

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SCHOOL DROPOUTS

A Study of the Factors Affecting School Persistence  
of Children in Families Receiving Social Assistance

by

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### ABSTRACT

In the last half century the way to full self-development has become intimately bound up with the acquisition of an ever-lengthening formal education. Moreover, the successful operation of a democratic system demands a thinking people. Concern for the welfare of people on social assistance implies the promotion of equality of educational opportunity for their children. Failure to do so is both a betrayal of responsibility and a neglect of human resources which we can ill afford.

The school dropout has been singled out as the object of a great deal of publicity in North America in recent years. Although numerous studies have been undertaken to identify the characteristics of school dropouts, few studies have dealt specifically with this problem as it is found in families in receipt of social assistance. The present study looks at the complex network of interacting forces: social, economic and educational, affecting these families and attempts to identify those factors which seem significant to school persistence. Illustrations of the way in which these various forces actually do combine to encourage early school withdrawal in public assistance families are cited.

Two hundred and ninety families having children between the ages of 13 and 21 were selected from the public assistance caseload in one area of Vancouver. Information regarding age, length of time on assistance, and family composition were obtained from assistance application forms. A sample of 27 families having children between the ages of 15 and 21 were selected for interviewing. The interview schedules were designed to obtain specific items of information from the parents, the eldest child still in school and the eldest dropout and/or graduate, wherever they occurred.

Analysis of these interviews shows that families on social assistance do not form a homogeneous group in their attitudes toward school continuance. The proportion of dropouts in public assistance families appears to be substantially higher than for the general population. School experience and parental motivation were found to be important factors in determining school persistence. Factors which were seen to be operative in determining the level of family motivation were feelings about receiving social assistance, parental attitudes to education, mobility, intra-familial relationships, health and social relationships. There was a group of students whose prospects of graduating could have been materially improved by a higher level of family income and a more encouraging approach by the school or the Social Service Department. There are disturbing indications that neither the school system nor other social resources are a sufficient counterforce to offset negative parental attitudes in families on public assistance.

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## CHAPTER 1. THE SCHOOL DROPOUT: A SOCIAL PROBLEM.

No longer is there any doubt that the increasing number of early school-leavers and unemployed youth in this nation constitute a major social and economic problem. With increasing regularity their public visibility is illustrated in newspaper flashes such as the following:

Already in their tens of thousands, these young school casualties line up hopelessly outside employment offices, crowd restlessly into pool halls and juke-box joints. They cost tax payers staggering sums in unemployment and welfare benefits and many authorities add in juvenile delinquency and crime. As such they constitute a national catastrophe. And yet their real tragedy defies measurement in dollars and cents. It lies in abilities of mind and hand they fail to develop; the potential they never realize.<sup>1</sup>

The late president of the United States, John F. Kennedy, sounded the alarm in these words:

The future of any country which is dependent upon the will and wisdom of its citizens is damaged, and irreparably damaged, whenever any of its children is not educated to the fullest extent of his capacity from grade school through graduate school. Today an estimated four out of ten students will not even finish high school - and that is a waste we cannot afford.<sup>2</sup>

Before the concept of human resources or effective manpower utilization became important in our thinking there was little concern expressed over the loss of potential talent in our population. The space race and cold war have sensitized us to the possible shortage of manpower talent. The problem of

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<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Spectator, Hamilton, Ontario. August 24, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> John F. Kennedy as quoted in Schreiber, Daniel; "Juvenile Delinquency and the School Dropout Problem", Federal Probation, vol.27 (Sept. 1963), p.19.

locating, motivating and financing maximum use of human resources has arisen. Those at the other end of the academic scale also claim our attention; those of limited intellectual endowment. The majority of students, however, fall between these two extremes and no group is immune from the incidence of school dropouts. These young children may find difficulty in mastering academic programs in the school or because of personal, financial or social deprivation, their maximum use of educational opportunities is impeded. When they prematurely withdraw from the school system they are usually vocationally unprepared and too personally immature to find and hold satisfying positions of employment.

There is a humanitarian as well as an economic aspect to the problem. Those excluded from the regular labor force experience a great deal of individual frustration:

In a society where personality is organized around work, where the worker depends upon his job for his very ties to the world, and where an ability to perform the role of provider rests upon his job, anything that threatens that role is catastrophic not only economically but personally as well.<sup>1</sup>

What is the problem of the school dropout and for whom? The potential dropout in the school system is often distinguished as a trouble maker, seat filler and frequently a general nuisance by teaching personnel and school administration. Raising the number of years that must be spent in school has created the problem of what to do with the non-academic young person, or the poorly motivated child. They do poorly in

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard, Jessie; Social Problems at Midcentury, New York, Rinehart and Winston, 1961, p.393.

school because they are confined to a routine which appears to have little connection with life as they see it. School is seen, therefore, as little more than a custodial institution. Truancy may be an escape from this frustration or the enforced endurance of humiliating failure.

In the employment office the school dropout is a recurrent nightmare. Because of his lack of vocational preparation for employment and few personal qualifications to sustain his activity in a job, he is difficult to place and frequently requests new placements more often.

In the courts he appears with monotonous regularity. In short there are few social agencies at which he does not call on his shopping tour for resources to help him channel his energies into productive and satisfying life experiences.

We see a failure in our elementary and secondary schools to effectively engage or educate children from families in the lower reaches of our status system. Previously this aroused little concern because alienated adolescents could leave school and be absorbed into a vast unskilled and semi-skilled labour force. The manual labour positions had to be filled; somebody had to do society's less pleasant work. The school helped to make the prospects of these unappealing jobs more bearable by making education itself an irritant for children from culturally deprived and academically unsophisticated families.

Changes in the availability of employment opportunities and in the social and personal requirements for adjustment to

a complex society have occurred more rapidly than the existing institutional capacity to cope. Hence some educational and welfare programs exist as an anachronism in our society.

What is the role and responsibility of social work?

Traditionally the role of social work has been to deal with and help find solutions to social problems:

Social work, as a profession, concerned with the total welfare of people, recognizes that education is a vital part of that total welfare. It is important then that (social workers) examine those aspects of their own profession which are related to education and that they explore ways in which through their profession they can strengthen the opportunities of the student in this country.<sup>1</sup>

Social work has fallen into the trap of too frequently specifying personal rather than institutional inadequacies as the cause of social problems. This myopic view has caused them to look within the individual and the family situation for causes of deviancy and malfunctioning and thus to limit their remedial efforts to these targets. They have become preoccupied with rehabilitation and amelioration at the expense of the prevention of social problems. For too long it has waited for the client to come to the place from which services are dispensed. Social work enunciates two main professional purposes; (1) to help people in need, and (2) to bring about social change to reduce the number of people in need of help. There is now, more acutely than ever, the necessity of looking behind the presenting problems to discover the social and economic processes that started these persons on their search for ambulance services.

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<sup>1</sup> Poole, Florence; "Working with parents of School Children," Social Work in the Schools - Selected Papers, New York, N.A.S.W. p.32.

The purpose of this study is to take the first step in understanding the underlying causes of premature withdrawal from school in a limited group. By focusing our inquest upon those families presently in receipt of social assistance there is an attempt to identify those factors which in addition to a marginal income influence a child's motivation and ability to make optimum use of educational opportunities. The study endeavours to consider the meaning of being a member of a low status, disadvantaged, minority group and its influence upon the aspirations and abilities of these youths and their families. The question of the adequacy of existing institutions to meet their needs in the educational field is then posed.

#### Some Socio-economic Aspects of the School Dropout Problem

Like any social problem, the problem of school dropouts is highly complex and its analysis must take account of many different factors.

Today, it is common to regard the child who quits school before graduating as inviting nothing but trouble for himself and the community, and since this idea is so widely held it seems especially desirable to subject it to critical examination. Although the dropout may be accused of not making the most of his opportunities and of depriving his generation of more developed talents, it should be kept in mind that if he has reached the legal school-leaving age he has broken no law.

Technically, though, under no circumstances does dropping out constitute a 'norm-violation'; nor can it be taken for granted that the youngster has invariably done the 'wrong' thing in quitting. There are, in brief, presumably acceptable reasons for deciding to drop out,

and anyone is within his rights to hold and exercise them.<sup>1</sup>

The very fact that the holding power of the schools has steadily improved emphasizes the necessity of looking at other aspects of the problem. In the United States in 1890, eight per cent of youth of high school age were attending school and six per cent were graduating. In 1960 85 per cent were attending and 69 per cent were graduating.<sup>2</sup> A historic summary; census by census from 1871 to 1951 in Canada, shows a steady growth in percentage of those aged five to 19 attending school from 50.1 per cent in 1871 to 66.6 per cent in 1951.<sup>3</sup> In 1961 in British Columbia 83.4 per cent of children in the home between the ages of 15 and 18 years were attending school.<sup>4</sup>

Schrieber suggests that the essence of the dropout problem is not so much the number or proportion of dropouts as that the world to which they seek entrance has drastically, and rather incredibly, changed. For example, until recent years the dropout was an essential part of the economy filling a continuously large demand for unskilled labour. This is no longer true in Canada as is evident from changes which have occurred since World War II in the composition of the labour force. In the nine years

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<sup>1</sup> Schreiber, Daniel; "Juvenile Delinquency and the School Dropout Problem", Federal Probation, vol.27 (Sept.,1963) p.15.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, Percy, V.; Our Dropouts, Baltimore, Maryland State Department of Education, 1963, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics Education Division; A Graphic Presentation of Canadian Education (Sept.1961), p.10.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Census of Canada, 1961.

prior to 1958-59 the professional category increased by 71 per cent whereas the semi-skilled and unskilled increased by only 19 per cent and those engaged in agriculture, fishing, logging, trapping and mining decreased by 27 per cent.<sup>1</sup> Canada has imported large numbers of skilled and professional workers while many of her own people remained untrained for technical roles.

Another reason for the age-old problem of school withdrawal coming into prominence now is the fact that this decade is bearing an unprecedented population load in the adolescent-young adult range. The babies of the post-war baby boom will be passing through the schools and into the labour market this decade. At present, young persons are entering the Canadian labour force at a rate of 35,000-40,000 per year. It is estimated that a peak of 50,000-60,000 entries per year will be reached by about 1965.<sup>2</sup>

Occupational trends must be related to changing patterns of education. Providing the present pattern persists, the educational qualifications of all those young Canadians entering the labour force in 1965 will be as follows: One third will have left school with no more than a full elementary school education. Another one third will have dropped out before obtaining a junior matriculation standing or its equivalent. Less than 20 per cent of the new entrants will have senior matriculation standing and only six per cent will have completed

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<sup>1</sup> The Canadian Welfare Council; First Priority: The Welfare of People, (March, 1961) p.23

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.22.

a university or college course.<sup>1</sup> Thus it would seem apparent that although more children go to school longer than ever before, this has not kept pace with the demands of automation for highly skilled and educated workers.

Before turning to another aspect of this problem, two questions must be raised even though they cannot be dealt with here. One is the question as to whether the schools are, or should be, preparing young people to move into the labour force. The other question is whether Grade 12 education is necessary for all the jobs for which it is now a requirement.

Wilensky and Lebeaux in the Industrial Society and Social Welfare point up an important aspect of the problem. This aspect is very much a part of the major focus of this study - the dropout from the social assistance family. "The lower-class boy, disadvantaged in the struggle for status measured by middle-class values, anxious about the fact that he and his family seem to have lost that struggle, has a problem of adjustment."<sup>2</sup> More and more has the school been the block for him as education has increased in prestige and social value.

The significance of this for individual development has been explored in another study where it is suggested that because of the increased importance of education in our society,

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<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Wilensky, H. and C. Lebeaux; Industrial Society and Social Welfare, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1958, p. 193.



school provides a special focus for rebellion and conflict formation for boys.<sup>1</sup> Consciously afraid that they cannot be successful and will get hurt trying to achieve; they seek security in withdrawal.

This may in turn be aggravated by the stress of moving from one social class to another for the lower-class child. For some of these boys educational and occupational achievement may be threatening to them because it involves competing with and the surpassing of their fathers.

#### Occupational Opportunities of School Dropouts

The repercussions of dropping out of school can be serious. First of all, a sizable percentage of dropouts experience employment difficulties. Secondly, dropouts tend to be more susceptible to delinquency than are high school graduates. These repercussions will be discussed in turn.

Employment opportunities for high school dropouts are decreasing as automation reduces the demand for unskilled labour, and as industry increasingly demands higher levels of education for the employees who run the complex machinery. The employment problems of the dropout have been summed up by

Eli Cohen:

Compared to high school graduates, dropouts suffer greater unemployment, take longer to find jobs, get poorer jobs, and earn less money. Untrained and incompletely educated, they are often underemployed, face the prospect of a lifetime of blind alley jobs, and sometimes remain chronically unemployed. They are

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<sup>1</sup> Litcher, Solomon O.; The Drop-Outs, Glencoe, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962, p.248.

vulnerable, dispensable, and unwanted in our work force.<sup>1</sup>

Three aspects of these employment problems will be examined - the relation between dropouts and unemployment, the types of occupations dropouts tend to have, and the significance of these jobs in their everyday lives.

It may be said with certainty that rates of unemployment among dropouts are considerably higher than among high school graduates. The Canadian Senate Committee on Manpower and Employment reported the following statistics for February, 1960: The total unemployment rate in Canada at that time was some nine per cent of the total labour force. The unemployment rate among those who had completed secondary school was three per cent. Among those who had completed primary school but not secondary, the rate was eight per cent. And among those who had not completed primary school, the unemployment rate was 19 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

A classification of the total number of unemployed at that time by levels of schooling throws additional light on the relationship between educational levels and unemployment. In February, 1960, some 44 per cent of all unemployed persons had not completed public school. An additional 26 per cent had only

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<sup>1</sup> Cohen, Eli; "The Employment Needs of Urban Youth, "Vocational Guidance Quarterly, vol.10 (Winter, 1962), p.87.

<sup>2</sup> Canada, Senate; Proceedings of the Senate Committee on Manpower and Employment, No.1, p.30, cited in Canadian Welfare Council, "First Priority: The Welfare of People", submission to the Special Committee of the Senate on Manpower and Employment, Ottawa, 1961, p.24.

a grade 8 education. Twenty-two per cent had had some secondary education.<sup>1</sup> This means that 92 per cent of Canada's unemployed had not finished high school. Daniel Schreiber, Director of the School Dropout Project sponsored by the National Education Association in the United States, reported in 1963 that two-thirds of the unemployed in this country have less than a high school education.<sup>2</sup> This figure is considerably lower than the Canadian proportion.

Regardless of the differences in figures between the two countries, it is obvious that unemployment rates among dropouts are considerably higher than among high-school graduates, and this is a matter of justifiable concern.

The problem is not merely one of greater unemployment, but of the type of employment secured by school dropouts. Dropouts often obtain short-term or seasonal-type jobs. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics reported in 1960 that school dropouts from the lower grades tend to obtain employment in unskilled and labouring occupations, while those dropping out from the higher grades are more likely to settle into occupations of a semi-skilled, commercial, or clerical nature.<sup>3</sup> A study in the United States of 350,000 students who dropped out of school between January and October of 1961 also points out the tendency

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<sup>1</sup> Loc.cit.

<sup>2</sup> Schreiber, Daniel; "The Dropout and the Delinquent: Promising Practices Gleaned from a Year of Study," Phi Delta Kappan, vol.44 (February, 1963), p.216.

<sup>3</sup> Dominion Bureau of Statistics; "Student Progress Through the Schools, 1960," Catalogue No. 81-513, p.46.

for dropouts to end up in labouring and semi-skilled occupations. Many women obtained farm-type labouring jobs or jobs in private households or other service work.<sup>1</sup>

Many children in the lower-income group are limited as far as vocational planning is concerned by a lack of knowledge of job opportunities, and also, of course, by the fact that they may have had to discontinue their education and accept any available job in order to assist in the support of the family.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of the type of job dropouts engage in is far-reaching. If a youth has been forced by lack of knowledge of job opportunities or by financial pressure or insufficient education to take employment which does not use all his abilities, his resulting frustration and boredom may have an adverse effect on other areas of his life. Underemployment of a man's potential, to say nothing of unemployment, may be threatening to his self-esteem as well as to his economic situation. The repercussions that the lack of a satisfying job may have for an individual has been summed up by the Canadian Welfare Council as follows:

The lack of a satisfying job at an adequate wage can do serious damage to family morale and solidarity. It may lead to deterioration in the individual's capacity for gainful employment and thus create dependency. It can undermine an individual's self-respect and parental status in the home, especially in a society where we

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<sup>1</sup> Schiffman, Jacob; "Employment of High School Graduates and Dropouts in 1961," "Monthly Labor Review, vol. 85 (May, 1962), pp.505-506.

<sup>2</sup> Bach, Frank; "Vocational Problems of the Young Offender," Master of Social Work Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1961, p. 20.

properly expect each individual to assume responsibility, as far as possible, for meeting his own needs and those of his family. And it can be equally damaging to young people who are entering the labour market for the first time and who are beginning to establish new homes and families.<sup>1</sup>

### Delinquency and School Dropouts

Although it is not possible to establish any causal relationship between dropouts and delinquency, several studies have established the fact that most sentenced delinquents are dropouts.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, there are many school dropouts who do not become delinquents.

