

Have you got a job?

Poor job prospects for 71 graduates

On these pages we print two views of the job crisis which university graduates are experiencing as they seek meaningful employment outside the university. They are a follow-up to the two articles last week about graduate employment in the Maritimes and the summer job prospects.

Attention has been focussed on the situation by the U. of T. Graduate Student Union report, "Who needs a Ph.D.?" written by Marjaleena Repo.

The letter below is a copy of the form letter sent to all graduating students by Prime Minister Trudeau.

Beginning immediately below is an article by Wynton Semple, another Torontonian.

from The Varsity

IN 1969, THE NUMBER of people graduated by Canadian universities with Bachelor and first professional degrees increased by 10.9% — In the same year, 25.9% fewer Arts students with pass B.A.'s were required by Canadian industry, as compared with 1968.

While pass Arts students experienced the biggest cut, they weren't the only ones. Canadian industry's requirements for new graduates with Bachelor degrees in pass Science and honours Arts declined by 18.4% and 14.2% respectively. For honours Science graduates, there was a meager increase of 3.6%.

Those who did get jobs found their real starting salaries lower than those paid to their compatriots in comparable occupations the year before. The cost of living increased 5.9% in 1969. None of the starting salary rates increased as much as the cost of living. The averaged increase for all disciplines (including Commerce & Business Administration and Engineering) was 3%.

And just to put the finishing touches to a gloomy picture, not only did employers hire fewer graduates for less, many employers didn't bother recruiting at all.

In its post mortem on the job situation for 1969, the Department of Manpower and Immigration admits:

"It was found that the much talked about shortage of jobs may — to some extent — actually exist."

BUT, BY JUGGLING some statistics they are able to convince themselves that last year's shortage of jobs was only a temporary shadow passing over a generally radiant outlook for university graduates. Listen to the glad tidings from Manpower:

"during this period (1961 to January 1969) the labour force as a whole increased by 18.7% while the "Professional" portion grew by 59.5% and accounted for almost one third of the total labour force growth. So, regardless of the present state of this portion of the labour market, the long-term prospects are extremely promising."

Manpower's optimism is based on a rather unique interpretation of recent history. While the "Professional" portion of the labour force grew by 59.5%, the

number of new graduates with Bachelor and first professional degrees (i.e. those who are candidates for jobs in the "Professional" sector of the labour force) grew by 368.2% during the same time period.

Some idea of the total number of new people required in the "Professional" sector in Canada during the nine years from '61 to '70 can be obtained from a federal study done in 1968 by Meltz and Penz. This study gives a projection for the total number of required new entrants into the labour force in the "Professional" and certain semi-professional "Commercial and Financial" occupations during this time.

This study's projection of the number of people needed in these fields over this time is 272.5 thousand, 378,219 thousand people came out of Canadian universities with Bachelor and first professional degrees during the same time period.

If there was a surplus of university graduates in the sixties, why is it only recently that it has become a prominent public issue?

ONE OF THE FACTORS that tended to obscure the problem was that emigration to the United States played a significant role in reducing the number of university graduates in the Canadian job market. It may be that the famous "brain drain" was occasioned less by the tinny charm of the American mammon than by the spectre of unemployment at home.

In the fiscal year ended June 30, 1968, 7,117 "Professional, technical and kindred workers" emigrated to the United States from Canada. This number amounted to 12.3% of the total number graduating from Canadian universities in 1968.

However, the door to this particular escape route was slammed shut on July 1, 1968 when the U.S. immigration laws

were changed such that Canadians were forced to stand in line on a first come first served basis along with everybody else in the Western Hemisphere.

The privilege of being allowed into the U.S. is now extended to only 120,000 people a year from this region. Would-be immigrants with educational qualifications below the level of an M.A. must have pre-arranged employment before they're allowed in.

GRADUATE SCHOOLS HAVE served as another outlet for the surplus of graduates. From 1961 to 1970, the rate of increase in the number of graduate students was much higher than that of undergraduates. In this time period undergraduate enrolment grew by a factor of about 2.4, whereas graduate enrolment increased by about 4.2.

Also, the problem of employment for university graduates was and still is obscured by the position women are forced to occupy. Usually they are "allowed" to stay home and do unpaid labour in the home. Periodically they are used to help fight wars or to do the menial extra low-paying jobs which men refuse to do.

Of the 2,558,000 women in the labour force during the third quarter of 1969, 2,003,000 of them were employed in the service-producing industries. In October of 1969, the average weekly wage and salary in these industries (Service, Finance, insurance & real estate and Trade) was \$97.69 as compared to an average weekly wage and salary of \$137 for the goods producing industries. During the third quarter of 1969, 66% of the married women between the ages of 20 to 64 were officially considered to not be in the labour force since they did not work for pay and were not actively seeking work. (Whereas 34% of the married women in this age bracket were considered to be in the labour force, the corresponding figure for men was 94%.)

