

# Understanding Canada



Regional and Community  
Development in a New Nation

Jim Lotz

# UNDERSTANDING CANADA

## Regional and Community Development in a New Nation

Government intervention in the lives of Canadians has grown enormously over the past ten years, as our country and its people struggle towards a sense of identity and purpose. How much can the State help us to develop, as individuals and as citizens? And how much can each of us do on our own to achieve personal and community development?

*Understanding Canada* traces the concept of community development from its beginnings in colonial Africa to recent attempts at self help in Canada, and relates it to the ideas of individualism and liberalism. Focusing especially on the Atlantic Provinces, the author looks at efforts to ‘help’ the poor from the top down and from the bottom up. He analyzes the successes of the approach of the Antigonish Movement which flourished in the Thirties.

Jim Lotz’ suggested models, goals and roles in community development indicate that we can meet rapid change in a positive and creative way.

Since 1960, Jim Lotz has carried out research and been active on the problems of unemployed youth, urban development, squatters, new towns, declining communities, cross-cultural education, bookselling in Canada, and the social, human and community impact of development in Canada, Scotland and Alaska. He is the author of *Northern Realities* (1970), and co-author of *Cape Breton Island* (1974). He serves in an editorial capacity with Plan Canada, Science Forum, Canadian Review and Axiom. A former federal civil servant and university professor, he now lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, earning a living as an independent research worker, freelance writer, organizer and teacher.

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# Foreword

I arrived in Canada in 1954 as an economic refugee. Britain in the 1950s, a bleak, dreary land offered few opportunities for a restless, questing spirit like mine.

My first job involved putting together air photographs.

After a few months, I was fired -- for just cause -- and crashed my car on the way home. I spent several months as a billing clerk and advertising copywriter before going to McGill University to take a master's degree in geography. Since coming to Canada, I have tried to make a living while striving to understand the bewildering, beguiling, fascinating, frustrating post-colonial, post-industrial, post-modern, post- all-sorts-of-things country that is Canada.

The title of this book derives from living and working and travelling in Canada, and the parallel process of seeking to better understand myself, as I reacted to what I saw and experienced. My years in Canada have been a journey outwards and a journey inwards in a country that has an enormous range of landscapes, peoples and activities.

In 1955 and 1956 I spent the summers at McGill Subarctic Research Laboratory in Schefferville in Labrador-Ungava, a town that no longer exists. While huge machines tore apart the iron-rich land, I planted grain and vegetables in a test plot near the lab: They all died from cold in midsummer. I travelled around the immense, brooding silent land that makes up so

much of Canada. Between 1957 and 1960, I spent a year in northern Ellesmere Island, living on a glacier and the ice shelf and exploring the interior ice cap. The hugeness, the harshness the sheer *uncaring* nature of this lovely land made an indelible impression on me. From the air, our party on the Gilman glacier looked like “fleas on a bedsheet,” as a friend put it.

In 1960, having reached my level of competency in glaciology, I joined the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources as a community planning officer. I carried out studies of new northern towns (Inuvik, Thompson), declining ones (Uranium City), the squatters of Whitehorse, the Dawson City Festival and others matters. In 1962, I moved to the Northern Coordination and Research Centre of Northern Affairs. I spent my summers in the Yukon, carrying out research that I thought would be of interest and use to residents.

The Klondike Gold Rush of 1896-98 drew thousands of men, and a few women, to Dawson City. Some of them, when they reached the community, did not go out to the creeks. In part, this was because most of the good ground had been staked. But, for many, the journey, not the arrival, had been the goal. They had suffered incredible hardships, challenged the north, and found something in themselves that they had never before known or had ignored. In this primeval wilderness, something spoke to them that assuaged the abysmal loneliness of their hearts, that lifted their spirits and gave meaning to their lives.

In *The Spell of the Yukon*, Robert Service catches how many of the goldseekers -- and immigrants to Canada -- felt when they reached their new found land;

“You come to get rich (damned good reason), You feel like  
an exile at first;  
You hate it like hell for a season, And then you are worse  
than the worst.”

The poem continues:

“And I’ve thought that I surely was dreaming  
With the peace o’ the world piled on top.”

And ends:

“It’s the beauty that thrills me with wonder,  
It’s the stillness that fills me with peace.”

In *Northern Realities*, published by New Press (now defunct) in 1970, I contrasted the two visions of Canada’s North, as a place to make a quick fortune, to clean up and clear out, or as a pristine land offering, peace, solitude and spiritual healing for harried urban dwellers.

In 1966 I became a professor and research director of the Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology at Saint Paul University, a small, Catholic francophone institution in Ottawa. Here I continued to follow my curiosity wherever it led me, teaching (and learning from) nuns, priests and laypeople, and carrying out research on Ottawa’s Lower Town, unemployed youth, squatting in Canada, development in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and other topics. *Understanding Canada*, published by NC Press, documents some of these involvements and my views on community development. The 1960s and 1970s were a turbulent time in Canada, the United States and Europe. Young people, brought up in affluent societies, protested against the evils and inequities of the world. Cradled in the cultures of entitlement and instant gratification, they demanded that government immediately rid Canada of poverty, injustice, the abuse of human rights, environmental degradation, etc.

The election of Pierre Elliott Trudeau as Prime Minister in 1968 appeared to usher in an era of national renewal and revitalization. There was no shortage of brilliant minds and clever schemes to strengthen national identity and overcome all that was wrong in Canada. Somehow, they never connected

with the real lives of ordinary Canadians struggling to deal with change. In the 1960s, community development seemed to offer a cheap and cheerful way of bringing outsiders into the mainstream of Canadian society -- or as a new form of social control by governments. Despite their best efforts, the Democratic Deficit -- the gap between them and the people they claimed to serve -- widened over the years.

The Sixties and early Seventies saw a proliferation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), non-profit ventures, interest groups and similar bodies. They confronted the government over issues that concerned them or did what official bodies could not or would do or cared for disadvantaged groups from whales to non-smokers. In the U.S.A., the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement focused the idealism and commitment of discontented youth. Todd Gitlin subtitled his book *The Sixties*, "Years of Hope: Days of Rage." In Canada, the energy of excluded individuals and groups became more diffuse, becoming concerned with the status of women, the environment, poverty and other causes. Many of their organizations -- too many, in fact -- relied on government funding to forward their agendas.

In these turbulent times, many Canadians developed a dualistic view of government. Was it the source of all good, the fountain of all benefits, the solver of all problems that afflicted them? Or an oppressive, intrusive, demanding force in the lives of ordinary citizens, concerned only with manipulating and controlling them? *Understanding Canada* reflects this view of the state as a benign or malign presence in the lives of Canadians.

One theme recurs again and again in the turmoil of the last four decades. In a segmented, fragmented, ever-changing society, where the centre seemingly cannot hold, and chaos and anarchy beckon at every turn, the lure of community, of

togetherness, warmth, wholeness, belonging has not slackened. Traditionally, community has referred to people living together in a specific geographical location or to groups with common concerns -- communities of interest. Community today arises from a combination of self-help, mutual aid and cooperation, themes that have persisted throughout history among those seeking to create a better life for themselves and others. Community has to be created. Social movements create community, providing lost souls with identity, meaning and direction in life. Some are fruitful and rewarding for the rest of society, others damaging to the general good.

In *The Lichen Factor: The Quest for Community Development in Canada*, published by UCCB Press in 1998, I examined ways in which polarities and dualities (development/conservation, the state/ citizens, past/future, tradition/modernity) might be reconciled. This third part of the Canada trilogy drew on my northern experience to show how three options for human interactions play out. When caribou fight, they sometimes lock horns. Unable to separate, they fall down and die after spending all their energy trying to pull away from each other. Muskoxen, when attacked by wolves, form a circle or a line to protect themselves. Confronting the enemy led to a huge slaughter of these great beasts when Peary's hunters went in search of fresh meat. The land around Lake Hazen is strewn with the skulls of muskoxen, mute testimony to the impact of technology and the inability of animals to change their ways.

The Canadian North also harbours over a thousand species of lichen. They are a symbiosis between two life forms, algae and fungi: One cannot live without the other. The alga makes food for itself and the fungus which, in turn, draws minerals from the rocks and other places to nourish the partnership. Is the lichen a living example of cooperation and mutual aid -- or of parasitism? Scientists still puzzle over how lichens came to

be and how they manage to survive the harsh conditions at the ends of the earth. This humble plant holds many mysteries.

These three northern forms of life -- the caribou, the musk-oxen and the lichen -- dramatically illustrate the options for human relationships: Conflict, Confrontation, Cooperation. The reasons why people one option over the other is complex and mysterious. The three books of my Canada trilogy explore them, stressing how self-help, mutual aid and cooperation can help individuals and communities to create better lives for themselves through their own efforts.

My quest to understand Canada--and myself--continues.

I am grateful to The Working Centre for republishing *Understanding Canada*. This venture is a wonderful example of the lichen factor in action.

Jim Lotz  
Halifax, Nova Scotia.  
December 2010

# 1

## What is Community Development?

Community development means different things to different people. The technique, in modern terms, arose in the dying days of the British Empire. In British Colonial Africa, the process was initially called “mass education.” After the Second World War, community development was used as a way of preparing people in rural areas for self-government. It began as a pragmatic, low-key, low-cost approach to help people to identify their problems and to work together towards solutions.

In the 1950s and 1960s, as professionals and amateurs went forth to help “underdeveloped” nations, community development was identified as a simple way of handling complex problems of the impact of change on communities. These communities were usually traditional subsistence societies, based on farming, in which people were bound together by kinship ties, and by a system of mutual obligation.

Even small changes in such societies can have devastating effects. In the case of the Yir Yoront, an Aboriginal tribe in Australia, the social organization collapsed when ranchers rewarded young men and women for doing chores with gifts of steel axes. The cheap, easily accessible steel axes were much more efficient than the stone axes used by the elders of the tribe. The elders had kept a tight control over the supply of axes, knew where the material to make them could be found and thus had exercised a measure of control over the young,

and kept the small society stable.<sup>1</sup>

In the Sixties, community development was imported into North America and Western Europe as a way of fostering self-help programmes in ghettos, depressed rural areas, and urban centres. The helping professionals sanitized, deodorized and rationalized the technique. Roland Warren, a professor of social work in the United States defined community development as:

...a process of helping community people to analyze their problems, to exercise as large a measure of autonomy as is possible and feasible, and to promote a greater identification of the individual citizen and the individual organization with the community as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

When Canada declared War on Poverty in 1965, the Director of the Special Planning Secretariat of the Privy Council stated; "Community development is more than a tool of an anti-poverty programme: no anti-poverty programme can be successful without community development."<sup>3</sup> The Secretariat then set up a subcommittee to define community development, but it sank without trace.

Community development has been thrown around in Canada as a panacea for all kinds of social problems. The average Canadian is now beginning to ask: What does community development mean today? Does it have any relevance to the solution of local, regional, provincial and national problems? Or is it yet another alien import?

The answers you get, depending on who you talk to, may be confusing. It is helpful, at the outset, to distinguish between the terms "change", "growth" and "development", as they are often used to describe the same processes.

"Change" means that what once was is no longer. The transformations involved in change can be complete or

partial, negative or positive, or both, depending on your value judgement. Change can be in any direction; it can benefit some individuals, groups, communities or classes, and it can harm others.

“Growth” implies an increase in size, weight, quantity, volume, etc. It is sometimes used as a synonym for development, or it can be used to mean more of the same thing. However, growth usually implies a quantitative change.

“Development” signifies an unfolding, a growing from within, an organic process that involves a fuller and richer working out of what has already been started, the achievement of a higher level of sophistication or of completeness.

Development raises questions of qualitative change, the idea that there will not only be more of what currently exists, but that things will be better. Until recently, and especially in the west, it was assumed that development, in itself, was a good thing. The question that arises these days is—who stands to benefit from development?

Community development focuses on the process of enabling people collectively to achieve goals and to influence actions together, rather than as individuals. All individuals and communities have notions of the proper way in which to handle threats to their integrity. As the rate of change accelerates, more things happen more often to more people. Many of these events cannot be handled by traditional mechanisms or institutions. People begin to feel as if the world is getting out of control.

Community development, as a conscious technique or process, tries to involve people in open discussions of their problems on both the personal and the community levels. Frequently it will entail an economic analysis of the community, and research and decision making aimed at drawing up and implementing a plan of action, to create or maintain the kind of community that people have collectively determined to be

desirable. The results of the process may be to encourage change in the community, to keep things stable, or to develop strategies to avoid change. Unless people are willing to admit they have problems, anything done for the community by a small group or by an individual is seen as an unwarranted intrusion. Many communities react to change, instead of anticipating it and developing strategies for handling it in a positive manner.

Communities, of course, are never homogeneous entities; they are made up of competing and conflicting individuals and groups. There are those with desperate economic needs, and those on the lookout for a quick buck. There are entrenched economic and political forces whose members watch everything in the community, and groups that have become inert and ineffective in community life. Socially conscious people will press for more welfare services, improved education and better hospitals, while others want factories and a strong tax base. Groups have different priorities, operate in different time-frames. As members of communities draw together to face internal problems or threats from outside their boundaries, tensions and conflicts within the community may actually increase. Effective community development should enable people to handle these conflicts and tensions in a creative manner. The message is clear from all over the world—if people don't hang together, they'll hang separately.

Strategies for handling change must be based on an understanding of the internal workings of the community, and on a sophisticated appreciation of the forces impinging on it. On Ellesmere Island, I came across the bones of musk-oxen, surrounded by rifle shells. When musk-oxen are threatened by wolves, their main enemies, they huddle together, the bulls on the outside, the females and the calves in the middle; the bull's horns deter the wolves. This protective strategy was the wrong one to use when the U.S. explorer Robert Peary was looking for fresh meat.

In times of rapid change, community members are forced to make contact first with each other, then with other organizations in the community. Then they must move through a hierarchy of communities, from the local to the international, seeking help and advice.

Some people in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, decided that the town needed a major industry. So the mayor and other civic leaders set on foot a campaign to convince Michelin to establish a tire factory there. They went through the community development process of establishing goals, seeking help and advice from the Federal and Provincial governments (including promises of financial aid for the plant), organizing people and identifying resources both inside and outside the community, bending every effort to achieve their goals. At an early stage, they sent a letter in French, composed locally, to the president of Michelin in France, inviting him to visit the community.

The tire factory had different impacts on different sectors of the community. Some benefitted more than others, but the new factory provided more jobs, and a more stable economic base, than is enjoyed by the traditional small Nova Scotian town.

More and more, communities are identifying their major problem as the need for an industrial base, or for employment opportunities. The problem has been seen as finding a corporation or entrepreneur willing to locate a factory in a particular community. This quest has put communities in competition with each other, as each tries to lure “saviours” willing to invest money in creating employment. This desperate quest for economic security has attracted to Canada members of an international jet set of con artists, charlatans, and plain crooks who demand grants, incentives, and tax advantages to set up plants that employ workers at low wages. They move in, skim off the cream, then move on to another “disadvantaged” area. This approach to development has resulted in expensive

fiascos right across Canada, but this game seems to be ending.

Increasingly people are looking at the possibility of co-operative ventures, or encouraging local businessmen to establish projects. Such ventures are hard to establish and difficult to run; about 70% of all small businesses fail in the first five years. But there have been successes. In 1972, a pulp and paper mill in Temiscaming went bankrupt; the workers took it over in the following year and are making an economic success of it.

There are no easy answers to economic development problems, but community development techniques can help people to assess the costs and benefits of ventures aimed at helping the community, and ensure that residents are participants, not victims, in schemes aimed at helping them.

The basis of a successful community development approach rests on a planned programme to meet the needs of local people, reliance on self-help, access to technical assistance and accurate information, and an integration of specialist services around the agendas of the community rather than of those of outside agencies. The need for community development cannot always be foreseen; it can arise overnight, as people become aware of a need, or react to a threat, or face a new government initiative: a new airport, an expressway, a penitentiary. The individuals or groups most threatened are usually the main initiators of the community development process.

Between 1965 and 1971, I lived in the Glebe in Ottawa; this area developed a strong sense of community in the Sixties. It was bounded on one side by the Rideau Canal, by an elevated highway on another side, and by Caning Avenue. People got to know each other, and worked together on community projects, through established organizations like schools and churches, or through ad hoc programmes like summer day camps.

The City of Ottawa, in the late sixties, decided to drive a superhighway through the Glebe. When the scheme was

presented to City Council, a large number of people from the Glebe turned up at the meetings, and sat in the Gallery. The plans that eliminated the superhighway, or rerouted it across or through another part of the city were cheered. We jeered when the planners proposed that the superhighway pass through the Glebe. We were a very middle-class group, and the Mayor was very circumspect about telling us to keep quiet. The highway was not built through the Glebe because the residents were able to affect the planning process at the very beginning.

What happened in Ottawa's Basse-Ville (Lower Town) illustrates how co-optation and chaos can occur if people are not informed, or don't or can't get accurate information about proposals that will affect their communities. The planners, in revamping the road network in and around Ottawa, decided to reconstruct a highway passing through Basse-Ville. The City decided to tie in an urban renewal scheme planned for the east end of Basse-Ville with the reconstruction of the highway. The decision to renew the area was not made by the residents.

A few years earlier the community had suffered a severe blow. The Mackenzie Bridge was built over the Ottawa River, and about five hundred families in Basse-Ville were moved from land needed for the approaches. Some small businesses which depended for customers on this population went broke.

In general, the people of the community seemed satisfied with their life style in this tightly-knit, French-speaking community. Basse-Ville was like a small, friendly village with established boundaries, just like the Glebe, sitting in the centre of Ottawa. It was a working class neighbourhood, focused on the Church which ran an extensive programme of social services. Its residents did not hear about the proposal to reconstruct the highway and to undertake the urban renewal scheme until planning was well advanced.

The planners sent interviewers down to collect data on the

residents. The 1961 Census showed that the majority of the people of Basse-Ville were French-speaking. Yet the interviewers were English-speaking, and left cards with residents stating that if no-one in the house spoke English, a French speaking person would visit them! On the plea of helping the people of Basse-Ville to “help themselves,” scores of agencies and individuals, ranging from self-styled Maoists to welfare organizations intent on expanding their empires, invaded the community.

I directed a study of this area in the summer of 1966 while Research Director of the Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology at Saint Paul University. We looked at local history, the patterns of mutual aid, the leisure activities of the women, and the role of the media in urban renewal. Our research showed that the people of Basse-Ville had a strong tradition of self-help and of working together to achieve common goals.<sup>4</sup> In the past, they had organized and raised funds to build their own church, to create employment, and to establish and run a wide variety of social activities.

We discovered that the women had very little leisure time, and indeed some seldom went outside the community. A sociologist identified patterns of “neighbouring”; people helped each other all the time. Neighbours cleared the snow from the paths of old people. We also discovered that no effort was being made to use radio or TV to inform and involve people in the urban renewal programme. Instead, an information office was located in the church hall and residents had to climb several flights of stairs to look at plans and proposals for the area.

The urban renewal scheme created an atmosphere of uncertainty. The City authorities were intent on creating a better life for the people of Basse-Ville while getting their highway. But official secrecy, agency rivalry, and lack of understanding by outsiders of the community’s dynamics resulted in divisions. The people of Basse-Ville were defined as incompetent; no

attempt was made to build on their tradition of self-help, to assist them in identifying strengths and competencies, and to work in a co-operative way.

When the decision to renew the area was made, a number of people moved out. Landlords complained of empty apartments, so the City moved in welfare recipients creating a different balance in the social structure. Insensitivity over the use of language (the “experts” were all English speakers initially) led to strenuous attempts by residents to protect their language, and to a fight over whether a proposed new high school should be bilingual or unilingual.

In the fall of 1966, a committee was set up, consisting mainly of representatives of agencies working the area, rather than of ordinary residents. They were represented by the parish priest and by members of church-based agencies. The first meeting was held in the Church Hall in Basse-Ville, and was conducted in English. The second meeting took place in City Hall, because there was more parking there. A planner showed a map locating the houses to be torn down. Then the chairwoman rather nervously noted that no one, not even the Planners, were sure what was going to happen in Basse-Ville because the funding for urban renewal had to come from three levels of government. So she asked those present to identify the problems of the community.

A teacher complained that bright students were deliberately failing their school years in order to stay with friends who would not be promoted. This same teacher, a nun, had run an ad hoc church-funded summer recreation programme in Basse-Ville. Unilingual students from Toronto had been brought to Ottawa to “help” the “poor” kids of Basse-Ville. The nun had literally to scour the streets, looking for loose kids to take part in the programme.

The problems of Basse-Ville were being defined in terms of the needs of existing organizations in the community, not necessarily in terms of the people who lived there. I asked the parish priest at the meeting in City Hall what was really bothering the people of

Basse-Ville. He said: "I can't preach the Gospel on Sundays. People sit there, wondering what is going to happen to their homes." I suggested that we inform the people of the community what was planned for them, and try to get them to participate. Shortly after this, I was de-selected from the committee.

The citizen's committee was broadened, but initially only 'safe' community representatives were selected to sit on it. As the City fumbled through, some of the more dynamic and politically alert members of local organizations began to voice objections about the urban renewal scheme. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, whose Head Office is in Ottawa, and whose staff was bombarded with messages in the media about how this project was going awry, withheld funding until the local people had more input. By this time, houses were already being torn down. However, a plan that more nearly met the needs of residents was drawn up, a change made in the policy from tearing down houses to rehabilitating them. Basse-Ville was renewed, and the people there rehoused.

In the case of Basse-Ville, the intervention by outsiders was generated by government plans and concerns. It was an example of 'top down' planning which had to be adapted because of citizen opposition. In Riverdale, a working class area of Toronto, the outside intervenor was a single individual hired initially by church groups to help the people to get more control over the forces that were affecting their lives. This man chose confrontation as a way of arousing the people and of organizing them to fight the oppressors. Don Keating, a former United Church Minister, trained with Saul Alinsky, the late apostle of confrontation, in Chicago.

The Basse-Ville approach ignored politics; Keating's basic tactic was to help the local people to build an independent power base so that they could run their own small community effectively. He knocked on doors, identified leaders, sought out issues, and then led the people in confronting those whose actions were damaging the quality of life in the community. The leadership that he had

trained was rejected when a mass rally was held to form a larger community organization. Funding for the project was supplied by the City of Toronto. No attempt was made to raise a local war chest. The money ran out, and Keating was fired by the community groups that had hired him.<sup>5</sup>

In Whitehorse, capital of the Yukon Territory, squatters on Whiskey Flats organized to fight relocation. In this case, good leadership emerged among the squatters, and they ended up working with the political system and the bureaucrats to develop approaches that avoided direct confrontation and also the arbitrary imposition of the plans of outsiders.

In 1960, I did a study of squatters living on the fringes of the City. Until a new road was driven through Whiskey Flats, no-one paid much attention to the people who lived in home-made houses along the riverbanks, on unserviced land to which they did not have title. Initially, the Federal and Territorial governments tried to use force to clear Whiskey Flats. They also drew up plans designating Whiskey Flats as a park, to convince people that the squatters should be moved. My study, which I did with a squatter leader, was supposed to help the government to evict the squatters with more care and precision than might have been the case if they had just gone ahead without getting some of the facts. The report, which was sent back to the squatters, showed that they made up about a quarter of the population of Lower Whitehorse.

The squatters realized that their individual problems formed part of a common pattern, and good leadership emerged among them that was able to negotiate on an equal basis with the different levels of government, forcing them to implement the relocation scheme in terms acceptable to them. Programmes were developed to move houses, to relocate people, and to pay compensation. An evaluation in 1970 showed that the process had taken much longer than anyone had anticipated, but that

direct costs were only a quarter of the amount budgeted.<sup>6</sup>

It's impossible to estimate the indirect costs of relocation be it in urban centres or on the banks of a northern river. In Ottawa and Whitehorse, I saw the human costs of trying to help people without honestly involving them in the process. It was stamped on the faces of civil servants and residents, the majority of whom were decent people suddenly confronted with conflict and tension. Eventually the people of Basse-Ville and the squatters of Whitehorse did get better housing and access to more services. But their sense of community was shattered, something went out of their lives, and they had little chance to develop or to renew their communities in ways that were acceptable to them.

In community development, "it ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it", as the old song puts it. Community development is often invoked to solve social change problems when all other methods of handling a critical situation have failed. Community development, instead of being the first option, is called in as a last resort. Very often events inside and outside a community are beyond the control of residents. Decisions have been taken, plans drawn up, funds committed in such a way that it's impossible to alter them. And who you are has a lot to do with the success a group or a community has in achieving its goals.

While the people of Basse-Ville were struggling to get some control over the renewal process, a group of Ottawa's elite identified a "felt need" to use the jargon of community development: a concert hall. Members of the elite formed a community of interest, and followed the process of community development. They discussed the idea with others, and with government officials, identified resources, and started to pressure decision makers. The main animator was a senior official in the Federal Government, G. Hamilton Southam, who eventually

became the first Director of the National Arts Centre. The Ottawa elite, unlike the people of Basse-Ville, were viewed as competent to handle complex problems, and given ready access to the public purse for their community project. Their initial estimate of the cost of the Centre was \$8 million; the final figure, all public money, was \$40 million. The operating deficit for the National Arts Centre in 1975-76 was \$6.9 million, and this was picked up by the Federal Government. Meanwhile, *Le Coin du Travailleur*, an employment service run by the people of Basse-Ville themselves, and funded by the Department of Manpower, had its budget cut in 1976.

These examples reveal a characteristic pattern that has emerged in Canadian development in rural and urban areas over the past ten years—socialism for the rich and private enterprise for the poor. The first question to ask of any community development project before funds and time are committed is: “Whose needs are being served?”. The power to define a problem carries the power to control it. Over the past ten years, community development has been invoked as a universal panacea for all the problems of depressed areas and disadvantaged peoples.

The community development process forces individuals and communities to confront, collectively, their common values, assumptions and attitudes. That’s why what starts as a form of placation by government so often ends up as a source of tension and dissension. The whole dilemma of development, and of trying to help people, was summed up in the anguished cry of an Indian woman I heard at a Conference: “Why is it that when we Indians start to do something, some white person comes along and tries to show us how to do it right?”

## 2

# The World-Wide Community Development Movement

### THE CONCEPT

“Community development” is a confusing concept because it involves both abstract ideas and human actions. The talk of “self- help,” meeting “felt needs,” co-operation with government, use of local and outside resources, and the rest of the rhetoric can conceal situations in which people are being oppressed, manipulated and exploited. And, of course, government can also be exploited in the name of community development.

In 1948, the United Nations had one community development worker; in 1971, 61 experts were working in 29 countries. In 1969, 27 educational institutions offered courses in community development throughout the world. In 1975, 63 institutions and organizations offered 75 degree and special training programmes.<sup>7</sup>

Whatever community development is, it is growing, and more and more people are learning and using its techniques.

In 1971, a United Nations report stated:

... it needs to be kept constantly in mind that community development has been considered in various ways, depending

upon circumstances and the points of view of the person or persons concerned. The United Nations definition refers to it in the first place as a process, implying transition from one phase to another. It is also a method or approach that emphasizes popular participation and the direct involvement of a population in the process of development, and that has until now been largely concerned with rural development. When community development activity is formally organized with a separate administration and staff it can be considered a programme. Finally, to the extent that it represents a philosophy of development, sometimes with an almost religious fervour, it can be called a movement.<sup>8</sup>

Over the past 30 years, community development has become an international movement, embodying a philosophy of development. Social movements arise in times of change, as people become dissatisfied with their lives and the institutions that govern them, and seek a new scheme of living. New concepts and images filter into their consciousness; people become confused trying to match the new images with their own lives. Old ideas, values and approaches are rejected, new ones learned.

A general social movement usually is characterized by a literature, but the literature is as varied and ill-defined as is the movement itself. It is likely to be an expression of protest, with a general depiction of a sort of utopian existence. As such, it vaguely outlines a philosophy based on new values and self-conceptions.<sup>9</sup>

Social movements pass through stages, starting with vague restlessness and excitement. Prophets arise and reformers emerge, often crying in the wilderness. Slowly order comes of chaos. Policies, rules, and tactics are sorted out, defined, written down, codified, learned. A new type of leadership

emerges, one that can take vague ideals and translate them into programmes of effective action. Once programmes are underway, the administrators take over.

Much of the confusion in community development arises because observers and participants are unaware of the stage at which a community is in the process. The stage can be determined by examining the type of leadership. If the community is still seeking, or listening to, a prophet, it is at the beginning; at the end, stability, rather than change, is being emphasized and the administrators are in charge.

Initially, community development looks fuzzy and vague, as people struggle to define their personal situation, the situation of the community in which they are living, and the relationship between an existing state, usually considered to be undesirable, and some desired future state. Thus community development always involves a radical effort at change, although there may also be a conservative thrust to retain what is of value in the existing system.

