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"THE DEFECTORS"

by John McNamara
(Roger Cantin)

A REPORT AND SOCIAL ESSAY TO THE

*PRESIDENT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OF THE

EDMONTON SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MAY 15, 1969

BURWASH INDUSTRIAL FARM
BOX 285
BURWASH, ONTARIO

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 - Hon. Robert Clarke, Minister, Education, Province of Alberta
- * Mayor Ivor Dent, City of Edmonton
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"THE DEFECTORS"

I N D E X

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P R E F A C E

The basic ideas embodied in this text are derived from experience gathered as an alcoholic, criminal offender, skid-row habitant; - as a professional in accounting and marketing; - and as an amateur in several other fields including social animation. My status as man, Christian, husband and father has yet to be decided.

A sincere apology is extended to the Council for the belatedness of this report which should have been submitted prior to my resignation, hospitalization, and eventual incarceration.

This is not, as what was perhaps desired, a statistical documentary. It does not specify duties performed, meetings attended or all briefs presented; - does not cite any particular case histories other than mine, nor any presumptuous achievements in rehabilitating anyone. In the form of a sustained dialogue than an exposition of authoritative views .. offering no panacea .. it is rather a reaction and position paper to the opportunity provided me through your appointment, and in sincere gratitude of such.

My special acknowledgements to T. J. Garvin, E.S. Bishop, Bettie Hewes, June Stiffle, Lynn Hannley, Rev. M. Barrier and Clarence Fiddler for their valued counselling and assistance. Their fervent dedication to the goals of human ecology has been to me a source of inspiration.

I should also like to thank those in government, in agencies, in business, and in the cleric for receiving and enlightening me, and equally those on skid-row, in hospital, in A.A., in prison, and the families in the Boyle Street area.

Further appreciation to Mr. Silcox, Superintendent, Burwash Industrial Farm for his kind permission and co-operation in making this essay possible, and to Rev. B.R. Brazill, Anglican Chaplain, for reviewing it.

To my wife, Edna, and my three sons, Kelvin, Daryll and Keith, must go my deepest gratitude for their love, tolerance and support in darkest hours .. and to my Creator for all of them and life this day!

INTRODUCTION

SCHIZOPHRENIC EDMONTON

The City is Edmonton! Gateway and beneficiary to the rich resources of the vast Northwest .. spawned out of pioneering spirit, sweat and gushing Indian blood! Early Siberia of the Redcoats! Pulpit of the Evangelists! Fort Knox of the "funny-money" Party! Social Credit Capital of the friendliest and humane Canadian Province, sunny Alberta!

It's a thriving, growing city bursting at the seams with new residents and many transients .. mostly young, buoyant and energetic. Cosmopolitan in its composition of multi-ethnic cultural variety and gaiety, the City is yet the steadfast hostile guardian of Victorianism .. proudly heralding modernity, prosperity, and tenacity in enduring record-breaking cold spells.

Sporting an abundance of intellectuals, professionals, tycoons, bureaucrats and politicians - its affluent society of near 350,000 upper and middle-class people - hustle, produce, distribute and amass in ant-like precision ... tragically, too many have steel-plated hearts, iron fists and smug consciences ... pathetically too few with compassion and awareness that Edmonton, despite the truism of its greatness, has indeed its schizophrenic nature! Not unlike other cities, it too has its skid-row or ghettos .. and not unlike Berlin, it has its own "Wall" and its "Defectors" ... some 70,000 strong .. smitten with near or complete poverty, and all its ramifications!

CHAPTER I

ALIENATION: IDENTITY

My terms of reference as a detached social worker were to generally deal with the problems of transient or single homeless men. Having, however, lived the problem already, I could not confine myself to dealing merely with this individual aspect alone. I simply chose to research on a broader scale rather than just accommodate.

As I met and talked with a substantial cross-section of girls and guys, men and women of varying ages, background and problems, I discovered they had one common prevailing feeling .. that of "alienation".. here indeed was that unmistakable "Wall". They had rejected our respectable world as absurd - defecting from it to become beatniks, hipsters, potheads or wandering moochers at best; and at worst, alcoholics, drug addicts and criminals of all types.

Prevading these groups is a profound sense of impotence ... a feeling or belief that the social order has to be taken as a whole or repudiated as a whole and thus beyond the individual to change .. and the parallel conviction that they are beyond changing themselves. They subscribe to such negative philosophies as "Survival of the Fittest", "Everyone for Himself", Live in pleasure today for tomorrow we may die" .. all the more pronounced in our nuclear age. They are mistrustful and contemptuous of law enforcers, politicians, educators, spiritual advisers, social workers, and often of their own parents and relatives.

There is a general agreement that before any rehabilitation can be effected, the defector must first WANT to be rehabilitated. Can we do anything to witness this "happening" .. or do we do nothing and wait until it does occur? Here, there is widespread disagreement and opinions.

What would seem a pre-requisite is to provide an opportunity for them to grasp or experience an illumination of the mind ... a "total awareness" to the root of all human distress .. which is the sense of alienation from the natural order of the universe in order that the nature of the self, society, and the universe is finally clear, and the sense of true relationship, or oneness, is restored ... that they may experience a change in their chromatic scale of values. Unless a person understood, however dimly, what he is, and how he is linked with his fellows, and with the Cosmos and its Creator, he cannot hopefully survive.

Of course, identity is not a new philosophy. We know it was expressed in the ancient animism of Asia: "unless the spirits of rock, river and tress were placated, the necessary relationship between them and man would be broken and the universe would dissolve into chaos!"

Christianity, is a religion founded and rooted in a definition of human identity. Man was created by a personal God. He stood therefore in a familial relationship to every other man. The physical universe was an ambience provided for his growth, survival and continuity. His status was affirmed by the doctrine of the Incarnation according to which the Creator himself took on human flesh and gave it an irrevocable dignity.

Communism, in its own gospel, is equally specific. The identity of man was affirmed and maintained only by his collective activity. He was a dependent creature, spawned out of chaos and proceeding to extinction. Alone, he is damned for his life span to a howling wasteland, a prey to injustice and exploitation. His identity is therefore contingent upon his serviceable membership in the mass.

By a strange paradox, Buddhism originally affirmed identity by preaching that perfection lay in its ultimate extinction in the All-Self of pure Enlightenment, but this was an esoteric doctrine, accessible only to the adept, so the common people had corrupted it and adulterated it.

Besides these deep, if divergent affirmations, the social gospel of which I was to be one of the new prophets in Edmonton's skid-row, sounded strangely hollow and unsatisfying. Awareness? Rehabilitation? Love? Brotherhood? Self-determination? Equal Opportunity? Morality? Upgrading .. re-training? Participation? Community? .. What did they mean to the man who waited his turn in the soup-line at the Marian Centre: - or whittled away the time in the Edmonton Day Centre until someone "made" the price of a bottle; - to the "winoes" hugging the hillside of the river-bank or huddling in laneways and doorways to escape rain or snow; - to the disillusioned youth turned away from the Y.M.C.A. because he didn't have \$3.50 for a night's lodging and obliged to foresake dignity and sleep at one of the hostels where he could find himself thrust into a dilapidated filthy room, forced to sleep in the one stinking bed with an equally stinking stranger .. and a man at that; or if fortunate enough to have the price of a few coffees or beers, he could find a sympathetic and willing "broad" with her own pad and her own ideas? What good were these mere platitudes to the frustrated ones gathered in the lobbies of employment agencies who couldn't get work because they lacked grade 9 education to be a

janitor .. too old or too sick to be laborers .. or because they lived at the hostel and therefore stigmatised as a risk; - to the Indian or Metis who felt discriminated upon; - to those who needed clothing and turned hopefully to the Salvation Army only to find, if they had no money and on welfare, their choice was limited to the "unsellable merchandise" destined for the dump.

I saw the crisis of our age reflected in the anxious inquiries of young people still attending school and "shooting speed" or "sniffing-glue"! I felt the pulse of those desperately searching for life's meanings beyond mere high-sounding verbiage .. through barbituates (goofballs), smoking "pot", taking mainline heroin or readily available LSD!

What good were these words to Betty, Kathie, Lou, Marg, Annie and the dozens of other girls in the cafes and hotels' (I need not mention), sitting and waiting for the next "trick"; or for the "not-so-attractive or has-beens" waging stiff competition for a 'mark' to provide wine and roof for the night; - to the young, brawny "sweet-kids", Eddie and Ralph (and how many more) waiting to pick up some homosexual to roll! To all of these, and more, with outraged spirits, what indeed did such proclamations mean? How could they identify themselves with the well-dressed, mild-mannered social do-gooder who possessed so much and understood so little, it seemed. Perhaps they did hear in the phantoms of their hearts a faint whisper of the ancestral voices making the age-old cry for identity, continuity and community! But I knew not, even in my own common tongue how to rouse them to hear .. above the clatter of psychedelic screams, the clinging of bottles and glasses, the ruffling of sheets, or the pleading sobs of someone going "cold turkey" in a bleak cell .. the necessity to change, to be rehabilitated .. when even I was having difficulty!

