

# JOB OPENINGS FOR PROFESSIONALS LOWEST EVER

Job openings for accountants, executives, engineers, scientists and other professionals plunged to another record low at the end of December, according to the Technical Service Council/Le Conseil de Placement Professionnel, a national industry-sponsored placement service and personnel consulting firm.

Vacancies decreased 30%

in the last three months, and 81% in the last year, TSC's quarterly survey reported. Only 659 vacancies were reported, compared to 3,414 a year ago and 4,328 in June, 1981.

The survey is based on job listings by 1,700 employers from coast to coast. It is representative of vacancies in manufacturing, mining, construction, consulting and service organizations but not institutions and governments.

Ontario reported the largest number of vacancies, followed, in order, by Alberta, B.C., Quebec and Manitoba. For many years, Quebec ranked second in job vacancies for professionals, with about two-thirds as many openings as Ontario. Recently it has ranked third or fourth.

Not one of the 99 specialties surveyed reported more than 65 vacancies. Several dozen occupations, like mineral geologists, reported fewer than 10 openings each. In mid-1981, 11 specialties reported 100 to 340 vacancies each.

"The number of job vacancies for professionals is a leading indicator, often giving 6 to 12 months warning of an improvement in general employment", says Neil MacDougall, president, Technical Service Council. "Unfortunately, there are no signs of an upturn".

"Many employers are so concerned about survival that their layoffs have included muscle as well as fat. When the upturn does come, vacancies for part-time and

contract employees will improve first."

"Companies are reviewing and upgrading their management staffs. As a result, some unemployed executives on our relocation counselling programs have found positions within one to three months af-



ter lay-off. Often the jobs are not advertised."

Layoffs have been particularly numerous in support departments like public relations, research, corporate planning, aviation, training, and personnel. Openings for personnel and industrial relations managers are only a fifth of those listed a year ago.

Vacancies have decreased as dramatically for junior chemical engineers, chemical process engineers, purchasing agents, structural designers, electrical engineering designers, plant electrical engineers, systems analysts, computer programmers, plant engineers, mining engineers and accountants

Previous recessions have barely affected accountants. Accounting was one of the two occupations in greatest demand. Recently, however, numerous accountants have been laid off by manufacturers and accounting firms.

Demand for experienced computer programmers and systems analysts is no

longer strong, but still outranks other occupations. Employers report reduced turnover and a large selection of candidates. Consequently, recruiters are more selective, shying away from applicants who have changed jobs often.

Other occupations in relatively strong demand include experienced electronic engineers, electronic technologists and petroleum engineers.

Job prospects for the 1983 university and community college graduating classes are depressing. A survey of over 40 large and medium sized companies showed that they expect to hire only one fifth as many graduates as in 1982. One company which hired 55 graduates last year expects to hire only one this year.

Even engineering, commerce and computer science graduates are experiencing difficulty. Mining engineering graduates at one university are prepared to consider labouring jobs in the mines. One graduate has offered to work for nothing in order to gain experience.

Vacancies for executives in the \$35,000 to \$150,000 per year range decreased 49%

in the last year, according to a separate survey by Bryce Haultain, & Associates. Although the number of openings for executives of all kinds decreased, vacancies for final executives outnumbered any other kind (33%). The proportion of executive openings in engineering, science and personnel decreased sharply.

The Technical Service Council/Le Conseil de Placement Professionnel is a non-profit placement service and personnel consulting firm run by the industry. It was set up in 1927, when 20% to 30% of the graduating classes in engineering and science were emigrating to the United States.

To combat this "brain drain", the TSC operates a coast to coast placement service. An estimated 43,000 men and women have secured job offers through the TSC. There is no charge to job hunters.

TSC has offices in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver. The service is financed by over 1,300 companies.

Bryce, Haultain & Associates, a TSC affiliate, specializes in executive search and relocation counselling