Some statistics will help to illustrate these statements. In a recent study of dropouts carried out in Seattle, Washington, it was found that 35 per cent of the dropouts became involved with the courts. In another study carried out in Bridgeport, Connecticut, it was found that 24 per cent of the dropouts were similarly involved. According to these studies, there were large percentages of dropouts (from 65 per cent to 76 per cent) who did not become delinquents. But on the other hand, in Seattle the delinquency rate amongst dropouts was 12 times that of those who stayed in school, and in Bridgeport it was eight times that of stay-ins.<sup>3</sup> And so averaging the two, we could say that the delinquency rate was 10 times greater amongst dropouts than it was amongst graduates.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Welfare Council; "First Priority: The Welfare of People," Submission to the Special Committee of the Senate on Manpower and Employment, Ottawa, 1961, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Schreiber, Daniel; "Juvenile Delinquency and the School Dropout Problem," Federal Probation, vol. 27 (September, 1963), p.18.

<sup>3</sup> Loc.cit.

In a Canadian study entitled "Vocational Problems of the Young Offender," Frank Bach found that of 40 inmates of New Haven, only three had completed high school.<sup>1</sup> While the large majority of school dropouts do not become delinquents, most delinquents on the other hand are school dropouts.

It has been found that there are factors in the school situation which lead to both dropping-out and to juvenile delinquency. These factors have been listed by William C. Kvaraceus. He states that the school situation of the potentially delinquent child displays the following characteristics:

1. Shows dislike for school.
2. Resents school routine and restriction.
3. Disinterested in school programme.
4. Is failing in a number of subjects.
5. Has repeated one or more grades.
6. Has attended many different schools.
7. Intends to leave school as soon as the law allows.
8. Has limited academic ability.
9. Feels he does not 'belong' in the classroom.
10. Does not participate in organized extra-curricular activities.
11. Has only vague academic or vocational plans.
12. Attends special classes for retarded pupils.
13. Truants from school.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bach, op. cit., p.50

<sup>2</sup> Kvaraceus, William; Juvenile Delinquency, Washington National Education Association cited in Brook, George C.; "High School Drop-Outs

Brook maintains that, if in addition to the foregoing, the child seriously and persistently misbehaves, destroys school material or property, is cruel and bullying, or has temper tantrums in the classroom, he is likely to become a juvenile delinquent.<sup>1</sup> These are admittedly tentative indications of a common ground occupied by dropouts and delinquents.

#### Factors Associated With Premature School Leaving

Previous sections of this chapter have considered the nature of the school dropout problem and some of the social, economic, and occupational implications for the individuals affected. The following sections will review those factors which various studies have found to be typically associated with premature school leaving with special reference to the influence of low family income. Table 1 shows the frequency with which eight major characteristics of school dropouts are identified in 20 different studies undertaken in the U.S.A.

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<sup>1</sup> Brook; op. cit., p.34.

Table 1. Characteristics of School Dropouts as Revealed by 20 Studies.<sup>1</sup>

<u>Characteristic</u>	Allen	Brewer	Brown	Cantoni	Davie	Dresher	Cragg	Hand	Kuhlen	Lanier	Lopardo	McGee	Sando - 1952	Sando - 1956	Shiebler	Snepp	Thomas	Warren	Weinrich	Young	Total
Low-Income Family	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	15
Low Achievement	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X			X	X		X			12
Discouraged or failing	X	X				X					X		X	X							6
Non-Participation in Activities	X					X	X							X		X	X	X			7
Dissatisfied with Teaching	X		X						X					X	X		X		X		7
Feeling of not Belonging		X				X			X	X			X			X					6
Weak or Broken Home		X				X	X			X						X				X	6
Lure of Job			X						X		X						X		X		5

Poor educational achievement appears to be characteristic of many school dropouts, but it would be quite wrong to assume that most school dropouts are of low intelligence. The problem is not so simple as that. For example, one study notes that 56.5 per cent

<sup>1</sup> R.A. and L.M. Tessener; Nat.Assoc. of Sec.School Principals Bulletin, "Review of the Literature on School Dropouts," vol.42, No.238 (May 1958), p.144. The exact titles of the studies referred to in the above table are included in the bibliography of the present study.



of dropouts were under-achieving in relation to their ability as determined by intelligence testing,<sup>1</sup> only 41.7 per cent were performing up to the level of their ability and 1.8 per cent were described as over-achieving. (i.e. Achieving at a higher level than they were capable of on the basis of intelligence test scores). Closely related to level of achievement is a limited ability to read, of the 13,715 dropouts examined in the same study 45 per cent read at the sixth grade level or below<sup>2</sup> despite the fact that 50 per cent of the dropouts had average or above average intelligence. The study reveals moreover that 54.6 per cent of the dropouts had been held back in elementary or junior high school and 35 per cent of them had had to repeat one or more elementary grades.<sup>3</sup> Under-achievement for one reason or another appears to be a characteristic of the school dropout.

Under-achievement is usually associated with irregularity of school attendance. The Maryland study shows that 60 per cent of dropouts attended irregularly in the last full school year, and in the year in which they dropped out a mere 27 per cent attended regularly. It is interesting to note that almost 60 per cent of the absences in the year in which they dropped out are described as "unlawful absence."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland State Department of Education; Our Dropouts, The Maryland Cooperative Study of Dropouts, June 1963, Table 18, Mental Ability and Achievement.

<sup>2</sup> Our Dropouts, Table 19, Reading Grade Level.

<sup>3</sup> Our Dropouts, Table 21, Retentions.

Another common characteristic of the school drop-out is lack of participation in athletic or extra-curricular activities at school. The Maryland study establishes that fully two-thirds of the dropouts did not participate in athletics or extra-curricular activities.<sup>1</sup> Lack of participation in school social activities may be merely one other aspect of the sense of alienation from school and peers which is mentioned in a number of different studies as characteristic of the dropout.

It appears that it is more characteristic of the drop-out than the non-dropout to be of low intelligence. However, various studies while agreeing that this is so, differ as to the degree to which it is so. Snapp found that the scholastic aptitude of those who left school was below the average of all students in high school as measured by the Otis Test of Mental Ability,<sup>1</sup> but Cantoni's study found there was only a small difference between the I.Q. of the dropout (92.3) and the I.Q. of the graduate (101.6) as measured on the Kuhlman-Anderson Intelligence Test.<sup>3</sup> The Maryland study points out that 50.2 per cent of the dropouts had below average intelligence,<sup>4</sup> which is about what one would expect to find in a cross-section of the general public. No definitive relationship between low intelligence and early school leaving can be determined from

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<sup>1</sup> Our Dropouts, Table 17, Attendance.

<sup>2</sup> Snapp, Daniel W.; "Can We Salvage the Drop-outs?," The Clearing House, 31 (September 1956), pp.49-54.

<sup>3</sup> Cantoni, Louis J.; "Stay-Ins Get Better Jobs", Personnel and Guidance Journal, 33, (May 1955), pp.351-3.

<sup>4</sup> Our Dropouts, Table 18, Mental Ability and Achievement.

this latter figure. What is perhaps an area of greater significance is revealed in Palmore's study<sup>1</sup> which indicates that approximately one third of 384 dropout children of "lower class and assistance families" studied had average or above average intelligence.

There is little doubt that teachers represent a most important factor in the lives of children and adolescents. Not only will they affect personality and adjustment of the pupil, but they will also determine to a degree the reaction of the student to the subject matter and play a role in school retention or dropping out.<sup>2</sup>

It is characteristic of dropouts to be ill-disposed towards their teachers and to have been unable to get along with them to a much greater degree than those who remained in school.

The school dropout has a greater than average chance of being born to parents who were themselves dropouts. The Maryland study investigated the educational level of the parents of the dropouts and concluded there was a relationship between educational levels of parents and that of their children. It established that the best educated parents had to an extremely high degree, the best educated children.

At the other end of the scale, this same study revealed that fully 80.3 per cent of the fathers of dropouts were

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<sup>1</sup> Palmore, Erdman; Social Security Bulletin, (October 1963), "Factors Associated with School Dropouts and Juvenile Delinquency among Lower-Class Children", p.6.

<sup>2</sup> Tressner, R.A. and L.M.; "Review of the Literature of School Dropouts," The National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, (May 1958), pp.147-148.

themselves dropouts, and 78.5 per cent of mothers of dropouts were themselves dropouts before graduation from high school.<sup>1</sup>

A further characteristic of the school dropout is the fact that his parents are likely to be unskilled workers. W. L. Gragg in his study observes that "Pupils whose parents pursue managerial, clerical, professional and semi-professional occupations are much more likely to graduate than pupils whose parents are engaged in unskilled labour and certain service occupations with low incomes." <sup>2</sup> The Maryland study confirms this observation. It established that only 6.5 per cent of the parents of the dropouts studied were classified occupationally as "Professional, Owner, Manager,"<sup>3</sup> whereas, by contrast, in excess of 13 per cent of the total labour force of Vancouver fall into this same occupational category.<sup>4</sup>

The important influence of the parents' level of education on the amount of schooling achieved by the children is indicated in Table 2. This table, which draws on British Columbia data, shows that the proportion of children aged 15 - 18 years attending school is almost twice as great in families

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<sup>1</sup> Our Dropouts, Table 6, Educational Level achieved by Father, Table 7, Educational Level achieved by Mother.

<sup>2</sup> Gragg, W.L.; A Dropout or a High School Graduate, Education Digest, 15, Sept. 1949, pp.30-31. Quoted in National Assoc. of Secondary School, Principals Bulletin, (May 1958), p.144.

<sup>3</sup> Our Dropouts, Table 4, Occupation of Head of Household.

<sup>4</sup> Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada; Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts, Vancouver, Queen's Printer, 1961.

with a University graduate as head as it is in families whose head has received no formal schooling at all. The differences are not as marked but are nevertheless significant for families with intermediate levels of education; for example, in families whose head has only 5th year or more elementary education the proportion of children 15 - 18 years attending school is 77 per cent compared with nearly 88 per cent of children in families whose head has completed 4th and 5th year secondary education.

Table 2. Children Attending School as a Proportion of all Children at Home, by Education Level of Family Head.

(British Columbia, 1961)

<u>Schooling of Head</u>	<u>Children at Home by Age</u>			
	<u>15 - 18 years</u>		<u>19 - 24 years</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage at School</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage at School</u>
No schooling	1057	53.8	1021	9.3
<u>Elementary</u>				
Less than 5th year	3811	67.3	396	15.6
5th year and over	27193	77.2	14584	20.3
<u>Secondary</u>				
1st and 2nd year	20072	82.7	9352	24.9
3rd year	7959	86.2	3357	31.8
4th and 5th year	15417	87.9	7452	36.2
Some University	3892	90.3	1936	47.2
University Degree	3871	94.7	1843	67.6

Source: Census of Canada, 1961. Adapted from Table

The differences are even more striking for children still attending school in the 19 - 24 year age group. This group would include children taking vocational and technical courses and attending University as well as a small minority who are retarded in high school or who have dropped out of school and returned. It is noteworthy that two out of three children in this age group from families whose head is a university graduate will be continuing their education compared with only one out of five children from families whose head has only fifth year or more elementary education.

In summary, it seems clear that motivation to continue in school is directly related to the educational attainment of parents. Children of more educated parents attain more education than the average. A similar influence appears to be at work with regard to family income; the higher the income the greater the chance of continuing in school. According to Table 3, three out of four children between the ages of 15 - 18 years will be attending school in British Columbia from families whose head earns less than \$2,000.00 per annum compared with more than nine out of 10 children from families with incomes of \$10,000.00 or more. Similarly, the chances of continuing one's education after the age of 19 appears to be almost twice as great for children in families with incomes of \$7,000.00 - \$10,000.00 as it is for children from families with less than \$5,000.00 per annum.

These various relationships between the educational attainment of children on the one hand and parents' education,

occupation and income, on the other, have considerable significance for the problem of school dropouts among families receiving social assistance. An important question concerns the interpretation to be placed upon these relationships.

Table 3. Children attending School as a Proportion of all Children at Home by Specified Income Levels of Wage Earner Family Heads.

(British Columbia, 1961)

Income Levels of Wage Earner Family Heads	<u>Children at Home by Age</u>			
	<u>15 - 18 Years</u>		<u>19 - 24 Years</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage at School</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage at School</u>
Under \$2,000	5594	74.2	2890	19.2
\$2,000 - \$2,999	5199	77.5	2769	20.8
\$3,000 - \$3,999	10534	80.0	5056	22.0
\$4,000 - \$4,999	13530	83.9	5895	25.2
\$5,000 - \$5,999	9260	85.6	4031	29.6
\$6,000 - \$6,999	5728	87.8	2400	37.0
\$7,000 - \$9,999	4793	91.5	2104	48.5
\$10,000 and Over	2076	94.9	1150	64.2
All Income Groups	56714	83.4	26295	28.8

Source: Census of Canada, 1961. Adapted from Table

Do children from families of high socio-economic status receive a greater stimulus to continue their education from the perception of the connection between educational achievement and occupation or are the superior economic advantages which they enjoy the critical factor? Are these various family influences strong enough to keep untalented children in school and prevent talented children from continuing their education?

#### The Special Problem of the Low Income Family

A number of studies have examined the incidence of premature school withdrawal among children from low income families. One such study of 18,500 former recipients of the Aid to Dependent Children program in the United States revealed that 71 per cent of the boys and 61 per cent of the girls had dropped out of school before age 18 without graduating.<sup>1</sup> These figures are notably higher than for the general population of school-leaving age. A smaller study of dropouts in 70 secondary schools of Illinois indicated that 72 per cent of all youths who dropped out of high school came from families of low income.<sup>2</sup> Another study claims a dropout rate for lowest income schools which is 20 times greater than the dropout rate in the highest income schools in a large U.S. city.<sup>3</sup> The greatest differential

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<sup>1</sup> Blackwell, G.W. and W.L. Godwin; "Social Class and Economic Problems of Adolescents," High School Journal, (March 1952), quoted in N.A.S.S.P. Journal 1958, p.144.

<sup>2</sup> Hand, Harold C.; "Do School Costs Drive Out the Youth of the Poor?" Progressive Education 28, (Jan. 1951), p.89-93 - quoted N.A.S.S.P. Bulletin, May 1958, p.143.

<sup>3</sup> Sexton, Patricia Cayo; "Social Class and Pupil Turnover Rates," Journal of Educational Sociology, (November 1959), vol.33, No.3, pp.131-134.



rate of dropout in Vancouver in the year 1961-1962 was .6 per cent of the school enrolment in a high income area, as opposed to 28.8 per cent in a low one.<sup>1</sup>

Parental attitudes to the school and education as such are important in their influence on children's attitude and performance in the school. Sometimes school is seen by parents as merely vocational training or as a panacea for all their ills. If it is not seen as a positive value, or the expectations of it are unreal, and if the goals and values of the educational system are not meaningful to the parents, one can expect a negative or apathetic reaction to school on the part of the children.

Education is looked to as a possible means of breaking the chain of economic dependency, subsistence living and their concomitant problems, which are found in families who have been in receipt of public assistance for long periods of time.<sup>2</sup> If the negative forces in operation in such families work to discourage a child from completing his education, we cannot count on breaking the dependency cycle by means of our present education and welfare services. Alex Inkeles points out one aspect of the perpetuation of dependency when he says, "Not only is the horizon restricted for the individual of lower status, himself; he also tends to insure his self perpetuation by restricting the horizon of his children and others who share his

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<sup>1</sup> Pupil Withdrawal Survey; (Sept. 1961 - August 31, 1962), Dept. of Research and Special Services, Vancouver School Board.

<sup>2</sup> Spence, John William, and Brown, Beverley Blake; Measurement of Need in Social Assistance, Master of Social Work thesis, University of British Columbia, 1962, p.98.

disadvantaged status."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the problem of social dependency created by lack of education and skills, it is important to recognize other reasons for wishing to educate our whole population, including what Frank Riessman calls the culturally deprived or disadvantaged child. In the first place, those people who are not educated are a neglected resource and are denied the possibility of full self-realization. Secondly, if these young people are denied education because of factors beyond their control, we are betraying our proclaimed purpose of providing equal opportunity for all. For children from low-income families mere equality of access to educational facilities may be totally insufficient to ensure true equality in the chances of life. Social and psychological barriers may stand in the way of their taking advantage of education offered. It is clear that while certain attitudes and behaviour may not be conducive to achieving success in school or in a vocation, these attitudes and behaviour are a response to the environment in which one lives and the influences that surround one. Davis has said, "The behaviour which we regard as 'delinquent' or 'shiftless' or 'unmotivated' in slum groups is usually perfectly realistic, adaptive and -- in slum life -- respectable response to reality."<sup>2</sup> If the same thesis is applied to families on

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<sup>1</sup> Inkeles, Alex; "Industrial Man: The Relation of Status to Experience, Perception and Value," The American Journal of Sociology, (July 1960) vol.66, No.1, pp.1-31.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, Allison; Social Class Influences upon Learning, Harvard University Press, 1961, p.11.

