

Enrollment steadily increases

Unemployment hits Law grads

by Tony Morley

Rising unemployment has a way of making one associate money with having a job. The best way to make money and enjoy it is to have a profession. And that's why a lot of undergraduates are looking to the law school as a sure way into the shrinking job market. After all, who ever heard of an unemployed lawyer? Read on.

If you can make the willing suspension of disbelief, there is a growing shortage of jobs in the area of traditionally orientated legal work. The point has already been made that community college graduates are taking the place of articling clerks in Ontario. The spectre of unemployment has not materialized as yet, but not too many law students can deny having experienced vague misgivings about the job situation. If you don't plan to be in the top ten per cent of your class, your employment opportunities may become as phantom as the "Weldon Tradition", whatever that was.

Enrollment in law school has been increasing at a steady rate. If undergraduate enrollment continues to drop, enrollment in law school will be sure to increase still further. The administration has to make up the deficit somehow and the provincial bonus per law student is probably higher than the provincial bonus per undergraduate. The students who get into law school, that otherwise wouldn't, don't stand to gain. The only real winners will be the members of the law faculty who depend on us for their jobs.

It's fun to be an alarmist, but that's not the reason behind this little article. One need only look around the University community to see that science, arts, engineering, and education graduates have experienced a large drop in demand for their services. Perhaps it is the scarcity of jobs in these areas that has persuaded many students to undergo an experience that is often dull, sterile, and in many instances, sleep producing — i.e. the L.L.B. programme.

Suppose you get into law school, absorb the 3 year trip down memory lane technique, and are finally ready to graduate. You've invested at least six years of your time and are probably heavily into debt with the student loan people. Now you're ready to look for a job. One word of advice: there is a small bulletin board on the second floor of the law school, half of which is devoted to the vulgar, non-academic thing of finding a job. This may be of little help since the requests for articling clerks are usually two or three years out of date. Clearly no one is going to lead you by the hand but someone will tell you there are jobs if you look in the smaller towns. If what we have here is a breakdown in communication, then the law school could be of assistance. The matching of resources to needs can best be performed in an organized manner and not by going through the yellow pages of local directories in the hope of obtaining job interviews. So far the law school has not even circulated a questionnaire asking law firms if they will require the assistance of an articling clerk. Even if you do find an articling position most of us know that law firms take on articling clerks with no intention of keeping them. After all, it's only costing them \$50 or \$60 a week to have you around.

For those of us who have been feeding on an idealistic diet and have thought of lightening the burden of the poor; there is legal aid. There has been a lot said about legal aid, but to my knowledge this area is still short of government funds. Legal aid provides a valuable service but still it's on a level where some have termed it to be nothing more than a cosmetic to cover the pock-marked face of a profession almost as old as the oldest one.

Some law graduates find a momistic satisfaction sucking the "corporate tit." Companies like Alco and General Motors surely have places for smart young lawyers willing to minister to their needs. Even here there has been no rush of

employers ready to snatch the law graduate as he slips out of the legal womb.

Still others may search for the illusion of security in the Civil Service. The federal government makes the rounds once a year but only hire those interested in doing traditionally

orientated legal work in the Justice Department.

The trouble is that no one really knows what a lawyer does. If law graduates are not to go the route of education graduates (commonly referred to as the garden path), then there has to be a broadening of

the lawyer's function. Even Dalhousie Law School will eventually have to resort to the device of a placement office. The sooner the law school realizes that very few of us wish to be legal scholars the better off our job prospects will become.

Commerce Society: Understanding their role

by the Dalhousie
Commerce Society

Business, capitalism, free enterprise, the competitive market system, private enterprise: to those of us who are business-oriented, these terms are probably held in as high esteem as, say, motherhood.

These terms and all they imply may be self-justifying; however, the value of such a system has ceased to justify itself in the eyes of a growing number of people.

On December 14th, John Ellis, president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, told the Kingston and District Chamber of Commerce that "the competitive system has been under varying degrees of attack for as long as I can remember... profit to many ears is an ugly word and I believe this is due to a misunderstanding of simple economics."

Although Ellis was talking about price and wage controls at the time, his statement does point to a problem with which students in the Commerce Society are quite concerned.

That problem is the estrangement of the business community from Canadian society, and how this can be remedied. Traditionally speaking, the strength of commerce in this country has rested on the natural integration of private behaviour and public requirement. This co-ordination was based on the predictable outcome of gain-seeking individuals in a competitive environment. The market mechanism had, in the past, solved the economic problem with a minimum of social and political controls.

In the past, the basic concern of man was survival. Although this still applies, it is continuously receding into the background. The central problem which is likely to confront the societies of tomorrow is nothing less than the creation of a new relationship between the economic aspect of existence and human life in its totality.

Our present system of commerce is an inefficient instrument for provisioning society with those goods and services for which no price-tag exists. One of its failings is its application of a strictly economic calculus to satisfy human wants and needs. The market is an assiduous servant of the wealthy, but an indifferent servant of the poor. Thus, the system presents us with the anomaly of a surplus of luxury housing existing side-by-side with a shortage of inexpensive housing, although the social need for the latter is incontestably greater than the former.

The shortcomings are indicative of a central weakness of the market system — its inability to formulate public needs above those of the marketplace.

As primary wants become more satisfied, the public aim turns towards objectives which are not attainable without a degree of public control.

The concerns being voiced against business today are not only an indicator of the public conscience, but are also a functioning requirement of a mature society. In short, the passive acquiescence of society will be replaced by the purposeful aspirations of the community.

Today's complex

technological society does not permit the degree of participation which was possible in the closely-knit village communities of the past. It is difficult for the ordinary citizen to visualize this structure as anything more than a vast machine, turning out policies and creating the environment in which he operates, with no direct reference to his needs or desires.

Active citizen involvement in social action groups (trade unions, co-operatives, tenants organizations, etc.) will increase. Eventually, it will become a major force in society with which commerce will have to contend.

We will become aware (if we have not already become so) of being prodded, coaxed, or even threatened to act in ways that do not appeal to our own self-interest, but which may well be in the best interest of the public.

The important question which arises here is: what will the business community of Canada do?

Will it react negatively to those pressures and withdraw from the community, as if into a protective vault, saying, "You don't understand us. You're all wrong."? Or will it realize that the business community must make its peace with social and political realities, and see that, in this continuing mutual adjustment, the role of economic forces is far from a mechanical one?

The answer to us, as Commerce students, is clear: we must accept the social and political realities. Only then can we begin working with the peoples of this land, to make their aspirations for a better society ours as well.

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