There was no point in these women seeking work.

If one quarter of them (716,000) had decided to actively seek paid employment, the unemployment rate for women would have been 35% instead of the official 2.5%. The overall unem-

ployment rate would have increased by 9%.

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE, what about Manpower's claim that "the long-term prospects are extremely promising"?

In both the immediate and long-range future, the supply of graduates will increase much more rapidly than will the supply of jobs. In the five years prior to 1971, the rate of increase in the annual number of new university graduates of all kinds from Canadian universities is approximately 4 times that of the projected rate of increase in jobs in the "Professional" sector in Ontario. For the '71 - '76 period, this multiply declines to about 2.

It is clear that there is now a job shortage for university graduates and that the salaries new graduates are receiving have declined relative to those paid to their predecessors. It also appears that the discrepancy between supply and demand will increase with the likelihood of even larger relative declines in salaries in the future.

However, as is often the case, that which is clear on the basis of data gathered by social scientists who support capitalism, is not the most important.

It is all very well to know that 'X' number of people will or will not have jobs at 'Y' rates of pay but that tells us nothing of the actual experience of having a particular job.

In the final analysis, the operational definition of these terms is "from the point of view of the ruling class" since the research assumes the permanence of the status quo.

Watson and Butorac illustrate the way in which research is carried out from the perspective of the ruling class in their introduction to Qualified Manpower in Ontario 1961 - 1986:

"These are estimates of the numbers and types of manpower we might reasonably need in the normal course of events in an unplanned economy, striving for sustained economic growth very loosely defined within certain general guidelines. They rest on the assumption that our social and economic structure will remain fundamentally unchanged over twenty-five years, unaffected by any catastrophe such as war, depression or revolution."

There doesn't need to be an organized, conscious conspiracy among social scientists to ensure the promotion of ruling class interests. They are required only to accept the legitimacy of the present order.

WHAT CAN BE SAID about the sorts of jobs university graduates can look forward to? Can we accept the prime minister's word? What are we to say to the Minister of Manpower and Im-

migration who assures us that:

"Rapid and continuing technological change in today's society creates ever more exciting opportunities for regarding careers in many fields — commerce, industry, science and academic endeavour."

In the minister's mind, there is not even an employment problem let alone a question of what kind of jobs.

Although the empirical research has not been done which would enable us to make confident assertions about what the work experience for university graduates actually is, it is possible to say what it is not. There seems to be little substance to the notion that capitalism is creating all sorts of exciting creative challenging jobs which demand that those who fill them be highly trained, capable of acting and thinking independently and critically.

Meltz and Penz, in commenting on the changes in the education structure of the labour force which they project between 1961 and 1970, say:

"... it is important to note that only about one third of the projected change in the education structure is attributable to a shift in the structure of occupation groups toward white collar occupations, particularly professional and clerical occupations. The major part of change is due to upward shifts in the occupation groups' education structures."

In other words, it is not so much a matter of new job sectors opening up which require more more education as it is a matter of the education level of existing jobs in the present sectors having risen.

IN THE 20 YEARS between 1966 and 1986, in Ontario, it is projected that the proportion of the total labour force constituted by those in the "Proprietary of managerial" and "Professional and technical" groups will increase by 2.86%.

Even if the interesting jobs are in the "Professional and technical" sectors, few women will get a crack at them. Those who compile the projections have no reason to believe that the present level of gender racism will subside much in the next twenty years.

It is projected that in 1986, 2.15% of the labour force will be constituted by women holding jobs in the "Professional and technical" sectors (including elementary school teachers). If elementary school teachers are excluded from the calculations, the 1986 projections for the male and female participation rates in the "Professional and technical" sectors indicate that the proportion of females will be less than one fourth (1.46%) that of men (5.85%).

It appears that there will be few jobs opening up in the sectors which we have assumed embraced the stimulating creative jobs.



Semple's article has been published by Hogtown Press as "They'll Have to Start a War or Something: the Employment Hoax". The Hogtown version includes many tables and footnotes which we have not reproduced.

You can get hold of this (and many other useful publications) by writing Hogtown Press, Box 6300, Station A, Toronto.



PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

Dear Students:

In a growing and prosperous country like Canada, the social and economic well-being of all citizens depends on their capacity to respond quickly to technological change and adjust successfully to new developments.

The key to our future progress and high standard of living is the education of our young people.

As new graduates, you have the knowledge, skills and ambition that will help make Canada a leader among nations that cherish freedom and fulfilment of the individual. It is through your initiative that Canada will prosper in the years ahead.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau
Ottawa, 1969.