



THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

MONTHLY LETTER

HEAD OFFICE, MONTREAL, MAY 1948

GRADUATING INTO LIFE

YOUNG people are faced with decisions of great importance to them and to the country. Those who graduate from our schools this year must decide at once what vocation they shall follow; within a few years they must make up their minds about marrying and founding a family; and from now on they are charged with a certain responsibility for the development of Canada. All this requires that they set up a philosophy of life, if they have not already done so.

Graduates have been through chosen courses: matriculation, science, philosophy, arts, engineering, and so on. The next course is in survival—not physical survival, because that is comparatively easy in this age—but survival as free men and women getting great satisfaction out of life.

All over Canada another kind of graduating is taking place, the graduation of young people from foreign lands into Canadian life. All winter they have been studying, and today they are able to understand the English or French languages. At the International Branch of the Y.M.C.A. in Montreal the boys and girls sat on the edges of their chairs, so eager were they to answer questions, to say sentences in English.

This is a graduation that is not only interesting but significant. These youths have escaped from bondage in countries ruined by war and oppression. They are making their way into the freedom of Canadian society. They will be the parents of Canadian children a few years hence. By their study they are building up for those children a better chance than will be enjoyed by children whose parents cling to their old-world language and customs.

What Comes Next?

Graduation is only the end of a phase. The greater part of life lies ahead. Every year some 150,000 young Canadians search for openings in the 20,000 or more different types of vocations we have in Canada. (These figures, and many more in this Monthly Letter, are taken from a useful and interesting publication of the Department of Trade and Commerce called *Canadian Census Occupational Data for Counsellors*. It is a

166-page bulletin filled with authentic information, available from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa, for fifty cents.)

The first problem facing these young graduates is raised by the fact that the careers beckoning to the individual have increased a thousandfold. In the middle of the last century there were 300 occupations from which to choose; the most recent estimate is that there are 30,000, but of course not all are available in Canada. The Number One problem, then, is to choose a job.

There are no greater tragedies than those brought about by merely drifting into jobs. Young people who fail to choose a life activity which gives them a purpose and provides them with satisfactory self-expression are like Carlyle's unhappy people: "No landmark on the Earth; no lodestar in the Heaven."

It may be pointed out with reason that every person can work successfully in a number of occupations. It is equally true that for nearly every person there is some one vocation into which he can put more good, and in which he can find more delight, than any other.

Youths are inclined too often to seize upon the best paying job of the moment, without asking themselves "Will it give me satisfaction?" As a consequence, they find themselves in dead-end jobs, disgruntled with life, and frustrated in their desire for self-expression.

Men and women are needed today, and the demand will be equally great ten years from today, who are prepared to do a good job, but that preparedness does not just grow. Business executives know only too well how often they have had good positions go begging for trained men and women, simply because there are so many who are unwilling to qualify on their own initiative.

Opportunities will come in spite of anything you can do, but if you are not ready for them they will pass on to someone else. There is an old saying to the effect that the small man wastes his time looking for big opportunities, while the great man uses his time taking advantage of the little ones as they come.

Canada Offers Opportunities

Besides all the obvious chances for carving a respectable place out of the years ahead, there are a thousand paths not yet trodden, and for the adventurous man Canada is still unexhausted and undiscovered.

A special Canadian issue of the New York Herald Tribune, issued in January, had headings such as these: New iron ore development may be one of world's best; Added supply of coal seen in new field; World's largest aluminum unit is ready to aid Marshall plan; Pulp and paper mills operating at rate 50 per cent higher than in pre-war period; Electric power projects to aid industry; New industries climb sharply in 8-year span; More than 2,000 industrial projects established in Quebec since 1945; Dominion easily maintains her position as the world's third largest trader; Ontario leads in industrial plant building; Chemical industry expansion to set new high; Life insurance holdings per capita set record unsurpassed by any other country relative to national income; Chartered banks play a major role in economic programme. These headings from a United States newspaper should tell Canadians as well as people south of the border that this is a country of grand opportunity for the young men and women who leave school and university this year.

Sometimes one hears talk of all the wonderful chances there are in other countries. Some of the publicity given the "exodus" of young Canadians has been, to say the least, exaggerated. The articles have leaned to vague statements and generalities. Well, here are some facts.

