



# THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

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**Y**OUTH'S problems are not all economic, though that is the feature most often referred to. They are much wider, involving family life, education, recreation, social experiences and guidance. This is an age which questions everything, and the subjects about which youths are seeking knowledge cover every phase of human activity. Parents know that their children do not obey unquestioningly as children did even one generation ago; business firms have introduced new methods of employee relations to meet the changed attitudes of young workers; associations which have existed for scores of years find that they must explain, and sometimes broaden, the objectives laid down by their founders; teachers are required to go into detail when lecturing on principles that were axiomatic a quarter century ago.

Change in world affairs and human living is natural, but it becomes beneficial only when human beings move to meet it, shifting the emphasis from what was done in the past to what can be done in the present. This carries two warnings: to adults, that while a youth is preparing to take part in the life of future years, he is at the same time living now, and desires immediate satisfactions: to youth, that if he should be carried away by the doctrine of seeking absolute safety, he may miss the satisfaction and adventure which activate the explorer, the scientist, the artist — the zest and open-mindedness that come only to those who dare to begin something new. An intelligent, alert youth, unafraid of study and work, will receive fair and generous co-operation from Canadian adults and their organizations.

It is undoubtedly true that the hopes of the world are centred now as never before so strongly in the youth of the world. Young men and women need to prepare themselves for taking over responsibility for the economic and spiritual changes which are undoubtedly stirring the nations, because the strength and safety of communities and nations depend upon their virtue and

intelligence. While steadiness will be required in the ranks of all countries, the next quarter century will see an increased demand for fire and initiative in their leaders.

The first errors to be swept from the minds of young people are the ideas that days of opportunity are past, and that there is no longer a premium on effort. When executives tell young people starting work that advancement depends upon their own efforts, it is a sincere and serious warning. If youth chooses to disregard the advice of successful businessmen, it must face the fact that the alternative is a totalitarian state government, such as those the democracies have just defeated, or an industrial paternalism. Either is calculated to relieve the worker of the necessity to think, and force him into the ranks of those who do nothing but obey orders and perform the tasks to which they are assigned.

Youth has always walked the democratic countries with such swift feet that ideas of regulation and regimentation are not likely to appeal. Reaction to loss of freedom might take one of two forms: struggle, or resignation. Neither would be good for individuals or the nation. The pitting of class against class would disrupt the best plans for steady development of resources. Passive acceptance, with surrender of independence and willingness to depend for better jobs on political patronage, would ruin the spirit of youth and deprive the country of worthwhile leaders. Youth, which is the link between childhood and adulthood, needs to be a combination of dash and prudence.

One handicap to reorientation is that anyone trying to compare or correlate two generations belongs to one of them, and will have difficulty in understanding the other. Another is the natural reluctance to make fundamental changes which might affect the accustomed way of life. These two obstacles apply to youth as well as to adulthood, a fact which points to the need for dealing with the issue co-operatively, with a distinct responsi-

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# THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

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bility on both parties. If it is the part of youth to prepare for living, it is equally necessary that adults should recognize that youths are living now. Their days are ends in themselves, to be used up fully, but they can be completely satisfying only so long as they lead to the understanding and assumption of responsibility necessary to the successful adult.

In seeking their place in society, young people are not isolated, but are a vital part of the whole social structure. Painful lessons of the danger inherent in separate youth movements have been taught the world by the dictator countries. Instead of participating with their elders in the economic, developmental and social life of the nation, these young people were regimented, drilled, and educated out of free society into blind, unthinking servitude. No democratic country could contemplate with ease such a future for its children, and so it becomes needful to make as attractive as possible the way of youth seeking a happy place in the workaday world, in spite of whatever strains in the social order may arise.

But youth cannot just sit and wait for the adult world to solve its problems. The war has disorganized the conventional way of life, and has given all ages and all parts of society unfamiliar situations. In times of peace cultural changes are slow, and can be taken in their stride by adults and youths alike, but war accelerates the speed of evolution, and makes broad-scale, combined-age planning more difficult. In this regard it is well to remember that young people are more impressed by what they see done than by what they hear talked about, and adults are placed in the position of being examples: they will be expected to listen and talk intelligently about youth's problems, and weigh young peoples' enthusiasms kindly.

Family problems are likely to be particularly acute in the next few years, because the war has instilled greater feelings of the desire for independence in young people. They have been given, by participation in battles and industry, a new feeling of self-importance. This, properly handled by church, educational, family and business connections, may be made a great influence toward self-direction and self-control. If not treated diplomatically, it may become volcanic, to the detriment of the individual and of the state. Not all youths succeed in reconciling the fact that they need their families at the same time as they are beginning to rebel most strongly against the family discipline, and, perhaps, lack of progressiveness. Yet families are important. If the nation took over children, it would inevitably turn out adults who were alike in their reactions and culture, subservient to regimentation, and unmarked by the initiative that is fostered by family life.

