



# THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

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IT used to be thought nice to say of a child: "He is just like his father," or "She is just like her mother." In fact, parents were not flattered unless it was said. The starting place for this Letter is: "Today's youths are *not* just like their parents."

Both young people and grown ups have changed with the times, but they suffer equally from the fact that they live in a complicated age for which their personality development has not been fast enough. Youths are impatient, and wish to get things done in a hurry. Adults are quite sincere in feeling that youthful haste is lowering standards and endangering the common good.

Young people of every generation, our own included, have been irritated by the apparent slowness with which changes are brought about. Only in maturity is the progress of mankind seen in its true perspective. Then it is realized that considering the many factors involved, the human race does advance amazingly well. There are two billion persons on this earth, each belonging to a race, a nationality, a climatic area, a religion, an economic position, a sex and an age. Considering the multitude of mixtures and the thousands of variations, it is wonderful that we have been able to co-operate as well as we do in the civilization we have built.

Many books have been written to trace world development from the simple life of two persons pictured in the biblical story of Eden down to the complicated and intertwined lives we live today. This Letter cannot go into all of that, but will refer to the changes wrought in the times of today's youths, their parents and their grand-parents.

A "generation" is about 30 years, so that since the Year One there have been only 64 generations born into the world, and since the confederation of Canada fewer than three. During these three generations much has been done to change the attitude and footing of young persons. Great centres of population have grown up, requiring new forms of social organization. Hand-in-hand with the expansion of cities has come minute specialization in work, so that most men are contributors to a finished article rather than originators of ideas, producers of raw materials, and complete craftsmen, as were their forefathers.

Look at some of the material changes. Five of the most wonderful developments in the past two generations, though taken so much for granted by the

present junior offspring, were automobiles, electric lights, telephones, radios and movies. Here is the number in Canada at each of three censuses, twenty years apart:

	1901	1921	1941
Automobiles.....	535	464,805	1,572,784
Domestic consumers of electricity.....		830,000	1,756,000
Telephones.....	63,192	902,090	1,562,146
Radios.....	none	a few	2,150,000
Movie theatres.....	none	910	1,244

These figures show that Canada has one car for every 7.36 persons, and one telephone for every 7.4 persons. Sixty-nine per cent of the houses are lighted by electricity, 78 per cent have radios, and there is a movie theatre for every 9,310 persons in the country.

Illiteracy is down: there were 300,000 illiterates, persons who could not read and write, in 1921, and in 1941, according to the census report, "There was no further purpose to be served by asking about literacy since the proportion of the population illiterate, for census purposes, had become insignificant." Twice as many girls received degrees in our universities in 1941 as in 1921, and the number of full-time students of both sexes also doubled. Savings accounts in the chartered banks have increased from \$41 per person in 1901 to \$148 in 1921, and today they stand at \$296 per person.

What does all of this mean? It means that life today is not the same as it was in the boyhood of men who are now at the top in business and industry and farming, and insofar as it is different we cannot expect young people to live the same lives their fathers did.

When R. W. Diamond, Vice-President and General Manager of the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Co. of Canada Ltd. addressed a mining association convention at Spokane he set out the issue neatly: "We can see it reflected in our young people. Not only are too many of them bewildered today by the complexity of problems, but what is still more serious, many of them are unconscious of the problems that face them. Not only are the problems of their education infinitely greater than those of a generation ago, but there are more distractions for our young people in the fields of entertainment. Life in some cases has

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The Same**

been made too easy for them. There is nothing wrong with them fundamentally, but these have been trying times and things are out of balance."

It is important for us to realize, before going into remedies, just what the difficulties of the age are. Take a young person of the 1900 to 1911 decade. For convenience we shall say "he" although the study applies equally to girls. That youth was far more absorbed by his parents than are young people today, because today there are far more outside interests for both parents and children. Unquestioning obedience was demanded and, in most cases, given. Respect for parents was buttressed by love, a really close affection very different from the lip-service so casual today. Life moved in a groove that had been set from time immemorial, with only minor deviations.

The design which served so well for so many generations was shattered in 1914. It had, of course, been fading under the bright glare of the industrial revolution and the advance of technology, but the war finished it. Instead of dependence upon authority there grew up reliance upon individual instinct. Instead of trust in the wisdom of age there arose worship of the pushfulness of youth. Instead of quiet fireside gatherings there came car rides, movie shows, hustle, noise and mechanical unrest.