Social Assistance, are we providing an equal opportunity to their children, if no account is taken of their social handicaps? Thirdly, education is seen as a means of combatting those social ills of prejudice and intolerance as well as anti-intellectualism.<sup>1</sup>

#### Method of Study

In October, 1963, the South Unit of the Vancouver City Social Service Department was serving a total of approximately 5,000 cases made up of single recipients, couples and families with children. The files of these families were drawn (approximately 690) and briefly examined to determine those families with children aged 13 to 21 years. The latter group comprised 290 families. Some 100 files of families with children could not be examined because they were not available in the agency for a variety of reasons. Some were in use in the Central Office or the Medical Division, and others could not be traced in the time available. These one hundred files would probably have included approximately 42 families with children between 13 and 21 years.

The 13 to 21 age range was chosen because it includes those children most vulnerable to dropout pressures as well as those old enough to have left school either as dropouts or graduates. The study was intended to gather information on all three groups: (a) children still in school and in the process of developing interests, ideas and experiences likely to influence their continuing their formal education; (b) children

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<sup>1</sup> Riessman, Frank; The Culturally Deprived Child, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1961, p.3.

who had left school before completing grade 12; (c) children who had graduated from grade 12.

A schedule was completed for each of the 290 families with children aged 13-21 years, recording such information as marital status and age of parents, number and ages of children in family and length of time on Social Assistance. (See Appendix F. ). This information is presented in tabular form and analyzed in Chapter Two.

As the study progressed it was evident that time would not permit the interviewing of children aged 13 and 14 years and accordingly the universe from which it was planned to draw the interview sample was reduced to those families with children aged 15 to 21 years. This group comprised 225 families made up of 146 one-parent families and 79 two-parent families. These families were then stratified according to year of first reported application for Social Assistance.

For purposes of more intensive research, interview schedules were designed for parents, children in school, children who withdrew before completing grade 12, and high school graduates. Twenty-seven families were interviewed. Where possible the oldest child in school, the oldest dropout and the oldest graduate in each family were selected for interview.

Selection of families for the interview sample was made on the following basis. After stratification of families according to year of first application (pre 1955, 1955-1959, 1960-1963) every third family of the two-parent families was selected to give a total of 24 and every fourth family of the

one-parent families was selected to give a total of 36. Altogether 16 families were drawn from the group that applied for Social Assistance before 1955, another 16 from those who applied between 1955 and 1959, and 28 from those who applied between 1960 and 1963.

Table 3A. School Dropouts from Social Assistance Families  
Selection of Sample for Interviewing

Year of First Application	<u>2-Parent Families</u>		<u>1-Parent Families</u>	
	Total	Number in Sample	Total	Number in Sample
Pre 1955	17	3	40	5
1955-1959	16	3	41	5
1960-1963	46	6	65	8
Total:	79	12	146	18

Prior to approaching these families, five families were drawn from the files of the South Unit for a trial run in order to test the interview schedules. On the basis of these interviews certain revisions were made in the schedules.

Of the 39 families in the sample who were approached initially by letter, and subsequently by personal contact, 27

agreed to participate. In four cases it was possible to interview only the parents because the children were unavailable. In one case the parent would only speak on the telephone, but the child was interviewed.

The interview schedules were designed to provide for consistency of interviewing and recording among the five interviewers, while at the same time permitting the maximum of latitude in the development of answers to particular questions. Unless otherwise stated, the tables in the text are based on information collected through the survey schedules.

Information collected in the interview is analyzed in Chapters Three and Four. First, information on the parents interviewed is presented and compared with corresponding data for the total universe of families from which the sample was drawn. Parental attitudes and expectations with regard to their children's education are then examined and following this the experiences and aspirations of the children themselves are considered. The concluding chapter attempts to identify those factors in the family, school, and personal situations of the children which significantly affect their chances of staying in school. Throughout, special attention is paid to the influence which living on social assistance has on children's completion of their formal schooling.

## CHAPTER 2. THE FAMILIES SELECTED FOR STUDY

For purposes of this study families receiving social assistance and with one or more children thirteen years and older were designated as the "population at risk". The number of such families served by the South Unit of the Vancouver Social Service Department in October 1963 was something in excess of 300, but information could only be obtained from the files of 290 and this is accordingly the universe used for subsequent tabulations. These 290 families are referred to as the Survey Sample, and comprise a little more than one-quarter of the total families with children receiving social assistance from the South Unit, and about one-half of one per cent of all families with children at home in the City of Vancouver (Table 4). Less than 30 per cent of family heads in the survey sample were born outside of Canada compared with a ratio of 35 per cent foreign born in the total city population. It is perhaps noteworthy that exactly one-half of family heads in the sample who were born in Canada come from another province (Table 5). It is not known at what stage in their careers they came to British Columbia.

### Reasons for Applying for Social Assistance

Common to the families who apply for social assistance is the fact of destitution but behind this condition may lie any one or combination of a number of different circumstances. Need may result from inability to find employment which in turn may be associated with limited educational or vocational qualifications

or a skill which is no longer in demand, from mental or physical handicap or age. The chief-earner in the family may be incapacitated either temporarily or permanently by ill-health or be in prison; or the parents may be separated by divorce, desertion or mutual agreement, leaving one of them with total responsibility for earning a living and caring for the children. In such cases, it sometimes proves impossible to combine the two responsibilities and social assistance is sought to enable the remaining parent to stay home and care for the children.

Table 4. Families with Children at Home

Vancouver; South Unit City Social Service Department;  
and Survey Sample. (a)

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	<u>Families with Children at Home</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Vancouver City	56,136	100
City Social Service Department, South Unit	749	1.3
Survey Sample	290	0.5

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Source: Figures for Vancouver based on Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada 1961; figures for South Unit City Social Service Department, and Survey Sample refer to 1963.



Table 5. Place of Birth of Family Head  
Survey Sample

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Born in Canada:

British Columbia	68	
Other Provinces	<u>136</u>	204

Born outside Canada:

United Kingdom	32	
Australia/New Zealand	2	
Europe	39	
United States	7	
Asia	4	
Not Reported	<u>2</u>	<u>86</u>
Total:		290

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Each of these circumstances is likely to exert a somewhat different influence on the family applying for social assistance and should therefore be included in any consideration of the relationship between this experience and the educational prospects of the children in the family. Not only does this information have immediate value for the present study but it would also seem desirable for ordinary purposes of program evaluation to report regularly and in a systematic fashion the reasons for application for social assistance. Unfortunately,

the reasons noted by City Social Service Department workers on the application forms are not sufficiently well-defined or consistently enough recorded to permit any meaningful tabulations to be made from them. The categories most frequently used and the number of cases within each of them are shown in table 6.

Table 6. Reason Given for Application  
Survey Sample

	<u>One Parent</u>		<u>Two Parent</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Unemployment	42	22.58	61	58.66	103	35.52
Destitution	68	36.55	27	25.96	95	32.76
Ill Health	20	10.76	10	9.62	30	10.34
Child Care	20	10.75	0	0.00	20	6.89
Desertion	13	6.99	0	0.00	13	4.49
Other	21	11.29	6	5.76	27	9.32
Not Given	2	1.08	0	0.00	2	.68
Total:	186	100	104	100	290	100

#### Assets of Families

That families are virtually destitute when they apply for social assistance is amply confirmed by the figures given in Table 7. Nearly two-thirds of families for whom information is reported had less than \$10.00 in cash or savings and only five

per cent of families had property worth more than \$3,000.00. Property in these cases would almost certainly refer to the homes occupied by applicants and as later sections of this study will disclose, the quality of owner-occupied housing is very poor indeed.

Table 7. Assets of Families at Time of Most Recent  
Application for Assistance

Survey Sample

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<u>Cash Assets</u>	<u>Families</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than \$10.00	184	63.45
\$10 - \$100	51	17.59
\$101 - \$200	8	2.76
\$201 - \$500	7	2.41
Unknown	<u>40</u>	<u>13.79</u>
Total:	<u>290</u>	<u>100</u>

<u>Value of Property</u>	<u>Families</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than \$200.00	17	5.86
\$200 - \$500	11	3.79
\$501 - \$1,000	8	2.76
\$1,001 - \$2,000	10	3.45
\$2,001 - \$3,000	7	2.42
\$3,001 or more	26	5.52
Unknown	<u>211</u>	<u>76.20</u>
Total:	<u>290</u>	<u>100</u>

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According to the regulations to the Social Assistance Act, assets to the value of \$500.00 are permitted to families applying for social assistance. Considering the overwhelming proportion in this sample who have little more than a few dollars, the question arises whether families in need know about this entitlement or whether it is understood policy in the Social Service Department to discourage applications for assistance until the family has exhausted practically all of its resources. Whatever the reasons, it would seem indisputable that the prospects of successful rehabilitation are diminished if help is withheld until the last possible moment.

#### Frequency of Need for Assistance

Table 8, which compares the present length of time on Social Assistance with the number of previous applications, provides a valuable supplement to the information given in the previous table. The nature of dependency and its effect on family morale and educational achievement must be considered not only in relation to the total span of time over which a family has been known to a social agency, but also in terms of the frequency with which it has had to apply for Assistance. Thirty-five per cent of families in the sample were receiving Social Assistance for the first time and almost one-half of these had been receiving it less than one year; the remainder of this group had been living uninterruptedly on Assistance for periods ranging from one to seven years or more. It is important to recognize that uninterrupted dependence on Social Assistance for a long period of time is not necessarily a sign of gross social

incompetence on the part of a family. For certain family relations such as the loss or incapacity of the chief-earner through separation or death or chronic illness and the presence of young children in the home, there may be no alternative to the provision of long-term aid on a continuing basis, although even here the possibilities of rehabilitation are often greater than is commonly supposed or attempted. There are other situations which prompt grave misgivings about the effects of Assistance on morale. What, for example, are the implications of a history of repeated resort to Social Assistance? What are the circumstances of those twelve families whose current period on Assistance is less than one year but who have received Assistance on more than five different occasions before? Altogether 16 per cent of families in the sample had been in receipt of Social Assistance on five separate occasions.

#### Date of First Application for Social Assistance

According to one popular stereotype the social assistance family is chronically dependent and consent to be so. This stereotype is no different from most stereotypes in being thoroughly misleading and stands in need of testing against objective facts. The data in Table 9 contributes in a small way to the establishment of a more factual picture. More than half the families in the sample first applied for assistance within the last three years and another 25 per cent in the last eight years. The evidence of a chronically dependent group lies in the eight per cent of families whose first application for assistance was made between 14 and 34 years ago. It is among

the children of such families that one would expect the greatest attrition of educational achievement and aspiration.

Table 8. Duration of Current Period on Assistance  
Compared with Number of Previous Applications  
Survey Sample

Number of Previous Applications.	<u>Duration of Current Period on Assistance</u>						<u>Not Reported</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>Less than 1 Yr.</u>	<u>1 Yr. to 3 Yrs.</u>	<u>3 Yrs. to 5 Yrs.</u>	<u>5 Yrs. to 7 Yrs.</u>	<u>7 Yrs. or More</u>			
No previous applications	47	23	16	11	5	0		102
1 " " "	27	18	8	3	6	2		64
2 " " "	22	10	3	0	0	2		37
3 " " "	10	8	4	3	2	1		28
4 " " "	6	3	2	2	1	2		16
5 to 10" "	11	9	2	0	1	2		25
11 or more "	1	2	1	0	2	0		6
Not reported	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>		<u>12</u>
Total:	<u>129</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>9</u>		<u>290</u>

The sharp increase since the late 1950's in the number of two-parent applications, both absolutely and in relation to the number of applications from one-parent families is noteworthy. This undoubtedly reflects changing economic conditions leading to an increase in unemployment for the unskilled worker which most heads of social assistance families are.

Table 9. Date of First Application for Social Assistance  
Survey Sample

<u>Year</u>	<u>One Parent</u>		<u>Two Parent</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1924 - 1929	2	1.07	0	.00	2	.68
1930 - 1934	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00
1935 - 1939	8	4.30	1	.96	9	3.10
1940 - 1944	2	1.08	2	1.93	4	1.38
1945 - 1949	5	2.68	3	2.88	8	2.76
1950 - 1954	31	16.67	11	10.58	42	14.48
1955 - 1959	52	27.96	21	20.19	73	25.18
1960 - 1963	86	46.24	66	63.46	152	52.42
Total:	186	100	104	100	290	100

Marital Status of Heads of Families

Table 10 points up a significant difference in the family life of the children in the survey sample compared with children in metropolitan Vancouver as a whole. If it is conceded that child development is enhanced when both parents are in the home, the relatively disadvantaged position of the social assistance child emerges clearly from this table. Whereas more than 90% of all families in Vancouver have both parents at home, only 35% of the families in our survey sample enjoy this advantage. The table moreover provides a further commentary on the nature

of the circumstances which prompt the need for public aid. Thirty-three per cent of the wives in the sample are separated from their husbands or have been deserted compared with 2.6 per cent for the Vancouver population as a whole and more than 14 per cent are widowed compared with a rate of 4.5 per cent of widowed family heads for the total population. Table 11 shows the distribution of children aged 15 years and older among the families of different marital status for the survey sample and Metropolitan Vancouver.

Table 10. Marital Status of Family Heads: Metropolitan Vancouver  
Compared with Survey Sample

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Vancouver</u>		<u>Study Group</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Husband and Wife at Home	178852	91.11	104	35.86
Wife only at Home	5043	2.56	96	33.10
Husband only at Home	1034	.53	6	2.07
Divorced	2212	1.13	25	8.63
Widowed	8745	4.46	42	14.48
Never Married	414	.21	17	5.86
Total:	196300	100	290	100

Source: Data for Vancouver derived from census of Canada, 1961, Table 74; data for survey sample derived from files of South Unit, City Social Service Department.



Table 11. Number of Children at Home Fifteen Years and Older,  
by Marital Status of Family Head  
Metropolitan Vancouver and Survey Sample.

	Children at Home							
	15 - 18 Years				19 - 24 Years			
	Vancouver		Survey Sample		Vancouver		Survey Sample	
Husband and Wife at Home	33676	87.9	90	34.7	17927	83.3	25	33.8
One Parent only at Home	1822	4.7	93	35.7	1130	5.2	20	25.7
Widowed	2029	5.3	39	14.8	1966	9.1	18	21.0
Divorced	752	2.0	24	9.3	446	2.1	6	8.1
Never Married	42	0.1	14	5.4	53	0.2	7	9.4
Total:	38321	100.0	260	100.0	21522	100.0	76	100.0

Source: Figures for Metropolitan Vancouver derived  
from Census of Canada, 1961, Table 74.

Age of Family Heads and Size of Family.

The criterion used for selection of survey sample (i.e. families with children 13 years or older) has produced a group of families at a relatively advanced stage of family formation with correspondingly higher average ages of parents and above average numbers of children. The median age of the parents in the sample

is 42 years, with one-parent families having, on an average, a median age four years younger than heads of two-parent families, (Table 12). The average number of children per family in the sample is 3.1 compared with an average of 1.2 children for all families in Vancouver, (Table 13). It is noteworthy that 12 per cent of families in the sample have six or more children at home and almost 10 per cent of two-parent families are very large with seven or more children in the home. Other studies indicate a negative correlation between family size and average education of children; that is, the larger the family the less education the individual children are likely to attain.<sup>1</sup> The relationship between size of family on financial dependency on the one hand and educational achievement of the children on the other, is clearly an area deserving intensive study among families receiving social assistance.

Considering the bias of the survey sample in the direction of older, and therefore larger families an attempt has been made to offset this distortion by comparing family sizes within similar age groups for parents in the survey sample and in the Vancouver population generally (Table 14). The striking fact which emerges from this comparison is that male family heads between the ages of 35 - 44 years in the survey sample

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, James N. Morgan et al; Income and Welfare in the United States, McGraw-Hill Book Co. 1962. "The number of children in the family is a major factor influencing the level of education expected for children. Other things being equal, girls and boys in families with one or two children are expected to obtain a substantially higher level of education than those who are members of families having five or more children."

have exactly twice as many children on an average as their counterparts in the City as a whole, (i.e. 4.7 children per family compared with 2.3). The differences in family sizes for female family heads are equally striking. Although the evidence is not conclusive there is reason to believe that families in the survey sample are somewhat younger than other families in the City with children 15 years or older, (Table 14B). If this should prove true, the combination of unusually large numbers of children and relatively young parents presents a set of circumstances likely to prove inimical to the educational development of children.

