

THE PROBLEM OF DROPOUTS IN NOVA SCOTIA

A thesis written in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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## PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the incidence of student withdrawals from the public schools of Nova Scotia before the terminal year in comparison with the total school population of the province, and to explore the factors contributing to such withdrawals as revealed in the records of the Provincial Department of Education and in published sources relating to the dropout problem; and to recommend steps which may be taken to reduce the number of withdrawals in the area mentioned in the title.

Sincere appreciation of their assistance in the performance of this study is expressed to Mr. John A. Ross, Director of Personnel Services for the Nova Scotia Department of Education; to the Librarians and Staff of the St. Mary's University Library, the Nova Scotia Teachers' Library, The Library of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, and The Dartmouth Teachers' Professional Library; to Mr. H. A. Peacock, Research and Information Officer of the Canadian Education Association, Toronto; to Miss Lola Bratty, Librarian and Information Officer of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, Toronto; to Dr. Desmond Connor, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, N. S.; and to the officers of the Canadian Provincial Department of Education who supplied information concerning studies of school dropouts in their respective provinces.

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## INTRODUCTION

When the average Nova Scotian married couple first pass their eldest child into the hands of a public school teacher, they assume that he will progress through a succession of eleven or twelve school years, and emerge at the end of that time with a certificate of having passed the provincial examinations and thus be qualified either to enter college or some other form of post-secondary school training or employment. Some children do this; many others do not. So the question arises, why do some children complete the course of study while others do not? Is it because of the part of the province in which they live? Is failure to do so the fault of the parents, or of some teachers, or of the whole school system? Perhaps it is the fault of the children's associates, or their general neighbourhood?

Though many parents do not realize it, the withdrawal of their child from school may be the result of not one, but many factors which have influenced his intellectual development, his emotional adjustment to his status among his peers, the amount of enthusiasm which he feels toward his school work, and the amount of satisfaction which he derives from being successful in it. Of only one thing can the parents and his teachers be certain: unless the child is abnormal, he has not enjoyed becoming a dropout, for it has placed him in a category apart from the average children in his grade. He realizes that he is classed as

inferior, though he may not be quite sure as to why this should have happened. In order to try to justify his new status in the community, he will likely feel that he should either put a chip on his shoulder, assume an attitude of disinterest or scorn toward others who have been successful in school affairs, or withdraw from them into whatever employment he can find in order to earn money to become independent and to compensate for his lack of achievement in school. The immediate and the long-term outcomes of these adjustments are too complicated to consider at this point; but they will effect not only the balance of his life, but to a greater or less degree, that of his whole community.

This thesis is to be a study of how many of such children are either in the process of leaving the Nova Scotian schools, or have left them, what has been done to reduce their percentage of our school population, and what may be done in the future toward the same end.



CHAPTER I  
DEFINITIONS, CLASSIFICATIONS, AND CHARACTERISTICS  
OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS WITHDRAWING BEFORE  
COMPLETION OF THEIR TERMINAL YEAR

In this opening chapter, a listing will first be made of the definitions of terms most commonly used in reference to the school dropout problem; this will be followed by an explanation of the several classifications into which leaving students are to be placed in this study; finally, there will be set out an outline of the most frequently observed characteristics which such students display. These characteristics will apply not only to their school work, but to their out-of-school life, their home background, and their personality. The first of these three tasks will familiarize the reader with the boundaries of the problem in hand; the latter two will give a general picture of the type of student with whom we will be dealing.

Definitions

Any study of an educational occurrence of the extent and implications of the one in hand should begin with a definition of each of the terms which will be used most commonly in that study.

For the word "student", the definition given by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in relation to their findings of the 1961 Census

will be adopted, since the statistics and conclusions of each Census give the only information of national scope on which studies can be based. In this work, a student was one who "was considered as attending school if his main daytime activity was attending an elementary or secondary school, university, or an institution providing an equivalent type of general education."<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, it is also taken to include a student who is attending school for part of a school day, and spends the remainder of that day at employment arranged by the school for him as pre-vocational sampling and training.

Since this study is to be confined to students of elementary and secondary schools, it will not include university students or students of courses given outside of the public school system by institutions providing technical or vocational training through either classes or correspondence courses.

For the term "dropout", there will be adopted the definition of the National Education Association of the United States: "A dropout is a pupil who leaves a school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies, and without transferring to another school." It is supported by the following explanation:

The term dropout is used most often to designate those elementary and secondary school pupils who have been in membership during the regular school term, and who withdraw from membership before graduating from secondary school or before completing their programs of studies. Such an individual is considered a dropout whether his dropping out occurs during or between regular school terms, whether his dropping out occurs before or after he has

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<sup>1</sup>Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, Population: School Attendance and Schooling, Bulletin 1.2-10, p. 1.

passed the compulsory school attendance age, and, where applicable, whether or not he has completed a minimum required amount of school work.<sup>1</sup>

This definition, as clarified above, will be taken as the meaning of "Students Withdrawing from the Public Schools Before the Terminal Year" as it occurs in the Title, and as the meaning of the term "dropout" as it occurs in the Survey.

An "involuntary dropout" is one who leaves school because of death, disability, departure from the geographical area served by the school, or admission to a corrective institution, before his terminal year. All others are to be considered as "voluntary dropouts", since the act of leaving school, or of failing to return to it at the opening of a new term, was within the voluntary control of the student. Expellees are also considered as voluntary dropouts, since their behaviour leading to, or giving cause for expulsion, was voluntary.

The term "dropout rate" shall be taken as meaning the number of dropouts expressed as a percentage of the total enrolment as of the previous September 30th, the annual date by which opening enrolment is considered to be established. This term may be applied to either any grade, any school, or any subdivision of a school system such as an elementary school, junior high school, or senior high school. The school grades encompassed in these categories are:

- 1) Elementary School - Grades 1 - 6,
- 2) Junior High School - Grades 7 - 9,
- 3) Senior High School - Grades 10 - 12, or 13, if offered by the school.

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<sup>1</sup>National Education Association, School Dropouts, Research Memo 1963-10 (Washington: April, 1963), p. 2.

"Retention rate" may be considered to be the converse of "drop-out rate," and will refer to the number of students retained in school, expressed as a percentage of the total enrolments as of the previous September 30th, and also applying to any grade, any school, or any subdivision of a school system.

By "termination year" will be meant the final year of schooling made available to a student by his provincial government, without tuition, in any course of study designated as suitable for him by the school system whose classes he is attending at present, or may attend.

With the foregoing definitions established for reference, let us now proceed to an examination of methods of classification of drop-outs as they occur in Canada.

### Classifications

If the act of dropping out of school were a simple and immediate matter, it would be sufficient to classify dropouts according to their age and grade at the time of their departure from school, noting only the effect which such dropping-out had on school population and the future labor force. But such is not the case. Dropping-out is, rather, the culmination of a variety of pressures on the student, pressures which may be personal, social or economic, or a combination of any of these three forces. Theoretically, then, it should be possible to classify dropouts according to these pressures. But such a classification would not give a total picture of all factors contributing to withdrawal from school, since among students there are wide ranges of other differences, such as variations among their native and acquired mental and physical abilities, their familial backgrounds, emotional

range and stability, motivation toward education, and socio-economic status. Also, there is extensive overlapping among these features of their make-up.

Classification of dropouts according to true causes for their leaving school is not possible without a complete clinical examination of each child, his family, his community, his peers, and his school history. In any one case, it can be conjectured that he left school because of certain circumstances, but it is impossible to prove positively that these circumstances are the actual or even the principal cause.

For example, in an area which has elementary school facilities of only one classroom per 30 - 35 pupils per grade, and no auxiliary classes, a child who learns more slowly than the majority of the class will very likely drop to the bottom of his group in scholastic achievement. As the years pass, he will likely be required to repeat one or more grades, and will then become over-size or over-age as compared to his grade-mates. Generally this results in his becoming maladjusted, losing his sense of identity with his peers, and developing a feeling of inferiority. Such a student will likely become a dropout, although, had it been available, a class for similar slow-learners might well have kept him interested in school, and channelled what ability he had into a course of study suitable for him. Thus the questions arise: In such a child a dropout because of lower mental ability than the average, or because there was no adequate schooling available for him? Was there no adequate schooling because the municipality could not afford it, or was it because his community (the taxpayers) did not think auxiliary classes were necessary? Both his mental ability, and the lack of schooling for those of his ability

were factors contributing to his withdrawal; but which was the true cause of his leaving? The answer is indeed arbitrary.

Since there are no statistics available in Canada as to the real causes of student withdrawals before their terminal year, for the purpose of this study a classification of dropouts will be made on the basis of student destinations after they have left school. Such a classification will give an indication of factors contributing to their withdrawal.

The analysis of their destinations will be made according to the pattern of destinations used by six provinces in the 1961 census: Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. This pattern classifies them under two main headings: Continuing Education and Withdrawals, the latter being divided into Withdrawals to Employment and Other Destinations. Students in the latter two divisions are arranged under a number of headings, details of which will be given in Chapter 3, the survey of dropouts in Nova Scotia.

So let us turn next to the characteristics of the students with whom we are concerned, the dropouts, and their physical, mental, emotional and social traits.

#### Characteristics

While it would not be accurate to say that every student who displays certain scholastic success patterns in elementary school, or follows certain behavioral modes, or come from a certain socio-economic stratum of society is destined to be a dropout, it is nevertheless true that those who leave school before the normal graduation time do display certain features common to the majority of dropouts. Let us examine dropouts first from the point of view of the classroom teacher,

next from that of such a child's neighbours, and finally from that of a psychologist who is attempting to analyze the causes of his characteristics.

The most obvious occurrences in relation to dropouts as seen by a teacher are that over the years that he has been in school, he has likely been near or within the bottom quartile in achievement for his grade, and that he is over-age for the grade, generally by two or three years. While he may have placed near the class median for Grades One or Two, and possible Grade Three, his place in the class probably has receded over the next three or four years. He seldom takes a leading part in classroom or extra-curricular activities, and may display a history of frequent tardiness and/or repeated truancy. Just after puberty, his achievement has likely declined sharply. In the case of a girl, this decline will probably be followed by signs of rebellion; among boys, the potential dropout will default and evade obligations, lack energy and drive, and have no realistic plans for the future. If his family history is examined, it will likely be found that he had older brothers and sisters who were dropouts, that his parents are of a low socio-economic stratum, and that his parents are immature emotionally, one being weak and vacillating, the other angry and demanding. It is also quite likely that only one parent will be living at home, or that both parents are working at employment which keeps them away from home for most of the time, or that the parents take most of their recreation away from the home and children.

The foregoing should not be taken as positive signs of potential dropping out, but as Guest says: "Where any one of the symptoms is present, the chances that the student will drop out are higher than if

the symptom does not appear, and the more numerous the symptoms, the more probable the dropout."<sup>1</sup>

From the point of view of the child's neighbours, the dropout or potential dropout will likely exhibit a number of anti-social actions; these will vary in frequency and violence according to his physical ability, his emotional state, and the amount of discipline which is brought to bear on him by his family; they will in all likelihood have been noticed by the teacher also. There will be considerable mischief-making, generally starting with harmless forms, and progressing to malicious types; bullying is likely to be in evidence, as well as provocative acting-out, leading to fighting; disobedience is a very common characteristic, accompanied by defensive lying, or lying to achieve other aims. These signs of social maladjustment can lead to the more spectacular actions indicative of rejection of commonly-accepted familial and social mores: running away from home, delinquent gang association, breaking curfew, vandalism (especially toward school buildings), drinking, theft and other crimes.

These symptoms of an antisocial outlook on life, while not invariable, are commonly exhibited among students who are either potential or actual dropouts. All are forms of behaviour which offer more immediate satisfaction or gratification of impulses than would adherence to a normal pattern of school and social life for children of school age. They also indicate a complete disregard of what is commonly accepted as right or wrong in terms of the individual, the

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<sup>1</sup>H.H. Guest, Dropouts: A Review of Research on School Dropouts, reprinted by Pupil Personnel Services, Department of Education, Province of Nova Scotia (Halifax, N.S.: 1964), p. 4.



family, and the community.

It must be stressed that not all potential or actual dropouts behave as in the foregoing; all those forms of behaviour do not appear in all children of this type; some children may, by contrast, become extremely recessive and "go into a shell" in an attempt to hide their failure in school. The characteristics mentioned are those most frequently displayed by children who are not able to find a successful, gratifying outlet for their energy in school work.

Finally, let us examine the views of a psychiatrist, John H. Rohrer, Department of Psychiatry, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., concerning the characteristics of dropouts. He finds that, for the most part, the dropout is one who:

- a) has grown to mistrust other individuals;
- b) has had no significant adult figure to offer him emotional support;
- c) has been inculcated with the most primitive kinds of social values;
- d) has had to turn to peer groups in order to find someone to relate to emotionally;
- e) has developed feelings of isolation that lead to sporadic "acting out" in attempts to obtain these relationships;
- f) has struck back at the perceived sources of frustration--authority figures who have failed him, or former peer groups that have snobbed and enraged him;
- g) has been forced to grow overly dependent upon overcontrolling maternal figures who have not permitted him to develop a feeling of self-reliance;
- h) is seeking out, albeit in an inadequate manner, ways of gratifying his need for affection and maternal warmth.