The wars had another result. There were 60,000 lads brought up in the old tradition who did not return from the first war, and their absence allowed the new ways to grow that much faster; 38,000 did not come back from the second war. There might have been easier transitions for young people — easier, too, for adults who associate with them — if these tragic spaces had not been blasted in our ranks.

It is not only individually that we have been affected by changing circumstances. The family has been subjected to violent shocks, and though it has shown amazing resistance there is no doubt that some values have been lost. How could it be otherwise? The early pattern of family life just could not stand unaltered through the rapid change in material culture. The new model may be better on the whole, but youth needs to remember that parents are tied by sentimental strings to the past, and may have difficulty in adapting themselves to the new ideas of their children.

Families are pleasant but difficult institutions in which to live. They are social groups in which there are exceptionally close and personal relationships, with few reticences and many demands. Young people see the difference between family and outside relationships without understanding it. They resent criticism freely given them by parents, brothers and sisters, who say things no outsider says, criticize things no outsider mentions, and demand a higher standard of behaviour than is expected outside. This situation, with freedom outside and strongly contrasting strictness within, is quite different from the time when the family was the centre and almost all of life.

There are, too, changed standards of living. Much of the extra money in circulation during war years went to families who did not receive so much before,

and they are eager to keep up the freer spending habits they have formed. Alongside these are many families which have less buying power than they had in 1939, because they live on fixed incomes and feel the pinch of inflation and taxation. When you take a fixed income and deplete its buying power by 30 per cent, that makes a big difference in the habits and outlook of families and individuals.

Theorists deplore the urbanization of Canada, which has its effect upon youth, but it is not clear what can be done about it. Movement from country to city has been a steady process. The percentage of rural population has decreased from 80 in 1871 to 63 in 1901 and 46 in 1941.

This change in population distribution, which has its almost exact parallel in the United States, is incidental to increasing mechanization of agriculture, spreading industrialization, and the desire of people, particularly young people, for the comforts and amusements of town life.

Youth is non-conformist in its contacts with other ages; it will follow the most fantastic fancies of its own group without caring what the world thinks or says. Youths feel safe in stepping into the thick of emotions which bewilder their parents. Life becomes a thing of sudden revolts, with introspective intervals. No institution, whether church, school or business, escapes criticism. Formalism and ritualism are treated with impatience; social conditions call forth conferences, inquiry and resolutions. Restless youth is critical of the past, and willing to suffer from experience. This is healthy, provided youth does not mistake mere movement for life, and mere speed for progress.

When adolescence merges into young adulthood, old problems are intensified and new ones are added. While physically fit and psychologically ready for marriage and to begin fashioning his own life, the youth is likely to have difficulty in fitting his abilities into his living situation. The average age for marriage today is 28 for men and 25 for women. The delay is caused not only by the difficulty of selecting the right job, but involves the raised standard of living which requires income at a higher level than was formerly needed. It is complicated by the fact that so many girls now earn good wages in their teens, and dislike marrying if it means having less to spend.

When they talk about their future, some young people give an appearance of being cynical. It is hard to describe, but they are like passengers on a small boat who, fearful of a storm, would nevertheless enjoy seeing the ocean rage. Youths can pass unmoved through the most tragic events overwhelming both country and friends, and yet "go overboard" about a radio singer and weep with the sorrows of a fictional heroine. Theirs is not so much true cynicism as an inclination to go with the crowd in a "don't fence me in" spirit.

If youths are seized by an inclination to overrun their signals, they should realize that civilization has not been built by bitterness or negation or self-centredness. The best of life is reserved for those who approach it constructively. Seventy per cent of those

**Families  
Change**

**Youth Is  
Different**

polled in a recent Fortune survey reported by Readers Digest believe they have a better opportunity for success than their fathers had.

**Planning For Life** Planning for life should include five features: health, recreation, education, making good on a job, and ambition, about each of which a few words may be said.

Youth will do its best to keep out of the sick-bed only when it is realized that there are precautions which, if taken early, will add years to the enjoyable and productive stretch of life. To this end there is room for a pointing up of physical education in school, directed not so much to mass exercises as to individual knowledge and sense of responsibility.

