

APPENDIX "B"

The Council of Saint John
Home and School Association

Honourable Members:

The Saint John Home and School Association are concerned with poverty as it affects the home and the student.

For purpose of this brief we are not considering poverty brought on by protracted illness or death of a supporting spouse but rather are concerned with the able bodied workers who are willing to perform gainful employment at a wage level which will remove them from the poverty class.

We are confronted with the man, woman, husband or wife who is physically able to perform useful work and can find no work available.

It is submitted there are two main contributing factors to the poverty problem which is basically economic disability.

These are:

- (a) The failure of the education system to train persons to become useful members of the community.
- (b) The failure of employers to employ persons capable of doing the work by insisting on order qualification for those they hire.

It is proposed to first deal with the failure of the educational system.

Our educational system is not designed nor used to cope with our poverty problem. The system is still centered around the basic concept of stimulation of the mind.

Our education program is geared to prepared students for academic training and only a minute portion of the program is geared to the teaching of occupational or social living. The courses from 1 to 9 are geared to qualify the student for entry into secondary schools, not to prepare a person for a useful role in society. Those who are unable to reach the academic qualifications are dropped by the wayside.

The present philosophy of the educational system was developed when education was the prerogative of a few. The few were the select who became the community leaders.

The programme of academic training for those who would be the community leaders

may have had merit. The philosophy of the education system was not to prepare one for a useful role in society, based on his ability, but rather to train the select (being selected by a programme designed to develop the trained mind capable of philosophical and scientific inquiry.

The masses were not considered in this concept.

Our changing society has outgrown or greatly enlarged this basic concept but our educational system strictly adheres to it. Educators still feel and adhere to the philosophy that academic training is basic to any field of endeavour. For example: A student has to pass grade eight basic and be recommended for vocational training before entering the two years courses in the fields of commercial art, motor mechanics, electronics, and carpentry at a Vocational School. But before being admitted to the three year course in the above mentioned courses the students must have completed grade nine academic.

The theory of training the whole child appears to have been somewhat clouded when a Superintendent of schools announces, as was done recently in Saint John, that the School is responsible for academic programs only. He says that those who are inclined towards a different type of training should be excluded from the schools.

Also in the public school system a cut back of teachers has been required. Subsequently, at the head of the list of courses for removal are the shop, home economics, physical education, art and music, all courses which the prepares a person for practical living.

Many schools have excellent wood working, metal and motor mechanics shops as well as facilities for home economics courses but these are not being employed to any great extent and further it appears that the educational policy is to remove them completely.

A manual training course is a subject which is of daily use in later life as it is applicable to daily living. Home economics is possibly even more necessary as children coming from deprived homes are usually lacking in the requisite skills required to raise their future family's standard of living especially in the areas of nutrition, cleanli-