THE PROBLEM OF THE SLOW LEARNER IN NOVA SCOTIA

A thesis written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

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INTRODUCTION

Mental retardation is a problem which is receiving a good deal of attention in Canada today. People are beginning to realize that public-supported education is not only for the academically gifted but must be so organized that even those with little ability can have the opportunity to develop their meager talents. Considerable effective work has been done in Nova Scotia, both in the past and at the present time, but much remains to be done if we are to ensure that equal educational opportunities exist for all. This is the cornerstone of our democratic way of life. The purpose of this thesis is to show what has been accomplished in this field and to delineate some feasible improvements in the light of present conditions.

The methods to be used in the presentation of this thesis will be extensive use of available material such as books, reports and unpublished material designed to show the history of the problem as well as the contemporary situation in Nova Scotia. Information will be obtained from other Provinces in Canada for purposes of comparison with Nova Scotia and interviews will be held with those individuals in responsible positions directly connected with this problem of mental retardation.

The questions to be taken up in later Chapters will include: (1) the history of the problem of slow learners in Nova Scotia, (2) the Education Act and its provisions for mentally handicapped children, (3) the roles of the Departments of Health, Welfare and Labour in the problem of Mental Retardation, (4) a description of the classes for trainable retarded, educable retarded and slow learners in Nova Scotia with an emphasis on the curriculum used and (5) suggested improvements in the status of the retarded person in Nova Scotia.

It is hoped that this study will show the need for greater efforts on the part of persons concerned with mental retardation and that eventually the co-ordination of all disciplines concerned will lead to a greater understanding of the problem and improved facilities and training for these less fortunate members of our society.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF AUXILIARY CLASSES IN NOVA SCOTIA

In considering the problems of the slow learner, it is necessary to define the terms which are in common usage. The term "retarded" includes educable, trainable and non-trainable groups. A committee set up by the Nova Scotia government to be responsible for co-ordinating the work between the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia with regard to a Dominion-Provincial Conference on Mental Retardation, defined mental retardation as " an impaired development of the mind, resulting from a wide variety of conditions, including not only defects of the central nervous system, but also those in the psychological and sociological spheres."[1]

It is possible to make a more practical classification of mental retardation by establishing the following groups:

(a) The Slow Learner. I.Q. range approximately 75 to 90.

(b) Educable. (mildly retarded) I.Q. range approximately 50 to 75.

(c) Trainable. (moderately retarded) I.Q. range approximately 30 to 50.

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[1] Report on Federal-Provincial Conference on Mental Retardation. Nova Scotia Working Committee. May 1964.

(d) Non-trainable. (severely retarded or custodial) I.Q. range approximately 0 to 30.

Considerable work has been done in the field of mental retardation in Nova Scotia through the co-operation of the Departments of Health, Education, Welfare and Labour of the government of Nova Scotia. All of these agencies are involved in various facets of this tremendous problem. The interaction of these various Departments can be seen as the medical personnel attempt to diagnose the causative factors, the educationalists must try to provide education suited to their needs and abilities, the Welfare Officers must develop social assistance programs and provide counseling and the labour officials are concerned with the eventual employment of these unfortunates.

History of the Problem in Nova Scotia.

Today, through the mass media of communication, most people are aware of the existence of mentally retarded children. Many know that there are special classes in our schools for these children and probably think of these classes as a recent educational development.

According to the annual reports of the Halifax Board of School Commissioners, a survey of the school population was made prior to 1915 and in the report of that year it was stated "that there were about eighty mental defectives." Mr. A.J. Findlay, the Chairman of the Board, said,

> Although the segregation of the subnormal is but a late expedient, the practice is now generally followed in all large cities. Experience has shown that a few defectives in a class will materially retard its progress. Besides lowering the efficiency of the class as a whole, their presence means discouragment for the teachers as well as themselves..... As a beginning here, a special teacher should be appointed and a class for the mentally defective started.[2]

The report of 1916 showed definite action. The School Board of Halifax decided to set up a special class for retarded children. In 1917, Mr. J.P.Quin, the Chairman of the Board reported:

> the success of our special classes for subnormal children is beyond question. When our estimates were prepared last year, there were included two more special classes for such children but these, for obvious reasons, had to be deferred.[3]

The obvious reason was the explosion of December 6, 1917, which destroyed so much school property that no extra classrooms were available.

Before her retirement, Mrs. Sarah Houston, the first teacher of these special classes submitted a paper to be read at a meeting of the Educational Association at Moncton, New Brunswick, on August 28, 1917. Mrs. Houston stated that this class was the first in Nova Scotia and began October 1, 1916.

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[2] A. Elizabeth Daine. History of Auxiliary Classes in Halifax City. p. 1.

[3] Ibid. p.2

It consisted of eighteen boys and ten girls. The second class was begun September 1917, with fifteen girls and fifteen boys.

The pupils of these first classes were taught in separate sessions - the boys in the morning and the girls in the afternoon. Their handwork consisted of basketry, string work, ring weaving, weaving cushion covers, sewing, knitting, crocheting and embroidery. Mrs. Houston stated that "by special methods most of them learned to write and a few became good readers."

She further states:

> These children can be prepared for useful and happy lives under control....Public schools should be equipped to do anything and everything in their legitmate performance for any and every child that can receive benefit during school age by school children. When a period of benefit has passed, the child should pass out of the school system.

Although their methods were different, nevertheless in the early days of special education the philosophy was much the same as today - to give to these pupils an education suited to their needs. The thoughts of the Board were for the betterment of these pupils, to relieve the classroom of a deterrent to the progress of the more able pupils.

By the year 1920, four auxiliary classes were in operation by the Halifax School Board and their report of that year stated:

too little is known of the extent of the work and

> the value to the community generally of this department of the school services. The general school classes have been relieved by the taking out of the subnormal and backward children who were a hindrance to the progress of the school. Equipment and upkeep of the special classes and the special training of the teacher was done at the Board's expense. The cost of the necessary equipment has not meant so much to the city as the gradual uplift and development of the minds of the unfortunate children and their training in the crafts they are able to learn.[4]

The number of classes continued to increase year by year until in 1938 there were ten classes in all. The Chairman of 1939 reported that the Board carried on the work among backward pupils, may of whom after a term or two were able to resume their places in the regular classes. Others were fitted to take up useful employment where the work required was largely housework or manual labour.

During the early period of special education, the emphasis was on handwork. The academic work was that of the regular grades, watered down to the pupil's level. Very little thought was given to the post school life of the pupil. During the early years of the Second Great War, the pattern changed. It was realized that this former program was not sufficient to meet the needs of these pupils and a new program of "Occupational Education" was introduced in 1948. This program is based on the specific needs of retarded

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[4] Ibid. p. 4

children and their preparation for participation as well adjusted citizens in adult life.

Pupils, instead of being kept busy and amused, are made aware of their capabilities and their value as citizens. This new program of Occupational Education has shown its value in the number of pupils, now adults, who are self-supporting,happy citizens.

From the beginning in Halifax of one teacher and thirty-one pupils in 1916, the needs of two hundred and sixty-one pupils are being served by nineteen teachers today.

The tremendous growth in school population in Dartmouth has led to a need for auxiliary classes to look after the needs of the pupils with below average ability. The first auxiliary class in Dartmouth was started in 1958 at Northbrook School under Miss Josephine Harris, now Director of the Auxiliary Classes for the whole city. In 1959 an additional class was started at Greenvale School. Two more classes, opened in 1960, brought the total to four. The amalgamation of the town of Dartmouth with outlying areas in 1961 increased the number of classes, as there had been a class for the trainable retarded at North Woodside School as well as one auxiliary class at Admiral Westphal School. In 1962 a class was opened at Harbourview School. In 1963 another was opened at Michael Wallace School and in 1964 it was transferred to Admiral Westphal where a third class was established. Thus, in a relatively short period of six years, the

number of classes for retarded children in Dartmouth increased from one to eleven, from a small enrollment to a present total of one hundred and thirty-five. The staff in the same period of time has increased from one teacher to twelve, plus a Supervisor.

Development of Classes for Trainable Retarded.

In the early development of special education in Nova Scotia, mentally retarded children were not classified into educable retarded and trainable retarded classes as they are today. However, with the opening of the Mental Hygiene Clinic in 1918, the Psychiatrist realized that many of the children brought there had I.Q.'s lower than those recommended for auxiliary classes. This led to the establishment of a home for the severely mentally retarded.

In the trying times following the 1917 disaster another project for the welfare of these children was begun.

> The Massachusetts-Halifax Health Commission was organized in Halifax after the explosion of 1917. The Pediatric clinic was started by the Health Commissioner and the pediatrician soon noticed that many of the problems brought to him were retarded mentally or had problems that interfered with normal adjustment at home, at school or in the community. On the recommendation of the pediatrician, a Mental Hygiene Clinic was formed with a psychiatrist in attendance one afternoon a week. The parents, who were glad to cooperate were given a better

> understanding of their children's problems and were helped in their task of special training. The children were interviewed and in most cases given psychological tests. The I.Q. of children brought to the clinic was usually found to be lower than those recommended for auxiliary classes. Until the opening of this Mental Hygiene clinic, no public attention had been given to the child of very low mentality.[5]

Early in the year of 1918, the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire from many towns and cities sent a large amount of money to help sufferers from the Halifax explosion. The Halifax Chapter I.O.D.E. asked if the money could be used to help mentally defective girls from families which had been gravely affected by the explosion. Permission was given and plans were made to establish a Home where the children could be given care and a training suited to their mental ability.

