

Company of Young Canadians

Halifax members express views on Company problems

Drop-out problem

Joan: You must realize that there are ways of keeping them in school other than running around saying "stay in school."

Editor: The teacher probably tells them that if they work hard they will get ahead, surely they soon discover that this isn't always the case.

Joan: Yeah, well how do we get around this type of thing.

Editor: Providing the opportunity isn't the same as providing the motivation is it?

Joan: Yeah, but that also sometimes motivates people, if they haven't got a place they figure what the heck is the use of trying.

Editor: Daring your stay here as a company worker do you hope to overcome this problem?

Joan: I don't know how I can, Carol?

Darby: I can't see how.

Carol: I don't feel that it is up to us to say just because you don't have a pair of pants you should drop out.

Darby: They have to help themselves in the first place.

Joan: I have no definite answers, I know that it shouldn't be but what are you going to do?

Editor: Would you advocate the adoption of a programme similar to the one initiated in New York - Operation Headstart?

Joan: So what if they take them right out of their homes? That still doesn't make their background any different.

Darby: How can they take the children out of a particular environment? I can't see how anyone feels God enough to do that.

Joan: How would they feel towards their parents after that, what happens to the parents? They are still there, so you just leave them to rot.

Editor: There are many things that I'd like to have but if I am unable to finance them I just darn well go without.

Joan: Yeah, but some people don't think that way. They happen to like them and they figure they'll find a way to acquire them.

Editor: If you have a grade 9 education how are you supposed to find a way?

Darby: I don't know. But you are thinking from a middle class viewpoint though.

Editor: I'd like to travel but I can't afford it so I don't. That's it, period.

Darby: That's because you can't get it easy. Children are easy to come by. It's probably the only thing that they can have and call their own.

Joan: I don't have the answers to all these things and I never claim to.

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Joan: Besides who needs three cars, five or six TV sets, and ten bathrooms and stuff like that, you can get along with one bathroom and one car and maybe not live in such an expensive house.

Editor: Oh come on now; you cannot raise a family on fifty dollars a week.

Joan: What are you poor when you are making fifty dollars a week. You learn to live cheap.

Company is born

Approximately fourteen months ago Prime Minister Pearson announced his plan for a domestic Peace Corps; more than one foot-dragging year later it is under way.

Three members of the Company are in Halifax under the auspices of the Nova Scotia Project. Each receives room and board and thirty-five dollars a month.

Carol: I mean okay, I have a grade nine education but I had a fairly good job and I would consider myself just as good as a middle class person.

Joan: All middle class people don't have a fantastic education, Gordon Sinclair has only a grade eight education so you can't go by that.

Carol: There are such things as, what do you call them - educated fools you know.

Editor: Should one of the members of the community come to you with a problem what would you or could you do about it?

Darby: I don't know. Find out what they want to do about it.

Carol: It's not what we want; it's what they want. This is the whole damn trouble.

Joan: They're not dumb; they're not stupid or ignorant. Why should we be coming up with all the answers when those people are sitting out there?

Darby: They've got a lot of answers. They have a lot of ideas but nobody listens to them.

Joan: Well, there are a few things on the go, There's Kwacha house, (Kwacha means freedom in Zambia.) It was started in the basement of the Surf club.

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Editor: I'll concede that you care for these people but is caring enough? None of you has had professional training; do you think that your six week orientation programme qualifies you to deal with these complex problems?

Joan: What have the professionals done? I suppose if you had a professional training they tell you when you get to this point you do this but that doesn't always work.

Editor: What guidelines have been set up by company directors?

Joan: The company hasn't set up anything. We are the company. It's up to us. We volunteers are the company.

Editor: Who evaluates the success of your activities within the community?

Darby: We do. Oh we do. We do hope to get together as a group of volunteers to evaluate what we are doing at different points. The kids that are working here in the Maritimes have a regional meeting once every two months.

Editor: What percentage of the unemployed in this area are without work through choice and not necessity?

Joan: I wouldn't say too many. Not if people took the better to go and talk to these people but you get a defeatist attitude. They keep trying for a job that they like and they don't get it for some reason or other so they give up.

Editor: What would you consider the single most important task that faces you in the next two years?

Darby: I think the most important thing is to help the poor

to help themselves, to organize so that they can solve their own problems. This is kind of difficult. From your viewpoint I think you are suggesting that we be leaders and I don't think that's what we are trying to be; we just want to see their viewpoint.

Joan: I am definitely not here to be a leader nor do I claim to be.

Carol: Nor I.