CHAPTER 11

PROFESSIONALS ... PRIORITIES

One should assume that the core of our "Professional" establishment that deal directly with social problems (in the fields of education, sociology, religion, medicine, psychology and mental health, politics, law enforcement, communications, industry, ect.) are 'per se' already permeators of truth, awareness, justice, brotherhood and love.

Regrettably, there appear still too many knowledgeable, capable professionals desperate for personal security, mistrustful of the social-handicapped, entrenched in pre-conceived ideologies, or grown cynical through experiencing abuse or seeing too much distress.

The trouble with the conservative element of the Professionals is that most of their thinking is too pragmatic and shockingly naive. As for the liberals, their thinking is more sophisticated but their function ought to be to provide new ideas and they seldom come up with any.

As it now stands, the professional, as open-minded, dedicated, personable and as well trained as he may be and often is, has seldom been able to communicate effectively with the "defectors". Juggle the statistics as much as we care to, and irrevocably the analysis sheet will show the percentage of those rehabilitated as negligible while the percentage of those defecting steadily rising. This is not to say that professionals should be expected to be able to rehabilitate anyone. To do so would not only be unfair but utterly ridiculous or naive. But what they can do, and not now seemingly doing enough, is to create an environment conducive to rehabilitation.. to inject a desire to change within the defectors by projecting the real advantages to do so .. through participation, understanding, firmness, kindness, dedication and dependability. The defector does not really wish pity or "I feel sorry for you bit" .. although he'll nourish on it for the lack of nothing else.

One of the greatest lessons taught to me through the dual experience of being a defector and trying to be a professional or at least helping others was that if I am ever to become effective, I would not only have to possess and utilize the prementioned qualities but I would have to have trust and faith in the defector, knowing that both of us were created in the image of the same Creator with equal opportunity or potential for spiritual development - but not, as misrepresented to me as a child, born equal of physical, mental, or material essence or opportunity.

It is not uncommon to find in the defectors this "born equal" philosophy turned into "the world owes me a living" .. only to find out they have to work damn hard to collect it.

Within the framework of a "Grand Strategy" for a better society, it is only logical to predetermine priorities before tactical plans are drawn and operations launched.

This is not in contradiction with the concept that the "sociology of modernity is not one of total solutions, and may be intolerable to those with established patterns of emotions and ideology". It is rather an assertion of that fact, that although engaged in a strategical warfare for human improvement with no finite goals, except in the higher sense of infinite cosmic welfare, existential law dictates an orderly procedure towards mapping out specific targets that can only be clearly defined and arrived at though an analytical mind with balanced emotionalism, idealism, and pragmatism!

Where then lie our priorities? To rehabilitate the defector first? Or to stop the flow of those most likely to "defect"? Obviously, the latter, if society is not to become unbalanced or annihilated. But to do so, we must review our findings on the defectors themselves to select some common denominators whereby we can identify the 'probable' defectors. On doing so, we find our defectors to be a complex lot indeed! How then choose the common traits? Can we safely assume that "poverty" is "it"? But then there is the mentally or physically or morally poor as well as the economically poor. Are there not also wealthy social defectors? Are all defectors criminal? Alcoholics? Drug Addicts? Beatniks? Of course, he can be all of these, any or none of these, which makes identification of the "probable" defectors equally complex .. so too our priority tactical programmes.

My own viewpoint is that a sound priority programme should be concentrated on two main fronts "Poverty" and "Youth" in an effort to ward off an increase in the flow of defectors .. while simultaneously effecting a programme of recovery and development for the defectors.

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CHAPTER 111

POVERTY

"We should treat well all strangers who seek our help ...
under a ragged coat they may hide their wings:"

Fulton Oursler.

Ever since the late beloved President John F. Kennedy declared "War on Poverty", it has been the most feverishly debated topic of the politicians, churches, news media, social agencies, labor unions and other organizations or private experts (except the poor themselves: unqualified, I suppose.) They have discussed and argued on its definition .. how to reduce it .. abolish it .. ignore it .. researched its causes and effects. One would think it's a new problem but since time immemorial poverty has bred prostitution, divorce, illegitimacy, illiteracy, injustice, crime, discrimination - incited riots, revolution, wars - and an endless list of human suffering. Why then all this NEW concern .. this NEW research .. NEW extensive propaganda? Can the "poor" finally be assured there is a new compassion, a true desire to help? People in poverty express fear that it may be more of the old-shoe appeasement of "charity" rather than advocating positive means with which the poor could effect self-help and self-respect. Or as better said by T. Garvin, and I quote without permission from a published report in the Journal: "Christian charity too often fills a belly for a day .. to soothe a conscience for a year!".

There has been one significant new proposal both in Canada and the United States that offers real hope to those "economically" poor .. the concept of Negative Income Tax.

Basically, this concept, as I understand it, would (or should):

- a) Guarantee a realistic minimum income to everyone.
- b) Assure that those who need assistance will automatically receive it with dignity.
- c) Be less expensive than present over-lapping systems of welfare.
- d) Enable a more effective use of resources.
- e) Breach part of the gap between rich and poor, thus opening up new vistas of communications creating awareness and understanding, without loss of incentive, or the spirit of freedom and competitiveness .. in fact, it may put some teeth and truth in "democracy"

Dissentors of this concept are seemingly using unpalusible, naive, and affluent-orientated arguments such as:

- 1) It would increase taxation and harm the economy.
- 2) It would destroy incentive.

The basis for the first argument is an attempt to prove the concept as a "double taxation", etc. - but fails to point out that our Canadian Tax System favors the rich and hits hardest the low-income groups.

In the second instance, it suggests that there would be an increase in the number of work drop-outs, and also suggests "that the ability to manage and to use money effectively is closely related to the ability to make money by working". Is it not amazing that the poor should be kept poor in order to force them to work? One would also think that the ability to manage money was related to education, training, patterns of expenditures in the community and among peer groups, the arts of advertising and marketing, and other factors. Strange isn't it, very few people are concerned about how the wealthy and middle classes spend or manage their money? I wonder at times, if they had to do with an income of \$2,000 to \$4,000 or even \$5,000 per year, if they would not require extraordinary ability to manage their lives?

There must of course be safeguards. M.I.T. or Guaranteed Income will not eliminate the "need" for all social and welfare programmes since as we already know the problem of poverty is far from being exclusively money .. as well defined by Rev. B.R. Brazill, Anglican Chaplain:

"The worst state of poverty is not, to my mind, economic. Many of our leaders were in their youth, poor. Yet they persevered and became a success. This is offered to everyone, if they wish it. Poverty can exist in the wealthy, in their minds, in morals, etc. I feel this kind of poverty is more degenerating than any economic poverty. The problem is 'mental' rather than 'economic'. I feel economics should help the healthy poor people, whereas, medical and mental treatment should help the mentally poor whether they are rich or poor economically. There are many kids from rich homes in Yorkville, Boyle Street, on L.S.D. etc."

One must realize also, that in this day and age when it is so difficult to control, let alone assess the viability of so many expeditive programmes and systems of taxation, that the policy makers are not unjustifiably troubled and weary to implement sweeping measures of reform.

It is therefore that much more important that there be an increase in debate, pressure and support of this concept through active participation by the poor themselves.

CHAPTER IV

YOUTH

Student violence and unrest, petty and major crimes, sexual permissiveness (if not perversion) addiction to drugs and/or alcohol, and much more is visibly rampant amongst our youths. This deteriorating "quality" is not however the reason for selecting "youth" as the "second front" of "probable" defectors. Logically the reason is in their large "quantity", for the largest section of our population consists of youths between the ages of ten to thirty. Take both factors in account.. the "deteriorating quality" along with the "augmenting quality" .. and one may well feel affronted with an appalling and alarming situation .. one without historic precedence .. for never before the respectability of our society has been so gravely challenged.

Having, unfortunately, had little or no "rapport" with the youth that have not yet completely defected, I can offer little in the way of a new tactical plan to reverse the present "degenerating quality" in our youth. The answer may well partly be in reasserting our own "old" moral values within ourselves first. We get many arguments that they are not our "product" really - advanced through different concepts of "Evolutionary Law". Yet, when our sons or daughters succeed (materially at least) we are very quick to claim part of the credit - and just as quick to refute responsibility if they fail or prove some embarrassment to us. Whether we wish to accept them as our children or as soul-brothers in the esoteric evolutionary sense, we can hardly dispute the truism of the fact that their physical, mental and social development is largely influenced and molded by the elders. This viewpoint is strongly contested by various exponents of evolution but I am not gifted with such esoteric enlightenment as to conceive our physical being as a mere biological vehicle to transcend our inner souls from one evolutionary phase to another without responsibility to the social order. Both, theosophists and theologians generally agree that elders are indeed duty-bound and privileged to train and protect our youth. We are responsible to ensure therefore that the influence exerted on them is not detrimental to their personal development or to the future collective good of the society - but not necessarily what we believe to be socially acceptable or desirable outwardly - but from youth's own discernation of what is desirable and good, evolving from both their own spiritual being and our influence.