This attempt at seeking out of emotional warmth is, he feels, most vividly portrayed in the large frequency of dropout due to pregnancy among adolescent girls. In most cases the pregnancy is not the result of sheer lust, but an attempt to get emotional warmth and "closeness" from a second individual.<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing have been summaries of the characteristics of actual and potential dropouts as most frequently observed by such children's teachers and neighbours; these sets of behavioral symptoms were then causally explained by a psychiatrist. Jointly, the characteristics and their explanation present a picture of a student dropout's background and performance in school, as well as in his community, and the role which he frequently (though not always) may start to play in society before he leaves school, and shortly thereafter.

Let us turn next to the effects which the early withdrawal from school will have on the student himself, and on his community. Such a child is seldom passive; in seeking an outlet for the energy which in most children is used up in school and social activities conducive to normal mental, physical and social development of children, he will develop abnormal mental attitudes which will be displayed (in most cases) to the disadvantage of both himself and his community.

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Schreiber (ed.), The School Dropout (Washington: National Education Association of the U. S., 1964), p. 73.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEGENERATING EFFECTS OF EARLY WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL ON STUDENTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

Premature withdrawal from school, except in isolated cases (an example of which will be given later in this section), has been found to have an adverse effect on the student's social development, as well as on his scholastic and vocational progress toward adulthood. And since every student is a potential participant in the total growth of the community in which he is living, this adverse effect will be reflected on his neighbours and his town or city; it will be magnified if a general pattern of high dropout rate has been allowed to develop in the community's schools.

Let us examine first the immediate effects which dropping-out has on the student's attitude toward life, and ways in which he can adjust to his new status; this will be followed by a consideration of the way his earning power is lowered in comparison with that of his peers who continued to progress in school; next we will consider the effect on his intellectual development; finally there will be studied the effects which a prevalent pattern of dropping-out from schools can have on a community.

Attitudes and Adjustment

While there are always exceptions, in general five progressive steps can be noted in the attitudes of students who have dropped out of school. These are as follows:

1. The student is left with a feeling that something has not been completed, even though he did not value highly some or any of the parts of it while it was available to him. This reinforces the feeling of incompetency resultant from his unsuccessful efforts in school.
2. This sense of incompleteness is accompanied by a feeling of rejection by and/or inferiority to those who have previously been his peers. The rejection may not be deliberate, but simply the natural consequence of a change of milieu. The student must therefore move into a new group of peers.
3. This feeling of rejection is followed by compensatory action which is generally revealed in either a self-deprecating attitude, evasion of work and responsibility, or anti-social action which may be either violent or surreptitious. He generally tries to negate the value of education to himself and his peers.
4. He may sometimes (though not always) feel that because he has been rejected by the school, he has therefore been rejected by society as a whole, and even by his family. The intensity and range of this reaction will depend on the sympathy which his family shows toward his new situation in life.
5. A period of readjustment is necessary following the act of dropping out, and it will form the basis for his next venture into the life-stream of his community. This readjustment will move,

him into one of four currents:

- a) He may return to school, following guidance conferences, and possibly psychiatric treatment, with new and more intense motivation to meet the school's standards. (Without such motivation, his cycle of failure would only be repeated).
- b) He may enter either a work-opportunity type of class, or a trades-training school.
- c) He may commence training for a specific trade, if he is old enough, as an apprentice.
- d) He may obtain casual employment of an unskilled nature, and either,
  - (1) remain as unskilled labour;
  - (2) progress to more skilled work with the same employer, learning it "on the job"; or
  - (3) transfer to a similar informal apprentice-type job encountered during his work. (e.g., a concrete-mix truck-driver's helper becoming a carpenter's helper or "rough carpenter").

But no matter what he eventually does, there will be a period of interruption between the time he drops out of school and the time he commences to apply himself to one of the four options above. This may vary from a week or two to a much longer time, depending on the amount of guidance available to him, and the amount of time which his family will tolerate his idleness. While such a period might be called a waste of time, it serves a valuable purpose in that it enables the former student, with assistance from others, to re-assess himself

and "find where he fits". In some cases it could have negative results, should the student make the wrong choice, or rebel against honest, rational assessment of himself, and move into criminality. But, given at least a reasonable amount of sympathetic handling by his family, guidance officers in schools and employment services and others interested in his welfare, the period of readjustment should not be considered a complete loss. It should be counted as a necessary step in the development of a child who intellectually could not keep up in school, or could not adjust himself to the schooling available to him, and whose family did not provide him with sufficient motivation and direction to keep him in school.

A frequent factor in many case histories considered was the tendency by parents to let symptoms of potential dropping-out slip by from day to day with only ineffectual treatment, if any, in the hope that they would "cure themselves".

Isolated, exceptional cases mentioned earlier in this chapter are exemplified by a boy who drops out of school because the academic work is irrelevant to him, is employed by a commercial establishment in a junior capacity, and then by virtue of his own initiative "works up" with the firm until he either dominates it, transfers to a similar one which he can dominate, or creates his own establishment. The critical factor in such a case is generally extreme motivation to financial and social independence.

Dropping out of school can be summarized as being a traumatic experience to the intellectual, emotional, and social growth of most children; its extent, intensity, immediate and end results will vary

with the true causes of his leaving school, and with the sympathy and understanding with which the case is diagnosed and treated. This is the first and most immediate consequence of the occurrence.

Earning Power

A second consequence is that, except in cases where unusual initiative and drive are found in the former student, his lifetime wage-earning power is markedly less than it would have been if he had continued through secondary school. This is shown by the following table taken from the statistics of the 1961 census of Canada.

TABLE 1

WAGE-EARNERS, 15 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, BY SCHOOLING,  
AGE GROUP AND SEX, SHOWING AVERAGE EARNINGS,  
JUNE 1, 1961, FOR CANADA

Schooling, age and sex	Average earnings
MALES	\$
1 ELEMENTARY . . . . .	2,964
2 15 - 19 years . . . . .	1,123
3 20 - 24 years . . . . .	2,156
4 25 - 34 years . . . . .	3,035
5 35 - 44 years . . . . .	3,312
6 45 - 54 years . . . . .	3,285
7 55 - 64 years . . . . .	3,168
8 65 years and over . . . . .	2,360
9 SECONDARY . . . . .	3,911
10 15 - 19 years . . . . .	1,178
11 20 - 24 years . . . . .	2,787
12 25 - 34 years . . . . .	4,116
13 35 - 44 years . . . . .	4,677
14 45 - 54 years . . . . .	4,778
15 55 - 64 years . . . . .	4,562
16 65 years and over . . . . .	3,396

TABLE 1--Continued

Schooling, age and sex	Average earnings
17 UNIVERSITY . . . . .	5,699
18 15 - 19 years . . . . .	755
19 20 - 24 years . . . . .	2,255
20 25 - 34 years . . . . .	5,408
21 35 - 44 years . . . . .	7,122
22 45 - 54 years . . . . .	7,372
23 55 - 64 years . . . . .	7,031
24 65 years and over . . . . .	5,177
FEMALES	
25 ELEMENTARY . . . . .	1,449
26 15 - 19 years . . . . .	954
27 20 - 24 years . . . . .	1,394
28 25 - 34 years . . . . .	1,550
29 35 - 44 years . . . . .	1,560
30 45 - 54 years . . . . .	1,575
31 55 - 64 years . . . . .	1,518
32 65 years and over . . . . .	1,188
33 SECONDARY . . . . .	2,078
34 15 - 19 years . . . . .	1,226
35 20 - 24 years . . . . .	2,108
36 25 - 34 years . . . . .	2,291
37 35 - 44 years . . . . .	2,227
38 45 - 54 years . . . . .	2,353
39 55 - 64 years . . . . .	2,434
40 65 years and over . . . . .	1,846
41 UNIVERSITY . . . . .	3,257
42 15 - 19 years . . . . .	862
43 20 - 24 years . . . . .	2,413
44 25 - 34 years . . . . .	3,399
45 35 - 44 years . . . . .	3,682
46 45 - 54 years . . . . .	4,080
47 55 - 64 years . . . . .	4,186
48 65 years and over . . . . .	2,812

Taken from Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, Labour Force; Earnings of Wage Earners by Schooling and Age (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1964), Bulletin 3.3-5, p. 17-1.



In the case of males, there is a marked increase in earning power of secondary school graduates over students who left school after completing only part or all of the elementary school course of study; this superiority carries on all through life. University students and recent graduates in the 15 - 24 year categories earn less on the average than their secondary school counterparts, but in the next age bracket (25 - 34 years), the university graduates earn more; this latter trend continues through the balance of their working days. All of the foregoing applies to females, except that those of 20 - 24 years with university training earn more than their secondary school counterparts, although those of 15 - 19 years earn less.

In 1962, the Department of Labour published a conclusion that each year of secondary school education added \$238 to a young man's annual income, and that matriculation alone added \$466 per annum.<sup>1</sup>

To illustrate further the relationship between education and earnings, the following is a statistical breakdown of earnings in relation to schooling for 1961, for non-farm population. Sample data were collected from every fifth non-farm private household in each of approximately 31,000 enumeration areas, from those of 15 years of age and over.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Labour, Canada (No title); Information Branch Training Circular 5 - 62 (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1962).

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, Population Sample, Incomes of Individuals, Bulletin 4.1-1.

TABLE 2

AVERAGE INCOME BY SIZE FOR THE NON-FARM POPULATION,  
BY SEX AND SCHOOLING, FOR CANADA,  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1961\*

Schooling	Males	Females
No schooling	\$1715	\$ 888
Kindergarten and elementary	3134	1247
Secondary, 1 - 3 years	3943	1589
Secondary, 4 - 5 years	4825	2080
Some university	4995	2535
University degree	9048	3384

\*Taken from Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, General Review; Educational Levels and School Attendance (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1965), Bulletin 7.1-10, p. 10-30.

From the foregoing, the loss of earning power among those who left school before completing their terminal year is obvious. This is the second consequence of dropping-out of school; once the average dropout has become part of the regular labour force, it can be rectified only by attendance at a supplementary school such as night-school, or through training offered by an employer to increase the value of the employee to himself; only the exceptional dropout can afford to cease being an employee in order to return to full-time studies which will raise him to the status of a secondary school or university graduate.

### Intellectual Development

Let us now turn to the effects which leaving school prematurely have on the child's intellectual development. The following are the more prominent ones:

- a) The failure to master more than the basic skills of reading, writing and calculation;
- b) The limiting of the student to a very restricted social horizon because of lack of knowledge of history, geography, and civics;
- c) Restriction of his knowledge of health "rules" and conduct, and the reasons for them, to those of a child;
- d) Lack of familiarity with any language except his own vernacular, and of any foreign country, except as he may assimilate knowledge of doubtful authenticity through haphazard reading of periodicals designed for his intellectual level;
- e) Little familiarity with science except as he may encounter it in his daily work, living, and recreation;
- f) Practically complete unfamiliarity with literature, its characters and thoughts;
- g) Most likely complete lack of training in music appreciation and art.

Each of these limitations of intellectual development will have a deleterious effect on the dropout's economic, social, and cultural life, by restricting his range of knowledge to his own immediate circle of acquaintances and daily experiences. Unless as an adult he undertakes further study, his range of potential occupations will be limited to the simplest, and the least specialized, and the most poorly paid.

The following are the three principal effects which dropping-out of school has on the student:

- a) the creation of emotional disturbances which will prevent him from assessing himself correctly in accordance with the standards of his community, and which may produce in him abnormal attitudes toward society as a whole. Unless he returns to school, he will have to adjust himself to a new role in society and the economy.
- b) financial retardation through loss of wage-earning power, which, if not remedied by out-of-school study, will effect his future life, and that of his future family.
- c) restriction of intellectual and cultural life to that of approximately his last grade in school.

Now let us turn to the effects which numerous dropouts can have on a community.

The total effect of leaving school prematurely on the individual dropout, except in exceptional cases, is a degenerating one, just as each of the separate results previously mentioned tend to lower his status in employment, in social and in cultural life. But the effects of his dropping-out do not stop in himself; they also effect, to a small extent at least, his community. And if the dropping-out is part of a general pattern of early school leaving in that community's schools (as is frequently the case), the results will be impressed on the whole area.

It has been proven conclusively that most school dropouts are the children of former dropouts,<sup>1</sup> and if a cycle of non-completion of

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph C. Bledsoe, "An Investigation of Six Correlates of Student Withdrawal from High School," Journal of Educational Research, 53:3-6 (September, 1959).

school starts to operate in any given area, a low socio-economic stratum of society will start to form; in this medium there will be incubated a self-perpetuating educational occurrence which may spread like a blight, even to adjacent areas. A low standard, or community average of education will lead to low productivity economically, which in its turn will produce a loss of earning power, and hence a loss of purchasing power. Education will, in one or two generations, tend to be looked down upon, or at best thought to be a matter of little importance; this will be followed by loss of faith in and respect for the community political organization which is vested with the authority for schools; from here, the loss of faith will spread to include all community-established organizations, including the police force. Community action groups will be difficult to form, and slow to act, since the less well-educated do not find working co-operatively an easy or a satisfying thing. Recreation will become far more consumptive than productive, architecture will become polyglot, and community arrangement or zoning will be haphazard.

