

Senator Fournier: What happens to a man who is under the influence of alcohol and he is arrested by the police. What do they do with him?

Miss McGrath: It is no longer a criminal offence to be found drunk in public. It is still a criminal offence to be found drinking in public. Generally very little is done with him unless he has been disturbing the peace or something like this and then he is taken.

Senator Fournier: What will the police do with a man if he is half drunk on the sidewalk? Will they take him to jail or take him to the hospital?

Miss McGrath: I really do not know what they do with them. Nine times out of ten if he is not causing too much trouble or bothering anybody else he is left in the doorway. If possible they will take him where he belongs but very few of these men have permanent homes.

Senator Fournier: What do you think is the cause of the alcoholic problem in certain areas; lack of work or lack of education or lack of many things maybe?

Miss McGrath: I think it is something deeper than that that causes the alcoholic problem. The alcoholics with whom we spoke did not lack education and they did not lack opportunity.

Senator Fournier: Family heritage maybe, father to son?

Miss McGrath: Not really. It is something that has to be gone into in great detail deeper than we have gone into it but a good number of the men to whom we talked were not disadvantaged as far as education was concerned, but as far as family background was concerned.

Senator Fournier: Thank you.

Senator Hastings: Mr. Chairman, may I ask one quick question?

The Chairman: Yes.

Senator Hastings: On page 9 you, as we have heard many times before allude to the fact there is justice for the poor and the rich and you state:

Free legal aid will be available to those in need at preliminary hearings and trials.

Is there not legal aid available at preliminary hearings and at trials in the Province of New Brunswick?

Miss McGrath: I think not, just for trials, not for preliminary hearings.

Senator Fournier: It is just being organized now.

The Chairman: I think what has happened is that legal aid is available in every province and, to a measure, here. If I recall correctly we raised this with the deputy minister when he was before us in Ottawa. We were told it is being organized. You can rest assured it will be one of our recommendations anyway.

Now, we have had a very interesting meeting here with both you girls. You have been very good witnesses. You are both very knowledgeable and it has been an interesting brief. We have covered many matters that are important.

Senator Fournier: May I ask one more question? I overlooked a point.

The Chairman: Yes.

Senator Fournier: What is the reason why these homes are not being repaired by the landlord? We have been told that Saint John is the oldest city in Canada. There are many old buildings and I would assume that many of them need to be repaired and possibly one of the problems is that you are required by the City, when repairing a building, to rebuild it to a certain standard and many of these buildings have been built during the 19th Century and it is almost impossible to repair them to good living conditions.

Is that one of the factors why there are so many homes where the landlord is so slow in spending money to repair the homes?

Miss McGrath: I do not know whether building standards apply to old buildings as well as new.

Mr. Owen: Presumably they are but there would be no way that they could possibly enforce them across the City without most of the people being evicted.

Senator Fournier: They would have to be demolished completely and rebuilt?

Mr. Owen: That is right. This would obviously have to happen with most of these houses so the City is sort of closing an eye to that type of building for the time being while urban renewal projects and buildings are going ahead. To enforce this overnight, they would have to move out a quarter of the population.