

## APPENDIX "G"

BRIEF TO  
 SENATORS' COMMITTEE ON POVERTY  
 FROM  
 SOUTH END IMPROVEMENT  
 ASSOCIATION  
 AND  
 SOUTH END TENANTS' ASSOCIATION

SAINT JOHN, N.B.

JULY 21, 1970.

Gentlemen:

Since we were informed that your committee has two avenues of investigation before it—expert research and a series of public hearings—we felt that in view of the facilities at your disposal any attempt we might make in preparing a statistical study of the problem of poverty would be pretentious. Therefore we decided to express the opinions of those in our associations as well as the people in our neighbourhood with whom we discussed the problem of poverty—alcoholics, property owners, inhabitants of slum housing, recreation workers, children, welfare recipients, social workers.

As a result of our inquiries we found that poverty for the people in our neighbourhood is a relative thing: —

For the recently released prisoner it's no job to go to, no money to spend, no one to help.

For the store owner it's the threat of broken windows and the fear of talking.

For a tenant it's three weeks without water before the landlord had the plumbing fixed.

For the little kid it's a bag of potato chips and a bottle of pop for dinner and supper.

For the older person it's watching your neighbourhood disintegrate before your eyes.

For one family it's porridge every meal the last three days before the welfare check arrives.

For the policeman it's having an opinion, not being free to express it, and being blamed for the whole mess.

AND for some people it's the inability to realize that all the above exists.

The memberships of our two associations as well as the area in the City of Saint John,

New Brunswick, which we represent is heterogeneous in make up. We include those on welfare, members of the professions, those who live in abject poverty, those who do not consider that there is any reason why they should concern themselves with the problem. We believe that a rich society is one in which there is a wide spectrum of people of different ages, backgrounds, and occupations. At the same time we submit that though poverty in its broadest sense is not merely the absence of material goods, the many types of human deprivation that exist cannot be entirely divorced from the lack of economic security. Therefore the ever-widening gap between the very rich and the very poor must be closed, and to this end we would RECOMMEND that emphasis in taxation should focus on the opposite ends of the scale. Those on minimal incomes will be given help from the tax dollars of those earning very high wages. This is not to suggest an equalization of income but a more just distribution of wealth.

In treating the question of poverty we considered all those factors—economic, physical psychological, moral and perceptual deprivation which render people less free to choose, less capable of controlling their own lives. The role of society as we see it is therefore to seek to solve present problems without delay and at the same time to strive to forestall even greater problems being presented by advancing technology. Poverty in 1970 is not the same as poverty only twenty years ago. Opportunities for overcoming economic deprivation are vanishing with continuing prosperity so that now we find ourselves on the verge of an age where unskilled workers may have no place, and where people will be paid for not holding a job.

Since it is the children who suffer most severely when poverty is present we would