Thus it can be seen that the total effect of a regular occurrence of student dropouts in a community can have just as degenerating an effect on that community as does the act of dropping-out have on a single student. In both cases, economic productivity is decreased, purchasing power is limited, and the cultural and social values are kept down to the level of the grades where dropout rate started to rise above ten percent. And, unless there is an influx of more highly educated population into a community where dropouts are predominant, that community will tend to look at the area in which it is located as an immature

adolescent would, thus establishing a community tone of self-centeredness, and defensive hostility toward the rest of the world.

### CHAPTER III

#### A SURVEY OF STATISTICS CONCERNING SCHOOL DROPOUTS IN CANADA, 1961 - 1962

The problem of school dropouts is general throughout all major areas of Canada, although the rate of withdrawal varies among the provinces. In order to examine the extent of this occurrence, and to draw conclusions from figures assembled from the records of each province by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, four steps will be taken. First, a comparison will be made of the total 5 - 19 year population as recorded in the last seven censuses with the school population of the same age group, over the same period of time in order to indicate the percentage of youth attending school. Next, in order to study more closely the incidence of those not attending, and the variations among provinces in this regard, statistics for the two most recent censuses will be broken down into smaller age groups by provinces. Then national school enrolment figures will be used as the basis for an analysis of dropouts by grades. Finally, a more detailed analysis of the statistics of the last (1961) census will be made by grade-groups, and these figures will be compared as among provinces, on a percentage basis. It is hoped that in this way a picture will be given of the status of Nova Scotia with regard to

school retention, as compared with other provinces, and with the national average.

The total enrolment of students in elementary and secondary schools, for Canada, and the percentage which that number forms of the total 5 - 19 year old population, are shown below, indicating both the substantial increase in population over the past sixty years, and the rise of rate of school enrolment.

TABLE 3

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF THE POPULATION 5 - 19 YEARS OF AGE  
ATTENDING SCHOOL, FOR CANADA, 1901 - 1961\*

Year	Total Population, 5 - 19 years	Number Enrolled	Per Cent
1901	1,745,521	892,831	51.1
1911	2,161,217	1,144,184	52.9
1921	2,761,092	1,694,430	61.4
1931	3,242,213	2,128,907	65.7
1941	3,261,997	2,131,567	65.3
1951	3,580,083	2,386,780	66.7
1961	5,357,331	4,198,165	78.4

From these statistics, it can be seen that while the total population which might be expected to be in school has more than trebled, the number actually enrolled has been increased approximately five times. An increase of over 50 percent has been recorded in the percentage.

\*Taken from Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, General Review; Educational Levels and School Attendance (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1965), Bulletin 7.1-10, p. 10-3.



enrolment. In other words, there has been incomplete schooling in Canada since 1901, but the proportion which dropouts form of the total population in the 5 - 19 year age group has diminished each ten years, with the exception of 1941. From Table 3 it can be deduced that the increase in school enrolment was due to the increased holding power of the schools, as well as increased birthrate, since the total school enrolment increased more rapidly than did the total population.

Let us proceed now to the second step of the analysis of school attendance figures, that of breaking down the enrolment statistics of the two most recent censuses into smaller age groups, by provinces. This is done in Table 4, and it will show the percentage of each of the smaller age-subdivisions which is attending school; a comparison of these percentages will show in which age-brackets dropouts occur to the greatest extent.

From Table 4 it can be readily seen that, once students move into the 15 - 19 year age group, there is a strong probability that many of them will drop out of school; the proportion who may be expected to do so will vary among the provinces, those from Ontario westward exhibiting greater tendency to remain in school than do those from the five more easterly provinces.

The high percentage rate of population in the 10 - 14 year age range attending school, as compared with the percentage attending in the 5 - 9 year age range, is explained by the fact that school attendance is compulsory in the former category; in the latter, attendance is not compulsory until an age of six years has been reached; some areas permit attendance at an age of five years, but this is optional.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION 5 - 19 YEARS OF AGE ATTENDING SCHOOL, BY PROVINCE AND AGE GROUPS, 1961 AND 1951\*

Province and Year		Age Group			
		5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	Total 5 - 19
Newfoundland	1961	74.5	96.4	51.7	76.3
	1951	65.0	94.6	38.4	67.3
Prince Edward Island	1961	71.2	97.2	55.5	76.6
	1951	68.5	96.1	40.0	69.2
Nova Scotia	1961	83.0	97.1	57.3	80.7
	1951	73.6	94.9	45.2	72.4
New Brunswick	1961	68.9	97.0	56.7	75.8
	1951	63.4	94.0	40.6	66.9
Quebec	1961	69.5	96.4	50.1	73.3
	1951	60.2	89.5	29.9	60.5
Ontario	1961	82.2	97.5	62.9	82.6
	1951	69.8	94.0	43.7	69.4
Manitoba	1961	75.9	97.6	62.1	79.7
	1951	66.3	95.0	44.0	68.4
Saskatchewan	1961	71.4	96.9	65.5	78.6
	1951	64.6	96.2	49.8	69.5
Alberta	1961	71.5	97.9	65.8	78.9
	1951	64.1	95.8	50.3	69.0
British Columbia	1961	74.3	97.6	68.0	80.7
	1951	65.2	94.9	52.0	70.6
Yukon & N.W.T.	1961	60.0	82.5	42.0	63.4
	1951	31.2	44.5	13.3	29.4
Canada	1961	75.3	97.1	58.5	77.3
	1951	65.1	93.0	40.4	66.7

\*Taken from Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, Survey of Elementary and Secondary Education, (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1964, Bulletin 01-210, p. 24.

Although school ceases to be compulsory in the 15 - 19 year age range, and although in 1961 family allowance benefits ceased to be paid during the same range, there is a conspicuous rise in percentage attendance in that age-group from 1951 to 1961. This is undoubtedly the result of social and economic pressure on students and their families to have the children remain in school as long as possible; it was paralleled by the establishment in all provinces of many, and more extensive vocational training courses, "streaming" of grades according to student ability, the addition of "general" (as opposed to purely academic) courses, and better and more comprehensive testing and guidance services.

It should be pointed out here that not all children in the 5 - 19 year age group attend school. Some children attend before the compulsory school attendance age is reached, and others remain after they are legally permitted to leave school; the numbers of such children vary with provincial education regulations, with the pre-Grade 1 school courses which are offered, and with the terminal courses given in high school. Table 5 is a summary of compulsory school attendance ages, as of 1941.

Nova Scotia's 1961 percentage of students in that age-group is very close to the national average, showing only 1.2 percent less; in 1951, the percentage was well above the national average. The provincial increase in the 10-year span was only 12.1 percent, whereas the national increase was 18.1 percent. This indicates that the holding power of Nova Scotia's schools did not increase in the ten years from 1951 to 1961 to the same extent as did the national average holding power.

TABLE 5  
COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE\*

Province	Age Group
Newfoundland	7 - 15 years
Prince Edward Island	7 - 15 years
Nova Scotia	6 - 16 years, urban; 6 - 14 rural
New Brunswick	7 - 16 years, urban; 7 - 14, rural optional
Quebec	6 - 15 years
Ontario	6 - 16 years; 6 - 14 if in agriculture
Manitoba	7 - 14 years
Saskatchewan	7 - 15 years
Alberta	7 - 15 years
British Columbia	7 - 15 years

In the third step of this statistical study, let us examine an analysis of national student enrolment in the same age-range (5 - 19 years) by grades, in order to find at what grade the withdrawals start appearing frequently. In order to do this, let us turn to Table 6; this Table is a simplification of statistics provided by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, being reduced to terms of hundreds of students; this has been done so that the fall-off of enrolment through the grades may be more readily discerned. Students in pre-Grade 1 classes have been omitted, since these classes do not appear similarly in all provinces.

\*Taken from Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, Survey of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1961-1962 (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1964), Bulletin 81-210, p. 28.

TOTAL ENROLMENT, BY PROVINCES AND GRADE, 1961-62,  
IN HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS, TO THE NEAREST HUNDRED<sup>a</sup>

Province	Grade												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13 <sup>b</sup>
Newfoundland	158	147	141	141	133	126	118	104	101	65	43	1	..
P. E. I.	30	28	27	25	26	26	24	24	21	17	8	6	..
Nova Scotia	183	184	183	176	172	174	174	156	133	99	71	35	1
New Brunswick	178	166	164	160	160	150	156	137	113	83	59	40	6
Quebec	1439	1413	1402	1401	1303	1264	1097	1085	807	632	453	74	5
Ontario	1559	1462	1375	1278	1247	1195	1195	1118	1173	883	583	472	237
Manitoba	232	215	206	196	194	181	186	168	169	129	109	60	..
Saskatchewan	248	237	222	209	206	190	197	181	181	138	108	93	..
Alberta	366	348	320	308	281	271	269	258	250	189	153	158	1
Br. Columbia	399	374	357	339	319	310	319	311	294	236	179	145	21
Yukon	5	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	..
Western Arctic	7	6	5	5	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	..
Eastern Arctic	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	..
Overseas (DND)	11	9	8	7	6	6	6	5	5	3	2	1	1
Canada	4818	4593	4414	4252	4060	3900	3745	3552	3249	2475	1768	1087	272
Percentage decrease by grades	0	4.7%	3.9%	3.7%	4.5%	3.9%	3.9%	5.2%	8.5%	23.8%	28.6%	32.3%	74.9%

<sup>a</sup> Taken from Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, Survey of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1961 - 1962 (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1964), Bulletin 81-210, p. 32.

<sup>b</sup> Blank spaces indicate Grade 13 not offered.

From this chart of enrolment by grade, two things are apparent:

- 1) There is only a comparatively slight loss of students before the end of Grade 8; following that, there is in most provinces a steadily increasing rate of withdrawal through Grade 12. On a national average, the Grade 12 enrolment is 22.5 percent of the Grade 1 enrolment. (Allowance should be made for the fact that the current Grade 12's original Grade 1, 12 years previous, was likely smaller than the current Grade 1).
- 2) The higher the high school grade-level, the greater is the increase in the rate of withdrawal. From this it can be deduced that the higher the grade is in the school program, the less attractive it is to the student body. This may be because of student intellectual ability; because of the course itself; because of counter-attractions such as employment or marriage, which may provide more potent motivation than does the school system; or because of a combination of any of these three factors.

Having seen the enrolment figures for Canada, by provinces and by grades in the 5 - 19 year age-group, and the percentage decrease from grade to grade, let us examine what such dropping-out from the courses of studies provided by the various provinces had, by 1961, done to the educational attainment of Canadian youth in the 15 - 19 year age bracket. This group has been selected since it is the incipient national labour force for the next decade, as well as the principal source of students for the universities. Since there is such a wide variation in population among the provinces, a clear comparison between provinces, and with the national averages, can be made only in terms of

percentage. From such comparisons, a rating of the holding-power of Nova Scotian schools can be established, before a detailed study is made of dropouts occurring in it.

Table 7, following, is an analysis of schooling achieved in the year of the last census, 1961, by provinces; it gives the total population of the age-group by provinces, the total number within the group attending school at all levels, and the percent attending school. Those at each level are expressed as a percentage of the total provincial population of the 15 - 19 year age-group. It comprises the most recent data available, being published in November, 1965.

From this table, two sets of conclusions will be drawn: first, those relating to Canada as a whole, and second, those relating solely to Nova Scotia.

The national summary of education as presented by this Table shows that while only .5 percent of Canadian youth had, by 1961, received no formal schooling, 16.1 percent had not continued in school past Grade 8; it is reasonable to assume that some of these latter did not reach Grade 8 level. Since the compulsory school attendance span for most provinces is from 6 or 7 years to 15 or 16 years of age, those students who completed their compulsory years of schooling and covered eight grades must have repeated one or more grades of school; those who passed through fewer than eight grades would have had to repeat a proportionally greater number of grades. (The only exceptions to the foregoing would be rural students who were first enrolled at 7 years of age and permitted to leave school at 14 years of age).

TABLE 7

SCHOOLING OF THE 15 - 19 AGE GROUP (1961 CENSUS)  
IN THE CANADIAN PROVINCES\*

15 - 19 Age Group	Nfld.	P.E.I.	N. S.	N. B.
1) Total population in group	43,829	8,875	64,239	53,514
2) Total attending school	22,647	4,927	36,789	30,347
Percent 1) is of 2)	52	56	57	57
Per Cent				
a) Attending, attended, or graduated university	2.0	2.9	2.9	2.0
b) Out of school; last grade attended was 12 or 13	2.3	4.1	4.1	4.8
c) Attending secondary school (Gr. 9-12 or 13)	37.3	43.0	41.5	42.1
d) Out of school; last grade attended was 9, 10 or 11	23.9	19.5	20.0	14.4
e) Attending elementary school (Gr. 1 - 8)	13.1	10.1	13.3	12.9
f) Out of school--not proceeding to full elementary standing	20.8	20.0	17.8	23.2
g) No formal schooling	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6

\*Taken from Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, Preliminary Statistics of Education, (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1965), Report 81-201, p. 54.



