



# THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA MONTHLY LETTER

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## *Prospectus for Youth*

YOUNG PEOPLE entering high school in the year of Canada's Centenary of Confederation will have just passed middle age when the calendar clicks over from 1999 to 2000.

Even if a detailed prospectus cannot be written now for the second half of their lives they can profit by making the attempt. The outline should be visible this year of the work that must be done in these days if maturing youth is to obtain the greatest possible value out of life.

One thing is certain: as these young people pass through stages in their development — being educated, having jobs, getting married, raising children — they will shift gears often. Science, business and politics are moving at a pace that was without parallel in the past, giving rise to novel situations which will overwhelm the static person, the person who is not prepared to adjust himself.

In one sense the future is already here. What young people are putting into their heads today is in essence what they must have to meet the necessities of tomorrow. The present leaders in business, industry, the professions, universities, and research will be retired. Most of the top jobs will be absorbing the youths who graduate from school in the next few years. Whether a person is fit to make his way to the top depends upon what he is doing now to fit himself for the climb.

Effort is needed. These are days when we have to keep running just to stay where our fathers finished. Subjects that were the etceteras of education in our grandfathers' day have become imperatives. The student of today has three factors to face which older generations did not: the increased amount of knowledge in the world; the advanced stage of education given to every pupil; and the pressure of ever-improving techniques.

Consider automation, which will be more and more to the fore as the years advance. Thousands of companies are going to succeed or fail twenty years hence depending upon whether today's young people have learned to understand the technical and social effects of change and respond to them effectively.

There are many aids to comfortable living now on the drawing-boards or farther advanced: automated highways that guide cars; microwave ovens; synthetic food; flight to Europe in ninety minutes; individual rocket flight; hydrofoil ships and air-cushioned trains; pocket telephones; global television; and new health prospects through preventive and curative drugs.

Before going overboard in admiration of all these things, it is useful to remind ourselves that even the most ingeniously efficient tool, a computer or a research microscope, is only an extension of man's capabilities.

Then we realize that to use the tools already in being, and to invent and use new tools, today's young people must develop capability. This means not only spending more time in school but spending that time in a well-organized effort to learn. Young people need to adopt some of the principles of their ancestors, adapt a little to meet changed circumstances, accept a little from other people's experiences, and add a few tricks of their own. Then they will be ready to apply known expedients and methods to the untried situations that are bound to arise.

### *Meet the future now*

To put it bluntly, young people are up against a tough proposition. This is a time, before getting too far into life, to find out what all the possibilities are.

It is no time for loitering. There is no use in waiting for the future in the hope that everything will turn out all right. We must become engaged with it, even though we have no detailed chart. There is no harm in thinking back to the sands of Dunkirk where three hundred thousand of our troops were hemmed in by enemy tanks. We had to get them off the beach. Hundreds of men who had motor boats and fishing boats and dinghies rushed to help. There was no time for pep talks or pampering; there were no charts. They were told: "Now off you go and good luck to you — steer for the sound of the guns."

Young people approaching graduation have a

chance to show what they are made of. They will see the difficulties of the task and not shrink from them; they will look far enough ahead to anticipate and give attention to problems before they become urgent; they will appraise themselves and the future intelligently so as to give order and direction to their lives and develop their talents to the full.

Now and in the years following school an important factor in life is motivation. Joy in living arises from having a purpose. We may seek a golden fleece or a pot of gold; to heal the sick or build a space ship; to reform the government or make a better world; whatever his ambition may be a youth should have in mind an old Chinese saying: "Great souls have wills, feeble ones have wishes." Desire must be intense enough to pay the price in study and work and devotion to progress. Only effort will enable desires to express themselves in results.

Perseverance is a great asset. As Longfellow said in poetic terms, if you only knock long enough and loud enough at the gate you are sure to wake up somebody.

