

JOB PROSPECTS WORST SINCE

FOR THE CLASS OF '77

By Roy LaBerge
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Canadians have been told they will have to lower their expectations if the economy is to recover from its current sluggish growth rate, and the current labour market is bringing this grim message home to thousands of graduating students in the "Class of '77."

It is estimated that 94,000 students will graduate from universities this year, and another 60,000 from community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

Their employment prospects may be the worst facing any graduating class since the 1930s Depression and there is little likelihood they will improve in the near future.

In its midyear economic forecast, the Conference Board in Canada predicted a growth rate of only 5 per cent this year and 4.5 per cent in 1977. It foresaw a continuing weak labour market, with a 1977 average unemployment rate even higher than its 1976 estimate of 7.2 per cent.

200,000 graduates seeking work

If the Conference Board is right, that will mean the third consecutive year of more than 7 per cent unemployment - the rate was 7.1 per cent in 1975. With about 200,000 people leaving school to enter



the labour market every year, the lowest unemployment rate so far in the 1970s was 5.4 per cent in 1974. That followed rates of 5.6 per cent in 1973, 6.3 per cent in 1972, 6.4 per cent in 1971 and 5.9 per cent in 1970.

General poor employment prospects were forecast in the midyear national survey by Manpower Temporary Services of Toronto. Of 1,318 companies responding, 69 per cent predicted no increase in employment, 3.3 predicted decreases and only 21.5 per cent foresaw any growth in their labour force.

Canada makes no official count of unemployment - or under-employment - of each year's graduating class, but Statistics Canada, in its midyear labour force survey, found an unemployment rate of 10.2 per cent for labour force members in the 20 to 24 age

category, in which most graduates fall.

Arts and Education... little hope

Despite the lack of official data, there are many indications that job prospects are generally poor for the expected 32,000 arts and education graduates, but somewhat better for the approximately 10,000 graduates in science, commerce, and business administration.

Many of the 2,700 law graduates are running into a tight labour market, and the 1,600 students expected to graduate from universities with nursing degrees face competition in a declining market from thousands of community college graduates.

Roger Worth, a writer

for The Financial Post, has quoted a Canada Manpower official as saying that 25 per cent of the graduates from spring convocation still had not found jobs by mid-summer and that another 25 per cent were underemployed.

"Jobs aren't available even in the most specialized fields", the unidentified official was quoted as saying. "There are all sorts of cases where people with master's or doctor's degrees are driving cabs, waiting on tables or working as labourers."

Accurate measurements may be lacking, but newspaper reports across the country suggest Canada is not tapping the potential ability of many graduates. A PhD graduate in history, after applying unsuccessfully for 140 academic positions, took a \$3-an-hour job as a salesman in a tobacco store. An employer who advertised for a warehouse foreman got replies from seven masters of business administration. Hospitals from several southern states of the U.S. started successful staff recruiting drives in Ontario where hundreds of newly graduated nurses couldn't find work. One nursing

graduate could not even find a job as a ward aide, her occupation before she entered nursing school. Some arts and general science graduates found

jobs, but only after sending out from 150 to 200 resumes and following them up with telephone calls.

One master of science graduate from Carleton University in Ottawa decided to become an apprentice plumber to improve his potential earning power. Carleton president, Michael Oliver, says

the graduate career in p not disturb holds the vie universities Canadian a opportunity change idea demics, and to a better of themselves society, the necessarily