TABLE 7--Continued

Quebec	Ontario	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B. C.	National
467,426	436,883	70,808	72,864	99,004	112,653	1,430,095
234,137	275,005	43,959	47,738	65,102	76,598	837,249
50	63	62	66	66	68	59.7
2.7	1.7	3.8	3.0	3.0	4.1	2.8
6.4	5.9	5.4	5.6	6.2	8.2	5.3
38.5	53.8	50.3	54.6	55.0	58.1	47.4
17.3	19.3	18.4	15.5	17.2	15.8	18.1
9.3	7.6	8.6	8.3	8.2	6.4	9.8
25.3	11.3	13.2	12.5	10.0	7.1	16.1
0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5

The occurrence of grade "repeating" is even more clearly shown in the 9.8 percent of the same age group who (although at least 15 years of age) were still attending at Grade 8 level, or lower. This percentage of the age group represents approximately 82,050.4 boys and girls. What induced them to remain in school at Grade 8 or lower level at an age of 15 years or more is not known; the normal age for Grade 8 is 13-14 years, this being 8 years beyond the start of compulsory schooling. These two groups of students together represent 25.9 percent of the total age group.

While the necessity for a student to repeat one grade out of 12 is not unusual, and may be attributed to circumstances outside the school such as illness or migration, the fact that he has to repeat more than one is generally an indication that either he is not suited to the schooling offered to the general population of school age, or that the school is not suited to him. If his repeating of grades is confined to the elementary level, the conclusion is more obviously inescapable. In either case, 62.1 percent of such repeating students did not continue in school any longer than they had to, by law. They became elementary school dropouts, in most cases eligible only for unskilled labor. It is likely that most of the other 15 - 19 year elementary students would soon join them.

An additional 18.1 percent of the total age group attended some form of secondary school, but had left during the time they were enrolled in either Grade 9, 10 or 11. (This would include those who completed one of these grades, but did not return to school for the next year, as well as those who dropped out during the school term). This percentage represents approximately 151,542.1 students who had

received the minimal schooling required to enter a trade as an apprentice, and to do their vocational training "on the job". The type of work which they could undertake would be controlled by the last grade which they had completed; this measure of their ability could be raised by "night-school" or other supplementary academic work, which in most cases would have to be done in their free time.

To summarize the foregoing, 26.4 percent of the total age group had not progressed in school beyond Grade 8, and would likely become unskilled labor; the 18.1 percent who had attended some high school grades would be eligible for some form of apprentice or trades-training work. By combining these two groups, it can be seen that 44.5 percent of the 15 - 19 year group (372,575.8 students) can all be considered as school dropouts, since none of them entered Grade 12, the terminal or next-to-terminal year in all provinces.

From Table 7 it can also be seen that an additional 47.4 percent of the age group were still attending secondary school. But only 5.3 percent could be expected to attend either Grade 12 or 13, according to students in category "b" in the same table. Hence it can be deduced that 94.7 percent of these students failed to take advantage of the complete educational facilities offered by their various provinces, in 1961. How many of these were involuntary dropouts, and how many were voluntary, is not known.

Let us turn next to corresponding statistics for the Province of Nova Scotia, in order to ascertain how its dropout situation in the same year compared with the national average.

The proportion of Nova Scotians in the 15 - 19 year age group who had received no formal schooling was less than the national average, but the percentage who were not successful in completing full elementary standing before leaving school was slightly higher, being 17.8 as compared with 16.1. The percentage still attending elementary school was approximately 35 percent higher, which also indicates a lower degree of success in these grades than does the national average. The percentage who had left school after last attending either Grade 9, 10 or 11 was slightly higher than all provinces except one, and the proportion attending secondary school was approximately 12 percent less. The proportion who had left school after last attending Grade 12 was 22 percent less than the national average, although those who were attending, had attended or had graduated from university was, pro rata, slightly higher than the national average. In general, then, the rate of success in school as indicated by promotion from grade to grade was below the national average, and the proportion of dropouts from Grades 9 to 11 was above it. The proportion who attended Grade 12 was also below the national average, whereas the number enrolled at universities was above. This may be explained by the fact that at that time admission could be gained to Nova Scotian universities with a Grade 11 certificate.

In all of the foregoing, it should be remembered that the statistics refer only to public school systems, as organized and directed by the respective provincial governments. They do not include private schools or courses of training outside the school.

system, such as schools for stenography and business practise, courses for training of nurses and nurses' aides, teacher-training institutions, technical and trade schools, colleges and universities.

Having thus established Nova Scotia's comparative standing in the national statistics concerning public schooling received by the 15 - 19 year age group, let us now proceed to a more detailed study of the retention of students in the public schools of that province as set out in the records of the Provincial Department of Education, and the destinations of those who have withdrawn from the schools.

CHAPTER IV  
A SURVEY OF STATISTICS CONCERNING  
SCHOOL DROPOUTS IN NOVA SCOTIA

In studying the problem of school dropouts in Nova Scotia, a statement will first be made of the distribution of students throughout the province, by counties, and by urban and rural areas of those counties, in order to establish whether the dominant mode of life in each county is urban or rural. This will be followed by an examination of the student withdrawal rate for each county, or municipality within a county, and by a discussion of factors contributing to the withdrawal rate. Finally, an exploration will be made into the destinations of student withdrawals before their terminal year, as set forth in the records of the Provincial Department of Education. In the three phases of the work, records of the nine eastern counties of Cumberland, Colchester, Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough, Richmond, Cape Breton, Inverness and Victoria will, if possible, be compared with the remainder of the province, namely, the counties of Halifax, Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne, Yarmouth, Digby, Annapolis, Kings and Hants. It will be noted that the western nine counties are divided into fifteen municipalities: Annapolis, Argyle, Barrington, Chester, Clare, Digby, Halifax, Hants East, Hants West, Kings, Lunenburg, Queens, St. Mary's, Shelburne and Yarmouth. The study will cover the two school years of

1961-62 and 1962-63, these being the last two years for which student retention rates have been established by counties for each grade in the school system from 3 to 12.

Through this study it is hoped to ascertain whether or not there is a consistent pattern in the occurrence of student withdrawals before the terminal year in the urban schools and in the rural and village schools, or if there are different patterns in the two types of schools. A pattern of withdrawals may form around the withdrawal rate at various grade levels, and it may be shown to be greater at those grade levels in some counties than in others, or in one area than another. If a pattern does become evident, it may be possible through it to designate one thing or another related to the school system as a factor associated with dropping-out in a significant number of schools. It is also the purpose of this study to try to discover through the destinations of students who leave school before their terminal year, one or more reasons why appreciable numbers of such students leave school before they have completed their province's prescribed program. If such reasons are evident, they may form the foundation for remedial action which may be taken to reduce the number of dropouts throughout the province.

#### Distribution of Students

The Provincial Department of Education in classifying students for statistical purposes, separates them into two main divisions, those attending rural and village schools, and those attending urban schools. This classification will be followed throughout this study. For administrative purposes related to school attendance, the Department

groups the schools into municipalities, some of which comprise whole counties, and some of which include only part of a county.

In order to compare the school enrolment records of the nine eastern counties mentioned in the title with those of the remainder of the province, their municipalities will be arranged into eastern and western areas, to correspond with the counties in those areas.

The school population of Nova Scotia during the school years of 1961-62 and 1962-63, if divided according to the limits of the eastern nine counties and the western nine, will be found to be slightly denser in the western areas; they held 54.9 percent of the children, while the eastern part of the province contained 45.1 percent, as shown in Table 8, "School Population of Nova Scotia in Eastern and Western Counties, During the School Years of 1962 and 1963". The eastern counties had 53.0 percent of their children in urban schools, and 47.0 percent in rural and village schools during both years; in the western counties, 42.6 percent of the children were in urban schools, and 57.4 percent in rural and village schools in 1962; in 1963 these latter figures were 42.3 and 57.7 percent respectively. There was no significant movement of population during the two academic years from urban to rural and village schools, or vice versa. The eastern nine counties, then, were less numerous in population, but more urbanized than the western nine.



TABLE 8

SCHOOL POPULATION OF NOVA SCOTIA IN EASTERN AND WESTERN COUNTIES, DURING THE SCHOOL YEARS, 1962 AND 1963

School Year	Urban	Rural and Village	Total
Eastern Counties			
1962 . . . . .	44023	39621	83644
1963 . . . . .	44545	39984	84529
Western Counties			
1962 . . . . .	43610	58162	101772
1963 . . . . .	44617	60459	105076
Totals			
1962 . . . . .	87633	97783	185416
1963 . . . . .	89162	100443	189605
Vocational Schools			
1962 . . . . .	..	..	910
1963 . . . . .	..	..	922
Totals Including Vocational Schools			
1962 . . . . .	..	..	186326
1963 . . . . .	..	..	190527

Let us now turn to a detailed examination of the distribution of the school population as it occurs in the two main areas with which we are concerned, the nine counties at the eastern and western ends of the province. Enrolment figures taken from the Annual Reports of the Provincial Department of Education have been rearranged so that they could be grouped according to these areas. Schools in the urban areas of each county or municipality have been grouped together, as have those for rural and village schools; designation of schools into one category or the other has been adopted from the same Reports. Statistics have been compiled from the school years of 1962 and 1963 in order to synchronize these figures with the arrangement of withdrawal rates as set out by the Department as closely as possible. They are set out as follows in Table 9.

TABLE 9

DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL POPULATION BY COUNTIES,  
AND TYPE OF SCHOOL, FOR SCHOOL YEARS  
1962 AND 1963

Area	County	Year	Urban Schools	Rural and Village Schools	Muni- cipal Total
Eastern Nine Counties	Antigonish	1962	1055	3360	4415
		1963	1104	3298	4402
	Cape Breton	1962	26380	11258	37638
		1963	26625	11485	38110
	Colchester	1962	2977	5505	8482
		1963	3009	5464	8473
	Cumberland	1962	5481	3533	9014
		1963	5594	3543	9137
	Guysborough	1962	680	2035	2715
		1963	701	2042	2743
	Inverness	1962	1198	4346	5544
		1963	1335	4386	5721
	Pictou	1962	6252	4270	10522
		1963	6177	4401	10578
	Richmond	1962	..	3202	3202
		1963	..	3220	3220
	Victoria	1962	..	2112	2112
		1963	..	2145	2145
Total		1962	44023	39621	83644
		1963	44545	39984	84529
Western Nine Counties (by Municip- alities)	Annapolis	1962	2727	2594	5321
		1963	2857	2585	5442
	Argyle	1962	..	2031	2031
		1963	..	1988	1988

TABLE 9--Continued

Area	County	Year	Urban Schools	Rural and Village Schools	Muni- cipal Total
	Barrington	1962	• •	1670	1670
		1963	• •	1752	1752
	Chester	1962	• •	1764	1764
		1963	• •	1855	1855
	Clare	1962	• •	2143	2143
		1963	• •	2145	2145
	Digby	1962	1475	1640	3115
		1963	1523	1592	3115
	Halifax	1962	29101	22231	51332
		1963	29591	24029	53620
	Hants East	1962	• •	3165	3165
		1963	• •	3281	3281
	Hants West	1962	1630	2519	4149
		1963	1687	2513	4200
	Kings	1962	1965	8721	10686
		1963	1991	8992	10983
	Lunenburg	1962	2010	4190	6200
		1963	2040	4256	6296
	Queens	1962	1274	2155	3429
		1963	1288	2162	3450
	St. Mary's	1962	• •	797	797
		1963	• •	803	803
	Shelburne	1962	1515	807	2322
		1963	1601	777	2378
	Yarmouth	1962	1913	1735	3648
		1963	2039	1729	3768
	<b>Total</b>	1962	43610	58162	101772
		1963	44617	61459	105076

In the foregoing tables, it will be seen that the grand total of the two municipal totals does not equal the total provincial enrolment figures of the annual reports of the Department for 1962 and 1963. If the figures of 910 Vocational Students in 1962, and 922 Vocational Students in 1963 are added, the totals will then agree; these students are listed in the annual reports separately from those of academic schools.

In the case of the eastern area of the province, it will be noted that although the students of the urban schools outnumber those attending the rural and village schools, the area as a whole should be considered principally rural since in six of the nine counties (municipalities), the population of the rural schools is greater than those of the urban. In the western area, the totals of students enrolled show a preponderance in favor of rural and village schools, and as well there are 11 of the fifteen municipalities which show more rural and village pupils than urban. Allowance should be made for the fact that a large proportion of the rural and village school population of Halifax County is included in the suburban areas of Spryfield, Halifax West, Fairview, Rockingham and Bedford, which are not "rural" in the generally accepted sense of the word, although they are located outside the boundaries of Halifax. The suburban areas of Woodside, Imperoyal, Westphal, and Port Wallis are included with Dartmouth as "urban", since they were amalgamated with that town in 1961.

