

The Chairman: Let me just say it is becoming that a school teacher should do her homework, and she did it well. Thank you very much.

The Chairman: We have a submission by the Crescent Valley Area, Saint John, New Brunswick. On my right is Mrs. Mary Jane Whipple, who will present the brief. Next to her is Mr. Richard Saunders. Mrs. Whipple will now proceed to present the brief.

Mrs. Mary Jane Whipple: Mr. Chairman, senators, ladies and gentlemen, the recommendations contained in this brief are the distilled products of open meetings held in the Crescent Valley area in May of 1970.

We feel that this area, which is a public housing development of 388 families, has a great deal of importance to say to this committee based on the hard facts of their daily existence.

The opportunity given to the people of Canada to express their feelings about the problems of poverty, and the future course of social development, are well appreciated and the governments in Fredericton and Ottawa are to be commended on their initiatives in this direction.

But it is important to stress that however valuable dialogue is, and however vital the setting up of study groups and task forces, in the final analysis, it will be by their effectiveness in initiating solid, progressive programs that work, that they will be judged.

In this regard, we feel that it is of vital importance to any program that hopes to fight poverty that the lines of communication between people and government remain open, and that the poor be actively and continuously involved in the initiating and administrating of these programs.

The poor are by no means a homogeneous group. They include the working poor, the disabled, the young and the old, all with differing needs, hopes, desires and abilities. We would like to call the Government's attention to the fact that low income groups are often in a worse position than welfare recipients who at least have the security of free health services.

In regard to the future of welfare programs, we recommend:

1. Information as to benefits, rights, appeal procedures etc. should be readily available to welfare recipients in easy to understand language.

2. Investigations into purely personal affairs should cease.

3. Familiarization programs should be initiated among welfare clients to overcome the fear of recriminations by officials.

4. There is a need for improved sensitivity on the part of welfare workers as to the needs of recipients.

5. More effective incentives should be built into future welfare legislation.

6. The permanently unemployable, the aged and disabled, should be provided with adequate supports that would alleviate fears for their future security and well being.

In so far as the poor as a whole are concerned, the problems are much broader than purely financial deprivation. The solving of these problems will require fundamental changes in the society as a whole. In this regard, we recommend:

1. The initiation of a guaranteed annual income scheme with built-in incentives.

2. Improved income support allowances for cultural activities and recreation.

3. We recognize the need to organize groups of persons who share similar problems to act as pressure groups for change.

4. One of the most serious blocks to the alleviating of conditions which create poverty is the failure of the school systems to meet the needs of young people. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of "drop outs" in the last few years. It is, therefore, recommended that the school systems be looked at critically in an effort to make them fill the needs of the youth for whom they are in operation. Such a study should heavily involve youths themselves.

5. Adult education should be readily available at every level, and incentives offered to encourage the re-educational process.

6. We urge the setting up of a family court system and legal aid system as an urgent need in this province. As it is now, the poor are in a nearly hopeless position in regards to family matters such as marriage breakdown, desertion, inter-familial brutality, et cetera.

Young people too, who become involved with the law on various charges do not have available to them a lawyer's services, if they