> In the summer of 1918, the I.O.D.E. Home opened to receive ten girls from Halifax North. Some girls had physical defects in addition to their mental defects, but they all needed and were given training that would help them to be happy and useful. Their intelligence was too low for them to become self-supporting outside an institution, but with much patience and kindness on the part of teachers, the girls learned to do housework well under supervision. Among the handcrafts learned were knitting,

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[5] Ibid. , p. 3

> weaving and basketry. The Home established by the I.O.D.E. continued to function for nine years, demonstrating to the public that seriously retarded children can be taught to work and play with others, if given guidance and special training.[6]

> The interest in the severely mentally retarded in Nova Scotia dates back to the formation of an organization in 1908 called the "League for the Protection of the Feebleminded." The League had many prominent persons as members in Halifax and in several towns in the Province. They carried on enquiries about the problem and made representations to the government. This was the first public interest in mental deficiency in Nova Scotia.[7]

After a few years the League ceased to function, but interest was still kept alive in the City of Halifax by the local Council of Women and by members of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire.

> In the year 1919, the members of the Mental Hygiene Committee of the Halifax Local Council of Women contacted former members of the League with the object of reviving the organization. Through the influence of various prominent men and women much interest was aroused and meetings were held which were well attended. The purpose of the meetings were threefold; to reorganize the League for the Protection of the Feebleminded, to start a psychiatric clinic and to work toward the establishment of a Provincial School for retarded children.[8]

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[6] Ibid., p. 2

[7] Ibid., p. 2

[8] Ibid., p. 3

It was soon decided to widen the field, and the name of the organization was changed to the Nova Scotia Society for Mental Hygiene and is still incorporated under that name although it now generally uses the term Canadian Mental Health Association (Nova Scotia Division.) Through the years, the influence of this organization has been great.

The Nova Scotia Training School.

In 1927, the government of Nova Scotia asked the National Committee on Mental Hygiene to make a survey of the province to ascertain if it were advisable to make some provision for institutional care and training of mental defectives.

The Nova Scotia Training School is the result of the years of planning and work by societies, committees and individuals. Scores of meetings were held, and many clubs were addressed by speakers who were interested in the field of mental retardation.

> Before the Training School was opened to receive pupils, Dr. Clyde Marshall, Psychiatrist for the Province of Nova Scotia, made a comprehensive psychological survey of children in County Homes, Orphanages and other institutions, wards of the Children's Aid Societies and the Director of Child Welfare. In this survey, many children were found to be mentally subnormal and suitable as pupils for the Nova Scotia Training School.
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> The boys dormitory, with a capacity for fifty pupils, was opened to receive boys in 1930. Some time before the opening of the school, several teachers were sent to institutions in Massachusetts to study their methods of

> teaching retarded children.
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> The girls cottage, school and trades building, women's staff house, barn, laundry and bakery were completed and in use in 1931. The farm has become highly developed, the grounds beautiful and more and more buildings have been added through the years.[9]

Instead of individuals with no future, except dependence on relatives or continued institutional care, many former pupils have become self-supporting, law-abiding citizens and happy homemakers. The Nova Scotia Training School at Brookside, with its thirty-two years of successful and humane work, now stands as one of the top ranking schools of its kind in Canada.

As early as 1916, responsible people realized that in order to provide adequate educational training for children attending school, it was necessary to take the mentally retarded from the regular classes so that they would not impede the progress of the more capable students and more important, they would take part in a program of instruction better suited to their needs. It is interesting to note that it was realized many years ago in Nova Scotia, that all mentally retarded could not be placed in the same class, that their needs were different and thus the idea of separate classes for educable and trainable developed. The interest of educators and interested citizens has led to a large increase in the number of classes provided for mentally retarded children in this province. See Appendix A.

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[9] Ibid. p. 3

CHAPTER II

THE EDUCATION ACT AND ITS PROVISIONS FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

In considering any educational problems which students in our schools may have, it is essential to study the Education Act of the Province in order to find out what legislation exists which affects these students. In the Education and Related Acts of the Province of Nova Scotia, we find the following statement:

> Subject to this Act and the regulations, every person over the age of five years and under the age of twenty-one years has the right to attend a school in the school section in which he resides.[1]

However, in a later section of the Education Act we find that:

> (1) a child is not required to attend school and a parent is not liable to a penalty under this Act in respect of a child if, (2) the mental condition of the child is such as to render his attendance at or instruction in school inexpedient or impractical.[2]

> School Boards in Nova Scotia may provide instruction for physically or mentally handicapped children and these classes will come under the Foundation Program of Nova Scotia.[3]

The significant things about this regulation are first of all, the word "may" and secondly, the words

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[1] The Education Act and Related Acts of the Province of Nova Scotia, (Halifax) 1961. Section 2, subsection (2) p. 6.

[2] Ibid. p. 48 Section 105

[3] Ibid. p. 69 Regulation 8

"foundation program." According to this regulation school boards may provide classes to instruct mentally handicapped children but they are not required to do so. Thus we find that certain areas of the province have good educational programs for retarded children but there are areas where no special instruction is provided for them. Regarding the foundation program, we find this statement by the Honourable Vincent J. Pottier, Q.C.:

> First of all a level of school support must be determined as basic and essential for every child in the Province. This level, common to all school units, is to be considered as a foundation level only and not as including a total program which would be satisfactory or acceptable to each and every school district in the Province. This Provincial level of basic educational needs must provide for a program of education which this Commission will name and refer to as a Foundation Program for Nova Scotia.[4]

The educational services to be provided under the Foundation Program include (1) capital costs - construction costs, (2) instruction - teacher's salaries, (3) maintenance of schools and (4) transportation of pupils. Under this program, costs are shared on a partnership basis with the Municipal governments contributing according to their fiscal ability, with the Province paying the balance of the costs necessary within each unit for educational needs included in the Foundation Program.

It can be seen that the inclusion of Regulation

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[4] Report of the Royal Commission on Public School Finance in Nova Scotia, (Halifax) 1954 p. 16

8 (c) whereby classes for mentally handicapped can be established under the Foundation Program is of significant importance in Nova Scotia. If it were necessary for School Boards to pay the total expense of these classes without provincial financial assistance, it seems likely that our mentally handicapped children would not be receiving the instruction which they are getting today.

The pupil-teacher ratio in Nova Scotia is thirty-five to one but if the School Board wishes to provide more effective service or instruction, especially for classes of mentally retarded children, it can provide a greater number of teachers or other qualified persons. Thus we find that in certain special classes for the trainable retarded children, assistants have been hired to help the teachers in what must be the most difficult of teaching positions. The financial burden placed on the School Boards is eased as the Provincial government will help pay the additional expenses for these assistants.

The problem of transportation for children who are physically unable to walk to school or whose mental condition is such that it is not safe for them to proceed to school by themselves, is a serious one. School Boards may provide conveyance for these pupils and the costs are shared by the municipality concerned and the Province.

The Education Act guarantees financial assistance

for the maintenance and operation of schools according to the following scales:

(1) For aids, equipment and supplies used in teaching, $100.00 for each instructional area in use as listed below: academic classrooms (include classes for both trainable and educable retarded pupils.)
(11) For the physical maintenance and operation of school buildings at rates in the following schedule:

a. one and two room schools.....$450.00
b. In schools where instruction is given in any or all of the grades, primary to VIII and containing no facilities other than classrooms, library and auditorium-gymnasium.....$600.00[5]

It is possible for municipal and urban school boards to share in the cost of providing special classes for retarded children. Classes may be established in one area which will take children from both the municipality and the city or town. This applies particularly to special classes for the trainable as very few are found in any one school section.

The procedure is as follows:

(1) Two or more school boards (municipal and urban) agree to establish a special class.
(2) One board agrees to be the administrating board.
(3) The class is declared an "administrative division thereof" and its administration is the

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[5] The Education Act and Related Acts of the Province of Nova Scotia, (Halifax) 1961 p. 76

responsibility of the head of that school system.

(4) The cost of the class is computed and divided between each board on a per pupil basis.

(5) Each board declares its cost under the Foundation Program.

It can be seen from the legislation described that the Education Act does provide for the mentally handicapped in a financial way, envisaged by Mr. Justice Pottier. All the services included in the Foundation Program such as capital costs, teacher's salaries, maintenance of schools and transportation of pupils are available to assist in lightening the financial burden faced by municipalities which provide classes for retarded children. Certainly, we have taken important strides in this field from the time when individual agencies and the parents of mentally retarded children had the complete responsibility for providing education for these children without the benefit of governmental and school board assistance.

Education costs have soared in this province and elsewhere. Some areas of the province use fifty-percent of their revenue to look after education costs. It is felt by school boards in some areas and perhaps justifiably so, that the percentage of funds paid by the Provincial government under the Foundation Program should be increased especially

for classes established for retarded children. If we consider the ratio of thirty-five pupils to one teacher as laid down in the Act and compute the percentage of her salary which is paid under the Foundation Program and compare the percentage received for a teacher in charge of an auxiliary class, which must have a small enrollment, we can see that the cost of the auxiliary class is two or two and a half times greater than for a normal class. When we consider the fact that the city of Halifax has approximately twenty of these classes, the additional drain on funds can become severe.

