

The Educated Unemployed

The recent revelation by the Public Service Commission that the ratio of job aspirants to vacancies in government service has increased alarmingly, including a rise in the incidence of unemployed educated people, comes to us as no surprise. Time and again we have tried to bring this important fact to the notice of the past government but to no avail, yet it continues to be an outstanding problem which needs to be seriously addressed without delay.

The root of the problem is in the education system which no longer serves the needs of the nation. The prevailing system befraught with distortions which have never been straightened out in a rational manner has, in the main, produced far too many round pegs in square holes, but to date nobody seems able to fully comprehend and arrest the situation. With the continued preference for Liberal Arts subjects which fails in the end to fit the majority of graduates for a career in business or commerce the urgent need for redirecting university students towards scientific and technical education takes on added importance, for it can be seen that the number of science graduates are insufficient to fill all the available vacancies but the over-spill graduates from Liberal Arts subjects are not able to take advantage of this fact as they lack the basic scientific knowledge required for the filling of such jobs.

Today's modern office usually requires some sort of technical ability and at least a smattering of electronics so as to enable the new aspirant in the business world to use and understand, if only a little, the operation and upkeep of machines they may be required to use in the day to day functioning of the office. This idea puts a whole new perspective on what is needed from the educational set-up and what is expected from the university graduate to enable him to compete in the prevailing limited job market. The malady in our system, which can be described as an 'elitist' form of education must be dealt with and eradicated, before it is too late, so that prospective employees may be able to slip in and out of different types of employment with apparant ease. Of course efforts must be maintained to increase employment opportunities for the people, educated or not, but when even a quick survey of local offices tells us there is a chronic shortage of trained staff in areas known as 'technical' there seems to us little more that needs to be said.

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