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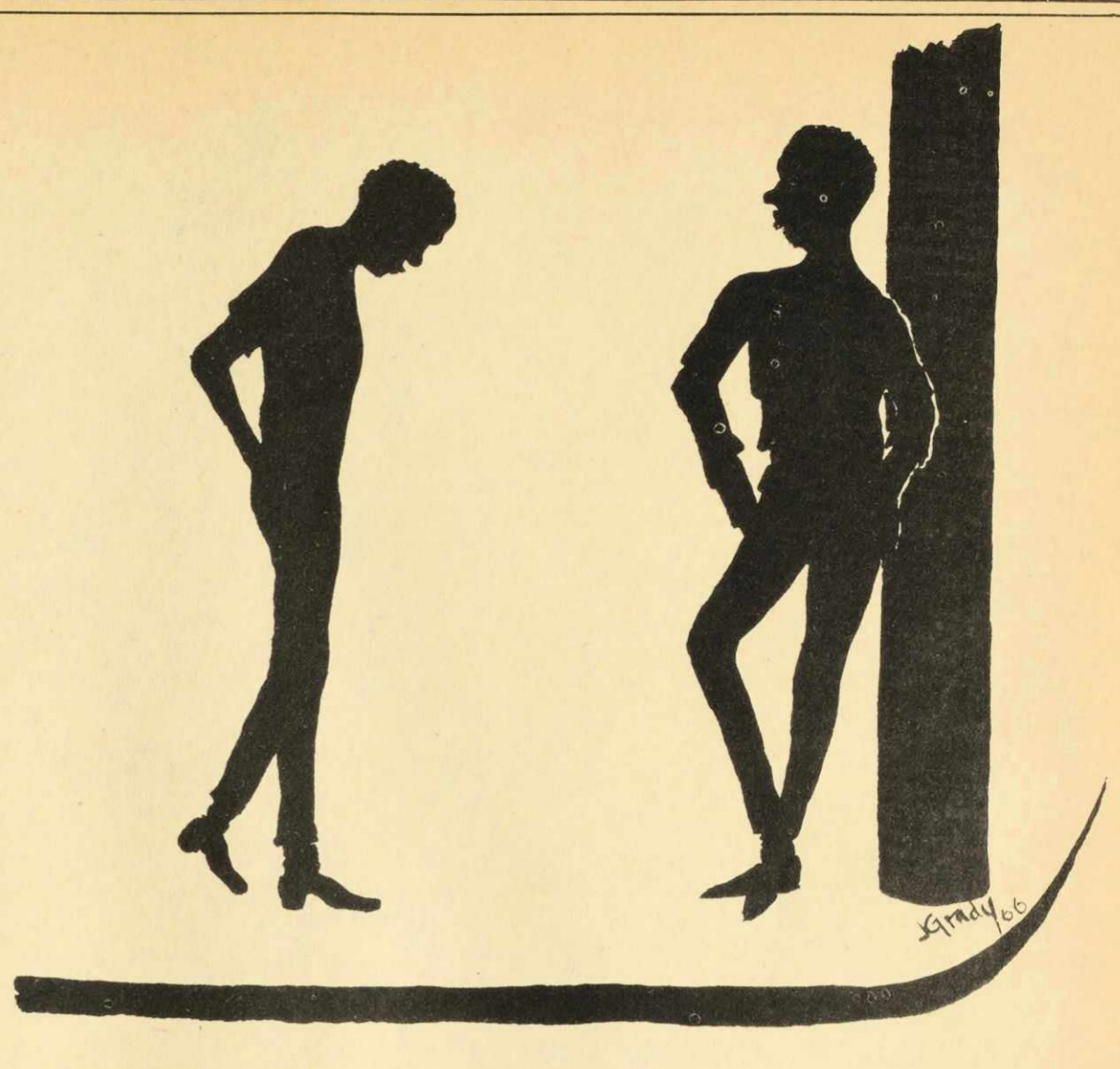
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Grady '66

The middle class

Carol: You look down upon me and our people as lower class people. Okay, well maybe they don't feel this way. Maybe they feel so long as I've got food in my house and a little bit of heat to keep me warm and something to put on my back I am not poor.

Joan: I consider the middle class are very poor mentally in their outlook on life. I figure they have a lot less fun than a person who is poor materially.

Darby: Middle class people are happy about material things whereas the economically poor people have life to look forward to. The middle class consider material things more than life itself. I would honestly say that there is a greater percentage of people who are in the economically poor class who are happier with life itself.

Editor: There is such a thing as liking the people that you live around and liking the place that you live in.

Darby: Why isn't it? What are we living for?

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Darby: Are they? Or is the community at large a drain on them?

Joan: Where's all the money going then? Who's got it? The middle class. I don't see any middle class going poor. They sure can afford it.

Editor: Don't you think that they deserve what they have earned?

Darby: Why do they? Just because they had the opportunity that maybe the rest didn't get? The middle class is making around ten thousand a year so they have to pay three thousand in taxes, so what? The other guy didn't have a chance.

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By TIM FOLEY Editor

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