The government of Nova Scotia has taken cognizance of the problem of mental retardation in this province by including special classes under the various parts of the Foundation Program so that costs are shared by the province and the municipalities concerned. However, far-sighted legislation which will provide for increased provincial grants to defray the extensive financial outlay for these special classes is now of tantamount importance if mentally retarded children are to receive an education suited to their needs in this province.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLES OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH, WELFARE AND LABOUR IN THE PROBLEM OF MENTAL RETARDATION

It has been pointed out in previous pages that the problem of the slow learner is one which requires the co-operation of the various departments of Government. The departments of Health, Welfare, Education and Labour must combine their resources to ensure that those who are mentally retarded have an opportunity to become useful citizens in our society. The right hand must know what the left is doing in order to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure that programs are co-ordinated.

In the report of the Nova Scotia Working Committee for the Federal-Provincial Conference on Mental Retardation we find this statement:

> Since mental retardation is not a single etiological entity but may result from a great variety of causal factors and is not a disease, but a resultant condition causing subaverage general intellectual functioning, thus affecting the retardant's adaptive behaviour, it should be emphasized that any program developed to assist all mentally retarded persons, from birth through adulthood, must co-ordinate the research, knowledge, skills, services, and programs of all disciplines concerned - education, health and medicine; welfare and social services; psychology, labour, law and parent organizations.[1]

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[1] Federal-Provincial Conference on Mental Retardation, Nova Scotia Working Committee Report. May 1964.

While the Department of Public Health does not conduct any program specifically for the mentally retarded, there are a number of programs carried on by the Department which are related to the problem of mental retardation.

Maternity Care.

The Department of Public Health assists in the task of achieving the highest possible standard of maternity care and carries out the following services which have a direct and important bearing on the prevention of mental retardation:

(a) The Director of Child and Maternal Health is Chairman of an Advisory Committee on Child and Maternal Health.
(b) The Director of Child and Maternal Health is a consultant to the Nova Scotia Insurance Commission in matters pertaining to maternity care.
(c) It supports, through health grants, the prenatal mortality study of the Nova Scotia Medical Society. This project is directly concerned with the standards of maternity care.
(d) It supports an emergency obstetrical team which offers assistance to any part of the province.[2]

Biochemical Diseases Associated with Infancy.

This program is concerned with problems related to the detection and treatment of phenylketonuria. This is a hereditary disease in which the mother and father carry a trait weakness which is passed on to approximately twenty-five percent of their

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[2] Ibid., p. 7

children. This disease can be detected by a simple urine test when the baby is three to six weeks of age. If the baby is untreated, the result is usually mental retardation. It is believed that a special diet, low in certain amino acids, will prevent the mental retardation which would otherwise result. The Department of Public Health will pay the cost of the special diet which is required. It has been recommended that all infants born in Nova Scotia should have a urine test of P.K.U. through the laboratory facilities of general hospitals.[3]

Health Care, Including Treatment.

The Department of Public Health supports nine community Mental Health clinics throughout the province of Nova Scotia. These clinics are a co-operative effort between the Department of Public Health, the community and the local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. As these clinics become fully staffed, they will provide diagnostic and counselling facilities for the communities within each health unit.

In Halifax City there is a special clinic for the mentally retarded which is a co-operative effort between the city and Dalhousie University and the Canadian Association for Retarded Children, Nova Scotia Division, and is supported by health grants from the Nova Scotia Department of Public Health. The mentally retarded who report to this clinic are examined by a psychiatrist or paediatrician as well as other competent para-medical personnel.

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[3] Ibid., p. 11

Persons who are non-trainable due to mental retardation and who require institutional care are admitted to the Nova Scotia Hospital for assessment. With the approval of the Director of Mental Health, certain cases, upon recommendation by two psychiatrists, may be admitted to one of the Municipal Mental Hospitals. The Director of Mental Health requires a report regularly concerning these patients to ensure adequate supervision and to determine any development of the patient's potential. If these patients are children, the Director may recommend they continue in one of the Municipal Mental Hospitals, or be referred for Foster Home care under the Department of Public Welfare, or placed in the Nova Scotia Training School.

In the province there are two branches of the Nova Scotia Division of the Canadian Association for Retarded Children providing Day Care Centres for pre-school children. One local branch of the Association is providing day care to school-aged children who are severely retarded (non-trainable).

Liaison Between the Departments of Health and Welfare.

The Director of Mental Health certifies mental retardation and the Director of Child Welfare approves admission to the Nova Scotia Training School. A similiar service is extended to retardates who are placed under the Foster Home Care Plan.

A number of social workers of the Department of

Public Welfare, as well as some of the Public Health Nurses of the Department of Public Health, assist parents in developing an objective approach to everyday problems presented by the retarded child and in developing plans for adequate training and care indicated by the placement officers.

The Canadian Association for Retarded Children, Nova Scotia Division, carries out a Home Care program through a committee of the same name. This gives parents of retarded children, particularly mothers, an opportunity to meet in groups with professionals to discuss with one another the home situations and any problems with which they may need help.

Department of Public Welfare.

The Nova Scotia Training School, operated by the Department of Public Welfare, is a child-caring institution for one hundred and eighty mentally retarded children of which one hundred and twenty are educable and sixty are trainable. This school, situated near Truro, develops the retarded child's adequacy in three areas; personal, social and occupational.

> A child's personal adequacy is developed by placing him in training situations and practical experiences designed to develop self-reliance, a sense of personal worth, and a feeling of belonging.[4]

Social adequacy is developed by experience in group living, games and social functions, community

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[4] Ibid., p. 16

contacts, and classroom instruction. Occupational adequacy is the goal of classroom instruction in handicrafts, woodworking, cooking, sewing, etc. and of practical work throughout the institution. Academic instruction, to the extent of the child's capacity is specifically directed to the accomplishment of the three goals in regular classroom instruction.

As a general rule the retardate leaves the school at eighteen years of age to return to his home or job placement. The trainable young adult, if he cannot return to his own home and engage in sheltered employment, has foster care provided for him. A number of trainables are boarded in foster homes and supervised by the social work staff at school. These retardates are in receipt of the Disabled Person's Allowance. Foster homes are provided for mentally retarded children of the three categories. This program ends when the child reaches the age of eighteen years. There could be continuity of care with the mentally retarded person receiving the Disabled Person's Allowance.

There is a licensed group-boarding home under the supervision of the Department of Public Welfare. At present six untrainable children are being cared for. These children are supervised and assessed regularly, moving out of the home when improvement in their functioning is noted.

Some mentally retarded children need guardianship, because of parental neglect or loss of parents, before receiving residential care or foster home care. These children are taken before juvenile courts, and, if found to be neglected children, guardianship is given to a Children's Aid Society or to the Director of Child Welfare. Thus, when the retardate is ready to leave the institution or foster home, he has the assurance of continuous care until the age of twenty-one years at least.

The Province of Nova Scotia does not have a special vocational education or training program for mentally retarded adolescents. The Vocational Education Division provides occupational training for youth in six vocational High Schools throughout the province. It also provides, through the Nova Scotia Institute of Technology, occupational training or retraining for persons beyond school leaving age in order that they may enter employment in certain semi-skilled trades. However, it is quite evident that the mentally handicapped cannot meet the entrance requirements for these establishments and that only a small segment of them could benefit from courses providing occupation skills and knowledge in the maximum time available.

The pupil at the Nova Scotia Training School commences his vocational training with practical work throughout the institution; in the dormitories, kitchens, boiler room, the farm, laundry, grounds

and general maintenance. The trainee, when considered ready for employment, is placed in the community at jobs, working by day and returning to the School at night. After a period of temporary employment, the trainee leaves the School, ready for full-time employment. The graduate who has found work in a city or town is usually referred by his placement officer to the recreation and leisure time facilities offered by the church, Y.M.C.A. or Y.W.C.A.

Department of Labour.

The Department of Labour gives service only by exception to the regulations concerning the employable mentally retarded. Apprenticeship training regulations do not specifically deal with the physically and mentally retarded. Minimum entrance requirements to apprenticeship training is given as Grade VIII or equivalent.

Programs for the mentally retarded in Nova Scotia, as elsewhere, have developed without too much awareness of how single programs in government Departments and voluntary organizations relate to one another. Because of the numerous problems which accompany mental retardation, it is necessary to have a closer liason with all agencies concerned, both government and voluntary.

In 1962, the Nova Scotia Minister of Public Welfare brought together senior officials in

the Departments of Education, Health and Welfare who were involved in programs dealing with the mentally retarded. Members of the Executive of the Canadian Association for Retarded Children, Nova Scotia Division, were also included in the joint meeting. Programs were reviewed and gaps in services noted. These meetings are held bi-annually and have proved to be valuable in co-ordinating services for the mentally retarded.[5]

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[5] Ibid., p. 11

CHAPTER IV

CLASSES FOR TRAINABLE RETARDED, EDUCABLE RETARDED AND SLOW LEARNERS IN NOVA SCOTIA

Intellectually and educationally the children who are found in the lowest quartile of the population form three broad and distinct groups. Each group has its own characteristics and problems requiring a distinct and unique educational program. The first group is made up of children whose I.Q.'s range approximately from thirty to fifty and they are placed in the trainable retarded classes. The curriculum for these children is based on the development of skills, with very little emphasis on academic work.