In choosing an objective it is not wise to overextend ambition beyond one's powers. If a youth has grappled unsuccessfully with elementary mathematics in school how can he expect to work with the complex figuring to be done on the high levels of finance or in the higher levels of the atmosphere? As the prophet Jeremiah remarked: "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?" One needs to seek out one's best field of activity and work hard at getting ready for it.

### *Plot the best course*

In plotting one's course it is important to keep in mind the almost universal trend away from arduous, unskilled types of jobs toward occupations that require higher levels of training, skills and knowledge. In the next ten years young people who have equipped themselves only to fill low-level jobs will have even fewer opportunities than today. Old skills are disappearing and a wide variety of new skills are emerging.

The Chief General Manager of this bank said in a message to students: "People who tell you that you need all the education you can get hold of are not trying to cajole you into continuing at school: they are stating an undeniable fact. We are living in a time when you need to know about things that were not even in the dictionary when your father was young. And we are entering upon an age when what we learn this year and next will be all too little to keep our heads above water. By all means reach out your hands for all the learning you can grasp, and give your minds to mastering it."

A young man cannot always do immediately what he has it in him to do. He may have to await opportunity and the right environmental conditions. Three hundred years ago Sir Isaac Newton provided the

basic laws of mechanics but not until the past few years have there been conditions calling for the application of Newton's laws to space travel. Today there are many textbooks and learned journal articles devoted to the subject. *Inertial Navigation Analyses and Design*, edited by C. F. O'Donnell, has 442 pages about only one sub-division of space travel, with an index ranging from "Aberration of star's light rays" to "XN-1" — the United States first all-inertial navigator, successfully flown in 1950.

Not everyone will become a scientist, a launch technologist, or a traveller in space, but the influences at work in these areas have profound effects on every section of the labour force. The highly educated workers have not only created work for themselves but have created hundreds of high-grade jobs and made obsolescent hundreds of low-grade jobs throughout the work world.

Everyone now in school, and everyone entering school, can profit throughout all his future by taking advantage of the opportunity given him to learn. The Census of Canada section on wage-earners provides a clinching argument. The average annual earnings of men with various levels of education were: elementary school \$2,964; secondary school \$3,911; university \$5,699. Women earned: elementary school \$1,449; secondary school \$2,078; university \$3,257. A government tabulation in 1959 showed these percentages of men between 40 and 49 years of age receiving less than \$3,500 a year: elementary school education 47.2; secondary school 22.2; university 15.1.

Two additional features need to be taken into account: the increasing competition numerically and the increasing competition academically. The number of people in the 20 to 24 year age group is expected to increase by 33 per cent from 1965 to 1970, and by 57 per cent over the decade 1965 to 1975. The Economic Council of Canada provided this forecast: whereas the male labour force in this age group increased by only 25,000 in the decade of the 1950's, in the 1960's it will increase by 270,000, or more than ten times as much.

The second source of pressure is the high expectation of industry and business that young people will come to their first jobs with more than only the knowledge and skill that are needed to do routine work. The standard of competence for starting a job has risen.

Under-education is a problem that must be faced squarely as one demanding priority over almost every other as the nation enters its second century. Here are the shocking facts revealed by the 1961 Census: of Canadians aged 15 and over, there were 5,215,175 — 47 per cent — who had no more than elementary schooling. These included 184,834 with no schooling at all, and 858,972 with four grades or less.

### *Choose the job thoughtfully*

The choice of things to work at has broadened. One issue of a daily newspaper recently contained more

than four pages of display advertisements for men and women. Most of the jobs advertised were not known twenty-five years ago, either because the things now being made did not exist then, or because the machines of today had not yet been thought of.

The canny youth will study the Canadian occupational scene, so as to become aware of the wide range of occupations available. Then he should investigate carefully the listed occupations which seem to offer him the best possibilities for realizing his ambition, taking into account his capacities, abilities and interests. He will soak himself in facts before making this important decision about his life work.

