

better thing, not only for the clients but also for the workers who are delivering the service.

The Chairman: I gather from what you are saying that the case loads you mention are normally that size?

Miss Conohue: Their case loads are like that.

Mr. Finigan: That is right.

The Chairman: They are as much as that?

Miss Conohue: Yes, 150 or 200 cases.

Mr. Finigan: And more.

The Chairman: To put it mildly, that is a surprisingly large number. I do not know why you call it a case load because no one would have any more time than just to look up and say "What is your name? What can I do for you?" With 150 cases, what advice could you give them?

Senator Inman: On page 10 you speak of the generation gap. How do you think this came about and also why do you think young people today reject family life as they seem to be doing? In your work you must meet a lot of these young people and hear them talk.

Mr. Smith: Well, the generation gap, I believe, is a form of lack of communication between parents and child from the early years. If you cannot talk to your child at age 6 or 7 or you will not talk to your child at age 6 or 7, when they get to be 16 or 17 they are not going to talk to you, and this is a problem that many parents are experiencing.

Senator Inman: Do you blame the parents for that?

Mr. Smith: I do. I think that we are just a little too busy to sit down and talk to them. When a child asks a question I think we should answer it. As I say, we expect this child to take advice from us. As they get a little older they feel they should not have to and they feel they are grown up. If they cannot in the early years obtain their advice then they are certainly not going to want it as they get a little older and as they become more intelligent.

I think that is what I was referring to as the generation gap, this lack of communication. The parents cannot understand the child and the child cannot understand the parents.

Senator Hastings: Mr. Chairman, I would like to continue this discussion of the generation gap with Mr. Smith, because I happen to be one of those parents who are experiencing this problem and are unable to cope with it. I have one 18 year old somewhere between Halifax and Calgary on the Trans-Canada Highway, and another 16 year old who would like to be with him but I had to forcibly detain him at home. The only one that will conform is a 10 year old daughter.

We had two witnesses yesterday who said, as you did, that parents cannot communicate. I am going to ask you: Can social workers communicate?

Mr. Smith: Absolutely not.

Senator Hastings: The boys said yesterday that youth can communicate with youth. Do you believe that?

Mr. Smith: They would like to think they can, yes.

Senator Hastings: Who can communicate with them?

Senator Quart: Grandmothers. The sociologists say that when everything else fails get the grandmother. She can get both sides of the gap together.

Mr. Smith: I feel we can communicate, senator, in so far as ours is not a personal thing. We are not looking at it from a personal viewpoint, and what might rile you about your son would not necessarily rile me. I might be able to see his point of view.

Senator Hastings: As to getting his hair cut?

Mr. Smith: I don't agree with that but it would not upset me as much as it would you.

We find the same difficulty in our agencies, trying to get to these kinds. We do not know what the answer is. I think whoever can come up with the answer will make himself a bundle. There is just no one simple solution to it.

Senator Hastings: The boys also said yesterday you have seven or eight drop-in centres in Saint John. It disturbs us to hear they are rejected by the young or poor children.

Mr. Smith: I know there are drop-in centres. I have never been to one. I would not say they are rejected by them. It may be.