Diagnosis and realization are the first needs of an appreciation of the problem, but it is necessary to proceed toward a cure, which is a joint responsibility of

youths and their elders. Planning by and for youth should be organized as part of the total planning of the community, because adults working alone might become paternalistic, while young people working alone without guidance and public support are inclined to weary in tasks that spread over long periods. Lasting benefit depends upon a scheme which allows the youths to grow into and put to use immediately the skills in which they are interested. Dozens of communities, inspired by war-time needs, have sponsored organizations to bring adults and youths together. Whatever they are called, Community Council, Youth Council, or a local name, they have done good work in serving youth. More than a score arose out of the Canadian Youth Commission. The best have realized that it is not enough for youth, or those in whose hands the fate of youth rests — employers, school, church, parents, and national leaders — to establish a plan and then cease thinking about it. Pace must be kept with changing conditions, and the giving of inspiration needs to be continuous.

A survey in Toronto showed that not many of the young people who cut short their education to enter war industry are planning to return to school; only one per cent of the girls, and about a fifth of the boys. The Toronto Reconstruction Council has suggested that young people should be provided with training allowances, along the lines provided for ex-servicemen, to induce them to return to school.

But training is not everything. It is necessary to provide advice which will enable young people to choose the field for which they are best fitted. Great Britain has done good work in vocational guidance, having a juvenile section in each employment office which works in close co-operation with the schools, and an instruction centre for youths above school age. These services help not only the young people, but also the employers. By examining the interests and abilities of youths, they help employers find the candidates best fitted for the jobs offered. So successful has the scheme proven, in fact, that employers attested their faith by paying for its scientific development and application. It is generally recognized that the period of youthful perplexity needs to be cut into at both ends: by prolonging education to the extent necessary to provide an effective educational background, and by preparing youths for, and fitting them into, jobs. Moreover, guidance must include acquainting parents and children with the nature and scope of many occupations, so as to enable them to choose with intelligence and hope of success. Organized guidance is necessary because of the changes in kinds of industry, changes within an occupation, and the complexity of business. These make effective advice by parents very difficult without outside help. Professional guidance takes account of the aptitudes, ambition, resources and interest of young people, but the counselor does not apply tests and then prescribe a course which must be followed. He provides information, and helps parents

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# THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

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and youths to interpret it, and to make a plan. Employers are well aware of the fact that while many youths appear fit for nothing except unskilled labour, because of poor education and lack of training, surprising results are attained through right environment, skillful supervision, and encouraging guidance. On the other hand, the maladjusted worker means for industry waste, inefficiency, and high turnover of employees.

The Canadian census monograph issued in 1937 reported that the age for leaving school in 1911 was 14.38 years, while the age for achieving economic independence was 16; in 1931 these ages were 16.25 and 18 years respectively. There was a continuous gap between the age of leaving school and the age when the youth was able to earn enough to support himself. Subsequent reports showed the long-term trend unbroken, and, if the tendency continued unchecked, says the monograph, "young people will in a few years be dependent on parents at the age of 20." Loss of independence was entirely among young men, girls having actually gained while young men up to 25 had lost. The social effect which gives point to the need for a new outlook, was seen in the falling marriage rate in the 20 to 24 year age group, and in the 100 per cent increase in the illegitimate birth rate from 1921 to 1931. At the time of the 1941 census, only 8 per cent of Canada's young men under 24 were married, and 21 per cent of her young women.

From the standpoint of society, it is obviously desirable that every youth should have the opportunity to become self-supporting, and from youth's standpoint it is desirable to encourage and guide the girl and boy to learn and to work efficiently. This latter objective has become distorted by the work and wages condition of war-time. Conversion from war to peace conditions of employment will include realization that war conditions are not normal. Work habits need to be better. Constant moving from one plant to another will not advance the youth in peace-time. He must learn to be reliable, and to avoid absenteeism. He must have a plan, and guard against the danger of its taking him into an occupation remote from his ability. He needs to place more emphasis on learning than on work, avoid dead-end jobs, and prepare himself for more than routine. These needs of young people are recognized by the International Labour Conference, to whose meetings in Paris, Canada sent 13 delegates and advisers last month. At home, many community authorities are seeking a closer correlation of their own efforts with those of parents, teachers, employment offices and employers to ensure the proper preparation of young people for work of a satisfying kind.

It is not enough that a youth should seek education in an amoebic manner, meeting immediate needs, feeling his way blindly, and unguided by any exact aim. If the adults of today are eager to provide the facilities for education, and to pay the cost through

taxation, youth must take advantage of the opportunity enthusiastically. Enrolment in a school or university does not require that the institution shall either force education upon the student, or trick him into it by games and lures. It makes knowledge accessible, and the student should, at the cost of any effort, possess himself of the utmost it can give.