Table 12. Age of Family Heads  
Survey Sample

	<u>T y p e o f F a m i l y</u>					
	<u>One-Parent</u>		<u>Two-Parent</u>		<u>All</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Families</u>	
Under 25 years	4	2.2	2	1.9	6	2.1
25 - 34 years	18	9.7	4	3.9	22	7.5
35 - 44 years	96	51.6	35	33.6	131	45.2
45 - 54 years	48	25.8	35	33.6	83	28.6
55 - 65 years	14	7.5	17	16.4	31	10.7
Not Reported	6	3.2	11	10.6	17	5.9
Total:	186	100.0	104	100.0	290	100.0

Median Age of One-Parent Families	41 Years
Median Age of Two-Parent Families	45 Years
Median Age of All Families in Sample	42 Years

One of the most disturbing features of the composition of families in the sample is the large proportion of children under 15 years of age. About two-thirds of the children are under 15 years and nearly 60 per cent of these live in families in which there is only one parent in the home, (Tables 15-16). There are 143 children, or nearly 16 per cent of the total, who are under six years of age. These figures are disturbing because they underline the potential size and long-term nature of the problem of undeveloped human resources in families dependent upon social assistance.

Table 13. Size of Family - Children  
Survey Sample

<u>Type of Family</u>	<u>Number of Children in Family</u>							<u>Total Families</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7+</u>	
One-Parent Families	36	47	39	33	15	12	4	186
Two-Parent Families	20	19	21	17	8	9	10	104
Total Families	56	66	60	50	23	21	14	290
<hr/>								
Average number of children per one-parent family								2.9
Average number of children per two-parent family								3.4
Average number of children per family (total sample)								3.1
Average number of children per family, Vancouver City(a)								1.2

(a) Based on Census of Canada, 1961, Table 52.

Table 14. Average Number of Children in Family  
According to Age of Head: Survey Sample  
Compared with Vancouver City

<u>Male Heads</u> <u>Age</u>	<u>Children per Family</u>	
	<u>Vancouver</u>	<u>Survey Sample</u>
All Male Heads	1.4	3.5
Under 25 Years	0.9	.5
25 - 34 Years	1.8	5.0
35 - 44 Years	2.3	4.7
45 - 54 Years	1.6	3.0
55 - 64 Years	0.6	2.2
65 and Over	0.1	-
<u>Female Heads</u>		
All Female Heads	1.3	3.0
Under 25 Years	1.5	2.5
25 - 34 Years	2.0	3.4
35 - 44 Years	2.1	3.4
45 - 54 Years	1.5	2.4
55 - 64 Years	0.7	1.8
65 and Over	0.1	-

Source: Figures for Vancouver based on Census of  
Canada 1961. Bulletin 2.1-7 Table 74.

Table 14B. Number of Children in Family according to Age of Family Head - Survey Sample

<u>Age of Family Head</u>	<u>N u m b e r   o f   C h i l d r e n</u>							<u>Total</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7+</u>	
Under 25 Years	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	5
25 - 34 Years	0	3	10	4	3	1	2	23
35 - 44 Years	15	28	23	26	14	12	14	132
45 - 54 Years	23	26	14	17	4	3	1	88
55 - 65 Years	13	8	7	2	1	0	0	31
Not Known	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>11</u>
Total:	53	71	58	50	23	18	17	290
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Table 15. Families by Marital Status, and Age of Head showing Age Distribution of all Children at Home for Survey Sample

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Under 15 yrs.</u>	<u>15-18 yrs.</u>	<u>19-24 yrs.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Married				
Husband and Wife at Home	235	90	25	350
One Parent only at Home	205	93	20	318
Widowed	61	39	18	118
Divorced	45	24	6	75
Never Married	<u>23</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>44</u>
Total:	569	260	76	905

Table 16. Distribution of Children by Age according to Type of Family - Survey Sample

<u>Age of Children</u>	<u>T y p e   o f   F a m i l y</u>					
	<u>One-Parent</u>		<u>Two-Parent</u>		<u>All Families</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Under 6 Years	82	15.0	61	17.1	143	15.8
6 - 14 Years	252	46.0	174	48.7	426	47.1
15- 18 Years	167	30.5	93	26.1	260	28.7
19- 24 Years	<u>47</u>	<u>8.5</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>8.1</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>8.4</u>
All Children	548	100.0	357	100.1	905	100.0

The Interview Sample

Reasons for Application for Social Assistance

Reasons for application for Social Assistance beyond the brief descriptions such as "destitute," "unemployed" or "child care" found on application forms could not always be easily determined, but in some cases it was possible to fill out these uninformative labels with information obtained from interviews with parents. This information tended to be the present reason for not seeking or obtaining employment rather than the original, expressed reasons for application. As could be expected in a sample composed of families with children, a frequent reason for requiring Social Assistance was for the support of children. Eight mothers indicated a preference to remain at home with their children. Three of these families had

pre-school children and the remaining five had all their children in school. In those cases where all the children were of school age, the mothers preferred to remain at home in order to provide proper care and supervision. Four of these families in which child care was the central reason for needing Social Assistance reported frequent illnesses in the family. Three mothers had considered part-time employment but had not been able to find jobs which would allow them to care for their children adequately. In two cases it appeared that the mothers did not have occupational skills on which to fall back.

Table 17. Primary Reason Given for Receiving Social Assistance  
Interview Sample

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	<u>One-Parent</u>	<u>Two-Parent</u>
Unemployed		4
Child Care	8	
Ill Health	1	2
Loss of Breadwinner	8	
Unknown	<u>4</u>	-
Total:	<u>21</u>	<u>6</u>

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In some cases these mothers did not feel that the net earnings they might make would improve their financial position. Costs incurred by being employed such as expense of baby sitters, additional clothing and transportation when subtracted from a low wage would mean that their income would not be appreciably higher than on Social Assistance.



Loss of the breadwinner in the family through death, desertion, separation or divorce was mentioned in eight families. In seven of these, child care was certainly a major factor, but the reason for receiving Social Assistance focussed on loss of a provider rather than on suggesting that the predominant reason was child care. This was especially true among those families which had teen-age children. Only one parent who gave "loss of breadwinner" rather than "child care" had pre-school children. In the other seven, the median age of the youngest child in the family was nine years. In two of these families the point was made that prior to the family breadwinner's death, he had been a poor manager of family finances.

Physical ailments mentioned by three families either completely prevented employment or allowed for only part-time work. In some cases, where illness was one of the secondary reasons for receiving Social Assistance the disabilities affected the parent and in others, the children. One father was unemployed because of a back injury, not covered by W.C.B., which prevented him from resuming his usual employment as a labourer.

Unemployment of the father, uncomplicated by any apparent physical disability, accounted for the applications of three families. In these cases there was no suggestion of the mother taking employment.

#### Characteristics of Families Interviewed

This section examines the marital status of parents, place of birth of applicants, age of the family head and the

number of children in the family compared to the age of the head of the family.

Considering the conditions which lead to financial dependency it is not surprising that the present sample of families includes a large proportion with only one parent in the home. The ratio of married to single heads in the universe, was 36 per cent to 64 per cent. In the interviewed group 27 per cent of the parents were married and the remaining 72 per cent were one parent families with several forms of single status, i.e. six were widowed, two were deserted, five were separated, four were divorced and two lived in common law. The marital status of one family at the time of the interview was unclear.

Table 18. Marital Status of Family Heads  
Interview Sample

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<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Number of Family Heads</u>
Married	7
Widowed	6
Deserted	2
Separated	5
Divorced	4
Common Law	2
Not Known	<u>1</u>
Total:	<u>27</u>

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One of the studies reviewed in Chapter 1 suggested that marital status of the parents could not be considered a significant factor in school retention. Seventy-two per cent of the dropouts reviewed in that study were from families in which both parents were present and legally married. It therefore cannot be assumed that marital status, as such, is a major contributing factor in the general dropout population.<sup>1</sup>

Table 19. Place of Birth of Family Head  
Interview Sample

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<u>Place of Birth</u>	<u>Number of Family Heads</u>
British Columbia	7
Other Provinces in Canada	11
Outside Canada	8
Not Reported	<u>1</u>
Total:	<u>27</u>

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Seven, or 27 per cent, of the family heads interviewed were born in British Columbia compared with 23.5 per cent for the universe of families. The universe showed 47 per cent from other provinces in the interviewed group. The remaining eight or 31 per cent of the interviewed families were born in countries other than Canada. Six of these were from non-English speaking

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<sup>1</sup> Our Drop Outs, Maryland State Department of Education, June, 1963.

countries. In one of these families, lack of fluency in English on arrival in Canada caused one year retardation for the children re-entering school. One mother was acutely conscious of her difficulty with the language and gave it as a reason for not contacting the school in any way.

Table 20. Number of Children in Family Compared with Age of Head of Family - Interview Sample

<u>Age of Family Head</u>	<u>Number of Children in Family</u>							<u>Total</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7+</u>	
25 - 34 Years			2					2
35 - 44 Years	1		2	4			4	11
45 - 54 Years		1	1	3		3		8
55 - 65 Years	3		1				2	6
Total:	4	1	6	7		3	6	27

The size of families and the age of parents are important in considering their general welfare, and particularly the pressures on the family group. In the families interviewed, 19 of the family heads were between 35 and 54 years old. This group accounted for 93 of the total of 119 children born in these families. The number of children per family ranged from one to 13. The median number of children per family in the interviewed group is four. In the universe, the median is three children per family.

### CHAPTER 3. FAMILY INFLUENCES ON SCHOOL RESISTANCE.

#### Family Health

In surveying the health of the families interviewed there were three main purposes. The first was to determine the incidence of sickness and disabling conditions. The second was to estimate the degree of stress on the family caused by particular ill health or disability of either parents or children. The third purpose was to establish the degree of absenteeism caused by poor health. Besides absenteeism caused by ill health, instances of truancy were revealed in the study although no quantitative measurement was made of it. There may also have been families who concealed this information. Since parents and children were the only sources used for this sort of personal information the reporting on truancy and absenteeism in this study cannot be regarded as conclusive. The Maryland study found that "the majority of drop outs were irregular in attendance, either lawfully or unlawfully during the year in which they dropped out." It found that 60 per cent of the dropouts had records of irregular attendance for either lawful or unlawful reasons. In the year they dropped out 70 per cent of them attended irregularly.<sup>1</sup>

It should be pointed out that variations appeared to exist in the families' reactions to sickness. For example, one family became extremely upset and the daughter dropped out of

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<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit.

school when it was discovered that she was suffering from tuberculosis, despite the fact that no hospitalization was required and treatment was given through the Out-Patients Department of the hospital. Such differences were taken into account in classifying the impact on the family.

Table 21. Health of Families  
Interview Sample

<u>Health Status</u>	<u>One-Parent Families</u>	<u>Two-Parent Families</u>	<u>All Families</u>
All members of family in apparently good health	6	2	8
Family suffers some incapacitation because of ill health	7	2	9
Family severely incapacitated by ill health	7	2	9
Not ascertainable	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
Total:	<u>21</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>27</u>

Six of the one-parent and two of the two-parent families suffered no disablement for health reasons. All reported excellent health and virtually no absenteeism for reasons of illness. Two mothers indicated that their sons had played truant a good deal, however.

Nine families experienced some incapacitation because of ill health. Two of these were two-parent families. These

families described a variety of complaints. Two daughters suffered congenital defects. Two children suffered asthma. One daughter was absent six weeks after an appendix operation. It was also indicated that she played truant. One daughter was suspected of malingering. She was sent to school but was frequently sent home again by the school nurse. The remaining four families suffered some incapacitation because of ailments of the parents which included two mothers with unspecified complaints, ulcers and prolonged illness of a parent now deceased.

A total of nine families were severely incapacitated by ill health. One child suffered tuberculosis which was treated on an out-patient basis. One family preferred not to specify the complaint but indicated that it was the reason for application for Social Assistance. In the two-parent families the fathers stated that their health had caused unemployment, one had ulcers and other general complaints, the other had suffered an injury which made him unemployable for the only work he knows which is labouring.

The remaining five families, which were all in the one-parent group, were severely disabled by poor health. In all but one of these cases, more than one member of the family suffered poor health of a serious nature. The disabilities found in these five families are summarized below.

Family No. 1	One child suffers from Tuberculosis.
	One child - pneumonia and spinal condition.
Family No. 2	Mother - slipped disc.
	One child - asthma.
	One child - menstrual problems.

Family No. 3    Mother - multiple operations.  
                  Two children - severe vision impairment.  
                  One child - epilepsy.  
                  One child - concussion, suspected of epilepsy.  
                  One child - continuous fatigue.  
                  One child - obesity.

Family No. 4    Mother - arthritis.

Family No. 5    Mother - dropsy and general ailments.  
                  Father - heart condition prior to death.  
                  One child - asthma.

Two children in two of these families in this severely incapacitated group were truants. The actual absenteeism from school for illness or disability was not uniformly reported by parents or children interviewed. Those who indicated there had been absences tended to be vague about the length of them.

#### Housing Conditions

Housing conditions and the rents paid for accommodation have been examined in our interview sample for their possible influence upon family morale. Special consideration has been given to differences depending upon whether families are living in their own home, in subsidized housing, or in non-subsidized housing. The influence of poor neighbourhoods was mentioned by several families in their complaints about the inadequacy of social assistance allowance. There was an attempt to consider the burden upon family finances of high rent payments and the incidence of gross overcrowding conditions which provided an unfavourable atmosphere for the child to study. The following findings appeared to be of significance.

Of the 27 families interviewed, two owned their own



home, mortgage free. One of these was described as run down, dilapidated and neglected. As the second parent refused to be interviewed no assessment of the physical condition of the home could be made.

Table 22. Type of Accommodation showing Average Rent paid, Average Number of Bedrooms and Average Number of persons in the Home by Subsidized and Non-Subsidized Housing.

<u>Type of Accommodation</u>	<u>Average Rent Paid</u>		<u>Average Number of Bedrooms.</u>		<u>Average No. of persons in the Home</u>	
	<u>Sub. Housing.</u>	<u>Non-Sub. Housing.</u>	<u>Sub. Housing.</u>	<u>Non-Sub. Housing.</u>	<u>Sub. Housing.</u>	<u>Non-Sub. Housing.</u>
House	\$59.00	\$73.00	3.3	3	5.3	5
Duplex	32.00	57.50	3	2	4	2.5
Row Housing	40.00		2.6		5	
Apartment	28.00	65.00	2	2	4	2
Suite		46.00		1.3		3.3
Overall Average	\$43.00	\$64.00	2.7	2.4	4.7	4

Three families were paying mortgages on their homes. These were described as extremely over-crowded with an average of six persons in two bedrooms. The houses in each case were in poor repair, steps broken, windows cracked and in need of paint.

It appeared generally that those families who owned their own homes or were paying mortgages were unable to meet the expenses for upkeep.

Of the 21 families renting, nine were occupying subsidized public housing. The remaining 13 were renting on the open market and their rents were significantly higher for poorer accommodation. Average rent paid by families in non-subsidized housing was \$64.00 compared to \$43.00 in subsidized housing and ranged as high as \$88.00 for a four bedroom house for a family of eight. Obviously families on social assistance who are obliged to find accommodation on the open market are at a considerable disadvantage since the maximum rental allowance is only \$60.00. In such cases, money which should be spent on food and other necessities has to be diverted to rent. Those families living in houses or apartments rented on the open market complained most intensely about the financial burden which the high rents posed.

Accommodation in subsidized rental projects, although somewhat confined, was generally in better repair. Because of the confined quarters and the large proportion of young children the accommodation was described as noisy and lacking privacy.

#### Length of Residence

Contrary to what one might suspect, many of the families interviewed displayed unusual residential stability. Twelve families who reported no moves in the last five years had an average of nine years in their present home; six of these were living in subsidized housing. Two others in subsidized housing projects had an average of two years in their present residence. While another had a history of ten moves in the past five years and was now in the process of being evicted from Little Mountain

housing after being there three months.

Only two families renting non-subsidized accommodation recorded no moves in the last five years. Average time spent in their present accommodation for those renting non-subsidized accommodation was two years one month compared to an average of six years 10 months among those renting subsidized accommodation.

Two main factors appeared to influence the extent of residential mobility. Frequent moves among those representing non-subsidized accommodation represented an attempt to find cheaper and more adequate accommodation.

Of those families who did record moves in the last five years, the moves were frequent averaging four per family. Six families in this group confined their moves within Greater Vancouver with another seven families who moved into Vancouver from other areas of British Columbia in the last five years. A second factor indicated was that of a family's inability to settle down anywhere. There was a general tendency for those presently in subsidized housing to have had fewer moves; two compared to six in non-subsidized housing and a much longer period of time currently in present residence, an average of six years 10 months compared to two years 10 months in total interview sample.

### Crowding

It was found that nine families were living under grossly overcrowded conditions with an average of nearly three persons per bedroom. The incidence of crowding is highest in those families paying mortgages on their homes, and those living

in non-subsidized suites.

Another five families were uncomfortably crowded with an average of nearly two persons per bedroom. The highest proportion in this group was living in non-subsidized houses.

It is suspected that the degree of crowding and its effect upon students in the family is even greater than that indicated by the above figures. Two factors may account for this. The majority of the families interviewed contained only one parent and this parent frequently expressed a desire for a separate bedroom. In some cases three or four children were sharing one room. Secondly, each of these families had at least one child over 15 years of age, to whom privacy and study space are of critical importance. High school students frequently shared rooms with younger siblings which meant that undisturbed study space was not available.

