

Austerity At Last?

The biggest problem confronting Canada today is that Canadians refuse to face the facts of economic reality.

These facts are staring us in the face—facts that have been blithely ignored by Canada's political parties since the Second World War.

Unemployment has increased over the years so that it now stands close to a post-war record. The Unemployment Insurance fund will soon be depleted if the present rate of benefits continues. Federal Commissions are busy studying the automobile, railway and publishing industries.

Locally the situation is alarming. The Chief Commissioner of the City of Calgary has predicted that a financial crisis will face municipalities within five years unless a complete readjustment is made in the revenue set-up. Recently nine Alberta cities presented a brief to the provincial cabinet stating that Alberta municipalities faced with "economic impact of the population shift from the rural to urban areas cannot possibly continue to operate much longer with limited resources available to them."

Contrast this with the public attitude; and with the utterances of business and political officials who go out of their way to kowtow to this attitude.

The Edmonton Journal on Monday of this week published a special "Alberta Annual Review and Forecast". Thirty-five full-sized

newspaper pages record "sound progress", "a favorable year", "confidence", "optimism", "big boom", "bright prospects", ad nauseum. The most guarded comment was that of an outlook of "cautious optimism" for Canadian agriculture. A meaningless epithet applied to an industry which has been in the doldrums for years.

These views are what Canadians generally believe and want to hear expressed. We are living in a state of euphoria in which we look at the world through rose-colored glasses.

Canadians, in effect, have been spoiled. Now they are completely unwilling to accept the fact that grave economic problems will affect their standard of living.

Unfortunately, this only compounds the problem. Only by a recognition of the true facts is it possible to take steps towards a solution. An austerity program is definitely needed. However, in a democratic society, a government can take effective action only so long as it is supported or sanctioned by the voter. And what political party would be so foolish as to toss thousands of votes down the drain with an advocacy of an austerity program?

Such a change in the public attitude is unlikely. Instead, Canadians will continue to live off the fat of the land in the mistaken belief that the 1960's belong to Canada.

Satchel Paige once advised: "Don't look back, someone may be catching up." In Canada's case, the wolf is at the door.

Shortages

At most Canadian Universities there is a shortage of land, a shortage of facilities, a shortage of instructors, but no shortage of students. According to the Canadian Universities foundation a student shortage is unlikely over the next ten years—they estimate an increase in student population of 125 per cent by 1970.

If the expansion of the program of the University of Alberta is typical of Canadian Universities the others must be in very poor shape. Our scheduled ten year expenditure (1955-1965) is \$63 million, second in Canada, and only now are facilities catching up with people. They are catching up now because there was no action ten years ago when the present increases were foretold.

Present statistics anticipate an even more drastic increase over the next ten years. The expansion to take care of the next ten years should be nearly finished now, not just beginning. The buildings would sit unused, but they would be ready.

According to the Canadian Universities foundation report, another, even knottier problem faces the Universities during the next ten years—an instructor problem.

In 1960 there were 8,000 full time Canadian University professors. To keep the present ratio (one "prof" for every 13 full time students), 18,000 professors will be needed by 1970.

The Alberta department of education faced a similar problem in the '50's, caused by "war babies". The same war babies that will be arriving at the Universities in the mid '60's.

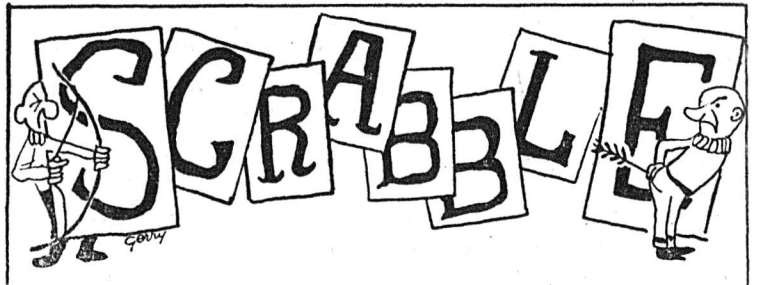
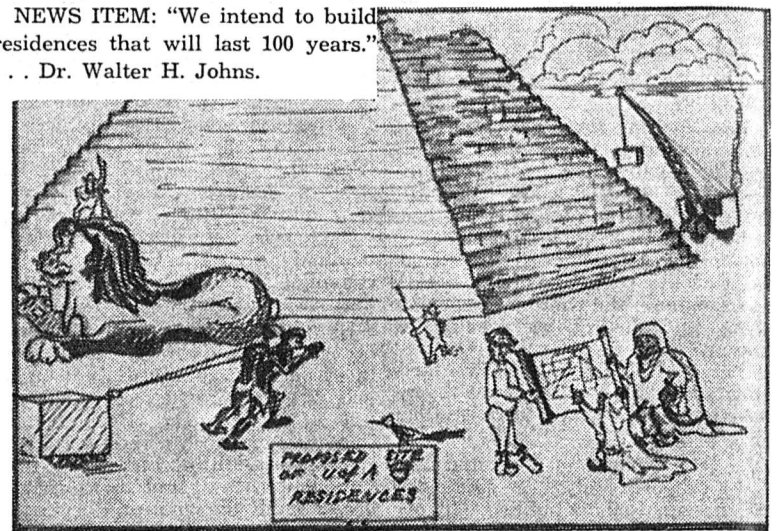
The Universities must either keep the students out of varsity by raising standards of entrance, or find minds to teach them.

