

dred and fifty.

What does poverty mean in Saint John? For one thing, it means one of the highest infant mortality rates in Canada. In varying degrees, it means nutritional deficiency; insufficient and/or grubby clothing; shabby house; falling plaster in the halls, odours of filth and waste, gross accumulations of reeking garbage, plagues of insect parasites; rats; dingy alleys; dirty litter strewn, weedy back yards; piled rubble, broken glass. An early exposure to violence, brutality, fear. An alcoholic parent, or parents. Unhappiness. Hardening. Cruelty. Hate. Early sexual experience. A craving for whatever you can get that will make life easier. To be happy. Crime. Jail. Prison. To hold on to what is secure. To worship what is friendly. To like. To love. To drop-out of school. To marry early. To earn less than \$2,000 a year. Not to know how to feed, clothe or love your children. Not to get out of the kind of neighbourhood in which you were born. To be generous. Bitterness. Weariness. To make a good life. Indolence. To live on welfare. Pride.

In Saint John poverty means something else, too. It means to avoid change.

It can be of no small significance that the first peripheral study of the problem areas of Saint John was made only twenty years ago; or that although it recommended immediate action to alleviate what had been for a long time a critical situation, very little, or no action at all, was taken for years. Or that the Poor Laws that were used in the province up to within the past five years were those same laws that had been formulated in the time of Elizabeth the First, four hundred years ago. Or that the first major slum clearance in Saint John, out of which has come Courtenay Place, was initiated within only the last five years. Or that it was fought and resisted by a core of affected landlords, with an accompaniment of local protest.

It is perhaps a curious thing

that such a number of the landlords of the substandard areas should have protested so adamantly what should have seemed a vast renewal scheme for the benefit of all. Perhaps much was to blame for simple misunderstanding. Radical innovation automatically arouses suspicion and distrust, especially when it disrupts what is already a favourable establishment, a way of life. In the case of the landlords, urban renewal meant the elimination of what was in fact a somewhat profitable state of affairs. The majority of the landlords happened to be absentee owners;

they did not live in their sometimes squalid or decrepit properties. They lived, in fact, in rather 'better' neighbourhoods, and in some instances, represented the more 'Respectable' elements of their community; that is, the upholders of religion and morality. The landlords performed a minimum, often a most very minimum service of repair to their properties. After all, often the wreckage of a good property came from the behaviour of the tenants themselves, and if this was what they wanted, perhaps

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"The house has four fire escapes, but only one of them is at all trustworthy."