

V. URBAN FRINGE POVERTY

59. Several years ago, the Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University, completed a detailed and unpublished study of an urban-fringe community composing part of an incorporated town and the adjacent county municipality. This study provides insight into a type of poverty community that exists on the margins of many urban communities in Nova Scotia.

1. Attitudes of Outsiders

60. The study reports the attitude of outsiders (residents of the town proper) towards the dwellers of Fringeville. The people of Fringeville, who are looked down upon and appear to be alienated from the larger community, are mostly unskilled workers with a high rate of unemployment. They were originally brought into the area to do menial work for residents of the town and, subsequently, were stranded on its fringes. The children are regarded as having a high incidence of school retardation, and, possibly, mental retardation. Families are large, ordinarily with eight to ten members, usually all squatters on the land that they occupy, and live in substandard houses. No one could think of a single person who might be said to give leadership to the community.

61. The outside observers stress the lack of basic education in the children of Fringeville, who appear ill-adjusted to normal school habits. Observers point out that, although a number of bright children enter the lower grades, before they reach the end of elementary school their "brightness" has been replaced by apathy and indifference.