Among the second group we have the educable retarded children with I.Q.'s ranging approximately from fifty to seventy. They are placed in auxiliary classes which are organized in public school systems, both municipal and urban. They are recognized within the Education Act, thereby making them the responsibility of the local school boards.

The third group is the least retarded of the three and is called the slow-learner group. This group is also the largest in number and includes from fifteen to twenty percent of the school population. These are the children who find it difficult to keep up with the work of the regular classrooms and who are closest to the normal group in their emotional, social, physical and motor development.

Trainable Retarded Classes.

These classes are established to look after those children whose I.Q.'s fall into the thirty to fifty range. They are classed trainable because the amount of academic skills they can learn is very limited.

> Slowly but inexorably the doctrine of equal educational opportunity for all children has attained the force of law in democratic societies. This doctrine has recently been extended to include many physical and mental deviates who previously were considered too handicapped to profit from formalized educational facilities.[1]

With the exception of the two classes in the Municipal Mental Hospitals and the three classes at the Nova Scotia Training School, all classes for the trainable mentally retarded are under the local school board administrations, thus becoming part of the public school system. Most of these classes were started by branches of the Canadian Association for Retarded children, Nova Scotia Division. With certain changes made in the Nova Scotia Education Act, it became possible to include these classes in our public schools. They are recognized, therefore, as part of the Nova Scotia Foundation Program and the Provincial government and local school boards share in the cost. This helps in having trained

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[1]Louis E. Rosenweig and Julia Long, Understanding and Teaching the Dependent Retarded Child. (Darien, Conn.: The Educational Publishing Corp., 1960) p. 9

teachers, adequate classroom facilities and equipment, and approved transportation.

The Department of Education has approved a special program which is based on the book, Under - standing and Teaching the Dependent Retarded Child, by Rosenweig and Long. The supervision of this program and these classes is the responsibility of the Inspector of Special Education.

> Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada where classes for the trainable mentally retarded children are fully recognized by its Education Act as being a part of the public school system and which has a prescribed program for them on a provincial basis.[2]

The Inspector of Special Education has the responsibility of assisting school boards in establishing special classes for the trainable and auxiliary classes for the educable retarded, developing and supervising classroom programs and curriculum, assisting with recruiting and training teachers, and co-operating with other government Departments concerned with mental retardation. Nova Scotia is the only province having such a position which helps to bring about uniformity of procedures and provides leadership from the top. Some of the wealthiest cities in Canada have Directors of Special Services but their efforts are confined mainly to the city which employs them, while the remainder of the province follows behind.

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[1]Federal-Provincial Conference on Mental Retardation, Nova Scotia Working Committee Report, May 1964 p. 25

Parents and teachers are well aware that children differ in height, weight, color of hair and eyes, etc. and these are accepted as the rule of nature. The subtle differences of personality, intelligence and temperament in children are less apparent and less well understood. Since there is such a wide range of differences in children, we are inclined to establish limits of acceptability. We have devised the term "normal" for such limits. Children who fail to meet such standards are considered to be "sub-normal". Society is inclined to attach strong negative feelings to the intellectually inferior and makes them the butt of sarcasm and humor.

The term "mentally retarded" to designate these children has received the widest usage in recent years, mainly because of its acceptance by parent groups. It seems to be a kinder description than any of the others, or at least it has not yet been misused by society.

Identification and Selection of Children for Trainable Retarded Classes.

The chief method of identification of mental retardation is the result obtained from an intelligence test. However, not every intelligence test can be employed since it is necessary to rule out other factors than intelligence that might interfere with the result, such as illiteracy, physical defects

or weaknesses within the structure of the test itself. It is common, therefore, in most communities to use a test whose validity and reliability is high and one that rules out as far as is possible the other irrelevant factors. Such intelligence tests are usually given individually and take the form of an interview between the tester and the child. The two tests used most frequently are the Terman-Merril 1937 Revision of the Binet and the Wechsler Intelligence Scales. Loosely speaking, any child who scores in the zero to seventy-five I.Q. range on one of these tests is presumed to be mentally retarded. This assumption of the retardation should be further examined by inquiries into the physical, cultural, emotional, enviornmental and biographical factors that may help to explain the child's present functioning. Good clinical practice, especially when a differential diagnosis has been made, requires such exhaustive inquiry into all phases.

The responses of the trainable retarded to intelligence tests are so meager that in many instances the diagnosis can be made without recourse to an exact quantitative score. The entire testing situation is almost meaningless to them. Judgement and reasoning are notably lacking. Literacy is rarely attained by members of this group. Special techniques and much application are necessary to teach them to

recognize common signs in their enviornment necessary for safety and survival. They can be taught eventually to recognize numbers, such as addresses, telephone and some money values. They can learn to safeguard themselves from common physical dangers although they are inclined to be accident prone. Speech deficiencies are frequently encountered and since oral language is their major means of communication, much effort and time must be spent in this area. Physical signs of retardation are very evident. Muscular co-ordination is extremely poor and although some growth in this regard is possible, it is developed slowly. Unusual emotional states are frequently encountered. Some of these are associated with the constitutional nature of the defect, others are a learned kind of behaviour, directed against a world that they find unfriendly and bewildering.

> They are and will remain socially inadequate although an educational regimen instituted early and continued almost to the adult years may help them to live fuller and richer lives. Although many in this group are destined to live in protective situations, some may learn to work under sheltered auspices either at home or in special work situations.[3]

A careful assessment of all factors must be carried out before decisions can be made for placement of a child in a trainable retarded class. The factors may be considered under the headings of

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[3]Louis E. Rosenweig and Julia Long, Understanding and Teaching the Dependent Retarded Child. (Darien, Conn.: The Educational Publishing Corp., 1960) p. 18

eligibility and feasibility. First of all we must consider whether the child has attained the age for mandatory attendance in school. Then, under feasibility we must consider whether the child has (a) the ability to walk, (b) to make feeding needs known and to help himself, (c) the ability to dress himself, (d) the ability to remain without parents for four to five hours. Secondly, it must be determined that the basic defect from which the individual suffers is mental retardation. This should be clinically determined and should meet all six of Doll's criteria:

> (a) social incompetence, (b) due to mental subnormality, (c) which has been developmentally arrested, (d) which obtains at maturity, (e) if of constitutional origin and (f) is essentially incurable.[4]

Thirdly, we must consider that the degree and extent of the mental retardation is such that it precludes the child's placement in other school services. It is assumed that an I.Q. below fifty indicates that an individual cannot successfully engage either in the curriculum of the regular grades or in the traditional special classes for "educable" retarded children. Under this factor we must consider physical handicaps such as impaired vision, impaired hearing, impaired mechanisms for motor co-ordination, etc. These and other handicaps may interfere with success on some scales for measuring intelligence. We must consider brain

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[4]E.A.Doll, I.Q. and Mental Deficiency, (Journal of Consulting Psychology, 1960) p. 29-30

injury which may be interfering with perception and which may affect the test results. The fact that early illnesses may have delayed mental development must be considered as well as delayed speech that may have influenced the ability of the child to respond to the verbal aspects of the intelligence tests. Under eligibility we must ensure that the degree and extent of retardation is not so great that it precludes placement in this school service. The mental age of some children may be so low as to make them poor risks for group educational procedures.

> Viewing the child from the perspectives of eligibility and feasibility guarantees each child the widest consideration possible. The intent in this approach is not to develop criteria that will deprive a child from his right to participate in a planned educational program but rather to protect this child and other children so that the planned educational program can function effectively in their behalf.
>
> Some of the criteria developed lend themselves to examination prior to the child's admission to school. Many borderline cases cannot be resolved and current practice in many communities is to establish a trial period of from six to fifteen weeks. This is a worthwhile practice, and in the present stage of our knowledge concerning such children, it should be continued.[5]

The cornerstone of the democratic way of life is the belief in the worth and dignity of the individual. The individual is supreme and institutions

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[5]Louis E. Rosenweig and Julia Long, Understanding and Teaching the Dependent Retarded Child, (Darien, Connn.: The Educational Publishing Corp., 1960) p.29-30

are convenient systems organized to serve him. All the rights and privileges that are guaranteed to the citizens of a democracy are logical extensions of this belief. We are convinced that every individual, if given the opportunity, can make some contribution to the common welfare and his own happiness.

