

SINCE THE DEPRESSION

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people go to prepare themselves to hold jobs.

That view may be shared by other academics, but it is not the one held by hundreds of thousands of students who enter university to qualify for employment at above-average salary levels. These students will find little consolation in the findings of the Technical Service Council, a non-profit personnel consulting and placement service that makes quarterly surveys of 1,500 employers from coast-to-coast, all in the private sector of the economy.

the graduate's choice of a career in plumbing does not disturb him. Oliver holds the view that while universities provide young Canadian adults with an opportunity to study, exchange ideas with academics, and perhaps come to a better understanding of themselves and their society, they are not necessarily places where

"The 1976 university graduating classes have been hard hit by the economic slump," the council reported. Its mid-year survey found job openings for executives, accountants, scientists and other professionals down 25 per cent from mid-1975. The council attributed the decrease to slower growth of both consumer spending and capital expenditures by industry, as well as slow export sales and a decrease in hirings by government.

Prospects for arts and general science graduates ranged from "indifferent" to "poor", with some of the "class of '75" still unemployed.

Work "non-existent" for PhDs

The council reported that master's graduates in many disciplines, including business administration, were also finding job prospects poor, and most universities reported "poor" or "non-existent" job prospects for PhDs.

Otherwise, the council says, its current surveys appear to bear out predictions it made in mid-1975 in a 10-year forecast: good job prospects for business and commerce, chemistry and engineering graduates until the 1980s, when demand would decrease sharply. That survey found the bachelor or honours bachelor degree to be the qualification sought most



by industry, and it predicted that master's and PhD graduates would have trouble finding employment.

The bleak prospect facing many PhDs comes as no surprise. Almost a decade ago, at hearings of a special Senate committee on science policy, it became apparent that surpluses of PhDs were developing in several disciplines. In 1971 an Economic Council of Canada economist found job prospects "uncertain" for PhDs in their traditional occupations. "There is no possibility that the 13,800 PhD graduates that can be expected in the next five years will be absorbed by universities in the traditional manner," wrote Max von Zur-Huehlen.

In the population boom that flooded Canadian campuses in the 1960s, the universities not only absorbed the PhDs graduating in Canada in that decade but also imported large numbers from abroad. That was during a period of rapid expansion, with enrolments increasing at an average 12 per cent a year, but those increases have slumped in the 1970s. There are few avenues of employment for PhDs outside universities. Von Zur-Huehlen found that foreign owned industries were cutting back their research programs in Canada, and so was the federal government.

Some holders of new

doctorates have found work as teachers in high schools and community colleges - which they regard as "under-utilization of their training." That avenue is not a broad one, for two reasons: community colleges cannot always meet PhDs' salary expectations, and many of the colleges "remained unconvinced that 'overtrained' research scientists have undergone the ideal preparation for their type of education."

On the job market, Canadian PhDs also face competition from a similarly qualified, but much greater number of PhDs produced by U.S. universities. Von Zur-Huehlen says Canadian universities hold several attractions for U.S. graduates: "a two-year tax holiday, a shorter academic year, rapidly improving salary structures, a different social and political climate, and the possibility of achieving academic distinction and then returning to the United States when the

opportunity arose."

One result of the anti-inflation program has been cutbacks in government spending at all levels - federal, provincial, regional and municipal throughout the country, aggravating an already bad employment situation. One cutback that particularly hurt the class of '76 was a reduction to \$24 million of the federal summer employment program for students.

In recent years, almost 1.5 million students have joined the labour force during their summer vacations, hoping to earn money to cover all, or at least part of the following year's education expenses. With the federal program cut this year, untold numbers face the prospect of not returning to their schools, and their continuing presence on the labour market

Gov't spending cuts aggravate situation

may mean extra competition for new graduates.

An NDP MP John Rodriguez, has estimated that 15 per cent of the students, or more than 225,000 didn't find any work at all last summer and hence didn't return to classes this fall. Nobody knows precisely how many students are unemployed because Statistics Canada dropped its annual survey of student summer employment last year, as a cost-saving measure.

While few universities conduct formal surveys of

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