If instructors are not available, the "war babies" will face a problem similar to that effected by the Alberta government in the 1950's, a crash program from which education in Alberta's still recovering.

Imagine if you will—six week professors training courses, popcorn box PhD's, a call to arms of all retired profs, first year courses taught by pass pattern students who have spent a summer in a research lab.

If a student manages to stick in University for two years he may get a course from a bona fide professor. In other words the first two or three University years will turn into a glorified high school, the same way six years of school is like glorified kindergarten. Thank God for kindergartens.

NEWS ITEM: "We intend to build residences that will last 100 years." . . . Dr. Walter H. Johns.



If one more person comes up to me and says "Happy New Year" or "Did ya have a good Christmas" or "How're the exams going", so help me I'll croak him! Just for the record, the answers are: 1. Oh, shut up, 2. No, and 3. Censored.

There's one positive good thing about the festive, restive Yuletide . . . it gives me enough material for a dozen columns. Just add words and stir.

Now that Christmas and its accompanying horrors has gone for another year . . . now that the profit-and-loss, the raucous parties with boring people, the sincerity (It's just what I always wanted. Oh you shouldn't have . . .), the Happy Noo Year or Else, the upset stomach and acid indigestion, the Bromo Seltzer, have gone for another year . . . let us heave a great gasp of relief, loosen the belt over the upset stomach, tighten the same belt for the hard times ahead, and collapse 'neath the Evergreen, the Holly, the mistletoe, the discarded wrappings, the ugly tie from Uncle Ezra, the much-needed fluorescent red socks and matching shoe laces from Aunt Pneumonia, rest our heads on the ten pound can of mustach wax from Cousin Fudd, put our feet up on the Do-it-yourself Tattoo Kit from Grand'maw . . . and just reeee-lax! While we lie thus, let us survey the wreckage that the wretched season has wreaked upon mind and body. How about another slice of turkey? Okay, then, how's about a nice mince pie?? Well, c'mon and have another drink . . . just one for the road. What's that? Steady, old boy, steady. It's upstairs, first door on your right.

Think of all the fascinating people you met at Christmastime: the smart set who went down East ("Really, I cannot reconcile myself to the West after seeing Toronto at night . . . you just can't imagine it."); that

History teacher with the horn-rimmed glasses and the button down mind, Liberal capital L, conservative small c ("Old age pensions! What for . . . it's their fault that they're old.") the oh-so-sophisticated first year students back to the small town from the Big Time (I'm so clever I make myself sick"); the Happy Gang who didn't go to College, but have acquired so much more knowledge than it is possible to gain in ten years at University ("I don't know anything about varsity life, but I know what I like. You gotta' be close to the world to understand it. Whadda' you going to get out of college anyway?"); the Guys, the group, the fellas ("Are you in Alpha Ethnica Groupia too? Gee, that makes us Frat brothers."); well-meaning relatives ("Well, what are you doing now anyway? Going to school eh? That's nice. What grade?); AND the Phonies . . . let's not forget the Phonies, bless their self-deceptive little minds ("The last time I was in Madrid, I found it so . . . so bleak, as it were. You know what I mean, of course"); of course.

I don't know. I guess I just like people.

Actually, Christmas is a wonderful time; a time to meet up with so many good friends; a time to spend precious moments with one's family; a time of genuine laughter; a time of

Continued On Page 5

THE GATEWAY

Member of Canadian University Press

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For Friday Edition—8 p.m. Tuesday For Tuesday Edition—8 p.m. Sunday

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Office Telephone—GE 3-1155