> Education is the instrument through which a society seeks to implement and put into practice the ideal by which it lives. It is nourished by the culture in which it flourishes and in turn revitalizes and extends that culture. Thus, if the goals and purposes of education are examined, one can see reflected the philosophy of that society. Such goals apply to all citizens of the state, to the bright as well as to the intellectually limited. The goals were intended as relative ones to be attained by each individual to the extent to which his ability permitted.[6]

> Four major goals of education in a democracy have been identified. They are (1) self-realization, (2) human relationship, (3) economic efficiency, and (4) civic responsibility. These goals are interrelated and each is capable of further subdivision. They should be viewed as four vantage points from which to study the more specific purposes of education. Furthermore, these goals are not the exclusive property of the schools. They are the goals that all educational institutions, the school, the home, the church, etc., are pursuing commonly and jointly.[7]

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[6] Ibid., p. 33

[7] Educational Policies Commission, Policies for Education in American Democracy. (Washington D.C. National Education Association, 1946) p. 47

The question to be answered is:

> Are these goals applicable to the mentally retarded and, specifically, can we use them for the group under discussion, the trainable retarded? The common factor that links all individuals together is that they will exhibit through their development and by their behaviour an impairment in intellectual functioning. As far as is known, this impairment is present from birth or an early age and continues throughout the life of the individual so affected. The trainable retarded child will grow intellectually at the rate of one quarter to one half of a year in any one calendar year. Thus at three years of age, they will be capable of solving problems of the average child of three-quarters to one and a half years; at six, they will perform like children of one and one half to three years; at nine, like children of two and a quarter to four and a half years; at twelve, like children three to six years and at maturity like children four to eight years.[8]

The assumption that must be made for all retarded children is that because of their lowered intellectual potential, they will not be able to solve life's problems without some kind of organized help. The amount of such aid will be represented by the difference between the goals that they can attain and the goals which our society recognizes as necessary for independent survival.

Curriculum Used for Trainable Retarded Classes in Nova Scotia.

In the province of Nova Scotia, we have accepted for our use in the trainable retarded classes a

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[8] Louis E.Rosenweig and Julia Long, Understanding and Teaching the Dependent Retarded Child, (Darien, Conn.: The Educational Publishing Corp., 1960) p. 35-36

curriculum outline by Louis E. Rosenweig and Julia Long. This guide presents six major skill areas: the self-help, social, motor, academic, vocational and avocational and the attainable subskills in each area.

The Self-Help Skills.

These are basically an orderly extension of the skills that the child has begun to develop prenatally. Feeding and toileting are skills of this nature. They are not only partially ready to function at birth but receive the greatest amount of attention and concern of all the skills from the moment of birth. Since they form the primary learning tasks of childhood and are the basic skills of existence, how they are taught and how they are learned may seriously affect the learning of all subsequent skills. Other self-help skills are important for the protection of the individual from the dangers which threaten existence. Washing, brushing teeth, controlling self and identifying self are such skills. Holding one's temper, employing one's self, completing tasks, and following instructions are skills that are also necessary. Together the self-help skills represent what an individual must acquire if he is to respect himself as an individual and what he must learn before he can participate in the affairs of the world about him.

The Social Skills.

Any child from infancy on is faced with the complex task of molding the world to suit himself while taking into account the desires and needs of others. It is in the area of the social skills that the mental deficient exhibits his most glaring lacks. Social incompetence is the major criterion of mental deficiency and the reasons for this are not hard to find. The social skills are highly dependent on those higher mental processes of judgement, reasoning and dealing with abstract symbols. The trainable retarded child is dependent for so long a period of time on his mother that the rapport that usually exists between mother and child is damaged. Rejecting or smothering attitudes of the parents and siblings arise to aggravate further or defeat his weak attempts to establish his identity and to learn the necessary social skills.

Some of the social skills which must be learned are as follows: (a) considering others, (b) receiving help, (c) playing and working with others, (d) helping others, (e) being courteous to others, (f) obeying rules and (g) being kind to animals.

Motor Skills.

Motor development is one of the most rapid forms of development during the early years. Within a short period of time, the individual changes from a helpless infant to an active, reaching, co-ordinated

child. The relationship of motor ability to mental ability has been explored by many investigators. One could conclude that the rate of early motor development is indicative of mental growth. Tregold, in his classic work on mental deficiency, states that, " a defect of muscular co-ordination is one of the commonest abnormalities of mental defectives."[9] He points out that in such children body balance is ungainly, there is clumsiness in walking and running and motor disability is pronounced in the finer hand and finger movements. We normally assume that a child will learn to crawl and eventually walk. These are the obvious skills and are taken for granted. However, the trainable retarded child must be taught to walk with good co-ordination, to run with assurance, to walk or run up or down stairs with objects in arms, to enter into group or social dancing with evident satisfaction, to use all eating utensils skillfully except knife for cutting, and to use pencil with finger movement and good speed and to produce legible figures and letters.

The Academic Skills.

Because of the very limited potential of the trainable retarded child, it is difficult for him to grasp any academic skills. However, an attempt is made to teach him visual discrimination so that he has the ability to associate objects of clothing with some personal function such as the

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[9] A.F.Tredgold, A Textbook of Mental Deficiency 7th. Ed., (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Co., 1947) p. 71.

policeman, fireman, nurse or doctor. Under auditory discrimination, an effort is made to teach the child to recognize sounds of many things which may be safety cues. The ability to use a large variety of words for common objects, days of the week and articles of clothing is also of importance. It is desirable for the trainable retarded child to learn to read labels on cans, boxes and packages and be able to read all safety signs. The teacher of the trainable retarded class must realize fully the limitations of her pupils. It would be pointless for her to waste her time trying to teach academic skills which are beyond her pupils when her time would be better spent on self-help or motor skills.

Vocational Skills.

The skills which have already been mentioned are a prelude to some type of vocational training, because without these skills, the individual would not be sufficiently motivated to attempt vocational skills.

> Recent studies of groups of retarded children have shown that twenty-seven percent of the group studied worked for pay. Most of the jobs held consisted of simple household chores, sweeping, dusting, washing dishes, or jobs as messengers.[10]

In the trainable retarded classes in Nova Scotia the children are taught such things as

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[10]Louis E. Rosenweig and Julia Long, Understanding and Teaching the Dependent Retarded Child, (Darien, Conn.: The Educational Publishing Corp., 1960) p. 54

running errands, caring for others, dusting and sweeping, setting a table, washing and drying dishes, washing and ironing, homemaking, and using tools. Avocational Skills.

The trainable retarded child is taught skills which will serve as leisure time activities. He is taught to make gifts such as pin trays, book marks and message pads. He attempts to learn to use a hammer, screw driver, sandpaper, shellac and oil paints. If a child can learn these skills, it will help him to use his leisure time profitably and perhaps give him a source of livlihood at the same time.

In the curriculum outline for the trainable retarded classes we find a neat breakdown of the plans and procedures for each type of skill under the headings: skill, suggested activities for the teacher, suggested activities for the child and audiovisual and other materials.

For most people, the thought of serious mental retardation is one which they do not entertain for very long. They express solicitude for the unfortunate and at the same time breath a sigh of relief if it is a problem which has not affected anyone close to them. It is hard for a person to realize that a child may be so seriously retarded that he requires instruction on how to open a door or use a spoon.

Auxiliary Classes

The classes for educable mentally retarded children in Nova Scotia are called Auxiliary Classes, and are organized in public school systems, both municipal and urban. They are recognized within the Education Act, thereby making them the responsibility of the local school boards. The Inspector of Special Education is the member of the Nova Scotia Department of Education who is directly responsible for the program, curriculum and supervision of auxiliary classes throughout the province.

The classes are organized as follows:

(1) Junior Auxiliary Classes - Ages 8, 9 and 10.
(2) Intermediate Auxiliary Classes - Ages 11,12,13.
(3) Senior Auxiliary Classes - Ages 14 and up.

Where there are insufficient children in any one school to follow this pattern, a modification of it is necessary. An attempt is made to keep as homogeneous a grouping as possible according to both chronological and mental age.

Auxiliary classes have been set up to look after those children whose I.Q.'s fall into the approximate range of from fifty to seventy-five. Most of the trainable retarded children are detected by their parents or the family doctor and are not entered in the Public Schools, rather they are kept at home. However, the educable mentally retarded enter school at the regular age of five years.

During the first year of school, detection and assessments are started and continued the following year and later. It is frequently during the first year of school that detection of mental retardation is possible. This will occur as a result of the teacher's report as to the child's ability to follow the program, and from the administration of standardized tests. It is not considered wise to make these assessments final, but the child must be watched carefully, worked with carefully and given further standardized tests. Such assessment will be carried on for two or three years. When the assessors are reasonably certain that the child is mentally handicapped he will be recommended for placement in an auxiliary class for the educable retarded. At this point, the child is approximately seven and one-half to eight years of age. Parental counselling then takes place. No child is to be placed in an auxiliary class until the parents have given their consent. If this consent is denied, the child is left in a regular class and the head of the school system will continue to try to convince the parents that the child will be very handicapped trying to work at the same rate as normal children.

Aims and Objectives in the Education of the Educable Mentally Retarded.

Stated briefly, the general educational goals for the mentally retarded pupil are the same as those stated for all children. Like normal children, the mentally handicapped should be educated so as to make the most of their abilities, to satisfy their own needs as well as the demands of the society in which they live. Elise Martens, in a pamphlet entitled, Curriculum Adjustments for the Mentally Retarded, states these goals as:

> 1. The knowledge and disposition to keep physically well in order to enjoy life to its maximum;
> 2. An ease and joy in social relationships that help him (the mentally retarded child) to make friends and to participate in social and civic experiences;
> 3. An ability to live as a contributing member of a family and a neighbourhood group, and later to maintain a home of his own as head of a family;
> 4. An ability to plan and to choose his leisure activities wisely;
> 5. The ability to earn as much of the necessities of life as possible;
> 6. The knowledge and ability to spend his salary wisely.[11]

These goals of a program for mentally handicapped children are not achieved independently but by planning direct, specific experiences. Rather,

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[11] Nadine Chidley, Planning for the Educable Retarded Children in a Public School System. (Winnipeg) 1960. p. 6

they form the unifying core of the entire program as each one is directly related to and dependent upon the others.

