

## PREFACE

I was born in Canada in 1933, at the depth of the Great Depression when everything, including money, was in short supply. It took the outbreak of World War II to pull Canada out of the depression. From 1939, a growing world-wide demand for materials and increased government spending created a strong boost for the economy. However, until about 1945, the focus of the economy was to support the war effort by rationing consumer goods, recycling materials, and expanding activities in the war industries. As a result, for about the first dozen years of my life, although I never felt poor, I was aware that family money was in short supply.

In my early years, I was involved in a diverse range of part-time jobs. The payments I received from these jobs were a strong incentive that motivated me at the time. There was never any parental pressure to get these jobs, but I suspect that my modest income did somewhat reduce the financial demands on my parents.

I have since realized that these part-time jobs did in fact provide me with a very comprehensive and valuable set of learning experiences. They expanded my education far beyond

what I was receiving from the school and classroom activities I was involved in. I met and interacted with people of different ages and in a wide variety of situations, many of which were quite the revelations to me at the time. The work responsibilities, albeit part-time, provided an important connection with the real world that was not available from my formal educational programs. These jobs formed an environment similar to *experiential education*: situations in which *learners* engage with *educators* in direct experiences that increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their surrounding communities.

I thought it would be worthwhile to record some of these early work experiences in greater detail to recognize the positive contribution they have made to my overall lifetime education. This is done as much as anything for my own satisfaction. Hopefully, though, the information will also be of good general value to those who are curious and drawn to its message, especially the younger generations who may be wondering how to make sense of the seemingly inconsequential opportunities in front of them and perhaps are at crossroads of their own. I have presented the jobs essentially in chronological order, starting in 1943 when I was in elementary school and about ten years of age.

Many of my experiences were very much seen from below, a worm's-eye view of the world, if you will. In my early years, I was often in the position of following orders from above with little or no ability to control my own situation. I was the recipient of an endless series of orders, "Do this, do that." Some of these were given in a friendly and supportive manner by people serving as interested mentors and guides. Others were given in a "shut up and do as you're told" context by individuals who frequently seemed to be at war with the world around them. Many of the tasks involved were physically very tough and few presented much in the way of intellectual challenge.

The following descriptions were initiated several decades ago and based on an array of summaries recorded while the various jobs were in progress. The present words have been developed from these summaries during the last year on a sporadic basis. Since these recollections record things that happened almost eighty years ago, many of the details are lacking. However, they do highlight the value of the learning experiences and provide an interesting glimpse of the many lifestyle changes that have taken place since then in today's culture. I have tried to present my recollections factually. Hopefully not too many of the tales have received the additional embellishment that often accompanies such reminiscences of days gone by.