In many homes the kitchen and dining were combined, always occupied, and frequently monopolized in the evening by the television set. Next to lack of privacy cited as a problem in the majority of families by both the parents and children, the availability of free space in the home was mentioned most frequently as a problem.

#### Education of Parents

The educational experience of parents plays an important part in the attitudes they have toward education. Parents of limited education may react in two ways. Those who do not see life in terms of upward striving or self improvement may place very little value in education because their vocational

aspirations for their children do not surpass their own. On the other hand those who do wish for a "better life" for their children than they had themselves may place great emphasis on the importance of completing school.

Table 23. Education Level Compared with Age of Family Head.  
Interview Sample.

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<u>Age of Parent</u>	<u>Grade Achieved by Parent</u>				<u>Some University</u>
	<u>0-8</u>	<u>9-11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12+ non-academic training</u>	
25 - 34 Years			1		
35 - 44 Years	7	5			
45 - 54 Years	5	3		1	
55 - 64 Years	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>2</u>
Total:	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>

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In five families it was not possible to determine the highest school grade completed by the parent. One mother had attended school for only two summers and did not achieve any grade standing. Another mother attended a one-room school for three years in which grades one to eight were taught, but did not actually acquire a specific grade standing although she spoke in terms of feeling she had completed grade 8. The educational level of the remaining three parents are unknown.

Of those who attended school regularly the grades achieved by family heads ranged from grade 6 to grade 12. The

median grade completed was grade 9.

One parent from Germany noted that free schooling ended at grade 8 in her homeland, and this was therefore the grade at which all but the well-to-do leave school. In the families interviewed, two heads had had "some university education," but neither held degrees. Three heads had attended either a trade or technical school. In one of these cases the skills thus learned were not being used or even considered for use. The mother had been a stenographer trained after completing grade 12, but in looking for employment envisaged herself working in a school cafeteria. She wanted employment that would leave her free after school hours for supervising her teen-age daughters, and felt that she was now "too stout," to work in an office. It is also possible that she had lost these skills because of the intervening years of child care and homemaking.

Despite the fact that over the years school retention rates have been improving, the table showing grade achieved by age of head does not indicate that these families have been greatly influenced by this changing educational pattern. For example, the four heads who completed grade 12 were 64 years, 56 years, 47 years and 34 years. The latter head was a mother who had dropped out of school during grade 9 but returned to a program of adult education in which she completed grade 12 at age 33. Of those between the ages of 37 and 46 none had completed any grade beyond 10.

Parents' Attitude to Education

A number of studies have drawn attention to the influence on school retention of parents' attitude to education and the school. The close relationship existing between attitudes of parents to education and continued school attendance of 16 and 17 year-olds is underlined in the Hamilton Study. It states that those families which see education as a means of upward social mobility urge their children to stay in school. This desire for self-improvement was found to be typical of middle class families but was less often true of lower class families "who are more likely to accept their status."<sup>1</sup>

Table 24. Parents' Attitude to Children Continuing in School  
Interview Sample

	<u>One-Parent Family</u>	<u>Two-Parent Family</u>	<u>Total</u>
Not necessary for Children to graduate	2	1	3
Would like Children to graduate	18	4	22
Indifferent		2	2

The families interviewed in the present study predominantly expressed an interest in their children completing

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<sup>1</sup> Out of School Youths, Hamilton: Greater Hamilton Y.M.C.A., 1962, p.12.

grade 12 for primarily vocational and economic reasons. Eighteen one-parent and four two-parent families expressed this wish. In five of these families the hope that their children would graduate was accompanied by expressed fears that they seemed headed toward dropping out of school because of such things as inadequate clothing, grade retardation, or loss of interest on the part of the child.

Two of the one-parent families thought that it was unnecessary for their children to complete grade 12. In one of these grade 12 was desired for the son, but grade 10 was considered adequate for the daughter. One of the one-parent families seemed indifferent and indicated that grade 10 was adequate and suggested that experience outside of school was of superior educational value. One two-parent family did not think it was necessary for their children to graduate. However the father indicated that his son is interested in school and wishes to complete grade 12.

While the importance of education was emphasized by the majority of families it was revealing to examine the actual interest taken in children's education by the parents. Judgements of their interest were made on the basis of what actual knowledge of the school courses and activities they had, knowledge of their children's feelings toward them and knowledge of their school performance. These evaluations were also based on the use the parents made of opportunities to become familiar with the school through parent-child discussion, participation in parent groups such as P.T.A., and through initiating contact with



teachers, principals, counsellors or school nurses.

Table 25. Level of Parents' Interest in Education  
Interview Sample

<u>Level of Interest</u>	<u>One-Parent</u>	<u>Two-Parent</u>	<u>Total</u>
Actively Interested	3	1	4
Some Interest	10	1	11
Little or no Interest	8	4	12

Three one-parent and one two-parent families were rated as being "actively interested" in their children's education. In the one-parent group, one mother was almost desperate that her son pursue his education seriously as she had placed her faith in education to ensure a better way of life. The other parents who were rated as actively interested were active in parent groups, were familiar with courses and with teachers and students in the school, set study time aside for their children and made sacrifices to ensure them of adequate clothing and school equipment.

Eleven families fell in the "some interest" category. They all had a superficial knowledge of the school programs, some knowledge of their children's grades on report cards, and gave some help with homework and courses, but showed no initiative in dealing with problems related to school. One family had invested in a set of "Books of Knowledge" which they could ill-afford and which the children did not use.

Eight one-parent and four of the two-parent families showed little or no interest in education. In the latter case two fathers indicated that school was the mother's area of concern. In these families the parents did not seem to perceive the role for parents in education.

The feelings of the parents toward their children's schools appears to be important in that they influence the attitudes of their children.

Table 26. Parents' Attitudes toward the School  
Interview Sample

<u>Attitude</u>	<u>One-Parent</u>	<u>Two-Parent</u>	<u>Total</u>
Entirely Positive	2	-	2
Positive with some Reservations	10	2	12
Negative	3	1	4
Indifferent	5	3	8
1 Unknown			

Parents' attitudes have been classified on the basis of expressed feelings about teachers and treatment meted out by the school. The latter is in relation to the handling of complaints by either school or parent, helpfulness of the counsellors or lack of it, interest or lack of interest in the children by school authorities. The evaluation also takes account of parents' attitudes toward the grading system, course content, educational "frills," homework, and complaints about facilities and provision for lunches at the school.

Of the one-parent families two had positive attitudes to the school. Only favourable comments about the teachers, courses and school activities were made by them.

Among the one-parent families, 10 held generally positive views with some negative criticisms. There were also two of the two-parent families in this classification. Adverse comments made reference to personal encounters with the counsellors and teachers. Two parents complained that their children had been told to limit their educational goals because they were on Social Assistance.

The grading system used on report cards was not understood or approved of in some families. Unfavourable comparisons were made with the methods of grading used in their own school experience. Some felt that the system of letter grades was unfair because it depends on what kind of students are in the class and how liberal the individual teachers are with A's and B's when many children do well on the same test. Some parents criticized the "frill" courses. One parent felt that such things as dancing have no place in the school. Lack of respect for teachers was raised as a negative comment. While one parent appreciated the warm atmosphere of the school, she regretted that it sometimes led to flippancy on the part of the students. Three parents complained that homework is excessive.

The three parents who were predominantly negative were in the one-parent group. One of these supported the school despite the numerous criticism she had for it. In this case the mother felt there was lack of individual interest in the children

because the school was so big and she had experienced an irresponsible attitude to truancy and to counselling.

Some families who indicated they had no opinion about the school without question. There were five one-parent families in this group and three two-parent families. For one parent the courses were incomprehensible. She commented that "school is hard." Two mothers regarded the school submissively and one appeared to have accepted a request for withdrawal of her daughter without any attempt to resolve the problem. One parent had no opinion but felt the child liked school. Of the three two-parent families, two parents did not have enough knowledge of the school on which to base an opinion. The third indicated acceptance of the school but had no knowledge of it.

Table 27. Parental Interest in Education compared with Attitude towards School - Interview Sample

<u>Attitude towards School</u>	<u>Actively Interested</u>	<u>Some Interest</u>	<u>Little or No Interest.</u>
Entirely Positive	1	1	1
Positive with some with some Reservations	2	8	1
Negative	1		3
Indifferent		1	7
1 Unknown			

There were, then seven families in which parents held no opinions about the school or accepted school authority and had little or no interest in education. The only other major

grouping in this analysis were eight parents who were generally positive but had some reservations and at the same time took some interest. The remaining families were scattered in their attitudes to the school and their interest in education.

The parent who was actively interested and had a positive attitude had a warm appreciative attitude toward the school. She reported that a great deal of individual interest had been taken in her son both in his courses and in his school activities which were in drama and art clubs. She appeared to have a warm relationship with certain teachers. This mother had purchased insurance policies for her children's education despite the financial hardship so incurred. The fact that her son is outgoing and responsive seemed to enhance the interest taken in him by his teachers. The family was sensitive about being on social assistance. The mother did not tell her son about receiving assistance until he was in high school. The son showed that he had absorbed this shameful attitude to Social Assistance when he refused to benefit from the extra assistance usually granted for text book rentals in order to keep this information from the school.

The family that was actively interested in education but had a negative attitude to the school felt that the school authorities were sometimes irresponsible in counselling services, that the school was too large for adequate individual interest in the students and that the teachers tended to assume lack of concern on the part of parents. For example, when she responded to a sharp note about her child's absenteeism by making an

appointment for an interview with the teacher, the teacher expressed surprise at her sincere concern and unbelligerent approach to the problem. The teacher had expected her to be hostile. The parent discovered in the interview that the teacher had accepted notes of excuse for absence, which were written in a child's handwriting on school looseleaf paper. The parent felt that the teacher had been obtuse in not recognizing the truancy and that she had not taken her responsibilities to the parents and children seriously enough.

Of the group who were classified as having a positive attitude with some reservations and some interest, one had only very general knowledge of the school program, and was fairly well satisfied but objected to the school counsellor. Another protested a desire for education for her children but said her daughters complained when she kept them out of school for baby sitting. She felt that she and her children were rejected by the principal of a parochial school because of their being a Social Assistance family.

One parent helped with homework and had some positive contact with the counsellor but was critical of educational "frills," and cost of materials for school which were a financial burden to her. Although one mother did not participate in any school programs for parents, she had a fair knowledge of courses. She indicated some family friction over homework. Part of her reservation about the school was a result of a feeling of economic inferiority compared with families of other children in the school. She said that the other children at school had large

amounts of spending money, whereas her son had none. Another parent took considerable interest but took a laissez-faire attitude. She said, "The school knows what it is doing." At the same time she criticized the arrangements at the school for lunches.

One father made concrete efforts to help children in their education by providing books and obtaining an apprenticeship for his son. He was, however, critical of the teaching methods employed and some of the "frill" subjects.

One of these families left the decision about withdrawal from school to the child and indicated that they rarely discussed school. However, the father seemed to have some concrete suggestions for improving the educational system, such as grouping children of similar ability in classes.

Among those parents who had no opinion or who were indifferent to the school and who showed little or no interest in the school, there frequently was no discussion of school courses or activities, or any that occurred was on the children's initiative. Contacts with the school had not been made unless teachers or counsellors telephoned or wrote the parent. Some of these parents appeared to regard the school as a completely foreign institution outside their control and were content to submit passively to whatever was decided for them. This may not be an unrealistic assessment of their actual situation.

#### Grade Retardation

It has been found that students who drop out of school frequently have repeated one or more grades, and therefore at the

time of leaving school are older than the majority of students in the same grade. Schreiber found that, "In several studies of communities, as much as 90 per cent of the dropouts had been retained at least once; 60 per cent twice or more."<sup>1</sup>

Table 28. Degree of Grade Retardation of all Children in Interviewed Families - Interview Sample

<u>Retardation</u>	<u>One-Parent</u>				<u>Two-Parent</u>				<u>Total</u>
	<u>In School</u>		<u>Dropout</u>		<u>In School</u>		<u>Dropout</u>		
	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	
One Year	3	2	5	2	2	3	3	-	20
Two Years	5	5	-	-	1	-	1	-	12
Three Years	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total:	9	7	6	2	3	3	4	0	34

Of the 88 children in these families for whom this information was known or applicable, 39 children or 44 per cent were retarded in their grades. Thirteen boys and seven girls or a total of 20 children were retarded one year. Nine boys and five girls or 14 children were retarded by two or more years. Four children, two boys and two girls, were in Special Class and one boy was in his third year in the Occupational Program. These children are included in the total retarded group, but not in the totals retarded by year. There were nine graduates among the 88 children, none of whom were retarded in their grade.

<sup>1</sup> Schreiber, Daniel; "Juvenile Delinquency and the School Dropout Problem", Federal Probation, vol.27 (September 1963), pp.15-19.



Three of them were actually advanced. Two had completed grade 12 at sixteen, rather than the usual 18 years.

Schreiber also found that dropouts were more often boys than girls. He says, "In most studies from 52 per cent to 58 per cent of the dropouts in a particular locale are likely to be male."<sup>1</sup> In the present study, the dropout ratio was 10 boys to two girls.

#### How Parents Feel About Being on Social Assistance

In asking parents how they felt about being on social assistance a distinction was made between those attitudes and feelings related to a marginal income and those feelings arising from the experience of being a recipient of public aid. The former is discussed first.

Of the parents of 26 families interviewed, 11 indicated resignation to a marginal income by either stating this explicitly or by the omission of complaints about the financial inadequacy of their income. In this group of 10 families there was an average of 2.75 children in the home compared with an average of 3.3 children living in the home in the total interview sample.

A second group of parents representing 11 families indicated that a marginal income had generally restricted themselves and their children in buying clothes, school books, extra educational aids such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc. They were forced to accept second-hand clothes which were not only

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<sup>1</sup> School and Early Experiences of Youth; U.S. Department of Labour, Bulletin 1277, cited in Schreiber, Daniel, "Juvenile Delinquency and the School Dropout Problem," Federal Probation, vol.27, (September 1963), pp.15-19.

worn but ill-fitting. This has special consequence for teenage family members whose accelerated rate of growth means frequent size changes.

There was a general complaint that such a marginal income was inadequate for the necessities of life and made extras such as Christmas or birthday gifts, money for club memberships or recreational activities, bowling and skating, out of the question. This was frequently mentioned as affecting the family's morale and limiting any freedom of choice, "your life was not your own".

Because of a low rent allowance some families felt obliged to accept housing accommodation which was in poor condition. Neighbourhoods in which rents were within their means were seen as having a poor influence on children because of their run down nature. Several parents felt that the presence of teenage gangs in the neighbourhood had a detrimental influence upon the interests of their children.

The cost of bus fare itself was mentioned as being a restriction. Four children in one family walk 15 blocks to school daily as 56¢ per day or \$11.20 per month for bus fare to school was an impossibility. Those parents who complained about the general inadequacy of social assistance allowance had an average of four children in the home.

A group of parents representing five families were notably outspoken about the restricted income of social assistance allowance. They pointed out that social assistance provides about \$22.00 per child per month, all inclusive regardless of age.

Childrens Aid Society in placing a child considers expenses to be \$37.50 up to the age of six, progressively increasing with age to a maximum of \$57.00 for a teenage child per month with an additional allowance for clothes and medical expenses.

At the age of 16 family allowance benefits are withdrawn with no subsequent supplement in assistance payments, while general expenses for the child during this period are higher. Whether boy or girl in the age range of 14 - 18, there is a period of rapid growth requiring more frequent changes in size of clothes. Appetites during this age increase markedly and ordinary school expenses for books and notepaper are higher.

These families are unable to meet financially what can reasonably be considered to be necessities of subsistence. In addition, social activities which may also be considered a necessary adjunct of personal development are out of the question. Club memberships and recreational activities of dancing, bowling or skating are financially prohibitive.

Parents also complained that income benefits of social assistance allowances not only ignore the differential costs for children but fail to take account of a rising cost of living. Grocery and clothes costs have risen while income benefits remain static. In one instance an unemployed husband and father who appears to have strong emotional ties with the family has left the home temporarily as in his absence there is relatively more money for groceries. In this group there is an average of 4.2 children in the home compared with 3.3 in the total interview sample.

Those families with more children in the home, generally, expressed stronger negative feelings about the inadequacy of social assistance allowance. It may be assumed that although clothes can be handed down in families with several children, combined expenses for maintenance, school activities, and incidentals exceeded allotment for the children.

Feelings concerning the experience of receiving public assistance were remarkable not for their variety but for their intensity and conviction. No family thought social assistance to be a desirable means of income and those expressing little feeling, generally conveyed in their responses a resigned, fatalistic feeling of dependency.

Responses of the families were divided into three groups: 1) those who intensely disliked receiving social assistance and saw no alternative; 2) those who generally disliked the situation but appreciated the help it afforded and 3) those who were resigned to the situation with little motivation to change. As the dynamics operating in such responses are many it is difficult to single out each for clarification. The following, however, appear to be of special significance.