Table 10 is a tabulation of the dominant type of schools in each municipality.

TABLE 10

DOMINANT TYPES OF SCHOOLS IN NOVA SCOTIAN MUNICIPALITIES  
FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS OF 1962 AND 1963

Area	Urban Schools	Rural and Village Schools
Eastern Nine Counties	Cape Breton Cumberland Pictou	Antigonish Colchester Guysborough Inverness Richmond St. Mary's Victoria
Western Nine Counties (by Municipalities)	Annapolis Halifax Shelburne Yarmouth	Argyle Barrington Chester Clare Digby Hants East Hants West Kings Lunenburg Queens

Having set out the foregoing statistics in order to locate within the province the distribution of the school population, and the dominant type of culture to be found in each county, let us now turn to the withdrawal rates of students from the schools of the province as a whole, and from those of each county.

Student Withdrawal Rates

Statistics concerning student withdrawals from the public schools of the province are maintained by the Provincial Department of Education on a cumulative basis, annually, so that the student enrolment of any Grade 3 can be followed through the subsequent eight

years of its progress until Grade 11 is reached. (Statistics for Grades 1 and 2 are not considered relevant in this matter). For each year there is listed the current membership in the grade, as well as the percentage of the enrolment of the original Grade 3 which is still attending school in the county or municipality. This percentage is the retention rate for the grade for that year. By subtracting this retention rate from 100, it is possible to obtain a withdrawal rate for any grade in any county or municipality for any year. By averaging these withdrawal rates over the eight subsequent "years of life" of the grade, there can be established an index of the academic attrition of the grade; this index can then be compared with a similar rating for a corresponding grade in any county or municipality, and for the same grade throughout the province as a whole, or any area of it.

Let us first consider these retention and withdrawal rates from the point of view of statistics for the whole province. As in the case of the enrolment records, they will be confined to the academic years of 1962 and 1963. From Table 11, "Student Retention and Withdrawal Rates for All Public Schools in Nova Scotia, School Years of 1962 and 1963", it can be seen that the student withdrawal rate increased from year to year in Grades 6, 8 and 9, but remained constant or decreased in all other grades. As in the national statistics in Chapter 3, a sharp falling-off can be noted, commencing at Grade 8, and increasing in each subsequent grade.

Next, let us analyze the same rates for the two major areas with which we are concerned in this study, the eastern and western nine counties, in order to see in what respects they varied from the

provincial averages. Statistics for this purpose are set out in Table 12.

TABLE 11  
STUDENT RETENTION AND WITHDRAWAL RATES  
FOR ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NOVA SCOTIA,  
SCHOOL YEARS OF 1962 AND 1963

Year	Grade									
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Avg.
Retention Rates										
1962	100	98.4	95.9	94.7	93.5	84.1	75.2	61.4	48.7	83.5
1963	100	99.4	95.9	94.6	94.3	82.1	71.9	62.0	52.0	83.6
Withdrawal Rates										
1962	. .	1.6	4.1	5.3	6.5	15.9	24.8	38.6	51.3	16.5
1963	. .	0.6	4.1	5.4	5.7	17.9	28.1	38.0	48.0	16.4
Differential										
Increase	. .	. .	. .	0.1	. .	2.0	3.3	. .	. .	. .
Decrease	. .	1.0	. .	. .	0.8	. .	. .	0.6	3.3	0.1

From Table 12 it can be learned that while there was the same horizontal pattern of increasing withdrawal rates from grade to grade as in the provincial record, there was a marked difference between the two areas in their withdrawal rates in certain grades. During the two school years under study, the withdrawal rate in the eastern counties increased in two grades, while in the western counties it did not



STUDENT RETENTION AND WITHDRAWAL RATES FROM EASTERN AND WESTERN COUNTIES, SCHOOL YEARS OF 1962 AND 1963

		Grade										
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	AVG.	
Eastern Counties												
Retention Rates												
1962	100	94.2	97.1	92.6	89.8	82.1	75.0	58.2	52.1	81.6		
1963	100	103.7	96.2	93.9	94.3	84.0	69.0	63.0	56.9	84.6		
Withdrawal Rates												
1962	::	5.8	2.9	7.4	10.2	17.9	25.0	41.8	47.9	18.4		
1963	::	-3.7	3.8	6.1	5.7	16.0	31.0	37.0	43.1	15.4		
Increase	::	::	0.9	::	::	::	6.0	::	::	::		
Decrease	::	9.5	::	1.3	4.5	1.9	::	4.8	4.8	3.0		
Western Counties												
Retention Rates												
1962	100	97.7	98.1	96.5	94.3	82.0	73.1	56.6	43.8	83.1		
1963	100	106.8	102.0	101.7	101.3	85.4	76.1	61.9	57.1	88.0		
Withdrawal Rates												
1962	::	2.3	1.9	3.5	5.7	18.0	26.9	43.4	56.2	16.9		
1963	::	-6.8	-2.0	-1.7	-1.3	14.6	23.9	38.1	42.9	12.0		
Increase	::	::	3.9	5.2	7.0	3.4	3.0	5.3	13.3	4.9		
Decrease	::	9.1	3.9	5.2	7.0	3.4	3.0	5.3	13.3	4.9		

increase in any. The average decrease per grade in the eastern counties was 3.0 percent, but in the western ones the rate of decrease was over 50 percent greater, being 4.9 percent. In the eastern counties, the greatest decrease in dropout rate was in Grade 4 at 9.5 percent, with Grades 7, 10 and 11 showing only about half as great a reduction. Among the western counties, the greatest change occurred in Grade 11, which normally experiences one of the heaviest dropout rates; this grade showed a lessening of that rate by 13.3 percent, and Grade 4 was next in line with a decrease of 9.1 percent.

While it is impossible to attribute these decreases in withdrawal rate definitely to any cause or causes without a detailed examination of all grades concerned, it is clear that the western counties were able to bring about a greater improvement in their rate than did the eastern counties. This may have been the result of more extensive student counselling services, the addition of courses which attracted more students, the elimination of courses in which the majority of students were not interested, or general public pressure and opinion which would encourage students to stay in school as long as possible; or it may have been a combination of any of these.

Let us next examine the records of the counties and municipalities of the two areas; statistics which will embody their withdrawal rates over the two school years of 1962 and 1963 are given in Table 13; the grouping of counties and municipalities follows that of the Department of Education in its annual reports.

TABLE 13

AVERAGE STUDENT WITHDRAWAL RATES BY COUNTIES OR MUNICIPALITIES,  
EASTERN AND WESTERN COUNTIES OF NOVA SCOTIA,  
FOR SCHOOL YEARS OF 1962 AND 1963

Eastern Counties	1962	1963	Western Counties	1962	1963
Antigonish	17.7	16.9	Annapolis	15.0	15.8
Cape Breton	18.1	18.9	Argyle & Clare	34.1	30.0
Colchester	12.4	19.2	Digby	15.5	10.1
Cumberland	18.9	6.6	Halifax	17.3	14.7
Guysborough	20.8	24.4	Hants	9.4	12.2
Inverness	22.0	19.5	Kings	14.4	13.9
Pictou	9.3	13.7	Lunenburg	14.9	19.0
Richmond	32.0	17.7	Queens	18.5	13.2
Victoria	16.2	1.9	Shelburne	10.4	10.3
			Yarmouth	19.5	14
Average	18.4	15.4	Average	16.9	12.0

This Table 13 reveals in more detail that the western area generally had lower student withdrawal rates than did the eastern area for both of the years under study, and showed a greater rate of reduction from 1962 to 1963. The two exceptions to the above will be seen if the counties are arranged in ascending order of their average withdrawal rates for the two years, as in Table 14, following.

TABLE 14

AVERAGE STUDENT WITHDRAWAL RATES BY COUNTIES OR MUNICIPALITIES, AND AREAS, FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS OF 1962 AND 1963, IN ASCENDING ORDER

County or Municipality	Area	Average Student Withdrawal Rates, 1962 and 1963
Victoria	Eastern	9.1
Shelburne	Western	10.4
Yarmouth	Western	10.5
Hants	Western	10.8
Pictou	Eastern	11.5
Cumberland	Eastern	12.8
Digby	Western	12.8
Kings	Western	14.2
Annapolis	Western	15.4
Colchester	Eastern	15.8
Queens	Western	15.9
Halifax	Western	16.0
Lunenburg	Western	17.0
Antigonish	Eastern	17.3
Cape Breton	Eastern	18.5
Inverness	Eastern	20.8
Guysborough	Western	22.6
Richmond	Eastern	24.9
Argyle & Clare	Western	32.1

The exceptions referred to above are Victoria County (eastern) which had the lowest withdrawal rate, and Argyle and Clare (western) which had the highest. Exclusive of them, with Colchester as the median, the eastern counties dominate the higher withdrawal rates, while the western counties occur more often among the lower rates. The seven counties which have a larger urban school population than rural or village--Shelburne, Yarmouth, Pictou, Cumberland, Annapolis, Halifax and Cape Breton--are scattered quite evenly over the top eighty percent of the list.

One other item is worthy of note. Those counties which show the most strikingly low withdrawal rate also show, on their county charts of school retention rate, an increase of students in the grade enrolments beyond Grade 3, giving rise to student retention rates of over one hundred percent. Whether such increases are the result of growth of communities, or of the swelling of the ranks of certain grades because of a large number of "repeaters" is impossible to state without detailed examination of the classroom registers in the schools involved.

Additional information concerning the number of students, by age, grade and sex, who have ceased to attend any school, is available annually in the "Age, Grade and Sex" data sheets which are part of the Provincial Department of Education's annual "Report on Pupils Withdrawing From School During or At the End of the School Year"; this report will be discussed in the survey of destinations of students who withdraw, which follows this section of this chapter. Its data,

however, is classified by blocks of school units which serve communities of various sizes of population, rather than by counties or municipalities; consequently it cannot be used as part of the present study of withdrawal rates.

In general, then, students in the western nine counties show a tendency to remain longer in school than do those of the eastern nine counties. Let us turn next to an examination of the destinations of those Nova Scotian students who left the public schools before their terminal year, to find what modes of life they assumed after leaving the public schools, and what factors may have contributed to their withdrawals from school.

#### Destinations of Student Withdrawals

In this third section of the survey of statistics concerning the dropout problem in Nova Scotia, it will no longer be possible to compare the records of the eastern and western parts of the province, except insofar as they apply to the two major urban areas, Sydney in the eastern part, and Halifax in the Western. The reason for this is that the records of student destinations compiled by the Provincial Department of Education are arranged not by counties, but in the following blocks of schools:

- a) Halifax (1962) Halifax Metropolitan Area (1963)
- b) Sydney
- c) Urban centres of from 10,000 to 29,999 population
- d) Urban centres of from 1,000 to 9,999 population
- e) Rural schools of six rooms or more

- f) Rural schools of two to five rooms
- g) Rural schools of one room.

Rearrangement of data within these blocks of schools to form statistics relating to counties and municipalities is not feasible; however, several of these blocks will be combined to give data which will correspond with that which is available from the annual reports of the Department of Education. The two blocks of urban centres will be dealt with jointly as having the same population of that of the "Urban Schools" in the annual reports, less those of Halifax and Sydney; the three blocks of rural schools will be combined to give a total school population of the "Rural and Village Schools"; school populations of Halifax and Sydney will be taken unchanged from the annual reports. In this way the number of students who pursue various destinations can be calculated as percentages of the school population within their combined blocks. Table 15 sets out these categories of school population.

The numbers of students leaving the school systems of these blocks of schools for various destinations are arranged by the Department of Education under four headings: (1) those transferring to schools outside the municipality, (2) those continuing their education under auspices other than the public school system, (3) those entering employment, and (4) those moving into "other classes". Those continuing their education outside the public schools include students who have entered private schools, business colleges, technical or trade schools, nurses' training schools, teacher training institutions, and universities or colleges. Those entering employment are arranged

TABLE 15

POPULATION OF BLOCKS OF SCHOOLS, NOVA SCOTIA,  
FOR SCHOOL YEARS OF 1962 AND 1963

Block	School Population	
	1962	1963
Halifax	17,771	..
Halifax Metropolitan Area	..	29,591
Sydney	9,531	9,480
Other Urban Centres	61,241	51,013
Rural Schools (all)	97,783	100,443
<b>Total</b>	<b>186,326</b>	<b>190,527</b>

under seventeen types of work, plus "labourers not classified elsewhere", and those whose employment is "not stated" on the report. "To Other Classes" refers to (1) girls only who are married, (2) girls who are helping at home in domestic duties, (3) to both boys and girls who are out of work though able to work, (4) boys and girls who are unable to work or attend school because of death or disability, (5) those who have been sent to corrective institutions, (6) other special cases, (7) those whose occupation is unknown.

Forms to accommodate the above classifications are sent to each school in the province at the beginning of each school year, to be filled out for the preceding school year; the data thus obtained is assembled by the Department of Education. The validity of such



reports varies with the accuracy of the reports of the school Principals and teachers of one-room schools who complete them; information supplied to them about former students is necessarily "second-hand" in many cases.