One of the results of the independence and industrialization of old nations and new has been to create pressure on existing political systems to open up positions of power for people with ability. Community development can be used to train future leaders to acquire a style of leadership in which power is used for the benefit of the community, rather than for personal gain and prestige.

The nation-state is a comparatively recent development; many people throughout the world still give their first loyalty to their tribe, their region, or their province, rather than to the nation as a whole. Leadership sometimes comes from members of marginal groups who can unite contending factions. Hitler was an Austrian, Stalin a Georgian, and the leader who emerges from an isolated region or a small tribe is a common feature of life in new African nations.

## ORIGINS

The basic philosophy of community development was worked out on a pragmatic basis during Britain's retreat from Empire. In 1925, the British Government issued a White Paper entitled Education Policy in British Tropical Africa. This was based, in part, on a foundation-funded study of mission education in Africa, initiated by the Americans in 1922. The paper stated that progress in Africa should not rely on the schools, but should come through improvement in agriculture, development of native industries, and improvement of health, by training people to manage their own affairs, and inculcation of ideas of citizenship and service.

It has been claimed that Britain acquired her Empire in a fit of absence of mind; she certainly ran it that way. The British kept the peace, and collected taxes to pay for doing so. Expatriate mining and trading firms skimmed off the cream of the resources, and controlled imports and exports. Education and social welfare were left to the traditional tribal system, and to voluntary, church-based organizations that were funded by collections from home. In *Once a District Officer*<sup>10</sup>, Sir Kenneth Bradley tells how community development began in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), where the traditional leadership pattern was having trouble dealing with new demands in remote rural areas. In 1926, Bradley was stationed in this colony, which had an annual budget of £250,000, roughly the same as the street cleaning bill for Glasgow.

While stationed at Fort Jameson, Bradley actively pursued a policy of devolving power to the people. He persuaded several of the Chiefs Council of the Angoni to appoint educated young men to "Ministries"—of Latrines, Better Houses, etc. The Governor of the colony was upset by Bradley's scheme. He was an amateur anthropologist, and claimed that traditional office-

holders should do these new jobs. The Chiefs (“who were not anthropologists”) pointed out that there were no officers of this kind in traditional society, and their people were more interested in the future than in the past.

Bradley was working in the British pragmatic tradition; he did not identify his efforts as “community development.” He objected to the paternalism and the creation of dependency that colonialism fostered. The Angoni knew why Bradley was there. He was no fuzzy do-gooder: he was the representative of the powerful nation that controlled their destinies. The Angoni trusted him; Bradley did not have the staff or the cash or the desire to manipulate them.

One day, a member of the Chiefs Council came to Bradley, and complained that their children were being educated by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Calvinists and Seventh Day Adventists. They were being taught not only to read and to write, but to despise members of other sects. The Angoni wanted their own school, but the tribe had no money. Bradley pointed out that they did have land and labour. Why not build the school themselves? If they decided to, he would help them.

The Angoni decided to go ahead and Bradley played the role of the enabler, getting commitments from skilled people and scrounging everything he could. The local Public Works man drew up the plans, the Agricultural Officer laid out the garden, the people cut poles, the Chief and his Ministers found money for carpenters and bricklayers. A levy raised money for books, Bradley rounded up pencils, pens and ink-bottles from his own office, and the Education Officer persuaded his department to make a grant to pay the teachers.

Similar initiatives were taking place all over the British Empire in the Thirties. Community development was not an official policy, nor did it rely upon a corps of experts. It was not started through altruism or to push one particular discipline or

approach to development. It came about because money was lacking, and because traditional peoples wanted change and could fit community self-help projects into their seasonal round. The tribal structure ensured that everyone knew their rights and responsibilities. Many colonial officials were convinced, as Bradley put it, that “spoonfeeding was a bad thing.”

All these small trickles of self-help combined to form the world community development movement.

...hundreds of small, independently conceived experiments in self-help eventually came to be translated into a policy and presently there was a whole new philosophy of administration for all underdeveloped countries, with its own titles, its own jargon and its academic school of theorists. Community development under different names has spread all over the tropical world from Latin America to Thailand.<sup>11</sup>

Bradley stresses the amateur approach. Everything was done by trial and error, but somehow people fumbled through.

## THE WINDS OF CHANGE

The goal of British colonial policy was to help the colonies to become self-governing nations within the Empire, and later, the Commonwealth. French colonial policy was based on the concept of *assimilation*, and a belief that the highest goal to which any colonial could aspire was French citizenship. In their colonies in Black Africa, the French carried out programmes of *animation rurale*.

Unlike community development, which was born of indirect rule and the great importance attached to local government and communal responsibility in the British colonies, “animation”

was originally one aspect of the reform of a highly centralized form of government and was designed to allow employers, workers, peasants and local leaders to play their part.<sup>12</sup>

Structurally, animation efforts ran parallel to the official colonial administration, stimulating and informing them. Both community development and animation were seen primarily as *educational* processes.

Community development and *animation* became part of the process of decolonization. People were seeking more freedom to control their own destinies, and a better life: the colonial powers were trying to retain effective control of their colonies at the least cost. In both British and French colonies in Africa, expatriate officials were in short supply.

The British were planning some economic development programmes for the Empire when the Depression descended. In 1935, the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies issued a memorandum on educating people in rural communities. It stressed central planning and the need to co-ordinate departmental activities to avoid overlapping and duplication in the provision of services and resources—a familiar theme in our own time of tight money. General colonial policy favoured the community development approach.

The Second World War accelerated the development of self-sufficiency. Cut off from the “home countries,” many colonies had to grow their own food, and to rely upon their own resources. The demand for raw materials meant new prosperity. Tribesmen were drafted into the colonial army, and district officers left to serve Britain. Traditional peoples saw huge armies of men and machines ripping the land apart to build airstrips and other installations. The ambitious, energetic, egalitarian Americans were everywhere, disrupting the tight colonial world of the British, the French, and the Dutch. The people were organized to hate and to fight a distant, abstract enemy.

In the Far East, the world was turned upside down. Here the Japanese quickly and easily defeated the western powers, overrunning their colonies, and humiliating and imprisoning white men and women. Even the United States was chased from its colonial possessions in the first six months after Pearl Harbour. After the war, some of the old colonial powers believed they could take up where they left off in 1941-42. But independence movements sprang up in most of the Asian colonies.

In Britain, in 1941-43, a series of meetings were held on education in the colonies. The Advisory Committee on Education stressed the idea of “mass education”, of government guidance, and the need for rural people to participate in planning their own future—the basic themes of community development.

The Labour Government that took power as the War ended decided to grant political independence to the colonies—a decision widely admired throughout the colonial world. I remember standing on the side of the road one evening while hitch-hiking across Algeria in 1950. Two Algerians approached me, and we got into conversation. They were lavish in their praise of the British government for giving up their colonial Empire. The British, of course, still retained economic control and expatriate Britishers still occupied key positions in the new governments and in the educational system.

The term “community development” first emerged in the British colonial context at a conference in Cambridge in 1948. It was fuzzy, but had a pleasant sound, and evoked a positive notion of handling change. The prestige that the British enjoyed for the way in which they had prepared people, especially in Africa, for self-government resulted in a very quick dissemination, among the colonizers and the colonized, of the belief that community development was an effective way

of transferring power to people at the local level.

The British handed power over to an educated elite, many of whom had sat at the feet of Harold Laski, the theorist of socialism who taught at the London School of Economics. Here they learned of the wonders of socialism, and of what would happen when the state acquired the means of production and distribution.

In post-war Britain, however, the problems of socialism now had to be worked out in practice. The government nationalized the coal mines and the railways. These were in very poor condition, because no more money had been spent on them than was absolutely necessary. Moreover, workers had not been trained to take over the key positions. The original owners were not only compensated far beyond the real worth of their enterprises; they were often retained in management. The railways and the coal mines were as badly managed as ever, and it was years before positions were opened up to people on the basis of ability rather than of class.

The Labour Government initiated programmes aimed at meeting social needs that had been neglected for years before the war. Schools, hospitals, housing were built to replace buildings lost during the War, and to extend public services.

The French left their colonies only after military defeat in Algeria and Vietnam, or when General de Gaulle decreed it. Guinea decided to go its own way, and not become part of the new economic empire of France. When the French left, they stripped it of every artifact of French "civilization," right down to the telephones on the walls, and the uniforms of the police.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CATCHES ON**

An African in Nigeria once told me, "We would rather be badly ruled by our own people than well ruled by you whites."

This is what community development is all about. Unfortunately, it is often difficult in new nations and in times of rapid change to determine who “your own people” are. In Nigeria, there were riots in Kano in 1953 between the southerners, who wanted independence in a few years time, and the Hausas of the north, who were more traditional and in no hurry because most of their needs were being met through the existing system of Indirect Rule. During the riots while serving as a Special Constable, I reported to the British Residency that Africans were murdering each other. “There’s nothing we can do about it,” was the reply.

In 1954, at the Ashbridge Conference on Social Development, community development was defined as:

A movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation and on the initiative of the whole community.

In the tightly-knit world of the African villages, “whole communities” did exist. The concept of community was attractive to westerners at a time when their world, under the impact of the post-war boom, was changing rapidly, and becoming fragmented, segmented, depersonalized, and individualized.

The British definition was taken over, almost intact, by the United Nations which described the process in *Social Progress Through Community Development* published in 1955, as follows;

Community development can be tentatively defined as a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest reliance upon the community’s initiative.

One of the appeals of community development is that it can often be used as a cheap way to get development projects carried out by having the local people contribute free labour, while the local elite and the expatriate experts look on.

Different countries handled the transfer of power from the colonizers to the colonized in different ways. In India, pilot projects in community development had been launched in 1939. In 1948, a “Grow More Food” campaign was launched, using the community development process. In 1952, it was found that the campaign was making little progress because the peasants were not getting the government’s message, and they were so undernourished that they lacked the energy to get involved.

As the British left, the Indian government developed a new type of administrative structure, a decentralized “block” structure, with the village level worker, or *gram sevak*, acting as development coordinator. He was supposed to be all things to all members of the community, to train municipal councillors, keep the village clean, encourage vaccination, organize adult education, and take care of countless other programmes, as well as filling in forms and reporting to head office.

The Indian experience shows the weakness of making one person responsible for development at the village level. The village level worker is the low man on the bureaucratic totem pole, caught between pressures for change from above, and desires to retain traditional ways at the grassroots. He is paid by the Government, so if conflict arises between the demands of the villagers and those of the government, he gets caught between his loyalty to the people he is supposed to serve and his pay cheque. The *gram sevak* became the joe boy for other departments, the flak catcher who caught the brunt of the villagers’ dissatisfaction with the government. The Indian programme attracted many able and dedicated young people.

But the problem of development in India was seen by the government officials as being “out there,” in the villages, rather than in the centers of power where resources remained in the hands of the few.

In the Philippines, the community development process was also part of a movement away from colonial attitudes, towards a greater degree of self-reliance. In contrast to the Indian approach, community development started at the top. President Magsaysay promised to help the dwellers in the *barrios* in the Fifties. Between 1950 and 1954, various government departments started their own socio-economic programmes. In 1954, because of agency overlapping and confusion, a Community Development Council was created as a co-ordinating body. In January, 1956, President Magsaysay created the post of Presidential Assistant on Community Development, and intensive, co-ordinated programmes began. Magsaysay was killed in a plane crash in 1957, and with his death the steam went out of the programme. The country moved towards economic and social chaos, and then to one man rule.

In both India and the Philippines, jobs are scarce. Anyone who lands a position as a community development worker with the government is not likely to prejudice his future by acting too rashly, or organizing the local people to oppose decisions from the centres of power. Much of the money earmarked for community development disappears into the bureaucracy.

## **ENTER THE RUSSIANS, AMERICANS, AND OTHERS**

As the former colonial powers withdrew or were ejected, the Russians, Americans and others moved in to offer help in developing the new nations. After the War, the United States poured money and experts into Western Europe under

the Marshall Plan to save it from communism and to make the democracies safe for private enterprise. In 1949, U.S. President Truman announced his 'Point Four' programme in his inauguration address.

Fourth, we must embark on a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.<sup>13</sup>

American technologists and aid officials spread over all the world. Service in the new nations offered interesting and exciting prospects in exotic settings. The American approach relied heavily on the application of money and technology, using assumptions derived from the free enterprise system. Young Americans began to plan careers in developing nations, and the Peace Corps was devised as a way of channelling their energy and idealism into social and economic action overseas. Most of the Peace Corps volunteers were B.A. Liberal Arts generalists, without specific skills. Some believed that their role was to change the hearts and minds of men, to convert them to the way of the West. If Peace Corps programmers found a recruit with no identifiable skills, they said a silent prayer and assigned him to community development. In Peru, 10% of the volunteers stayed with a project and completed it; another 30-50% used a routine approach, fumbled through and did "minor and transitory things," and the rest messed around and simply made life more difficult for the people they were supposed to be helping.<sup>14</sup>

In 1966, the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act specified under Title IX that the emphasis in development should be on "ensuring maximum participation in the task of economic development on the part of the people of the developing nations, through the encouragement of democratic private and local governmental organizations."<sup>15</sup>

Each new nation, as it was being “helped” by western nations, was forced to examine the assumptions upon which it was founded and was operating. After the Second World War, it was assumed that the economies of the developing nations would take off in due course, as those of the West had done in the nineteenth century.

During the Cold War, the Russians and the Americans supplied aid and military supplies. In such strategically located nations as Somalia and Afghanistan, the rulers were happy to get development assistance from both the American free enterprisers and the Russian communists. Initially, foreign aid, much of it in the form of loans, was given on a project basis: a steel mill here, a new airport there, an irrigation scheme over there.

Donor nations watched their money go down the drain, and the new nations began to experience severe imbalances in their economies, their debt burden rising sharply. Demands were made for the compilation of national plans that would indicate the linkages in the economies, and show where imported and domestic investment could be used to the best advantage. Soon a National Plan became a status symbol, a sign of progress and modernization. Growth targets were set, input-output models designed, equations worked out. Then the experts left. Upper Volta simply filed its plan on a shelf. Sierra Leone and Senegal adopted their plans with a great fanfare, and then asked someone else to prepare another one.<sup>16</sup>

While the outside experts and the new governments were drawing up grandiose schemes, the concept of community development, of self-help, of local participation was catching on. Instead of welcoming development assistance from outside, new nations began to reject it. Tanzania based its approach to rural development on “*ujamaa*,” working together. In the western nations, development assistance had spawned large bureaucracies, and in France, an anti- overseas development

lobby was formed. A writer in the *Guardian* of September 2, 1972, summarized the basic dilemma.

I have become appalled by the tremendous resentment which is building up in the developing countries against expatriates and against everything that is connected with development aid. Aid is increasingly regarded as the 'smooth face of colonialism', and the expatriates are regarded as its sinister agents... On the personal level relations are generally good... But deep down the resentment against aid and expatriates is boiling up.

The writer had carried out assignments in Madagascar, Togo and Nigeria for one of the international technical aid organizations, and stated,

This mounting hostility is really quite understandable. No one likes to be helped; no one likes to see a lot of foreigners around, least of all if they are of another race; no one likes to see his own promotion slowed down by the fact that foreigners are called in to fill many of the vacant posts...

Canada got into the foreign aid business late, and its policies and programmes seem to be strongly influenced by American ideas. At a Conference on Development Assistance held in Halifax in April 1976, an American development expert now domiciled in Canada presented three Canadian funded projects. He claimed that being funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was "like being on an expense account". One project was located in Haiti. Here, if a peasant generated a surplus, the dictator's police relieved him of it. CIDA was trying to start an irrigation project, but the people were 'apathetic' and 'disinterested'. An old irrigation system had fallen into disuse, although only one small piece of equipment needed replacing or repairing.

An academic in the audience pointed out that it would be futile to encourage the people to expend energy in becoming more productive if they were going to be cheated out of the benefits of their labour.

During the Sixties I acted as an enabler for a volunteer group, the Co-ordination of Inter-American Student Projects. This was an offshoot of a programme developed by the Maryknoll Fathers in the U.S. Young university students went down to live in the *ranchos* of Mexico for six weeks to do community development among the people. Over the years, they began to realize that their efforts were ineffective in changing the conditions. They began to see that they were merely being self-indulgent. They set on foot an evaluation, and examined the situation from both the Canadian and Mexican points of view. In 1971, the people involved decided to disband CLASP.

International programmes aimed at understanding and working with communities in the Third World require lengthy involvement in the life of that world and a commitment to the goals and values of that society, and of the people in that society who are committed to the humanizing of the structures therein.<sup>17</sup>

These young people kept their ideals, and came to realize that community development was not just a job, or something you did during summer vacations, but that it involved values, and attitudes towards others and towards one's self.

Many young Canadians have gone abroad, and experienced a moment of truth about the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities in the world. But about the time that CLASP was self-destructing, Jacques Hébert, a personal friend of Prime Minister Trudeau, tapped the public purse for his pet project, Canada World Youth. It brings young people from developing nations and from Canada to live, work and learn together

in this country, and then sends them back to do community development.

In the *Halifax Mail-Star* of March 24, 1976, a 19-year old university student recounted her involvement with community development in this programme.

Last year I went to Dalhousie University... and got down in the dumps so I decided to try something different for a year and then go back to college.

Twenty-five Guatemalans came to Canada and lived in the Okanagan Valley in B.C.— “the part of Canada most resembling Guatemala”. In January, the party moved to Guatemala, and spent two weeks in a formation camp. As the student explained it;

We were supposed to work on community development projects but they hadn't gotten underway by the time of the earthquake. The purpose of the project is to motivate the Indian cantonese people to build things they need, such as schools. We would supply the equipment and help with the building. We were also to provide recreation programs for the children; basketball and things like that.

The programme now costs \$3.75 million and enrolls 700 volunteers each year. It may provide some remedial education for Canadian students, and give them a chance to see something of the world. But essentially it diverts attention from the serious problems of structural change in the developing nations.

Originally development agencies came into existence to foster change. But now they resist it, especially if people in the new nations show signs of becoming self-reliant. An international development bureaucracy exists that passes jobs around among the right people; these people have a vested interest in human misery. In the past, if you fouled up a development project, you blamed it on the local people, and asked for more funds.

These times seem to be coming to an end.

The practical people in the new nations took from the West anything that seemed to help them to survive. Development is never a matter of abstractions. It always involves the interaction of human beings. In the new nations, optimistic westerners met face to face with fatalistic peasants whose way of life had changed little over the centuries. Some nations turned their backs on the West, and followed their own inclinations about development. China has shown that development can be self-generated, and not dependent upon external aid. Vietnam showed that the human spirit could triumph over technology

### SO FAR—SO WHAT?

In the Mid-Sixties, the 'developed' nations discovered pockets of poverty and underdevelopment within their own boundaries. Suddenly, the problems of development were no longer 'external', but 'internal' also. A spasm of guilt swept the West. Why was so much money being spent to 'help' people abroad, when there was so much misery at home? Of course, it is much easier to spend money on development abroad because few people can go out and check on its effectiveness. If you start to intervene in the lives of the poor in your own country, the results become very visible. In the United States, the War on Poverty was launched with the same rhetoric used to rationalize development efforts abroad. In Europe, the plight of transient workers, gypsies, the unemployed, the *bidonville* dwellers and others on the margins of society became apparent, and efforts were launched to help them. Almost inevitably, because the way of life of such people was viewed as deviant and disorganized, the various attempts to socialize them and to teach them the values of the larger society were described as 'community development'.

At the same time, the stresses and strains of urbanization and industrialization, the remoteness of government and its insensitivity to regional and local needs, and the general bureaucratization and depersonalization of society began to play on the nerves of the middle class. In the developed nations and the new nations, there was a rising demand for participation in the development process. People everywhere asked to be informed and involved in the decisions that would affect them.

The term 'citizen participation' was paired with 'community development' in a United Nations Report in 1971. *Popular Participation in Development; Emerging Trends in Community Development* summarized the state of the art in new and old nations. The report discussed the problems of community development — village uplift on a self-generated basis was a mythical concept, some sort of outside stimulus and help was always needed; community workers often came into conflict with elected politicians, who after all, were supposed to bring benefits to local people; individuals benefitted in the name of community development; unless there was social reform, democratic community development was not possible; the 'felt needs' of the powerful dominated community development programmes; projects were unrelated to regional and national plans; bureaucratization stifled the spirit of local initiative. The report described community development efforts in North America, South America, the Caribbean, Western Europe, Poland, Romania, the Middle East, French-speaking Black Africa and Asia. The Russians claim that they don't need to use community development techniques because their whole approach is based on the idea that people run their own affairs. Lenin wrote:

For us, the State is strong only by virtue of the masses'

political awareness. It is strong when the masses are informed of everything so that they can form their own judgements and go into action fully aware of what they are doing.<sup>18</sup>

It's naive to assume that the Soviet State practices this sort of approach to development. On the other hand, the UN report seemed to indicate that any *human oriented* approach to development can be labelled community development. The experiences presented ranged from the Model Cities Programme in the United States, which tried to co-ordinate statutory agencies in a joint attack on poverty to the activities of fire brigades in Poland which are the first service to be set up in new communities and take on the role of cultural animators. Other examples ranged from the resettlement of villagers in Vietnam for defence purposes to broad programmes of animation in some of the socialist countries of Black Africa, where the party educates the people to undertake the tasks of developing the nation. Various efforts in Canada were described as community development; they ranged from the training programmes at Coady International Institute to the Company of Young Canadians, and from attempts to help Native peoples to efforts to eradicate poverty by the Federal Government.

What becomes clear from examining the community development programmes in other nations, and from talking to people involved, is that each nation develops its own style of community development as it tries various ways of informing and involving its people in developments that affect them. Community development often starts as isolated ventures which coalesce, bring about some structural change, and then die out. The people involved move to other spheres of operation, inside and outside government, and spread the method of community development. In time, foreign models and concepts are rejected if they do not fit the physical, economic, social and cultural

realities of a nation, and indigenous models and practises develop.

A senior official from India told me that the first two community development workers sent to a remote part of his country had their heads cut off by the local people. This has often been the fate of reformers and innovators, and strikes a responsive chord in anyone familiar with attempts at community development in Canada.

# 3

## Community Development in Canada

In 1965, John Porter's book, *The Vertical Mosaic* appeared. It provided detailed, factual information on the way in which power and wealth in Canada are controlled by a small elite. Business, the civil service, government and political institutions are threaded through with invisible linkages that ensure that power and privilege are never threatened. Canada appears as a country with a rather small number of rulers, and a large number of the ruled.

A society cannot develop unless it opens up positions and authority to people with ability. Countries like Britain and France, until recently, were able to socialize bright young people through the education system, and then absorb them into the larger society by assigning them to various niches.

Development and rapid change create new opportunities in social and economic structures. In the United States, a continuously expanding economy, a stress on individualism, an emphasis on the acquisition of technical skills, and a belief in the openness of society directed the energy of bright young men and women into the service of capitalism.

In both Western Europe and the United States, the assumptions of laissez-faire capitalism and the social democratic way of life were seldom challenged during the Sixties. It was believed that they would create the conditions for economic growth, and for the continuous creation of employment. Nor

was the quality of growth and of employment questioned.

In 1966 I met a man from New Haven who was associated with the Community Employment Programme in the U.S. He was visiting Halifax to tell the social agencies there how to handle problems of Black employment. I asked him why the employment programmes were so successful in New Haven. He replied that the Vietnam War was creating employment for everyone who wanted to work. Pratt and Whitney made helicopter engines in New Haven, and since a large number of these machines were needed in Vietnam, the company was literally out on the streets looking for workers.

During the Sixties, the U.S. economy boomed because it was turning out goods that would eventually be destroyed, or fall apart. This liberal economy of planned obsolescence was exemplified in places like Alaska. Here defensive/offensive military systems were developed to protect the country from attack by Russia and to launch a counterattack. As each system was developed, new technology soon made it obsolete. In consumer goods, planned obsolescence ensured that markets would never be saturated. A student from Kenya complained to me that equipment he had received from the U.S. did not work, and that he could not get spare parts. He was extremely annoyed when I explained that this was not accidental.

Three imported intellectual traditions conditioned the response of our federal government to change during the Sixties. One was the good old British method "fumbling through". Problems could be dealt with on an ad hoc basis by the right people selected from a certain class, and trained through a liberal arts or legal education to handle any situation. The American tradition is based on technology and professionalism, the acquisition of specific skills to be used to handle specific problems. For every social and human problem, the appropriate technology can be located. The French tradition of highly

centralized planning also strongly influenced Canadian thinking. In this, technocrats in the centres of power draw up plans and programmes to be implemented through a line organization by bureaucrats at lower levels. In the development rush of the Sixties, little attention was paid to indigenous models and experiences in handling rapid change.

The years between 1965 and 1975 were crucial ones; they represented a watershed in the lives of most people. Many older Canadians had only local and parochial loyalties, identifying with their neighbourhood, village, or province. Nationalism emerged as a strong force. The new national symbols, especially the flag, were intended to unite Canadians. The success of Expo 67 reinforced the belief that we were creating a new nation, one that would be free of the tensions and pressures of the played-out democracies of Europe. A feeling of openness was encouraged; young people began to travel across the nation and to find what other parts of the country were like. A variety of government programmes was launched to create conditions of equality for all Canadians: equalization payments moved funds from the rich provinces to the poor ones.

Canadians were, however, also being made aware that serious problems were arising.

In its Report of 1968, the Economic Council noted the prevalence of poverty. Within a month, Senator David Croll secured a million dollars in public funds, set up a Senate committee, and hired a staff to investigate poverty in Canada. Like similar endeavours, the Senate Committee on Poverty proved to be an expensive form of remedial education for the rich, and a handy way for the government to cool off a hot issue.

From the beginning, Senator Croll made sure that no evidence would be heard that might threaten the status quo, and move the focus of attention from the poor to the social and economic structure of Canada. In Toronto, he demanded that

the words of two radical Toronto aldermen, John Sewell and Karl Jaffary, be struck from the record. "They don't represent anyone", claimed the appointed Senator.

As the Committee toured Canada, a split appeared between the Senators and the support staff. The Senate report, *Poverty in Canada*, published in 1971, claimed that "the welfare system is a hopeless failure" and was costing \$6 billion a year. Further, about 60% of the poor were not on welfare, but were working. The Report spoke of the need for new programmes to "help the poor to help themselves," but their main recommendation was that a Guaranteed Annual Income be introduced to solve the problem of poverty. The Senators, of course, already had a Guaranteed Annual Income!

Four members of the staff of the Committee quit in April, 1971, and later published *The Real Poverty Report*. They claimed that any attempt to deal with, or even discuss, the causes of poverty in Canada, was eliminated from the drafts of the Senate report. They saw the need for structural change in the Canadian economy, and for a distribution of wealth and power to those who did not possess it.

The Senate's approach was based on the idea that the present method of distributing welfare was inefficient. They merely wanted to give the poor enough money to live on, and then leave them "to help themselves". This would pose no threat to the existing holders of power. A story I heard at a meeting of social workers in Liverpool, England, illustrates the weakness of this approach. A social worker was telling a group of poor people how to make nutritious soup out of bones. One of the poor asked: "Who got the meat?"

The conflict between those who favour a dole and those who want a complete change in the social and economic structure so that the causes of poverty and disadvantage are tackled, rather than merely the symptoms, still rages.

The image of the noble savage began to crumble as the facts about the real world of Native people, a world of poverty, poor housing, high mortality, alcoholism, and discrimination, emerged. The North was no longer seen as a last frontier, but as a colonial appendage of Canada where resource companies could take what they wanted without paying any attention to environmental and social costs.

Inevitably, Canadians looked to their governments for leadership and action. The July, 1966, issue of the *Journal of the International Society for Community Development*, a U.S. publication, was entirely devoted to "Community Development in Canada". In an introductory letter, the late Lester Pearson stated:

As a philosophy and a method, community development offers a way of involving people more fully in the life of their communities. It generates scope and initiative which enables people to participate creatively in the economic, social, and cultural life of a nation. It provides, above all, a basis for a more profound understanding and a more effective use of democratic processes. These are the essential elements of Canada's social policy. These principles underlie our current and social programmes which, in essence, are designed to make it possible for people to overcome low income, poor education, geographic isolation, bad housing, and other limitations in their environment.

From the beginning, then, community development was seen as something you did from the centre outwards, for, or with disadvantaged peoples and underdeveloped regions.

The federal government, through its Special Planning Secretariat in the Privy Council Office, soon found that crucial areas dealing with poverty and disadvantage such as health, welfare, and education, were under provincial jurisdiction. The

provinces did not want direct federal intervention in sensitive areas such as poverty. They suggested that any monies should be handed over to them. This was done directly, through equalization programmes, and indirectly through joint federal-provincial programmes.

