DONALD JAMES, intending to complete a degree in forestry but uncertain as to the employment opportunities, surveyed some employers of forestry graduates. This is what he found out.

Can I get a job?

Thirty-six letters were sent out, twenty-one directed to industry, five to governmental agencies (four provincial and one federal) and ten to forestry consulting firms. Geographically the list of contacts encompassed the breadth of Canada. The consulting firms were listed in the Vancouver telephone directory. The industrial and governmental contacts were listed in the 1971-72 Directory of Employees of New University Graduates compiled by the Federal Department of Manpower and Immigration. These are major contributors to the economic output of the forest industry and as such they are the employers of a large percentage of persons engaged in the industry.

I asked two questions of all contacts: "What demand for forestry graduates did they foresee in the years 1972, 1973 and 1974?" and "In what areas of forestry did they foresee a demand?" In addition to the above questions, I asked the consulting firms "Is there at present a demand or do they foresee a demand for graduates in the area of resource-land use planning?"

The replies received were most interesting, especially when viewed collectively. Eighteen of twenty-one industries replied while four of ten consulting firms and the four provincial governmental agencies responded to my enquiries.

Six of the eighteen replies from industry did not read my letter beyond the word **employment**. From them I received a standard reply "... nothing available at present but we will keep your letter on file ...". The remaining twelve replies were not optimistic as to employment possibilities but they were hopeful that with the coming of **better economic times** the picture would improve. There was a definite split between the pessimistic east and the optimistic west. Firms in the east held little hope for employment in the future while replies from the west indicated that they expected to be able to maintain levels of new hiring and that in the near future their hiring potential would increase. None undertook to answer at any length the question of the areas of demand. To the question of resource-land use planning, the consulting firms indicated no interest at present or in the foreseeable future; they did suggest that the interest of the Federal and Provincial governments was increasing in this area.

Responses of the Provincial government agencies were the most complete in content. Again there was a regional difference between the east and west. Two western provinces expressed a positive attitude for the future based on past requirements, expecting that demand will keep pace with supply in the near future. One reply stated that the demand for graduates is higher than supply at present, though with increasing enrolments in forestry education this situation will soon be rectified. Replies from the east were less optimistic; they foresaw no increased demand and no difficulty in filling vacant positions right now. "Go west young man, go west" still seems to be good advice.

While awaiting replies, I formulated a number of thoughts as to the probable format and content of responses and unfortunately many of my preconceived notions were borne out. I expected a number of standard replies avoiding the questions asked and "pat answers" on the folly and danger in predicting employment possibilities beyond the present. Nevertheless, the collective similarity in format and content came as a surprise. The overall impression conveyed by the respondents was "It is our policy to reply but not to inform". Also substantiated was the impression of impersonality that an individual is left with when dealing with a large organization. **Personnel Department** is valid in name only. Six replies left me with the feeling that I had been in contact with an individual who had access to information I was interested in and who as an individual was willing to impart this information to me.

I undertook the survey of employers because there is no central source of information available whereby questions of the type asked can be answered. Individual employers appear to be the only source and they are unwilling or unable to predict employee requirements beyond today; this was especially evident in the private sectors. Yet increasing numbers of undergraduates as well as educational institutions and potential employers need a continuous source of current employment information. My survey may, therefore, be of interest.

Though limited, the results may be summed up this way: At present and for some time to come, a buyers market prevails, so don't wait for the job to come to you.