Leisure should be used, not just "spent". When leisure is given this positive interpretation it is no longer regarded as a time for mere bodily exercise, but as an opportunity for continuing education, aesthetic experience and the enjoyment of life according to one's inclinations.

Youth is travelling a wrong road when it makes pay and time off the criteria of the first job. Life deserves more of young people than a demand for easiness, and they deserve more of life than they will get by pursuing ease as their main objective. Before approaching someone for a job, they should have decided clearly in their minds that that job is the right one for the fullest development of their abilities, and then they must convince the employer that they are the right persons for the job.

Having won a place, they can not depend upon passage of time and "hard work" to bring raises and promotion. "Mix intelligence with your energy," they should be told. "Activity isn't everything. The Mexican jumping bean is so active because its inside has been eaten away by a moth larva . . . If you wish to take the ceiling off your pay, keep in mind that nobody wants to know how hard you have worked, but what you have accomplished."

They must go on learning, too. Learning is more than reading a book a month; it is a continuous adventure, in which every day adds its experience, and every new acquaintance offers an opportunity to round out knowledge. It isn't enough to be given a place at the bottom of the ladder: one must be willing to climb. The world won't make itself over to suit people clamouring for elevators or escalators.

No better advice could be given young people than to tell them: "Don't despise the past; it made you what you are. Read books which tell about people who made that past; then you need not make the same mistakes. Don't twist this advice to mean that you should retire from the world and live on reading, to become a hermit or the self-proud inhabitant of an ivory tower. It's smart good sense to read the experiences of others, extract the good points they made, and then go from the logic of paper learning into the field of action and try out the precepts and examples in your own life."

Those who study intelligently, not only for knowledge but for understanding of what "makes men tick", are better prepared for opportunity, and op-

portunity is nothing apart from the ability to grasp it. There never were greater opportunities than in Canada today, but they still have to be worked for. They are competitive; in competition the training must be done ahead of the testing time, and there's no use in blaming others for unpreparedness.

Many persons stumble over the cat because they are not looking where they are going, and then kick the cat. If you do so, says G. H. Preston in "Psychiatry for the Curious": "you have demonstrated one of the commonest tricks which people use to defend themselves against feelings of failure, guilt and stupidity. It was your fault you stumbled and you should have kicked yourself, but you didn't; you 'Projected Your Guilt' and kicked the cat. 'Defense by Cat Kicking' or by blaming it on someone else is a type of human behaviour which you can see practised every day by your friends."

**Parents Changed Too** In olden times a father had three expectations of his children, it is pointed out by Arnold W. Green, of the University of New Hampshire, in the February American Sociological Review. These were: help with work on the farm or in home handicrafts, economic security in the father's old age, psychological security by preserving the family name. To this Mr. Green adds: "In terms of dollars alone, the cost of raising a modern middle-class child represents a serious threat to the personal ambition of the father."

It is just as well to bear in mind that parents give up quite a lot of their own desires to launch their children fittingly on life. Compulsory school laws, regulation of child labour and deferment of youth's independence have increased the economic burden on wage-earning parents. A census monograph, using 1931 statistics, gives some figures which represent the cost of bringing up an average Canadian child through 18 years of dependence. According to this calculation the cost for each child in 1931 was \$320 a year; at that same period the average year's pay of all persons on salary or wage was \$1,111, so that the entire earnings for five years would be required to meet the cost of raising one child. In 1946 the cost had increased to \$363 a year, and the average pay was \$1,678 a year.

Parents are likely to look at themselves through the eyes of *their* parents, confusing the ideality of that life with the realities of the life they are living before the eyes of their children. Is it any wonder children become confused? They have many models before them: their parents as they see them and their parents as their parents see themselves; other relatives, school companions, vacation friends, heroes and heroines of stage, screen and novel, of sports and the big world of achievement.

It is demanded of children that they combine conformity in the home and school with aggressive independence outside; co-operation in the home with competition outside. Caught between two conflicting codes or ideals, the wonder is that so many young people find their way through the maze of contradictory directions to a comfortable way of life.

In theory, the way is simple. Adults do not need to know the answers to all the obscure problems of the day; they have a big fund of simple truths far more worthwhile. What they need to do is to look upon a youth as a person with possibilities, establish a real friendship with him, teach him out of everyday experience the basic truths about living, thinking and being a social asset, encourage him and give him a job to do.