School guidance officers have copies of the Occupational Classification Manual, Census of Canada, 1961, which lists more than 16,000 different occupations. Morgan D. Parmenter, Professor of Guidance, Ontario College of Education, University of Toronto, has published two texts to help young people lay out their future: *Exploring Occupations*, and *You and Your Career*. These are available from The Guidance Centre, Ontario College of Education, University of Toronto, 371 Bloor St., W., Toronto 5, Ontario. The list price is \$1.87 each postpaid. Also available from The Guidance Centre are monographs on individual occupations. To date 179 separate monographs are available in the G. C. occupational information series. The price is 15¢ a copy postpaid. A list of available titles may be obtained by writing to The Guidance Centre.

Occupations are described in some detail in a series of booklets prepared by the Economics and Research Branch of the Department of Labour. These are available from the Queen's Printer, Ottawa, for 25¢ each. A list of the occupations dealt with will be sent upon request to the Queen's Printer.

As Professor Parmenter points out, teachers and guidance officers cannot possibly know the details of the many occupations. They should know, however, about sources of occupational information and should be prepared to assist students to find out about the occupational world. The pupil on his own should talk about occupations with his parents and with people engaged in them. No one can speak with certainty about the future in a time troubled by rapid discovery and change, but every young person will be helped in making his plans by getting information from, and the opinions of, people in various walks of life.

### *Keep on learning*

Anyone who thinks that he has completed his education upon graduating from high school or university had better feed another punched card into his mental computer. The business and industrial world will not stay where it is when this year's or next year's graduates swarm into it. One must keep learning to keep up.

There is another reason for continuing to learn: the current high standard of living has fostered ambition

to the extent that people will not be content to earn in 1977 what they are being paid in 1967; they wish to progress. It will be small comfort to them to know that there is "full employment" — which means that only three per cent of the labour force are without jobs — if they are still on their starting jobs with only token annual increases.

Education does not stop on graduation day. All of life is a time of learning and relearning. People who stop learning are handicapping themselves in two ways: they are unfitted to earn what they believe to be a satisfactory wage, and they cannot rise to the cultural and achievement level that would be made possible by increased knowledge and understanding.

Getting an education comes easier to a person who sets his goal in an honest spirit of intellectual acquisitiveness. He may have to become an expert on a job, but he can remain a scholar too, and this breeds self-confidence. He is likely to have more than passing marks: he will have quality.

At whatever age the dawn of Canada's centennial year finds you, it is well to continue — or to take up again — work on your own intellectual enlargement. Education is not manna that falls alike upon the deserving and the undeserving. It is reserved for those who work at it, perhaps reviving the old custom which is still valid for those who aspire: the midnight oil method.

There was an RCAF youth who had not completed high school; he took the balance of his course by correspondence during the war. Under the assisted education plan for ex-service men he went through university, graduating with a degree in engineering; by coaching and other ways of earning money he put himself through Massachusetts Institute of Technology, specializing in electronics and writing a thesis for his Master's Degree that attracted attention of people in high places in the United States space programme. He was whole-hearted in his pursuit of what he believed himself to be capable of doing, and today he holds a high executive office and is a leader in his field.

### *Broaden the base*

The person who wishes to be well-rounded and fit for any opportunity that may turn up will not make the mistake of choosing a small radius. By including in his programme the subjects that will help toward a sound general education he will be better able to develop specific skills.

Key positions in whatever utopia Canada builds will go to people of broad education, people who are able to see a big picture, and not to people who know nothing outside the technique in which they have specialized. A great Canadian, the late Canon Cody of Toronto, once defined education from the point of view of the individual as "the process by which persons grow and are enabled to live significantly."

Men who become great in any sort of occupation have a passion for work. It may be the pursuit of knowledge or the totting up of figures or the measurement of a close tolerance. A healthy person looks upon inaction as the greatest of woes. The brilliance of the executive behind his desk, of the research man at his retorts and measuring instruments, of the teacher in front of his pupils, of the statesman on the floor of parliament: their brilliance is the product of years of grinding and often boring work.