The program for the slow learner must be practical. It should be constructed to suit the child's present and future needs. The scope and content of the curriculum should be determined by his interests and his ability to assimilate it and use it in everyday life.

The curriculum, which includes activities in academic and non-academic fields, should be considered as all of the child's experiences during his day at school. All of these activities should be so arranged and simplified that the backward child will be able to benefit from them. Many of the activities may be integrated within a unit of study; however, the basic skills should have special emphasis.

The areas for academic lesson materials should be social situations, social service problems and health and safety problems. Social experiences help the mentally retarded pupils to appreciate the contribution that others make to our society and to understand that they in turn have individual responsibilities towards others.

The core curriculum refers to studies dealing with human relationships, structured around centres

of interest in which the basic subjects are integrated. The plan allows for an overall understanding of some topic, with successful practice on many basic skills. As the areas are explored, the study assumes a life-like aspect which provides motivation to the pupil for acquiring greater proficiency academically, manually, socially and economically.

The core unit of study provides a practical plan for teaching slow-learning children. The plan has proved successful in holding interest throughout a series of experiences and activities. It is also useful for motivating the retention of information and basic skills and for teaching other concepts and attitudes which lead to the final objective of producing a self-sufficient adult.

The core unit may be planned for the group by selecting a topic of interest in the area of human relationships as represented in the social studies or science fields, and by grouping materials, activities and experiences around it from many areas, thus producing a coherent and cohesive unit of study. The chronological and mental ages, intelligence quotient, maturity, environment and interests, as well as the ability to profit from activities and experiences, should be considered in planning all units of work for slow learning children.

The teacher must provide the content or subject matter and the background material. She

must prepare the details for presentation and for the integration of other areas of study or work. She must plan for all of the activities and experiences in connection with the unit. She must prepare work-sheets at several levels of ability to reinforce oral and demonstration teaching. The teacher must co-ordinate the preparation and presentation of all these items and carry them through to completion.

The teacher is responsible for building into the units, materials and activities that will train the child to have attitudes and habits that are socially acceptable. These may include cleaniness, neatness, courtesy, promptness, honesty, and a respect for property, both public and private.

Two of the basic goals of the core curriculum are:

A. To provide a limited number of basic occupational skills for specified chronological age levels centered about meaningful and realistic instructional cores.

B. To make these cores start from the nearest and most meaningful enviornment of the pupil, and gradually guide him to an ultimate realization of his privileges and responsibilities as a citizen and as a contributing member of the social sphere in which he lives and functions.

The core curriculum for the auxiliary classes of the province of Nova Scotia is built around eight

titles. These subjects are arranged so that the child moves from one to another according to chronological age. It must be remembered that the total learning situation for the auxiliary student is constructed around the core.

The eight cores are as follows:

CORE	TITLE	CHRONOLOGICAL AGE
1.	Family and Home	6,7,8
2.	The Neighbourhood	9,10
3.	The Larger Community	11,12
4.	Our City or Town	13
5.	Study of Job Areas	14
6.	Choosing, Getting, Holding a Job	14,15
7.	Spending one's Income	15
8.	Worker as Citizen and Social Being	16,17 +

The objectives of core one might include the following:

a. To help children to learn, to follow and to obey instructions.
b. To teach children to work together co-operatively.
c. To help children to acquire desirable social habits.
d. To help children to acquire desirable personal habits.
e. To train children to contribute toward happy family relationships.

Some suggested topics for this core might include:

a. Helping with household tasks.
b. Caring for belongings. (Personal and common household.)
c. Helping with money through economy and care.
d. Keeping safely, hats, caps, gloves and rubbers.
e. Keeping clothes reasonably clean.
f. Correct use of knife, fork, spoon, glass and dish.
g. Serving others.
h. Caring for self.
i. Kindness to pets.
j. Protection of pets.
k. Care of pets.

The various cores from one to eight are outlined on the basis of weekly and monthly plans for the whole school year. Some of the lesson plans to accompany these cores were prepared by auxiliary teachers following the Auxiliary Block Program during the summer months. These plans reflect the diligence and competence of these teachers whose dedication to their profession is without question.

The teaching of reading is a very serious problem in the junior auxiliary classes. It has been found that the pre-primer readers are unsatisfactory for these children. In one of the auxiliary classes in the city of Dartmouth, an experiment in reading is going on at the present time. The method in use was developed by Sylvia Ashton-Warner in

teaching children with no knowledge of English. The method used is to acquaint the child with some words, each written on a separate piece of paper. Gradually, the child is permitted to choose his own word. Each day the teacher reviews the words with each individual child. As the child identifies the word, he is asked to tell some little story about it. He makes the word his own and he is encouraged to talk by this method. If a child is unable to remember the word, the teacher takes the slip of paper and tears it up. The child thus loses the word and a greater effort is extended by him so that he will not lose it. These words have a high interest value for the child because they are derived from his experiences. As the child acquires more words he is taught some simple ones so that he can form sentences. It is difficult to predict the outcome of this experiment. However, the teacher and the supervisor are so far impressed with it. The children seem to enjoy it as a game and at the same time are learning words and developing vocabulary which means something to them, rather than the repetition of words which mean nothing, such as are found in some basic reading texts.

Nova Scotia has made substantial progress in her handling of the educable retarded. When we compare the facilities available today with those of

a few years back we can see that a great deal of planning has been put forth in establishing a province-wide system of education which compares favourably to the rest of Canada.

Slow-Learners.

Intellectually and educationally the children who are found in the lowest quartile of the population form three broad and distinct groups. Each group has its own characteristics and problems requiring a distinct and unique educational program. The first two groups, the trainable retarded and the educable retarded, have already been covered; the third group is the least retarded of the three and is called the slow-learner group. This group is also the largest in number and includes from fifteen to twenty percent of the school population. These are the children who find it difficult to keep up with the work of the regular classroom and who are closest to the normal group in their emotional, social, physical, and motor development. In intellectual development the slow learner approximates the lowest range of the normal group. Although classified as retarded, the majority of slow learners do not deviate to such an extent that they cannot be adequately educated in the regular classroom. However, in all such groups, there are some pupils who cannot benefit from regular classroom placement and who do need a specialized type of program.

Characteristics of Slow Learners.

Contrary to general belief, the slow learners do not differ to any great extent from children in general in physical, intellectual, educational and emotional characteristics. Their general appearance and reactions are similiar, and it is impossible to distinguish them by merely looking at them. The fact that they appear to be so "normal" or "average" is probably the cause of many of their difficulties and the reason why their difficulties and deviations go unrecognized.

Physical Growth.

As a group, the slow learners are probably slightly below average in size, build and motor ability. There is a small, passive correlation between physical and motor development and level of intelligence. However, with slow learners, this difference is not sufficient to have educational significance.

Intellectual Growth.

As previously stated, slow learners make up the largest group of mentally retarded persons. Approximately fifteen to eighteen percent of the general school population can be considered slow learners. In an average community school system, a class of thirty unselected children can be expected to include four or five slow learners. The rate of growth of a slow learner is between three-fourths and nine-tenths that of an average child. His maximum

mental development ranges from eleven years to thirteen years, six months.

In the classroom, when compared to the normal child of the same chronological age, the slow-learner exhibits the following intellectual characteristics:

1. They have not the same mastery of previous learning and consequently will need more review.
2. Their interest span is shorter and they will need smaller units of work.
3. They cannot retain many things at a time, nor for very long, and the learning situation should therefore not contain too many elements either in number or in trend.
4. They do not comprehend or see clearly the significance of things, therefore questions and facts must be clear and specific.
5. They have difficulty organizing ideas or facts, therefore situations must require little organization or they must be given help in organizing.
6. Their general interests are not as wide or as varied.
7. They lack initative, cannot direct their own activities or detect and correct their errors, and therefore will require more guidance and help in understanding their mistakes.[12]

Educational Growth.

When the slow learners enter school they are already retarded intellectually as compared to the norm for their age. Consequently these children usually spend two years in the first grade and probably repeat one or two additional grades during their

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[12]Nadine Chidley, Special Education for the Slow Learner, (Winnipeg) Sept., 1963. p. 3

school life. The slow learners at the I.Q. range of ninety are close enough to the average to be able to make normal or almost normal progress throughout most of their school life.

That slow learners are retarded in their rate of intellectual growth is indicated by their I. Q. ratings. This degree of retardation is reflected in school by their lack of academic achievement. Certain specific academic skills require a minimum mental age before the majority of children can undertake their study. The slow learners do not and cannot learn these academic skills at the chronological age at which they are taught to most children. A good example of this is in the teaching of reading. Reading requires a minimum mental age of six years plus, if a child is to experience success in learning to read. A slow learner with an I.Q. of eighty does not have a mental age of six years until he is seven years, six months. A slow learner with an I.Q. of ninety has a mental age of six years when he is six years and eight months. He will certainly be capable of learning many of the academic skills and concepts when he is older and when he has reached the necessary mental age level. However, some skills and concepts will never be acquired because the necessary mental growth will not be attained. In terms of educational planning, these children cannot be considered as remedial problems who will eventually catch up if given time.

Social and Emotional Adjustment.

