

Frontier College fights Canadian poverty

Discrimination against the poor and disadvantaged is nothing new to 43 per cent of adult Canadians.

This is the percentage of the population designated by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics as having less than elementary education. The figure is higher than in any other industrial nation in the world; many included within it can be said to be "functionally illiterate."

has had an enviable advantage in gaining the confidence of its target group. Rather than bring the students to education, it takes education to the students in mining and logging camps, construction and railway locations, fishing towns and other outlying communities in every province and territory of Canada. Rather than make use of professional teachers, the College seeks adaptable university

though two thirds of the field-workers still serve in the period May to September, there is a greater need of applicants for the expanding winter program.

President, Ian Morrison, reports that the entire College budget averages out to \$1,500 per labourer-teacher. "This compares favourably with the Company of Young Canadians, whose budget works out to \$16,000 per volunteer", he con-

and the public at large. The largest contribution now comes from student unions across the country.

THE LABOURER-TEACHER

Frontier's representative, the labourer-teacher, is expected to sound out the needs and, if necessary, motivate the desires of his community before setting up a program. Many labourer-teachers find that classes in basic French or English consume much of their time; others are more involved with film series and baseball tournaments; still others have taught anything from sketching to civil law. After a full day's shift of manual labour, it's a heavy program.

"Invariably one of our most urgent roles is to inform the workers about, and if necessary prepare them for, existing government upgrading and trade-training schemes", says Morrison. "Often their experiences in education have been bad ones. It's no mean challenge motivating someone like that to try again."

Although labourer-teachers are very much on their own, head office keeps in close touch with letters and even personal visits. "Feedback is important to us", says Morrison, "and not just in evaluating our own programs. It was the unique experience of decades of labourer-teachers that en-

abled us, for instance to contribute a useful brief to the Senate Committee on Poverty in 1970.

ROLE FOR WOMEN AND MARRIED COUPLES

Frontier's unique experience in outlying Canada has also been responsible for a new branch of the College's activities. In recent years, it has been asked to undertake a number of "Community Education Projects" on contract to several provincial and territorial governments. Young married couples are being sought for full-time work in eight such projects this year.

For some time, this was the only way in which women were serving the College in the field. But the hiring of women as labourer-teachers, initiated last year, is likely to be expanded this year to a total of 10.

The results of the labourer-teachers' sweat can be found dotted across the vastness of outlying Canada. Here a former transient labourer is on his way to learning a trade that will enable him to get a secure job and to live with his family; there a Portuguese and a Korean have learned enough English to get citizenship papers and a job in a unionized mine; somewhere else a tiny community has seen the world beyond the months of Arctic night through a series of prize-winning films.

In these circles, the name "Frontier College" is also nothing new.



Mike Denker, a Labourer-Teacher with Frontier College, at Frobisher Bay

These people are generally members of the unskilled, transient, or seasonal sections of the labour force. They suffer discrimination from employers and are often unacquainted with their basic rights regarding welfare and labour policies. With a background of the apathy bred by poverty, they often have neither the will nor the way to avail themselves of existing opportunities.

Attempting to close the gap between such second-class citizens and the rest of Canada is a small, Toronto-based organization called Frontier College. FRONTIER'S RESPONSE

Since its founding in 1899, it

students with the resourcefulness to improvise.

Instead of attempting to communicate across unbridgeable social distances, these instructors relate to their communities as co-workers, labouring for their shift as company employees alongside everyone else. The College's term for such a fieldworker is therefore "Labourer-Teacher."

RECRUITING

100 labourer-teachers are recruited every year from among some 1,500 applicants through interviews held at every major university in the country. They serve for a minimum of four months at any time of year. Al-

though, "especially if one realizes that most of our cost is actually incurred at the time of placement. That is, if we kept our volunteers in the field a whole year, as CYC does, the total cost would be little more than it is now."

Chartered by Act of Parliament in 1922, roughly a third of the budget for the Labourer-Teacher Program comes from federal and provincial grants. "But we are emphatically a private agency - we're not tangled in any government red tape."

Another third is provided by trade unions and industry, and the last by organizations

African students ready for 'Africa night'

Admittedly much of Africa today still remains "terra incognita" Particularly to North Americans. This is because of the static bias accompanied by an ideological commitment and a kind of "benevolently protective" antiquarianism which pervaded the writings of the earliest "pioneers".

Man now lives in the space age and what is left of the world is no more than a village. Considering the ever increasing means of communication available to us at relatively low cost, we no longer can blame our ignorance of the world outside our own on mis-in-

formation.

Travelling is an important part of education, a way of knowing more about other peoples of the world. The educational part of travelling is two sided; first to the traveller and second to the host countries he visits. It is in this connection therefore that the African students of UNB thought that it would be a worthwhile endeavour to show to the people of the Maritimes some parts of African cultures.

The first step towards this was taken last year when the African Students put up a show of cultural displays. While the

reception was fairly encouraging the write-up that followed in the newspaper was more than convincing that a lot of people could still not condition themselves to taking African culture for its richness, distinctiveness and originality. One might not be too far from being accurate to say (though ethnocentrically as it may sound) that "civilization as understood in the West today started in Africa. A quick look at our history books might remind us that university of Alexandria is one of the earliest institutions of higher learning. Alexandria is a city in Egypt and Egypt is a country in Africa. It is a common knowledge that most people at this part of the world still talk and refer to Africa as a country. This short article falls below the scope of a lecture in political geography, no matter how astounding it may be to have heard some University students asking embarrassing questions about Africa.

of UNB is for the second time in a row preparing to treat the people of New Brunswick to the richness, distinctiveness "exoticness" and complexity of some African cultures, hoping that this will not be mistaken for the pejorativeness of savagery.

Understandably the activities of Africa night will not be

able to give you everything you may want to know about Africa but hopefully they will go a long way to dispel the general belief that Africa is still in a stage of pre-historic development. Therefore come and judge for yourself. Don't rely on somebody else's judgement. You are promised a big and exciting treat to African Culture.

Badminton tournament

The AIAA Intercollegiate Badminton Tournament will be held this weekend February 25-26 at Mount Allison University. By AIAA rules, only three participants are allowed on the mens team and three on the ladies. UNB is being represented, in the mens by: Lane Bishop, singles, and John Garnett and Bruce Perry (UNBSJ), doubles. This past weekend Bishop took the New Brunswick Senior Mens' Singles Championship with a hard fought win over John Garnett.

The men have tough competition this year especially from determined Acadia and Memorial, and will have a battle to defend their team title.

The womans' team consists of Sally Coughy, singles, and Judy Pultz and Janice Jackson, doubles. Coughy was also a winner in the Senior New Brunswick Tournament, taking the Singles and Doubles trophy. This UNB team is also depending the title it won last year against some greatly improved University teams.

BEAVERBROOK ART GALLERY

- * Animated and experimental film festival
- * Monday, February 28 8 p.m.
- * Admission - Free

The African Students Union

There won't be any BRUNSWICKAN next week. (March 3)
All of us, and presumably all of you, have other plans.
See you on March 10.