

Study says workers fear skills obsolete

United Press International
NEW YORK — American workers worry more that they will lose their jobs because their skills become obsolete than because of the recession, says Dr. Richard Adamsky of Temple University.

Adamsky, professor of vocational education at the Philadelphia institution, also is a consultant for ITT Educational Services, Inc., of Indianapolis. His conclusion that workers fear technological obsolescence more than the recession was drawn in part from a survey just made by the ITT vocational training subsidiary.

Adamsky said this survey indicated 81 percent of workers doubt if they have the skills to keep their present jobs or find new ones. About 21 percent want to change careers anyway, for various reasons, including doubts about their present skills.

About 62 percent believe they need more specialized training and 67 percent said the only way to get new skills is to go back to school.

Adamsky and Richard H. McClintock, president of ITT Educational Systems, said the proprietary vocational schools of the country are trying hard to provide the retraining workers need to remain competitive in the job marketplace but choosing the right voca-

tional training school from among the hundreds offering courses is not easy.

Adamsky conceded there has been widespread criticism of vocational training programs in both proprietary and public schools for training people in skills already obsolescent.

Adamsky said the bottom line in choosing a vocational school is its record in placing its graduates in actual employment. The next best criterion, he said, is determining if a school is properly accredited. One may have to go to considerable trouble to verify both the placement record and accreditation. The principal accrediting organizations are the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools and the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools. Both are in Washington.

But Adamsky said the best career training is that being done by the armed forces. "This is so much the case that industry is borrowing or even pirating military training methods."

The same point was made recently during a television interview by Narvin Cetron, author of a currently popular book entitled "Encounters With the Future." Several chapters in this book are about changing job skills in the

years ahead.

Cetron told United Press International the armed forces is doing the best at retraining workers by giving them skills for which there really will be a future market. Among the corporations doing a good job in vocational career training are Control Data Corp. of Minneapolis and ITT, he said.

Both Adamsky and Cetron said the armed forces have big advantages: a lot of money, plenty of expertise and the discipline and authority to compel servicemen and women to work hard at the training courses. "If they goof off," Adamsky said, "they can be kicked out of the service or sent to the coldest and most remote part of Korea."

ITT Education Systems operates 22 vocational schools and training centers across the country. McClintock said the survey showed that workers in the 18-24 age group are the most concerned about skills and the employment outlook. One-quarter of those in middle management jobs also had similar fears.

Although the survey did not cover high schools, McClintock said the ITT vocational school officials had encountered concern among youngsters in high school about acquiring marketable skills that will ensure them jobs for the future.

Old-age fund in trouble

United Press International
NEW YORK — Cutting benefits, raising the retirement age and increasing taxes are some methods being proposed to reform Social Security.

The government recently borrowed money to pay current benefits. Various estimates put the amount in benefit cuts and higher taxes needed to save the system at \$60 billion to \$150 billion in the coming decade.

James A. Curtis, head of Milliman & Robertson, Inc., the Seattle-based employee benefit consulting firm, proposes:

— Medicare, disability and other benefits not related to Social Security should be paid out of federal general funds.

— Indexing or annual raising

of retirement benefits should be reduced if not eliminated.

— Social Security should be made universal by phasing in all workers enrolled in other public pension plans.

— The basic retirement age probably should be raised.

— Persons with other substantial income should be taxed on at least part of their Social Security retirement benefits.

Curtis's ideas for change are conservative compared with those of A. Haeworth Robertson, former chief actuary of the Social Security Administration.

Robertson wants to continue the present system only for the estimated 21 percent of the population who will be 45 or old-

er by July 4. For the remaining 79 percent, he would create an entirely new system called the Freedom Plan, involving:

— A flat non-taxable monthly payment, probably under \$300 a month, taken from general funds.

— A Freedom Bond program having special government bonds with deferred interest payments to provide extra retirement income.

— A government cost-of-living supplemental payment for persons drawing pensions under private plans.

Robertson would raise the retirement age for drawing Social Security benefits to 70.