Table 16 is a summary of this data; it includes all students except the very young who withdrew to re-enter school when older.

TABLE 16

DESTINATIONS OF NOVA SCOTIAN PUPILS WITHDRAWING FROM  
SCHOOL DURING OR AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEARS,  
1962 AND 1963

Destination	Blocks of Schools						
	Hfx.*	Syd.	Urban Centres, 10,000 popn.	Centres, 1,000- 9,999 popn.	Rural, 6 or more rooms	Rural, 2-5 rooms	Rural, 1 room
<b>A. Transfers</b>							
Out of Municipality							
1962	1267	378	361	1363	1528	640	308
1963	2116	343	476	1917	1443	438	264
<b>B. Continuing School Elsewhere</b>							
1962	576	225	206	547	659	12	5
1963	955	223	274	759	761	40	7
<b>C. Employment</b>							
1962	310	250	192	1070	1323	130	36
1963	1043	248	389	1207	1412	122	21
<b>D. Other Classes</b>							
1. Marriage							
1962	7	17	5	77	82	8	2
1963	25	10	15	99	132	9	..
2. Helping At Home							
1962	17	29	26	133	237	33	17
1963	43	17	76	193	287	48	10

TABLE 16--Continued

Destination	Hfx.*	Syd.	Urban Centres, 10,000 popn.	Centres, 1,000- 9,999 popn.	Rural, 6 or more rooms	Rural, 2-5 rooms	Rural, 1 room
3. Out of Work							
1962	46	92	43	215	192	49	15
1963	36	68	119	258	242	34	7
4. Death or Disability							
1962	15	14	18	26	30	7	6
1963	21	11	13	26	24	10	..
5. To correc- tive Institution							
1962	13	6	10	15	7	1	..
1963	26	16	13	17	8	4	2
6. Others							
1962	2	..	..	4	6	2	2
1963	5	2	1	12	18	7	1
7. Unknown							
1962	64	17	21	61	152	12	9
1963	167	20	74	167	83	14	3
Total of "D"							
1962	164	175	123	531	706	112	51
1963	323	144	311	772	786	126	23
Total of "C" and "D"							
1962	474	425	315	1601	2029	242	87
1963	1366	455	700	1979	2288	248	44

\*Halifax, 1962, refers to Halifax City, 1963, refers to Halifax Metropolitan Area, including Dartmouth.

By comparing the numbers of former students itemized in Table 16, with the total school population of the combined blocks as given in Table 15, their percentages of the total school population can be established, and an indication will be given of the proportion of urban and rural students who may be expected to move into the various destinations. These percentages of the total school population are summarized in Table 17, following.

TABLE 17

DESTINATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF THE TOTAL NOVA SCOTIAN SCHOOL POPULATION WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS OF 1962 AND 1963

Destination	Year	Block of Schools			
		Halifax	Sydney	Other Centres over 1,000 Population	Rural
		%	%	%	%
Transferred out Of Municipality	1962	7.0	3.9	2.8	2.5
	1963	7.1	3.6	4.7	2.1
Continuing Educa- tion Elsewhere	1962	3.2	2.4	0.9	0.7
	1963	3.2	2.4	2.2	0.8
Employment	1962	1.2	2.6	2.1	1.5
	1963	3.5	2.6	3.1	1.5
Other Classes	1962	0.9	1.8	1.1	0.9
	1963	1.1	1.8	2.1	0.9
Total Percentage of School Population	1962	12.4	10.7	6.9	5.6
	1963	14.9	10.1	12.1	5.3
Total Percentage of School Popula- tion excluding Transfers	1962	5.2	6.8	4.1	3.1
	1963	7.8	6.8	7.4	3.2

Table 18, following, indicates the percentage which each of the "Other Classes" of destination were of the totals of that class for the two school years in question.

TABLE 18

DESTINATIONS OF PERCENTAGES OF THE "OTHER CLASSES" OF DESTINATIONS OF THE TOTAL NUMBER IN THAT GROUP OF NOVA SCOTIAN PUPILS WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS OF 1962 AND 1963

Destination of Other Classes	Year	Block of Schools			
		Halifax	Sydney	Other Centres over 1,000 Population	Rural
1. Marriage (girls only)	1962	4.3	9.7	12.5	10.6
	1963	7.8	6.9	10.5	15.1
2. Domestic Work at Home (girls only)	1962	10.4	16.6	24.3	33.0
	1963	13.3	11.8	24.8	36.9
3. Out of work	1962	28.0	52.6	39.5	29.5
	1963	11.1	47.2	34.8	30.3
4. Dead or Disabled	1962	9.1	8.0	6.7	4.9
	1963	6.5	7.6	3.6	3.6
5. To Corrective Institutions	1962	7.9	3.4	3.8	0.9
	1963	8.1	11.1	6.5	1.5
6. Others	1962	1.2	. .	0.6	1.2
	1963	1.5	1.4	1.2	2.8
7. Unknown	1962	39.0	9.7	12.2	19.9
	1963	51.7	13.9	22.2	10.7

Now let us see what information and deductions about the destinations of Nova Scotian dropouts can be derived from these two latter tables.

The following conclusions can be reached by studying the first of the two latter tables, Table 17. The more densely populated an urban area may be, the more likelihood there is of internal migration affecting its school population by transfers; since transfers in and out of an area in general tend to equalize one another, the rural areas of the province tend to be more stable in their population than do the urban, both being equally susceptible to normal growth. The more densely populated an urban area may be, the greater is the tendency to continue education in another form after the student has left the regular public school program; former students from Halifax showed themselves approximately four times more likely to do so than did the rural students, and three times more likely to do so than did the students of smaller centres in 1962; however, in 1963 the students from the smaller centres greatly accelerated their move toward further learning. Students of rural areas showed themselves to be generally less likely to move into employment directly after leaving school before their terminal year than did those of the smaller centres; the latter showed the greatest impetus in this direction of any group except those from Halifax in 1963; this upsurge of employment for students who dropped out of school may have been in part the consequence of the increased business and construction activity which the amalgamation of Dartmouth and its suburbs brought to the Halifax metropolitan area in that year. Between two and three times as large a proportion of urban students in Halifax and Sydney left school for one reason or another than did students from rural areas; and between one and two times as many from the smaller centres did the same.

More frequent opportunities for employment and for technical study may have been the reasons, both being stimulated by a denser, more mobile population.

Interesting contrasts may also be seen in the major classifications of destination pursued by those students who did not transfer away from the area. Those in Halifax tended more strongly to further study than to employment or other things in 1962, but in 1963 moved more to employment; in 1963 the percentage who left school before the terminal year also increased. In Sydney during both years the stronger tendency by a slight margin was to employment, with slightly less students leaving before graduation in 1963 than in 1962. In both of the other two blocks of schools, the trend to employment was about twice as great as that toward further study during both years. In the smaller centres the percentage who left school before completing it was almost twice as great in 1963 as in 1962; no reason can be assigned to this most marked increase.

If an examination is made next of the second of the two percentage tables, Table 18, the following observations will be noted. The proportion of girls who left school to be married is markedly less in the two urban centres of Halifax and Sydney than it is in the smaller centres or the rural areas; this corresponds with the fact shown in Table 17 that the urban students showed a greater inclination to continuing study than did the students from smaller centres or rural areas, and was especially evidenced in Halifax. The girls in the rural areas showed by far the greatest trend to staying in domestic work at home, rather than seeking employment

outside the home; girls in the smaller centres showed the same tendency, but to a lesser extent; these facts correspond with the rural figures for continuing education, and for seeking employment. With the exception of Halifax in 1963, all blocks of schools showed that approximately a third to a half of their students who withdrew from public school before completing the course of study and who did not go into employment or further study, or transfer, were out of work, although they were able to work. The two cities had the highest proportion of their dropouts either dead or disabled, or sent to corrective institutions; both of these facts may be considered to be by-products of the denser population and generally more intense life of the urban areas as compared to that of the towns and villages or rural areas. Finally, Sydney, the smaller centres, and the rural areas have a much lower proportion than does Halifax, of students whose destination is unknown; this may be accounted for by the fact that in the less densely populated areas, there is more intra-community acquaintanceship among students, and between students and school staff.

But the question still remains--why did these students leave school?

#### Contributing Factors

Since no province-wide survey has yet been made as to the factors which contribute to student withdrawals, conclusions in this matter will have to be confined to two area surveys, one urban and one rural. The first of these was a study made by Gobin Sawh in an unpublished Master's dissertation concerning dropouts during the school year of 1959-50 in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. He found that

the following were the principal factors among girls, in order of importance: lack of ability, lack of interest, being overage, unsuitable home environment, economic reasons, parents' opinions on appropriate sex roles for boys and girls, opportunity for employment, preference for work over attending school, dislike of certain subjects as useless, dislike of certain teachers. Among boys the corresponding factors in order of importance were: being overage, lack of ability, lack of interest, unsuitable home environment, economic reasons, desire to be independent, opportunity for employment, dislike of certain subjects as useless, dislike of certain teachers.<sup>1</sup>

For comparison, a survey of former students of a down-town area of Toronto, made by St. Christopher House, a social agency, was also concerned with urban dropouts (its samples were of a more consistently lower socio-economic level than those which represented all parts of Halifax and Dartmouth); its findings (in order of frequency) are generally similar: lack of application, reached limit of ability, desired employment, financial need, unsettled home conditions, non-cooperation, lack of home encouragement or control.<sup>2</sup>

In the rural area of the Musquodoboit Valley, Halifax County, in the course of the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act study by Dr. Desmond M. Connor and Dennis W. Magill in 1963 concerning "The Role of Education in Rural Development", 1815 female household

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<sup>1</sup>Gobin Sawh, "The Destinations of Students Leaving the Public School System in the Halifax-Dartmouth Area, 1959-1960" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Dept. of Education, University of New Brunswick), p. 46-48.

<sup>2</sup>Our Disinherited Youth (Toronto: St. Christopher House, 1962).



heads perceived the following reasons why students in their families dropped out of school, in order of frequency:

- a) "desires to earn money for himself";
- b) "no interest in his school work";
- c) "lacks the ability to do the school work";
- d) "family's income is low and he is needed at home";
- e) "parents take little interest in his schoolwork";
- f) "courses offered are unsatisfactory";
- g) "opportunity for a good job"<sup>1</sup>

When, in the same study, students were asked their opinion why one of their friends dropped out of school, the replies in order of frequency were:

- a) "little interest in school work";
- b) "desired to earn money";
- c) "lacked ability to do schoolwork";
- d) "friend's parents took little interest in his (her) school work";
- e) "opportunity for good job"; (equal with) "family's low income, and your friend was needed to help at home";
- f) "school did not offer the courses your friend felt he (she) needed."<sup>2</sup>

If these findings concerning rural school dropouts are compared with those reached in New Brunswick by Mary A. Drummie, they will be found to be generally similar; it should be noted that her data was gathered from the entire province, which is predominantly rural in

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<sup>1</sup>Desmond M. Connor and Dennis W. Magill, A Study of the Role of Education in Rural Development, A Report to the Department of Social Sciences, St. Francis Xavier University (Antigonish, N.S.: Department of Social Sciences, 1965), p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 149.

population. Her "Source of Drop-out Problem Data" lists the following factors in order of frequency:

- a) low intelligence;
- b) unrealistic or childish attitudes;
- c) lack of parental direction in general;
- d) lack of scholastic guidance;
- e) lack of parental direction toward education;
- f) poor financial situation;
- g) adolescent adjustment problems;
- h) other individual sources;
- i) social adjustment problems;
- j) constitutionally unfit;
- k) family wants child at home;
- l) marital status;
- m) lacks curriculum for special talents;
- n) student-teacher incompatibility;
- o) inadequately prepared for present course.

The first three of these factors make up 50 percent of the sources of all dropouts, being twenty-five, fifteen and ten percent respectively; the remainder are six percent or less, each.<sup>1</sup>

From these two Nova Scotian samples, and from similar ones in Ontario and New Brunswick, it can be seen that in all cases lack of interest in school work, lack of ability to do the work, and the desire or need for earning money, are the dominant factors; these are followed

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<sup>1</sup>Mary A. Drummie, A Research Report on New Brunswick School Dropouts in the Academic Year 1963-1964, A Report to the Province of New Brunswick, Department of Youth and Welfare (Fredericton: Province of New Brunswick, 1965), p. 53.

in each case by a negative home or environmental attitude toward education. These are basically the same factors which, in Chapter 1, were found to be the most prevalent in dropout cases, in both Canada and the United States.