People who think realistically on the subject know that schooling is but a part of education. It provides certain basic facts, it conditions the mind to receive, analyze, and apply facts and experiences that come from outside, and it builds up self-confidence step by step. There are three essentials in education — training for life's work; a knowledge of science and of its place in civilization, and, most important, a philosophy of life. Without a sense of values, the graduating student has lost the experience of the past, and has no measuring stick for his own future. With right education, adapted to the present-day needs of youth, many who would otherwise become a focus of social maladjustment, without hope for themselves and without use to employers, could become adjusted to both society and employment. Schools are trying to lead youth to reason and to understand. One evidence of this is in the rising quality of instructors. In 18 years, the proportion of teachers holding first-class certificates rose from 17 per cent to 38 per cent, while the percentage of teachers holding third-class or lower certificates dropped from 33 to 7. At the same time, higher qualifications are required to obtain the same certificates. In the same period the average daily attendance in publicly-controlled day schools increased more than 80 per cent, while the population of school-age youths increased only 50 per cent. Between 1921 and 1939 enrolment in universities increased by 14,500, and by 1947 it is expected the pre-war total will have been doubled. Just before VE Day, service men and women were registering for correspondence courses operated by the services at the rate of 3,500 a month in Canada and 1,500 overseas, and attendance at lectures in the theatres of war exceeded 7,500 a month.

All of this adds up to a situation which does not seem too harsh. Youth is being aided by the increasing understanding of adults, wider interest of communities, more opportunities for participation in organizations for their own welfare, greater attention by governments, constantly broadening scope of schools, training in private, government, and plant schools, and the guidance offered by unselfish citizens whose only objective is the good of youth and the betterment of society. These efforts and achievements, however, should not induce complacency, because in spite of them youth finds itself at a most critical stage in life. Even in a settled world, conflict marks all the years of growth toward adulthood, and the problems of today's young people include, in addition, the let-down from pressures of war, the upsets of reconversion, the need for suitable jobs, and what to do with leisure.

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# THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

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Joined with the veterans in seeking solutions will be thousands of youths who were not of age to join the services, but who flocked from school to engage in war production work. Those who left their homes and set themselves up independently will be particularly vulnerable. They, like the veterans, will require advisory and readjustment services which, instead of giving them the feeling of being problems in the national economy, will give them the sense of being needed in peace as they were in war. They should be encouraged to take advantage of every facility of school, college, church, social agency, community organization, and plant training. That they can count upon the sympathetic consideration of employers in meeting the needs of resettlement is indicated by the number of reports of firms which are making every effort to ensure that young employees find suitable jobs in which they will be interested, and where they will be given training and experience to enable them to climb higher.

The idea has grown in some quarters that work is a disadvantage to man, and that working hours should be very short or in some way abolished. This is false, because it is only through work that mankind advances, but at the same time technological developments (the results of man's brain-work) tend to increase the number of units of production per worker, and thereby make greater the amount of his leisure time. What to do with it is one of youth's problems. The solution is not to be found, as was attempted in some countries, in enforced mass physical exercise or in utilization of free time by the state. This question of providing occupation for non-working or non-school time is of great importance, because young people without the knowledge and the facilities to make the most of it tend to

become demoralized by idleness. Many communities are making their school playgrounds available for evening use by non-school young people, and at the same time opening their class rooms, libraries and auditoriums for the use of youths seeking to learn everything from tap dancing to dramatics, and to practise everything from public speaking to discussion of the nation's affairs. This idea of the "lighted school house" caught the fancy of citizens in one Canadian city, where adults and youths have worked together to produce a splendid programme for leisure time. Youth organizations use the schools for their meetings, the auditorium is available for dances, and a youth centre for those 17 to 23 has been established with a forward-looking programme. The responsibility of adults is to provide the environment in which young people are allowed to be experimenters in culture, and contributors to it.

As for youth, it should recognize that this land is full of opportunity, which offers itself to men in proportion to their ability, their will for action, their power of vision, and their knowledge. There is no greater folly than to sit by the roadside waiting for someone to come along and carry one with him to wealth and influence. The spirit of dependence upon others is abhorrent to successful men. They speak truthfully when they say "There is plenty of room at the top," but they add: "You can't start climbing without first elbowing your way to the foot of the ladder." The wise youth, facing the post-war world, will make more opportunities than he comes upon accidentally, and he will find businessmen and educational leaders eager to give a helping hand to anyone who has set his mind on advancement.

**SAVE YOUR BONDS!** Now that the 9th Victory Loan campaign has been successfully completed, determine to hold all the bonds you bought. You will be performing a service to society and to the nation, as well as to yourself.