

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The interviews were arranged in collaboration with the youth projects operated by and for young people. The interviewers were young men and women identified with "the contemporary youth scene".

Some of the findings and observations were as follows:

Families of the young people interviewed are significantly larger than Canadian families generally. Families with five or more children were almost twice as numerous in the sample as in the general population (26.2 per cent compared to 14 per cent).

More than half the fathers of those interviewed are in managerial, professional and technical occupations, compared to 23 per cent for the population generally. Youth transiency would appear to be a phenomenon associated primarily with middle and upper income families, with no significant differences between boys and girls.

Striking differences are apparent in the family backgrounds of male and female transients. Eight per cent of the boys are from families with only one parent in the home; the proportion increases to 45 per cent among the girls.

Only 19 per cent of the young people interviewed had severed all contact with their families. Over half reported they maintained regular correspondence with their families by mail, telephone calls or visits. There was a strong impression that many parents accepted, if not wholeheartedly approved, the transient life of the respondent.

With the exception of 12 individuals, who had attended elementary school only, these young people had been or still were in university or high school. In most cases, their attitude toward the school system was critical or hostile. About 50 per cent of them said they had been in trouble in school. The most pointed criticisms described the school as boring, restrictive of initiative, freedom and creativity, rigid, regimented and authoritarian.

Fifty-four per cent had been travelling over six months, and more than half had been on the road for two years or more. Most of the confirmed itinerants were males 18 years of age and over, of whom 24 per cent had been on the road three years and more.

REASONS FOR TRAVELLING

There seemed to be three main reasons for travelling: (1) To escape from problems in the home (20.3 per cent); (2) to see the country, to seek adventure (28.2 per cent); (3) to gain new experience and understanding of oneself and other people and places (51.5 per cent).

Trouble with the police was mentioned as the biggest problem by 47 of the youth, accommodation by 36, food by 29, money by 23, employment by 16, health by 9.

Employment was given as the means of subsistence by 73 of the 119 young people, assistance from friends by 40, dealing in drugs by 34, pan-

handling by 35, savings by 23, family by 19, social assistance by 14, and stealing by 11 (each respondent mentioned one or more items).

Fifty-nine per cent enjoyed the life they were leading; 23.9 per cent said it was only partly satisfying and had its disadvantages; 17 per cent said it was not a desirable kind of life, lacking security and inducing depression.

USE OF DRUGS

All respondents with three exceptions claimed to have used drugs, and for most of them their first experience had been with marijuana. About 20 per cent said they had had some experience with "hard" drugs. About a dozen said they had "pushed" drugs. About half said they began using drugs between the ages of 14 and 16; two said they began at 11 years and two at 13; the remainder said they began when they were over 16. There was variation in attitudes of youth to drugs, from, "It's great if used intelligently and responsibly", to expressions of anxiety about impurities of supplies, infection from needles, and mental health effects.

FEBRUARY HOUSING STARTS

Preliminary data released by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation show house-building activity continued at a low level during February, with 5,078 dwelling units started in urban centers. This was a decline of 53.7 per cent from the unusually high February 1969 level of 10,974 units.

When allowance is made for seasonal fluctuations, starts in all areas changed little from an annual rate of 160,000 units in January to 156,900 units in February. These included a slight improvement in starts of single-detached dwellings and some further easing in apartment and other multiple-unit starts.

Compared to last year's figure, the decline in February affected all types of dwelling with starts of single-detached dwellings down by 32.7 per cent, from 2,408 units to 1,621 units, and apartment and all other types of dwelling by 59.7 per cent, from 8,566 units to 3,457 units.

CMHC points out, however, that February 1969 figures reflected an extraordinary increase in institutional mortgage lending activity in the closing months of 1968 and the first few months of 1969. Most of the lenders were particularly active in making loans for rental dwellings during that period.

During the first two months of the year, starts in urban centers totalled 11,927 dwelling units, 46.5 percent fewer than those of the year before, a decline of 40.6 per cent in starts of single-detached dwellings and a 48.6 percent decrease in all other types.

The value of gold production in Canada in January, calculated at the average price paid by the Royal Canadian Mint, was \$8,017,937.