Such programmes were of two types. Socially based ones were supposed to help people to identify their skills, needs and opportunities so that they could contribute to and participate in the larger society. They included Federal programmes like the Company of Young Canadians, Opportunities for Youth, the multi-cultural programmes, Local Initiatives Programme, and all manner of other programmes at the provincial, and sometimes even at the municipal level. The other programmes were aimed at strengthening and stimulating the economic base of communities and regions. Into this category fell the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Administration (ARDA), the Department of Regional Economic Expansions (DREE), various incentive programmes, and provincial efforts to lure industry.

In both social and economic development programmes, a great deal of lip service was paid to community development, local involvement, citizen participation, self-help approaches and the rest of the soothing rhetoric. But basically, all these approaches were founded on one simple idea—the way to help people to solve their problems is to give them government money. Community development was seen as a safe, ideologically neutral way of keeping people from making legitimate demands for changes in the power structure. Initially, it was assumed that people like social workers knew how to handle the problems of the poor; thus much of the responsibility for policies and programmes was handed over to people with a background in this field. Community development was also viewed as a form of technology to be applied to solving the problems of the poor.

Large sums of money were spent on finding out how to involve them in the decisions that affected them, and to socialize them into accepting the existing system.

In Alberta in the Sixties, I was shown a fascinating diagram by the son of a prominent politician who had developed a “systems approach to poverty” while working with a Californian company. The system was a bizarre real life form of Monopoly. The poor would follow critical paths through the education and social systems. Their individual problems would be analyzed, and then they would be channelled into various programmes that would eradicate their personal deficiencies. In effect, the scheme was aimed at intellectually dry-cleaning the poor. If everything else failed, and the poor refused to be socialized, one critical path landed them in jail!

Thus, in that crucial decade government largesse was expended on the poor and others with the aim of integrating them into Canadian society. And what was the result?

In the early Seventies, a citizen group formed in Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia, to oppose the creation of a National Park. It was partly funded by the federal government under a LIP grant. But it concluded, in a statement published in the *Urban Research Bulletin* of February, 1974:

...we are beginning now to see that our government is not a friend, but truly our enemy. Instead of being told what to do by former colonial lords, we are now told what to do by political lords. We want to break out of thinking the government should do something. They are doing too much and keeping us dependent.

This statement summarizes the essential dilemma of community development in Canada at this time. Instead of creating the conditions for people to help themselves, and each other, community development programmes have created

dependency. Instead of opening up new opportunities, these programmes had created a feeling of frustration. Instead of fostering initiative at the local level, they have encouraged people to do what the government wanted.

The politicians and power holders are as bewildered as anyone by the way in which recipients of grants and help have turned on them. Programmes developed in an area of abundant, cheap resources got into difficulty as inflation gathered momentum and as basic commodities, notably oil, shot up in price. Community development during the decade, when sponsored or supported by government, seldom confronted the political realities at the national, provincial and local level.

Some groups and individuals, notably the Company of Young Canadians, considered community development as an ideal way to organize people to confront the holders of the power. The funding was withdrawn from such groups, or the individuals involved were fired or transferred. Most community groups were a bit timid about asking hard questions of appointed and elected officials.

An enormous amount of energy, enthusiasm and idealism has been dissipated over the past ten years because the Federal and Provincial Governments have refused to treat Canadians as participants in the development process. Development, no matter how defined, has one imperative. People must be informed and involved in the decisions that affect them. Otherwise they show a tremendous capacity for misunderstanding and mishandling the proposals and actions of government.

In May, 1973, Premier Alex Campbell of Prince Edward Island, speaking at a regional development conference at Dalhousie University, was quoted as saying:

Governments must find a way to fuse the decision-making process with the growing demand for public participation

# 4

## Manitoba: A Canadian Beginning

The first province to have a formal programme of community development was Manitoba.

In 1956, the Manitoba government undertook a study of people of Native ancestry. Indians and Métis were becoming increasingly visible, and in the report community development was recommended as a way of tackling their problems. In plain and simple language, the report stated four basic beliefs:

- 1) That all people, no matter how unambitious they may appear, have a desire to better themselves. They have personal and communal needs. They suffer when these needs are not met and wish that something could be done to meet them.
- 2) The difficulties preventing fulfillment of those needs are too great for the resources which they have. Backwardness is not caused by laziness or lack of ambition. If the people had the opportunity to do something about their needs they would become active and progress
- 3) All groups can do something to help themselves when given an opportunity to do so on their own terms. Most outsiders who try to help people of Indian ancestry expect them to solve their problems using White standards of behaviour. Métis and Indians would organize many successful community improvements if they were

- allowed to solve their own problems in their own way.
- 4) In order to achieve lasting changes it is necessary to influence simultaneously various aspects of human behaviour. The cultural and social life of any people constitutes an interrelated whole. Changes in one section may affect many others. By the same token, refusal to change in one section may prevent or retard changes in other sections.<sup>19</sup>

Jean Lagassé, who had directed the study, was appointed Director of Community Development for the province. Community development as a new approach to change does not fit into the usual bureaucratic slots. The study was carried out under the aegis of the provincial Department of Agriculture and Immigration; the community development programme based on its recommendations was administered by the provincial Department of Welfare. Lagassé worked with an Interministerial Committee made up of representatives from the Departments of Labour, Agriculture and Conservation, and Mines and Natural Resources, with the Minister of Health and Public Welfare as chairman.

Lagassé's approach was low-key and gradualistic. A social worker by profession, Lagassé is a concerned and compassionate person. In 1959-60, when the programme was getting off the ground, there were no formal training programmes for turning out workers. Lagassé gathered around him a corps of dedicated and dynamic field workers. None was an expert, and so each was able to take a wide variety of approaches, and to learn on the job.

At Camperville, the community development officer began to collect data, and the local people started an organization to identify their needs. Of twenty-five areas they identified for action, ten could be tackled on their own, and fifteen required

government cooperation and support. At Berens River, a pulpwood co-operative was set up; at The Pas, a friendship centre was started; at MacGregor, houses were built; at Churchill, attention was focused on creating awareness of the Native peoples' problems among the white population.

To most whites, Indians were either an academic abstraction or an unpleasant reality played up by the media when their behaviour does not conform to middle-class norms. In Manitoba, four main bands resided in different parts of the Province—the Saulteaux, the Cree, the Chipewyans, and the Sioux. Each had a different culture and history.

At Roseau River Reserve, Pat Dunphy helped the people to organize, and to rebuild and relocate their homes. He also tried to get the local white population to change its attitudes. Dunphy encountered dependency among the Indians, who attempted to manipulate Whites through playing on their guilt feelings. The Indians constantly complained that the Whites had cheated them and their ancestors. Dunphy countered by saying that there was not a lot anyone could do about what had happened in the past, and that the Indians should plan for the future and learn to deal with problems in the present.

Basically, community development was a small-scale effort at change in Manitoba. Lagassé had no illusions about this, and his staff plugged away at helping Indians to develop skills, abilities and self-confidence in handling local development and the impact of change. But community development was dealing with the symptoms, not the causes, of underdevelopment. The major decisions that would affect the lives of all Manitobans were being made in the boardrooms of Winnipeg, and in the financial centres of the world. Community efforts at the local level can seldom solve the major economic problems of development. During the Sixties, the Manitoba government began to resort to grandiose schemes for large scale development. Such

schemes, it was assumed, could be launched without informing or involving those most directly affected.

In 1963, Lagassé moved to Ottawa to become Director of Citizenship, and the steam went out of the community development programme. His achievements, and those of his staff, cannot be measured in terms of cords of pulpwood cut, houses built and wells drilled. In 1968, the community development workers were transferred to the regional welfare offices and the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood took over services on the reserve. But a knowledge of the goals, techniques and philosophy of community development had begun to spread throughout Manitoba.

As small, self-help efforts at local development got started, the Conservative government of Premier Duff Roblin hit upon a scheme to “solve” the Indian problem, while at the same time opening up the Province’s North from the top down. Plans were formulated for a huge pulp and paper mill in Northern Manitoba. This would be fed by timber from an area of 40,000 square miles, and employ 4,000 workers of whom half would be Indians and Métis. The government offered up to \$100 million to any group willing to establish the mill. Their offer was accepted by an international group that built the mill at enormous cost, and siphoned out as much money as possible. The province incurred a huge debt for a project that would yield small tax returns and provide few jobs. And the mill has progressively destroyed the traditional life of the local Indians, Métis and Whites, the very people it was supposed to help.

The province also launched the Nelson River diversion scheme to generate hydro-electric power. A citizen’s group arose to oppose the scheme, and Manitoba Hydro held a series of public hearings to inform and involve the public of the impact of the project.

The Churchill Forest Industries fiasco was one of the reasons

for the defeat of the Manitoba Conservatives in 1969. When the New Democratic Party took power, it launched an enquiry but it had to keep pouring public money into the mill; too much had been invested to abandon it. And it was locked into the Nelson River scheme, which had a great impact on the lives of the native peoples of the North.

It also began to promote its own top-down schemes for developing Manitoba, and in 1973 issued a document entitled *Guidelines for the Seventies*. By 1972, this “have-not” province had a gross provincial income of \$4.4 billion—twice that of 1962. Personal income totalled \$3.2 billion. *Guidelines* outlined a philosophy based on maximizing the general well-being of all Manitobans, while equalizing and improving conditions to keep people in the province (the “stay-option”). It also stressed public participation in community decision-making.

For people outside the mainstream of Manitoba society, who had difficulty finding and holding employment, a Guaranteed Scheme was suggested. Jobs created in this way would not be make-work, but would meet real social needs. How people, who had problems in fitting into the regular labour force, could suddenly acquire skills to carry out social tasks was not explained. In effect these people were to be kept in the province to form a pool of labour for jobs the government found no one else would take.

*Guidelines* threw into focus what is more and more coming to be seen as the crucial problem of the Seventies. In our state of “stagflation”, the economy is not expanding fast enough to provide employment for all. The Trudeau government has treated inflation as a more serious problem than unemployment. In a huge, sparsely populated country like Canada, advanced, capital-intensive forms of technology are essential. This means that more and more people, especially the young, are losing their jobs as machines take over. Many have been taken off

the labour market and stockpiled in colleges, universities, and training programmes, learning skills and acquiring knowledge that has dubious relevance to the world of work in Canada.

Another problem that Manitobans face, as do other Canadians in areas that rely heavily on primary producing industries, is that of marginal pay-off. People working in the woods, or in the secondary manufacturing and service industries, could often earn as much drawing unemployment insurance or taking government retraining courses. In Gaspé, for example, a government mobility programme paid people \$85 a week to learn English to help them to move to jobs in the cities. This sum was well above the minimum wage.

If Manitobans are dissatisfied with their government, they can pressure them for change or eject them at election time. But Canadian Indians do not elect the people who control their lives. And more and more Canadians are being treated as wards of government, or as clients of administrative agencies.

The experiences of these people show that community development has often been used as a way of buying time by those who hold power, rather than as a way of encouraging self-reliance.

# 5

## Native Peoples, Rural Poverty, and Local Initiatives

### “THE INDIAN PROBLEM”

In 1973, I attended the First International Consultation on Community Development Education and Training held at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Some Indians from Manitoba attended, and late one evening, well before the conference ended, they phoned me to say they were leaving. “We aren’t learning anything more here than we don’t already know,” they explained. I told them that sometimes they had to travel far to hear the “experts” to appreciate the fact that they already knew a great deal.

Native peoples are made to be the archetypal figures of failure. Indians are always shown in the media as falling short of White standards. A CBC television team arrived in Winnipeg one day in the Sixties, and took some footage of an Indian kindergarten at the Saint John Bosco Centre there. The TV programme that resulted featured shots of drunken Indians, and of a magistrate suggesting that the way to solve the “Indian problem” was to sterilize them. None of the material showing the Indian people educating their children was used.

In the early Sixties, the Department of Northern Affairs

launched an animation programme to make its staff more sensitive and aware of the problems of the northern Indian and Inuit. About the same time, Indian Affairs initiated a community development programme that involved recruiting workers who would move on to reserves like small-time Lawrences of Arabia and help the residents to break out of their dependency on government. The Northern Affairs approach was gradualistic, that of Indian Affairs truly radical.

Just as both programmes were getting under way, the two Departments were combined into one.

In 1967, I was hired by Indian Affairs to give a course on community development. It was held in Smith's Falls; apparently a Liberal supporter had built a hotel there, and it had to be kept filled. My course was in the sixth and last week of an in-service training programme, and it soon became apparent that the community development workers had been pulled off the reserves because their activities were threatening the formal system of Indian administration and the emerging patterns of Indian self-help.

On the first day, I rambled on until the only Indian in the group confronted me. On the second day, after we had seen the film of an interview with Saul Alinsky, one of the Whites confronted me. On the third day, I told them that I did not give a damn what they did with the rest of the time available, and that I'd be in my room that afternoon if they wanted to talk over what they wanted to learn. On the Thursday, we took apart the existing training programme and redesigned our own. The first thing everyone agreed they needed to learn about was the Treaties; they also agreed that the authority on treaties was working for Indian Affairs Branch.

It was obvious that the community development programme of Indian Affairs Branch was on its way out. To resolve the tensions, Indian Affairs began to hand over community

development to the native organizations in the provinces. Indians are wards of the federal government, but this does not stop provincial governments from launching programmes aimed at helping them.

Alberta established a community development programme for Indians and Métis in 1964. Its goals were:

(1) to help the communities organize themselves so that normal services available to all citizens are available to the Indians and Métis; (2) to assist in the improvement of the social and economic situation; (3) to help create a social climate in the wider society which will permit Indians and Métis to assume an equal place with other Albertan people.<sup>20</sup>

All government programmes were based on social Darwinism, the belief that the Indians were somehow “behind” the Whites and had to be “brought up” to their level.

In Alberta, communication and leadership were stressed as the keys to salvation. A Provincial Co-ordinator of Community Development was appointed who publicly stated that his approach was based on “fighting the system”. The programme in Alberta suffered the same fate as the one in Manitoba. It was bounced around a number of departments. In 1967, it was transferred from a cabinet committee to the Department of Industry and Development, and a Director of Community Development was appointed, who was senior to the Co-ordinator who favoured confrontation. In 1968, the programme was moved into Human Resources Development Authority, a quasi-governmental agency that swept all kinds of radicals, whiz kids, change agents and odd bits and pieces of programme connected with social change under one roof. Once a government does this, it can abolish the agency and get rid of the trouble makers at one fell swoop. This happened

to the Alberta agency in 1971. As early as 1969, the Director of Community Development and a number of the staff had resigned, claiming that they were not being allowed to spend funds allocated to them.

Ontario launched its community development programme for native people in the Sixties, and it followed a similar path. Here too, in the late Sixties, the Director and many of his staff had resigned for precisely the same reason.

Many Indians had seen Whites come on the reserve, hang around, do trivial things, and spout the jargon and rhetoric of community development. Since no special skills and training appeared to be needed, the Indians figured they might just as well get the allocated funds rather than see them go to White outsiders who claimed in many cases that they had come to learn from the Indians! In October 1969, the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood took over community development in that province. They were followed by the Union of Nova Scotian Indians in September, 1970, and by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians in October, 1970. By 1971-72, total Indian Affairs funding for community development services totalled \$1.8 million, a small drop in the Department's budget. Projects ranged from friendship centres to logging operations.

Community development had become a handy form of slush funding. Some native organizations copied the structural model of Indian Affairs bureaucracy. Young people sometimes found themselves caught between two bureaucracies—the one run by Indian Affairs, and the other by their own people. In the late Sixties, a host of organizations grew up, ad hoc groups to pressure governments for money to solve problems. Non-Status Indians and Métis began to organize, and the federal and provincial governments started to ladle out money to them.

“Indians” are an abstraction created by a bureaucracy for administrative purposes. Canada contains a wide variety of

tribes and groupings, but the Ottawa bureaucracies tried to treat them all alike. In Alberta, for example, the Blackfoot and the Cree never got on together in pre-European times. The able head of the Indian Association of Alberta, Harold Cardinal, had to do a tricky balancing act. He had to be able to negotiate with federal and provincial bureaucracies, and to work on joint programmes. He also had to work with the media to influence public opinion. He had to treat the various native groups equally, and help people with widely diverse lifestyles to come to terms with the demands of the white world, and yet to retain the most valuable of their traditional ways.

Indians have made even bigger news in the Seventies. The White Paper issued by Indian Affairs in 1969 tried to dump the Indians out of the federal lap. The Indians responded with a Red Paper, outlining their demands. After first rejecting the validity of the idea of aboriginal title, the federal government agreed to consider native land claims in Canada and provided funds for the research.

The futility of trying to placate people by shoving money at them was illustrated in a piece in the *Globe and Mail* of May 3, 1973 on the Ontario Métis and Non-Status Indian Association. This group had been organized to serve the native peoples in Ontario, an estimated 50,000. In two years, the organization had signed up 2,043 members while receiving \$1 million in government funding. One family in Thunder Bay seemed to be running the organization; staff members charged mileage to drive to head office to pick up their pay cheques. The president received \$13,000 a year plus expenses, and met any Criticism with the statement: "You are trying to apply white men's rules to us, but we are Indians and want to run our own affairs". In December, 1975, militant Indians "sat in" the office of the Secretary of State in Ottawa. They were the executive of the

National Association of Friendship Centres, which had been promised \$26.1 million, but had received only \$8.4 million.

Meanwhile Indian attempts at community improvement were being stifled by agencies trying to help them. Over the winter of 1975-76, attempts were initiated to make abandoned military housing available to Indians in Moosonee, Ontario. There was no opposition to the idea on the part of either the Government or the Indians. But 43 government groups and committees were involved in arranging the transfer, and agency confusion turned a simple process into a long, time-consuming one.

Pathological aspects of the lives of some Indians attracted a lot of media attention, and a host of White do-gooders. In many cases what looked like deviant behaviour was actually the only form of adaptation available to Indians lost between the old way and the new. In the summer of 1969, I went pub-crawling in Edmonton with Hugh Brody who was doing research for his report, *Indians on Skid Row*. Far from being alienated, the Indians I met were open and friendly. As Brady notes:

For the migrant Indians, skid row resolves the tension which arises from the combination of a desire for living in the city with the intense need to avoid a milieu dominated by middle-class, non-Indians. Inevitably located in an urban setting, the skid row offers protection from mainstream life. . . . At present the majority of Indians on skid row find there a gratifying and welcoming environment.<sup>21</sup>

A young Indian, Morris Isaac, recounted with gentle humour the problems he faced in his quest for sanity and humanity in a White-dominated world in which people saw Indians, not as human beings, but as means to their ends. At one stage, the young Mic-Mac joined the Company of Young Canadians and recorded his impressions of the people he met there:

The volunteers were trying to do something. I guess that's enough. I didn't think too much of some of their projects, because some of the volunteers spent their time dreaming. They were dreaming about a world where there was peace, love and understanding. I don't remember running into a place like that. Some of the people did not understand what the Indian situation was. They did admit that there was something wrong, but instead of doing something, they spent all their time admiring people who were poor. They claimed that there was love and understanding among poor people. I don't know about that. Too many volunteers had the impression that all they had to do was run into an Indian reserve and ask the first people they meet if people needed help.<sup>22</sup>

Despite enormous difficulties, the native peoples of Canada are getting organized and breaking away from the paternalistic grip of those who control their destinies. In the Northwest Territories, the Dene Nation is demanding that their land claims be settled before the Mackenzie pipeline is built.

In October, 1974, a group of native peoples who had travelled from all across the country demonstrated on Parliament Hill. They were met by RCMP clubs. These young people were members of the generation that grew up between 1950 and 1970, knowing neither the traditional way of life, nor the new world of technology. Reaching back into their heritage, they revived the idea of the Ojibway Warrior Society that came into existence when the integrity of the people was threatened.

The blockades at Cache Creek, British Columbia, and the occupation of Anishinabe Park near Kenora, Ontario, were all efforts by Indians to assert some degree of control in the face of a social system willing to give them money, but not to recognize their rights either as indigenous people or as human beings.

The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (Eskimo Brotherhood) hired

Whites to carry out a survey of their traditional hunting and fishing areas to substantiate their land claims. They also developed a new concept of regional government—*Nunavut*. At the present time, the Northwest Territories has an appointed commissioner and an elected council with little power. Native representatives are in a majority in the Council. At the local level, most community councils are made up of a majority of Indians, Métis and Inuit. Between the local and territorial levels of government is a bureaucratic form of regional government, in which expatriate Whites hold most of the positions of power. All the tasks in this bureaucracy are defined in terms of southern standards of performance.

The proposal for Nunavut borrows a concept from the large corporation, and applies it to traditional people trying to adapt to change and to retain something of their traditional ways. An Inuit Development Corporation is suggested, in which every Inuit would hold shares. Funds for running Nunavut would come through this Corporation, in the form of royalties, monies from the settlement of land claims, transfer payments, and funds from existing government programmes to which the Inuit, as Canadians, are entitled. Below this level of government would be community corporations which would control the land areas that the Inuit occupied in traditional times. The new Territory would still be part of Canada. The Inuit make it very plain that they wish to remain Canadian, and that their aim is self-government not separation. The Inuit ask that they be informed of what any outsider wishes to do in their territory, whether such people are intent on mineral exploitation or on preserving the environment.

Over the past five years, a large amount of money has been wasted by native organizations, or misappropriated, after being wrenched out of whites by making them feel guilty. In the Auditor General's Report released in late November, 1976,

it was stated that many Indian bands were not properly using funds allocated to them to help them to have more control over their own affairs. Canada's Indians have shown a stubborn determination to achieve a greater degree of independence, and have developed sophisticated methods of organization to meet their needs. Of course they have made mistakes; this is an essential part of the learning process.

Ten years ago, the main complaint was that Canada's Indians were apathetic; now the "problem" is being identified as aggression and hostility to Whites. Like many people in developing nations, they have been forced to explore their own heritage, to learn the way the western system works, and to develop approaches that make sense in terms of their own cultures. These experiences provide a rich source of knowledge for anyone concerned with sound community development. Indeed, instead of the native peoples being "backward" they are in many ways very far ahead in determining how to identify and to handle their own problems.

## **RURAL POVERTY AND ARDA**

Another group outside the "mainstream" of Canadian society is the rural poor, and attempts were also made to help them through community development. Many parts of Canada settled by farmers were unsuitable for agriculture. They might provide a meagre living for a family, but the hard way of life had little appeal for the children, who migrated to the city. This was especially true in eastern Ontario, an area of shallow soil and small farms.

In 1961, the populist Government of John Diefenbaker passed the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act (ARDA). Its aim was to rationalize Canadian agriculture, and to wipe out rural poverty in a variety of ways. The land would be

made more fruitful, community pastures created, farms bought from retiring farmers and put together into economically viable holdings. Marginal land would be taken out of production, and mobility encouraged. People would be trained to acquire skills that could be used in finding employment in the cities.

The ARDA agreements were renewed in April 1965 for a period of five years, and again in 1970 in some provinces. The agreements all laid great stress on informing and involving rural people in the decisions affecting them. But they never specified how this would be done.

Rural poverty thus became a newsworthy issue. On May 7, 1964, the *Ottawa Citizen* ran photographs of Keelerville, a small rural community strung along a highway near the St. Lawrence Seaway. The piece was headed "Seaway Shacktown is Unbelievable" and it berated the government for talking about rural poverty and doing nothing about conditions in places like Keelerville. This community had been in existence for about sixty years, and was one of seven shanty towns in Dundas County.

I got involved in Keelerville when a United Church minister, a member of the Company of Young Canadians and a former student, came to visit me in 1966 at the Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology. The minister had succeeded one who had been fired by his congregation for working with the people of Keelerville. The man from the CYC was living in the area, trying to do what he could to help the people. This included, among other things, handing out copies of *Maclean's* to improve their reading habits. The student was now a child-care worker who wanted to take away one of the children of a Keelerville resident, to be "properly looked after." The people of Keelerville had responded by threatening to shoot him the next time he came around. They also threatened to smash the cameras of

anyone who tried to photograph them.

I visited the area with the child-care worker. We drove through Keelerville at high speed. We made enquiries about programmes that would help the people of Keelerville. Surely there had to be something available under ARDA? It turned out that the people of Keelerville were not farmers; nothing could be done for them. The wage earners worked in factories and in casual employment.

With some of the people associated with the Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, I dropped down from time to time to Dundas County to meet and talk with clergymen and others. The main concern of the people of Keelerville was to get a community hall, but they were being blocked in their attempts. They also wanted better access to medical facilities, and a baby clinic.

It was the local ruling circles that were thwarting their efforts. After visiting backwards and forwards for two years, we eventually made contact with the "King of Keelerville," in the company of the Catholic priest. This man ran the small settlement like a feudal fief, delivering votes in exchange for groceries. He recalled one politician who had bribed him with \$20 worth of groceries, and who had lost the election. But the candidate still delivered the groceries. By this time, the United Church minister, who had originally come to ask for help, had also been eased out by his congregation for spending too much time with the poor.

In 1967, local women got together and formed the Seaway District Community Association. They were mainly farmer's wives with a social conscience who wanted to organize recreational facilities for young people.

In 1968, the United Church Board of Missions established a summer camp for the children, and parachuted a young volunteer into the area to run it. From the Centre, we provided

what support services, advice, and encouragement we could, trying to be helpful without cutting across the emerging community leadership structure. The main problem of this part of Dundas County was soon clear. The volunteer was accused by the local elite of spending too much time with the children of the landless poor, and of discriminating against the Keelerville children because of their parents' economic status. He did an excellent job under trying conditions, attempting to encourage leadership from the children of both groups. But he was placed under a great deal of stress. In his report to the Board of Missions, he noted that he got little support from United Church members, and suggested that the Church stop tampering with problems in the area and adopt a community development approach to rural problems, using trained workers with adequate backing and support.<sup>23</sup>

The poor people in the rural areas of Eastern Ontario were the targets for many kinds of intervention. Most of those trying to help were in too much of a hurry to examine their own assumptions. In *Community Development: Ideology and Technology*, John Jackson, a sociologist teaching at Concordia University, examined the actions, assumptions and socio-historic bases of three groups that tried to help the poor in another county in Eastern Ontario, to determine why their efforts were so ineffective.<sup>24</sup> The three groups were the Company of Young Canadians, the YMCA, and ARDA.

The Company of Young Canadians espoused community development as an ideology. It claimed that the way to overcome poverty and disadvantage was through community development. Their approach was rooted in the ideas of the Liberal Party, the New Left Movement, and the values of established welfare and recreational agencies. The volunteers were just dumped into the County, and left to fend for themselves. They believed that personal contact and intervention was the way to help the poor.

They did not scrutinize their own personal or organizational assumptions. Project members just hung around their base, accomplishing very little, and finally the whole thing fell apart, and the volunteers left. The volunteers had no knowledge of the community development process, nor how to encourage participation in a rural situation where poor people were denied access to resources.

Few people join the YMCA to help the poor, yet this organization's involvement in the County began as community development, and ended in group therapy for middle-class managerial and professional people. Changing inter-personal relations was seen as the key to development. The historical roots of the YMCA derived from attempts to save young people from sin, so that the group therapy sessions—confession in modern dress—were a great success. But they did nothing to help the rural poor.

Despite all the talk of citizen participation in the agreements, Jackson found that the ARDA programme was based on the idea of salvation through technology. ARDA representatives were sent out to sell programmes. Affluent farmers knew how to make use of the information provided by ARDA field agents, and how to get grants and loans. The rural poor were simply bypassed by ARDA, or were encouraged to leave the land. The rich farmers got richer, the poor ones poorer.

## LOCAL INITIATIVES

As governments try to reform themselves, they raise the aspirations and expectations of the governed. At the end of the Sixties, a large number of citizen organizations had been formed in rural and urban areas. People had come together to solve problems they could not tackle on their own. A survey carried out by an American consultant in 1969-70 identified

over 200 low-income citizen groups in urban areas; Vancouver had twenty-nine, Winnipeg, twenty-one, Toronto, thirty-nine.<sup>25</sup> Some of the organizations were started by the poor to press for welfare rights and employment. Middle class groups were also organizing to block urban renewal schemes and superhighways, or to carry out research on slum housing. Citizen groups were setting up co-operative stores, and community clinics, and also lobbying politicians and learning to deal with bureaucrats. In January, 1973, Environment Canada published an *Index of Canadian Citizen's Environment Organizations* which listed 400 groups active in this field alone.

My personal involvement with citizen groups reveals that few are strong, well-staffed, and well-organized. The majority are made up of a few dedicated people who have come together around an issue of common concern. They stagger from crisis to crisis, chronically short of money and of resources.

Federal and provincial governments soon started to buy into citizen groups to have some measure of control over them. Most were so short of funds that the government grants came as a Godsend. But they also created a situation of dependency, and gave rise to new bureaucracies charged with making sure that projects were properly run. In October, 1970, the Secretary of State announced that his Department had \$35 million for voluntary groups in Canada to engage in citizen participation. A bewildering variety of programmes was spawned by governments intent on retaining power, while encouraging citizens to get involved in radical-change programmes. Federal and provincial governments provided funds and set up agencies and programmes to help ethnic minorities, sportsmen, publishers, old people, and consumers.

