

Youth's Business

Machine Shop Owner at 17

Tribune Concord Bureau

Can a person become both an engineer and a veterinarian?

That's the only problem bothering Michael Clement, 17, a Clayton Valley High School junior who already operates a money-making machine shop in the garage of his parents' hillside home near Concord.

His expensive machinery is impressive. There are, for example, a turret lathe and grinder, drill press, large milling machine, overhead crane, arc and gas welding rigs, saws, torches and a compressor.

Not all of it was bought new. Early acquisitions were worn until he rebuilt them. The newer equipment was purchased relatively recently earned through jobs he handles after school and Saturdays.

To keep up with demand he has hired two school friends "good in industrial arts" — Vick Hagaman and Eric Manwill — and pays them "more than the minimum federal wage."

His latest contract is to make the frame and install the hydraulic mechanism for two 50-ton presses. The bread and butter jobs are steel book shelves and game gambrels — the latter a device for hanging carcasses of butchered animals in refrigerators. Some weeks the three youths turn out 1,000 units of gambrels.

On the side Mike and a friend are working to patent a hunting and fishing invention.

The young manufacturer also intends to take university business courses. He has all A and B grades except for one C in algebra. And he is adequate enough in that subject to help others as a student-teacher.

His main other interest is horses and other large animals. He enjoys taking care of them as well as riding.

Mike credits a succession of industrial arts teachers and freely given help from Concord machine shop operators for his accomplishments to date.



Tribune photo by RON RIESTERER

MICHAEL CLEMENT HAS LEARNED HOW TO MEET A PAYROLL

He credits his industrial arts teachers with shop's success

"I hope you can put in a plug for the industrial arts programs at the schools," he said, "They do a wonderful job."