The National Employment Service obtained from the Department of Veterans Affairs the names and addresses of 1,127 veterans who are taking courses in United States educational institutions. A letter was sent to each man offering to supply detailed information regarding conditions and opportunities in any part of Canada, and offering help in finding a suitable position on graduation. Replies are not all in, but fifty per cent answered the first lot of 900 letters mailed, and others are coming in weekly as students near the end of their courses. Most of the students definitely wish to return to Canada; in fact, of the first 450 replies only one expressed no desire to return. Practically all who have finished their courses have come back to Canada.

The Value of Education

There is probably no country in the world where progress is so little conditioned on "pull" and "influence". There is no country where a young man has a better chance to make his own way, according to his initiative and energy. Education is not thrown at the heads of youths who show exceptional ability, but is there for the taking by all.

Some leaders in the professions and industry worked their way through university by driving cabs, waiting in restaurants, and keeping books of account in their spare time. Psychologists have arrived at

the conclusion that a young man who does some of this self-help work is a better student and a better man than the one who has things made easy for him.

But Canada does not put an undue premium on higher education. The lad who leaves high school to work has his opportunities, and, after all, Shakespeare, Burns, Carlyle, Scott and Darwin came into the sunlight of fame without any parchment certificates, and very few of the men at the top in Canadian industry and finance today have any except honorary university degrees.

This is not to say that the highest education available to an aspiring young man is not the best education, provided it contributes to the work he intends to do in the world. In quantity of knowledge available the young man of today may excel a Plato or an Aristotle. The problem is to make use in the best way of what he gets. Dr. Raymond G. Miller says in *Take Time for Human Engineering*: "A formal education is comparable to a bunch of keys. In itself, mere knowledge is of no particular value, except as it is used to unlock the doors to the development of understanding and judgment."

Very few people progress in this world if knowledge has had to be forced upon them, or if it is handed them on a silver platter with second helpings when they spill one serving. The people who succeed are invariably those who have a thirst for knowledge, go out and secure their knowledge in one way or another, and then put it to work. Those who are obsessed with the thought, or have sons who think, that parents "owe" a higher education to their children at whatever sacrifice of comfort and ease should read the article "I Got a Right to an Education" in the *Canadian Home Journal* of February. This story, by Allen Roy Evans, M.A., brings into right perspective all the debate and dispute centring around the obligation of parents and the "soft" approach of youths who refuse to earn at least a part of their way through school and university.

There is a movement afoot in this country for "Practical Education." The Canadian Research Committee on Practical Education was born last spring, and now shares offices with the Canadian Education Association in Toronto. Its chairman is Dr. Fletcher Peacock, director of education for New Brunswick, and its vice-chairman is Hugh Crombie of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association.

Some of the questions being studied by this committee, according to a list kindly supplied us by A. G. McColl, Research Director, are: What should be the primary objectives in the High School programme? Does the present High School programme meet these objectives? What proportion of all youth should the High School serve? Is the present programme meeting the needs of these young people? Is the employer satisfied with the training young people are receiving in High School? If not, what are the common deficiencies noted in the High School product? Is the remedy more likely to be along the lines of an improved general education programme or by a greater

emphasis on the skills and qualities essential in efficient employees? Is the school working with business, industry and labour forming a partnership in this vital enterprise of planning and providing a suitable education for young people? Would a closer liaison be mutually beneficial?

Just before leaving the matter of education, look at this tabulation. It shows in black and white what education has been obtained by persons in various vocations. This table, part of the occupational data bulletin referred to on page one, will well repay study by both graduates and those who will employ them.