The result looked like a deliberate attempt to divide and conquer Canadians. In each interest group, people had to compete for government funds with each other. And the

various groups saw themselves in competition with each other for scarce government funds. While the economy was expanding, there seemed to be plenty of money for everyone. But in a shrinking, or slow-growth economy, groups funded by government soon found that they were expected to sustain their existing efforts and to launch new ones with smaller and smaller sums of money.

The rise of issue-oriented citizen groups masked an emerging problem, that of rising unemployment. The first government programme aimed at solving this problem on a community basis was Opportunities for Youth, launched in 1971. This tried to absorb the energy of young people during the summer by providing grants for them to plan and to run their own projects to meet community needs. The result was a wide variety of projects ranging from the brilliant to the bizarre, and including schemes for scaring seagulls off airport runways, giving puppet shows for children, and running day camps. The Opportunities for Youth programme started with wild enthusiasm, and the belief that young people, alone and unaided, could tackle complex social problems, assist communities, and develop their own capabilities. As with many other community-oriented programmes, the participants in OFY found themselves caught between their own priorities, the needs of communities, and the increasingly stringent guidelines laid down by the government. Initially, it was mainly middle class youth who benefitted from OFY.

In the late Sixties, I made contact in Ottawa with some concerned women in a public housing project. They told me about the youth problem there. Many young people were being thrown out of school, and were unable to find employment. They were not eligible for assistance under Canada Manpower retraining programmes until they were a certain age, and had been out of school for a year. Some were getting involved with

petty criminals, and heading for a life of crime. In due course, I met the leader of the young people in the area, who had formed a youth group named “The Broken Free”. They wanted a place where they could meet to discuss their problems. But if they congregated on the streets, the police would move them on, and they had no money to hire a meeting place. Together, the group leader, a member of the Company of Young Canadians assigned to the area, and I helped the young people to form an organization called the NCYO—National Capital Youth Opportunities. It was incredibly difficult work, but the NCYO provided a vehicle for the young people of the area to work towards the solution of their own problems. They painted and renovated houses, helped each other to find employment, and provided mutual help and support.<sup>26</sup>

OFY was terminated in 1975-76. Yet the largest number of unemployed people in Canada was still among the 17-24 age group.

At the same time as OFY was started, the Local Initiatives Programme (LIP) was launched for adults. Basically the federal government believed that it was better to have people employed in make-work programmes than to have them unemployed. It was almost as cheap as paying unemployment insurance or doling out welfare. Over the years, a vast variety of training programmes for the unemployed had been funded by the federal government and run by the provinces. These programmes often bore little relationship to the employment situation, but they were a handy way to stockpile the poor, the disadvantaged, and the unemployed while the governments tinkered with the economy with the hope of making it work better.

In the case of OFY and LIP, untrained people were suddenly expected to plan, design, initiate and operate programmes that provided meaningful employment for the participants and services for the community. The projects had to be “creative,

original, and innovative”, and could range from converting a one-room school house into a community centre, to writing and publishing a history of a city, town or village.

In any community, there are always unfilled needs. These were quickly identified as targets for LIP projects. Vital projects like day care centres were lumped in with crude makework programmes. Even in the fall of 1976, many communities in Nova Scotia were getting LIP grants merely to fix up the community halls, and to tidy up the cemeteries.

What happened in Winnipeg shows the dilemma of untrained people venturing into a situation where they have to operate complex community projects. A local group got a \$124,000 LIP grant to run a “detoxification centre.” Those involved originally had the idea of providing a place where drunks could come to get advice on where to go to get dried out. It turned out that Winnipeg had no such facilities. Instead of setting up an information and referral centre, the group started a storefront crash pad where people could at least get a night’s sleep. Between July and November, 1972, the ten-bed facility accommodated 1,400 people who had nowhere else to go. In December, 1972, a man was brought in who had passed out in a nearby building. He died of acute alcoholism in the centre, and of course the project got wide publicity. As the administrator explained: “None of us are professionals. We are in the service because nobody else performs it”.

Running centres such as the one in Winnipeg is a tough and demanding task. Unskilled people are soon pushed out of their depths, and through the LIP and other community programmes, many people have been forced to face a moment of truth. Although the federal government funded the projects, it did not provide technical knowledge, resources or access to skills. The LIP project in Winnipeg identified a serious problem. But the result was to provide a social welfare service on the

cheap, and to convince the people involved that they were not very competent.

Many of the people involved in the LIP projects were serious and concerned. But LIP soon got a reputation through media coverage as being made up of middle class people wasting taxpayers' money in kooky make-work projects. If a project looked as if it were failing, the funds were cut off. If it looked like it was becoming too successful, and creating too much independence, then this too was threatening to government, and the funds suddenly stopped. There seemed to be little appreciation, by the government or the people involved, that many such projects were bound to fail, because this is what happens with most experiments.

In Fredericton, a woman established a half-way house for people with drinking problems, using community development principles. Just as it was getting off the ground, and the group was gaining some confidence in its ability to handle its own problems, the LIP money ran out. The co-ordinator was approached by a member of another government agency and offered \$60,000 if she would initiate an alcoholic rehabilitation programme. The people she was working with were not ready for such an approach, which would have involved a structured programme, so she declined the offer.

While some federal departments were trying to create employment and encourage participation and creativity, other departments were working at cross purposes to them. In Halifax, a youth group received a LIP grant to start a health food restaurant. Just as they were getting into their stride, another government agency demanded taxes which the struggling new venture could not pay.

The restaurant closed down. This pattern of agency confusion and of government working at cross purposes was common in Canada in the mid-Seventies. The Secretary of State tried to

encourage magazine publication with grants; in the fall of 1976, the Post Office raised its rates and this threatened to put some magazines out of business.

The difficulties of keeping a stable labour force on a project, and retaining commitment was illustrated by a LIP project in Victoria, B.C., which ran from November, 1971 to September, 1972. In theory, funds were available to hire eleven people to make handicrafts. In fact, in the time in which the project was in existence, more than seventy people passed through it.

Despite the problems of OFY and LIP, the federal government initiated a host of other employment schemes. LEAP (Local Employment Assistance Programme) was launched to create community jobs for disadvantaged groups outside the labour force. Outreach was another Manpower programme aimed at helping Blacks, Indians, Women and visible minorities who were having problems finding jobs. In 1975, the Community Employment Programme was aimed at creating employment by getting people at the local level to organize and to start money-making ventures. In November, 1976, the Minister of Finance was predicting higher unemployment over the winter and contemplating even more new makework programmes.

## **CITIZEN POWER**

Citizen power is a fact of life in Canada in 1976. The emphasis in community development programmes has shifted from social goals to concern about income and employment. In the 1960s, we were encouraged to "do our own thing". Now people are desperately looking around for stable employment and income to offset the rising cost of living. The government's methods of fighting inflation, is resulting in higher unemployment.

Many community groups have developed skills in organizing and running projects. And they have had to learn on the job.

The highly individualistic style once in vogue has given place to a more low-key approach in which committed people have stayed with organizations, often without pay, in order to keep what they consider to be vital services that meet community needs in operation. In many cases, like the native peoples, groups have decided to work things through on their own rather than to rely upon government grants.

In the summer of 1976, I supervised, on a voluntary basis, a survey of the social science information needs of voluntary organizations in Halifax. The Social Science Research Council of Canada received funds for the project from the Secretary of State. Many of the voluntary groups, especially in the low-income areas, were extremely hostile to the project. The Council sounded like another of those vague bodies that was using low-income citizens as a rationale for their existence. The groups had been worn down by a series of government agencies that had stolen their ideas, wasted their time, promised funds and never delivered them, and in general misled and exploited them. The groups had not asked for the survey, nor was it their decision to take the information gathered and send it to universities so that social scientists could come down and help the voluntary organizations to solve their problems. The community groups wanted the information themselves. They distrusted social scientists, and felt that they had been studied to death.

In November, the Director of the Social Science Research Council visited Halifax to discuss the way in which social scientists in the universities could help voluntary groups. I offered to arrange a meeting between him and representatives of the groups so that he could get a first hand impression of what they saw as their problems. He refused.

Governments at all levels must learn to work in co-operation with community groups, and the latter must insist on

this governmental co-operation rather than unilateral actions which are only discovered after a programme has been started. We must also look at the urban power centres. Governments are always happy to provide funds to have activists and research workers running around the hinterland, doing social welfare on the cheap and carrying out studies. It diverts attention from the assumptions of the decision makers. But activists in urban centres can disturb and threaten governments. Possibly this is why most community development projects are in smaller, and often isolated, communities.

While I was with the Department of Northern Affairs, all kinds of money was available for research on northern Indians and Inuit. But if anyone ever suggested a study of the decision-making process in the Ottawa bureaucracy, the administration immediately rejected the idea, or insisted that the research worker sign a statement that he would keep his findings confidential.

## 6

# The Failure of Liberalism

In November, 1975, the Social Science Research Council of Canada held a National Conference to explore ways in which social science could solve national problems. People from universities, governments, labour unions, community interest groups, and even a few ordinary citizens, were invited and assigned to discussion groups on Northern Development, Justice, Industrial Relations, Women and other “problem areas.” The Conference was partly funded by the Ford Foundation.

For reasons that still escape me, I was on the panel on Industrial Relations as a “citizen representative.” In this session, academics attacked government officials; labour union officials poured their scorn over both academics and government officials. An apostate labour relations expert from a university claimed that he would undertake no more government assignments; the government simply paid no attention to what he said. Another academic suggested that Canada spend \$50-\$100 million on research projects on labour productivity. He rather spoiled his case by pointing out that similar approaches in Scandinavia have not been successful, because things had gone back to ‘business as usual’ as soon as the social scientists left. A representative of the Canadian Labour Congress saw the answer to labour’s problems in his organization getting government money to do research.

By the end of the Conference, everyone was thoroughly

discouraged. One speaker quoted Yeats: "Things fall apart/The Centre cannot hold," and others talked of the Emperor's clothes. A university professor stated that when he looked around him in government, all that he saw were students, colleagues and friends; he said that it looked like a conspiracy.

Edmund Burke once stated that most of us do not possess ideas, but are possessed by them. This observation is true of Canada today, since most of us are liberals without even being aware of the fact.

Liberalism, the dominant ideology in Canada, is based upon the belief that the actions of individuals will maximize social joy and general prosperity.

Liberalism arose out of a long historical process in western Europe, and reached a major peak in the 19th century. The middle class and upper classes believed that they sat at the apex of a pyramid of human perfection. Roaming the world, conquering, colonizing, "civilizing", they were backed up by superior technology and by armed force which could be used against any nation or tribe that did not accept their hegemony.

In the 20th century, liberalism has become the main bar to the effective use of community development; the major concern of liberalism is acquisitive individualism. The basis of community development is mutual-aid, mutual-learning, the sharing of resources, the pooling of effort. Liberal ideology is rampant in the Progressive Conservative Party, in left-wing organizations, and in everything in between. It is embedded in the minds of business executives who consider the social and environmental consequences of their activities as external costs to be born by the community. This same ideology informs those individuals who go North to live on the frontier, free of the constraints of civilization, but with access to public services.

Liberalism believes that individual actions can create a strong,

free, healthy community. In fact, just the opposite seems to be true. In 1966, the Ford Foundation sent two representatives to Canada to offer half a million dollars to research organizations to do studies in poverty. They asked for proposals, and the agency sponsoring their visit hired a man who went around to the organizations represented at the initial meeting, seeking proposals. When the next meeting of the groups was called, he unveiled his proposal, (or it may have been that of the Ford Foundation); use the money to set up a training school for social animators to intervene in communities in Canada, and help the powerless gain power. Meanwhile, a Canadian organization involved with the poor tried to convince Ford Foundation that it should get the money. Ford withdrew the offer.

Later, the Ford Foundation moved into New Brunswick with a Leadership Development Programme that provided up to \$15,000 each to citizen leaders who were expected to train themselves in community action. When these people finished their training course, they had difficulty in finding employment.

Liberalism believes that the economic units of a community, farms, factories, stores, must be privately owned. This emphasis eliminates co-operative, worker-owned collectives, and public enterprises. In Cape Breton Island in the early Seventies, a fishing plant got into difficulties. At the very last moment, the local politicians started seeking information on employee-owned companies. Their quest for knowledge came too late; the plant was taken over by the provincial government, and then sold to an American company.

Modern liberalism measures the success of development efforts solely in terms of economic criteria. For example, the oil refinery at Come-by-Chance built by the Shaheen interests was the largest economic venture of its kind in Newfoundland, and indeed in Atlantic Canada. When Japanese creditors

foreclosed, it also proved to be the biggest bankruptcy Canada had ever experienced. The magnitude of the investment seemed, initially, to indicate great social benefit. After foreclosure just the opposite seemed true. Liberal economic theory operates on the basis of one of Samuel Goldwyn's maxims: "I want to make a movie that starts with an earthquake and moves up to a climax."

The liberal penchant for self-aggrandisement and for taking the hero role is prominently displayed in the promotions for CBC's "Ombudsman" programme. This show presents in cartoon form a baffled and bewildered citizen, confused by the bureaucracy. Suddenly, in a flash, CBC's Ombudsman arrives—a lawyer, a sociologist, a professor, etc. Is the Ombudsman there to help a troubled citizen, or to solve his own and CBC's desire for action and recognition? Time and time again, across Canada, community development schemes have been wrecked by individuals who have used them to meet their own ego needs.

Liberalism is essentially success-oriented. The development process is always fraught with the possibility of failure. Yet business failures are legion. In Canada, approximately 80% of all federal government documents are classified as confidential, so it's easy to conceal official failures. In releasing his *Annual Report* in 1976, the Auditor General stated that government spending was out of control and recommended that a senior official, at Deputy Minister level, be charged with ensuring that government money was used for purposes for which it was allocated. The government response was typical — a Royal Commission to investigate government spending.

Modern liberalism believes in salvation by technology. Only a few years ago, Canadians were being told that the country had adequate oil and gas supplies to last for centuries. Recently, these estimates have been scaled down, yet the faith in technology

is unshaken. Both the federal government, through Panarctic Oils, and private companies are drilling for oil and gas in the Arctic, and finding some. A giant pipeline was planned for the Mackenzie Valley. The Berger Inquiry into the pipeline was launched to determine the social and environmental impact of the project. It was never intended to stop construction of the pipeline, and in a time of rising energy costs and scarcity of resources, the government is counting on the hope that Canadians can be persuaded to favour the pipeline over the interests of the aboriginal peoples and their rights — and over more rational solutions to our energy problems.

There is evidence that liberalism is losing its attraction for some people in Canada; they are casting around for alternative ways of living, based on the concept of community. Such ways need not inhibit individual freedom and individual development; they just mean that what people have in the way of gifts, abilities and skills should be used for the good of the community, and not solely for personal benefit.

In Canada, we do have examples of communities that offer chances for individuals to develop as persons and as members of communities. The Hutterite colonies in Alberta are held together by strong, religious and communal ties; the Hutterites balance change against stability. An ambitious young person first becomes thoroughly immersed in knowledge of his religion which stresses community. Then he is allowed to innovate — according to his religion, in areas where his knowledge and skills increase the community's well-being. The biggest opponents of the Hutterites have been farmers who see in this way of life a form of communism that is profoundly threatening. The simple fact is that the Hutterites are more efficient producers than these individualistic farmers. They look after the land better, and rely less upon government assistance. The Hutterites use sophisticated agricultural technology, but they also produce a

lot of their own food and household goods. The fact that they are not avid consumers is also held against them.

Liberalism could flourish in Canada in an era of cheap, abundant resources, but it is an ideology unsuited to a time of scarcity in which people will have to share. The Science Council of Canada is now promoting the "Conservator Society," stressing "doing more with less." Many Canadians are already being forced to live this way, not out of desire to follow a new trend, but out of necessity. Many people did so during the Depression. A man near retirement who works for the National Research Council in Halifax explained to me how his family solved the energy problem in his youth. Family life took place in the kitchen where the stove was located. Everyone worked or relaxed there in the winter, and the school children studied there.

In Nova Scotia, the provincially-owned Nova Scotia Power Corporation, with liberal optimism, was encouraging people to "live better electrically" a few years ago; the Housing Commission was helping people to build their own electrically heated homes in Halifax County. Now it costs several hundred dollars a month to heat these homes, and the price of power is still rising. Some people have even installed wood stoves! It is difficult to sell such houses these days.

A liberal has been defined as someone who thinks somebody else has a problem. Youth unemployment was not seen as a problem as long as it was the children of the poor who could not find jobs. It has jumped into prominence in recent years only as the children of the middle class have been affected.

There have been standoffs and stalemates throughout Canada in recent years as aggressive, articulate, assertive citizen leaders have been counterpoised by expansionary-minded civil servants and politicians intent on pushing their needs, their proposals and their agendas. Each group is more interested in defending its proposals than in striving for a sense of what is

good for the national or local community.

Liberals are under stress because of their inability to understand the contradictions in their own thinking. In the summer of 1976, *Canadian Public Opinion* sponsored a seminar on the theme; "Can Governments Govern?" One paper stated:

In an organization of which I am President ... we make many demands on governments... The people we meet in this capacity are often women who one month are in our meetings helping us to write briefs and articulate issues, and the next are in the Secretary of State's office or the Ministry of Labour telling us we cannot expect an amendment to legislation or to receive funding. It is true in part that they have been 'coopted' by government as a way of diffusing (sic) the issue but that is not the entire explanation of their position. What choice did the government have? How many non-aligned universalistic, politically neutral individuals are there in this country to lead public hearings, to organize debates and to operate within civil service capacities?<sup>27</sup>

The idea that, somewhere, a saviour is waiting to resolve our problems is one dear to the hearts of liberals. The author of the above paper was a vice-president of the Liberal Party of Canada, a brilliant sociologist, someone who had been identified as a "mover and shaker." She was obviously moved and shaken by her encounters with government, so it's little wonder that ordinary citizens are having problems in getting their messages across.

Liberals, in and out of government, are a bit like the Sultan's son who inherited his father's harem. He knew what to do; he just did not know where to begin.

Two Liberal Cabinet ministers have come out with strikingly similar statements about the problems and promise of community development.

In 1971, the (then) Federal Minister of National Health and Welfare stated:

More recently, we have begun to move in the direction of seeing development of communities as a two-phase process. The first phase is the process of community animation, motivating the poor to organize, and work towards the identification of their own needs, the establishment of their own sense of community and capacity for collective strength in place of individual alienation and resignation. Some of these experiments, although modest, have produced rather startling results. Clearly there is within the culture of the poor and the alienated minorities a tremendous latent potential and capacity for self-improvement and self-betterment.<sup>28</sup>

This statement contains many of the buzz words of social change — community animation, alienation, latent potential, development of communities. But Mr. Munro implies that these processes begin in the communities of the powerless, not among the powerful. The focus is neatly shifted away from the elite to the poor, and community development and animation presented as antidotes to poverty, deprivation, and disorganization. Mr. John Munro then reveals the rear that lurks in the hearts of all liberals — if you don't placate evil forces, they will destroy you. He states:

It is phase two of this process that confronts us with the far greater challenge.

If we meet the articulation, by this community of its grievances and aspirations with a stone wall of either opposition or apathy, we will either destroy it or transform it into an army determined to destroy us. If community development is to be a reality and not a mere sham, then we must be prepared to mobilize the necessary resources — (including a willingness

to share some of our own power) — to meet the legitimate demands of the new community.<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Munro was correct in seeing community development as a two phase process — the creation of awareness, followed by community action. During the Sixties, liberals all over Canada preached that utopia was just around the corner, and that only they could bring it about. Unfortunately, prophets don't usually make good community organizers.

Another federal minister, Robert Andras, saw the impasse created by talking about participation and community action as a way of handling social change, instead of practising it.

...the time is passing fast when politicians or professional men can do very much “for” their countrymen ... the man doesn't trust it, and he certainly has had enough talk over his head about it. Anything that's going to be done “for” him, he wants charge of. If there is to be talking, he is demanding to be part of that talk.<sup>30</sup>

In the summer of 1972, I was trying to teach the students at Coady about community development, participation and self-help in an institution that practised none of these techniques. The university had received a LIP grant to lay turf on the college football field, and had hired about twenty healthy young men. They waited around for the turf to arrive, then passed them from hand to hand. Some nipped off for a smoke, and others just lay in the grass, sunning themselves. A shrewd student from Ghana noted:

The concept of Canadian community development is based on organizing citizen participation groups to fight for money from the government... In my country it is actually the efforts of the people, including money and energy contributions, with possible grants and advice from

government and other agencies.

Julius Nyerere, president of Tanzania, a nation using community development as the basic technique for solving social and economic problems, got to the heart of the development process when he claimed:

People cannot be developed, they can only develop themselves. An outsider cannot give a man pride and self-confidence as a human being. These things a man has to create for himself by his own actions.

People have to undergo a change in their self-perception before they can really engage in development. But Nyerere also saw the limits of self-help if people lacked technical skills and knowledge. He once said, "It is not being self-reliant to refuse to carry out the direction of a foreign engineer or a foreign manager; it is just being stupid."

In the countries of Africa, where community development and animation originated, the struggle for survival goes on. Here the problem is not how to get another car into the garage, but how to get a few more calories into the children. An African student, with whom I learned at Coady International Institute in Antigonish, caught the essence of community development in six words, "I help you, you help me."

## Atlantic Canada: “Depressed”, “Designated”, or Different?

Individuals, communities, and regions react to change in different ways, depending on their values, attitudes, and physical environment. The federal government over the past ten years has spent enormous sums of money on eliminating regional disparity. But there are two worlds in Atlantic Canada, each of which responds differently to change and government initiative. These two worlds can be seen as you cross the Canso Causeway from mainland Nova Scotia to Cape Breton.

To the left is a well-wooded land of small farms and wood lots. Here people, mainly old, scratch a meagre living by growing a few crops, raising a few sheep, cutting pulpwood, taking lobsters, driving school buses, and working on the highway. Life is a constant struggle against the land, the weather and the political system, but it has its rewards. The land and the sea will always provide food, and the extended kinship system and the community life provide mutual aid and support.

To the right of the Causeway, a white plume of smoke drifts over the Strait of Canso from the pulp and paper mill at Point Tupper. The completion of the Canso Causeway created a deep-water port, and in the early Sixties a large foreign corporation, Stora Kopparberg of Sweden, built the first phase of the mill at

a cost of \$50 million. Later came an oil refinery, a heavy water plant, and a thermal generating station. Half the staff at the oil refinery were brought in from Saskatchewan from an installation that was phased out there; the rest were trained locally.

Life on the land is labour intensive; it demands huge amounts of human energy to make ends meet. The new industries are capital intensive. The power station cost \$18 million to build, and employs 44 people. The young people of Nova Scotia, pouring out of the education system, find that the old way of life has little appeal, and that the new industries require a limited number of highly skilled people who must take a great deal of individual responsibility.

Ottar Brox, a Norwegian sociologist, in noting a striking feature of Newfoundland's economy, could have been commenting on much of Atlantic Canada:

On the one hand, there are modern, sophisticated, technologically up-to-date industries. On the other, economic practices and techniques exist that appear to be almost medieval, such as inshore fishing and especially the processing of salt fish, where no innovation whatsoever seems to have taken place, either in tools, or in work methods.<sup>31</sup>

## STEEL AND LOBSTERS

Around Sydney, N.S., an integrated coal-mining and steel-making complex grew up in the early years of this century, with foreign money and labour drawn from the farms on the Island, and from all over North America and Europe. Working conditions were bad, and after the first flush of prosperity, the Sydney area slid into depression. Not a penny more was invested or spent than was absolutely necessary.

Finally, on October 13, 1967, "Black Friday", the Dominion

Steel and Coal Corporation announced that it was closing its steel mill. The provincial government formed the Sydney Steel Corporation and began a modernization programme. After a good start — the mill made a profit of about \$8.5 million in 1970-71 — the steel market went soft, mistakes were made in the modernization process, and the mill began to lose millions. In 1976, the provincial government initiated a study of the development of a new \$2 billion steel complex at Gabarus.

The story of steel in Cape Breton is a familiar one. An industry gets into difficulty; the politicians try to save it. They look for foreign capital and expertise, and get into cut-throat competition with other nations and other areas of Canada. If the real aim of the new steel mill is to provide income for workers, the \$2 billion could be invested, and 2,000 steel workers each paid \$10,000 a year from the interest.

On October 1, 1967, the Cape Breton Development Corporation (DEVCO) was established by the federal government to save the coal industry and to promote industrial development. Footloose industries were lured to the Island, and soon these began to fold under the impact of the recession — after the grants and other concessions had been creamed off. The Toyota Plant of Canadian Motor Industries closed in 1975; General Instruments of Canada, which employed large numbers of poorly-paid women, packed up its equipment and moved to Mexico; a California-based entrepreneur hustled about a million dollars out of various government agencies without establishing the industry he had promised; in the summer of 1976, Kaiser Corporation closed its strontium mine and processing plant. The sad story of the Glace Bay Heavy Water Plant shows the perils of seeking regional salvation through reliance on technology.

By 1976, DEVCO was promoting oyster-raising and sheep farming as the answer to the problems of Cape Breton. The

Corporation had developed the new Lingan coal mine, and the energy crisis had brightened the prospects for opening new mines. The answer to development problems was seen as small enterprises arising out of local initiatives and based on indigenous resources.

However, unemployment continued to rise in Cape Breton, and LIP grants, retraining programmes and other emergency measures were invoked to keep people busy. Early in 1976, the Federal Government announced that part-time lobster fishermen would have their licenses revoked. The Cape Breton correspondent of the *Halifax Mail-Star* lamented:

Within the next few months, thousands of Nova Scotians from one end of the province to the other will experience the peculiar loneliness that afflicts any human being when he discovers, for the first time, that he is no longer able, or allowed, to do something he has always done.<sup>32</sup>

This piece was datelined Port Hawkesbury and went on to describe the new industries there as “so alien to the local ethos that people formed even closer attachments to the land and the sea as an escape from the stink and rigidity of the new systems.”

This theme of simple rustic living appears in an article by Harold Horwood, a Newfoundland writer, entitled “A Life of Such Deep Satisfaction”:

(The outports) persist because people are attracted by the peace and simplicity of the life and the spiritual strength that comes from immersion in the cycles of nature and the web of life. The style of life, intimately involved with seasonal cycles and the cycles of growth and succession, was much too vigorous and rewarding to succumb to government policies oriented toward factory work and a surplus labour pool.<sup>33</sup>

Ralph Matthews, in *There's no Better Place than Here*<sup>34</sup> presents an equally sympathetic but less romantic view of life in the outports. Matthews is also a Newfoundlander, and his research shows that some communities do have a sound economic base but others do not. In some, people help each other and co-operate in community tasks. Others are divided, and riddled with tension. For both writers, outport life is not better or worse than life in the city; it is merely different.

The writings of Alden Nowlan reflect some of the pain of being poor in Atlantic Canada. In a piece in *Weekend Magazine* in 1975, Nowlan tells of life in a "thin-soil settlement at the edge of the fertile Annapolis Valley."<sup>35</sup> Nowlan was born in 1933; at that time his father worked in the woods, cutting logs for \$1 a day. Even when Nowlan left home in 1952, their house had no furnace, no plumbing, no electricity, no refrigerator, and no telephone. Nowlan claims that he was born in the 18th century, and indeed, many people in the region never passed through the Industrial Revolution. Nowlan escaped the life on the land by becoming a newspaper reporter; he had loved to read and to run wild in the woods. He likens his arrival at his first newspaper job to that of a "raw Highland youth coming down to the dour but safe Lowlands in the Scotland of, say, 1785."

Canadians in the eastern provinces sometimes seem more cautious and discreet than elsewhere in the country. Certainly one of the traditions of the region is caution about, and even fear of, change.

In *Various Persons Named Kevin O'Brien*, Nowlan's fictional hero writes radical letters to newspapers. He is accused by the agricultural representative, "a kind of rural equivalent of an Indian agent," of being mixed up with "Commies." Kevin's father is questioned by the R.C.M.P. and turns on his son:

God, boy, why can't you be like other people? It wouldn't be too bad if you'd stole something. That would make sense. But can't you get it into that goddam stupid head of yours that people like us should keep our mouths shut and our arses down?<sup>36</sup>

The state is referred to in the third person in the world of Kevin O'Brien, and the police are "agents of an alien power."

In *Cradled in the Waves*, Croteau describes the real-life situation on Prince Edward Island in the Thirties.<sup>37</sup> Two Mounties turned up at a credit union meeting at O'Leary because someone had notified the R.C.M.P. that the Communists were holding a meeting. On another occasion a former Islander, aflame with the ideas of Social Credit, talked to two men in a hotel and criticized the British. He was arrested, convicted of treasonable utterances, given a suspended sentence, and ordered off the Island. This man joined the gunners during the Second World War, but was refused a commission because of his conviction. Croteau notes that the political plums for Islanders were appointment to the Senate or a judgeship. "Both meant security for life, honour, and very little to do," he caustically remarks.

