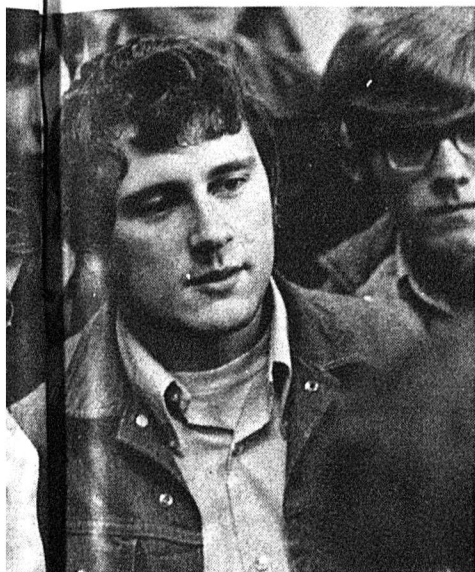


HELL WILL BREAK LOOSE



UNEMPLOYED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
K. AMELL IS GOING TO BREAK LOOSE"

...pation in the labour force. Some of
to so, some leave to see the world, but
y Stics Canada as "retired", - i.e. neither
J wor
the unemployment figures for youth by
ll pntage points. For example, the
for ns aged 14 to 19 in March 1971 was
nt. Inlity, the percentage was about 22.6

sk, the labor market is so bad, why don't
cho. Unfortunately, when the economy
getsoved as well. Universities have only
comedents, government and industry. If
v, goment and industry tighten their belts
iches universities.

s, wsmaller subsidies, have to limit
ig adion standards, or else raise tuition
s thenes have to pay more. While all this
urse, would-be student cannot find a
s has noney.

T "MAKE-WORK" PROJECTS

the projected enrolment on their own
istics of Economic Council of Canada and
Most usities then commit themselves to
figures that basis. They count on tuition
nd on government subsidies which are also
rsity student enrolled.

budgeted to be reshuffled this fall when
gures v discovered to be much lower than
d budget for. The main topic which the
ersities Colleges of Canada (AUCC) held
ting in September was under-enrolment.
n, pres of Carleton University in Ottawa
AUCC mmented after the meeting that
ment v significantly below the universities'
estern ada as a whole, enrolment will not
was year, much less than what was

d from members that enrolment was not
eshman, but large numbers of upper year
drop out of university. The only two
da wh university enrolment lived up to
iva Sound Newfoundland.

correlising summer unemployment with
enrol (university enrolment overall isn't
ie ratio the total student population to the
ed poal students is), they would have
irprised.

ion ofmer unemployment figures shows
o opportunities have been deteriorating
1968. If "make work" schemes by the
, like Opportunities for Youth are no lasting
olem.

since the total numbers of teenagers
reased in the previous year, while every
in in the number of teenagers looking

for jobs. This trend will inevitably continue because the seasonal demands of the Canadian economy cannot possibly absorb the hordes of unskilled university students who seek employment each summer.

Summer savings is the single biggest factor in financing education. Over 40 percent of all university educational expenses for students are derived from summer employment. Thus it becomes imperative for most students, particularly those from poorer families, to find work during their four month summer vacation.

When unemployment among students reached serious proportions in the summer of 1968, the federal government set up a task force (oh,oh!) to investigate and report.

Their report was the cornerstone for the 1969 summer program which included a \$259,000 "hire-a-student" publicity campaign, the hiring of 450 special student counsellors for Manpower centres, an increase of ten percent in federal government student hiring, and a 50 percent reduction in the number of foreign students allowed to work in Canada.

Student unemployment rose again that summer (an average of two full percentage points all across the country) and continued rising in the summer of 1970. The government, it seems, just didn't understand: gimmickry and short term "make work" programs were not going to work. Student employment had to be considered part of the overall economy; measures had to be taken that would encompass the entire economic situation in this country.

Then, in the spring of 1971, the government had another brainstorm. They would keep the student unemployment problem in isolation, and unleash a \$23.3 million windfall from the Secretary of State's office under the guise of "Opportunities for Youth".

More than 27,000 kids spent the summer picking up garbage in parks, creating community newspapers and journals, doing research on community planning and pollution, and using up \$23.3 million in non-permanent and generally counterproductive ways. (There were exceptions; some very productive projects were carried out).

Has it worked? Of course not: youth unemployment this summer was higher than ever. What OFY did accomplish, though, was to keep Canada fairly quiet as student radicals were co-opted into the federal bureaucracy.

The economic octopus was again overlooked as the government sought new ways to cut off the unemployment tentacles. The foreign-controlled capitalist disease worsened.

