

Well, Tony Picatti doesn't give a whoop for music. But if he is to be interested in going back to school at all, it won't be to appreciate Wordsworth's Ode on Immortality; it will be to learn a trade!