Croteau organized co-operatives and credit unions on the Island, and the Minister of Agriculture sent over a stenographer to help. She disliked co-operative work, and refused to help Croteau. But the Minister could do nothing. She came from his district and if he fired her, he would lose all the votes of her family. With the narrow margins that characterize many electoral victories in Atlantic Canada, this could have been fatal to the Minister's chances of reelection. An old joke in Nova Scotia goes to the effect that the only thing that changes after elections is the road crews.

## THE EAST AND ECONOMICS

Numerous conferences and studies have picked over the objective facts of poverty and economics in Atlantic Canada. If the East is to abound with happy, prosperous communities, the economic problems of the region cannot be ignored.

In 1965, the Canadian Welfare Council carried out a study of poverty for ARDA. The Council reported, in prose gutted of all emotion, the sort of life led by the people in the rural areas:

The monthly income in the family is \$10 from pulp cutting, \$26 Family Allowances and \$50 general municipal assistance.

Mr. J. is employed occasionally, has never obtained regular employment, and appears to have little desire to work. His wife is extremely discouraged with their way of life.

Mr. D. felt that this community was getting along just as well as other communities, except where there was industry. He would like to see somebody start an industry there; government should subsidize some company to come in. He said there was all kinds of hardwood, birch and beech that could be used by a factory there to make things that were imported from other countries. He would also like to see the government give the poor man who was willing to work a loan to pay his bills and get back on his feet. The loan would be repayable at fair terms. He thought the poor people were being ignored by church and state through no fault of the people.<sup>38</sup>

These studies, like the many conferences, played up the weaknesses of the region, and helped to stereotype the people of Atlantic Canada as losers. In January, 1965, 130 development

experts gathered at Queen's University, Kingston, Ont., to discuss areas of economic stress in Canada. John Graham, an economist at Dalhousie University, noted that economic stress "develops among identifiable groups of people in our society" and "gives rise to dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, with the way in which the economy is functioning."<sup>39</sup>

Graham noted the existence of the "happy low income casual worker" who does not want to be pinned down, and does not want full-time employment. These people, Graham notes, can be a burden on their fellow citizens who have to pay taxes to support them. The life style of the casual worker is a perfectly logical adaptation to a region where economic opportunities are limited, and where a lot of employment depends on the vagaries of the weather or of the politicians. If a worker sees government jobs handed out because people have political pull or kinship ties with the powerful, why should he feel inclined to take a steady job, even if it is available? And in the nineteenth century, Nova Scotians prided themselves on being all-round men who could farm, fish, build boats or houses, and turn their hand to any task.

Graham also noted the cause of economic stress: "the basic economic problem of scarcity."<sup>40</sup> He describes the economy of Atlantic Canada, and characterized it as having the following limitations— lack of natural resources, poor quality soil, small scale of operations in farming, fishing, logging, shortage of energy resources (other than coal), location on the periphery, lack of a balanced population, low productivity due to inferior resources, insufficient capital which is not efficiently applied, small scale of activity and prevalence of part-time activity, and lower productivity of labour.

A Newfoundlander explained the reality of his world. "We never know what we will be doing tomorrow," he said. "Government officials and office workers know precisely where

they will be and what they will be doing on any given day. We don't." It is of no use talking about dominating nature or controlling the environment to men and women who know how harsh the land and the sea can be. Each day, fishermen risk \$30,000 worth of gear (and their lives) around the Atlantic coasts. It is impossible not to admire people like that.

A major problem in Atlantic Canada is the smallness of the "productive age group". The ambitious young leave, and the remaining population contains a large percentage of the young and old. The workers between the ages of 15 and 64 are fewer in number than the Canadian average and have to support a large dependent population.

There's alleged to be a link between education and economic development. Yet Atlantic Canada has more universities, and less development, than any other part of Canada. There are 24 institutions of higher learning in the Maritimes alone, excluding prisons and reform schools. The goal of many students emerging from these schools is to get well-paid, white collar jobs, helping other people. Often, of course, this desire cannot be fulfilled.

The situation in Atlantic Canada is always being "explained" in terms of the weakness of the area, and never in terms of its strengths and achievements. People respond to the list of deficiencies as if they were objective facts (and often they are not). On Cape Breton, in fact, Dutch farmers make a good living on poor soils, because they know how to manage them. The location of Halifax and Saint John on the eastern edge of Canada has led to the construction of container ports. These have captured traffic from the St. Lawrence, and from New York, which are nearer centres of population.

In short, we know all about the problems of the region, and this has attracted con men, promoters, academics peddling their theories and other quick buck artists claiming to be able to solve them. But we know very little about the strengths of

the region, and the abilities of the people. In the past, regional deficiencies were explained by reference to “natural causes over which people had little or no control.” If you had asked the people in the outports and the fishing communities why there was no wharf, they would have claimed that the wind and the tide made it impossible to build one. Now people blame the government for not building the wharf. What was seen before as a technical problem is now viewed as a political one.

In March, 1974, a conference on “The Political Economy of the Atlantic Provinces” was held at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, and it focused on the metropolis-hinterland thesis. The conference brochure quoted J.M.S. Careless: “The metropolitan relationship is a chain, almost a feudal chain of vassalage, wherein one city may stand tributary to a bigger centre and yet be the metropolis of a size-able region of its own.”

A Newfoundlander claimed that the whole chain of life in the province, from the plankton through cod to southern fried chicken, was exploitive. Metropolitan centres cream off the riches of a hinterland, leaving the people poor and helpless. Newfoundlanders, this speaker claimed, had been brought up with the feeling that all their history had been a failure.

An historian at the Conference noted that before Confederation there was a sense of pride and identity on Prince Edward Island, but people there now felt that something beyond Northumberland Strait was out to get them. The claim that Confederation “mined” Atlantic Canada, and especially the Maritimes, is often made.

Confederation coincided with the decline of wooden ships and the lumber industry, and with a world-wide depression. A photograph of five Nova Scotian shipmasters who met by chance in Newcastle, Australia, reveals the confidence that once permeated the province as it sent its ships and men to trade all over the world.<sup>41</sup> The shipmasters sit, serene, looking straight at

the camera, sure of their place in the world. The social structure of ships, with captain, officers and crew, gave a stability to life on shore. People knew who they were, and where they stood. It is impossible to understand the dilemma of Atlantic Canada unless you realize that the people here once were confident and prosperous and had a self-sufficient economy.

Beauty and functional efficiency went together. The original *Bluenose* schooner was built in 1921; when not fishing the Grand Banks, she was off winning international races. The present *Bluenose* was built to publicize beer, sold to the Province of Nova Scotia, and now takes tourists around the harbour of Halifax and goes on “goodwill trips.”

The media and the local elite play up the disadvantages of the region, and claim that Upper Canada and Ottawa are engaged in a plot to ruin its residents. These attacks are sometimes a smoke screen to hide their own failures. The local elites of any region must bear much—but not necessarily the primary—responsibility for the economic and social calamities of their region.

Endless articles appear about the cost of importing manufactured goods, and of exporting primary products. Studies of transportation costs in Nova Scotia show a range from near-zero to 16%, with a median of only 3%.<sup>42</sup> Service in transportation is often more important than its cost, and this is something over which local pressure can be exercised. There is still no single, reliable and available source of information on transportation routes and costs in Atlantic Canada.

## THE POLITICIANS FAIL

Some people believe—with good reason—in the theory of “negative achievement.” It states that the bigger a mess you make in development, the more you can claim that outside

forces are responsible. The more guilt you can create, the bigger grants you can demand from Ottawa.

In 1976, the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council identified no fewer than 294 programmes designed to help development in the region. Each agency was in competition with the others to attract the right sorts of industries. Millions of dollars have been spent on programmes of economic and social development. Incomes *have* increased, employment *has* expanded, new services and facilities *have* been created—but never quite enough.

Every economic trick in the book has been tried—growth centres, luring in light industries and metal-working complexes, infrastructure construction, consultants. In 1970, Halifax staged an “Encounter Week.” A group of outside experts held a series of meetings, insulted local people, and probed and prodded into various corners of the city. This approach was picked up from an experience in Australia. The experts—one of whom (an American sociologist) referred to the Maritimes as “The American South—with a bad climate”—picked up cheques of \$1,500 for their five days’ work and left town.<sup>43</sup>

In 1975, another development agency, with the acronym MAGI (Metropolitan Area Growth Investments) was set up to take equity positions in enterprises in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. MAGI found few enterprises in which to invest, and its executives refused to discuss what they were doing to stimulate development. Its major investment has been a cruise ship, purchased and refitted outside Canada!

In 1971, the Atlantic Development Council set as a goal of regional development “self-sustaining growth . . . not a system which relies on the continuing infusion of transfer and support-type payments.”<sup>44</sup> The report suggested that structural changes were needed to help self-sustaining development to occur. The Atlantic Provinces still rely very heavily on equalization payments,

at a time when the federal government is facing more and more demands on the public purse. The people in the rich provinces are wondering what is happening to all that money they are sending east. In 1976-77, about one quarter of the provincial budgets of each of the four Atlantic Provinces came from equalization grants, representing a per capita subsidy that ranged from \$332 in New Brunswick to \$444 on Prince Edward Island.<sup>45</sup>

The politicians I have met in the region are decent and humane people, but they seem to be bewildered by the present economic situation. They are caught in a web of kinship and reciprocal obligations, as their relatives and friends keep bringing pressure on them for private benefits from the public purse. They tend to place the priorities of those they believe have power ahead of the good of the community.

Many still believe that some sudden miraculous event will bring prosperity, and that oil or Fundy tidal power will save them from the necessity of facing hard choices and making difficult decisions. A Science Council study of the possible impact of oil exploration of the east coast of Canada noted:

Until very recently, this system of personal (sometimes paternalistic) politics tended to dominate the process of government, the civil servant was relegated to a less significant position vis-a-vis the policy process. In terms of political style, the system of locally-based, face-to-face political activity was dominant in the Atlantic Provinces until a relatively late date.

Because of lags in economic development, the Atlantic Provinces have tended to lack the kind of technological and social delivery systems that are concomitant of much of industrialization and social modernization. In the absence of these economically-rooted systems, the political system per se has come to bear the burden of the primary delivery

of goods and services to the population. That is, it acts as a mediator between public wants and available resources.<sup>46</sup>

The dilemma that the politicians face in Atlantic Canada is that the very thing they hunger for—development—brings with it demands to function effectively in a much larger and more complex world than the safe and parochial one to which they are accustomed.

Much power is concentrated in the hands of a few people. People with personal problems can still seek out the premier and senior ministers, and are listened to and helped. At the same time, these elected officials have to deal with a constant stream of experts coming down from Ottawa, and entrepreneurs peddling schemes for regional development. Premiers and cabinet ministers have promoted special development projects, gotten a strong emotional involvement in ill-conceived schemes, and then have had to withstand a barrage of criticism while the promoter quietly slipped out of town. Premier Hatfield of New Brunswick identified strongly with the Bricklin automobile; he even campaigned in one of them.

In the affluent Sixties, there was a wide margin for error. When Premier Moores of Newfoundland announced the impending bankruptcy of the Shaheen oil refinery at Come-By-Chance, Joey Smallwood, the former premier, immediately claimed that this was part of a plot to wipe out the benefits that he had brought to the Island. The workers were left stranded in an area with few alternative employment opportunities. Many had to move west, so the province lost a skilled labour force. And the refinery had polluted the nearby waters, at a time when the fishery stocks were being over-exploited by foreign fleets.

The tradition in Atlantic Canada has been to leave politics to the politicians, and to try to retain some degree of personal freedom and autonomy. The scattered distribution of population

makes collective action difficult, and leads people to believe that their problems are individual and local ones, rather than symptoms of an overall social and economic malaise.

## **NEW HOPE**

A middle class is emerging in the urban centres made up of professional people, middle-level civil servants, alert students, residents of central Canada who are either retiring in the region, or returning up the road after “making it” (or failing to make it) in the wider world beyond. The standards and values of these people are very different from the older residents. They are tuned into the wider picture of national and regional development, and pressure politicians for a more rational developmental policy, and a more open and responsive system of government.

Economically, the problem is not so much any longer to stimulate growth but merely to keep pace with the cost of living, as government budgets are restricted, unemployment rises, and economic growth slows down. The response of politicians in Atlantic Canada to this is highly ambiguous. They run to Ottawa, rattling their tin cups, asking for a few pennies to tide them over a difficult time. They complain that the federal government is deliberately shafting them with their policies and programmes.

Development, whether it involves the building of a steel mill or the creation of a more efficient welfare system, has certain specific requirements if the maximum number of people are to benefit from the input of the minimum amount of resources. At least some people have to be achievement oriented, and there has to be a high degree of social mobility. The class system must be partly egalitarian, and people must have access to sources of public information that are accurate and unbiased.

There has to be a concern for material well-being, an interest in innovation, a willingness to take risks, and ability to establish and to adhere to certain rules, and a willingness to co-operate with other people. A new middle class that is attuned to these concepts is probably the best short-run hope for Eastern Canada.

## REACTION TO GROWTH

Some people of the region are already learning how to handle the tensions of change and development. In *Planning and Development*,<sup>47</sup> a political scientist contrasted what happened in two Nova Scotia communities, Bridgewater and Port Hawkesbury, when they attracted industry or had industry thrust upon them.

Bridgewater has a long history of local initiative, while Port Hawkesbury used to be a depressed fishing village where people felt isolated. Bridgewater created mechanisms to handle change; its residents did not simply react to outside forces. They managed to deal with government agencies on terms of equality by acting together. The town had the good fortune to hire a planner who understood and respected the way of life of its residents, and also knew how to deal with government agencies. Through its elected and voluntary leaders, Bridgewater showed foresight in looking for development that fitted the existing lifestyle; the town was designated as a growth centre, and had enough roads, services, and housing to handle the influx of the new industries and people.

In Port Hawkesbury, the people became victims of the planners and of government agencies bent on helping them. An area laid out as a model trailer park had a highway driven through it. A boom and bust cycle developed: the new industries that were established there got provincial financial

help, but the local people and municipal government were impoverished and pushed into debt. Housing, services and schools all proved inadequate for the new demands being made on the community.

The knowledge about ways in which development can be handled in an efficient, sane and humane manner is spreading around Atlantic Canada. On Prince Edward Island, Premier Campbell is beginning to stress the idea that “small is beautiful,” and the province is becoming very interested in alternative sources of energy.

In Newfoundland, regional development councils have been set up through which people in the outports can identify their problems, and get some resources to solve them. Funds have also been made available to get unemployed men into business. Money is available, for example, to purchase “skidders,” large machines that improve the efficiency of lumbering operations. The pattern of employment that evolves around the skidders is similar to that in the fishing industry. One man owns the machine, and the others are partners in the venture, sharing the risks and the rewards. It is only possible to work in the woods for ten months of the year, so that the workers can spend time fixing their houses, planting their gardens, or whatever.

New Brunswick has begun to create small scale enterprise scattered throughout the province, instead of a few large ones in selected spots. Nova Scotia is developing a strategy for getting more small businesses into the province. Both provinces are doing what they can to stimulate agriculture.

The problem remains that many residents have recent and unhappy memories of attempts at intervention, either generated from the top down by government or from the bottom up by local community groups. They have forgotten, or never knew, the strong tradition of community development and self-help that has characterized the region in the past.

# 8

## Change from the Top Down: Nova Scotia NewStart

Yarmouth is a typical small Maritime town. It sits on the edge of the Atlantic in southwestern Nova Scotia, its face to the sea and its back to the land. It has a broad main street, some fine old houses, a library, an historical society, and a textile mill that began by making sails for ships. Along the main highway which follows the coast are the small, neat houses of fishermen, with lobster pots piled in the backyard.

But the picture postcard aspect of Yarmouth conceals a real world of deprivation and privation. The paintings of the “Magic Realists” capture the essence of the region. Everything looks simple and realistic. But the more you study the paintings, the more questions arise. In Alex Colville’s painting *Horse and Train* a shadowy horse gallops headlong towards a long, anonymous train.

The development process involves an inward and an outward exploration. The more you understand of the world, the more you understand about yourself.

The western tradition stresses the need to understand an “external world” so as to be able to control it. In Alberta, I was once shown a programme that a U.S. company had sold to some of the provincial government’s policy advisors. It was

a sophisticated method of intellectually dry-cleaning the poor. “Disadvantaged” people were to be cycled through remedial education systems. If their performance and behaviour reached certain standards, it was assumed that they would spin off into the labour force. The poor would be recycled, and, at last resort, they would be sent to jail or put in some other institution.

This sort of pseudo-scientific manipulation got a great boost when the War on Poverty was declared in the United States, and, of course, it was also used in Canada. It takes the heat off the political and economic system by designating certain people as “disadvantaged.” You then mount programmes to help these people to enter the already overcrowded labour force.

## THE TECHNOLOGICAL FIX

In March, 1970, I received a phone call from Ed Newell, a social worker with Nova Scotia NewStart in Yarmouth. The NewStarts were launched in the mid-Sixties as part of Canada’s War on Poverty. In 1963, the federal government had announced a programme of assistance to 35 areas characterized by high unemployment and slow growth. It had become apparent that occupational training programmes would be needed to turn rural people into an obedient industrial proletariat. The NewStarts were set up to find out how to do this.

The NewStart idea was presented to a Federal-Provincial Conference in July 1965 by Prime Minister Pearson, who stated:

This would be in effect an intensive effort in practical research designed to determine the best methods of meeting the training needs of adults in designated areas... the federal government believes that this kind of experiment is essential to developing the training needs of adults in designated areas.<sup>48</sup>

A general invitation was sent to the provincial departments of education and labour to participate in this programme. Tom Kent, then Deputy-Minister of Manpower and Immigration, sent out a letter dated March 23, 1966, stating:

The primary tasks of the project will be to discover the economic, social and other obstacles to training and to develop effective means to surmount them... The Project will be concerned with the training and retraining of all adults in the selected areas and, among other things, will develop programs for school dropouts, the unemployed, the underemployed, low income workers, workers displaced or threatened by technological change and persons whose productivity is affected by a decline in primary industries.<sup>49</sup>

The idea of the NewStarts was to develop, test, and evaluate methods for large scale programmes. There was the usual lip-service to working *with* the disadvantaged. As one writer noted:

There was an unusual air of humility about the sponsors of the programme in that they acknowledged that there were problems they did not fully understand and for which they did not have solutions.<sup>50</sup>

Because education is a provincial responsibility, the federal government resorted to the device of “quasi-government corporations” to run the NewStarts. They were jointly owned by the federal and provincial governments, with the federal government putting up all the money. These corporations are handy devices—each level of government can blame the other if anything goes wrong. Six provinces chose to participate. Saskatchewan focused on Prince Albert, Alberta NewStart on Lac La Biche, Prince Edward Island on Kings County, New Brunswick on Kent County, and Manitoba on The Pas. Nova Scotia, the first NewStart to go into operation, was incorporated

in June, 1967.

The programmes were to run for three years—too short a time to be effective even if they worked, but long enough to uncover some of the real dimensions of poverty and disadvantage and to raise people’s expectations that something was going to be done to help them. The NewStarts were to engage in “action research.” Attempts were made to find Canadian research directors, but none were available it seems, or willing to engage in this type of practical, applied research. In the end, five out of the six research directors appointed were Americans.

In September, 1967, the Executive Directors were brought to Ottawa, given an orientation course, and told to prepare plans and budgets for 1968 by the end of 1967. The problems of this crash programme soon became apparent—timetables were unrealistic, there were difficulties in recruiting staff, plans had to be made with limited knowledge of “disadvantaged” areas, decisions had to be made by “best guessing,” cross-disciplinary problems arose as each specialist claimed to have *the* answer. Canadian universities, then as now, were not training students to operate in the real world; there was heavy reliance upon U.S. experience.

NewStart attracted idealists, refugee professionals, people with dubious academic qualifications, people with pet theories to test, and those looking for a quiet life on a good salary. In 1969, the programme was moved to the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, where its mandate was relegated to “experimentation in the social and human aspects of development.”

## A METHODOLOGICAL MAZE

When I got to Yarmouth, the NewStart programme had polarized the community. NewStart was the largest “industry”

to locate in the area in recent years; its presence created a mini-boom. Empty space all over town had been rented, panelling installed, carpet laid, staff hired.

The “uptown” staff of research workers were hostile at the invitation that Ed had extended to me. Their major concerns were my academic credentials and my theories. Most were psychologists, oriented towards changing the behaviour of people. One of the paradoxes of western society is that the area that has been “researched” most—education—is in the worst mess. The research workers at NewStart seemed to be seeking the Holy Grail of social and behavioural change that would turn idle workers into productive employees.

The people of Yarmouth had not invited NewStart to study their community and its problems; the staff were an alien presence. Their idea was to use the “disadvantaged” to test out theories. Yarmouth was to be a “laboratory” for research on real, live, poor people. This approach to research has long been discredited as manipulative and unethical.

The NewStart staff had a mania for collecting figures, and for writing reports. This is another common error in research, and has also been discredited in recent years as people realized that the *quality* of data is more important than the quantity.

An Occupational Training and Information Study Centre had been set up. Basically, this was a technical library, with audio-visual facilities, a study room, and some space for personal counselling. It was run by a manager, an assistant manager, two “information aides”, and a receptionist-secretary. Problems arose because school guidance counsellors and teachers suggested that students use the Centre’s facilities, because there was no other place for independent study. The YMCA charged a fee, the regional library discouraged noise, and so the students brought their books to the Centre. But it was felt that their presence would discourage the use of the

Centre by “disadvantaged adults.” Although the young people were well behaved, they were turned away.

It was not as if the Centre was that busy. It had 6,701 visits from 1,470 different individuals over a fifteen-month period, while open five days a week. This works out to about 110 visits a week, or 22 a day, not an excessive number for a staff of five. Indeed, the report on it recommended that only three people were needed to run the Centre.<sup>51</sup>

This Centre, like the other operations, adopted an industrial mode of operation, opening five days a week from nine to five, instead of making information available when people were free to talk about their lives and their futures.

A Fisheries Information Centre was set up on the wharf. It had a staff of five, and received 1,774 visitors in its first year of operation or about 35 people a week; of these visitors, 440 were tourists.<sup>52</sup>

Research in Newfoundland has shown how skippers of fishing trawlers conceal information from each other.<sup>53</sup> The fishing industry is marked by informal patterns of co-operation and competition that are mediated through key people. The Fisheries Information Centre was set up “to test the usefulness of an innovatively designed and strategically located information centre with services intended for utilization by the disadvantaged population, in this case those involved with fishing and related occupations.”

If the real hope of the NewStart was to direct attention away from the problems of Yarmouth, then it failed. The “disadvantaged,” instead of becoming passive participants in pseudo-scientific research projects, started to organize and to investigate themselves.

## THE SOUTH END

Many rural communities in the Maritimes have a dual social system. The “good folk” live in one part of town, the poor in another. In Yarmouth, the poor lived in the South End. The uptown research workers were obsessed with theory, those in the South End with social action. The aim of the researchers was not to bring about social change, but to find out how to do so. The NewStart staff at the South End looked upon me as a messiah, come to lead them to salvation through community development. Moving around with Ed Newell, I began to understand the problems of change in the small tight community of Yarmouth. Most of the downtown staff were local people, operating out of a huge, rambling church-owned structure called NewPlace. I got the strong impression that these people, and those uptown, were suffering from battle fatigue. One group was wrestling with theories, the other with real life situations.

Yarmouth is a blue collar town. Illiteracy was high (15.7% in the County, 9.1% in the town in 1961), and in the South End, one in every five families was headed by a single parent, usually a woman. Wages in the County were 22% below the provincial average for women, 24.5% below for men. The main employer in town was Cosmos Imperial Mills, which was not unionized. You only had to look at the machinery to realize how competitive the mill was. The textile industry in Canada was “rationalized” in the late 1960s, to meet the challenge of cheap imports. Mills had to modernize or specialize to make money. Since the end of the Sixties Cosmos has bounced in and out of bankruptcy.

Despite the poverty and oppression, people in Yarmouth seemed reasonably content, and very patient.

One of the NewStart reports noted:

The new residents in Yarmouth, especially one who does not become involved with the inner workings or the power and the political forces that control and dictate the policies of Yarmouth, would view this town as an ideal place to work and to play in. However, after a number of years as a citizen in our town, they do eventually get involved and their eyes are finally opened to the real sick situation that exists.<sup>54</sup>

The moral and ethical base of Yarmouth society was noted:

Most small business and industrial enterprises in Yarmouth are small; the management ethos is seen as personalistic, paternalistic and frequently intrusive and authoritarian.<sup>55</sup>

Such a society, of course, will resist change because any change that opens up the social structure will threaten the existing values and power base. Almost all the businesses were family-owned, owned by one person, or were private companies.

Over 50 per cent of the employers consider 'appearance' as the main factor in hiring, with 'ability' being of first importance for only six per cent and 'education' for 17 percent.<sup>56</sup>

Ed Newell, with a few other courageous souls, probed into the structural reasons for poverty and disadvantage. They noted that "fear of the boss" pervaded the town's working people. Attempts at radical change in the Maritimes hit a structural snag. Various agencies have been set up to lure industry into the region. On these bodies sit representative of the power elite, and of the established businesses. They will reject applications for help from industries that might be competitive, or pay wages above the going rate. The real basis of power and poverty emerges from some of the NewStart reports. The poor are not

consumers, and hence not successes in our sort of society.

The essential problem of the Maritimes was noted in a report:

For youth with ambition or aspirations for an independent life style it seems a disappointing place to live and there is a desire to go elsewhere. However, there is also a fear of the unknown and a loss of psychological security away from home. For the poor who feel the weight of the 'well-to-do' it is seen as a type of entrapment with no escape.<sup>57</sup>

Ed Newell was caught in the typical situation of the community development worker. The research people uptown saw him as a low level pragmatist, working with real people rather than with abstract concepts. The local power elite probably viewed him as a rabble rouser, and the disadvantaged saw him as a handy part of the NewStart system to take a swing at. Ed was the son of an inshore fisherman who had to operate in the narrow space between theory and practice. To some people, he was a saviour, to others a scapegoat. But, by the time I got there, he had certainly gained the trust and respect of the leaders of the South End.

Ed's group looked at a couple of ways of stimulating citizen participation. One model, the "socio-cultural one," is based on the idea that socio-economic position determines the member's participation in community decision making. To overcome disadvantage, you provide compensatory education for the poor, houstrain them, hire them because they need the job, and give them fancy titles and salaries to do inconsequential things.

The sadness and futility of this approach came home to me when I talked to a local leader who had a drinking problem, (he told me). On his wall was a "Diploma" from the NewStart programme, certifying that he had been trained as an oil burner

mechanic. But this man got very little work because friends fixed the furnaces of people when they went on the blink. Specialized urban skills have no value in rural areas where people fix their own things, or get their friends to do it.

The placation approach to social change does not really work. Sooner or later, people realize that personal inadequacy is not the only explanation for lack of opportunities.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT — FITTING THE THEORY TO REALITY

The NewStart social development programme picked up the community development approach to social change.

This assumes that there are enough capacities for leadership in all communities, regardless of their social status, to make possible the development of effective self-help programs. Though they are locally based, they may be developed co-operatively with other organizations in the community.<sup>58</sup>

The poor in Yarmouth were not likely, on their own, to contest the power structure. The NewStart staff were forced to take a leadership role, but they did all they could to pass leadership back to the people of the South End. The citizen leaders with whom I spoke were looking for small gains, not for complete change in the system. The NewStart staff provided some skills in helping them to define their problems, and to move towards organizing themselves to effect solutions.

The local people formed the Yarmouth South Renewal Association, and started to attack the system. The Yarmouth Golf and Country Club did not pay taxes, and the new Association pressed for these to be paid. The weight of social action fell on the shoulders of one man, a furniture salesman

named Hubert Brush. I visited him in his home, where he was off work with a bad back. He was a gentle, courteous man, articulate and concerned. Like the other citizen leaders, he was in community development to stay, and he saw the need for advice on action, not more research.

There was a feeling of isolation and frustration among the social development workers and counsellors, who, like the rest of the NewStart staff, seemed to spend a lot of time just hanging around. One problem in Yarmouth is the limited number of jobs, and nothing was being done to create new employment opportunities for any of the disadvantaged who successfully passed the tests for becoming employable. Opposite the ferry dock was an empty piece of land. I asked what happened when the ferries arrived. Did anyone try to keep the tourists in town for a day or two? Oh, no, I was told, they just get waved through town. In Yarmouth people's expectations about their ability to solve problems were aroused without any attempt to widen the opportunity structure.

