

Senator Quart: And it is voluntary?

Mr. Finigan: It is all voluntary, yes.

Senator Quart: Do you charge any fee?

Mr. Finigan: Yes, we have a small fee we charge for membership.

Senator Quart: It keeps things working?

Mr. Finigan: Yes.

The Chairman: Mr. Finigan, one of your recommendations on page 2 is:

A more thorough integration of all community services, federal, provincial and private agencies.

Now, it occurs to me that if anyone can help do that it ought to be this group. What have you done?

Mr. Finigan: That is right, senator. I think actually what we are thinking in this particular portion of the brief is that for instance, the Social Welfare Department operates in one particular spot, and the other welfare divisions operate in another and Health in another. We are thinking of integration along the lines that these things would be all together which would result in better service and a better relationship between the agencies.

The Chairman: You are now mixing the private agencies with the public agencies. Is that what you say?

Mr. Finigan: Well, actually there would be a benefit even if the private agencies had their headquarters in fact right in the same building that we do because we are working with these agencies so constantly, like the Family Services of Saint John. They have a new Family Counsellor which refers cases to us and if they were right next door to us people could go right next door and obtain service there.

The Chairman: Yes, but Mr. Finigan, when most people think of integration of the services they do not think of having people sitting alongside of one another, but that some ought to be eliminated, and only some remain. That is the general opinion. I am not going to ask you what you think about that, but that is a general viewpoint.

Mr. Finigan: Well, it may be some people's general view. It is not mine.

The Chairman: No, I do not think so.

Mr. Finigan: I personally think that with so many different problems you have so many specialists in the field so therefore you cannot eliminate the professional service and Alcoholic Research service and some other person possibly is not experienced enough to handle that particular aspect of service that is necessary.

The Chairman: Is it not possible, Mr. Finigan, for all the services, perhaps with the exception of the Canada Pension Plan and Unemployment Insurance to be handled under the Canada Assistance Act, for any need that arises for any Canadian at any place in Canada?

Mr. Finigan: Do you mean, handled by one particular agency?

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Finigan: Yes, that is possible. In fact, in our department at the present time we are combining Welfare, Child Welfare and categorical pensions, and one worker handles the whole thing.

Senator Fergusson: I would like to refer to your statement about the elderly on pages 5 and 6. You say that things are more difficult for them than they used to be. There is no longer a strong family unit that takes care of the elderly people. Of course, they had larger homes and it was easier to keep them. Then you refer on page 11 to the fact that the old age pension should be reviewed, and then you continue with:

A government sponsored agency should be formed to promote the social aspects of the senior citizen's life and encourage membership to such activities.

I think somewhere you referred to housing for older people. Would you mind telling us, Mr. Smith, what housing there is for the older senior citizens in this area?

Also, last night we heard that the Recreation Department and some other agencies provided quite a lot of recreation for older citizens here. From your brief I gather you do not think there is enough. Would you enlarge on these two points, please?

Mr. Smith: Well, I am thinking more of the old age homes in Saint John. I do not know. I think if I were their age I would not want to be put into them.

I suppose it has good points to be with your own peer group but I find it hard to imagine