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*Intelligence is derived from two words- inter and legere- inter meaning 'between' and legere meaning 'to choose'. An intelligent person, therefore, is one who has learned 'to choose between'. He knows that good is better than evil, that confidence should supersede fear, that love is superior to hate, that gentleness is better than cruelty, forbearance than intolerance, compassion than arrogance, and that truth has more virtue than ignorance.*

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poverty cont.

Instead we see stately homes, the legislature, the universities, the downtown office complexes. Poverty, if it exists, is supposed to be a phenomenon of the North Side. This is not the case, however; Fredericton does have its poor and they live on both sides of the river. This city's poverty problem is exacerbated by a mainstream of ignorance and denial of the situation. In addition, there are many myths about the poor which tend to prejudice the "well-to-do."

New Brunswick is a have-not province. One measure of this is the fact that the welfare rates in this province are among the lowest in the country. On paper, at any rate, a single employable person on welfare is in the least desirable position in the province. Such a person receives only \$108 per month. As Deputy minister of Social Services Georgio Gaudette freely admits, such a rate is absolutely insufficient as a means of support. This "social insecurity system" seems to perpetuate, not solve, the problem of poverty.

The latest numbers from the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey put the unemployment rate for New Brunswick at 17% or about 47 thousand people. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that almost half of the single people in this province are below the poverty line. It should be noted that the unemployed are not the only group which can be considered poor; the working poor, senior citizens, marginalized families, the disabled and students also fall into this category.

The Fredericton Anti-Poverty Organization (FAPO) is an association concerned with both alleviating the plight of the poor and working towards a long-term solution to the problem. As a means of meeting both ends, FAPO runs a distribution service as well as a resource centre. In my contacts with FAPO, the extent of poverty was emphasized. It was noted that even the so-called middle-class is haunted by a "spectre of poverty" in the form of debts which have become difficult to pay due to the downturn of the economy.

This "spectre of poverty" which permeates our society has, of course, become more apparent during the recession. The nature of the social services infrastructure has been affected by the swelling numbers of the nouveau poor. In addition to the increased numbers of the poor, government services must cope with budget cut-backs. Ever since David Stockman defined ketchup as a vegetable for the subsidized lunch programme of the

early Reagan years, austerity has been the watchword for government around the globe. The administration of Brian Mulroney is no different. M. Gaudette has stated that concern has been expressed over issues such as universality versus selectivity with respect to social programs. He asserted, however, that although much remains to be seen, those in greatest need should not worry about their benefits being either cancelled or reduced.

The deputy minister, nevertheless, did not think that the ministry has been strained in recent years by the increased unemployment, especially in Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John. Due to demographics, services for the elderly have also had to be expanded.

One way in which the provincial government is attempting to cope with the stress placed on its social services is to rely more and more on cooperative efforts with volunteers. Many are concerned with just how far volunteerism can be taken, with whether or not the volunteer sector can maintain the quality of its traditional services as well as taking up some of the slack left by the government. M. Gaudette seems to believe that this strategy is working effectively.

One of these cooperative efforts between the government and volunteers is the Fredericton Community Kitchen, located behind the Victoria Health Centre. It is staffed and supplied by volunteers - churches, local businesses and individuals; government money helped to establish it. The kitchen is open for a noon-meal 7 days a week and feeds about 55 people per day. The meal usually centres around soup or stew and those who come to the Kitchen are permitted to eat as much as they like. For some, however, this is their only real meal of the day.

A related service is the Fredericton Emergency Shelter, which is also located behind the Victoria Health Centre. The Shelter was set up by some churches concerned with the large numbers of homeless people in the city. The Shelter receives money from churches, the social services department and individuals. As well, some of the Shelter's guests are required to pay \$5 for each night that they spend there.

The Shelter has a paid employee on duty at all times, but the rest of the work is done by volunteers. While the available staff attempt to make the Shelter's atmosphere home-like — and, indeed it resembles a hostel in some respects — they cannot be expected to provide as much individual contact as is required. Many more volunteers are necessary to enable adequate support programmes to be

carried out.

Homelessness is one of the most critical problems which the poor face. The low vacancy rate in Fredericton makes finding low-rent housing almost impossible.

Some of the material effects of homelessness are documented in a 1983 report entitled "The Case for Long-Term, Supportive Housing." The report was written by participants in the Single Displaced Persons' Project.

As a result of having and losing housing over a period of months or years, the homeless become 'transient'. They lose personal property that is hard to move and begin to limit their belongings to what they can carry. Their social and familiar relationships are strained or broken. They become increasingly dependent on the social service system for food, shelter, social space and personal relationships on a day-to-day basis. Because of their "transience", homeless people experience additional problems not faced by those with adequate housing. They have no effective legal protection of tenure. They are more vulnerable to rape and other forms of violence, to harassment by police, shopkeepers, children and the general public. They are exposed to special laws (special 'vagrancy', loitering, and drinking outside) and prone to abrogation of due legal process. They experience blockages when they attempt to vote, set up a bank account, get credit, get a job, get general welfare assistance, get medical coverage, take care of health problems, keep clean, mate, and build friendships.

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## National radio conference

This year, from May 16 to 20, delegates representing some fifty campus radio stations from across Canada will descend on UNB for the annual National Campus Radio Conference. This will be the first time for the conference to be held in the Maritimes.

Gordon Loane, Secretary of the organizing committee and member of CHSR, indicated that nine seminars will take place on a wide variety of subjects ranging from production and broadcasting to the more technical aspects of radio station operations. In addition, it is hoped that certain high profile guest speakers will accept invitations to give talks.

Mr. Loane praised various organizations for their assistance, which included financial support from the alumni association and a commitment by the university to help with transportation of the delegates to and from the airport.

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