

Schools archaic and militaristic

The team found that all parts of the province agreed on what is wrong with the educational system and what is needed.

1. The need for uniformity in all the school systems in Canada was stressed. This understanding could be due to the greater amount of shifting of families and youth in the country.

2. The quality of teachers was unequal, i.e. some teachers were teaching without the proper qualifications because there was an apparent shortage in some areas.

"In Bridgewater the team experienced some difficulty in encouraging youth to express themselves. When they did, they revealed the fact the community was governed by competition based on family feuds extending back half a century. One girl said: 'This community sticks together like gravel'."

3. Youth wanted more relevance in the curriculum because they feel that education "was very related to a mass production of students and that there was very little creativity or relevance to reality in the curriculum."

4. Students desire more choices "for the development by the student of an individuality. They felt the courses ought to be more consistent with the real total life situation."

5. More community-oriented courses instead of the "historical and totally incomplete" civics course were often mentioned. "They said they had 'little or no idea of how this country is run'."

6. "Most students said they preferred monthly tests to examinations and some options which would allow for self-pacing within the system."

7. Vocational or technical options were desired instead of just the option of university.

8. There was questioning of the actual worth of a degree in terms of emotional satisfaction as well as economic rewards.

9. "There was a desire to share in the decision-making re the development of creative curricula. Students felt they should be on school boards; that student councils should have more than token authority."

10. More and better funding for post-secondary, not necessarily free education, was requested. The 4-H clubs recommended that student loans not be paid back in full but at about 70%.

"In general, students described schools as militaristic and authoritarian. Teaching methods were felt to be archaic and boring."

La Fédération Francophone de la Nouvelle-Ecosse says, "Argyle and Clare, the only two Acadian municipalities in Nova Scotia, have the highest drop-out average in N.S. (30% retention, 70% drop-out for boys in high school; 43% retention for girls measured

"Seventy-five percent of the youth interviewed wanted to leave their towns as soon as possible because of a desire to seek better work options; to see other things; or out of frustration. There seemed to be little hope for an adult — youth coalition for development."

over five years)." In Canada, one out of 16 Acadians goes or went to university; one out of eight are British.

"The school system is conceived to assimilate the Acadian. It's English after the first grade. Though presently a bilingual community college is being erected, the whole system must become French at an early age if French assimilation is to be reversed."

"Apart from these statements," says the study, "the school system is the same as the rest of the province. 'The person is killed as an individual'."

Cultural stimulus badly lacking

"Our communities present little cultural stimulus and little atmosphere of the enrichment that dissipates apathy and develops self-awareness and self-worth..."

"4-H felt deprived in their cultural growth by lack of sensitive adult leadership. Adults were so caught up in their values and opinions, they were unable to hear the questions of youth."

A desire for cultural stimulus and a better way of life — challenge and responsibility — was noted by the researchers. Blacks wanted "to be seen as people, not just blacks." They were "tired of the dole."

The church was found to be decaying and in need of reform. Some are totally removed from the church because for some — "The Almighty dollar has replaced the Almighty God."

La Fédération Francophone says, "The Acadian is often called a linguistic and cultural bastard. He is not at ease in either English or French, speaking his village patois." Among the reasons they give are isolation, the effects of the media (there is no French daily newspaper), the declining influence of the family unit and the church.

Canada Manpower is useless

"The team discovered a sense of futility, frustration, powerlessness and lack of information amongst youth in the matter of long-range vocational expectations."

Dissatisfaction was expressed by some young adults that they were trained in trades in which they had no hope for employment. "High school and university students wanted summer jobs. No jobs were available without experience and training. No experience could arise without jobs."

Many people in Kentville suggested the view that the federal government might support a program of farm rehabilitation, which some groups of youth showed interest in. Manpower, the federal employment agency, came under severe attack. Generally, "they are useless." There were many cases of Manpower misplacing files, and they did not appear to carry files for blind or handicapped youth.

Nothing to do!

"The largest group activity for youth throughout the province revolved around weekend dances, street hang-outs, drop-ins, and cars... Facilities available were generally underused, under-developed and inaccessible except under tightly

structured arrangements. Traditional youth programmes such as Guides, CGIT were defined by 4-H as boring and lacking in goals and leadership. Youth wanted more travel options... and more hostels on national basis."

For the Acadians, the church used to be the only place for leisure, but again this is changing. However, there are few places to go. "There are no socializing activities apart from Saturday night dances. Youth lack even pool halls except in Cheticamp where there exists a community centre."

30% don't know their M.P.

"The political environment of Nova Scotia is highly traditional and small 'c' conservative and political parties, like many of the old families, remain the mainstay of many a small community." Many felt that politics was "much doubletalk," and some of those in the rural areas thought that the vote was a "hoax".

The lack of any study of political parties and processes in school was also blamed for their disinterest in politics. "Young people felt that their opportunity for social action was limited, that all levels of government allowed very little youth involvement and 'that the big bad papa bear was the worst of all'."

This lack of knowledge of politics was confirmed by the fact that about 30% of those responding could say correctly who their MP or MLA was. The researchers say, "There is no doubt that involvement in the political process and education for understanding the community and its functions is a prerequisite to an effective and involved citizenry."

About the Acadians, the report says, "They are not politically inclined," and in Cheticamp that they had little idea of what goes on in the Legislature.

Legally naive and uninformed

"Under 'politics' it was indicated that Nova Scotian youth was generally conservative. Legally they are naive and uninformed." Those with long hair and "the accompanying dress" were sometimes harangued. Youths have no awareness of the Bill of Rights and their human and legal rights.

"Youth everywhere were suspicious of the police... and felt there were two kinds of law, depending on social status... In Liverpool youth were angry about the alleged unorthodox and illegal methods used by the RCMP to expose and arrest youth in possession of drugs."

Mental health

"It is quite evident that young people are struggling to free themselves from a malaise that has gripped all of society; however, because they are young and therefore must still pass through the ages and stages of maturation, there is a compounding of the possible impact of this struggle. While still searching for an identity — a somewhat normal process in the teens, many young people must also labour under the pressure of doubts regarding the trust they may place in their families and other adults... The result is a society of young people who, like the person who suffers a manic depression, has very little self-worth or esteem and tends to withdrawal and suicidal behaviour.

"What is required? 'Well,' as one youth said, 'I want love. I want to belong.' There was also a need for communication with adults or a peer group."

Minority groups have few options

"Blacks generally refused to talk to the team because it was pointless in their view... There were no social or economic options. This environment and the at-

"University students showed some awareness that they were in an academic ghetto cut off from social realities of poverty, change, and political issues. While expressing social concern, they generally articulate these in discussions of abstract political theory."

titude of the community towards them reinforced their feeling of low self-worth, apathy and inability to organize for change."

Indians showed total dependency on Indian Affairs and were totally conditioned to their role as second-class citizens.