The majority of families interviewed were composed of one parent, in each case a mother. The female parent frequently stated that it was necessary for her to remain in the home to look after small children. As few of these mothers were vocationally equipped to obtain a secure position in the labour force it was difficult to distinguish between those attitudes reflecting an adjustment to temporary dependence and those indicative of an unalterable resignation.

Table 29A. Parents' Attitudes to Social Assistance according to Year of First Application for Social Assistance.

<u>Year of First Application for S.A.</u>	<u>Dislike Intensely; No Alternative Perceived</u>			<u>Dislike Situation but Appreciate Help</u>			<u>Resigned to Situation</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>One Par.</u>	<u>Two Par.</u>	<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>One Par.</u>	<u>Two Par.</u>	<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>One Par.</u>	<u>Two Par.</u>	<u>Sub Total</u>	
1963	1		1					1	1	2
1962				1		1	2	1	3	4
1960-1961	1	1	2	1	1	2				4
1956-1959	1	1	2	2		2		1	1	5
pre 1956	5	1	6	5		5				11
Total:			11			10			5	26

Table 29B. Parents' Attitudes to Social Assistance according to Length of Current Period on Assistance.

<u>Current Period on Social Assistance</u>	<u>Dislike Intensely; No Alternative Perceived</u>			<u>Dislike Situation but Appreciate Help</u>			<u>Resigned to Situation</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>One Par.</u>	<u>Two Par.</u>	<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>One Par.</u>	<u>Two Par.</u>	<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>One Par.</u>	<u>Two Par.</u>	<u>Sub Total</u>	
Less than 1 Year	2	1	3	3	2	5	1	1	2	10
1 - 2 Yrs.	3		3				1	1	2	5
2 - 4 Yrs.	2		2	1		1		1	1	4
4 - 8 Yrs.	1		1	2		2				3
More than 8 Yrs.	1		1							1
Unknown						3				3
Total:			10			11			5	26

Parents of 10 families implied a passive resignation to financial dependence upon social assistance with no strong feelings concerning its receipt. Nine of these were one-parent families. In the two-parent family in this group the father has been chronically ill and unemployable for the past few years. The parent of one one-parent family has experienced recurrent disc complaints and has been unable to work steadily.

Of the remaining one-parent families dates of first application for assistance ranged from 1939 - 1959. In each of these families there had been financial dependence, intermittent or continued, for a minimum of four years. This group represented an average of 44 mos. currently on assistance compared with an average of 29.3 months currently on assistance for the interview sample.

Two factors appeared to be operating in influencing the attitudes of this group: a disabling illness which prevented the head of the family from securing employment and the experience of an extended period of financial dependence.

Eleven families disliked the situation but had some appreciation of the purpose and help of social assistance. Of the 2 two-parent families in this group the husband was seasonally employed. Date of first application in both cases was 1960 with an average of 1.5 months currently on assistance. Both families felt some social stigma saying, "people think you are a bum." They refused to tell their children or their friends that they were in receipt of social assistance. Both families, however, saw this financial aid as "tiding them over" until the husband was able to secure employment.

Of the nine one-parent families, one mother has just completed her own grade 12 so that she may obtain permanent employment and a second works part time as a governess as much as her health permits. The other seven mothers have no vocational training which would enable them to obtain jobs more financially remunerative than benefits of social allowance. They express having made the decision to remain at home to care for the children rather than seek employment. "it is necessary to swallow your pride for the sake of the children." Each of these families had some appreciation for the services of public assistance. Appreciation of the medical benefits was frequently mentioned and an assured income allowed mothers to remain in the home.

Five mothers expressed marked sensitivity to perceived social stigma. They decried "the steryotype painted in the press of hard core families and the conviction that poverty was transferred from generation to generation, being called chislers and bums." The routine of administering cheques was perceived to enhance this feeling of being "expected to line up as cattle to be branded." In one instance a mother reported that a dentist had refused to provide adequate care for her son's teeth because he would receive only a partial fee.

Dependency was seen to encourage loss of initiative and to decrease morale. Deductions made from social allowance made it not worthwhile to seek employment part time as expenses incurred for clothes and bus fare cancelled out any extra financial benefits.

Donations received from Church and Service Clubs were frequently perceived as patronizing; increasing a feeling of inferiority. Two parents mentioned the conflict present in attempting to appear neatly dressed and in keeping a well cared for home. They stated that people accused them of "good looks at public expense." One mother stated that a Christmas hamper had been brought to the home and subsequently removed because the family home appeared to be well kept and comfortable implying no need.

Of the five families expressing intensely negative feelings toward receiving social assistance the date of first application was in one case 1959 and in three other cases between 1962-1963. In 2 two-parent families represented in this group the father had been rendered unemployable because of chronic illness; one suffering from ulcers since 1959 and the second a victim of a severe accident making it impossible for him to return to his previous labouring employment. The average current period on assistance was 17.3 months. Of the two one-parent families in this group the average current period on assistance was 12 months compared with 29.3 months for sample interviewed. It appeared that intense reactions in this group were related to relatively recent loss of independence and self-support and the case of the 2 two-parent families a disabling illness to which an adjustment was difficult and not yet made.

None of these families admitted to any association with others on social assistance and did not consider themselves "those kind of people."



Of the 26 families interviewed, 21 denied any association with others receiving public assistance. Five families stated that they had one friend who was receiving assistance or a casual acquaintance with other recipients.

It does appear that in general, these families do not identify themselves with a group "on welfare". Such remarks as "we are not those kind of people" or "some bums on social assistance have no initiative" indicated their disassociation. There was a general use of the pronoun "they" rather than "we" when discussing social assistance recipients.

CHAPTER 4. THE CHILDREN'S VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES.

The 27 families interviewed contained 44 children between the ages of 15 - 21 years; of this total, 19 children were still in school and living at home, 16 had dropped out of school and nine had graduated. Not all the dropouts or graduates were living at home. Children in school but not living at home were not included as there were very few of these and they were living out of town for the most part. It was possible to interview 18 of the 19 in-school children, six of the 16 dropouts and one of the nine graduates. Many of the dropouts and graduates were not interviewed because they were living outside Vancouver, and others refused to take part in the study. The relation between the number of children in the families in our sample and the number actually interviewed is shown in Table 29.

Table 29. Relation between Children aged 15 - 21 in the Interview Sample and Number actually Interviewed.

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<u>Children</u>	<u>Possible Total.</u>	<u>No. Interviewed</u>
In-School (In home)	19	18
Dropouts (In or out of home)	16	6
Graduates (In or out of home)	9	1
Total:	<u>44</u>	<u>25</u>

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The age distribution of all the children interviewed is shown in Table 30.

Table 30. Age Distribution of All Children Interviewed.

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<u>Age</u>	<u>In School</u>	<u>Dropout</u>	<u>Graduate</u>	<u>Total</u>
15	7	0	0	7
16	8	0	0	8
17	1	2	0	3
18	2	2	0	4
19	0	2	0	2
20	0	0	1	1
21	0	0	0	0
Total	<u>18</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>25</u>

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This chapter analyzes the children's school experience and compares the quality of this experience with their plans for school continuance and with the parents' attitudes and expectations. The second section deals with the children's participation in social activities connected with the school and the community. In the third section, the children's feelings about social assistance are examined and related to plans for continuance, to occupational aspirations and to parental feelings. The fourth section describes the children's perception of life and their frame of reference. In each section the in-school, dropout and graduate groups are considered separately. The concluding section deals exclusively with the dropouts and their actual leaving experience, as well as their subsequent employment history.

### School Experience of Children

It is a generally accepted principle in the field of education today that the nature of a student's school experience affects his attitude toward education and is a factor in determining whether he continues in school until graduation. That this is only one of many factors operating in determining school continuance is well documented in several studies of school dropouts. What is more subtle and elusive is the exact essence of the student's school experience and how this experience affects attitudes toward education and school continuance. It is these areas which the present study explores.

### School Programs Followed

The Vancouver school system offers four educational programs depending on the student's interests and abilities: the university program covering subjects which qualify for university entrance; a general program allowing a variety of commercial and industrial arts courses along with basic academic subjects; a special class for slow learners; and, since 1962, an occupational class which concentrates on teaching basic skills for simple service occupations rather than attempting vocational training. The results of the study indicate, as do statistics from other studies, that the program a student is enrolled in and his attitude toward that program are a significant part of his school experience. There are indications that school program may be of special significance to students whose parents are in receipt of social assistance.

(a) Students in School

Table 31. Programs of Enrollment

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<u>Program</u>	<u>Students</u>
University	5
General	7
Special Class	2
Occupational	1
Not Known	1
Program not Selected (grade 8)	<u>2</u>
Total:	<u>18</u>

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It is instructive to compare the program distribution of the students from families on social assistance with the program distribution of all students enrolled in Vancouver schools. A 1961 survey showed 66.1 per cent of the students enrolled in the university program.<sup>1</sup> Of the small group of 16 in the interview sample just better than 31 per cent were in the university program. Although the sample is too small for statistical comparisons and is an age-defined group of 15 - 21 rather than including all high school students, these figures do suggest a complex of factors working against the enrollment of social assistance students in the university program. Because of the small sample no statistically significant inferences can be drawn but it is illuminating to examine the students' feelings about their program.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Research and Special Services, Vancouver School Board; "Vancouver Schools Programmes Survey," November, 1961, cited in "The Pupil Withdrawal Survey, September 1, 1961 - August 31, 1962," Department of Research and Special Services, Vancouver School Board.

Of the five on the university program four expressed satisfaction with this program. The student who expressed discontent with the university program stated he would have rather been on the general program because he thinks it is financially impossible for him to go to university when he completes high school. He sees the industrial arts and commercial classes in the general program being more useful to him in terms of obtaining employment. He sees the general program as a way of avoiding a subject he is having difficulty with as well. In his case it can be assumed his probable change in program will result from financial influences as much as from occupational aspiration or ability to perform adequately in the program.

Of the seven students on the general program six expressed satisfaction and one was dissatisfied. One of those expressing satisfaction said she appreciated particularly the flexibility of subject choice in the general program. It was felt by two students in the sample that attempts had been made by the school to force them to take the general program. In the one case the student had failed a class and was required to transfer to the general program against her wishes. She was promised she could transfer back to the university program if her marks came up, but a move involving a change of schools made realization of this promise improbable. The other student mentioned had been directed to the general program by the counsellor because her family was on social assistance and, it was assumed, would never be able to afford a university education. It would be interesting to know how common this kind of experience is for

it could well be instrumental in school withdrawal, not only because of frustrated ambitions, but because of the social stigma felt.

This study indicates that changes in programs, in the main, progress in one direction only, from university to general. Of the four students who had changed programs three went from university to general and one changed briefly from university to general and then back to the university program. Analysis of programs will substantiate the fact that generally speaking once a year has been spent in the general program it is extremely difficult if not impossible to reenter the university program.

In 1963 there were 1,395 children enrolled in special classes in the Vancouver school system out of a total school population of 66,981.<sup>1</sup> This works out to about two per cent of the total school population. In the small interview sample two out of 18 or better than 11 per cent were in special classes. Out of the total school population of the families interviewed, four of 48 children were in special classes. This is about eight per cent. Again this suggests an interesting area for further research. Are there a greater proportion of social assistance children in special classes and what are the factors operating to bring about this situation? What part have the various types of deprivation experienced by low-income families played in this?

In 1963 there were 752 students enrolled in the occupational program in Vancouver. In the interview sample one

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Research and Special Services, Vancouver School Board; Table "Actual Enrolment by Grades, September 1951-1963."

student was in the occupational program. This student's discontent with the program further strengthened the contention that school program can be an important part of school experience. He admitted he was getting good marks in the program, which is generally considered an important factor in attitude toward school continuance, and yet he felt very strongly that he would prefer the general program. His view was that employers were not familiar with the intent or standing of the program and it was thus of little value in securing employment. Of the three functions which the high schools appear to be attempting -- a teaching function, a training function, and a custodial function -- this student's reaction casts doubt on how successful the occupational course is going to be even in providing the custodial function.

(b) Students Who Have Dropped Out of School

Having looked briefly at the part being played by school program in the school experience of those still in school, it is interesting to see what influence school program may have had on those who withdrew from school before completion.

Table 32. Programs of Enrollment

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<u>Program</u>	<u>Students</u>
University	0
General	4
Special Class	0
Occupational	0
Program not Selected (grade 8)	2
Total:	<u>6</u>

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In the interview sample the majority of those who left school were in the general program and the remaining two had not reached high school. This preponderance of dropouts from the general program is evident in studies not dealing specifically with social assistance families. In the Vancouver secondary school system in the year 1961-1962, there were 1267 withdrawals. Seventeen decimal two per cent of the withdrawals were from the university program, 74.1 per cent were from the general program, 6.4 per cent were from the occupational program and 2.3 per cent were from special classes.<sup>1</sup> In a recent study in the state of Maryland the greatest percentage of dropouts came from the general program.<sup>2</sup>

There are many ways of interpreting the fact that the general program is more prone to losing students than others. It is possible greater selectivity in the university program precludes a number of failures or dropouts. Another possibility is that students with no definite goals or ambitions are channelled into the general program. The fact that two students in the interview sample were advised by the counsellor to enter the general program when they wanted to go to university suggests another reason, frustrated ambitions.

One interesting aspect of the Maryland study is that although 53.1 per cent of the dropouts listed lack of interest

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Research and Special Services, Vancouver School Board; "The Pupil Withdrawal Survey," Vancouver, 1962.

<sup>2</sup> Maryland State Department of Education; Our Dropouts, Baltimore 1, June, 1963.

or lack of scholastic success as the major reason for withdrawing, only 1.4 per cent indicated lack of a suitable program as the primary reason for dropping out. Any analysis of the importance of program in school experience must consider the reliability of responses and this is pointed out by these results.

Another possibility which must be considered is what appears to be the general practice in the Vancouver school system of placing students in the general program when their marks are deemed unsatisfactory. Thus most students having achievement problems find themselves in the general program as a matter of course.

(c) Graduate Students

Our study included only one interview with a student who had graduated. This person had graduated on the university program. He had then proceeded to university. He views the general program as a farce. It is noteworthy that this person had always wanted to go to university so that he had definite goals in taking the university program. Other factors such as length of time on assistance and parental attitude toward education were factors which affected his decision to finish high school, but it appears that choice of program was also an important factor.

Significance of Program Selection to School Experience

The majority of students did not specify the school program as an area of discontent. Yet for those students who were dissatisfied their feelings were strong and not merely "sour grapes" responses because they were not doing well on a particular

program. The person who saw the general program enabling her to choose subjects which could equip her for employment immediately after graduation felt the choice of program was of real significance. Thus it seems that program selection might be a critical point in the school experience of the student where the counsellor could hope to be most influential in raising student aspiration. Encouragement and communication of the possibilities available at this point in the school career of the student could well counteract the influence of limited parental educational and occupational aspirations.

In comparing the program experience of dropouts and students in school there do not seem to be any significant differences. The ratio of those who had changed courses to those who had not was quite similar for both groups. The preponderance of enrolment in the general program carried through.

Although many students do not express satisfaction or discontent in terms of program we cannot assume it to be insignificant. Those students whose academic progress suggests they might have been asked to change programs by the school maintained they had made their own decision. They said they were satisfied with the change because the work was easier. This could be interpreted that they do have strong feelings about program choice. Those who specified either definite preferences or displeasure with their program support this interpretation. The fact that in two cases social assistance was a consideration in program selection suggests inequality of opportunity and a link between school experience and being on social assistance.

This could directly affect school continuance.

In using program experience as one of the factors in rating school experience as positive, negative or difficult to determine, we considered those responses which gave specific reasons for discontent as being a negative factor in school experience. Those who were able to suggest reasons why they were pleased with their program, as a strong positive factor, and the other responses were given lesser weight in either a negative or positive direction if the response indicated any preference at all.

#### School Performance - A Measure of School Experience

Probably more than any other criterion for a favourable experience in any realm in North America, success has been singled out for its significance. Many studies such as the Wayman thesis<sup>1</sup> and the Maryland study suggest that neither ability nor progress prevent dropouts. Yet school performance does play an important role in determining whether school experience is positive or negative and whether the student will continue or withdraw from school. The measures of school performance used in the present study are grade retardation, student self-evaluation of progress and average marks obtained.

#### (a) Students in School

Table 33. Grade Retardation

<u>Degree of Retardation</u>	<u>Students</u>
Repetition of One Grade	5
Repetition of Two Grades	3
Repetition of Part of a Grade	1
Students in Special Ungraded Classes	2
Students who have not Repeated	<u>7</u>
Total:	<u>18</u>

<sup>1</sup> Wayman, Sara, Gertrude; High School Drop-Outs, Master of Social Work thesis, University of British Columbia, 1961.