The school dropout situation in Nova Scotia in the school years of 1962 and 1963 has been seen to vary geographically between the eastern nine counties and the western nine, and also to vary between the urban areas, the centres of population smaller than cities, and the rural regions. Principal factors which contribute to the withdrawal of students before their terminal year have been found to be (a) the desire to obtain training outside the public school system, principally in the form of vocational or trades training, (b) the desire or need to obtain employment, (c) marriage, (d) the carrying-out of domestic duties at home, (e) the preference to being out of work rather than attend school. Numerically, the Nova Scotian dropouts increased from 19.2 percent of the total school population in the school year of 1961-62 to 25.2 percent in the school year of 1962-63; these percentages represent 35,774 and 48,012 students, respectively. In the Canadian culture of today it is not only desirable but essential that each child have the opportunity to obtain the greatest possible amount of education which his innate ability will permit him to assimilate and use, if he is going to be able to live the best life possible as an adult. These dropouts have not achieved full value from the twelve regular grades of school and the other courses, which the Provincial Department of Education has created for the use of all children of the province. In order to survey remedial steps which may be taken to reduce the number

of school dropouts in the province, let us turn now to an examination of what comparable areas in Canada and the United States have done in the same endeavour.

CHAPTER V  
REMEDIAL STEPS TAKEN TO REDUCE THE DROPOUT RATE  
IN AREAS COMPARABLE TO NOVA SCOTIA

Before examining the courses of action which have been entered upon in Nova Scotia to reduce the dropout rate throughout the province, it will be well to consider some of the remedial efforts which have been undertaken in the United States to achieve the same end. Some of them will be found to be quite different from those attempted in Nova Scotia, others will be similar; while studying them, it should be remembered that, in order to have any firm hope of success, each area or community must plan and put into operation only those programs which suit the financial strength, the educational needs, and the social background and circumstances of the area. Further, any such plan must have the support of the area's general public, after the latter has been made aware of the need for such remedial action.

In general, any such remedial program (assuming that it has the support of both the general public and the parents of the majority of the students) is constructed around two undertakings: (a) the introduction of, or widening of the scope of student guidance or counselling services, (b) revision or enlargement (or both) of the curriculum to make it more suitable for and meaningful to potential dropouts, and to

those who have left school, and returned. Each of these will now be examined in turn, to bring out their full meaning.

### Student Counselling Services

While student "guidance" could be taken in the widest sense to refer to counselling services which might be rendered to any student, by any teacher, on any matter relevant to the welfare of the student, it has over the past approximately 20 years grown to refer principally to the work of a teacher whose principal function is to direct students toward certain courses of study leading to future employment which he (the guidance teacher) believes will be most suitable and profitable for the student. More recently, this type of service has come to be known as "pupil personnel services", a refinement of the same work, and one which permits more detailed service to the pupil. In any one school or school system there may be one "pupil's personnel officer" who is responsible for the assessment of pupils' abilities and potentialities, and for the channeling of their school work along lines which will make the most effective use of these parts of a student's personality. But it has been found that, in addition to innate ability, other factors also exert a strong influence on the student; these are principally matters of health, psychological adjustment, and the sociological adjustment of the student and his family to his living area. Each of these involves specialized knowledge, so there have been built up teams of pupil personnel specialists, each of whose members work along the specific lines of his specialty, in the common interest of the student's welfare. Such teams are generally made up of a school counselor, a

school psychologist, a school social worker or visiting counselor, and a school health specialist.<sup>1</sup>

The duties of the latter three of these team members are obvious since they center around the area of specialization; but those of the school counselor are wider and more general in scope. In addition to assessing the native and acquired abilities of the student by means of standardized tests, and instructing him in future occupations which may be open to him, the school counselor has three other duties which carry him beyond the boundaries of the school:

- a) influencing others to provide for the student an environment, both school and non-school, which will present his education in a meaningful light;
- b) modifying others' perceptions of the dropout or potential dropout in the direction of better identification and understanding;
- c) modifying the self-perception of the dropout or potential dropout so that he may be able to relate better to others, and also to know how to make more adequate use of whatever environmental resources are available to him.

The school counselor can be described as a link between the pupil and his community, with the aim in view of assisting each to get the best out of the other. His work is not to be considered as limited to the classroom or school; the latter is only the starting point; his main task is (with the assistance of his team-mates) to help the student successfully make the step from school life to full participation in adult life, when he has reached the terminal year of his school program.

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Schreiber (ed.), The School Dropout (Washington: National Education Association of the U.S., 1964), p. 193.

This, then, is the purpose and method of the operation of school counselling services; the extent to which they are carried out will vary with the ability of the school area to invest money in them, and the availability of trained personnel to implement them. Now let us turn to the second of the major steps which are generally taken in a program designed to remedy a high incidence of school dropouts--the revision or enlargement of the curriculum.

#### Curriculum Revisions

Any school program, academic or vocational, which is created in an attempt to reduce the number of school dropouts, should be established only after a careful study of the body of the present curriculum and the educational philosophy on which it is founded, as well as the needs of the student body at the time the proposed revision and/or expansion of courses offered is to take place. Further, the actual items to be studied, or the arrangements for learning which may be included in such a revision or enlargement of the curriculum for the benefit of potential or actual dropouts will vary from one geographic area to another, according to the needs of the population. Yet the general design of alterations in curriculum in various parts of the United States and Canada tend to follow a relatively constant pattern, although the emphasis within the pattern will vary from location to location.

Courses included in such a pattern are those which will satisfy specific requirements of students whose problems are not common to the majority of pupils in the school system. Such courses include:

(a) Both academic and vocational study adjusted to the ability of pupils



who are in "The Lost Twenty", the I.Q. Range from 70 - 90; these are the ones who cannot keep up to the average pupils in regular classrooms, and yet are not sufficiently slow learners to be classed as "retarded", in order to be educated in auxiliary classes for the educable children at the lower end of the scales of intellectual capacity.

- b) The operating of work-study programs for students at both junior and senior high school levels; such programs include study in school for part of each day, with the remainder of the day being spent in employment at an actual occupation, the purpose of such employment being "sampling" or experiencing at first hand what different types of work are like.
- c) Providing distinct curricula, or programs of enriched standard curricula for pupils of above-average ability; such arrangements are designed to keep the superior students working at full capacity, and widening the knowledge or skill which they may obtain in any study, in comparison with that obtained by the average students.
- d) Providing special remedial and/or supplementary reading programs for youths who are below average in comprehension in reading, since such a great part of their progress in all subjects depends on reading ability.
- e) Organizing special classes for pupils who have been identified as potential dropouts, to assist in preventing them from taking the actual step of leaving school, pending diagnosis of causes of their difficulties in school.

- f) Providing summer programs of school for students in need of remedial assistance and/or completion of partial credits in order to achieve an academic standard.
- g) Providing summer enrichment and summer employment programs for potential dropouts, generally in a rural or sylvan location; generally, these programs are designed for urban youth who will likely profit by a change of surroundings as well as supervised recreation and living programs.

These must be supported by the following administrative operations which are closely related to school courses of study; without them, the foregoing courses would lose greatly in efficiency and effectiveness.

- a) Providing school social work service;
- b) Providing psychological service for maladjusted or "problem" students;
- c) Operating an achievement and aptitude testing program for all students, not only for those whose difficulties in and out of school make them conspicuous;
- d) Identifying potential dropouts early, and providing special educational and referral services for them;
- e) Altering school admission policies to permit the early enrolment of culturally and economically deprived children in educational programs;
- f) Providing a pupil-counselor ratio of approximately 400 - 1;
- g) Providing clerical assistance to enable counselors to spend the major portion of their time working directly with potential dropouts and their teachers;
- h) Providing systematic follow-up of pupils whose cases are closed by the school social work or pupil personnel services.

Without these administrative operations, any courses or modifications of courses, work-study programs or other devices to help the non-average students would be in danger of losing in both efficiency and effectiveness. Any item in any school program should operate fully in adjustment with all other parts of the school system, and with the student's home environment; this is the school administrator's function.

Now let us examine some of the specially-designed programs which have been instituted in various locations in the United States to cater to the needs of potential and returned dropouts in areas comparable to those which can be found in Nova Scotia.

Mercer County in southern West Virginia was selected as a pilot county for a state-directed, mandatory program for all male youth 16 and 17 years of age in 1962, who had dropped out of school before completing high school. Homes and schools were visited in order to provide a complete profile of each dropout, to be used in planning a job preparation program to be conducted during the summer months. From these profiles, courses were designed which were geared to the pupils' abilities, interests and needs, not to the standard curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

"The Chicago Project" of the "Great Cities School Improvement Program" placed primary emphasis on boys and girls who are fourteen years of age and over, and were still in elementary school (Grades 1 - 6). These slow-learning and retarded pupils from eight elementary schools were grouped in classes of 30 in one center. Academic work was covered at speeds and in forms which the pupils could follow, a reading clinic

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<sup>1</sup>U. S., Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Programs for the Educationally Disadvantaged, 1962, p. 16.

was set up in the school, after school activities were arranged through the school, and low-order skill classes such as simple clerical work, wood-products assembly, service-station attending, and pre-employment classes were put into operation.<sup>1</sup>

Ken-Gar, Maryland, a depressed rural area, was characterized by the children's low interest and achievement in school, which State education authorities felt was a reflection of the parents' low educational achievement and negligent attitude. Each parent was persuaded to offer some part of his home to be used as a classroom, complete with dictionary and chalkboard, for one night a week. Volunteer tutors, all college graduates and called "parent-helpers", were recruited to teach one session for two hours weekly; the parents were then assigned to grades which met four nights a week, each night at a different home, and each night with a different "parent-helper" according to the subject to be taught. The scheme gave "marked improvements in attitude and performance, and a decline in disciplinary cases in schools attended by children of these parents."<sup>2</sup>

In Racine, Wisconsin, an experimental kindergarten program was established in a low socio-economic area "to give opportunity for the children to accumulate familiarity with the world which is taken for granted by middle-class children." The children were given a normal half-day of kindergarten, with enriched field trips in the afternoon to museums, zoos, etc. Many picture books were provided for

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>"Remedial Plans", National Education Association Journal, May, 1962, p. 34.

the class library, and television programs were integrated with the school work.<sup>1</sup>

In Lane County, Oregon, a summer work camp was organized by educational authorities for potential dropouts to give them "a vigorous and profitable work experience". They were paid for working in State parks both in the woods and on the buildings, and learned "to eat heartily, to have some wholesome recreation, and to spend their time in a useful and productive activity". They reportedly returned to school in the fall full of enthusiasm for work, in much better condition both mentally and physically, and much less likely to become dropouts.<sup>2</sup>

It should not be inferred from the foregoing cases that such radical departures from the conventional patterns of academic and vocational schooling were typical of American efforts to reduce the dropout rate. In general, the most effective program was one which supplemented or replaced the traditional academic, pre-college entrance course of study with academic, pre-vocational and vocational work which was more meaningful to the great majority of students. The cases mentioned were cited to show the diversity of approaches which can be used to serve potential or actual dropouts, those who have not or may not in the future be able to gain a useful education through the conventional course of study.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 37.

## CHAPTER VI

### REMEDIAL STEPS RECOMMENDED FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NINE EASTERN COUNTIES

Before any recommendations are made of ways in which the student withdrawal rate may be lessened in Nova Scotia, a review will be made of action which has been taken by the Department of Education over recent years to the same end. It will be found that remedial measures have moved steadily ahead along three principal lines: (a) the establishment of vocational high schools and technical schools, (b) the creation of the General Course for high school students, and (c) the widening of pupil personnel services in schools throughout the province. A fourth step in the same direction was announced in the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the 1966 Legislative Assembly; it forecasts the creation of a Comprehensive School System which will provide a closer association between the primary and elementary schools on the one hand and the vocational and technical school program on the other. Each of these four things will be discussed in turn.

#### Vocational High Schools

The first of these were opened in 1949 at Yarmouth, and in 1950 at Halifax; the latter was to serve the areas of Halifax, Dartmouth, and Halifax County, the former to accommodate students from the town of

Yarmouth, the District of Argyle and the District of Yarmouth. In 1959, planning was started for the Nova Scotia Trades School and Technical Institute, and in 1960 the first plans were laid for a new vocational high school to serve Cape Breton County, the city of Sydney, and the towns of Glace Bay, Dominion, New Waterford and North Sydney. In 1961, under the impetus of the Commonwealth Technical Training Week suggested by H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, architectural plans for the Technical Institute were completed for a location in Halifax; Louisbourg and Sydney Mines were included in the area of Cape Breton Vocational High School, and first mention was made in the Legislature of a vocational high school for Pictou County. 1962 saw agreements ratified between the provincial government and municipal units for additional vocational high schools in Pictou, Cumberland and Kings County, and for the expansion of facilities in Yarmouth. Building of all these units was completed in 1963, giving the province a total of one Trades School and Technical Institute, and six Vocational High Schools. Classes under the Institute at North Sydney were moved into expanded facilities at Point Edward Naval Base, Sydney, in 1964, raising the total enrolment of the Institute to 828 students; enrolment in the six vocational high schools was 1707 students; thus over 2500 students of high school age were accommodated. Also, first discussions were held concerning a vocational high school for Lunenburg County, a trades school in Cape Breton County, and a regional vocational high school, to be located in the Truro area. In 1965 these plans moved further forward and preliminary consideration was being given to enlarging the number of schools still further in the near future. Clearly, these vocational

establishments were filling a need in the provincial educational program, and were making the course of study more meaningful and useful to many who formerly might well have become dropouts.

