

Career Forecast: cloudy spring later?

By the Editor

Predicting the climate for jobs next May or for even a few months from now calls for close attention to dozens of economic riddles, using the experts' opinions, maybe a crystal ball and above all — your own head.

Trying to write about the employment situation facing graduates next spring without saying anything negative or discouraging is similar to the kind of assignments that have driven many public relations men to martini-soaked graves or to simpler forms of work such as nuclear physics.

Right, I know and everybody knows (with the possible exception of Finance Minister Benson) that things ain't too grand for the grads of '72, at least not by the gloomy forecasts of the placement officers of the land, or changing sets of statistics issued by Canada Manpower and a host of other not-so-heavenly bodies. If Trudeau was indeed actually gaining any yards on inflation, it appears that Nixon crept up from behind and blew the whistle on Mr. Canuck's ballgame, leaving an import surcharge on the scrimmage line.

And just when every economist from J. Keynes to Toulouse Lautrec had been phoning his bank manager for the latest quote on German marks, in bounced the P.M. with \$80 million to cheer up all the secondary manufacturers of the plastic bric-a-brac that keeps people driving to work in the morning.

Keeping score on the changing employment scene in Canada is like forecasting the weather from an airplane: you have to get down on the ground and watch what happens and when it DOES happen, you can believe it.

Throw open an arena to John Public to debate what should be done about employment and you'd soon have a collection of riddles and befuddled, incomplete, unfounded viewpoints to publish six more years of Ripleys-Believe-It-or-Not. That's the trouble with the subject:

everyone's right to a point, wrong on several more and undecided about what on earth it is they're trying to discuss. It's a subject without a title.

Put the blame on anyone? Well, you have a list of rogues to choose from, beginning possibly with mommies and daddies all over the place who thought a split-level house and two or three split-level kids might be nice to have, but forgot to project population figures to the year 1971-2 to see that a relatively little country like Canada wouldn't have enough businesses operating to provide work for their tots.

Then there's bad old government that purposely created unemployment as an efficient, if somewhat inhuman, method of bringing down prices to the point where its supporters would be able to increase their bread consumption from two slices to four. This is called the "spoils system".

Next on the carpet is Trustbuster Teddy's old sparring mate, Big Business which shrugs with an infuriating but logical explanation about being unable to hire graduates until people start buying more bread. This you might call the "no blood from a stone" position.

Then there's the warcy from the outraged taxpayer who gasps at the sight of broadloomed school corridors and super-graphic-decor walls and couches, the voice that wants to throw the bums out because they're not interested in jobs anyway, all they want is a free ride with chips 'n gravy along the way with maybe a teensy increase in the welfare allowance.

And they get madder when the students confound them with arguments about brutality in business, reasoning that they're surely not expected to lend their talents to companies thrashing out pyjamas that burn children, cars that kill the rosebushes, and bureaucracies that steamroller initiative into laissez-faire indifference.

It's thoughts like this that make it doubtful anyone wants to hear, much less

consider, positive facts about job availability next May. When such information does come to light, it tends to be qualified into submission anyway. For example, a quote from Manpower and Immigration's "University Career Outlook 1970-71":

"It has been estimated that the population of Canada will reach 25,000,000 by 1980. The labor force will grow at an even faster rate because of the increase in the young adult population, immigration, and the larger number of women who enter the labor market. Every year the number of professional and technical workers in the labour force increases and employment in this group may expand from 1,100,000 to 1,800,000 in the 1970's".

Under these conditions, the book states, there should be "a continued good demand for professional and semi-professional personnel in the 1970's. However, the pressure of the young adult population on the labor market will result in a highly competitive situation. A premium will be placed on the level of qualifications and entrance standards may be raised."

The university graduate "will be particularly well situated to compete in this competitive labor market and, at the same time, to follow a career which is consistent with the changing goals of our society", the book adds, leaving translation of such wool-lined phrases as "a continued good demand" and a career consistent with "the changing goals of our society" to suspend the reader forever in the twilight zone of the Land of Maybe.

In fact what each person is forced to do is use his own background in economics and his ability to read, to decide for himself where employment will be in eight months — and get rolling on an aggressive campaign to telephone employers for interviews, ship out resumes and watch the newspapers and trade magazines associated with the industry closest

to his field for positions advertised. The list of factors affecting business activity in Canada is about endless, hinging not only on prayer and crossed fingers but on tariffs imposed by Britain as a member of the E.C.C. against Canada, on eventual settling of currency exchange rates around the world, on lifting of Nixon's wages and prices freeze and import surcharge, on future labor contract negotiations in Canada, on exports to China, on corporate liquidity, on demand for Canadian resources, on capital spending intentions of private and government sectors, on consumer buying and confidence, on bank savings, bank rates, on housing starts, tourism, grain production, on trade quotas with Japan and on the improvement in health of the country's pale-faced neighbor.