> Research has shown that the incidence of emotional disturbance and deliquent behaviour is significantly higher in the group of slow learners than in any other group. Many more discipline problems are found among slow learners than among the pupils comprising the rest of the general school population.[13]

This is easily understood when one considers their years of frustration spent in school where little or no attempt is made to provide a curriculum or to adapt teaching methods to meet their particular needs and intellectual abilities. These years of effort and failure result in a self-concept of personal inadequacy in school and a social concept of hostility and anger.

> It cannot be denied that slow learners present many emotional and social or behavioural problems but it must be denied that these difficulties are necessarily characteristics of slow learners.[14]

Identification and Educational Planning.

Early identification of the slow learner and educational assistance to the slow learner are still comparatively rare occurances. There seems to be a general lack of suitable and effective educational programs, based on clinical understanding, for children with early learning or behaviour problems. Despite the fact that educators and psychologists have been stressing the characteristics and needs of the individual

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[13] Ibid., p. 3

[14] Ibid., p. 4

for the past two or three decades, generally speaking, curricula are still the same as those planned for the normal group.

Unfortunately, in Nova Scotia and elsewhere, programs for the slow learners are set up at the Junior High School levels. Too often these special programs have as their goal the holding of the pupil until he is old enough to leave school.

> Programs for slow learners should be for slow learners and not for a heterogeneous group of children with average or above-average intelligence who are emotionally disturbed, educationally retarded or socially maladjusted.[15]

Ideally, the educational program planned for the slow learner should begin as soon as he enters school and should be designed for four main developmental levels, namely; primary, elementary, junior high and high school. The primary reading program could be broadened to another year plus kindergarten. The slow learner does not come to school with the same degree of readiness, particularly in communication skills, as most children. The average mental development for slow learners would not indicate that any achievement in academic learning should be expected in the first grade at age six years. The fact that there is a readiness for all learning is often forgotten

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[15] Ibid., p. 4

in the instruction of slow learners as they struggle with the regular school program.

Modified Occupational Program.

Very little provision is made for the slow learner and his educational problems in the elementary schools in Nova Scotia; however in certain areas of the province, classes have been started at the Junior High School level. This program is called the Modified Occupational Program for grades seven, eight, nine and ten.

The initial placement of these slow learners in grade seven of the Modified Occupational Program is carried out in the following way. After the results of the second term examinations are known each elementary school principal submits to the Director of the program a list of names of grade six pupils who will qualify for grade seven in the Modified Occupational Program. This list must also include the following information about each child: birthplace, birthdate, I.Q.,grades repeated, second term marks, attitudes and change of residence.

The Director of the program and the elementary school principals are responsible for interviewing the parents of these pupils so that the parents are adequately informed as to the nature of the program. At the time of the interview the school representative must endeavour to obtain the written consent of the parent for placement in the Modified Occupational Program.

After the final examinations the principals of the elementary schools must submit one copy of the names of pupils to be placed in the Program to the principal of the receiving Junior High School and one copy to the Director of the Program. The list submitted to the principal must be accompanied by the signed consent forms obtained from the parents.

Where there is doubt as to the advisability of placement of a pupil in the Modified Occupational Program, even though the pupil meets the requirements, it is preferable for the principal to permit the pupil to proceed in the academic stream until such time as his achievement is so poor that it seems likely he will be unable to cope with the academic program.

If a student has not been placed in the Modified Occupational program at the grade seven level, he may be placed in the program at the grade eight or nine level as long as he meets the criteria for the respective grade and the matter is thoroughly discussed with the parents.

Students may be transferred from the Modified Occupational Program at the grade eight or nine level if the principal feels that the ability, achievement and attitude of the students have improved to such an extent that the student should be able to cope with the work of the academic stream.

The Director of the Modified Occupational Program has established criteria for placement in this program at the different grade levels. Placement

may be made in the modified grade seven if the pupil is; (a) fourteen years old, (b) has failed two grades previous to placement in grade seven, (c) he has an average below seventy and (d) his I.Q. is less than one hundred or: (a) he has failed one elementary grade (I to VI), (b) he has failed academic grade eight or (c) he is fourteen years old. The criteria for placement at the other grade levels are similiar except that the pupil is older and his study habits suggest continued failure in the academic stream.

Designing a curriculum for the classes in the Modified Occupational Program is an extremely difficult task. Mrs. Nadine Chidley, Director of Special Services in Winnipeg has stated:

> A definite curriculum for use in the classes for mentally handicapped is not possible. A set curriculum often becomes a teaching "strait-jacket" into which an attempt is made to fit all children.[16]

However, in the Modified Occupational Program in Nova Scotia a curriculum outline has been developed which it is hoped will provide a unique curriculum specifically tailored to the needs of our students as teachers incorporate their own ideas into the curriculum outline.

The following outline of subjects will indicate the scope of the program.

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[16] Nadine Chidley, Planning for the Retarded Child in a Public School System, (Winnipeg) Sept. 1960 p. 8

Modified Occupational Program.

Year I.

Academic: English
Social Studies
Science
Health
Music
Physical Education
Arithmetic

Occupational Education:
Job Analysis
Guidance
Industrial Arts
Home Management

Year II.

Academic: English
Social Studies
Science
Health
Arithmetic
Music
Physical Education

Occupational Education:
Choosing, Getting, Holding a Job
Industrial Arts
Home Management
Guidance

Year III.

Academic: English
Social Studies
Science
Health
Arithmetic
Music
Physical Education

Occupational Education:

Spending one's Income
Home Management
Job Experience Program
Typing [17]

In order to make both phases of this program meaningful and functional the occupational education program must permeate and pervade the academic.

Work Experience Program.

The City of Dartmouth has a Work Experience Program in grades nine and ten as part of a larger program beginning in grade seven, to help prepare the less academic student to fit into the world of work when he leaves school. It is felt that when a student has had a try out at several types of work while still under the guiding hand of the school he will be better prepared to enter his first real job.

The program is designed for students at the grade nine and ten level, one half day a week for the grade nine students and one day a week for the grade ten students. The length of time however, is flexible and may even involve a solid week of work if the requirements of any job make this procedure appropriate.

No remuneration from the employers is permitted as the work is regarded as an extension of the school program. Work experience contacts with employers however, have led frequently to after school or week-

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[17] Modified Occupational Program, Grades VII, VIII, IX, X. City of Dartmouth Public Schools.

end work for which payment may be made.

The student who agrees to accept the opportunity afforded by this program agrees to work the regular hours involved in the particular job and to endeavour in every way to become an acceptable employee. The student's home room teacher or the Work Experience Director visits the student at his work and keeps in touch with the employer. In most cases the student will move from one try out job to another after a ten week period.

The Work Experience Program is regarded as another method of fitting education to the needs of the individual and it is believed that the student learns new skills, new attitudes and the practice in co-operating with others which will stand him or her in good stead in a real work situation.

The organization of classes in Nova Scotia for the trainable retarded, educable retarded and slow learners has helped to provide some meaningful education for these children whose potential is so limited. It is possible for them to gain training which is suited to their needs instead of the hopeless frustration they would face in trying to keep up with other children of normal or superior intelligence. A great deal of work has been done in Nova Scotia in developing curricula designed to meet the needs of these mentally handicapped children. As the general

awareness of this problem increases, additional funds should become available for more research and better trained personnel. Our mentally retarded children will then benefit from their particular type of training in the same way as their more fortunate counterparts.

CHAPTER V.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STATUS OF THE RETARDED PERSON.

The Province of Nova Scotia has taken many important steps in its handling of the mentally handicapped since the first auxiliary class was started in Halifax in 1916. In the almost sixty intervening years to the present time we have seen the establishment of classes for the trainable retarded, educable retarded and revised programs for the slow learners. The Education Act has been revised to permit the inclusion of these classes as part of our education system and thus they are a responsibility of the provincial government. The advantages of effective supervision have been brought about by the appointment of a Director of Special Services who has the responsibility for these classes. The organization of these classes under the Foundation Program of Nova Scotia has brought about a cost-sharing arrangement between the Province and the municipalities which helps to alleviate the high costs involved.

The Department of Health supports nine community Mental Health Clinics throughout the province to provide diagnostic and counselling facilities for the communities within each health unit as well as a special clinic for the mentally retarded which is located in Halifax. Residential

care is provided in the municipal mental hospitals and those who require special investigation may be referred to the Nova Scotia Hospital for this purpose.

The Department of Public Welfare operates the Nova Scotia Training School which is a child-caring institution for one hundred and eighty mentally retarded children. Social workers from this Department assist parents in developing an objective approach to everyday problems presented by the retarded child and in developing plans for adequate training and care indicated by the placement officer.

The diagnostic and counselling services for all mentally retarded persons in Nova Scotia should be extended to ensure that these persons, as a result of such services, may be given the opportunity of living at the highest possible level in relation to their capacities. Further, these services should be co-ordinated among the disciplines of the Nova Scotia Departments of Health, Education, Public Welfare and Labour, so that there would be effective liason and exchange of information.