Robertson, vice president of the New York management con-

sulting firm, William M. Mercer Associates, published his ideas last year in a book, "The Coming Revolution in Social Security."

In it he warned if the present plan is not drastically changed, the average Social Security tax collected from an individual, which went from \$30 in 1940 to \$1,587 in 1980, could rise to \$4,039 by 1990.

Adding employers' payments increases the 1990 figure to \$8,078 per worker, Robertson said.

He said Social Security cost-of-living increases for retirement recipients totaled 14.3 percent in 1980 — higher than pay increases for most people still working.

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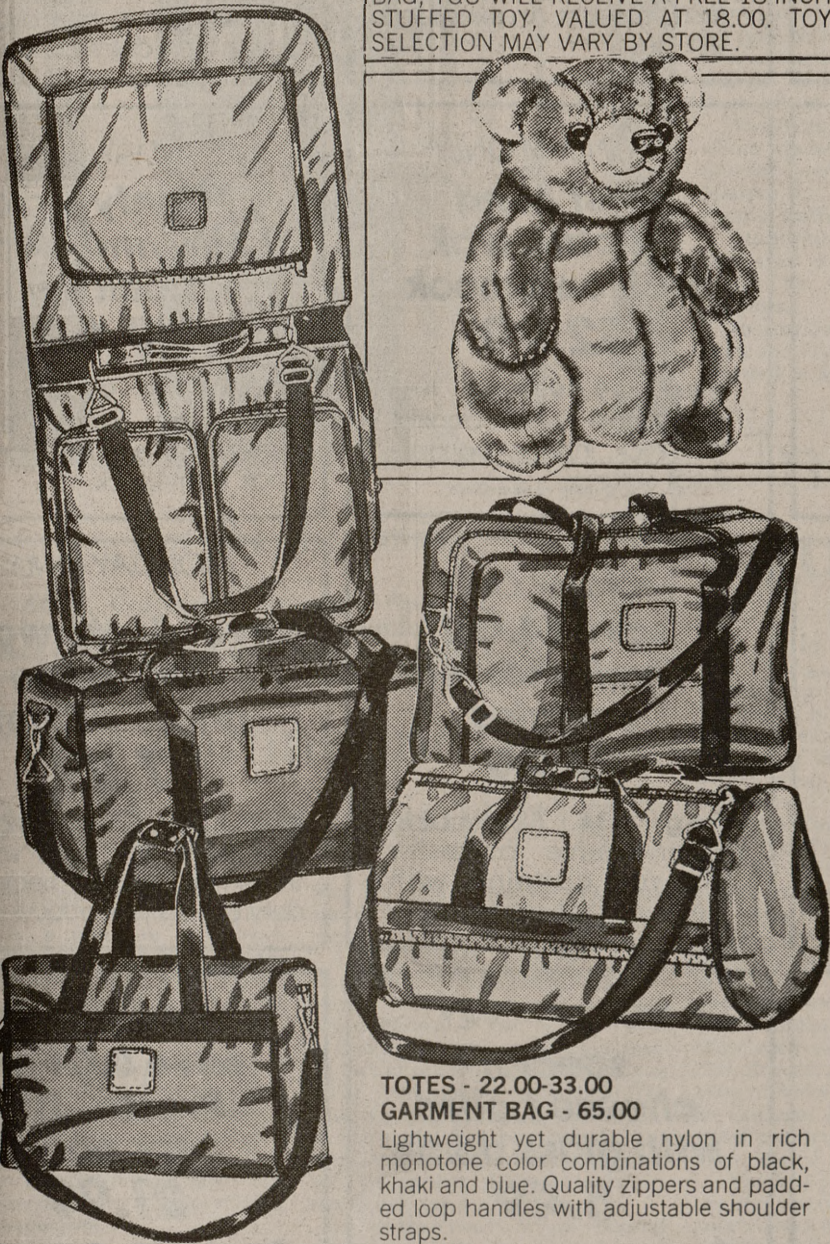
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