Before I left Yarmouth, I held an animation session at NewPlace. I tried to put what the staff was doing into perspective; they saw their problems and dilemmas as unique to themselves and to Yarmouth. I suggested that Hubert Brush should become a full-time worker in the social development programme; he seemed to be doing all the work anyhow as Chairman of the Yarmouth South Renewal Association. Maybe this was co-option, but I know that Hubert wanted to become formally associated with the programme. In May, 1970, he joined the NewStart staff.

Hubert dropped by to see me in Ottawa in 1971. He was enthusiastic and optimistic about what was happening in Yarmouth. I asked him if he had received a copy of my report. Not only had he got a copy—he also had a tape recording of my final animation session with the staff of NewStart!

## WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

The Renewal Association, with the help of Ed Newell and some of the other NewStart staff, began to channel the energy of people into meaningful outlets. The poor can be harsh judges. There was a lot of backbiting among welfare recipients because some claimed that others were getting more than they were. This conflict was at least brought out into the open. The Association met with landlords to discuss tenant problems, but the meeting descended into charges and countercharges. A housing co-operative was formed, and fifteen men built their own homes. Sixty public housing units were erected. The women got together to discuss the recreational needs of the young. There was a lot of hostility towards the YMCA because of its middle-class bias, and its fees, but eventually twenty-eight children joined the Y for a nominal fee. Some of the women involved in this group formed a sewing club, and eight learned how to sew. The NewStart programme had no money for materials and patterns, so the Renewal Association provided these; a former home economics teacher donated her services for one night a week. More people began to vote in municipal elections.

In March, 1971, Nova Scotia NewStart withdrew from the area. In October, 1970, the Renewal Association had received a Health and Welfare grant, and after that managed to keep going on LIP and OFY projects. Tragically, Hubert Brush died in 1972. Near the end of his life, he had found his true vocation and a fund set up in his memory helps to train indigenous leaders. In 1976, the Yarmouth South Renewal Association was still in existence, working out of the Hubert Brush Centre.

It is very hard to get objective analyses of the NewStart programmes. The approach was fundamentally unsound, relying as it did on changing the behaviour of people. It does not take

research to realize that people will not respond to manipulation by others who claim to be helping them. Much trivial material was produced by NewStart; none of the conclusions reached is strikingly original.<sup>59</sup> Many interesting insights and some hard data on the real world of poverty and disadvantage came out of the work done in social development, but few of the reports produced by NewStart research would be considered for publication in professional journals.

The real danger in the NewStart approach was the belief that it was possible to develop educational tools that could be used to end disadvantage, and to get people into employment. The idea that giving individuals some sort of technical trick or skill will solve the problem of poverty falls apart once you begin to examine the social and political structures of disadvantaged areas.

One suggestion for defeating poverty is to give the poor money, and let them tackle their own problems. This was tried on Prince Edward Island, with interesting results. In Yarmouth, the “top down” approach to development trained some adult educators (or at least made them aware of some of their limitations). And it radicalized the poor. On the Island, an attempt was made to stimulate change “from the bottom up.”

# Change from the Bottom Up: The Social Development Services of Prince Edward Island

During the Christmas break of 1970, I encountered a former student who was teaching at the University of Prince Edward Island. He told me that he and some colleagues were helping a citizen leader, Alex Burke, in his attempts at doing something about poverty and oppression on the Island. If they paid his air fare to Ottawa, could I take him around to some of the government offices to locate some help?

## ENCOUNTER WITH ALEX

When the Senate Committee on Poverty held a public meeting in Charlottetown, a man in black stood up and demanded: “Where the hell’s the poor’?” As Alex explained: “I looked around and all I could see was lawyers and doctors.” Burke was a carpenter by trade, who had fallen from a couple of high buildings. One of his brothers was a doctor, and his father was a locksmith who had devoted much spare time to

encouraging piping and the preservation of the Scottish culture on the Island. Alex, while resting from his fall, had organized the Tenant's Union of Prince Edward Island (TUPEI), and started raising general hell about poor housing.

Alex arrived at my house in Ottawa in March, 1970. A lean, craggy man, he had been a drill instructor in the Army, and served in Korea. He was tough-minded and aggressive, with an innate courtesy about him that was attractive. He lectured to two of my classes at Saint Paul University, and we made the round of government offices. In the Privy Council Office, a senior civil servant asked Alex what he would do if the landlords organized. Alex grinned and said that would be fine—it would make negotiating with them easier. In the Citizenship Branch of the Secretary of State, Alex was informed that TUPEI was going to get a grant; this was news to him. A man at Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation told him how to apply for money to hold a housing conference. In the Department of National Health and Welfare, Alex was briefed on how to get a grant to set up a social development programme.

In the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, which was responsible for the Prince Edward Island Development Plan, we met a friend at the entrance to the cafeteria. I introduced her to Alex, and she literally ran away. Later she upbraided me for bringing “that radical” into the Department. We met with two pleasant people from DREE, and made small talk until one of them asked Alex whether he knew Mr. So-and-so. Alex replied: “That bastard's my landlord”; the conversation wilted a little after that. Later we learned that the DREE people had phoned the Island to check up on Alex before he arrived.

Alex handed me a small booklet on the Development Plan when he arrived in Ottawa; he had secured it with great difficulty from the premier, who explained that Alex would not understand it. Going up in the elevator in the DREE building,

we met a young woman carrying a package. Out of it peeped the familiar brown and blue cover of the Plan booklet. I asked her if she could spare a copy, and she handed me four.

## **THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES OF PEI**

In June, 1970, TUPEI organized and ran an Atlantic Housing Conference at which something called the Atlantic Region Information and Communications Centre was established, with Alex Burke in charge. In August, 1970, the Social Development Services (SDS) of PEI came into existence, with a grant of \$76,000 from National Health and Welfare's Grants Programme. From being a lonely, embattled individual, Alex Burke now found himself in charge of a federally-funded project with ambitious goals.

The preamble to the grant application read:

The project proposal is based on the assumption that given an opportunity to come together and collectively explore their circumstances and given the necessary information about their own environmental situation and about all available resources and services, people will be able to identify their problems, and have an important input into development of plans for solving problems and the implementation of programs to meet their needs. It is assumed that given suitable resources and opportunities, that people will initiate self-help programs to deal with local needs which can best be met at that level. The Prince Edward Island Tenant's Association believes that its success to date in mobilizing island tenants to deal with problems relating to housing, landlord tenants legislation, etc. is proof of this assumption. Their organization has already had a significant impact on government decisions affecting housing plans and

legislation and it is believed similar results can be obtained in other areas of social development.

The objectives of the SDS were listed as follows:

- A) To organize local citizen groups across the Island.
- B) To help these groups through self-study and through the provision of information about available resources and services to gain a better understanding of their problems and needs.
- C) To help local people develop plans for solving problems and to provide the channel by which these can be put forward to the appropriate authorities.
- D) To assist local groups in planning self-help programs and in finding the resources to develop the activities.
- E) To work co-operatively with the existing services and resources, to mobilize them when necessary and expand them as needed.
- F) To work for the development of new services and resources when needed.

These words don't sound like those of Alex; they are the standard rhetoric of the poverty warriors. I had nothing to do with the setting up of the SDS, and the awarding of the grant; I spent a damp summer on the Island of Mull in 1970, looking at Scottish development from the grass, or, rather, heather roots.

The Ottawa officials had a tremendous emotional investment in Alex, and the very broad objectives of the SDS gave Burke an impossible task. TUPEI had been mainly Alex; now his mandate for organization and social action was expanded to cover the whole Island. Alex was no genteel middle class radical. He was a reformer, not a revolutionary, who wanted action against poverty, corruption and patronage. He wanted to clean the stables—not to burn them down. He once wrote:

You cannot rebuild a society overnight as some people think. If this could be allowed or accomplished 'We would be in a hell of a state!' There is much talk of over-throwing the present system. If this was carried out, has anyone thought of what you would replace the present system with? Also, would it be as good as the present system? And if some of our know-it-alls think that their systems would be better, how do they know? Have they put their systems to a test?

## DECLINE AND FALL

The SDS was funded for three years as a "demonstration project," and Alex swung into action. He also got onto the "poverty conference" circuit, and began to travel to various places in Canada. One evening in the fall of 1970, I received a mysterious phone call from the Island. Would Alex phone home as soon as he arrived? Alex had called up a few days before and asked if he could stay with us. When he arrived, he was brisk and cheerful. Then he phoned home, and his manner changed. "The RCMP have a warrant out for my arrest," he claimed when he put down the phone. "What shall I do?" The only thing I could suggest was that he eat the excellent meal that my wife had prepared, have a good night's sleep, and get back to the Island in the morning.

Alex flew back on the following day, stopping off to pick up a journalist friend who had earlier been engaged to tell the population of the Island about the Development Plan. It turned out that the RCMP had been making some enquiries about Alex, and had searched his lodgings. Some people in PEI, jealous of Alex's power and prominence, had charged him with misappropriating \$5,000 in public funds. The Department of National Health and Welfare hastily sent down an Executive Assistant, and there was talk of a Federal-Provincial Enquiry. I

arranged by phone for Alex to call down fire on himself, and to ask for an evaluation.

In December, Thom Haley, a freelance community organizer, and I flew down to Charlottetown. The Leadership Development Institute of Holland College arranged with SDS to sponsor a leadership seminar at which we would be resource people. Nobody turned up at the Workshop, and we spent about four days trying to make sense out of the situation on the Island, and of the problems of SDS. As our plane had swept towards the Island, the land was green and red below us. We left in a snowstorm that obliterated the outlines of the land. Somehow the contrast was symbolic of our visit.

We never did find much trace of the Social Development Service, and Alex seemed very isolated. The Tenant's Union was dormant. SDS had a store front operation in Charlottetown, with a secretary, but nothing much was happening there. Alex was working and publishing a newsletter, throwing out brickbats and praise to various people involved in development. The academics had withdrawn their support; the professor who had originally got me involved ended up writing a report on manpower aspects of the Development Plan.

Our report, entitled *Invisible Causeways*, pointed out the problems of SDS—poor accounting, limited organizational abilities, unrealistic expectations of what the poor could achieve, domination by one person. We suggested that TUPEI become an incorporated body, that SDS get a Board of Directors, that an accountant be hired, that a budget be adhered to, that trusted resource people be located, that Alex give some of his power to other people, that SDS co-operate with other development operations. Alex had been a mark for every person with a hard luck story, and dished out grants to help people out of financial jams. He lived a very spartan life, and was a model of integrity. But he was a single person,

with a great deal of charisma, lacking in organizational ability, and unable to get the help and the resources he needed to undertake the tasks assigned to SDS under the grant programme.

A few years ago, the Department of National Health and Welfare published a guide to financial accounting for citizen groups. The plight of the SDS has been a common one in Canada. Money has been dumped into the hands of citizen groups which are alleged to have some magic ability to organize and operate complex change programmes that would defeat the best minds in development.

The dual standard on PEI appeared as we talked to people in positions of power. Here was a citizen leader being harassed because of sloppy book-keeping and organizational procedures, while all kinds of weird boondoggles were being rationalized in the name of development. Alex Burke arranged for Thom and I to see Premier Alex Campbell. Alex used to talk about “the two Alexes,” a phrase that reflected how he saw his role, as well as the dual nature of Island society. Just as Premier Alex Campbell was the leader of the formal political power group, so Alex Burke saw himself as the leader of the unorganized. We had a pleasant chat with the Premier, but that was about all. PEI was starting to feel the impact of the Development Plan, which was alleged to help the people of the Island to raise their productivity, while improving their lifestyle.

The provincial Deputy-Minister of Development was a dedicated agriculturalist; I had met him in the Yukon Territory some years before when he was running an experimental farm. He saw the need to upgrade the quality of the Island’s products, but this was a delicate and difficult task in the small world of PEI where standards of excellence tend to be parochial. He secured money to send farmers down to Boston to compare their produce with that from other sources.

The Deputy-Minister of Welfare was a former Army Brigadier, active in the reserve. In the summer of 1970, two young men arrived in Charlottetown on a motorcycle. He issued vouchers for food and even supplied some gas for their cycle. Shortly afterwards, the two received a cheque for \$25,000 from Ottawa and opened the Armoury as a youth hostel. The Deputy-Minister retired a few months later, and his place was taken by an Ottawa technocrat with a thorough background in the problems of welfare administration, but little first hand knowledge on the Island way of life.

Civil servants involved in development projects have become the victims of change in places like PEI. The Development Plan required skilled experts in many fields. Before 1970, a government job was a safe place for Islanders with political pull who were seeking a quiet life. All this changed when the Plan, with its demands for performance, arrived on the Island to help the Islanders to “develop.” A modern civil service had to be built up from scratch. Few people on the Island had the specific skills needed to undertake developments tasks; until 1966, the Island government did not have an economist on staff.

Still, there was a lot of criticism on the Island of “outside experts” who came in and took good jobs away from local people.

In 1970, Alex Burke was only one of many people involved in trying to assist the development of PEI. After our visit, his organization was taken over by another group, and then fell apart. Alex registered at the University of Prince Edward Island, worked for the Rural Development Council, and then for the Island’s Housing Corporation. As the “amateurs” in community development and citizen participation were phasing out, the “professionals” were moving in to help to sell the Island’s Development Plan.

## A DEVELOPMENT FIASCO

In 1963, the Island's Deputy-Minister of Fisheries went to Scandinavia to drum up interest in a fish plant. A Norwegian consulting firm arrived on the Island, together with a Montréal resident of Norwegian descent. This man, Jens Moe, formed Moe Industries, the Norwegian consultants reported favourably on the idea of a fish plant, and the government was on its way to the cleaners. Gulf Garden Foods, controlled by Moe Industries, came into existence and a fish plant and a small shipyard were built. No one seems to have checked on what was happening. In 1966, the Fishermen's Loan Board took over the shipyard, and bankruptcy was declared. In 1967, the Island's Industrial Corporation had to come to the rescue by taking over the shipyard and the fish plant. A Commission of Enquiry unravelled the sad story. Of the \$9,355,000 advanced by the federal government for the project, the total realizable assets came to only \$3,100,000 "at an optimistic estimate." About \$6 million had disappeared into thin air—and so had Jens Moe.<sup>60</sup>

The economy of PEI is extremely fragile. The main prosperity depends upon the potato crop. There's some fishing, and the collection of Irish Moss provides income. Tourism is big business for about three months in the summer. Tourists have been outnumbering the residents five to one in recent summers. A quarter of the population lives in or near Charlottetown, and an Air Force base at Summerside is the main economic prop of the other end of the Island. Life is slow-paced, and people are suspicious of government and of outsiders. The NewStart programme in King's County had trouble finding trainees for its training programmes, and in getting "graduates" to accept jobs for which they were trained. An Island like PEI only has a certain number of economic opportunities; after all there are not that many things that can be done to a potato. The

province is alleged to be run by Four Hundred Families, and the social structure comprises a small elite, and a rather large number of “others.”

## UTOPIA IN 1984—THE PEI DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Island people are ambivalent about change. They want a better life, but they don't want the stresses and strains of urban, industrial society. Again, as in so many parts of Canada, these people have not completed the revolutions of urbanization and industrialization; the dividing line between the rural and the urban ways of life is hard to locate.

On March 7, 1969, the federal and provincial governments signed an agreement for a “comprehensive and co-ordinated plan designed to promote (the Island's) economic development, to increase income and employment opportunities and to raise standards of living.”<sup>61</sup> The planners looked upon PEI as a perfect place to develop a total regional plan. PEI was to get \$300 million in federal funds over a 15 year period for “Social and Economic Betterment,” but it had to put up about \$2 for every \$1 provided by Ottawa.

The agreement was to expire in 1984, and was basically a framework to enable the federal government to pump money into the Island's economy in some sort of rational manner. The people of the Island did not ask for a development plan. They really wanted a causeway, to link them with the rest of Canada. About \$10 million was budgeted for public participation and involvement; about three quarters of this came from the federal government. The Plan proposal contained the usual heavy rhetoric:

Projects and programmes under this program seek to achieve a new level and type of public involvement in shaping

society in the Province. It is the people of the Province who will make the development goal a reality.<sup>62</sup>

The Island government used various means to sell the Plan. One idea was to hire a staff of professionally qualified counsellors who would answer enquiries and seek out persons who might wish to take advantage of the Plan's provisions. This formal, professional approach to getting benefits was a new idea on the Island. It disturbed the politicians *and* the local people, for as someone remarked: "Everyone of PEI is a politician."

In 1964, an Island clergyman attended Coady International Institute, and was bitten by the community development bug. When he returned, he became concerned about the problems of the poor, and gathered together a study group of clergymen. Out of this came the Rural Development Council, which became an effective, middle class organization for helping voluntary groups. It spent a lot of time trying to stay independent of the government, but fell into the money trap in 1966.

On July 1 of that year ARDA pulled out of the province after playing around with community development as a solution for rural ills. The Rural Development Council moved into the gap left by the ARDA programmes, and got government funding to do community development. But this money did not come through for a number of years, leaving RDC in a limbo at a crucial time. It became apparent in discussion both on and off the Island with those involved with the Plan that nobody knew how to achieve effective public participation. The people of PEI were expected to go along with programmes that would radically alter their life style. "Social adjustment" and "economic viability" meant in practice that if people were not efficient in metropolitan terms, they would be counselled, retired, phased out, or moved elsewhere to be "serviced" by government.

The Rural Development Council undertook the public

participation programme for the Plan on the Island. It included counselling, community resource development, the Lennox Island Community Development project (for the Indian band on the Island), and voluntary institution support. A Leadership Institute was also established. In all, 22 participation projects were identified, but no less than ten were cancelled or never funded.

The Council never knew whether it was supposed to be helping the government to implement the Plan or organizing the local people to oppose it. There was conflict between the Council's community development workers and the staff of the Department of Agriculture, who believed that they had the mandate to do this type of work. Over 1970-71, there were also numerous conflicts within the Council, and the community development staff resigned. The Council did some useful work, but it failed to confront the political system, and so got caught between the politicians and the people. It helped residents to oppose the East Point Park proposal; fought against school consolidation, opposed increases in the telephone rates, and published information showing that Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation supplied its clients with a list of lawyers, all of whom were associated with the reigning Liberal Party.

In May, 1975, the funds for the Rural Development Council were terminated.<sup>63</sup>

## THE GLOSSY LOOK OF DEVELOPMENT

In 1971, when the impact of the Plan was being felt, the government produced a flashy brochure entitled *Prince Edward Island Development Plan Action*. The colour cover showed a happy family, all smiles, surrounded by graphics of boats unloading, buildings rising, computers computing, doctors doctoring and retorts retorting. The brochure dragged in all sorts of figures to prove that the Plan was working well. Over

5,000 soil samples were tested at the soil laboratory; over 400,000 seedlings planted in 1969-70; 654 vocational high school graduates enrolled in 1970-71. A total of \$995,000 had been spent in 1971 on "Community Involvement," and \$38,043,000 on education.

A picture in the booklet, in the section headed "Community Involvement Action," shows a man sitting behind a desk on which reposes one file and one report. The man is talking to—or is he "counselling"?—a man and a woman. The man is dressed in a suit, and looks neat, tidy, clean and respectable; the woman is elegantly coiffured.

In 1973-74, the provincial government commissioned evaluations of various aspects of the Development Plan. The one on public participation<sup>64</sup> noted that "there appears to have been a general heightening of participation over the past five years and an improvement in the quality effected." The report emphasized the need to train management people to handle the demands of citizen groups. The role of the provincial legislators was critical, and would become more and more uncertain as people began to articulate their demands. Most of the knowledge about what was happening on the Island came from personal relations, and general awareness, and the report noted the need for good feedback from and to government to cut down the threat of confrontation.

## PROBLEMS

The lessons of development elsewhere in the world reveal that the easiest thing for a government to do is to spend money. The hardest thing is to find sound, economically feasible projects that will fit into the context of the life in hinterland areas like PEI.

By 1976, PEI and the Plan were in trouble. The Utopian, expansive mood of the late Sixties had given way to a climate

of restraint. Electric power and fuel costs had risen sharply. A great deal of building had been done under the Plan; one of the first investments was the extension to the provincial administration building in Charlottetown. All this space had to be lighted, heated, and paid for by the government. Private investment was lagging, although \$240 million had been spent on "infrastructure." In 1975, Georgetown Shipyards lost \$4 million, and Fraser Valley Frosted Foods at Montague closed down. There was growing resentment against tourism, and land sales to non-residents were being restricted.<sup>65</sup>

The unions had become militant, and so had the farmers, who believed that the Plan was a plot to drive them off their farms. In April, 1971, the Provincial Government rammed a Public Order Act (Bill 55), through the legislature, ostensibly to block a rock concert.<sup>66</sup> Public opposition forced the Government to rescind the Bill. In December, 1973, the Armed Forces held an exercise in Prince County "to give those involved the chance to familiarize themselves with areas they might someday have to work in and to keep up and develop training skills."<sup>67</sup> Some of the incidents staged included the imaginary murder of the "Under Secretary of Beaches," a bank robbery in O'Leary, an arms robbery in Tignish, and the throwing of a Molotov cocktail through the window of the Alberton RCMP station.

In 1971, I took a group of Coady students on a field trip to the Island. They were impressed with the work at Holland College in Charlottetown which allows students a high degree of freedom to develop their own curriculum. We visited an open plan school, and talked to a bright, energetic, innovative principal who opened the school for us on a holiday. At Tignish we made contact with a former community development worker who took us out to see a farm where corn was being grown, although this was alleged to be impossible by the experts. This farmer had devised a cheap and simple way to feed his cattle

automatically. The students were enchanted with it; they came from rural areas and this was exactly the sort of device they needed and could use back home.

The government seemed bemused by events. In 1975, engineering students at the University carried out a study of housing on the Island, found that there were no standards, and prepared a simple booklet for prospective buyers. The province was unable to find the money to help with its preparation.<sup>68</sup> A report from the Island noted feelings of uselessness among young Islanders.<sup>69</sup> But the government did save \$10,000 by not sending out Christmas cards in 1975, and it had established an industrial mall where innovators could operate rent free for a year. And there was talk of luring a garment industry to the Island to provide employment for about 250 people.

Late in 1976, the Minister of Veteran's Affairs, the Island's representative in the Federal Cabinet, announced that most of the Department's operations would be transferred to PEI over the next five years. Decentralization of government functions is a legitimate development strategy, but in this case the Minister had apparently made the decision without consulting those who would be most directly affected by it—the civil servants in his Department. In the established liberal tradition, participation in decision making is for marginal areas, not for central bureaucracies.

In 1976, PEI hung between two worlds. Caught between them were the graduates of universities and schools for whom the old way had no lure, and the new way no points of access. Vocational training was inadequate on the Island, jobs were few and far between, all the best positions in the Development Plan had been occupied, and there appeared to be few niches for people with ability. Somehow community development and citizen participation in planning had not solved the problems of the people of PEI.

During the Thirties, the Island had a vigorous programme of community development and citizen participation, sparked by one or two remarkable people. The work of Croteau paralleled that of the Antigonish Movement, and used a variety of techniques to get local people to organize and to work to solve their own problems.<sup>70</sup> In the rush to “develop” the Island, no one took time to look at the approach of Croteau, and the techniques used by the members of Antigonish Movement. They were doing community development before the technique was identified, and they achieved a great deal with very little.

# The Antigonish Movement

The Antigonish Movement was a programme of social action, adult education, self-help and co-operative development that arose in Eastern Nova Scotia in the 1920s and reached its peak in the 1930s. It was named for the town of Antigonish, where the Movement had its headquarters in the Extension Department of Saint Francis Xavier University.

## THE BACKGROUND

Co-operation and mutual aid are as old as mankind. The modern co-operative movement arose as a reaction to industrialization and oppression. It began as a way of getting people together to buy what they needed at less cost, and to retain some degree of social cohesion and control in the face of the fragmentation and depersonalization that came with industrial life in cities.

In 1844, a small group of workers in the north of England opened a shop on Toad Lane. This act of the “Rochdale Pioneers” is usually considered the beginning of the co-operative movement in Europe. The first co-operative store in Canada opened at Stellarton, Nova Scotia, in 1861. On Prince Edward Island a group of Acadian farmers organized the first “people’s bank” in North America, the Farmer’s Bank of Rustico, in 1864. In 1906, the British Canadian Co-

operative Society was organized on Cape Breton by miners from Great Britain.

The aims of the early co-operative were quite simple—people came together to pay less for the necessities of life, and to get a better price for their products. Through co-operative buying and selling, producers and workers tried to break the grip of the merchant class. Some of the early efforts in co-operative action in Nova Scotia succeeded, and others failed badly because of poor management, the careless use of credit, and the domination of co-operatives by one individual.

Life in Eastern Nova Scotia changed radically at the beginning of the century, when two steel mills opened. The people in the new towns of industrial Cape Breton were never far removed from the land and from their kin; miners kept a pig on a piece of land near their houses. The coal companies operated hospitals and health insurance schemes, and owned much of the housing. The companies disliked unions, and fought their establishment bitterly. Absentee ownership and outsiders in management meant that local people had little control over their lives.

In the mining towns, the infamous “pluck-mes” (company stores) operated; the earnings of miners were checked off against purchases there. One MacDonald got the nickname “Big Pay”, when he opened his pay packet, found it contained only two or three quarters, and turned to his mates with the remark: “Big Pay!” The social system was a feudal one, with the companies controlling the lives of their employees. In 1920, the Duncan Royal Commission on the Coal Industry reported: “... the housing, domestic surroundings and sanitary conditions of the mines are, with few exceptions, absolutely wretched.”

If anyone tried to organize the workers, they would be fired by the company. Gifted men like Alex MacIntyre, who later became one of the leaders of the Antigonish Movement,

walked the streets for months without work after being fired for organizing. Anyone who dared to question the system was labelled a “red” or a “communist.” If a man got too vocal, he lost his job, and his house, and got little community support. Conditions above and below ground were terrible, but most men kept their peace. Coal mining was carried out by teams of two men, which permitted a great deal of flexibility in work schedules. Yet in time, industrial Cape Breton developed a radical tradition, and left-wing town councils, M.Ps and MLAs were elected.

Life on the land became harder, too. As roads got better, rural areas were depopulated. Small country stores began to disappear, and so did local lawyers and doctors. The sense of community declined; the ambitious young left home in greater numbers. Farmers and fishermen were pushed deeper into debt. Fishermen became “sharecroppers of the sea,” selling their fish to merchants who provided their supplies, and made a profit at both ends.

Cash incomes were low. Even in the coal mines, the pay for work at the face in 1936 was \$13 a week, and \$10 for other tasks.

## BEGINNINGS

In 1902, Father Jimmy Tompkins arrived at Saint Francis Xavier University, and this event probably marks the official start of the Antigonish Movement. Father Jimmy was a pragmatic intellectual, a small abrasive man who would today be called either a “social animator” or a bloody nuisance. He had taught at Chéticamp, an Acadian community where a dynamic priest, Father Pierre Fiset, had organized the people for self-help projects between 1875 and 1909. Father Tompkins had a magpie mind, forever picking up bits and pieces of knowledge from books,

newspapers, pamphlets and other printed sources and demanding that others read them and start doing something about the social conditions in eastern Nova Scotia.

At the end of last century, the Catholic Church was struggling to cope with the effects of urbanization and industrialization. Father Jimmy wanted to put Catholic concerns into action. He examined such ventures as the British Worker's Educational Association, the Danish Folk Schools, and Swedish Discussion Circles to determine their relevance to the region.

For 20 years, Father Jimmy hammered away at the idea that the university should serve the needs of the local people. Saint Francis Xavier University, like most of the other universities in the Maritimes, was then a religious foundation geared to ensuring that decent young men, and even a few women, received a proper education. The bright young men were sent to university, often at great expense to the family, and then moved into the priesthood and the professions. The other children stayed at home to farm, fish, and work in the woods. Or they went to work in the steel mills and the coal mines, and down the road to the "Boston States" and Upper Canada. Those who stayed behind gained their knowledge from the school of hard knocks. The dual economy and society that persists in the Maritimes is due, in part, to the elitist nature of early education. People were divided into "the intelligent" and "the dull." There was little recognition then, as now, that farming and fishing need a great deal of wisdom and knowledge of the type that is hard to learn in universities.

At first, Father Tompkins wanted the university to train students to stay and work in the region. Some did, but most joined the ranks of the "big wigs," whom Father Jimmy saw as the oppressors of the "little people." So Father Jimmy turned his attention to adult education. In those days, adult education was at about the same stage as community development today. It was

dominated in Upper Canada by elite members of the voluntary agencies, who viewed its techniques as a way of socializing the workers to accept the existing norms and standards of Canadian society, and by radical social activists who saw the process as a way of questioning and changing the whole basis of society. These two groups effectively neutralized each other much of the time.<sup>71</sup> Outside Upper Canada, E. A. Corbett did effective work in the West,<sup>72</sup> in a society that was still forming.