		Number M—Men W—Women	Number of years at school distributed in percentages			
			0-4 years	5-8 years	9-12 years	13 & over years
1. Professional persons.....	M	123,033	0.3	7.6	27.2	64.9
	W	126,802	0.3	7.2	55.9	36.6
2. Proprietors, managers, officials.....	M	864,664	15.4	55.3	24.8	4.5
	W	30,685	12.8	44.1	37.2	5.9
3. Clerical, commercial.....	M	389,981	2.1	28.1	57.1	12.7
	W	232,824	0.4	15.4	70.0	14.2
4. Skilled workmen; foremen	M	519,190	8.8	52.0	35.6	3.7
	W	12,405	3.3	41.8	50.7	4.2
5. Semi-skilled workers....	M	409,969	8.2	54.9	34.1	2.8
	W	146,351	3.6	45.7	47.7	3.0
6. Unskilled and service workers.....	M	1,038,919	17.0	61.1	20.5	1.4
	W	282,896	8.0	55.3	34.3	2.4

Vocational Guidance

There is a tendency for industries to become more highly mechanized but to have the machines so simplified in operation that relatively inexperienced operators may use them. Such industries can employ unskilled labourers and teach them all they are required to know in a week or less. A survey made by H. M. Bell for the American Council on Education showed that in 2,216 occupations in 18 industries 8.5 per cent of employees required no training, 59 per cent one week or less, 11.3 per cent from one week to one month, and only 21.3 per cent required more preparation.

It is obviously in the skilled occupations that education is of most value, for there it provides background against which competent handling of situations may be erected. This is where vocational guidance has its most worthwhile sphere of activity. It is a major responsibility, these days, to guide young men and women so that they shall make the best use of their natural skills and acquired knowledge in work suited to their interests and capacities.

This assistance cannot be given in a casual or routine way by teachers, clergymen and parents. It demands the service of people who can sit down with the youth and "talk things over," bringing to the discussion a wealth of experience, a breadth of understanding, and a patience which will together build confidence, reach the truth, and help in setting up objectives.

Dependability and Personality

One way to attract favourable notice is by taking extra care so as to earn a reputation for dependability. This means looking beyond the day's work, and accepting responsibility. Dependability is not achieved by listening to lectures, but by thought, hard work and self-denial.

The majority of dismissals, according to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics bulletin already cited, are not due to inefficiency. Numerous studies seem to show that only 15 to 25 per cent of dismissals are due to incompetence, slowness, spoilage of materials and physical unadaptability. Causes of most other dismissals are given as: personal defects, lack of job wisdom, and emotional immaturity. Included are such things as: insubordination, laziness, trouble making and drinking.

Dependability means being able to trust your own conclusions arrived at after your best consideration. A man who wants advice before he does anything important can never be depended upon in business. Dependability demands that if you happen to be wrong you admit it quickly and emphatically. There is no more effective way of demonstrating dependability than to speak out when you know you are right, and to admit unhesitatingly when you are wrong.

These things enter into personality, which is the sum total of the effect we have on other people. The enterprising, energetic, dependable man has an authentic dignity. The outward appearance is only the manifestation of something inside. This something usually inclines a man to take the gentle, the favourable, the indulgent view of his companions' failings, and to be courteous even under provocation.

Personality may be modified by temperament. Everyone is entitled to a temperament, provided it doesn't get in the way of his advancement. Temperament is merely a natural disposition which determines how we will feel and act at various times and under various circumstances. The author, artist, poet, sculptor and actor are excused much because people subscribe to the dictum of the German philosopher that "One must have chaos in one to give birth to a dancing star," but ordinary people cannot get away with too many temperamental tantrums.

Young people starting out in the business world should keep in mind the philosopher who argued with the Emperor Adrian and remarked: "I am never ashamed to be confuted by one who is master of 50 legions." There is also the story of Hajji Baba, whose chief hit him playfully on the head. Hajji Baba boasted: "though I rubbed the sore place, I still could laugh at the jokes of my chief." Only time and ripe experience bring such wisdom.

What is Success Worth?

What a youth does after graduation depends largely upon his ambition. He needs to study his objective and decide what to give up in the interests of success, because by this time he knows that nothing is to be gained except by giving up something else. It is not worth the same sacrifice to capture a flock of sheep as to capture a rich city.

Those succeed best, and probably easiest, who form definite ideas of what they are going to do before they start to do it. A specific, concrete and definite aim gives the mind unity of action.

Then a strategy must be worked out. Every man must plan his own strategy, based upon his peculiar abilities. David couldn't fight Goliath with Saul's weapons, and a man who knows he has not a genius for fighting must learn how to prosper by the arts of peace. In any event, wise strategy makes an alliance with circumstances which in case of success will follow up the pursuit, and in case of reverse will screen the retreat.

