

any given citizen. Each agency seeks to make citizens conscious of its function, and to do this it may publish information in various forms, and make personal contact with citizens. But let me stress again that the individual agency of modern government deals with only a small facet of the day-to-day life of any citizen. This means simply that if a citizen is to have maximum benefit from government programmes, he must be familiar to some degree at least with a considerable of programmes.

Now this is not an impossible task for the well-educated, alert and well-informed middle class — particularly since their direct needs from government are quite limited. But what about the poor people of the country? They need a great deal from numerous government agencies; yet most of them are not in a position to establish a functioning relationship with these agencies. The reasons vary — illiteracy, physical isolation, social isolation, language barriers — there are a vast number of reasons why the poor cannot easily enter into a significant relationship with government agencies.

And there is another more general reason also. The government agencies are oriented to commodities, to sectors of economic activity. They are oriented to increasing productivity, and if they spend too much of their time trying to help people who cannot produce for one reason or another, the agency may look inefficient. Let me give you an example. The job of the agricultural representative is to help increase farm production. Two hours spent with a well-equipped, well-capitalized farmer may help that farmer increase his production by several hundred dollars a year. On the other hand, two hours spent with a poor, ill-equipped farmer may have little or no effect, because the basic means of production are deficient. Which farmer then, is an "ag. rep." likely to pay most attention to — the man who can apply his advice easily or the man who can apply it only with great difficulty? The answer is obvious, and it illustrates what I am saying.

It would be easy enough to cite many instances if one examined all the programmes of the federal and provincial governments. And this, in my opinion, is the basic weakness of our government organizations when they seek to enable the poor to enter the productive economic life of our nation.

#### BRIDGING THE GAP IN COMMUNICATION

The fact is...that communication between the governments and the poor is difficult in the extreme. Somehow, there must be a bridge built — a communications bridge — between those who are in need and those who have the power to help them. Without such a bridge, the complex condition of poverty cannot be grappled with effectively by the kind of administrative structure we have developed in this country.

What kind of a communications bridge should we develop? Once again, there are many avenues — many roads to the kingdom. One could say that improved formal education would be a useful part of the structure. One could say that improved public information methods of government agencies would be useful — and who can deny that there is room for clear and lucid statements which can be easily

understood by most of the people. The number and capability of field men could be improved, no doubt. But it is doubtful that even if we very greatly improved all that we now do, this would, in fact, establish the required inter-action between governments and low-income people.

Let me elaborate on this for a moment. In order to become successful in our society, the poor must change — and most of them wish to change. But change in people and their social institutions can occur only through actual involvement and experience. What we are faced with is this: that while some kinds of change can be brought about by edict of government, lasting and constructive social change cannot be brought about by edict. Change in individuals and social institutions emerges from a consensus of new expectations. New expectations are not very tangible, however. They are rooted in people's minds as beliefs or ideas concerning what should be. While new expectations may be suggested by administrative programmes, they become actual only when they become accepted in the minds of people generally, and thus come to constitute working parts of people's attitudes and opinions. Such changes are brought about, as we are increasingly aware, not by imposition of government programmes, not by edict, but through the direct experience and involvement of the people.

What I am saying in effect is this: that both government programmes and the involvement of local low-income people are necessary if the challenge of poverty is to be met. Where programmes to eliminate poverty have failed, or not been fully successful, the failure can be traced to this crucial fact.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Is there a general solution to this problem — a solution which is compatible with the fairly rigid administrative structures we have evolved; a solution which is philosophically acceptable to a democratic free enterprise society? I feel that there may be a solution and that this solution may be found in a social process which is relatively new, but which has been developed with success in many communities in many areas of the world — both underdeveloped and developed areas. The name given to this process is "community development". This name has come to have a reasonably precise meaning when it is used by the specialists who have come to understand and apply community development as a social process. There is a well-known working definition of the term "community development", which has been adopted by many international agencies. The term "community development" has, in international usage, come to connote "the processes by which efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress". The definition then points out that the essential element of this complex process is the participation of the people themselves, in the provision of services in ways which will encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help.