In the Maritimes Father Tompkins and his followers began to get people to think about the causes of, and cures for, their condition. In 1921, he published a pamphlet entitled *Knowledge for the People—A Call to Saint Francis Xavier University*. In 1922, the radical priest was ejected from the university, and sent to the remote parish of Canso. Here, in a small fishing village where the people lived at a level of bare subsistence, the very rocks seemed to weep. The ostensible reason for Father Jimmy's rustication was that he espoused the cause of Maritime university amalgamation for which The Carnegie Corporation had offered to put up several million dollars.

Father Jimmy was a reformer, not a revolutionary. He saw the need to bridge the gap between book learning and real life, and to put knowledge into a form that the ordinary people could understand and use. This was the complete opposite of the sterile scholasticism of the universities.

At Canso and Little Dover, Father Jimmy, who was then over fifty, began to put his ideas into action. He was told: "You can't do anything with such cattle." At Little Dover, fishermen were getting 50¢ a hundredweight for fish that sold for 20¢ a pound in city markets. Father Jimmy carried out the duties of the parish priest, for he was a holy man who prayed a lot. At the same time, he prodded people, handed out pamphlets, brought in speakers, kept in touch with the adult education world—and attacked the property owning classes for fleecing the people.

The people at Canso and Little Dover petitioned for a road. An election was pending, so the road was started. It took three elections to get the road built, but the people kept up the pressure. Father Tompkins provided moral support, and knowledge of how the wide world outside Canso operated. The fishermen at Little Dover complained that the canneries were making too much money from selling the lobsters they caught. Father Jimmy suggested that they start their own cannery. He got study material, lent them \$300 interest free, and arranged a low-interest loan of \$700 to buy machinery. The men cut the wood, hauled the stones, and completed the cannery over the winter of 1929-30. At the end of the first lobster season, the fishermen had made enough money to pay off the \$1,000 loan, and to give themselves an extra 2¢ a pound for their catch. In 1937, lobsters that used to bring 6-7¢ a pound were fetching 20¢. Later, Father Jimmy brought in goats to supply milk for the children. The people formed buying clubs, and cut the cost of twine, rope, food and clothing by acting together. A new school and new fishing boats were built. The flocks of sheep were improved, and home industries such as rug making started.

## THE TRIGGER

The Antigonish Movement might never have gotten off the ground if the fishermen of Canso had not all been ashore on July 1, 1927, the Sixtieth Anniversary of Confederation. In 1926-27, weather conditions in the Atlantic had been good, and a large quantity of fish was landed, more than the market could absorb. Steam trawlers landed larger catches than usual, and prices slumped. The fishermen grumbled about their plight, so Father Tompkins organized a meeting, the press was called in, and out of the general uproar came the MacLean Commission (the Royal Commission on the Fisheries of the Maritime

Provinces and the Magdalen Islands). It was appointed on October 7, 1927, and reported on May 4, 1928. Its findings sound familiar—large trawlers were scooping the fish from the offshore banks, the fishermen were disheartened, boats and gear were rotting.

Father Tompkin's protégé and nephew, Father Moses Michael Coady, appeared before the Commission to plead the case for co-operatives as a way of tackling the problems of the fishermen. From this time forward, this great charismatic leader dominated the Antigonish Movement. Father Tompkins had been the John the Baptist of the Movement, crying in the wilderness, preparing the way; Father Coady was the Saviour. Coady was a big man, standing 6'3", strong, rugged, well-educated, a simple and eloquent speaker who got along well with everyone, a happy-go-lucky person who could laugh at himself.

Father Jimmy stayed in the humble station of parish priest. In 1935, he was transferred to Reserve Mines in industrial Cape Breton. He put books on his front porch and let his parishioners take their pick, and he pressed for the establishment of regional libraries: "So that people will know a fool when they see one". In time, Father Jimmy's operations came to be known as "The University of Reserve Mines." An American woman, Mary Arnold, who came to study there ended up helping Father Jimmy and a group of miners to start the first housing co-operative in Nova Scotia. The houses, built in 1937-38 at a cost of \$2,000 each, still stand near Reserve in an area called Tompkinsville.

Father Jimmy's enormous energy was finally extinguished in 1953, when he died. By that time the Movement that he had sparked had become an established part of the life of the people of eastern Nova Scotia, and was well known in the rest of the world.

## THE MOVEMENT

Father Tompkins was not a solitary individual, fighting the system alone. His ideas and his actions inspired a generation of activist priests, Protestant clergymen, laymen and government officials. They began to pressure the university into serving the needs of the local people. Men like Rev. Michael Gillis, Rev. John R. MacDonald, Father D.R. Rankin, and Rev. J.D. Nelson MacDonald pushed the cause of adult education. The university alumnae society and the Scottish Catholic Society stated that if Saint Francis Xavier University did not get into adult education, they would.<sup>73</sup> In 1921, the University put on its first "People's School", bringing fishermen and farmers on to the campus for six weeks to discuss their problems. In 1924, the clergy held their first rural conference on campus. This Conference raised \$2,500 a year for five years to send young men from the farms to take short courses at Truro Agricultural College. In 1928, the University established an Extension Department, with Moses Coady as its first Director.

The MacLean Commission had recommended the establishment of co-operatives as one way of giving the Maritime fishermen some control over their destinies. Moses Coady was asked by the federal government to organize the fishermen in 1928, and on June 26 in that year he brought together 208 representatives of fishermen's groups and helped them to create the United Maritime Fishermen. He also undertook a study tour of adult education efforts in North America. It was not until 1930 that he was able to devote his full time to directing the Extension Department.

Coady saw the need for an independent financial institution as a basic tool in development. Alphonse Desjardins opened the first "people's bank" in Levis, Québec, in 1900, and the credit union proved to be the ideal way of getting people to

pool their savings for community projects. Nova Scotians, however, had to learn about credit unions from Roy Bergengren, the American pioneer of the movement and Director of the Credit Union National Association in the U.S.A. He made nine trips to Nova Scotia at the invitation of Coady and his colleagues, and the first credit unions were established in 1933. In 1935, three quarters of the population of the small Cape Breton community of Louisdale were on direct relief. Here the people put their nickels and dimes together and organized a credit union with 35 members and a capital of \$40. By 1938, the credit union had a membership of 170 in a village with only 80 families, and its capital was \$1,800.

The aim of Coady was to break down the competitive individualism so common in the region, and to get people to study and work together to solve their problems. The methods used were the standard ones of community organizing. First a community meeting was held to air problems and issues, then small study groups were formed on specific problems. These might meet for two years before deciding to take action. The study groups tackled single issues, or helped to start a community credit union or co-operative.

In Louisbourg, the people started a study group in 1934 to determine the possibilities of opening a credit union; the credit union opened in June, 1935. In this community, gardening was encouraged, hay bought in bulk, thoroughbred cattle and sheep obtained to improve breeding stock, buying clubs established, and reading, writing and arithmetic taught at night schools. The emphasis was always on local needs and priorities, with Extension staff helping local people to identify these, and to get study material and resources. People were shown how to produce a better product.

In 1934, poultry pools in Nova Scotia marketed 9,000 pounds of graded poultry; three years later, this figure had risen

to 85,000 pounds. Radio was used to spread the message, and the pioneers found that they had to create their own literature. Complex material was broken down into understandable language; specialists were brought in when needed.

Coady once went with a poultry expert to a meeting in Guysborough County. He was asked to speak after the expert had enlightened the audience. He claimed he knew nothing about poultry, but added: "If you feed a hen the right amount of the right food every day, it's physically impossible for it not to lay an egg."

The going was never easy. Once Coady drove to a remote community on Cape Breton to be met by only two people, who informed him that the local priest was against the idea of co-operatives. On another occasion, Coady addressed a meeting and left a book with the group to study. Unfortunately the book was about tropical agriculture, and on his next visit, the local station agent confronted Coady and asked him how relevant such a book was. Coady laughed, acknowledged his error, and thanked the man.

But Coady never organized a co-operative in his life. A.B. MacDonald, known always as "A.B.", was the Saint Paul of the Movement. He came from a small community near Antigonish, and was educated at Ontario Agricultural College. After working as an agricultural representative and an inspector of schools, he joined the Department of Extension. His kind were the heart, soul, and muscle of the Movement. They helped to set up study clubs, showed people how to organize meetings, co-operatives and credit unions, taught them to read and to write, checked the books, and did the thousand and one small, mundane things that are the basis of good organization. It was hard work, but a great time in the lives of these people; you can see the joy shining out of their faces when you talk to the survivors of the Movement.

There was nothing new, startling or radical about their methods. The Movement worked through a decentralized network with its centre in the Extension Department of Saint Francis Xavier University. No one was excluded, there were no professionals, and everyone learned together. Coady's style was populist; he was a Christian Democrat, liberal in politics and conservative in religion. He wanted to make democracy work, and summed up his ideas of the good society as individual ownership of farms, homes, etc, a large measure of co-operative ownership in all economic processes, a measure "and perhaps a very large measure of socialism," and scope for private profit enterprise.<sup>74</sup>

Much of what has been written about the Movement is descriptive and laudatory, rather than analytical. Laidlaw sums up the Movement's achievements as economic uplift of the poor, implementation of a philosophy of adult education based on group action by people, helping labour to organize, making the university relevant to everyday life, and supporting the social techniques of the Catholic Church.<sup>75</sup>

The Movement reached its peak about 1939; in that year the University Extension Department had a staff of 11 full time members, 7 part-timers, and 30 other staff in the fishing communities. The Department's Rural and Industrial Conference, held in August, 1938, attracted 1,000 people. Harold Innis lectured at these conferences, and the *Times* of both New York and London sent reporters. In the three Atlantic provinces in 1939, 19,600 people were enrolled in 2,265 study clubs, and 342 credit unions and 162 other forms of co-operative organization had been started.

The effects of the Antigonish Movement spilled over into other parts of the Maritimes. On PEI, there were 35 credit unions with about 3,000 members in 1938. But the Bishop of Halifax refused to let his people listen to the radical priests

from Antigonish, and the Movement's pioneers were rebuffed in Lunenburg County and elsewhere.

## SELF-HELP ON PEI

Autonomous co-operative movements sprang up in New Brunswick and PEI, inspired by the Antigonish approach. In 1935, A.B. MacDonald lectured on PEI, and aroused interest in self-help projects. On the Island, it was J.T. Croteau, an American economics professor of Acadian descent who taught at both Island universities, who was the anchor man and recorder of co-operative and credit union movement activities. In 1929, the provincial budget was only \$1 million, and it had risen to only \$2 million by 1938. As Croteau noted:

The country people were friendly, glad to see a visitor and always ready to spend time in talk . . . They were intensively conservative, wedded to old methods and to old ways. Long experience with salesmen had taught them to be suspicious of anyone who talked too fluently. They took their politics too seriously.<sup>76</sup>

Croteau notes that the local merchants were victims of larger economic forces beyond their control, as were the farmers and the fishermen. The fishermen played all kinds of tricks — getting credit from one merchant and selling their fish to another, poaching lobsters, operating bootleg canneries that produced tinned lobsters that caused sickness and even death. A priest decided to organize a fishermen's union, and got seven men to form a committee. When the night of the general meeting came around, all seven men were in jail for poaching lobsters. Another priest ruined a co-operative by rescuing the manager every time poor business practices got him into trouble. In another community, the bookkeeper of

the co-operative had lost his cheque books — he had three of them — and it took three days to get the accounts straight. Two thirds of the members of the co-operative were named Arsenault, and half the rest were called Gallant!

Croteau tells of one community that was always having enthusiastic meetings — but where nothing happened. In another community that was poor, barren and unproductive, the place was full of promoters. Eight study groups formed, a credit union was launched, a store started on credit, and a cannery built, although the community had nothing to can.

Croteau visited Labrador in 1939, when the people were living on the edge of subsistence, with a relief allowance of 6¢ per person per day. He noted the work of the Grenfell Mission, which he described as “well-intentioned” and “idealistic”, but “ineffective in coming to grips with the basic problems.”

Really, what could the Grenfell people do in the face of a highly monopolistic business structure, with a handful of St. John’s merchants controlling credit, production and marketing: and manipulating the government by insisting on a regressive tax structure—low income taxes and high customs duties on essentials—and a paucity of social services.<sup>77</sup>

The co-operative approach to social reform turned off Socialists and Communists, who seldom came to see the work that was being done on the Island. By the spring of 1946, 25 co-operative societies had been established on the Island, doing an annual business of almost \$2 million. 50 credit unions with \$650,000 in assets had lent \$1.5 million to their members.

## THE ACHIEVEMENT AND THE MYSTIQUE

The successes of the Antigonish Movement were due to

hard work, careful planning and dedication by people who were not in development for the money.<sup>78</sup> They saw the activities in which they engaged as assisting in their personal development.

The War stripped away many of the leaders of the Movement, but the co-operatives and the credit union movement grew rapidly. During the Cold War, the Antigonish Way was seen as an alternative to Communism, and was heavily promoted. The June 1, 1953 issue of *Maclean's Magazine* contained a piece entitled "How SFX saved the Maritimes." It stated:

SFX has put new life into a dying fishing industry, restored idle farms and stamped out Communism in industrial Cape Breton, once a hot-bed of radical activity.

In 1964, the university issued a pamphlet outlining the goals of the Antigonish Movement and its achievements. The pamphlet, entitled *Closing the Gap*, claimed "If We Don't Do it... the Communists Will."

Why was the original Antigonish Movement so successful?

Father Jimmy, Moses Coady and the other leaders were born and raised locally, and educated outside the region. They were known, trusted, loved and respected because they used their abilities and gifts for the benefit of others. None of the workers was a fuzzy dogooder, parachuted in to help the local people. They had status, prestige, and a base at the university's Extension Department. Initially, funding came from Carnegie Corporation, and this source could not be easily influenced by local interests. As early as 1938, however, the university was complaining about "carrying the burden of the Extension Department," and in that year it received a federal grant to organize fishermen in the Maritimes.

The leaders of the Antigonish Movement encouraged and supported the emergence of grass-roots leaders. In the 1930s,

many Nova Scotians returned home from the States when the Depression worsened. The Movement created a new social and economic structure in which talented and able local people could use their abilities. The Movement had a philosophical basis for its actions; Tompkins, Coady and the others set out to create a new moral order. Coady hit out at the evils of his time and made his message plain: "...democracy is participation by the people; the job of all educators is to give mass-man a chance to appreciate his rich heritage and to express himself; rugged individualism is destroying the great majority of the people; adult education is essentially the scientific short-cut to human progress."

The leaders of the Movement were firmly convinced that education, not political action, was the key to a new society. The Movement's efforts removed the need for the political system to perform efficiently and to meet the needs of the people instead of those of the elite. It may have prevented its collapse. The Movement could not halt urbanization and industrialization. The small lobster canneries closed down as the fishing industry concentrated in a few key ports. Private buyers, offering a few cents more a pound for fish, cut the ground out from under co-operatives.

Coady saw development in liberal terms; he wanted to help people to find a place in that system, not to replace it. The Antigonish Movement has been recently accused of diverting the attention of workers from striving for a new social and economic order, a form of co-operative democracy based on egalitarian relationships.<sup>79</sup>

"A.B." died in 1952, and Coady passed away in 1959. In that year, the Coady International Institute was established at Saint Francis Xavier University to train students from developing nations. The co-operatives and credit union movements have been success oriented, and are now big business in the region. In 1975, sales of Maritime Co-operative Services exceeded

\$100 million for the first time; the United Maritime Fishermen had gross sales of \$24,289,617 in the same year. By 1976, credit unions had enrolled 140,000 members in Nova Scotia alone, or about one fifth of the population.<sup>80</sup>

In the Sixties, the first contingent of the Company of Young Canadians trained at Saint Francis Xavier University, perhaps in the hope that some of the magic of the Movement might rub off on the volunteers. A journalist who later joined the Company claimed:

Antigonish had a fantastic history of social action... it was here that Moses Michael Coady walked out of the Margaree Valley to found the co-op movement that spread throughout the world.<sup>81</sup>

While Coady was alive, people flocked from all over Canada and the world to learn with him; even Pierre Trudeau in his younger days made the pilgrimage. It now costs \$3,435 for a five and a half month training course for students from developing countries; this includes room and board. In 1973, the university combined the Coady Institute and the Extension Department as an economy move. The staff were not informed or involved in the discussions that preceded this decision.

In Canso and Little Dover, 50 years after Father Jimmy started his work there, the people are still struggling with poverty and deprivation.<sup>82</sup> Women working in the fish plant in the early Seventies made \$14 a night before taxes. In their efforts to organize, the people have got help from Father Gerry Rodgers of the Extension Department of Saint Francis Xavier University, the living embodiment of the Antigonish Way.

But he's a very lonely man.

# The Concept of Community

Politicians and civil servants usually pay lip-service to the concepts of community development and citizen participation. But the politicians understand that it is a threat to their power base, and the civil servants think it will involve more work. Both groups are correct, for the aim of community development is to make democracy work more effectively for more people. Some politicians and civil servants still think that participation in development is just a fad, and that those involved will disappear from the scene and leave the running of the world to experts.

Dr. T. R. Batten summed up his findings after 40 years experience in administration and teaching in the community development field in three succinct points. People involved in development are going to do what they think is important: they are not going to listen to the planners, the experts, and those who claim to know what is best for them. Secondly, anyone involved in community work who has special skills and knowledge in the field can best help community members by pointing out the costs and benefits of their proposed actions. Finally, advice and guidance should be given in a non-directive manner.<sup>83</sup> This style of leadership assumes that most people can solve most of their problems most of the time. It respects the right of people to be wrong in their own way, rather than correct in that of some other persons.

The community development worker is like an orchestra conductor, not like Lord Cardigan leading the Charge of the Light Brigade.

The concept of community is becoming more and more attractive as people reach the limits of what they can do as individuals. At the point where independence and freedom start to feel like alienation, people begin to realize that they need other people, and that perhaps other people need them.

One definition of community is: "A group of people living together or in one locality and subject to the same laws, having common interests, characteristics, etc." Basically there are two types of community — the vertical or geographical one (Street, neighbourhood, province, nation), and the horizontal or non-geographical one (teachers, stamp collectors, plumbers, social classes). Most people belong to both types of community. People prefer to live near people like themselves, and to associate in organizations with those whose interests, skills, and concerns are similar to their own. In Toronto, for example, the Hillcrest Ratepayers Association in the Casa Loma area excluded from membership the residents of three run-down apartment buildings, even though the buildings were located within the assumed boundaries of the community. The executive of the association did not feel that the interests of tenants were the same as those of upper middle class owners of expensive houses.

The concept of community implies territoriality or constituency and a communications system. This means that communities establish boundaries, and watch who crosses them. Once in New Guinea, Dr. Diamond Jenness, the anthropologist, wandered into a village. The place was deserted, so Dr. Diamond pulled a piece of string from his pocket and began to play Cat's Cradle. After a while, the children began to peer from behind trees, shyly at first, and then more boldly. They

then came forward, followed by the adults, who recognized that the stranger was harmless. A friend hunting with the Cree in Northern Ontario chased a moose across a river before killing it. As quickly as possible, the Indians retreated back across the river; they had invaded the boundaries of another band. The settlement of Indian and Inuit land claims is revealing that many of these people know very precisely the limits of their traditional territories. They remember too the strangers who invaded it.

In time of rapid change, communities form and reform, reshape themselves, move their boundaries. Over the past ten years, various official and unofficial change programmes have strengthened the sense of community in Canada by bringing different people together to get a government grant or to oppose a government programme. Where before, Canadians lived in traditional communities with established leadership patterns, now a new leadership pattern is sporadically emerging as people get together to deal with a threat or a crisis in the life of "their" community. The strategies used by the middle class professionals of the "People or Planes" group, who opposed the proposed Pickering Airport for Toronto, involved the same processes that the James Bay Indians went through in order to counter an outside threat to their way of life.

Contemporary societies have to handle a basic conflict in development. They must keep open the channels of communication between the governing and the governed, while at the same time creating complex organizations to handle the demands and needs of citizens. These organizations remove more and more power from elected representatives, and become more remote from the ordinary citizen. This modern tendency can weaken a community's concept of itself, because people external to the community may be taking decisive action that affects the neighbourhood or a larger area.

Many Canadians have discovered that the liberal concept of participatory democracy means: “We are going to make the plans and the decisions and then tell you what to do.”

Political parties are supposed to express the popular will, but over the past few years in Canada, Parliament, Provincial Legislatures and Municipal Councils have been bypassed in areas of vital concern to citizens, and have been reduced to debating clubs. The important decisions are made behind closed doors in corporate or civil service offices; policy statements and vital information are given first to the press rather than to members of other political parties. The result seems to indicate that our political parties are no longer the prime vehicles for social change; the parties fail to fulfill their potential and a plethora of citizen action groups have been — and will continue to be formed to present both small and some very large issues.

In Canada, governments have laboured under the delusion that the ordinary citizen has infinite amounts of time to attend meetings at which officials and politicians can tell them how well things are going. Studies have shown that people in many countries have similar behavioural patterns with regard to the use of time, and that the amount devoted to public affairs is very small. Crises will always bring large crowds out to meetings. But only a handful of people in any community or in any organization are willing to work actively to achieve long term community goals. Participation in Canada has been very successful in stopping projects, and the media have played up the angry crowds, rather than the quiet, careful work needed to establish and maintain good organizations and to do creative work effectively.

Because governments have failed to understand the dynamics of citizen groups, they have not realized that, honestly done, the community development process can be an inexpensive and effective way of handling change and encouraging development

in a democratic and efficient manner.

A university in Halifax launched a study to determine how best it could serve the needs of the community. An evening session was devoted to “Community Development” at which the chairman of the Task Force, a mathematics professor, claimed that community development could be defined any way the group liked. Representatives of about 40 citizen groups turned up looking for help in solving their problems. They tried to get a citizen representative on to the Task Force, but the Chairman said he would resign if this happened.

## THE GOALS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development is such a vague and general term that it is impossible to disagree with its sentiments. But it has *specific goals*, upon which government and citizens should be able to agree.

*The first goal is the transfer of money and power to the local level from the centre, and from those who have it to those who do not.* Power is the ability to act, or to influence action. The power dimension of development — who holds it, how they got it, what they do with it — has either been ducked in community development in Canada, or exaggerated. People seldom realize the power that exists in many statutes. Thom Haley, a freelance community worker in Ottawa, committed to memory all the welfare regulations pertaining to young people. He then quoted them back to welfare workers who had either forgotten them or never learned them. On Prince Edward Island, Alex Burke and his colleagues redrafted housing legislation and pressured to have it accepted, something a senior official told them he had been trying to do for years.

In 1974, I talked with a group of radical students in Halifax who were protesting the dismissal of a popular professor. They

were confronting the president, and handing out broadsheets on campus. I asked them if they had thought of transferring to another university, a few blocks way. I had seen a university in Ottawa thrown into panic when this happened, especially as it involved Francophone students transferring to an Anglophone university, because they were dissatisfied with the quality of education they were getting. If 100 students had moved from one university to the other this would have meant a loss to the university — and gain to the other— of over a quarter of a million dollars in per capita grants. Had the students thought of raising funds and hiring the professor themselves? I asked them. This is not a radical idea; it is the way universities began. I asked them why they did not make use of the university newspaper to present their case; after all their fees went to pay for it. They claimed that “one guy” ran it. The students had come together in a community of fear and confrontation, a very fragile creation. They had chosen a non-negotiable point and were pressing it hard because they knew the president would not yield. They had failed to understand the power they could muster through organizing. They had also apparently forgotten or lost sight of their reason for coming to university, which was presumably to learn how to think clearly and to act effectively.

One dilemma in Canada is that the level of government that has the most money and experts (the federal) is far removed from the municipalities, which have the most problems. The cities of Fredericton and Halifax, for example, don't have economists although the federal government is knee-deep in them. Provincial governments in Canada possess a great deal of statutory power, but often refuse to make themselves unpopular, preferring to use the federal government as a scapegoat. Many federal-provincial “sharing” arrangements were launched during the Sixties in times of boom and expansion, and have become expensive to run. The federal government is now trying to pass

these programmes over to the provinces. When the King of Siam was troubled by an unruly prince, he would present him with a white elephant. The prince would spend so much time, money and energy feeding, washing and cleaning up after the huge sacred animal that he no longer posed a threat.

Community development does involve a devolution of power; and this really means hard-nosed screening of proposals to identify those that can best be carried out by people at the local or regional level.

This brings up the *second goal* of community development — *identifying ways in which communities and their members can cut the social, economic, cultural and psychological costs of change*. We have an enormous amount of practical and theoretical knowledge about how to tackle social and economic problems, but it has been seldom used in the rush for development. Governments always seem to prefer to fly in experts from elsewhere than to read the reports on their desks. In development, there has to be a continuous search for realistically priced and effective ways of handling social change, inside and outside the community. As much as possible, projects should be self-supporting. He who pays the piper calls the tune.

Governments, by trying to make life safe for people, have stifled creativity. People learning will make mistakes, but effective community work helps people to get better information on how their world operates so that they make fewer and less costly mistakes as they go along.

Knowledge and information must be tailored to the needs of the community, not simply piled on them. While I was working on a weather station in Labrador-Ungava in 1955, a woman phoned me and asked for the weather forecast. I went into a long detailed description of the total situation, until it occurred to me to ask why she wanted the information. She simply wanted to know whether to hang out her wash.

*Thirdly, community development should keep people informed, as well as helping them to articulate and to record their experiences.* Only now are we developing a literature on Canada that describes and explains this country as it really is. When we launched the Basse-Ville project in 1966, almost nothing was written in the field. Yet there was plenty of material on the problems of black ghettos in the U.S. As communities begin to turn in upon themselves under the impact of rapid change, their members start to believe that their problems are unique, or of their own creation. In 1961, I did a study of Inuvik, after visiting other northern communities. The administrator of Inuvik was a dedicated civil servant. I saw him visibly relax when I told him about some of the problems that the administrators in the other communities were facing. Information is to development what oil is to modern warfare: unless it flows, nothing happens.

There are obvious needs in Canada that this goal embraces. Politicians have to get information in a form that enables them to make policy, rather than getting bogged down in detail. Politicians must learn how to respond to community demands, not to those of individuals engaged in special pleading. There is an obvious need for better and more accurate coverage of public affairs in the media, with the emphasis on analysis instead of on personalities and scandals.

*The final goal in community development is to help communities to build a stronger and more viable economic base, helping members to identify employment opportunities.*

In 1969, I proposed that a group of experts, attending the International Conference on Productivity and Conservation in Northern Circumpolar Areas in Edmonton, get together to train young northerners for careers in northern ecology and conservation.<sup>84</sup> Young northerners could draw upon the practical wisdom of their parents, as well as the technical skills and knowledge of the scientists. The proposal fell on deaf ears;

the group went back to its community concerns, writing briefs demanding grants to do more research, and attacking the government for ruining the environment. Since 1969, millions of dollars have been spent on crash programmes to study and protect the northlands. The outside experts have taken their cheques, written their papers, received their promotions, and moved on. The young native peoples of the North, full of anger and frustration, sit on the sidelines, watching outsiders get the good jobs.

Communities will usually articulate their goals so that they fit into the above typology of getting more money and power to run their own affairs, understanding how to cut the costs of change, being accurately informed, and acquiring a stable employment base. If a community development worker appears or arises in a community, it is not an accidental event. Something has happened to a community or to an individual, and a personal or collective decision has been made that the most effective way to deal with the problem is on a community basis.

## The Community Development Worker – Saviour or Scapegoat?

When the British were subduing the tribes of India in the nineteenth century, they sometimes found their progress halted by a fortified village. A subaltern, accompanied by a couple of sepoy, would rush forward with a bag of gunpowder, place it at the main gate, light the fuse and retire quickly. The mortality rate among both subalterns and sepoy was rather high; some blew themselves *and* the gate up. The officer would receive a posthumous Victoria Cross, and the sepoy's families a lifetime pension. This method of breaking into a fort or village was known as "The Forlorn Hope!" and it rings a responsive chord in anyone who has been involved in, or associated with, community development and citizen participation anywhere in the world.

Here again, the liberal tradition still influences both the thinking of the rulers and the actions of those they hire to handle crises. Community development workers are often sent into a complex, confused situation, and expected to bring order out of chaos. Thus the hero myth is perpetuated, rather than the needs of the community being served. Like the Little Dutch Boy, the community worker stands with his finger in the dyke,

basking in the admiration of all. But no one is looking over the top of the dyke to determine the water level nor looking downstream to see what will happen if the dyke bursts. In some cases, there's no water behind the dyke; in others, it is about to pour over the top.

The leadership pattern in traditional societies developed on a highly functional basis. Some tribes had a variety of chiefs—a Talking Chief, a Trade Chief, a War Chief. This pattern of leadership recognizes that the talents of certain people can be used for the community in different ways, in different settings, and at different times. Among the Inuit, the best hunter became the leader of the small bands because he provided the food for the group. The Inuit, like many other traditional peoples, had a role in society that recognized that there were forces in the universe over which they had no control, and which had to be placated. The shaman communed with the spirits of the dead, forecast the future, and made sure that the animals killed by the Inuit did not get angry at them.