Anyone who wants anything badly will work to get it. He deludes himself who thinks of success without doing something earnestly to deserve it. The heights are not populated by lazy people; business has no place for its enemy number one, the slovenly worker. He makes other people correct his mistakes and pick up after him, and he causes confusion in the best organized staff.

### *Think big*

It is proper to wish that our pilgrimage through life will leave some traces of our having passed this way.

One preparation for achieving this desirable purpose is to cultivate the habit of entertaining possibilities. An axiom of the exploring fraternity is useful. They believe that their purpose is to go where they have no particular business to be. Everyone will benefit by looking for opportunities to explore new fields of knowledge in areas not yet within his job boundaries. In fact, many a person owes his advancement in life to the fact that his imagination was equal to going down a rabbit hole to see what things were like there.

Fixed ideas and vocational fixation are evils to be fought against. Plans must be reviewed from time to time in the light of new knowledge and experience.

Unless a man is going to be content merely to make life bearable he should not start counting his years of age or his years of service as assets until he has nothing else to count. Every promotion is capable of bringing with it new pleasures. As a man progresses toward the heights of his business, trade or profession he meets more interesting people and enters more interesting situations. When one climbs a mountain in Switzerland or in Banff National Park the half-dozen people he meets at the top are among the most interesting he has ever had to do with: they have surmounted the same difficulties and appreciate the same view.

On such a journey a youth cannot afford to be restlessly diverted by casual pleasure. That yields only fool's gold. The days are never humdrum or unbearably tiring to a man who is pursuing a purpose. When a writer says he has fun writing, when a research man says he finds fun in solving problems, when an executive talks of the fun in the game of business, these men are not talking about surface pleasure but deep down satisfaction in discharging their work.

### *Get going*

No one else is likely to show profound interest in a young person who shows no interest in himself.

He needs to build a personal identity, and that is made up of quality in his personality, steadfastness, and evident interest in the project to which he gives his attention.

The Canada of tomorrow offers the hope of opportunity to such men and women if they will seek it out and grasp it.

In terms of actualities, as the report of the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects showed, the future looks bright. The growth of population will create new needs and new opportunities for initiative. More students, spending longer in school, will require more teachers, buildings and equipment. More marriages, creating new family units, will increase the demand for houses. New factories will be built and old factories expanded and modernized. Better educated people will require a higher standard of living, resulting in demand for an increased fund of cultural items such as music, ballet, drama, and art.

The Royal Commission report puts this into definite terms: "... given leadership, flexible policies and a bit of luck, Canadians have every reason to look forward with optimism and confidence to the continued economic development of our country and to a rising standard of living in the years to come." The thing for youth to do is to get going. Young people in their teens and twenties cannot at once influence Canada's second century, but this they can do: determine that within their environment and circumstances they will start and follow through their determination to be ready to shape that century as they grow into it.

They will adopt this simple imperative as their motto: if a thing is necessary to be done, do it now; if a tough task impends, do not shirk it; if a difficult decision demands attention, get the facts and be manly enough to make it. The "pending" tray is a treacherous place in which to lay duties and tasks and decisions. One of the minor prophets, a man who possessed a gift, unsurpassed by any other Old Testament author, of clear, vivid and eloquent expression, gave us a phrase to describe waste of time: "The years that the locust hath eaten."

Your progress may be interrupted by some unheralded and unforeseen event not of your own contriving. There is no need to wait with folded arms for the event to pass. Ask: is there any opportunity given me by it? Even in your darkest days Fate may be brushing you with her wings. In Lincoln Cathedral there is a beautiful window, made by an apprentice out of the pieces of glass which had been previously broken and rejected by the craftsmen.

Canada's future belongs to those who plan where they are going, prepare themselves for the journey, perform their tasks skilfully, seize their opportunities, and persist in spite of set-backs.