The strategy of British commanders has always lent itself to description in few words. Here are some examples: Jervis, "order, simplicity": Nelson, "disobey orders if necessary; keep enemy from consolidating; close—do not wait to have the battle forced upon you": Wolfe, "always try once more": Wellington, "keep your main strength hidden; when the enemy is lulled into security jump with both feet": and Hamilton, "if strategy doesn't work, go get the enemy."

The first suggestion by Wellington is an important pointer for the young man starting out in business. Too often youth is inclined to adopt big-shot manners without having big-shot qualifications. It is well to avoid display until you are in an unassailable position.

Next to the ill-repute of the immature "big-shot" is that of the "little-shot." He is usually a clock watcher, whose criteria of a job are the amount of time off, short hours and long vacation with pay. Little-shots go into tedious and devious detail every time a superior asks them for a report. They make their jobs appear difficult, and think they are giving an impression of the vast amount of work they do. Behind the smoke screen is usually found mental laziness and haziness. They have no idea of how to glide over the unimportant and to give proper attention to the important things.

The Time to Start? Now!

Obviously, this business of getting the right job and then getting on in it means more than merely answering an advertisement and reporting for duty. An important thing is to realize this at once, and start now to do something about it. People who postpone are lacking in drive efficiency. That boyhood superman to many of us, Napoleon, remarked that no blunder in war or politics is so common as that which arises from missing the proper moment of exertion. We all know the silly hesitancy which does not know enough to come in out of the rain, but stays outside while it is raining and, when it stops, goes inside just as the ceiling is falling.

Having planned well and having got started, look for ideas. Almost any idea that jolts one out of current smugness is better than none. Make your own programme so long and so hard that the people who praise you for a good piece of work will always seem to you to be talking about something very trivial in comparison to what you are really trying to do.

This discussion should not be allowed to leave the impression that if he uses certain strategy the graduate's life will be easy. The price of success is readily stated: start where you are now, without waiting for a "good break"; throw wishing overboard

and do something substantial and realistic about preparing for the next highest post; find out what obstacles there are and plan to surmount them by developing capability and directing it effectively; and then keep going.

There is a gain and a loss in every step forward. Something must be left behind, but the loss is not important if you secure the gain. The higher you climb in the scale of success, the harder you will have to work to hold your position, and the more you will have to put up with. That is one reason why there are not more people up at the top.

What Lies Ahead?

To predict what is ahead for Canada is futile speculation, because it depends upon so many variables: the state of the world, the urge of our young men and young women, the sense of our statesmen and business-men.

The wars have presented unpredictable situations in Canada; technological advance is so fast that it upsets predictions from day to day. In down-to-earth figures, here are the immediate prospects as outlined by the Department of Reconstruction and Supply in March: a 17 per cent increase in private and public investment outlay for new capital goods in 1948, compared with 1947; a capital programme of \$2.8 billion, the highest in Canada's history; of this, \$2,184 million is to be in privately-owned business, institutions and housing, while public outlay is expected to reach \$635 million.

Canada has undergone noteworthy economic advance in the 81 years since she became a dominion, and there is good reason to believe that the process of growth has by no means reached completion. New industries are being encouraged, and existing industries are expanding in a way to contribute to Canada's long-term development.

This advancement of Canada has taken place within the friendly atmosphere of western civilization, a culture based on principles established in the western world at heavy cost through the last seven or eight centuries. Working on the foundation so well laid, today's Canadians have the responsibility of preserving the fruits of the work of pioneers, and developing human potentialities which will enable men to use to their full value the new powers with which science has gifted them.

Young men and women who graduated this year are part of a civilization whose fate may be decided within their own life-span. This civilization has in it, despite all its faults and dangers, the seeds of freedom and of decent living.

There is no need to approach the future in a timid and tremulous way. All the power we can ever use now exists, and awaits our intelligent application. These are days when pomp and pride cast only a faint shadow across the pages of current history. Ability and knowledge and initiative, linked with common sense, are the points on which this year's graduates are judged and by which they will rise or fall.