Today, the Inuit have to communicate with the spirits of dead ancestors and animals, and with the “spirits” of the numerous government and other agencies that influence their lives. These powerful forces are as mysterious and as threatening as the spirits of the seal, the polar bear, and the other sources of food. The Inuit have learned that they must humour these strange spirits of government if they are to get access to resources and services. The community development worker has to be something of a shaman.

Very often, community development is invoked as a form of crisis intervention. An individual in a community sees a serious problem, and demands that the community act to resolve it. Or a government agency believes that a community has become socially disorganized, and sends someone in to solve its problems. The *basic role* of a community development worker is *that of the*

*animator/enabler*. He or she is *not* in a community to solve its problems, but to help its members to increase their capacity to do so. At the present time, community development workers are not professionals in the traditional sense of the word. It is possible, in Canada, to get a B.A., an M.A., or a Diploma in Community Development, and in the U.S. some universities are already graduating Ph.D. students in this field. Over the past ten years, members of established professions in Canada have gone through an identity crisis as they struggle to redefine their roles to meet the needs of the people they are supposed to serve.

Many people see community development as a fancy form of social work. A study carried out in Britain recently found that most people are not sure what social workers do. Indeed, they have trouble distinguishing them from the gasmen, who come to fix the stove or the pipes. Social workers are trained, on the whole, to handle the casualties of societies, not to organize them to change society. In London, England, some social workers were sent to evict squatters, and ended by joining them because they recognized their plight was not their fault, but that of the local government. Neither is community development a form of adult education, which, in Canada, has professionalized itself almost out of existence. You cannot do adult education these days unless you have at least an M.A. degree, and preferably a Ph.D.

This is not to deny that, on an individual basis, many social workers and adult educators in Canada have done effective community work. But professionals perform as much for their peers as for their clients. In a community development project launched in a low income area of Paisley, Scotland, the community relations representative of the police expressed concern about the way in which his colleagues were viewing his involvement in this attempt to help people to help themselves.

The policeman found a number of people who were interested in fishing, organized a very successful outing for them, and labelled this “community development.”

Saul Alinsky claimed that a social activist has to be a well-integrated schizophrenic. The community development worker has to encourage stability *and* change in a community, so that he or she, from the beginning, must be able to handle a high degree of ambiguity. He is seen as part of the oppressive system by members of the community and as a radical by his employers. The worker has to know how to handle formal and informal organizations, to understand the community’s past and to anticipate its future, to plan and to improvise, and to handle individual demands within a community context. This is what makes it extremely difficult to set down rules and regulations for community development workers, and to train them.

It is useful for community workers to think of an hourglass when pondering their role. An hourglass works just as well upside down as downside up; the important thing is the amount of sand in the two sections, and the rate of flow between them. The hourglass is a dynamic symbol suited to the way in which communities react to outside threats and opportunities, sometimes slowing them down, at other times speeding them up.

In each community, there are radicals and conservatives, who form a small minority of the population, and clearly articulate both ends of the political spectrum. Most people in any community are too busy making a living or attending to their own affairs to have much time to participate in community affairs. Many community workers intent on changing a community have been attracted to radicals in it, who impose their agendas for community change. Unless a widely-based coalition is formed this will split the community, as happened in Riverdale, in Toronto.<sup>85</sup> The community worker has to talk with representatives of all groups within a community. Beware

of those who claim to be interested only in the common good.

When a community worker steps into a community, the process he uses should go through three stages. Initially, there is a period of scanning and screening, within and without the community, picking up messages, decoding them, looking at the impact of change, listening to people tell of their fears and their dreams. One good way of finding out how people view their community is to ask them whether things were better or worse five or ten years ago, and then find some factual data to see if the income or economic base of the community has changed much in that time. Ask people where they believe the community will be in five or ten years time; this shakes out the desirable images of the future of the community and the shape of possible disasters.

In Canada, we have been subject to the imposition on our communities of the dreams and nightmares of Americans and others, and it's hard to tell which is which. In Montréal, in the mid-Sixties, I visited a private urban renewal project that had adopted and was trying to apply the American concept of "New Towns In-town." Rundown central sections of a city are destroyed, and a complete new community erected containing expensive apartment buildings, hotels, shops, etc. next to all the services and amenities of the urban core. In Montréal, one priest associated with the local church was helping the developers to bring about the complete destruction of a part of the inner city, while another priest was trying to protect his parishioners from the onslaught of the bulldozers. In time, a citizen's group arose that blocked the proposed redevelopment.

The *second stage* of the community development process is *organizing*. Once a group in a community identifies a common concern, the worker then helps them to organize to tackle it together. Organizing is tough, difficult, lonely work, a matter of knocking on doors, holding meetings, preparing minutes,

contacting agencies. Community development workers should help a community to identify an issue or a problem in which they can co-operate so that everyone in the community benefits. But the worker should also ensure that people understand the possible costs and benefits outside the community of what they intend to do.

In 1974, the Nova Scotia Department of Development held a public meeting in Halifax to discuss a proposed second container port. The proponents of the project and the consultants were on one side of the room, behind tables, and the public were in the main body of the hall. Such a situation is structured for confrontation. At the meeting, an attempt was made to “sell” the container port to the people who would be most directly affected by it. A community impact study was commissioned that showed that a container port was a “good thing” and would not disrupt the neighbourhood. No attempt was made to tell the people present of the importance of the existing container port in the economy of the city, and of the competitive nature of container traffic.

A citizen’s group formed to oppose the project, more consultant’s studies were commissioned, another site for the port located then cancelled because it was unsuitable. In 1976, the province was again pressing for the container port to be built on the original site. Meanwhile, the estimated cost of construction had doubled, Saint John had brought its new container pier into operation, some shipping companies had moved away from Halifax, and there was a great deal of unemployment on the waterfront.

Communities have come to understand that their problems are affected by actions and plans in a hierarchy of communities that extends from the local to the international. This brings up the third part of the process—the research and development role of the community worker. He or she has to collect information

on the various ways in which communities can handle their problems, and the costs of these approaches. Sometimes only the threat of collective action is needed to get action. When Saul Alinsky was helping Blacks in Chicago to get access to more employment opportunities at O'Hare Airport, he threatened to hold a "Shit-In." The plan was to occupy every toilet in the airport for extended periods, and if people coming off cramped airplanes and looking for relief on landing were inconvenienced, then this was just tough luck. Minsky never had to carry this strategy through to secure concessions.

Community development workers should understand the principles of judo, in which large people may be thrown by small people. In judo, after a period of fending and proving to check out how an opponent holds himself or herself, you then attempt to break his balance. If you succeed, you can carefully control the throw so that your opponent lands lightly or lands heavily. Brute force is useless in judo; it works against you. Instead you seek for leverage and use the minimum amount of energy for the maximum results.

A community worker has therefore to possess three sets of skills— scanning and screening, organizing, and bringing information and knowledge to a community so that its members can select the approach that most suits their needs. In the past, a single community development worker has been sent into a community in the belief that he or she could do everything for everyone, everywhere, and at once. A team approach is much more effective especially in a large community, because the demands made on individuals lead quickly to dependency by community members, or to rejection when the worker proves powerless to deliver what the community wants.

Some people have the knack for effective community work, or pick it up quickly. But the reliance upon a single individual to solve all the community's problems, as the experiences in

Yarmouth and PEI show, results in the worker ending up either as scapegoat or as saviour. This does little to help a community confront and solve its own problems; instead it postpones the moment of truth.

Prime Minister Trudeau was elected during the Swinging Sixties to lead us all to liberation, but he is having problems with his image in the Sombre Seventies. The ideology of liberalism has stressed charismatic individualism as the answer to national and community problems. And the fallacy of this approach is being demonstrated daily in Canada.

There are some basic skills and knowledge that people require before undertaking community work, or which they should acquire as soon as possible. Bookkeeping is a key skill. Lack of knowledge of how to run a set of books has ruined more community groups than the well-intentioned actions of outside do-gooders. A knowledge of social animation, and of the limits of the technique, is useful. During the Sixties, many young Québécois who would at one time have gone into holy orders took up *animation sociale* instead. Hordes of “animators” then descended on the Gaspé under the aegis of the *Bureau d'aménagement de l'est du Québec* (BAEQ). They received a rude shock when they found that the people were not interested in their abstract ideas, but in specific and immediate action to remedy their situation. Some knowledge of programme planning is useful, as well as an understanding of how to handle bureaucracies, and how social scientists operate.

Basically, however, community development cannot be taught—it must be learned. And much depends on the personality of the individual doing community development. People feel called to do community development, in the religious sense, in times of personal and community crises. When people discover they can't solve their own problems, they often suddenly get the idea that they can help others to solve

theirs. Like a drunk hanging on to a lamppost, they use the concepts of community development to support themselves, not to enlighten the community.

In Canada, community development has been touted as a simple and easy thing for unskilled, untrained people to do. As we have found out, it is not. The process pushes you down to the very roots of your own being, and forces you to look outwards at what is happening at the ends of the earth to make sense of changes in the community. At the same time, it helps individuals to discover personal resources they never knew they possessed, and to find the world community a much more interesting and open place than they had ever imagined.

A community development worker needs patience, plenty of humility, and stamina. A sense of humour is vital. Since community development workers, at least in theory, are on tap 24 hours a day, seven days a week, they need an understanding family and friends. Unless community development workers are willing to learn, and to assimilate and disseminate information rapidly from a variety of sources, their technical skills will be useless. Workers need a sense of discipline, and an ability to organize their own lives. Others will suffer if they don't practice what they preach. Finally, the worker must be an optimist, but also needs to remember that it is always darkest just before the bottom drops out of things.

Basically, community development workers have to come to terms with their own humanity and with the humanity of others, and to accept the fact that many of the things that happen to them and to others are beyond their control. They must be able to act in a creative manner, and not become the victim of circumstances.

In 1855, the favourite daughter of the Czech composer, Smetana, died. Out of his anguish came the lovely Piano Trio in G Minor that has moved and entranced people down the

years, while keeping alive the memory of a gifted child. Yet at its first performance it was panned by the critics. The Russian composer, Sergei Rachmaninov, went through a period of deep depression. His psychiatrist urged him to get back to his music, and the result was the Second Piano Concerto, which has brought joy and delight to many people in this century.

The openness of the community development process and its potential for unlocking creativity in individuals and communities will be vital in the years to come in Canada. But unless you know the depths to which you and others can sink, you will never appreciate the heights of human existence, nor be able to convey your joy and enthusiasm to others.

For community development is a joyful pursuit. It can show individuals and communities how to develop both self-reliance and the ability to co-operate with others in ways that are mutually beneficial. In this way, people can retain and heighten some degree of autonomy, *and* experience a sense of community.

Such an approach to development, at every level from the neighbourhood to the nation, makes more sense in Canada each day, as Canadians realize what binds them together as well as what separates them from each other.

# 13

## Doing it: Twenty Suggestions for Effective Community Action

There is no single effective way of doing community development especially in the situation of rapid change, uncertainty and confusion in Canada at the present time. Success or failure in community development comes from the dynamic interaction between the worker and the members of the community. Sometimes a worker is ejected from a community, or fired by an agency; this can mean the collapse of a project or it can lead the community to develop more self-reliance. In London, England, some citizen groups are hiring their own workers, and refusing to have anything to do with the official attempts of community development. In 1976, the Director of Rural Development in New Brunswick and several staff members doing community development resigned because their approach to rural change was based on the idea of helping small farmers to become more efficient, rather than the official policy of favouring agribusiness. They started a newspaper in Fredericton named *The Plain Dealer*, which has quickly reached a circulation of 6,000 and now has an independent source of income.

Throughout Canada, individuals and communities are beginning to realize that their problems are not unique, and are starting to share their knowledge. The following suggestions are directed at two groups—community members and community development workers.

**1. *Every Community has a history of intervention. Discover it.***

In 1975, I met with the executive of the community council in Sackville, Nova Scotia. This community has a population approaching 30,000, but still forms part of Halifax County and has no local government. A few years ago, some clergymen got together and encouraged the local people to form a community council. The Regional Social Planning Council, which has since been disbanded, did a survey of community resources. Then the local School of Social Work carried out a community development survey. The report recommended that a community development worker, with a Master's Degree in Social Work, be hired to help the community to solve its problems. A budget of \$25,000 would be required for the first year to hire a worker and to open an office. The members of the community council called me in because of lack of success in peddling this proposal to government agencies.

Looking at the situation in Sackville, it soon became apparent that most of the residents were able people who, in many cases, had built their own homes. The province had proposed to establish a sanitary land-fill near Sackville, and this had created a tremendous sense of community as people came together to oppose it. Just before I was called in, the premier had come to a public meeting and told the residents that the land-fill site would be located elsewhere in the county.

Among other things, Sackville had been subjected to a “Community Canada Day”. The community council had been contacted by a group which had started as an ecumenical venture in Chicago and then moved to Canada to do community development. The outsiders brought the people of Sackville together to talk about their problems, got them to write a community song, and then, at the end of the day, packed up and moved on. This event cost the community \$600. The history of intervention in Sackville is typical of many communities in Canada.

***2. The government is not your enemy or your patron—it is your servant.***

After I had visited PEI, a small businessman I met there came to Ottawa, at his own expense, to get advice on starting a bakery. I phoned the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and located the Bakery Products Specialist. He was an enormously knowledgeable man, and presented a number of options for starting a bakery.

The civil service is full of people like him, but you have to learn how administrative structures and the political systems work, and who to talk to about what.

***3. Contact your elected representatives and ask them to do what they were elected to do—serve community interests.***

A citizen leader in Saint John once told me that his strategy was to call collect cabinet ministers in Ottawa and threaten to picket on the streets if his demands were not met. I have heard animators in New Brunswick refer to M.L.A.s as “the enemy.” Community development often takes the weight off existing political structures. This should not necessarily be the

case, and in many cases it should be the exact opposite. In a bureaucracy, elected and senior officials seldom know what goes on at the lower levels. Elected politicians need citizen participation to keep a check on what the civil servants are doing. Avoid rushing to politicians on a crisis basis; keep the channels of communication open at all times. Present briefs at every occasion, and lobby politicians on community concerns, not just on the problems of individuals.

***4. Develop a system of keeping members of the community informed on what you are doing, and also develop ways of getting your message across to people in positions of power.***

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is a national organization made up of about 35,000 owner-managers. It issues a "Mandate" 10 times a year that lists issues on which members are asked to vote. These include gun control, public ownership of railway tracks, the anti-inflation programme; each issue is introduced with a statement of pros and cons. The results are tabulated, and form the basis of the Federation's policies and programmes. The ballots contain space on the back for comments and are sent to the member's M.P.

Community workers must ensure that both public meetings are held and newsletters are issued to members. The newsletters must be clear and short. Under no circumstances must people be confused about what is happening.

***5. Learn to deal with the Media.***

Citizen groups have often been wrecked in Canada by becoming victims of the media. Nominate one person in the group to work with the media. Never go to the media without a prepared statement on the issue you wish to discuss. Make sure

all your facts and figures are correct, and remember that most people can absorb only about 1,000 words at one time, and that most people forget what they hear a few minutes after. Read the local newspapers, and identify reporters who are competent in presenting material factually and accurately.

Letters to the Editor are one of the most widely read parts of a newspaper. A citizens group in the Yukon once wrote to me about a problem. I suggested that they write to *The Globe and Mail*. They did so, thus getting their message in front of the Ottawa decision makers.

Don't allow one individual to speak for the community unless what he or she will say is first discussed with members and the person has the necessary skills and abilities to handle the media. You control the information, and you don't have to release it to anyone who will abuse your trust or distort what you say to meet their own needs or agendas. One community group in Halifax relapsed into inaction for a year while people discussed a statement that one member had made to the media without authority. Individuals can speak on any issue, providing they make it plain that they are speaking only for themselves.

If you feel abused, or ignored by radio and television, state your case to the Canadian Radio-Television Commission. In the case of newspapers, talk to the editor or the publisher. If someone in the media does a good job write a "thank you" note to their bosses.

## **6. Express appreciation.**

If a civil servant goes above and beyond the call of duty for your community, write to his or her minister to express appreciation. It will brighten the minister's day. It will also help to assure co-operation in the future.

**7. Identify surplus resources, goods and services inside and outside the community, and see how they can be used for the benefit of all.**

All communities have resources that are not being fully used. During the Sixties, Thom Haley established Phoenix House, a floating free school. At that time, the National Capital Commission had a number of houses that they planned to demolish. Thom rented these, and Phoenix House operated out of them until the lease expired or the neighbours complained.

**8. Don't build an elaborate administrative structure that absorbs all your resources.**

In *The Navigator*, Buster Keaton finds himself adrift on an ocean liner. His sole companion is the heroine, and his plight is typical of our overly bureaucratized age. The liner's kitchen has devices for boiling thousands of eggs at one time. But how does Buster boil two?

**9. Account for every penny you spend.**

In the initial stages of community development, money flows freely. Later it tends to dry up if the community problem appears to have been solved, or if the community members begin to confront those who have provided grants. Most communities have people with skills in bookkeeping, or accountants who can look after the books for a small monthly fee.

Learn to distinguish between accounting, which is a mechanical function, and accountability, which relates a community's performance to its goals. The Company of Young

Canadians was investigated by a House of Commons Committee mainly because it had been sloppy with its bookkeeping and careless in its expenditures, not for its radical activities.

***10. Build an independent source of financing for the community group.***

Government grants are too unreliable a source of funding as many community groups have discovered. Interest in a group's activities increases if people put their own money into it. There are numerous ways to develop a war-chest—bake sales, movies, concerts, etc. In some communities, residents can be levied \$1 per house per month, or asked to contribute a penny per person per day to the community fund. Young people in the community can collect and wrap the pennies, and get a 10% commission for doing so.

***11. Learn a wide variety of strategies and tactics, and try them out to see how they work.***

I am not much of a fan of the encounter/small group approach to social change. In November, the United Church of Canada held Festivals of Faith in Toronto and Halifax. These brought together over 500 people, and then used the small group process to get individuals talking about their problems and solutions. On the first evening, everyone sat with friends or family, and identified themselves by their geographical location. By the end of the Festival, a new sense of community and common concern had emerged.

***12. Develop a support system.***

Community groups and workers run the risk of becoming

isolated, and of feeling paranoid as they begin to tackle problems on a community basis. Identify people outside the community to whom you can go for advice and guidance when you come across a problem, and are not sure what the possible solutions are. Ask your local librarian to keep a file on community development, and to build up a small stock of books on the ideas and experiences in this field.

### ***13. Remember that you are not alone.***

Community development and citizen participation are universal phenomena. In 1961, I met an Oblate priest in Thompson, Manitoba. Together with the Anglican and United Church ministers, he was able to act as a mediating and enabling presence in this company town to ensure that the company and the government, which were jointly responsible for administering it, did not ignore the wishes of the people. The Oblate priest had encouraged the formation of an advisory council by his parishioners, to get guidance from them.

### ***14. Start Small.***

For some communities, holding a successful meeting is a great achievement. Plan initial activities carefully; hope for the best and prepare for the worst. Don't foster unrealistic expectations, or build up people's hopes. Respond to immediate needs. A priest who took my course in community development took over a parish in Winnipeg that contained a large number of Filipino garment workers. When he asked them what they wanted him to do, they asked for a more intensive religious life than the one they were getting. He had been thinking in terms of organizing basketball games.

**15. *The Community knows more, collectively, than any one individual in it. Learn how to tap this knowledge for community purposes.***

The students at Coady International Institute had been trained through a British-type school system, in which the teacher was assumed to have all the knowledge. They waited patiently to hear my words of wisdom from the front of the class. I told them of my experiences in community development, and then each related his or hers. The class soon realized that they knew more about community development collectively than I did, so my role became that of the enabler in the learning process. In time, the students ran the classes on their own, organized field trips, and shared their knowledge instead of seeing each other as competitors for marks or for the teacher's attention.

**16. *Know your agency.***

Many official agencies make the mistake of assuming that the community development process only operates outside their front doors. The senior people behave in a competitive, acquisitive, individualistic manner, making decisions without informing and involving their staff. The organizational model in community development is the wheel, not the pyramid; the community worker sits at the hub of the wheel.

Check the agencies promoting community development in the community. Do they practise it in their own operations? If not, it could be diplomatically suggested that they become more democratic and sensitive in their own operations.

**17. Keep good written records.**

Community workers should keep a day diary, and a community log of events. They should also keep a personal diary. Comparing a personal and a public record of events makes many of them more understandable. The day diary and the community log can be used for reporting to funding agencies; the ship's log provides a model for this type of recording. Do not get bogged down in paperwork. In Thailand, at one time, government community development workers were devoting more than 60% of their time to writing reports.

**18. Work towards building strong, flexible, adaptable organizations.**

Too much time has been spent by community groups on catering to the needs of people with weak egos. Adapt organizational structures to the needs of real people, not the other way around. Identify patterns of success in the community. Help members to get an historical perspective on events.

**19. Remember that nobody is irreplaceable.**

Identify what needs doing, and ensure that every position of responsibility is "twinned", i.e. two people in the group are able to carry out the functions. If soldiers are stopped by barbed wire, the first man throws himself across it, and the others walk on his back. If you see community development as a bridge building task, remember that people walk over bridges. Forget individual ego needs of the selfish kind. Give people a chance to test out their talents. In the case of outside community development workers, he or she should start to train a replacement as soon as possible. Only too often community development efforts

have cut across and weakened traditional leadership patterns. At the end of the process local residents must administer their own affairs and implement their own decisions.

***20. Initiate an evaluation of your activities as soon as possible.***

Community development projects are controversial endeavours because they threaten existing power structures. Strangers in a community are always watched. Local people will contrast people's words with their actions, and the community development worker has to be above suspicion while still retaining his or her humanity. Teachers in Alaska told me that living in the villages there was like being in a fish bowl. I was walking along a highway in northern Cape Breton on a winter's day when a car stopped and picked me up. The driver remarked: "You're a long way from Vancouver." He had noticed a customs sticker from that city on my bag. A social worker sent into Durham Bridge, a small community in New Brunswick, began to visit the poor people. The "respectable" ladies of the village complained to the provincial minister that she was neglecting their concerns.

In community development, you can never be sure that what you are doing is of benefit to the community. Nor can the community members be very sure whether the community worker is helping them to achieve their goals. But this should not prevent an open and honest partnership between insiders and outsiders in the quest for a more humane society.

## The Promise of Canada

All four major political parties wittingly or unwittingly have failed to use the processes of community development and citizen participation to unite people, rather than to divide them. All parties have promoted and pursued economic growth at any price as the basis for national, provincial and regional development, and have raised the expectations of Canadians that government can solve their problems for them.

The basic approach of community development runs counter to the assumptions upon which these liberal technocrats operate. Community development stresses subjective experiences, not just “objective criteria,” as a basis for action. It is a process which involves a generalist approach to problems, not simply a specialist one. Informal learning, as well as formal education, is the basis of effective community work. And most of all, community development workers believe that systems exist to serve people, not the other way around.

Ten years ago, it looked as if the 20th century might really belong to Canada. In the Swinging Sixties, opportunities in Canada seemed unlimited, and people were being encouraged, with government money, to “do their own thing.” In the Sombre Seventies, the emphasis is on law and order and fiscal restraint. As resources become scarcer and more expensive, Canadians everywhere may be tempted to adopt an individualistic, acquisitive attitude and to treat their fellows as competitors. Or

we may huddle together like sheep, with opportunities closed off to everyone but the elite and the ruthless. Competitive individualism, inertia or conflict may overcome the promise of this new country. Effective community development could lead to a sharing of resources and ideas, and to an opening up of society to those with talent and ability that are not recognized or used at present.

The new mood has helped to reveal some of the contradictions in Canadian society. In 1976, funds for medical research were cut back at a time when the federal government was about to spend a billion dollars for 18 long-range surveillance aircraft. Montréal lacks a sewage disposal system, and many people there are poorly housed, yet its mayor was able to find over a billion dollars to stage the Olympics—a larger amount than the gross national product of many new nations.

At the end of 1975, the Prime Minister mused on television about the inadequacies of the free enterprise system, the need for values, and the increasing role that government must play in the economy. Yet, as this book has tried to show, government attempts at all levels to help us have often ended in bitterness and frustration on all sides.

Twenty years ago, ambitious young people intent on making their mark in life went into business as entrepreneurs. Ten years ago, many such people moved into government to develop policies and programmes to help “the poor” and the “disadvantaged.” The federal government has attempted to co-opt those interested in community development and citizen participation with considerable success, and has used them to sell some of its schemes to the public and to buy time.

The end result has been an enormous increase in government expenditure, a decrease in self-reliance and self-help, numerous

confrontations between the rulers and the ruled and a sense of frustration and failure both inside and outside government. Community development may flourish in times of affluence, but, if you have too much money, you may try to buy solutions to problems rather than solving them collectively. But if you don't have money and resources, you have to use your head and your heart, and to cooperate with others in enterprises of mutual concern and benefit.

## TWO WORLDS

The change among Canada's native peoples, the most colonized of the colonized, from passive acceptance of their fate to organization and confrontation with the federal government, has illustrated what happens when people glimpse their potential to affect their own destinies.

Their way is rooted in the land, not in the institutions and machines that were developed in western Europe. Canadian policy will have to come to terms with complex problems of modern technology, *and* with those of traditional societies. Each poses problems, but each offers resources, concepts, ideas, experiences, and ways of creating a more humane society in a harsh land. Canada has one foot in the modern world, and the other in traditional society in which the concept of community and of sharing is still central to survival.

One basic aim of the community development process is to extend the ethical impulse to everyone, not merely to immediate family and friends. This involves the creation of a morally based community that transcends the limits of race, space, and time, and yet respects the individual and the differences of the people who comprise it. In such a society, the emphasis is on mutual aid and mutual learning.

## UNDERSTANDING CANADA

There is no one way of being a Canadian; the often-referred to weakness of our identity, if in fact it is weak, should enable us to retain an open and flexible approach to change. Possibly this openness and flexibility will become a part of our Canadian identity.

The world of books is logical and linear, and has a beginning and an end. The world of the land, and its wisdom, is discursive, organic, curving back on itself, repeating certain patterns again and again. In the hinterlands that make up so much of Canada, you come to appreciate both ways of learning about the world and yourself.

We as Canadians have a will to contribute something of value to the world, as well as to create in this country a new kind of society, more egalitarian, more open to talent, more humane. Hopefully, we will learn from other nations. And, in turn, have something to teach them. Community development may flourish as an integral part of our national development in the difficult times ahead in a way that was never possible in the affluent, acquisitive, individualistic decade we have just survived.

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No government funds have been received for the research or writing of this book. It is a personal statement, offered as a contribution to the debate on Canada's identity and future. I have tried to avoid making saints or sinners out of the people I have met on my physical and mental perambulations through the confused world of community development. I have tried to understand and to emphasize the humanity of all, and to identify their contributions to the theory and practise of community development in Canada.

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The literature on community development is growing greatly, and includes everything from weighty and abstract academic analyses to journalistic stories of success and failure. I always try to encourage people to read as widely as possible, in both the technical and the creative literature. Ciro Alegria's novel, *Broad and Alien is the World* (London, Merlin Press, 1941) tells a great deal about the human agonies of change, and so does the three volume work edited by Julian Steward, *Contemporary Change in Traditional Societies* (University of Illinois Press, 1967). Conan Doyle's books and stories about Sherlock Holmes are good training material; they teach the student to take nothing for granted. I have found anything written by Arthur Koestler and George Orwell an aid in understanding the human condition and the need for a new concept of community.

There are a number of journals and prime sources for information on community development. The *Community Development Journal*, founded by the late Peter Du Sautoy, a pioneer in community development, is published by the Oxford University Press. In the States, the Community Development Society publishes a *Journal*. In Rome, the *Centro Sociale* issues *The International Review of Community Development* annually. *Community Work Abstracts* is issued by the European Clearing House for Community Work in the Hague in Holland. An attempt by a group in Vancouver in 1973 to publish a Canadian journal on social action and community development, *Community Change*, petered out after an issue or two. *Constructive Citizen Participation* (Development Press, Box 1016, Oakville, Ontario) is a good source of information and ideas.

The Department of Regional and Community Affairs of the University of Missouri-Columbia has published a useful selected and annotated *Bibliography* on Community Development and the same Department publishes and updates a *Directory* of Community Development Education and Training Programmes throughout the world; the most recent issue came out in 1976.

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*Understanding Canada* has synthesized my ideas on community development. Various aspects of the field are covered in a series of papers that I have written over the past ten years, and these were published as follows: 1967: "Is Community Development Necessary?" *Anthropologica*, Special Issue on "Community Development in Canada," 9(2); 3-14

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