The fact that only seven of the students interviewed had not repeated any grades seemed to indicate a high percentage of grade retardation in our sample. The 1960 Royal Commission Report on Education in British Columbia supports this observation. A direct comparison is not possible because that Commission refers to educational retardation which they define as "the over-ageness of pupils of the grade in which they are." The present study considers only grades failed as an indication of retardation. Nevertheless a comparison is meaningful. In the in-school interview sample, excluding the two students in special classes and the one student repeating part of a grade, it was found 53 per cent of the students had repeated one or more grades. Breaking this down into male and female, the interview sample had more girls repeating grades than boys. The Commission found about 30 per cent of the boys and 18 per cent of the girls in 1952-1953, and 27 per cent of the boys and 16 per cent of the girls in 1957-1958, were retarded one year or more in grade 8.<sup>1</sup> The Commission noted that the percentage of retarded pupils declined at each grade from grade 8 to grade 12. The decline is chiefly due to a larger proportion of retarded pupils than of average or better pupils dropping out of school because of their lack of progress.

At least two points of interest arise from this comparison. First is the apparent higher rate of grade retardation in students from public assistance families than the general population.

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<sup>1</sup> British Columbia; Royal Commission on Education, 1960, p.247.

Adequate assessment of this factor would require greater precision in the measurement of the ability of public assistance students. For the purpose of this study grade retardation is used as a factor in negative school experience and is considered more in respect to aspiration and interests of students.

The second point of interest is that the grade retardation percentage for girls was greater than for boys. Of the eight students who had repeated one grade or more five were girls and three were boys. This is the opposite of the findings for the school population of British Columbia by the Commission. It is also opposite to the findings of a recent Department of Labour study which indicated that the school system in Ontario seemed to be geared to the requirements of girls; that boys fare badly in it - in all years and in both the academic and vocational courses.<sup>1</sup> It might be thought that the social assistance families stressed education for boys to a greater extent than for girls. The interview with parents did not generally bear this out in the stated level of education they wanted for their children. There was however indication that education for girls was looked upon as an insurance measure against a poor marriage or loss of husband.

(b) Students who have Dropped out of School

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Table 34. Grade Retardation

<u>Degree of Retardation</u>	<u>Students</u>
Repetition of one grade	3
Repetition of two grades	2
Students who have not repeated	<u>1</u>
Total:	<u>6</u>

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1 Hall, Oswald, and McFarlane, Bruce; Transition from School to Work, Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1963, p.25.

The findings of the present study confirm the high rate of grade retardation among dropouts that other studies have also brought to light. For example a study of dropouts in Kentucky found that 60 per cent had repeated at least one grade.<sup>1</sup>

Two dropouts who had repeated a grade felt that being larger than the other students in their grade had been a factor in their dislike for school. Thus grade retardation in all probability influenced their eventual withdrawal.

Three of the dropouts who had repeated one or more grade saw their own ability as one of the things that had made it difficult for them to do well in school. It is not possible directly to relate grade failure to pupil ability but students often see grade failure as a direct reflection of their ability. Thus it seems fair to say that in the present sample, grade retardation played a significant part in school withdrawal.

The other indicators of school performance considered were self-evaluation of progress and average marks obtained.

(a) Students in School

Table 35. Student Evaluation of Progress

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<u>Performance</u>	<u>Students</u>
Good	7
Average	6
Poor	4
No Reply	<u>1</u>
Total:	<u>18</u>

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<sup>1</sup> Hecker, Stanley E.; "Early School Leavers in Kentucky," Bulletin of the Bureau of School Service, vol.25, No.4, University of Kentucky.

Table 36. Students' Average Grades

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<u>Grade</u>	<u>Students</u>
B Average or Better	4
C Range	8
D or Failing	5
No Response	<u>1</u>
Total:	<u>18</u>

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The four students obtaining B average or better assessed their progress in the top bracket and three who obtained C range felt they were doing quite well. Only one student whose average mark was below C felt he was performing satisfactorily. These observations indicate at least two things. First of all the students' assessment of their progress corresponds quite closely to that of the school authorities. Secondly, because of the reliability of their assessment of their progress it is possible to attribute a negative or positive connotation to this part of their school experience.

Of the four students who indicated they would like to complete less than grade 12, all had experienced grade retardation and all indicated they had considered leaving school. Three of the five who were averaging D or were failing aspired to less than a grade 12 education and had considered leaving school. This suggests the connection between grade retardation, school performance and school continuance which is generally expected.



(b) Students Who Have Dropped Out of School

The dropouts evaluated their progress while at school in the following manner:

Table 37. Student Evaluation of Past School Progress

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<u>Performance</u>	<u>Students</u>
Good	0
Average	2
Poor	3
No Reply	<u>1</u>
Total:	<u>6</u>

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Table 38. Students' Average Grades

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<u>Grade</u>	<u>Students</u>
B Average or Better	0
C Range	2
D or Failing	3
No Response	<u>1</u>
Total:	<u>6</u>

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The fact that only one dropout had not repeated any grades, that the majority obtained average grades below the C range and the majority indicated they assessed their performance below average, suggests that this aspect of school experience was negative for these students. It also substantiates the expected connection between school performance and school continuance.

(c) Graduate Students

The graduate student had not repeated any grades. Our interview does not specify whether the student started school at an early age or was accelerated in the school program, but it does indicate he completed grade 12 when he was sixteen.

This student said he did not get along too well in school because he was "slack". Nevertheless he reported his marks in the B range. It might be inferred from this interview that this is one of the many cases where ability enables satisfactory grades, but progress is not really a satisfying experience because the person's performance is not at a challenging level.

Student Likes and Dislikes - A Measure of School Experience

(a) Students in School

Three students said they liked everything about school. Nine specified certain things they liked about school. Two expressed no feelings about school and four said there was nothing they liked about school.

The items specified as liked included such things as certain subjects, social activities, certain teachers, other students and the flexibility of subject choice. To some extent in the likes and to an even greater extent in the dislikes, the personality and methods of a particular teacher shone through. Subjects such as home economics, commercial subjects and industrial arts courses received high preference.

Four students expressed no dislikes in relation to the school. One said he had no strong feelings one way or the other.

Seven mentioned particular subjects they disliked. Five specified they didn't like certain teachers. One person said he didn't know what he disliked. One student said she didn't like other students. Two students said they disliked pretty well everything about school.<sup>1</sup>

A closer look at specific dislikes proves interesting. One student disliked school because she did not make friends in school. She saw the other students' interests as being different from hers. She said she was not interested in smoking and boys. This girl in a special class was extremely overweight and interpreted her dislikes in terms of social acceptance.

Another student stated that one of the things she didn't like about school was that the other students were too "high class" and had money. In this family there was a cultural difference so that the dislike expressed for school could well be, in part, expression of cultural and social conflict.

The responses to this question regarding likes and dislikes were quite varied. Some replied with hostility and little consideration, some revealed cultural and social conflicts, some saw dislike strictly in terms of particular teachers and still others had well reasoned complaints.

In cases where either a student completely disliked or liked school there was no difficulty in assessing the factor in terms of a negative or positive school experience. In considering the students, the itemized likes were weighed against the itemized

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The number of students referred to is greater than 18 because some of the students listed several items they disliked.

dislikes and the factor was either scored for a positive or negative experience. The general tone of the interview was also considered.

For students who were strongly positive toward school the expressed desire to complete grade 12 was general and in the majority of cases these were the students who had not repeated any grades. The strongly negative expressions were not as decisive about completing grade 12 and showed greater consistency of grade repetition.

The indication is that although likes and dislikes expressed were not always likes and dislikes of school material, they did correlate quite closely in this sample with educational aspiration and grade retardation. Expressed likes and dislikes would seem to be fairly reliable gauges of the nature of school experience.

(b) Students Who Have Dropped Out of School

Two of the dropouts said there was nothing they had liked about school. One said he had liked not having to worry or work in school. The other three had liked certain subjects and again physical education and industrial arts classes were mentioned specifically.

It may be significant that all dropouts specified they disliked something in school whereas there were some in the in-school sample who had no dislikes. The dislikes included snobbish students, inability to do certain subjects, being large for the grade, certain teachers, being in trouble constantly and one said he disliked everything about school. It is also

interesting that in all cases the dropouts' likes and dislikes suggest a negative or mixed school experience. None of these young people evinced a positive school experience.

The three dropouts who were most negative about school did not include further training in their plans for the future whereas the students who expressed less negative dislikes at least professed a desire for some type of further education or training. Again the suggestion is that expressed likes and dislikes are a fairly accurate gauge of desire to continue in school.

(c) Graduate Students

The graduate expressed a like for some school social activities and particular interest in one subject from the field of science. The graduate expressed a dislike for particular teachers. This factor of his school experience would have ranked as positive. Again the idea that expressed likes and dislikes can be an effective gauge of desire to continue in school is supported.

Student Evaluation of School Fairness - A Measure of School Experience

(a) Students in School

Table 39. Student Evaluation of School Fairness

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<u>Response</u>	<u>Students</u>
Students who saw the school as being fair	9
Students who qualify an affirmative reply	5
Students who saw the school as being unfair	2
Students who didn't answer	<u>2</u>
Total:	<u>18</u>

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Only two students came right out and said the school was unfair. One student complained of the authority and rigour of the physical education program. The other complained of unfair detentions being given. One interpretation of these results would be that the majority were able to overlook specific instances and evaluate the school on a wide range of experiences. In looking at the replies of the parents of the two students who saw the school as being unfair, one had no complaint with the school and the other said that if there were a dispute between child and school she would always side with the school. Neither case reflects a direct transfer of parental attitude to child. In the one case the child's attitude toward the school coincides with a parental approach which says she is always wrong.

There was more evidence of parental influence in the group giving qualified affirmative answers. In four of the five cases, the parents either felt the school unfair or had reservations about its dealing with them and their children. The majority of the parents who saw the school as being unfair had children who also saw the school as being unfair. This would suggest a definite link between the feelings of injustice of the children and parents. There seemed to be no significant correlation between this and stated educational aspiration, but it is possible and quite probable that there is a significant link between those who saw the school as being unfair and those who fail to complete school. Here the influence of the parents' attitude would be a factor.

(b) Students Who Have Dropped Out of School

Table 40. Student Evaluation of School Fairness

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<u>Response</u>	<u>Students</u>
Students who saw the school as being fair	2
Students who qualified an affirmative reply	2
Students who saw the school as being unfair	<u>2</u>
Total:	<u>6</u>

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The majority of the dropouts did have some feelings that the school was unfair and this suggests correlation between this feeling and school withdrawal.

(c) Graduate Students

The graduate saw the school as being fair further supporting the suggestion in the previous section.

The Relation Between School Experience and Educational Aspiration

The school experiences of the students were classified as positive, negative or mixed. This classification was made on the basis of the satisfaction they expressed with their program, whether they had repeated any grades, their expressed likes and dislikes, self-evaluation of progress and grades obtained, and whether or not they saw the school as being fair. When the positive factors outweighed the negative, the student was said to have had a generally positive experience; if the negative factors outweighed the positive, the student was said to have had a negative experience; and in two cases the experience was termed mixed since the positive and negative factors balanced each other.

(a) Students in School

Eight students had a generally positive school experience. They all expected to go to at least grade 12. Six of these planned to stop at grade 12, one planned to finish grade 13, and one planned to go to university. Of the two students with "mixed" experiences, one planned to finish grade 12 and one was not sure how far he wanted to go.

On the other hand, of the five with negative experiences, three planned to leave after grade 10 and two planned to finish grade 12. The assumption that students with negative school experience, in general, do not have as high educational aspirations as those with positive school experiences seems to be born out. It seems quite in order to suggest that it not only has an influence on stated aspirations but on actual school continuance as well.

Relation Between School Experience and Importance Attached to School

The ways in which students saw education as being valuable were examined. They were classified in terms of economic and vocational advantages, in terms of enrichment of life experience because of education, in terms of learning to get along with people, and no value. They were then compared to the student's stated educational aspiration.

(a) Students in School

All eight students with positive school experiences felt school helped in future occupations. Four of these felt that a "general education" was valuable as well. One felt it helped in learning to get along with fellow students. Of the



group with negative experience, only three out of five felt school helped with an occupation. None mentioned the value of a general education. One saw it in terms of making friends and one could see no value at all. One of the interests of this study was to see if the people with negative experiences could see beyond their individual experiences enough values in education to want to finish school. Since three out of five did not plan to continue after grade 10 it might be concluded that school experience is a very significant factor in planned school continuance and colours markedly the values seen in education. The values seen by the students with positive experience suggest that this is the direction of the influence rather than the values seen overcoming negative experience and leading to school continuance.

#### Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

Several studies point out that lack of participation in school activities is a factor associated with dropping out of school. One of these is a co-operative study of high school dropouts by 14 school systems in the United States, from September, 1951, to June, 1955. This study is reported by George C. Brook. Brook cites lack of participation in extra-curricular activities as not only a characteristic of the dropout but also of the potentially delinquent child.<sup>1</sup> Lichter et al in their book The Dropouts point out the fact that a child not able to afford adequate clothing or the cost of participating in normal school activities may become unhappy and develop school problems. The

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<sup>1</sup> Brook, George C.; "High School Drop-Outs and Corrective Measures," Federal Probation, vol. 23 (September, 1959), p.34.

temptation to earn money may cause the child to drop out of school.<sup>1</sup>

In our study, both the in-school group and the dropouts, as well as the graduate, were asked to what extent they participate (or participated) in activities at school and in activities and hobbies not connected with the school. Generally speaking, neither the in-school children nor the dropouts were very active.

### In-School Group

In this group of 18 there was a rather large number (10) who did not participate in any school activities at all. Of the eight who did participate, some listed more than one activity. Five mentioned sports, and five listed other activities. In two cases, these latter consisted of part-time work (one student working in the school library and the other in the school cafeteria), and the other three students mentioned the Lost and Found Club, social events and scorekeeping for basketball.

On the other hand, the in-school group seemed more active in out-of-school activities and hobbies. Twelve out of 18 had some participation. Of these, sports were mentioned by six. The other activities included baby sitting, art, activities in connection with the church and with Gordon House, dances, Armed Forces Cadets, and street corner activities with the "gang". Only one held a part-time job not connected with the school.

Correlating the in-school and out-of-school activities, it was found that six students participated in both types, four in none and the other eight in one or the other. It is interesting

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<sup>1</sup> Lichter, Solomon O.; Rapien, Elsie B., Siebert, Frances M., and Slansky, Morris A., The Dropouts, Glencoe, Free Press, 1962, p.49.

that even though some of the students did list activities, almost all of them gave reasons why they did not participate more fully. For this reason it seemed that they did not see themselves as being particularly active.

Of the four who did not participate in either in-school or other activities, one gave no reason, one felt his homework and girl friend took up most of his time, and two said they just weren't interested. Of the six who participated in both types of activities, four gave reasons for lack of further participation. The reasons given by these students and by the other students who participated in one or other type of activity are interesting. The most common reason given was lack of interest and this was indicated by eight students. Three of these said they were not interested in anything and five mentioned specific activities which did not interest them. Lack of time was given as a reason for not participating by five students. This lack of time was due to such things as homework, boyfriends and girlfriends, and going to the pool hall. Two students felt shy and uncomfortable in mixed groups, one could not be in student government as he "couldn't get a majority" and one felt that "everything was for little kids" at Little Mountain. This latter is interesting in that it might have implications for needed services in housing projects.

The effect that marginal income has for possibilities of participation in activities was explored. Only two of the 18 in this group listed lack of money as a factor adversely affecting participation, yet when they were asked at another point in the

interview about the effect of social assistance on their lives, five other students stated that it hindered their participation in activities. And so it may be concluded that in at least seven cases, social assistance was a factor restricting their social activities.

#### Dropout Group

The dropouts had been even less active. Out of six in the sample, four had not engaged in school activities. The dropouts were also less active than the in-school group in community activities, and four out of the six had taken no part in these. Of the others, one was involved in sports and one had a part-time job. Correlating the in-school and out-of-school activities, three out of the six, which is a fairly high proportion, had not participated in either type of activity, and only one was active in both. They all gave reasons for lack of participation. These included lack of interest, fatigue, lack of time and lack of friends. In contrast to the in-school group, none of the dropouts indicated that lack of money was a factor.

#### Graduate

The graduate was active in sports both in school and in the community and belonged to one club; however, he did not feel he had been very active and seemed to regret this fact.

In conclusion, then, neither the in-school group nor the dropouts were particularly active in sports, clubs, social events or hobbies, and at least in the in-school group, being on social assistance or having a marginal income could be considered a limiting factor.

### Feelings About Social Assistance

In this section the feelings of the children about being on social assistance are examined, and then related to their plans for continuance in school, occupational aspirations and to their parents' views.

#### In-School Group

Of the 18 children still in school, three stated they had no feelings about being on assistance, three said they just didn't know how they felt, 11 expressed negative feelings and 1, positive.