In light of this, we may do well to consider certain immediate reforms in our realm of "influencing apparatus" .. our educational system .. our communications media .. our religious and institutional systems .. our own homes and personal lives. We need not professional do-gooders but people who possess the moral courage to develop and exert constructive channels of influence.

Our youth must become conscious of a desire to mold their role and personality to be such as to reflect "individuality" in a homogenized society, "wholeness" in a specialized society, and "freedom" in a mechanized society, which will undermine any creeping feeling of impotence within themselves .. and thus some help in preventing them from defecting.

We know that youth by nature is instinctively rebellious .. impatient to experience maturity .. to change the many impurities within the social system that his innocent eyes see .. while at the same time bound by loyalties he doesn't understand nor want. He also instinctively pursues to satisfy his curiosities. It must be made poignantly clear to youth that his right to freedom is not licensed permissiveness to do what he wishes .. but the freedom to choose to conform or not to natural Spiritual and Physical Law .. a law which is not an obstruction, not a theory, not even an ideology, but a matter of practical behavior .. a law meant for us directly, immediately in time and in space, whoever we are.

The consolation I have in witnessing our youth utilize "flower power - LOVE" in their attempts to effect a new social order, is not without apprehension. Love is by far the most dynamic and powerful force with which we can realize our "ultimate being". One best pray today that they understand and use this beautiful force properly .. otherwise we may find our whole society gone to pot!

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEFECTORS.

What then to do with us .. the defectors, the social-handicapped?

It is more expedient to reclassify this group into three categories:

1. The Free Defectors:- The single homeless and/or jobless men and women on skid-row, hostels, etc.
2. The Semi-Confined Defectors:- Those in halfway houses, clinics, etc.
3. The Confined Defector:- Those in jails and other institutions.

This chapter shall deal with the first category, and the other two, in the subsequent two chapters.

The simplest strategy to abstractly implant the seed of "awareness" within the "free" defectors is to involve them in detached social work.

Why not? Why not, as a pilot project, choose fifty such workers from the two to three thousand now on skid-row - say, 15 females and 35 men - subsidize them with a realistic salary for a period of six months. The cost? Budget \$150,000.00 to be shared by all governments, agencies, churches, industries and individuals if needed. Other than salaries, little other administrative costs are involved. Keep it simple. Selection, basic training, and guidance left in the hands of a supervisory Committee made up of professionals presently dealing constructively with the problems: ie. T. Garvin, Rev. M. Barrier, S. Bishop, Betty Hewes, Lynn Hanley, June Stifle, Jim Guinnan, Mr. Penny of the Day Centre, Don Milne, G. Fiddler, etc.

Worry not what will happen to the 50 before or after their six months. They will mostly be able to find new careers or go on to some other kind of job. More important, they will all have been exposed to the problems facing others like themselves .. will experience some inner awareness in various degrees .. and will have felt "needed" and "respected" again. They and society will have, as a result a much better understanding of each other. Those that fail will know there is hope to try again .. and those with some success will go on to new challenges and have paved the way for a tremendous movement which will spawn corps of volunteers from within their own ranks - especially in the elder men and women who have felt prematurely put to pasture (retirement) .. and who would welcome the opportunity to serve and be needed .. if properly invited to get involved!

Is this programme too radical for the professional establishment? Will the success or failure of the first "50" present a threat to their (professionals') status-quo? Who amongst our professionals have the moral courage to LEAD rather than just accommodate? Which ones enjoy a position where policies invigorate but do not monopolize their life .. who are not especially weary of, or prepared to yield to the majority popular voice (a misinformed one perhaps) but rather try to guide and anticipate it?

There are quite a few I was privileged in knowing but there are more. It's high time to come out and be counted, fellows!

The tabling of former Premier E.C. Manning's White Paper on Human Resources and Development emphasized the necessity to develop the individual - a priority if we are to develop a better society. It brought new hopes to the distressed ..and stirred the world of social workers. Imaginative, dedicated professionals discreetly removed white collars and ties, donned sport shirts or turtle-necks, and stormed into the problem areas. Poverty, housing, rehabilitation, human rights and a score of other social topics were in the limelight. Not all went smoothly - some were pitted against each other and there was a serious lack of co-ordination. But there was participation and concern .. and many recommendations were and are still daily being made.

I would like to review a few that pertain to "free" defectors which I had the opportunity to witness or participate in.

CLASSIFICATION CENTRE: Provincial Hostel.

The purposes and need for a classification centre was defined and recommended originally by C.U.R.E.S. in a brief presented April 10th, 1968. (See appendix 'A') It was subject of other meetings and in a special brief to the Human Resources and Development Board by the Edmonton Social Planning Council. What happened? To my knowledge, it's still under study .. at least it was still not implemented as late as January 25th of this year, and mostly because of a few bureaucrats who tend to regard any suggestion as an encroachment on their divine realm of administration.

One shudders with astonishment and disbelief when we hear, as so many of us did during that eventful April 10th, 1968 meeting, the (then) Director of Alberta Welfare Institutions, say loud and clear: "We are the policymakers .. the ministers (of Government Departments) are merely Rubber-Stamps!"

No one challenges the need for competent departmental administrators and advisers. But such arrogant proclamations by a top civil servant casts a shameful shadow on our democratic governmental process and leaves us wondering why we should even bother voting. It's even more disappointing to see such barons of bureaucracy allowed to remain in their powerful positions after such conscious blunders .. unrepentant and unwilling to change their ways. Criminals with that attitude are kept in jails! Are civil servants of that sort to be kept in office?

JOB RE-TRAINING AND UPGRADING

The quality of the facilities at H.A.T.T. and other schools are commendable. There is however a pressing need for an enlargement of this programme to lessen over-crowding and to lower or reline admission standards to accommodate those most in need.

HOUSING

We are all too familiar with today's most pressing and gigantic housing problems. Therefore, I shall only refer to the recommendations made to the Hellyer Task Force on Housing, and to the Edmonton City Council (Appendix 'B'). Have any of these been implemented or even given further study?

There is a further observation I should like to make on housing problems. Who pays the highest rents? It would seem the answer should not be the poor .. but it is! Especially so for those on welfare or non-whites. The resistance in keeping these people out of better sub-divisions or neighbourhoods is to keep realty values elsewhere inflated and not, as alleged, to keep them stable.

If we can't affectively provide adequate public housing, why not give serious consideration to other proposals such as providing the down payment on a house for those on welfare instead of paying their high rents to landlords who prey on welfare recipients. Certainly this could not be applied for all welfare cases but would it not restore the confidence in humanity to a woman, widowed or separated with children? What happens if she remarries? She simply would owe part of, or all of, the down payment and continue to make mortgage payments. Needless to go into details .. there are sufficient experts to look into that, are there not?

CHAPTER VI

THE SEMI-CONFINED DEFECTORS.

In regards to the semi-confined, Menwood Clinic and the several Halfway-Houses in Edmonton are playing an important role in the recovery of the defector .. especially the alcoholic.

There are not enough of them, of course, and more diversification is required. There is also much evidence to corroborate my belief that Halfway-Houses operated by the government or any particular religious organization may be sounder financially, but their therapeutic values or ratio of success is less than those operated by independently incorporated houses such as the Harold King Farm, Keswich, Ontario, or the Pioneer Fellowship House, Dalton House and Ronald Hall Complex in Seattle, Washington.

The fiasco of C.U.R.E.S. Community House and Restaurant project comes no doubt to mind as a contradiction. Having been the co-founder of C.U.R.E.S., it would be pointless to pass a post-mortem on it .. except to say selfishly, that had it not occurred, I doubt I would have had any true concept of my problems, of rehabilitation, or grasped any awareness .. and wonder if many professionals would know as much today either.

Governments, industry, social and religious agencies should encourage the establishment of Halfway Houses and sheltered Workshops by forming joint committees to operate them.

There is an immediate need for teen-centres and specialized youth hostels. Our pussy-footing in this area constitutes the gravest danger to our present social order.

Today's youths do not generally want to sever family ties but they certainly do not tolerate family imprisonment. They hunger for adventure, companionship, knowledge, understanding and love .. only to be driven by elders to quench their hunger through the pursuit and fulfillment of material or physical pleasures. They are crawling out of the family woodwork determinately and at an alarming speed. We best quickly provide for them the facilities they require if mankind is not to be trampled to extinction!