The scope of the problem in Nova Scotia is outlined in an organization manual published by the Canadian Association for Retarded Children, Nova Scotia Division, where it states:

> The estimated prevalence of mental retardation in Nova Scotia is approximately three percent. Based on a population of 762,000, this would indicate 22,000 retarded people in Nova Scotia. This is broken down further to indicate that

> seventy percent are mildly retarded (educable) which would give 15,400 people, twenty-five percent are moderately retarded (trainable) a total of 5,500 and five percent are severely retarded and this group would total 1,100.[1]

These figures should point out that mental retardation is a real problem in Nova Scotia and it must be faced. It should also be realized that twenty-nine out of thirty mentally retarded children can be trained and helped to grow into useful, happy members of the community with a considerable degree of self-sufficiency.

The health needs of mentally retarded persons under custodial care must be carefully assessed. Prior to admission, there should be a complete medical examination to exclude the possibility of infectious and contagious diseases from being introduced to the place of custody and to detect any condition which will require treatment or special follow up. All retardates who require admission to a municipal hospital should, in addition to complete medical examination, be examined by a qualified psychiatrist. Admission should be approved by the Administrator of Mental Health Services of the Department of Public Health.

When custody is required in a municipal hospital type of institution, there should be an

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[1] Organization Manual, Canadian Association for Retarded Children, Nova Scotia Division. (Halifax) p. 3

adequate staff to provide a high standard of general care. The nursing staff should be consistent with what is deemed necessary to ensure good care. A qualified psychiatrist should visit the institution at regular intervals according to the particular need of the institution concerned. Regular visits should be made to the institution by the Inspector of Humane Institutions or qualified persons delegated by him to carry out these inspections.

A periodic assessment of all persons in custody should be carried out so that retardates who might benefit from transfer to a training institution, to his own home, or to a foster home in the community can be carried out as soon as it is desirable to do so. Retardates who require special study, care or further investigations should be transferred as soon as the indication arises, to an institution or center staffed and equipped to carry out special investigations.

Since it is possible for doctors to detect some forms of mental retardation among infants and correct them, all babies born in Nova Scotia should be given the tests for phenylketonuria. This would serve to eliminate some cases of mental retardation and should be done if the cost is not prohibitive.

The Foundation Program of Nova Scotia which provides for the sharing of education costs

between municipalities and the government of Nova Scotia should be adjusted to provide a greater amount of revenue to the municipalities to permit them to provide increased educational facilities for our trainable retarded and educable retarded children. Classes for these children, must of necessity, be small and some require two teachers in the same classroom. School boards in this province are finding it difficult enough to finance education for the great majority of our children and the provision for our mentally retarded saddles them with costs too great for certain areas to handle. Thus, the retardates suffer because inadequate facilities or no facilities at all are provided for them.

Probably the most important single factor in any special education classroom is the teacher. In the planning and execution of a program for mentally handicapped children it is necessary to have teachers who are well trained. In terms of teacher training, the prospective teacher of the mentally handicapped should have all the background and experiences of the regular classroom teacher plus a knowledge of mentally retarded children. This knowledge should include: information concerning the physical, psychological and educational characteristics of the mentally handicapped, the philosophy underlying the organization of a special education program and some understanding of psychological measurement so that psychological reports can be

understood.

Needless to say, this type of teacher is hard to find. At the present time in Nova Scotia, auxiliary teachers come from the regular classrooms and follow a Block Program for auxiliary teachers at the Nova Scotia Summer School.

A two year program leading to a specialists license for teachers of retarded children should be established at the Nova Scotia Teacher's College. This program should be so planned that, when and if necessary, it can be introduced into the Faculties of Education at the Nova Scotia universities which give teacher training programs.

Consideration should be given to establishing psychological services within the Department of Education for the mentally retarded of school age. Such a service might be developed on a regional basis and with the co-operation of local school boards under the Foundation Program.

The educable mentally retarded should, at as early an age as possible, be provided with a program designed to provide the maximum academic accomplishment of which the individual is capable, integrated with a series of experiences related to an adequate range of occupations. Continuous assessment should be maintained until a suitable occupational goal has been established. The educable mentally retarded should then be enrolled for full-

time training which will provide an opportunity to acquire the skills, knowledge and related theory necessary to enter the selected occupation. This emphasises the need to introduce a special vocational and trades training program developed specifically to meet the needs and abilities of these pupils. It is a known fact today that many of our students who need to learn trades are unable to attend our Vocational High Schools because they cannot acquire the pre-requisite academic training.

A complete survey should be made in Nova Scotia to determine what occupations exist which the mentally retarded are capable of handling successfully. If the occupations are known, training courses could be set up to equip the retardate to secure and handle this employment.

Sheltered employment facilities are needed for the retardate who can be productive but cannot compete for normal employment opportunities. It is generally considered that sheltered workshops are appropriate enterprises for operation by voluntary organizations. In a province the size of Nova Scotia sheltered employment facilities may well practically serve persons with all types of disabilities. Government assistance would be through purchase of training or other services when they meet required standards.

Labour legislation should be revised with the object of assisting the mentally retarded to obtain full or part-time employment so that they may receive recognition and protection. Research in existing legislation as it pertains to the mentally retarded should be carried out to assure that necessary consideration for this handicapped group is embodied in our laws.

The Nova Scotia government, through the Department of Public Welfare, should establish regional residences for non-trainable mentally retarded children who require permanent care. As a more complete program develops for mentally retarded persons of all ages, the government of Nova Scotia should consider a more comprehensive program for recruiting and training the necessary personnel to carry out the complete program.

Since Nova Scotia has limited sums of money to invest in research projects concerning mental retardation, there should be a central unit which would collect the findings of national and international research projects and distribute such information to all the disciplines concerned in the province. The major share of available funds should be channelled into those services which are needed to develop a complete program for the mentally retarded persons living in Nova Scotia. The co-ordinated efforts of the Departments of Health, Education,

Welfare and Labour is essential if our mentally handicapped children are going to receive the type of training and care which is best suited to their needs.

APPENDIX A

(a) Numbers of Trainable Retarded in Special Classes:

City, Town, School District		Enrolment Boys	Enrolment Girls	Number of Teachers	Assistants
1. Armdale, Halifax County		6	6	1	-
2. Dartmouth	(a)	7	5	1	-
	(b)	6	6	1	1
3. Glace Bay	(a)	2	5		
	(b)	3	3	1	1
4. Halifax City	(a)	7	6	1	-
	(b)	8	-	1	-
	(c)	-	9	1	-
5. Kentville, Kings County		2	4	1	-
6. Kingston, Kings County		5	1	1	-
7. New Glasgow		7	5	1	-
8. New Waterford		6	3	1	-
9. North Sydney	(a)	4	5		
	(b)	4	5	1	-
10. Sandford, Yarmouth Co.		3	5	1	1
11. Spryfield, Halifax Co.		5	5	1	-
12. Sydney	(a)	5	5		
	(b)	5	5	1	1
	(c)	4	3	1	1
	(Members of a Cerebral Palsy Class)				
13. Sydney Forks, C.B. Co.		2	5	1	-
14. Sydney Mines		7	5	1	-
15. Truro		2	7	1	-
16. Windsor		2	3	1	-
17. Wolfville		2	2	1	-

N.B. All of the above classes are Special Classes for the Trainable Retarded pupils located in the public schools. Accordingly their administration is the responsibility of the local school board, eith municipal or urban. They qualify fully under the foundation program and are part of the local public school system. In each case, there is a local parents group, a branch of the C.A.R.C., N.S. Division, which assists in various ways: e.g., locating the children, acting on the admissions committee, assisting with teaching aids, and particularly with transportation.

The following two classes are located in Mental Health Hospitals and these children are residents having been placed by the Department of Public Health.

	Boys	Girls
1. Halifax City Mental Hosptial	4	3
2. Kings County Mental Hospital Waterville	4	2
	8	5

The Department of Public Welfare operates the Nova Scotia Training School in Truro; the enrolment of trainable retarded children is:

Boys	Girls
30	30

RECAPITULATION

	Number of Centres	Number of Classes	Enrolment Boys	Enrolment Girls
Special (Day) Classes in Public Schools	17	24	104	109
Mental Hospitals	2	2	8	5
N.S. Training School	1	3	30	30
	20	29	142	144
Grand Total Enrolment				286

(b) **Numbers of Educable Retarded in Auxiliary Classes in Regular School Systems.**

City, Town, Municipal School	Enrolment Boys	Enrolment Girls	Number of Classes.
1. Antigonish	5	5	1
2. Armdale, Halifax Co.	37	15	4
3. Bible Hill, Col. Co.	7	5	1
4. Bridgewater	11	6	1
5. Dartmouth	66	45	9
6. Fairview, Halifax Co.	11	6	1
7. Halifax City	164	81	17
8. Liverpool	20	10	2
9. Meteghan	23	-	1
10. Middleton	23	19	3
11. New Glasgow	10	4	1
12. New Waterford	10	8	1
13. River Herbert	9	2	1
14. Saulnierville	4	3	1
15. Springhill	7	6	1

City, Town, Municipal School	Boys	Girls	Number of Classes
16. Spryfield	6	6	1
17. Sydney	10	12	1
18. Terence Bay	10	4	1
19. Timberlea	9	5	1
20. Truro	43	16	5
21. Yarmouth	21	10	2
	505	268	56

INSTITUTIONS:	Boys	Girls	Classes
N.S. School for the Blind	29	18	4
N.S. School for Colored Children	12	6	1
N.S. Training School	60	60	4
	101	84	9
Total Enrolment	606	352	
Grand total enrolment			958

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