

**Sydney Day Care**

What this has meant is that black students have been encouraged to excel in sports and questions of the academic performance of blacks have been "shoved under the carpet".

In this school the ratio of whites to blacks in academic subjects is very uneven considering the fact that blacks constitute 35% of the student body. In physics the ratio was 13:1, in Math 20:1, in Biology 1:1, in Chemistry 30:1 and in French it was 5:1. Most black students were alienated from the school environment, were often persuaded that they were naturally stupid and accepted themselves as failures as far as academic work was concerned. In visiting several black communities during the summer we found that this trend existed in all integrated schools in the province.

The poor educational background given blacks in segregated elementary schools along with their poverty-stricken environment severely handicaps them. The racist response of school boards, whether they realize it or not, is also largely responsible for the perpetuation of this problem.

Blacks do not compete with white students because they have low skill levels and because the grounds of competition is unfamiliar to them. At the university level this problem is even more acute and the failure rate of black students is high. But the university is at "the end of the line" as far as formal education goes. By then, the system has done such a fine job of excluding the poor and sorting out the middle and upper class people to enter and grad-

uate from university that most blacks are usually excluded by then.

It is obvious that when the social and economic conditions of the majority of blacks in this province is considered, as we have attempted to do, both in the contemporary and historical sense, we see that the N.S. Black Student's Association for Higher Learning, in their original article, have not even attempted to deal with and expose the institutional racism that black people face in the educational system. People who are really interested in changing the plight of blacks in the education system should begin with an analysis of what the majority of people face. In the final analysis, an approach to the question rooted in individualism will not do.

The article was researched by the authors and we accept responsibility for the information presented here.

Before 1865, the only government - sponsored schools were private and exclusively available to a very small minority of upper class children. In most instances, communities had to "fend for themselves" which meant that the vast majority of adults were illiterate. In the black community there were few schools. Those that existed were either set up by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel or some other religious or benevolent organization.

Schools that did exist in black communities at this time were literally unattended and probably ran on a seasonal basis, stopping every winter and reopening the following spring. As was the case in

the province as a whole, there was more propagation of religious ideology in these schools than the learning of the three R's.

In the post-1865 period, things underwent little change. This date is significant because it marked the official establishment of the

ment stating that colored pupils shall not be excluded from public schools was passed. But power to authorize separate schools for sex and race was left with the Council of Public Instruction. Hence, the public schools blacks were segregated.

What was the effect of the small segregated schools? By 1950 only three indigenous blacks had received degrees from university. These three degrees were in theology.

Today there is talk of great progress being made in the quality of education received by blacks in Nova Scotia. This progress is usually measured in terms of the number of blacks graduating from high school or attending university. But this measure of progress is very superficial. For it was revealed in a 1968 survey that approximately two percent of the local black population has advanced beyond grade 12,

\$4,000. Most housing in the black communities does not have indoor plumbing, lacks central heating, burns wood in large amounts and is improperly wired and lighted. Communities on the whole do not have access to transportation, have improper medical attention and have no or very poor recreation facilities. Unemployment is rampant and characterizes the life of most black families.

Young blacks have a high rate of out-migration, a fact that is surprising only to the most naive, as it is a trend in the region as a whole. A trend of poverty and isolation exists as a daily reality of black life in Nova Scotia today.

Several changes have occurred in the last 10-15 years in the handling of the education of black Nova Scotians. In most communities on the grades 7-12 level, black students have now been placed in integrated schools. This has now become official govern-



**East Preston**

public school system in the province. Blacks were given little aid to help develop schools in their communities. There was also a great deal of opposition to blacks attending schools with white students in Halifax. While we have not been able to determine how widespread this feeling was, what we can say is that those with the power and who controlled the media at that time, were responsible for the propagation of racist thinking which has been used to divide the people they rule.

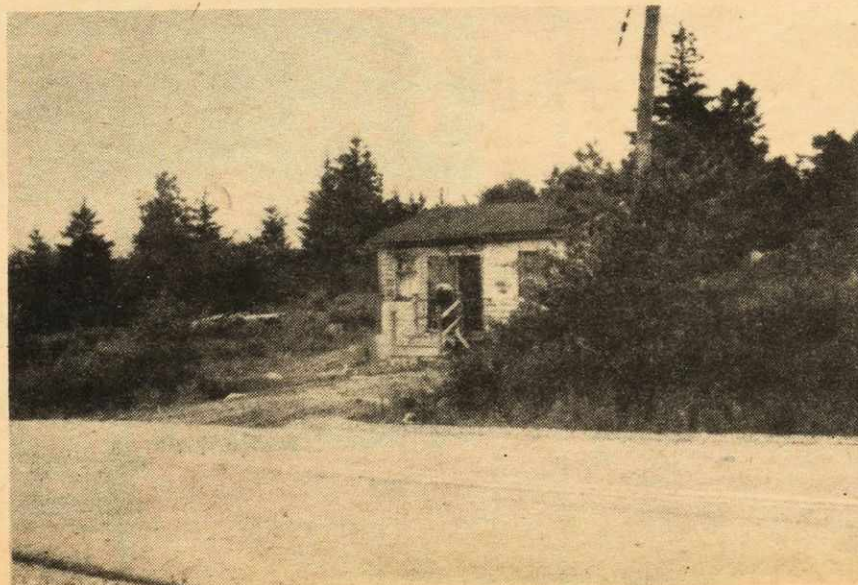
In 1884, the House of Assembly received two petitions against separate schools in Halifax. A full-scale debate resulted over the question and an amend-

and that less than 25% has gone beyond grade 9. It becomes obvious, then, that the progress being measure is the "progress" of two or three percent of the local black population. It is also obvious that the other 98% is not considered when progress is measured. It becomes clear that when one begins to measure progress in terms of the majority of blacks that one finds that very little progress has been made, and to speak of progress, as some people choose to, is to create a false impression and to perpetuate comfortable myths.

The average annual income of most black families is between \$2,000 and

ment policy. On the elementary level the old segregated schools still exist. These dilapidated schools are understaffed, lack recreation facilities and have most of the children concentrated in "slow-learner" classes. In these elementary schools, from the present authors' own personal experiences, and environment exists where the major stress is on discipline and attendance. These schools offer the black student very little in the way of skill development.

After six or seven years in these kinds of schools, the performance of the black student in the integrated school is poor. Graham Creighton High School, located eight miles east of Dartmouth, is an example. It was reported two years ago that more than 65% of the black students left school between grades 9 and 12. Over eighty percent of the black students attending the school were in the general and adjusted programs. The failure rate for black students was also very high.



**A House in East Preston**