An over-dramatization? Think about it. You may well change your mind .. when the telephone rings and the policeman 'moans': "We have your son (or daughter) here .."?

CHAPTER VII

THE CONFINED DEFECTORS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CENTRES.

The McGrath report on penal reform, commissioned by the Alberta Government, is an excellent indication of what can be done when one wants to. The Government's initiative was commendable especially in an area where the usual voter's apathy has led former governments to do nothing. However, one hopes, that the same moral courage shown in initiating the study will prevail in implementing the recommendations put forth.

The government would also do well to promote an inter-provincial and federal "task-force" on penal reform .. to take advantage of some penal improvements already in effect in other provinces and not embodied in the McGrath report.

Put a person in a cell, separate him from the sight, sound and touch of the world .. his loved ones .. nature .. and in a relatively short time you will reduce him to physical disorder and madness. At best, his neurosis will be increased and contrary to some beliefs, it does not generally bring him closer to repentance and a revival of spiritual consciousness and desire. More often than not, the desired effect of repentance and spiritual awakening is defeated by the feeling of bitterness and hostility for finding themselves in abnormal surroundings.

I do not wish to create the impression that our jails, reformatories and penitentiaries today are squalid dungeons of brutality. But regardless of how comfortable they may or should be, they would function far better if they were transformed into "development centers" .. for in present forms, incarceration is a subtle but very real process of dehumanization. Whether or not they serve as a deterrent to further repeated lawbreaking can be best answered by studying the undisputable statistics that our present inmate population in Canada's jails are in the majority, repeaters.

Dr. Karl Menninger, Dean of American Psychiatrists contends that our whole judicial system, based on guilt and punishment is inhuman .. and says that offenders should be treated, not punished, regardless of whoever they are or whatever their offence.

Arrayed against him are those who advocate the concept of "retributive justice", who clamor for retention of punishment, often in the name of Christ. Their main argument is that if you abolish punishment, you abolish guilt .. and thus not only making man "irresponsible" but depriving him of the need to be forgiven.

Personally, I dismiss the argument of punishment as the means of "repentance" and "forgiveness". At the same time, I fail to see how we can properly replace the concepts of right and wrong - which are moral and legal judgements - with those of health and sickness which are medical. There is sufficient proof however to recognize that guilt is diminished and sometimes cancelled by extenuating circumstances. Under natural moral law we cannot abolish guilt but this law does not subscribe to "punishment" as the infallible vehicle of repentance and forgiveness.

What appears necessary is the ability for society to accept that the offender is both guilty and sick - and once that an "informed" court has established the measure of guilt and sickness, the offender could be then sentenced to an appropriate "development centre".

Is not development of the human being (presuming lawbreakers still are) the surest method of deterrence? Would the process of judging on this basis be too difficult if our judges were not only trained in law, but also in psychology, sociology and philosophy?

What should be looked at very carefully by the authorities concerned is not the abolishment of present institutions altogether or in making them more comfortable "per se" - but a re-alignment of their entire programme that would effect greater deterrence through "development centres with greater rehabilitation incentives."

Following is a suggested re-alignment programme.

Phase I.

The present larger institutions be turned into three sections for first offenders only. (first jail sentence, that is.)

Section (a). A tough, military-type disciplinary section with human but minimum comfort facilities and hard work (for the medically fit) The maximum time in this section should not ideally exceed one quarter of the total sentence.

Section (b). A human development section whereby all rehabilitation techniques would be utilized in a disciplined but more comfortable environment. Here, education upgrading, job training, psychological and spiritual therapeutic programmes would be in effect, along with a part day (4 Hrs.) work schedule.

Section (c). A work-out, live-in section whereby the offender is now conditioned for his eventual release by taking on an outside job at regular pay, or continue his schooling under subsidy .. then returning to the centre afterwards. Periodic 24 or 48 hours leave of absence granted to be with their families or by themselves .. to adjust, and remove the anxieties of returning in society.

Phase 2.

Smaller de-centralized (nearer to the offender's communities) development centres should be established combining the policies and facilities of section 'B' and 'C' of Phase 1, but with emphasis on treatment of the particular problem, for repeaters only. The reason for not having section 'A' is simply that if harsh discipline and hard work failed the first time, it is not going to do anything but embitter, and harden the repeater - obviously, the problem is of a more serious psychological nature.

Phase 3.

Penitentiaries should be for both first offenders and repeaters with sentences over five years, indicating a serious crime or a series of offenses are involved, and requiring more extensive treatment, meaning the incorporation of sections A,B,C of Phase 1, with an added section 'D' for maximum security and treatment of violent habitual criminals.

It would also follow that anyone sentenced more than three times (or a maximum total of five years) to Phase 1 and 2, could automatically be sentenced to penitentiary.

Suspended sentences should be continued and granted to repeaters in cases of extenuating circumstances. The use of "parole" sentences should be discontinued along with automatic remittance or good-conduct time. Sentences, in other words, should be definite, with a year meaning 365 days.

Paroles under this system could be granted at anytime during the sentence and provided the offender is in section 'B' or 'C', or all phases.

At first look, this programme may appear as a complex and costly transition. But, I am confident that given the close-scrutiny of a federal-provincial task force, they would find it readily easy to put in effect, less costly in the long-run mainly because of less institution due to less repeaters or people in jail.

Penal reform should be viewed with an emphasis on the development of the individual. Changes however are always somewhat of a dilemma to the policymakers. They should therefore be assisted by all social agencies in informing the public at large, so that no reform is delayed or shelved because a government must retort to saying: "The public is not ready".

CHAPTER VIII

HUMAN RIGHTS

BLEACHED ANGELS OR BROWN PRIDE?

Walter Lippman wrote the following introduction to Carl Standberg's book, "The Chicago Race Riots" in 1919:

"We shall have to work out with the Negro a relationship which gives him complete access to all the machinery of our common civilization, and yet allows him to live so that no Negro need dream of a white heaven and of bleached angels. Pride of race will come to the Negro when a dark skin is no longer associated with poverty, ignorance, misery, terror and insult. When this pride arises every white man in America will be the happier for it. He will be able then, as he is not now, to enjoy the finest quality of civilized living - the fellowship of different men."

That was in 1919. Can we say it is much different fifty years later for the Negro .. the Indian .. the Eskimo .. the Metis? Not much more fellowship is there? True, they may not be fighting anymore (in Canada and the Northern States, at least) for recognition as voting citizens. Despite gigantic advancement in technology, in education, in resources and in affluence in our country, they are still struggling and demonstrating against frustration, joblessness, squalid living conditions .. against the lack of equal opportunity, in just about everything.

To be more direct, the Indian, the Metis, the Eskimo, cannot overcome color. They excite emotion .. it may be love or hate, pity or contempt, or a guilt feeling because they were here first .. but that emotion rises as soon as we see him. We feel the same emotions about the Negro, the Chinese, and the Japanese also - except for the guilt-feeling and the fact they are of a greater minority. There is nothing the Eskimo, Indian or Metis can do about it nor can we, the white supremacists (so-called, so-thought). They simply do not have the advantage that all of us had - the opportunity for at least some degree of anonymity.

Because of their color, the white community for generations have forced social, economic, educational compulsions which have prevented the majority of them to get out of the reserves, and the slum areas of our cities. We have kept them locked up within their own stigmatized environment as much as we dared to, with such justifying hypocritical comments as: "They can't handle it".

"it" being everything from money to liquor, decent homes, an education or religion of their own.

We have compelled them to believe that our ways, our methods, are better and theirs something to be ashamed of. Yet, how many of us can duplicate their craftsmanship, for instance.

Whenever we discuss crime, immorality, drunkenness, we are very quick to hang the blame on them if at all possible. An ordinary drunk charge for example is sensationalized in the news media as "Indian Drunk ... etc.", and in our minds we condemn the whole race with weakness. I never read or hear of a "white" drunk, a "white" thief, a "white" racist, do you? And if we did, would we think of every other white person as such?

The frustrations of our natives can be traced to many roots but is presently revealed because they are living marginally, at a time when the industrial revolution is at its height, and the opportunity for wealth graces our land, on the periphery of probably the richest country in history. Can we blame them?

Their problems and frustrations will not be appeased until we take three basic steps:

- 1). Allow them pride in being different.
- 2). Restore to them their basic "rights" in all aspects.
- 3). Give them the tools to do the job of restoration and adjustment themselves.

Let us read Mr. Lippman's message again!

CHAPTER 1K

TELL IT LIKE IT IS !

On relating to Edmonton .. its defectors .. its probable ones .. and in expressing my thoughts and views to you, with you, and about you, the people with the capacity and power, if not the irrevocable duty to deal with these problems, you may have thought my expressions as too harsh.

I make no apology for what my eyes have seen or my heart has felt.

One may, if he wishes, find solace in the fact that Edmonton's dilemma - of 70,000 defectors - or socially-handicapped people - is not exclusively Edmonton's and therefore remain apathetic.

Such was the complacency of other cities who revelled in their prosperity too soon .. and became aware of its varied and dangerous problems too late to ward off bloodshed and destruction.

Is Edmonton a long way from such a sordid fate? Perhaps. But how many of those 70,000 persons must die this year or the next, in hunger .. in violence .. in unnoticed suffering because of apathy?

Would we rather pre-occupy ourselves with building sky-scrapers .. or human beings? Why not both?

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that the Council and all who shall receive this report will give unbiased consideration of its contents .. that the recommendations will not be overshadowed by my own past inconsistencies and inactiveness as a citizen or social worker.

Most of all, may it implant in your hearts what I really wish to project to everyone .. Love and Brotherhood .. to beckon all .. defectors as well as those dedicated to social betterment .. to come out and "tell it like it is".. for we shall overcome!

EPILOGUE

LEGACY TO MY SONS AND TO YOUTH!

LOVE! KNOWLEDGE! BROTHERHOOD!

You may be chosen for inter-planetary flight. You will be a universal man .. representing all classes, all nationalities. You will want to be a model of earthman at his best. I know you will be physically fit. You should also be spiritually fit .. for you will be commissioned to conquer higher knowledge. Armed with spiritual awareness and power, you may open more doors than by brandishing nuclear weapons. Your success and your life may depend on your spirituality. Fortify yourself with the standard of love in your right hand and knowledge in your left hand. If you must fight, do so under the banner of moral law, and your faith will carry you to victory.

You have been created to climb; it is your nature. You will not retreat. All humanity awaits the outcome. You will serve the Creator .. the one reality you cannot deviate from. Summon Him only when you seek truth and higher knowledge and call Him with love. He shall respond in the reality of your emotions, inspiration, intuition, revelation, vision and prophecy .. He shall exist in your hopes and dreams.

You will leave earth to observe new vistas of creation. If you should encounter other planetary communicative spirits, you may be asked why you have left the safety of earth where mechanical creatures labor, build, clothe and feed you .. where physicians eliminate physical pain .. prolong your life and let you enjoy the finite pleasures of earthly paradise? You will tell him you have already experienced greater spiritual pain .. greater spiritual struggle in order that you gain Higher Knowledge. You will explain you left a previous paradise to seek knowledge. Your origin is dust. For billion of years we have struggled upward to perceive ever widening vistas of creation. Once you and I were imprisoned in that speck of dust. Our universe was limited to the whirling sun and planets of atoms, neutrons and protons. Had we stopped then we would not have been able to perceive a larger universe on earth. You carry the evidence of this past with you. As I dare gaze in the future, you, our descendants will break out of the prison of the solar universe and your knowledge of new worlds will be as the solar system is to this speck of dust. You carry the seed of your future within you .. this is your immortality .. and mine.

Your function is to bring reality into being. Eternity and infinity belong in your existence. You were created at the beginning of reality. You will have had the guideposts of our evolutionary past and have measured time from split seconds to billions of years. You will have invented new mathematical symbols for time to pursue and imprison eternity in reality. Eternity is endless change in measured time! Eternity is your promise of continued life and a hope for extension of knowledge through change! You can measure and imprison infinity in reality. You have measured size in the first unification of matter - space in light years. Infinity is endless dimension in measured space. Infinity is your promise for a never ending possibility of exploring new worlds with the hope that you may inhabit and develop them in the service of your Creator.

If the man you meet on your voyage should ask how he can also serve the same Creator, if, like you he has not met Him in reality, you shall tell him only, that for you there is one certain road. You serve the welfare and advancement of man, his children, in the world of reality. When you serve them, in true Brotherhood, you serve HIM.

COMMUNITY UPGRADING & REHABILITATION EDMONTON SOCIETY

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SUGGESTED REHABILITATION PROGRAMME FOR TRANSIENTS

* * * * *

Transients are described as men without jobs, money or homes - men on skid-row for a complexity of reasons. All have one common motivation on entering skid-row - to seek shelter and food. Hence, their coming to hostels.

Once in the hostels, the men are trapped ... thrown into a pack without a thorough understanding of the exact nature of their problems or of their needs to get out of skid-row. It is left to the strong to overcome a great number of difficulties and to the weak to resign themselves either to a fate no less than pitiful co-existence in a fruitless transient society or to suicide.

Following is a brief outline of some of the problems transient men have encountered when wanting to get out of skid-row in Edmonton, Alberta.

LODGING: The existing facilities are the Main Provincial Hostel, Colonna Rooms, Lil Abner House, Salvation Army ... etc.

Although room accommodations can be termed satisfactory at the Main Hostel they are not so at most of the other places, i.e.

Castel Hotel: two men per bed, dirty linen and improper washing facilities ... etc.

FOOD: It was expressed that although the quality and quantity of the food served at the hostels could be much improved, the main concern was the unrealistic impractical schedule of meal hours. The breakfast served between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. is too late for men to look for work or get to work; the evening meal served between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M. is too early for men returning from work.

CLOTHING: Although there are existing agencies providing clothing, in many instances services are inadequate and/or even discriminatory.

TRANSPORTATION: Bus tickets available in limited amounts.

We, therefore, ask, is there really an effective system whereby transportation is provided for men to go look for work; in town or out of town?

JOB OPPORTUNITIES: Employers and Employment Agencies are reluctant to hire men boarding at hostels. Are the Agencies aware of the special difficulties men encounter in this respect and what can be done to provide work for those seeking employment?

JOB RE-TRAINING & UP-GRADING OF EDUCATION: Are such programme available for men on skid-row? It appears that there are in effect only for those that are permanent residents of Alberta.

HEALTH: Lack of adequate treatment to physically or mentally ill or impaired.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES: Outside of card rooms and a limited scattering of discarded books and magazines, recreational

programs and physical conditioning facilities are not available to the men who need it most.

CHARACTER UP-GRADING: Transient men suffering from alcohol or drug addiction, those with criminal tendencies and records, the mentally and emotionally unstable are not sorted out, given treatment or directed to agencies dealing with their specific problems.

We have reviewed some of the problems now existing that can be assessed as detrimental to proper rehabilitation ... what then are the possible solutions?

Certainly it can't be in building more or better hostels, nor can it be in abolishing them altogether. The only possible answer is a positive, wide-scope rehabilitation programme geared to the individual. To realize this, means a thorough but not drastic re-aligning of existing programme offered by the Government and private Agencies.

Since the transients direct themselves, first of all to Hostels, the Department of Welfare must, therefore, bear the responsibility of initiating any such programme. They must adopt a new concept of rehabilitation including foremost Hostel operation.

HOSTELS:

The hostels should act as a twofold operation:

- a) A temporary shelter for transient men up to a period of one week or ten days, with re-aligning of services (meal hours etc.)
- b) A Classification Center whereby transient men would be interviewed by professional people, classed, and directed to their respective rehabilitation programme where applicable.

It would be found that these men would fit one of the following three major classifications:

- 1) "REHABILITATIVE" a) Physically
 or IMPAIRED
 Mentally
 b) Physically
 & FIT
 Mentally
- 2) "NON-REHABILITATIVE"
- a) Old Age Pensioners
- b) Permanent Mental or Physical Disabilities
- 3) "UNWILLING" (Temporary non-rehabilitative)

TEMPORARY NON-REHABILITATIVE (Unwilling)

Temporary lodging and meals for a period of one week or ten days. At time of registration the man should be told of the orientation programme available to him and his willingness assessed.

NON-REHAB.

- a) Old Age Pensioners directed to Old Age Homes or any other accommodation available.

- b) Mentally Disabled or Retarded to institutions specializing in mental health.
- c) Physically Disabled cared for through existing Agencies and/or Institutions.

REHAB.

- a) Physically or Mentally Impaired (sick) cared for by Hospitals, Clinics, Nursing Homes.
- b) Semi-Physically or Mentally Fit (those released from Hospitals and Institutions) directed to half-way houses specializing in the care of their respective problems.
- c) Native transients incorporated in the suggested programme and also directed to specialized counselling facilities for Native People.
- d) Physically and Mentally Fit placed in Community Houses or independent rooms if they prefer.

COMMUNITY HOUSE.

FORMATION OF THE COMMUNITY

Membership in the Community will be opened to anyone who has demonstrated an honest willingness to participate in community life and to accept personal limited responsibilities; membership is not restricted to any sect, race, creed, profession, the only requirement is a sincere desire for rehabilitation and to help others towards rehabilitation.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE TO SELECT THE MEMBERS?

The process of selecting the members for admission into the

Community House will be as outlined in our general rule, specifically through a Committee comprising of existing members in the Community House along with the professional counsellors selected for such.

This committee will ensure that the applicant is desiring to remain in the Community House for a sufficient reasonable length of time in order that rehabilitation be effected. The Committee may deem it advantageous that the applicant should be provided with the commodity of an outside house-keeping room while still participating in the various activities of the community.

THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

The basis of the rehabilitation programme will be centered on the theme of family atmosphere and family unity. In other words a closely knit circle of six to eight individuals who will dedicate themselves to self-development and self-rehabilitation through learning to co-operate freely and willingly with the other individuals of the group and society at large.

The programme as such is to be an all-encompassing one, embracing all facets of the rehabilitation, including: character reform, spiritual up-grading, mental stability, physical conditioning, economic management, social responsibilities.

a) Character Reform, Spiritual Up-Grading & Mental Stability

A broad character building programme is to be instituted through personal and group research of our character defects: talk sessions, professional counselling, personal meditation and reading, participation in other programmes with the same aim, i.e. A.A. Meetings,

Alcoholic Foundation Meetings, Retreat & Church Attendance.

b) Physical Conditioning

"Mens sana in Corpore Sano" ... A sound body for a sane mind. The Community House will initiate its own curriculum of recreational activities and physical conditioning plus taking advantage of those offered by other agencies, i.e. Y.M.C.A., Sports Clubs, (Bowling, Swimming, Curling etc.)

c) Economic Management

The members of the Community learn to properly manage their financial affairs and acceptance of responsibilities through a programme of self-support for the entire community effected either by:

- having a job outside the Community
- participating in a financial project sponsored by the Community as a whole
- or both

Regardless of where they are working, the members will have individual responsibility as to the maintenance and the operation of the Community House proper.

d) Social Responsibilities

The community will foster ways and means to have its members carry the message of rehabilitation to others in need, to co-operate and participate in a democratic society that advocates "free and creative individuals".

As a pilot project, the first Community House was opened April 1st. It is a two-storey leased building.

The top floor consists of rooms accommodating 6-8 persons plus lounge and library. The main floor is divided into two parts: the first being space for offices and meeting room ... the second being a fully equipped restaurant staffed and operated as a self-supporting project by the members of the Society.

The profit from this restaurant after expenses and nominal salaries will be used to finance the opening of other Community Houses.

The initial financing was obtained through a loan by the Society.

It seeks nor wants any grants, donations or membership fees.

The Society is autonomous, our leaders are but trusted servants.

We have however an advisory board of persons from all walks of life: government officials, civil servants, business leaders, clergymen, people involved in all phases of Community Development, health etc. They are invited to participate in our regular meetings, advise us and follow our progress.

SOCIAL AGENCIES

The services tended by the existing Social Agencies are important and appreciated. Could they be, however, re-aligned to enhance the above programme? i.e. provide recreation facilities, job opportunities, job retraining, professional counselling, educational and spiritual up-grading, material needs such as clothing, glasses and teeth and dental care, transportation etc. ...

This is in essence our suggested plan of recovery for transients trapped in the human jungle of skid-row. It is our aim as members of Community Upgrading & Rehabilitation Edmonton Society to further the cause of rehabilitation.

Our only purpose is to rehabilitate ourselves and others.

Anonymity is the foundation of our rehabilitation ever reminding us to place principles before personalities; we need and seek always to maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, T.V., or any other media.

Our Society welcomes any opportunity to continue to participate in all future discussion designed to create a meaningful approach to an effective rehabilitation programme.

Edmonton, April 10th, 1968.

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APPENDIX "B"

H O U S I N G B R I E F

Introduction:

The personal stories presented in this brief must be viewed as representative samples, demonstrating the problems that some people with social and economical difficulties encounter while trying to obtain accommodations in Edmonton.

1) Separated Metis Migrant Mother with Seven Children -

Three years ago the welfare worker told me to move to the city because it was better to live there and there were many nice homes. Before I came to the city I had all this furniture including a deep freeze which I had just finished paying for. Nobody told me that I could bring the furniture to the city and so I sold it all and came to the city with just a washing machine. I still haven't gotten all the money for my furniture. It took me two months to finally find a place -- while I was looking for a house a common response that I got was "no Indians allowed". The house I finally found had only one bedroom, a kitchen and a living room. I stayed here for a month with my six children until I found another place. I was forced to lie about the number of children that I had in order to get this place. When the landlady found out how many children that I had she said "all you Indians should be thrown into the Athabasca River by the cops". I also had to lie about my name, when the landlady found out that I was Indian she began to call me dirty Indian.

The landlady used to enter the house at anytime -- whether I was home or not. Many times she used to walk in with muddy feet just after I had done the floors and even when I asked her to take off her shoes she did not listen and continued to walk around. One time her and her son came to look at a dangling light which I asked them to fix. She began to call me names and swear at me. I finally got mad and her son pushed her out.

When I first moved in the toilet was not working -- there was no pressure. When I asked the landlady to fix it -- she said that I BROKE IT. Finally I called a plumber and he came to fix it. It cost me \$14.00, I then called the welfare worker who told me to call the health inspector -- I called the landlady and told her that I was going to call a health inspector -- she finally came and paid a plumber to fix it. There were also bed bugs and cockroaches in the place when I moved in which I finally got rid of by using different disinfectants. I never told the landlady because she would probably blame me and kick me out. The landlady won't fix the kitchen cupboards -- she told me to fix them myself and to pay for it myself -- the cupboards are quite rotten.

The bathroom used to leak through the living room -- and the landlady refused to fix it. About a month ago I asked for some new linoleum to cover the bathroom floor -- she gave me some old linoleum to put over top of the old stuff already on the floor. She gave us some paint to fix the place but not enough to finish anything. The pipe over the stove leaks -- the landlady will not fix it at all. There are two bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs and one bedroom and a kitchen and living room on the main floor. The rent of this place went up from \$85 - \$110 a month in the last year. All the lights in the house have shorts in them. In the girls bedroom the bulbs just blow up when I turn the switch on -- the landlady was to fix it about a year ago -- but it hasn't been fixed yet -- I am afraid that one of the kids might get a shock by trying to put a bulb in.

I have tried to get another house -- going as far as \$150 -- but I have not gotten one yet -- when I phone and tell people about my name they generally use some excuse to get out of renting to me -- or just hang up the phone. One time I phoned a real estate office to find out about a house and the person on the other end of the line said "we have our own kind of people to rent to". Another time the real estate office told me that she would try to find a house for "your kind of people".

2) Separated Mother With Five Children in Motel -

I first began house hunting 4½ years ago. Newly separated and with six children aged 15 down to 1. It was by no means an easy task. Almost every home owner I phoned or saw gave me the same answer: "Too many children or because you're separated that spells trouble with capital letters", or when I mention I'm on welfare assistance, this often terminated an interview. The mere mention that there is no man in the family brought this remark, "Sorry, but if you had a man he could maintain the property". I finally moved into a 3 bedroom low rental unit. The suites are lovely, spacious and clean but what worries me was the great number of families minus a father living in the development. Some of these mothers had quite loose morals and because of the lack of privacy like backyards and front, I was concerned about my children being exposed to a steady diet of this, -- I felt they were too young to understand and I was too absorbed with my own adjustment to my new state life, that of a separated Catholic, to understand it myself -- so I decided the best thing for all of us would be to move out and into a house where there would undoubtedly be a greater variety of people as neighbours. So after 1½ years of low rental living, I went house hunting again, encountering the same obstacles as above. I finally put an ad in the "Wanted House to Rent" column of the paper. I received many calls to my ad, most responded in the same manner when hearing of my marital status, children and welfare, "Sorry" they would say. Finally I got this call from people who wanted us and the rent was \$90.00 - within the limit set by welfare. So I grabbed the house. This was just under three years ago during the winter. When spring came we cleaned up the yard which was covered with intoxicating beverage bottles, rain pipes and an assorted type of pipes, boards and rotting fence posts. My children and I piled this by the garbage cans and it was hauled away. What I thought was a lawn grew into dandelions, thistles and ugly weeds, particularly the backyard. I tried to keep them chopped down with the hoe but it became a losing battle. It was very badly neglected and needed cultivating in the worst way. The house is also in bad condition. Most of the windows I could not open because they were sealed with paint. Most of the windows were cracked and the crack was taped with masking tape. After a while the tape dried up and fell off and the glass fell out. One basement window with heavy plastic on it, never has been replaced. Any time I mentioned anything the landlord who was out of town most of the time would say, "Next time I come in I'll see what I can do". This went on month after month and rolled into years. In the front entrance there is a piece of linoleum missing exposing the rough flooring so I threw a piece of rug on it, the nails sticking out held the rug in place. The linoleum in the bathroom and one bedroom upstairs was also cracked and chipped.

One month when he came to collect the rent and I mentioned the repairs needed he said, "You know what this place is like, you can take it or leave it". So I had to keep quiet and put up with it. The following spring he said he was going to cultivate the lot and reseed the grass, so I didn't bother with the outside. During

this time the age old fence fell over toward the lane side, the thistle grew between the boards, the dandelions, thistle and weeds grew tall in the yard and still no cultivation. He finally got a letter from the City about the mess and he came over and gave me H... I couldn't put up too big a fight for fear of being thrown out. He got someone to take down the old fence piling it up against the garage, and I kid you not it was there about two months when he got another letter from the City telling him to haul it away. He came over and gave me H... again, for what I'm still trying to figure it out.

By this time I had to tell him again about the plumbing conking out, the light switches, etc., etc., etc., between him and his son they tried keeping things together with wire, but what it needed was new parts. The taps ran so bad my water bill for months was double what it was elsewhere. So I rented out the garage for \$5 a month to cover the cost of the water going down the drain needlessly. He complained about that and wanted the garage to rent to someone also seeing as how I had no car.

The first year I was there I asked the landlady for weatherstripping and she said "It's up to the tenants to make their own repairs".

He fixed a light once that when my daughter pulled the chain to put on the light in her bedroom, the bulb fell to the floor and part of the hanging wire burned. He never did get around to fixing the light switch in another bedroom.

Just this spring he finally replaced the watertank. He brought over an old tank but the plumber wouldn't install it, so he had to purchase a new glass lined one. So I had a collection of 3 old watertanks downstairs. Repeated requests to have them removed met deaf ears. Of course he made another false promise to have the lot cultivated this year. He received letters from the city again and came over to give me heck again.

Because there was so much trouble with plumbing and wiring, etc., I once told him I would get an inspector over. This is when he started asking me to leave, then changing his mind a few times. I think he was scared.

He finally wrote a letter to the welfare and told them I could stay, but he wants \$150.00 rent per month (\$125.00 to cover rent, \$25.00 to hire a caretaker). The worker talked to him on the phone and said you must be nuts if you think the Gov. is going to pay for your caretaking. The worker turned to me and said I'd be wise to look for another place and said they would pay as high as \$150.00 per month plus damage deposit if needed. The last month I was in this house the fire dept. inspector was making his annual inspection and declared this house has unsafe wiring (electrical) I told the landlord this but he barked back "Don't tell me anything, I don't want to hear it". He also asked me if I would pay for the broken window. I told him to tape them up like he did for me and probably every tenant before me.

I heard that a couple of days after I moved out someone else moved in. The place was also very very badly in need of paint, even when I moved in. I had stayed longer than any other tenant he had before.

Househunting again became a very discouraging and disturbing experience for me. One needn't go to the U. S. or be a negro or Canadian Indian to experience discrimination. It is very present right here in our midst. I can understand a home owner being concerned about who lives in his home and with the present housing shortage he can pick and choose, so this leaves mothers raising their children alone out in the cold.

The following are some comments from homeowners:

"I have nothing against a mother on assistance but....".

"Separate families are troublesome".

"3 bedrooms is too small for you" (after hearing of my marital status).

"If you had a man he could 'make the repairs".

"Too many children".

"Three children are too many, four a disaster and 5 is out of the question".

I could go on and on, however to me this represents a display of discrimination about lone parents right thru' the city, east to west, north to south. I wonder how many of these homeowners call themselves Christians. Incidentally my previous landlord serves on the church council of which he is a member. A few days before the end of Sept. I was in a real state of despair.

My worker assured me that if I didn't locate a place by the end of that month the welfare would put us up in a motel. So we've been here in the Patricia Motel, 101 Ave. - 77 St. since Oct. 1st. We have 2 rooms here. The bedroom has 2 single beds where Janine 12 and Jerry 14 sleep and a crib where Kenny 5, sleeps. The front room which also has a kitchenette has a hide-a-bed where Paula 17 and I sleep and another couch where Anthony 7 sleeps. During the day when the children are in school it's fine, but when they are all home it gets pretty crowded. There is no laundry facility here, we take our laundry twice a week to a laundromat, five blocks away. We couldn't take much with us to the motel, just clothing and food, so as a result the children's reference books and everything else went into storage.

Just recently the motel keeper here recommended us for a 3 bedroom apt. in the Holyrood Apts., but when hearing of my marital status the apartment became too small for us, ha ha. Discrimination, discrimination, discrimination, discrimination, that's all it is.

3. Separated Mother with Four Children in Low Rental Housing -

I was born in Alberta and raised in Edmonton, finished school, took comptometer course, worked a year, then moved to British Columbia. There I worked for 2 years, got married and had four children. My marriage broke up and I came to Edmonton because my family and close friends were here. When my children and I arrived we had only what clothes we could pack. We stayed with my parents, and two sisters, both were still in school, for two months. I put my name on lists to get into low-rentals when I first arrived and during this time, I answered

ads and phoned apartments listed in the telephone directory looking for two or three bedroom places, furnished or unfurnished. Anything where four children were accepted was fine. The problems I encountered then, during two months of looking are the same I encounter now after three years. If the rent sounds reasonable to me, then the first question the landlords ask terminate the interview. How many in the family? Four school age children is the answer, but even three gets the same results. No.

If by chance my answer passes the next question brings a NO. What does your husband do? When told there are only myself and my four children I receive a NO. I have asked why and been told women on their own cause too much trouble. Some men are very interested in my answer and it appears they are looking for a housekeeper and bedpartner, besides a tenant.

If I pass all to now, and tell them I'm on Welfare, then some excuse is found to end interview. If all previous questions and answers are accepted, I get stopped by the last. When advertised places are empty and able to receive people immediately; I have to give one months notice to my present landlord or forfeit a large deposit. This is impossible. I don't ask for a new house, just one that is clean, big enough for us, has own yard and reasonable rent. Most places that aren't \$140 or more, are too small, very dirty, unkept, in general not fit for a dog to live in let alone humans.

After three years of living in low rentals, I would like to get a house for many different reasons. I think people should have some privacy outdoors as well as indoors. There is no yard to call your own and be able to keep your children controlled. I think also the environment surrounding life in apartment blocks and low rentals and row housing is very poor for our children living in fatherless homes. 25% of my neighborhood is minus one parent from the home continually. This means just over 50% of the children in my neighborhood have no male influence on their lives. To me this is a wrong thing to have so many one-sided families living in one group. I think if rents and attitudes were changed towards women on their own raising their children, and we were able to move into more balanced districts, we would have more adjusted children thus better adjusted adults.

4) Disabled Father with Nine Dependents -

Before I came to Edmonton I was making \$3.00 an hour, working as a sawyer, which consisted of 60 hour weeks and I had a nice place to live in. I had a second hand car and truck, but since moving to Edmonton I had to sell everything for practically nothing which left me with nothing to own. Now I won't ever be able to earn that kind of money as I'm unable to work. I've had four operations along with T.B.

I came to Edmonton five years ago as a T.B. patient, but before I went to the hospital I looked for a place for my family, wife and eight children; that took me two weeks and that was only a small house in Beverly and since then I've lived in five different houses. Since then, two were condemned and the others were too small to live in. Now that I have a bigger house, I've had four different families living with me because they couldn't find a place to live on account of being natives. One family got kicked out because he was a native and I didn't want him to lose his job.

I let him stay until he found a place. They had to live in my basement, which is made up of one room 14 feet by 14 feet, which is damp and cold and is entered through a trap door and down a ladder. It has a small gas burner but it didn't supply enough heat. You would have to see it to believe that it wasn't livable. I was paying \$80 for this house, but since I've painted it (paint I payed for) the rent came up \$20, now I am paying \$100. He also wants me to put in a new toilet or pay half if he installs it, then I suppose the rent will also go up. I still have a man, wife and child living in the basement, but they don't pay rent as I can't very well charge them.

5) Old Age Pensioner with Dependents -

When I first came to Edmonton I found a four room house, but this was because we know the people who lived there and were moving out, so we got first chance. We paid \$85 for rent, but when rain came we had to keep moving our beds around as it leaked pretty bad. So with no choice we moved back to Faust in July and August and came back in the fall. We really had quite a time finding a house, so in the meantime we stayed at my son's two bedroom house for a month. When we say this house (which we are living in now) for rent in the paper, we never looked at it, we just went to pay for it and we are kind of stuck in it now as we just can't find another place. We pay \$85 plus utilities, but I guess we can be put out any time as there is a 'For Sale' sign on it. This house is cold and it needs a lot of repairs. It could be condemned, but where would we go with our three daughters, a son and five gandchildren, so we don't dare complain. We never went any place as we couldn't afford it. We moved to Edmonton on account of we were both disabled and under doctors care and being in Faust we had to travel 40 miles and sometimes couldn't pay bus fare to High Prairie.