There is plenty of grim evidence to report, but good evidence too. On July 16, the Globe & Mail reported increased gas sales expected in 1971 of 10 percent which will boost incentive to explore, making jobs for geologists etc. Steel companies were cautiously optimistic on May 1 in the paper because of lower cost imports, but gas and oil line construction plus heavy industry buoyed up their spirits.

Each province's economic picture is an amalgam of good and bad factors at any time. New Brunswick for example, 30

percent below the national average economically was reported in July to be gaining secondary wood-based industries and expected go-aheads on multi-million dollar deep water port facilities. It noticed increased public spending on housing, higher investment capital outlays and an average industrial wage of more than \$100. Yet population is migrating away, unemployment payments remained high, commercial investment slackened and so on.

Oil and gas offshore production had Nova Scotia's Premier Regan in tears of joy in July, mentioning reserves ten times greater than those in the Gulf of Mexico. Real estate firms in July reported a 20 percent upswing nationally in sales, credited to more mortgage funds available. "Recovery of the economy, said realtor A. Willoughby, Toronto "is just the expression of the attitudes of the man in the street."

One attitude changing for the best has been that of industry toward the community college grad. In June, St. Lawrence College reported that 85 percent of its 249 grads had been placed, last year being 95 percent. Many students intended to go on for more schooling or travel Europe.

A report by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies shows that only 15 of the 624 PhD graduates from all the Ontario universities in the fall of 1969 and the spring of 1970 were unemployed.

These statistics, collected in October, November and December of 1970 show a radically different employment picture and a much brighter one than had been indicated during the fall from other sources

Most Canadian employers report same or slightly less recruiting activity this year. If you're in certain fields such as hotel and restaurant institutional management, accounting, geology, business administration, your chances for work fare well compared to the plight of the general B.A. graduate who stands to find most opportunity in sales, in training within firms, in fairly junior positions.

Sure it's a tough deal getting the kind of work you want these days, but your chances are no worse than your pal's. What you have to avoid is jumping into any old job that comes along because of the confusion and likelihood that you'll want to chuck it in two months, stumbling on to job number two and number three, thus alienating the more conservative, skeptical personnel officers of the land who will peg you as a "mover" or quitter.

What next May's conditions will be like depends on dozens of current economic problems, still being worked out internationally. All you can do is begin a consistent program of recruiting on your own behalf and count on poor preparations by others to put you in the forefront.

Both articles reprinted from Campus October 1971

if i were a '72 graduate

This is the first of a continuing series of viewpoints from leading placement officers at Canadian universities and community colleges, aimed at giving CAMPUS readers some solid advice and ideas on how to prepare for finding jobs and graduating smoothly into a satisfying career area.

This month, Mark Garber, the Canada Manpower Centre Student Placement Officer at Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology, Hamilton, Ontario offers the first of many ideas he would think about if he were a 1972 graduate.

by Mark Garber

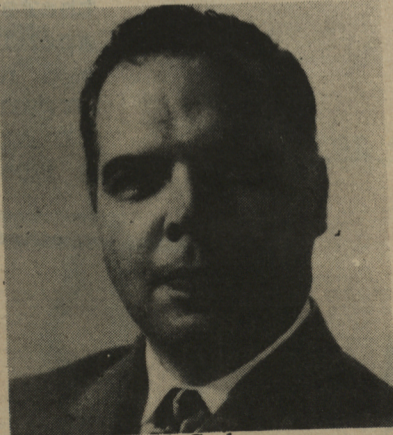
If I were a 1972 graduate I'd be damned worried!

The job scene in Canada stinks. We have all read the newspapers and feature articles of MacLean's and Time depicting

the sorry plight of graduates without jobs. It is a problem — and a very serious problem. However, I believe it is a problem that can be solved (and has demonstratively been solved) by graduating students who will start to think and act NOW by devising logical job strategies that will have a payoff in the spring of 1972.

I don't intend to fill this column with piddly-crap about "The Little Graduate Who Thought He Could". Job-seeking is no joke and neither you nor I have time for rhetoric.

What I hope to convey to the worried graduating student of 1972 who is willing to get involved in an active Job Strategy Program are a few precepts from my experience in the placement of college graduates that might enable him or her to steer between the puerility of PLASTICS and the ennui of WELFARE.



Mark Garber

One of the real tragedies of the current academic scene is the entrapment of graduates in programs of studies that have no real exit into the world of work. Graduates discover that the world of higher learning and higher earning are not necessarily synonymous.

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