The final crushing blow came when President Nixon announced the import surcharge and it became more and more obvious that Canadians were going to lose jobs because of it. A shaky domestic economy was compounded by the fact that the whim of foreign domination came to the fore.

Faced with this turmoil, the government set up its inter-departmental study group to keep youth unemployment out of the newspapers.

REASONS FOR YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

There ARE reasons for youth unemployment. And the government is going to have to face up to them before it is too late. Because, as Mel Watkins says, when middle class university educated students cannot find work, all hell is going to break loose.

These reasons are connected fully to the basic definitions of university education and employment. When North American society continues on the basis of four-years-of-liberal-education-for-everyone and then throws the unskilled graduate into the labor force to sell his labor, then there are going to be problems whenever the economic situation is below normal.

There are too many college degrees on the job market today: everyone wants to be an intellectual and nobody wants to be a worker. Over the past ten years, enrolment in Canadian universities doubled to about 299,000 but this increase in the level of education has not resulted in full employment and better jobs for grads.

Quite the opposite, in 1969 when a record 66,000 degrees were issued, the total number of graduates hired actually declined, especially among graduates from the arts.

Why are Canadian graduates unemployable? The answer to this is again to be found in an overview of our national economics. Lack of research cuts down on the employment

potential of industry. Most Canadian industries are no more than branch plants of American corporations, and most of the research done by these corporations is done in the U.S.

Another reason for the unemployability of Canadian grads is the surplus of teachers and professors. The teacher shortage of the last generation for primary and secondary schools is rapidly giving way to a surplus. In post-secondary institutions, the lack of research and teaching positions few and far between.

And with a university degree, particularly on the masters or doctoral level, the job market looks pretty gloomy when there are no opportunities for teaching and research.

There are also reasons why young people without degrees do not get jobs. Other than the young workers themselves being choosy about jobs (after all, they usually don't have families to support), workers under 25 do not have any seniority rights in industry and they are rarely unionized.

So they tend to get hired for short term work, by construction firms or by companies with unpredictable seasonal fluctuations; and in times of recession they are the first to be laid off.

Canada Manpower Centres, while providing a good service, are generally ignored by students who do not realize Manpower's potential in the labor market. Students have not yet identified Manpower as a social service agency and consequently less than 10 percent of students receiving summer employment find their jobs through the Manpower Centres.

Unless students have attended a polytechnical institute or a vocational school, they find it almost impossible to benefit from apprenticeship programs, training in industry, or the government's Occupational Training for Adults (OTA) program.

Let's consider the OTA program first. The program, set up in 1967, is a combined educational-industrial package, funded by federal and provincial governments, that includes academic upgrading and technical training. The problem for youth? To qualify for the training allowance, applicants must have been in the labor force for three years. Very few university dropouts can claim this experience.

Apprenticeship programs offer an equally dismal outlook. Applicants for these programs are selected and certified by provincial labor departments and in order to qualify they must already be employed. Oh, come now, if a young worker already has a job in these times of unemployment, then retraining him is not going to offer employment to those who need it. Why not offer apprenticeship programs to unskilled and unemployed youth?

The third scheme is training in industry. Under this program, the federal government contracts with private employers to hire trainees or retrain employees. The employer chooses the candidates and the federal government pays the cost. Unfortunately this scheme sees more old employees getting retrained than new workers getting hired and trained.

So, all in all, there isn't much hope for potential workers with a full or partial university education. And government employment schemes and economic policies are primarily to blame for this crisis.

Can Trudeau's new interdepartmental study group get to the roots of this problem? Let's take a quick look at their initial proposals:

They hope to offer incentives to industry to provide on-the-job training and to make changes in the rules on manpower training to allow young people to enrol in the programs. This proposal, if carried out, would be welcomed by most unemployed youth.

They hope to create local construction projects along the lines of the now-abandoned "winter works projects", and set up a loan fund to finance provincial construction schemes. Again, this would be an impermanent solution -- what happens to the non-unionized young workers who have no seniority rights after the construction boom is over?

They have given no indication that the utilitarian function of the university (versus the utilitarian function of the technical or vocational college) will be considered.

And they still insist that youth unemployment is an isolated problem, not connected with the national and international economic picture.

The study group's report, due in late October, will, if adopted as federal legislation, only provide another short term assault on youth unemployment. Next summer, wait and see, will find even higher unemployment among people under 25 years of age.

The problem, Mr. Trudeau, is only going to be solved when we take a long, serious re-assessment of Canadian economics and education. But that solution will be a long time in coming, because it runs against the grain of the entire reformist type of government that Canada has today.

*Note: The unemployment rate has gone up to 7.1 percent since the feature was written on Oct 9, 1971

IAN WISEMAN (CANADIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS)