

# Counselling for deprived discussed at conference

By DERWIN GOWAN

The Atlantic Guidance Counsellors Association resolved to look into the possibility of becoming a chapter of the Canadian Guidance Counsellors Association and also resolved to appoint a committee to study the Graham Commission Report done in Nova Scotia to see what ramifications it will have for guidance services in the Atlantic Provinces. This was done at their annual conference held here last weekend.

New officers were also elected. The new president is Barbara Walker from Halifax. She replaces last year's president Avery McCordick. The first Vice President is to be designated by the Prince Edward Island Guidance Counsellors Association. Doctor Ralph Stevenson is the Secretary-Treasurer.

Each provincial association is also allowed to elect a director. From New Brunswick is Wayne Hare, Glen Shepherd from Newfoundland, Steve Connolly from Prince Edward Island, and the Nova Scotia Director is Cathy Swenson.

The Atlantic Guidance Counsellors Association is made up of high school guidance counsellors from the Atlantic Provinces.

Guidance counselling to poor, under-privileged, and deprived was the subject of a special talk. Particular attention was given to

black ghettos and American Indians. It was said that before giving guidance to these groups, one must examine one's own attitudes first. Deprived minorities must be given help in living within their own environment, and a missionary attitude must not be adopted. When people are made to think they are inferior to others, they put up defenses, falling into the "I'm the greatest" frame of mind. Guidance involves aiding one in adjusting to the society in which they live.

The speaker presented a checklist explaining the various steps in motivating students to act in a way that will bring about success. First, a student must realize his or her own strengths and weaknesses. Then, the counsellor should help the person plan goals that are realistic. Help should be given in preparing to reach the goal, and the person should check his or her progress. This is to make sure the goal is being reached. Patience should be taught, and skills should be practised. They should be made to realize that perfection is only relative, and that improvement is more important.

She finished, "Though a child is poor, he is still a human being, and should be respected." It is usually impossible to change the child's environment, but they can be helped to live within it.



The audience listens intently to one of the speakers at the Atlantic Guidance Counsellors Association conference this past weekend.

## Counselling disintegrating?

The guidance counselling profession will disintegrate if counsellors continue to believe they are having an identity crisis, according to Dr. Pierre Turgeon, president-elect of the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association.

Dr. Turgeon was the keynote speaker at the 28th annual conference of the Atlantic Guidance and Counselling Association. His address opened the three-day conference held here last weekend.

He said he believed two years ago the counselling profession was in an adolescent stage, with the identity crisis an inherent part of this.

Turgeon tempered his thinking after having the "opportunity to pursue literature and meet individuals across the country."

"I think personally that we, as a profession, are moving from a state of professional identity to professional integrity."

"Notions of positive contamination is deeply rooted in the respect and caring we have for the people

we work with."

This factor is the "person-centered notion, which must remain in the profession," he said.

Turgeon said "people find themselves interacting with counsellors who are preoccupied with the question 'who am I?'"

The second factor is the "notion that we have to believe in ourselves as counsellors and the process of counselling."

The strengths and limitations of the profession are a very important issue, he said.

Counsellors must "maximize what we as individuals bring to the profession."

He said it is important for counsellors not to play down what they have to offer and to communicate this to a wider audience than the children they serve.

The profession needs people with public relations skills to communicate what services are rendered, he said.

Turgeon said effective communication will help the counsellors

help the children; and should include collaboration with parents, colleagues and teachers.

One problem is that so much of the counsellors' work is private and confidential.

The third factor Turgeon mentioned was the need for a knowledge of the environment in which work is carried out.

Counsellors attune themselves to textbook approaches although different environments require different approaches.

An example of this is when a counsellor is asked to service 5,000 children, and environmental condition that would require unique methods and services.

He said the fourth factor was the need to recognize education as a life-long and life-wide process. This involves counselling people of all ages.

Turgeon is a native of Edmonton, Alberta, and was educated at the University of Alberta. He is a professor of education at the University of Ottawa.

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