#### The General Course

Up to 1961, the course of study for Nova Scotian schools was entirely a college matriculation course; but since less than ten percent of the high school graduates availed themselves of the opportunity to attend college, or were financially able to do so, a non-matriculation program called "The General Course" was projected in order to give those who could not attend college an alternate term of high school years. In that autumn, the new three-year course was offered on a trial basis in four high schools, students being guided into it on the basis of their interest, cumulative school records, achievement and intelligence tests, and teachers' recommendations, subject to the approval of their parents. Six additional high schools offered the course in the following year, and by the autumn of 1963, fifteen high schools in all included it; no school was permitted by the Department to offer the General Course to its Grade Ten students unless the school was adequately equipped with a complete system of student records, and staffed by trained guidance personnel who could assist students to make a wise decision as to which course of study they would follow through the next three years. The ratio of guidance staff to students was set at one to four hundred. More schools continued to be added to the list of those offering "The General Course" in 1964 and 1965, as soon as they could prepare and staff their schools to accommodate it.



Its curriculum contained two options, both based on the successful completion of Grade 9: a Standard General Course for those not planning to enter university, but who desire a general, broad, academic and occupational training, and a Vocational Commercial Course for those not intending to enter university, but with aspirations to become stenographers, bookkeepers, secretaries, or to do other forms of office work. Such a dual course should give a wide range of basic training to those who, in a matriculation course, would likely have left school in Grades 10 or 11.

#### Pupil Personnel Services

As the high school system of Nova Scotia became more specialized with the addition of vocational high schools, technical training institutes, and the General Course, the need for personnel trained in student guidance increased steadily. Courses offering such training were offered in a four-year block at the Nova Scotia Summer School. Potential guidance personnel were also sought out in university Education classes, and encouraged to enter that field which was so closely related to the problem of school dropouts. By the school year of 1962, there were more than twenty vacancies for which trained guidance staff were not available, and the Department saw a demand for approximately one hundred trained guidance teachers in the near future. The demand still continues to be high, as the work of Pupil Personnel Officers becomes more essential to the functioning of high schools which offer a variety of courses rather than only one course which includes a few elective subjects. As the composite schools come into being, and as

the assessment, directing and channeling of students commences at lower grade levels, the need will be even greater. The same situation exists generally in all parts of the country, and as a result there is a constant loss of trained personnel from this province to other provinces where the salary scale is higher.

### The Comprehensive School System

A plan to extend specialization to meet the pupils' individual needs to an even greater extent than do the vocational schools and technical training courses was announced in November, 1965, by Dr. Harold Nason, Director of Elementary and Secondary Education for the province.<sup>1</sup> It is based on the demand for a single, unified program at all grade levels, in order to prepare them for full participation in their life of the community.

At the elementary school level, it would include the basic skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and mathematics, plus local history, geography, science, music, art and physical education. Provision would be made in it for early identification of students with special handicaps, or with special abilities, to be followed by appropriate action suitable to each individual case.

The proposed secondary school plan would start with three junior high school programs, instead of the present one with its elective subjects. One of these three would be the regular course in preparation for the normal senior high school work, and contain

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<sup>1</sup>Province of Nova Scotia, Dept. of Education, Education Office Gazette, (Halifax: The Queen's Printer, 1965), Vol. 15, No. 2, pp.2-6.

options limited to one or two practical and one or two fine arts. The second would be a modified program incorporating remedial instruction in the basic skill subjects for educationally retarded children who may have the ability to complete a secondary school course, and possibly going beyond it. It would contain alternative plans for students who do not show the likelihood of completing a secondary school program: one a pre-vocational preparation for employment or apprenticeship, and the other a work-study plan preparatory to direct employment. The third program would be an auxiliary program of training and experience designed to aid the mentally retarded and otherwise handicapped children.

At the level of senior high school, three programs would also be offered. The first would be the regular matriculation course of study and could take the student on either a standard, commercial or honours course, according to his ambitions and his ability. The second would be the general program designed to enable the student to satisfy the requirements for further study along vocational and trade lines, or for employment, in fields of endeavour which require a general high school education. Its certificate could be either "standard" or "commercial". The third would be the vocational high school program for students who are beyond compulsory school age, and who demonstrate aptitude, ability and interest in various trades.

The fundamental principles of such a comprehensive program are stated by Dr. Nason as follows:

A good school should provide a reasonably free and healthy atmosphere, a variety of approaches to the various subjects and suitable elasticity or organization. It is safe to say that there will be less difficulties in a school where individual differences are studied, where every child is so treated

as to preserve his self-respect, where the atmosphere is both friendly and invigorating, where the curriculum appeals to the natural interests of children, and where methods are sufficiently varied to cater to individual needs . . . .

Since practical work has greater power than purely mental work to set the minds of children moving and to stimulate them into purposeful activity, courses such as industrial arts and home economics are a necessity. We must concentrate on this area if we are to hold all our children in school long enough to profit from post-compulsory school age courses.

In our modern welfare state, it is not enough to teach a person to make a living. He must be taught that he has an obligation to the community in which he lives, for the services that he enjoys, and that the community itself is dependent upon the contribution that each individual makes.<sup>1</sup>

Such a program, when implemented, should give adequate opportunity to each child to receive schooling best adjusted to his or her ability and needs. In England the idea of a comprehensive school system has been approved and supported by the National Union of Teachers and the Confederation for the Advancement of State Education, although ratepayer groups and regional school boards in some areas are not entirely in favour, and appear to have doubts about financing it.<sup>2</sup>

In Nova Scotia, plans for it have been published for only four months at the time of writing, so public opinion cannot yet be said to be formed concerning it. An article concerning its projected administration and financing was published in the January, 1966, issue of the "Education Office Gazette", detailing the sharing of costs between Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments; further articles will deal with other aspects. At present a series of meetings of school boards and rural and urban municipal councils are being called at the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup>Colin Chapman, "Focus on Circular 10/65", New Education, February, 1966, p. 20.

request of the Minister of Education to discuss the plan as a whole, the place of the regional vocational schools in this system, and proposed changes in the foundation program of financing education in the province.

From the foregoing four digests of recent action taken by the Provincial Government to widen the area of service extended to the youth of the province, it can be seen that the Department of Education and the legislators are not unaware of the need to provide various types of schooling to meet the interests, ambitions and needs of the various types of children in the schools. But steps taken to meet these demands have necessarily been controlled by available money, and this in turn has been controlled by the extent of local taxation which the ratepayers will bear, and the funds which are available for education from the Federal treasury through provincial tax-sharing plans. There is apparently no dearth of ideas as to how the education system of the province can be improved so that more students will get more out of it; but such ideas are necessarily restricted by the rhetorical questions of "How much can the taxpayer afford?" and "How much will he let the government spend on education?"

Definite recommendations as to how the dropout rate can be diminished in the nine counties of the eastern end of the province are not substantially different from those which could be applied to all parts of the province. The prime one concerns money, the catalyst in education just as in industry, science, or commerce. It must be made available for teachers' salaries so that Nova Scotia, instead of being a sub-median province in comparative salary scale, would become one of

those at the top of the list. In this way the continual annual movement westward of teachers trained in Nova Scotian colleges and universities would be halted, and the province could attract teachers from other parts of the country. If there was no longer a shortage of trained Pupil Personnel Officers, and of money, students could be given all necessary opportunities to select the type of study best suited to their abilities; with success in school would come more interest in and enthusiasm for learning, and hence a desire to remain in school. If there was no longer a shortage of fully-trained classroom teachers and subject-specialists, those with the least natural aptitude and minimal professional training would be obliged either to raise their qualifications or leave the profession. If there were money available, much more could be done along the lines of public relations in order to convince the taxpayers that money spent on education is not an ordinary expenditure but an investment that will eventually "pay off" through the increased prosperity of the population. This would create a positive, active view of education by the taxpayers, at all socio-economic levels, not one which permits them to regard it simply as a necessary evil; and such an attitude in turn would be driving force toward the provision of funds for capital expenses necessary to provide adequate educational facilities for all parts of the province.

In relation to the dropouts themselves as individuals in a school, Charles M. Allen points out in his Combating the Dropout Problem the principal methods of the renewal of student confidence and participation in a school system. These are four: (1) improved guidance services to "help him in realistic self-appraisal and in seeing how

each of his in-class experiences helps him reach goals that he accepts; (2) improved classroom opportunities through ability grouping, remedial reading if necessary, and meaningful courses; (3) extraclass activities in keeping with the student's interests and abilities; and (4) changes in the marking system and the school's attitudes toward marks "so that neither teachers nor student leaders think of pupils who make high marks as being altogether good or those with low marks as lacking worthy attributes."<sup>1</sup> All of these are spokes in the cycle of confidence, ability, success, and learning, which, when it turns continuously along the track of acceptable endeavours, produces education. They could well be held up as measuring-sticks beside the practices of any school which is experiencing a high dropout rate, in any part of the province.

The recommendations made for the reduction of dropouts by Dr. Desmond Connor and Mr. Dennis Magill in their Role of Education in Rural Development, as studied in the Musquodoboit Valley, are more definite than the foregoing, and are applicable in varying degrees to each of the nine eastern counties of Nova Scotia.

They include sixteen items:

- 1) The appointment of a qualified guidance counselor in each school is essential. "This service is of fundamental importance in the early recognition of potential dropouts, in assisting youth (and their parents and teachers) with emotional problems, and in providing career information and advice. To economize in this field is to gravely weaken the effectiveness of the entire school system."

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<sup>1</sup>Charles M. Allen, Combating the Dropout Problem (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1956), pp. 42-45.

- 2) There must be broader curricula that are "relevant and meaningful to the youth of their school's constituency. The proposed Composite School Program is strongly recommended."
- 3) Home Visitor's should be organized. An example would be "a woman widely accepted and respected in her community, using informal methods to provide encouragement, advice and information"; she would meet weekly with the guidance counselor.
- 4) Parent Educators using "techniques ranging from mass media presentations to small group discussions and personal contacts to create a more interested and informed public for education" should work out of each School Inspector's office.
- 5) "A Summer School for Dropouts" should be held annually, "a short, intensive program of counselling, guidance, testing and job placement."
- 6) Improvement of School Instruction should be undertaken through in-service and summer courses for teachers, equipment for vocational courses, language instruction and visual aids, and improved library facilities.
- 7) Classes for slow learners should be arranged in each school.
- 8) A remedial reading program should also be organized in each area or school.
- 9) Career information "to ensure that the child and his parents are aware of the full spectrum of occupations available to him, not just those visible in the local community" is essential for adequate student guidance. Student-teacher relationships should be promoted concerning educational and occupational opportunities, especially



for male adolescents.

- 10) A Work-Experience program should be arranged for groups of slow learners, to introduce them to possible types of employment.
- 11) Recreational opportunities of a constructive and appropriate nature "for the potential dropout can contribute to his satisfaction with the school system and his decision to remain a part of it".
- 12) Use should be made of mass media to transmit knowledge about occupational alternatives and the relationship of education to steady employment and higher income. "Educators must learn some of the skills of the marketplace if they are to win for their product the attention it deserves".
- 13) School-community relations should be enlarged; "the wider use of school facilities for community activities can foster parental interest in education".
- 14) Local study of the dropout problem should be made continuously by parents, teachers and school board members, including an annual census and conference about it.
- 15) Federal funds should be invested in financing education in low-income areas "so that balanced development of all our resources may occur".
- 16) Further research into the problem should be undertaken, through Principals completing a data card on each student who leaves school before completing the secondary course, this information to be analysed by the Provincial Department of Education as to dropout

rate, and reasons for withdrawing.<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing provide an excellent guide for any area, rural or urban, that wishes to attempt to lower its dropout rate; each step could be valuable in itself, and when combined with the others in a carefully-planned program adjusted to the needs of a particular area, the whole should be most effective. But the final and deciding factor in any campaign to achieve that end is the attitude of the community as a whole toward education. As Allen says:

In the final analysis, the most significant factor in increasing a school's holding power will be the importance with which the problem is treated by the administration, the faculty, and the lay members of the community. Any action that gives encouragement to continuing study of the question and to making proposed remedies effective is likely to make at least some dent in the problem.<sup>2</sup>

If the community values education, it will not tolerate the wastage of student time and potential, and the discouraging and even degrading inefficiency of teacher effort in a school riddled with potential dropouts, any more than it would permit such uneconomical practices to pervade its industries, businesses, and homes.

The basis of all remedial action to be taken to reduce the dropout rate in all parts of the province lies fundamentally in the family. It is the responsibility of all educators, jointly, to ensure that action arises from that source.

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<sup>1</sup>Desmond M. Connor and Dennis W. Magill, A Study of the Role of Education in Rural Development, A Report to the Department of Social Sciences, St. Francis Xavier University (Antigonish, N.S.: Department of Social Sciences, 1965), pp. 165-174.

<sup>2</sup>Charles M. Allen, Combating the Dropout Problem (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1956), p. 47.

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