It is true that parents and employers become bewildered when they meet resistance to their efforts to enforce old-world or old-time standards, but a distrustful clash of wills on every minor point leads to no secure settlement of any issue. Virginia Woolf advised the world: "Beware of putting under the microscope one inch of a ribbon which runs many miles; things sort themselves out if you wait." It requires wisdom to know when to be meticulous about little things and when to take the long view, but wisdom is what adults should have most of.

If life is to offer youth its fullest measure of satisfaction then the community has its **Community Responsibility** responsibility. It needs to study a wide program for supplying youth-satisfactions, and then co-operate to work it out.

National statistics are utterly inadequate when we come to talk of what is to be done. Surroundings are different; opportunities are different; education is different. Youth needs a feeling of "belonging" in whatever community his life may be lived. The job of providing this "belongingness" rests upon the family, youth agencies, schools, recreation centres and churches in co-operation. It needs to be supplemented, inspired and sparked by parental education, parental connection with the community institutions, and provision of counselling and guidance centres.

Society must be cured of its present inclination to underestimate the importance of youth. The present unstable world condition presents a field of opportunity for groups with subversive ideas who prowl around every flock watching for stragglers. They are making the most of their opportunity. Mr. Diamond, previously quoted, said on this topic: "They are clever. But they are ruthless, unprincipled and immoral. They gain a following because so often theirs is the only form of leadership offered." That is a challenge to constructive leadership which should not go unanswered.

When we consider education, it is pointed out that Canada is doing better now than 25 or 50 years ago; that 66½ per cent of our children between 5 and 19 were attending school in 1941 compared with 61 per cent in 1921 and 52 per cent in 1901. It can be pointed out, too, that those between 25 and 29 years of age had a 9-year average of schooling, compared with only 7½ years among those 70 years of age and over.

These, to be sure, are comforting aspects of education, but there are some unsolved problems to be set over against them. Concentration of population in urban districts means unequal distribution of people and financial resources. Where they live has an impor-

tant bearing on the extent of formal education young people receive. Quality of teachers is a factor, and this is entangled with salaries. A report of the Canada and Newfoundland Education Association remarked that the present salaries paid to teachers are not sufficient to attract the right kind of person in adequate numbers.

These and the other problems of education can be attacked effectively only when the whole community is roused by its leaders to realize fully the implications of education to their own future and the future of their children; and when the need for education is presented in such a way as to inspire children with an over-powering desire to be educated.

After education comes employment. A man out of **Employment Is Vital** work is troubled; multiply him by thousands and you have a mass that is willing to accept any panacea no matter how fantastic or dangerous. An article in *Industrial Canada*, the magazine of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, commented last October: "Since an individual functions as a total organism, his efficiency on the job depends upon his total adjustment to life. He cannot face up to his financial and emotional problems unless he has the assurance that he has the best possible job available to him."

Employment in Canada, if it is to take in youth, must be full employment for all, because youth will be among the first sufferers of a slack period. To contemplate unemployment is to think not only of the actual condition, but also of the years between now and its occurrence. Unless youth has some certainty of profitable occupation young people will be lured away, year by year, to apparently greener fields.

In an uncertain world it is natural that people should like to have as many immediate certainties as possible, and should avoid vague and wistful speculation. Young people, spurred by the divine dissatisfaction of youth which has been so potent in advancing mankind, are not going to be satisfied with castles promised them when Canada develops, or with haloes awaiting them in the future if they devote their lives and talents to building up the country. International boundaries mean less every year, as transportation and communication push them more and more into the realm of imaginary lines. Should a condition of dissatisfaction with things as they are become merged with hopelessness of improvement, youth cannot be blamed for packing its bags.

There is no need for despondency. The same intelligent energy as was given to solution of war problems of production and utilization of manpower would be effective in meeting the peace-time need. Inertia is the greatest evil we have to contend with. Whatever is done must be done thoroughly: it's not efficient to cut a hole in the floor to let out the water from a leaking roof. If Canadians were roused, and went to work effectively to meet their problems — including that of youth — this country, in this century, could be made a place no Canadian, young or old, would wish to exchange, though offered a choice of all past ages and all presently great countries.