6) Transient Women -

The most forgotten section of people effected by housing problems in today's society are the single, homeless girls and women (often erroneously called 'transients'). Established Society shows some compassion towards families with problems, but the apathy towards single women is appalling. These girls, more helpless than men by nature, are given even less assistance than single men, and less understanding of their social handicap, be it illiteracy, unemployment, divorce or separation, unwedded motherhood, drug addiction, alcoholism, prostitution, etc. Present policies regarding housing, welfare or the entire realm of rehabilitation seem unable to have arrested the problem and appear to be hypocritical as well as inefficient. In other words, everything is done to send and maintain the girls on skid-row rather than helping to re-establish themselves in society.

Who are these girls? How many? Where do they come from? Where can they go?

The greater majority of our single women are from rural areas, reserves and colonies, other cities and towns. All are attracted by the a) glamour of city life, b) employment opportunities, c) educational facilities, d) welfare counselling services.

Girls 14-18: Facilities are practically non-existent. Single women in this category without children are presently accommodated at the Y.W.C.A. (75), Hilltop (16), and Southern Home (7). The rest must compete with single men for rooms in hotels or

private homes of which there are but a few available. For the native girl, the problem is even greater, since most landlords are reluctant to take them in.

For the penniless girls or those with marginal social handicaps, they have no alternative but to "shack-up" with any available boy-friend, or landlord; or be at the mercy of "pimps" or seek the shelter of our "Jails". Unwed girls with children must either give them up to foster homes (welfare) to their parents or relatives, or again "shack-up or prostitute".

Women 18-45: These comprise of separated or divorced women who from sheer desperation end up on the hustle, or those who have become "hard-core" transients (prostitutes, etc.) For them too, the housing problem is critical because their foremost need is accommodations that provide total rehabilitation facilities rather than mere shelter. Many desire rehabilitation but because of apathy, lack of understanding and facilities, they justify their positions on skid-row as one of "survival of the fittest" and resign themselves to a fruitless life. Those that can't, the only escape is through drugs, alcohol and eventual suicide.

Women 45 and over: The most horrible fate that women in this group are faced with is the knowledge that "it's bad enough to have been a prostitute but to have reached the point where you are no longer wanted even in this field". The hopelessness of this realization compels them to suicide, oblivion reached through using the worst forms of alcohol or drugs, (canned heat, rubbing alcohol, etc.) ending up in institutions for life, or more often in city morgues (labelled as dead from unknown causes etc.).

What are the actual facilities for them? Besides the few aforementioned, come along with me to visit them in the slum hotels, the streets and river banks, and the houses slum landlords operate in our cities; "Edmonton the Affluent"; "Toronto the Good"; "Montreal the Showcase"; "Vancouver the Beautiful".....!

What can be done? Following are the basic emergency steps that can be taken:

- 1) A program of "public awareness" to the problems of single women and the opportunity provided these women for participation in any policies affecting them.
- 2) A specialized Housing and Rehabilitation program for single women be instituted by a sole authority comprised of a member from all agencies and rehabilitated women.
- 3) An acceleration in establishing suitable community houses, hostels and homes for single women designed with an emphasis on the rehabilitative requirements.
- 4) Establish a Central Registry (re: Log Expo) whereby landlords could register available accommodations eliminating costs of time, money and frustration to women searching for rooms.
- 5) Motivate Government and Private Builders in constructing specialized moderate rental quarters comprising of private one room furnished housekeeping units.

- 6) An acceleration in the establishing of Halfway Houses, Community Houses, etc., for the socially handicapped.
- 7) De-centralized smaller hostels with single rooms, cafeteria and washing facilities for low-income, unemployment insurance or welfare recipients, but giving the women the initiative to pay their way.
- 8) Specialized Youth Hostels are urgently required,
- 9) An increase in the building of Old Age Homes and an agency geared to finding other facilities for this category is advocated.

Sample Case:

I came to Edmonton two years ago from Uranium City. I was looking for a job and because of my poor education I couldn't get the kind I wanted so I washed dishes in a cafe. I had a one room suite on skid-row but I didn't know it was skid-row then. One day my landlady told me I had to move, she didn't say why so I moved because she was going to call the police if I didn't. I had to pay her rent for one month, so I didn't have no money to move to some place else. I took my things to the bus depot and left them there.

From there I went to the Leland and met a friend who told me that all I could do was get a boyfriend to shack up with and I'd stay out of trouble. So I did. My boyfriend was mean so I ran away but I couldn't get another job because I was drinking too much. That's all it's been for two years until I met you and some other girls, but I'm still with a boyfriend. No one wants an old Indian woman whose got no money and I never go to welfare because I'm afraid to go. Sometimes I go to jail but most of the time I stay here and drink by myself. Maybe someday I quit but what can I do, no one cares.

8) Transient Men -

You have heard Edmonton at times referred to as a "Haven for transient men". Should we then interpret this as meaning that Edmonton has over-adequate facilities rather than a problem of housing for transient men? True, our city does provide the hard core, socially handicapped drifter, with a variety of shelters. Government operated or supported Hostels, Missions, a few cheap hotel or private rooms in what I call dressed-up flop houses. Actually less in quantity on a per capita basis than other major cities -- the only difference being that Edmonton Hostels, until recently, offered an unlimited length of stay. (i.e., some men interviewed had lived in hostels here for 15 to 20 years.) Hostels in other cities limit men to 5 to 7 days of free accommodation.

There is undoubtedly much room for improvement in the area of physical facilities for these men but the main emphasis should be directed towards a co-ordinated programme on providing for their human re-conditioning -- not to accept as a "fait accompli" that "hard-core chronically unemployed single men" are a hopeless lot with no alternative to the problem than to maintain them in (mostly) sub-standard accommodations or pawn them off on another locale just to have them return sooner or later.

However, these chronic problem men are really just a minority group living in the human jungles of skid-row housing. A far greater portion of men in hostels (facts a classification centre would substantiate) are homeless men in the 25 to 45 age group who have perhaps minor personal problems or social handicaps, but chiefly are temporarily unemployed. Herein exists the true problem of housing, for a man in this group, wanting to even live to normal standards finds great obstacles. First, he is subjected (if penniless) to share shelter with the hard-core group exposed to society (especially "industry", his chief source and hope of any kind of help or salvation) as belonging to this group. Our present welfare policies seem directed at keeping the men in this environment rather than assist them in leaving the welfare ranks.

For a man in this category who wants to get working and "on his feet" it is most depressing to find that a) he has to live with these men, b) to eat at schedules that make job hunting or actually working difficult if not an impossibility, c) to beg for transportation facilities, d) to beg for adequate clothing, etc. In many cases, he becomes so depressed that he simply resigns himself to a fate no less than co-existence in a fruitless society. Hence, this is where our chronic unemployed men become lost. In this age category is also found the unemployed transient who may still have a few dollars or be receiving unemployment insurance. His housing problem is even more critical. In theory, they are not allowed in hostels, etc. Edmonton has few clean rooms in decent homes in the \$6.00 to \$10.00 per week range available for rental -- and most landlords are reluctant to rent single rooms to men without jobs and references.

Frustrated, these men eventually exhaust their financial resources and end up in the hostels to become trapped in the same web.

Another group affected by lack of proper accommodations are the pensioners, (old age or physically disabled) who cannot afford decent facilities and are left also to the fate of hostels and skid-row. Next, but not least, of men faced with problems of shelter are the alcoholics, drug addicts, parolees, etc., who may desire to rehabilitate and who unlike others may be quite skilled workers, are faced with joining the others in the hostels.

Finally we have the most heart-breaking if not most dangerous group, our unemployed transient youths. Just what is Edmonton's housing programme for them? Beatnik pads? Hostel ghetto's?

Housing problems for transient men? Yes -- many and varied. Certainly there can be no instant miracle answer but if we are to be truly concerned and as one who has experienced the problem, may I advance to you steps you can consider taking towards a specialized Housing Programme for Single Homeless Men.

- 1) Motivating Administrators of present hostels to re-align their facilities, schedules and environment as to enhance rather than impair any rehabilitative opportunities.
- 2) Recommend establishment of a de-intoxication centre where drunks could be admitted overnight and counselled in morning.
- 3) Establish a Central Registry (re: Log Expo) whereby landlords could register available accommodations eliminating costs of time, money and frustration to men searching for rooms.

- 4) Motivate Government and Private Builders in constructing specialized moderate rental quarters comprising of private one room furnished house-keeping units.
- 5) An acceleration in the establishing of Halfway Houses, Community Houses, etc., for the socially handicapped.
- 6) De-centralized smaller hostels with single rooms, cafeteria, and washing facilities for low-income, unemployment insurance or welfare recipients, but giving the men the initiative to pay their way.
- 7) Specialized Youth Hostels are urgently required.
- 8) An increase in the building of Old Age Homes and an agency geared to finding other facilities for this category is advocated.