Of the 11 children who felt negatively about being on social assistance, two had very strong feelings. The first of these was reluctant to even discuss the subject, and seemed very anxious to move on to another section of the interview schedule. She did say that she "didn't always like being on assistance," but her mother reported that this girl was extremely unhappy about being on it. She says her daughter will go without a dress so that her mother can pay her book rental rather than get it paid through "the welfare" so that the school will not find out she is on assistance. She also does not want her friends to know. This girl does not want to be seen at the welfare office and refuses to accompany her mother when the latter goes to pick up her cheque. The second one also felt very strongly. Although initially she said it did not bother her, she went on to express how mad and discouraged she felt about being on "welfare". She had only just recently found out that her family was on assistance. She seemed to have a real sense of deprivation and said the family does not

have enough money to eat properly, or for clothes or school expenses, such as gym fees, home economics classes or any sort of social activities.

Of the other nine who expressed negative feelings, a sense of material deprivation emerged clearly. Five mentioned the inability to participate in social activities (and another mentioned this in another section of the interview) because of lack of money. Others spoke of not having clothes and books necessary for school.

One of the purposes of the study was to find out if the children felt there was any social stigma attached to receiving social assistance. One student expressed this and two others hinted at it when they answered the question about how they felt about being on assistance. The first said that people look down on those on assistance, and he'd like to earn his way. Social assistance makes you "feel like a bum". The student mentioned above who would not go to the assistance office was very conscious of the social stigma. The third indicated that her mother feels there is stigma attached to social assistance and goes to the office the day after the cheques are issued to avoid the line-up which she describes as being like "cattle going to slaughter". This girl stated that she doesn't think she feels as badly as her mother feels, but this is questionable.

One student felt she wanted to finish school and get a job and get off assistance so that she could be independent. Another student expressed strong feelings about the inadequate amount of the grant and about social workers in general. His

His views are most interesting. He stated that the cost of living had risen drastically but not the social allowances. Besides this, when Family Allowance is cut off and the child is still in school, income is even more inadequate. Social workers refuse to consider these conditions and actually don't believe them. They laugh and say it can't be that bad. He feels they make no attempt to understand the real situation. They are never around when you want them and are always there when you don't. They give advice which is not useful and will never consider one's plans.

One student, on the other hand, stated that he felt positively towards social assistance, that he couldn't get along without it and that it "didn't hurt" him. His family has been on assistance almost continually for 16 years and he may accept this as a "way of life".

#### Dropout Group

The dropouts also had varied feelings about assistance. Of the six in our sample, one expressed no feelings, one "didn't know" but implied negative feelings in another section of the interview, and the other four expressed negative feelings. It is interesting that these four all implied there was social stigma attached to receiving assistance. It could be that these people felt more free to express this feeling as they were no longer receiving assistance. Two said they were "too proud" to go on it again, one said it would be all right if you were sick, but if you could work and were on assistance you felt like a bum, and the fourth had felt very badly about it and hadn't wanted other

people to know he was receiving it. In addition to this aspect, two remarked on the inadequacy of the grant.

### Graduate

The graduate said he had no feelings about being on assistance, but the interviewer wondered about this, as none of his friends know he is on assistance.

### Feelings About Social Assistance Related to Continuance in School

A major purpose of the study was to determine what effect, if any, being a recipient of social assistance has on staying in or dropping out of school. The question was stated directly, as follows: "If your family income were higher, do you think it would have any effect on your staying in school?" It is noteworthy that respondents interpreted this question to mean if assistance grants were higher. Their answers were compared with their stated plans for continuing. The results were interesting, but inconclusive.

### In-School Group

Of the six in-school students who either said they had no feelings about social assistance or who did not know what their feelings were, five said that having a higher income would not affect their school continuance and one had never thought about it. Concerning their actual plans, three said they were going to grade 12, one in a special class was going to quit this year, one was only going to grade 10 and one wasn't sure. From this it would appear that income level was not a determining factor in the children's plans to continue or quit school.

Of the 11 who had negative feelings about assistance,



five stated that a higher income would have no effect on their plans for continuing and all five planned to finish school and one to go on to university. One even felt that social assistance would help. On the other hand, the five others with negative feelings toward social assistance said that their low income would adversely affect their plans for staying in school, but only one of these was actually planning to drop out before grade 12. They seemed to see the negative effect of the low income provided by social assistance rather as either "making things harder" to complete grade 12 or as affecting their opportunities of going on to university or technical school. (The child who had expressed positive feelings about social assistance said, on the other hand, that she felt being on social assistance would have a negative effect on her staying in school and planned to complete only grade 10!).

From the answers given to us, it seems that at least according to the views expressed, our hypothesis that being on assistance or having an extremely low income adversely affects school continuance was not conclusively substantiated. In summary, of the 10 students who felt that social assistance would not affect their continuance in school and the one who wasn't sure, eight planned to finish school, two to drop out and one wasn't sure. On the other hand, of the five who said it would have a negative effect, only one planned to drop out. They did feel, however, that the low income of social assistance would make it more difficult. We might wonder, however, whether these four who said they would finish perhaps identified the interviewers

as people valuing education and stated an intention of finishing grade 12 without actually planning on it.

#### Dropout Group

In the dropout group, the findings were not any more conclusive. Two said having a higher income would have made no difference, four said it would have made things easier (for example, having more books and clothes), but in spite of this, only two of these four listed financial reasons when asked about their reasons for leaving school. In both cases, they did not leave because of financial necessity but because they wanted to earn money to buy a car.

#### Graduate

The graduate had not been on assistance when deciding his educational plans.

#### Feelings About Social Assistance Related to Occupational Aspiration

In the hope of finding out if there was any relation between the feelings of the children about social assistance and their occupational aspiration, both groups and the graduate were asked whether they felt being on social assistance affected their chances in life. Unfortunately, the children found the question difficult to answer.

#### In-School Group

Of the in-school group, nine answered that it made no difference, three answered that they didn't think it made any difference, two answered that they didn't know, and two really didn't answer the question. Of the remaining two, one felt that it would keep her from attending university if she wanted to;

however, the interviewer felt she had no interest in school, let alone in university. She had failed two grades, was doing very poorly and couldn't think of anything she liked about school. She thought she might be a secretary or do something connected with home economics or work at the unemployment bureau, but was very vague about these ambitions and had no idea of what training or ability was necessary. The second felt that if he were in a "richer class", there would be more opportunities and it would be easier to get a job. He felt that if you know "rich people", they can get you started in business. He was planning to be a book-keeper.

#### Dropout Group

The dropouts did not provide any more conclusive evidence. Of the four who stated being on social assistance would make no difference in their life, one was a labourer, one a shipper and two were unemployed. The other two were both housewives, and one had felt that being on social assistance had helped in that some social workers were helpful, but the other acknowledged that she had been "depressed" about social assistance. It is interesting that the two unemployed dropouts didn't feel that being on assistance had affected their chances.

#### Graduate

The graduate felt that being on assistance would not affect his chances in life.

The question was further pursued by examining the occupational plans of the five who had said a low income would adversely affect their continuance in school. Only one of these

mentioned anything in this area and that was that if her income had been higher, she might have considered a different occupation requiring higher education. She planned to do clerical work. Another was the one mentioned above who said that had he been in a richer class, he would have had the opportunity to go into business. Of the remaining three, there was no suggestion of any effect on choice of occupation and one planned to go to university (financed by the R.O.T.P. plan) and be an aeronautical engineer. Accordingly, only three of the total in-school and dropout group felt that social assistance in any way affected their occupational aspirations and one of these, the interviewer felt, was not genuinely interested in doing what she claimed social assistance would prevent her from doing, i.e. going to university.

#### Relation Between Children's and Parents' Attitudes to Social Assistance

It had been hypothesized that the parents' attitude towards assistance would affect the children's attitude. This was difficult to substantiate, since six in the in-school group and one of the dropouts either were not sure what their attitude was or said they had no feelings about being on assistance. On the other hand, all the parents expressed some feelings. Generally speaking, some relation was found in that in the families of the 11 in-school children who expressed negative feelings toward assistance, eight of the parents expressed purely negative feelings, and in the families of the five dropouts whose feelings were negative, four of the parental attitudes were also negative. Upon closer examination, it was found that the negative feelings concerned different aspects of the assistance.

### In-School Group

It was found that the parents of the six students who either expressed no feelings or did not know what their feelings were, held a great variety of attitudes. These ranged anywhere from one parent with very positive feelings to one who hated receiving assistance, felt a strong stigma and resented being dependent. The in-between attitudes concerned mainly the stigma. It can be said, then, that of these six families, the parental attitude either had not influenced the child or the child could not express his real feelings.

In the families of the 11 children who had expressed negative feelings, eight of the parental attitudes were negative, two were positive and one was mixed negative and positive. The negative feelings expressed by the children, however, concerned mainly the inability to afford such things as books, clothes, social activities, etc. Ten of the 11 children felt this way; however, only five of the parental attitudes concerned this aspect. On the other hand, considering the whole in-school group, only three students felt a social stigma attached to receiving assistance, while 11 of the parental attitudes concerned stigma. It may be concluded, then, that the children were concerned chiefly with the material deprivation, while the parents were concerned about the social stigma associated with receiving assistance.

### Dropout Group

In this group, the relation was similar. Five of the dropouts expressed negative feelings about assistance, and four

of the parents did also, while the fifth had a positive attitude. The tendency to associate a stigma with receiving assistance seemed to be more uniform in these families, four of the dropouts expressing this and three of the parents. On the other hand, the parents of the two children who expressed discontent with the amount of the grant did not mention this.

### Graduate

It was not possible to interview the parent of the one graduate in our study.

It may be concluded, then, that generally speaking, there was some relation between the parents' and children's attitude towards assistance in that most of the parents of the children with negative attitudes had negative attitudes as well, but the attitudes concerned different aspects of receiving assistance.

### The Children's View of Their Life Situation

Every individual gradually develops a unique frame of reference -- a set of basic assumptions concerning fact, value, and possibility -- which gives him a meaningful picture of himself and his world.<sup>1</sup>

Depending upon a person's assumptions of fact, value and possibility, the same stimulus situation may be perceived quite differently -- and met accordingly with quite different responses.<sup>2</sup>

This part of the study attempts to explore the frame of reference or world view of students whose parents are in receipt of social assistance. Some of the pertinent questions are: Where

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<sup>1</sup> Coleman, James C.; Personality Dynamics and Effective Behaviour, Chicago Scott Foresman and Company, 1960, p.291.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 298.

do they get their facts and values? How do they see their prospects for the future? Do they see themselves as pawns in a game of chance or as being capable of influencing their own future?

The Social Assistance Student's Assumptions Concerning Facts

The basis of a person's world view is his picture of how things really are, who he is and what he is worth, what the rest of the world is like, and how he fits into the overall picture. According to this he develops his judgements of value and possibility.

At the heart of the student's reality assumptions is his picture of himself. Five of the students in school saw themselves as lacking mental ability. Some specifically stated they felt their possibilities for the future in terms of employment were limited. It is strongly suggested by this study that the student's school experience is primarily responsible for this view of themselves. At least two or three other students expressed concern over their ability to cope with the school subjects. However the marked depreciation of self was most notable in the five. Although the school's appraisal of their academic ability may or may not be realistic, the tragedy is that the student sees the imputation of inferiority in the competitive school setting spread over other areas of his life.

One of the dropouts said that some social workers think you are a "crumb" if you are on social assistance. Thus part of her picture of herself was derived from the opinion which she thought the social worker held of her.

Generally the students interviewed had little knowledge

of what would be necessary in the way of training and education for occupations in which they expressed an interest. Those who did know something about the requirements had only a general knowledge. This was one area where parental knowledge was generally limited and the school's vocational guidance did not seem to have bridged the gap effectively. The general knowledge they had picked up did not seem in most instances to mean very much to them, and was not likely to be very effective in determining their course of action.

Often mistakes are made in choices because students are handicapped by misconceptions or inadequate knowledge about the environment. Foolish decisions are made and many possible satisfactions forfeited. One boy's view that very few people went to grade 12 was based on his observations of the level of education achieved by the adults in his neighbourhood. The limited range of occupational aspirations on the part of the students interviewed shows a lack of knowledge of what the industrial society in which they live requires in the labour force.

Perhaps the only general statement that can be made is that assumptions about facts seemed limited rather than faulty, general rather than specific. Parental and peer groups seemed most influential in influencing their limited perception of the facts. The effect of the school in bridging this gap appears to be dependent upon the school experience of the student and parental attitude to the school.

#### Student's Values

Although the student's values depend upon their reality



assumptions they are distinct from fact in that they refer to what ought to be rather than what is. They imply goals to work for in the future and relate closely to their assumptions concerning possibility.

The difficulty met in any attempt to assess values and their origin is the difference between conceived values and operative values. Granting the complexity of this area, it is still possible to make some observations. One boy held very highly the value of being free from debt. This seemed to come from his mother and their European cultural heritage. This value limited his possibilities for although he had the ability he would not consider using the limited loan funds available to acquire a university education. Another boy valued highly high-paying, short-term jobs. The source of this value seemed to be his frustration with the limited spending money available to him while his family was on social assistance, and his identification with his brother who was making good wages in an unskilled job. This boy could verbalize the pitfalls of such short term jobs but in terms of an operative value he seemed to ignore completely the fact that the brother had switched jobs on several occasions.

This same boy's value of things enjoyable in life came from the street corner gang. In this case, and at least one other in the study, there seemed to have been a definite break with formal groups and their values in favour of unorganized groups whose values might be considered liable to lead to delinquent behaviour.

The correlation discovered between parental interest

in education and the student's valuation of education was found to apply to other areas of life as well. Illustrations of this correlation between parental and student values was seen in areas concerning use of money and the importance attached to church activities. The value of being self supporting and independent could be traced almost directly from parent to child in some families. One girl's dislike for being on assistance was expressed in this way, "I don't want to be on social assistance when I get married."

Money seemed to be valued highly by many male students. The status of a car and "sharp" clothes played up so much on television seemed to have reached them, and naturally pointed out to them how they and their family were not the normal American family presented on the screen.

Again perhaps only one general statement can be made. Operative values were much more difficult to detect than conceived values. In the area of value seen in education there were grounds for suspecting that conceived value was not likely to be the same as the operative value.

#### Students' Views of the Possible

"Life derives meaning and direction not only from the values a man believes in but also from his assumptions about what he can hope to accomplish and what kind of person he can become."<sup>1</sup> The course of his life is charted by his assumptions about what is possible as well as by his opportunities, resources and ideals.

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Coleman, op. cit., p. 310

The authors of this study felt that knowledge of the source of the student's picture of opportunities he saw available to him, upon which he set his goals, was important in considering methods of dealing with the problem. A related area of inquiry was whether these students were continually replacing old expectations with new ones or whether their assumptions of possibility were rigid.

The graduate student saw his possibilities primarily being shaped by his family and his friends. He in no way felt his opportunity had been limited by being on social assistance. He seemed to have expected to further his education upon graduation and worked toward that end.

There were however some responses to the questions about occupational aspirations which seemed to indicate students felt little possibility of influencing their ultimate occupation. One girl who was predicted to graduate answered that she guessed she would end up in an office. It is interesting to note that this girl maintained she made her own decisions regarding choice of school program and occupation. She also expressed a dislike of being on social assistance and yet did not see it as having had any effect on her future. Her father was a labourer and she saw high school as being sufficient preparation for her chosen field of office work. Although the interview does not spell it out, it seems safe to speculate that a lack of knowledge of possibilities and the influence of the commercial course offered at school resulted in her feeling of "What else? I guess I'll end up in an office."

Another example already referred to suggested that the boy felt very definitely his possibilities of getting a university education had been thwarted by the family being on social assistance. His sense of being a victim of fate was quite strong and his plan for the future seemed quite rigid and not open to further consideration.

One student seemed to provide a good example of unrealistic assumptions based on conceived value of what was desirable and on an inaccurate picture of the facts. He stated he expected to obtain his Ph.D. in chemistry. He had been out of school for two years and returned. He stated he planned to finance this through the Royal Officers' Training Program of the armed forces. This program provides only for the first degree and then requires three years military service. In this case the mother seemed to be resigned to being on social assistance and this apparently grandiose view of the possibilities may be his reaction to a feeling of hopelessness.

Previously in the study reference has been made to one particular school counsellor's influence on a student's assumption of what was possible. This influence and the direction of the influence stemmed from the counsellor's estimate of the student's ability and the financial position of the family.

Students' ideas about possibilities seemed generally limited by lack of knowledge of facts. There were some who expressed little hope of improving or changing their present lot. The feelings of dependency expressed by some parents were no doubt operative in some of the children's assumptions about life

possibilities but documentation of this was difficult. From this small sample it can be said that although the school brought about changes in assumptions regarding possibilities for a few, this was not the general rule.

This study has only really brushed lightly some of the aspects of what may prove to be one of the vital areas for research in gaining a better understanding of the behaviour of public assistance students who drop out of school. Although the interviews did not provide sufficient material to analyse in detail the sample in terms of the theoretical framework outlined in the introduction of this section, they did illustrate the importance and subtlety of research in this area.

#### The Children Who Quit School: Their Reasons and Subsequent Employment History

In this section, the actual experience of the dropouts is examined, including the ages and grades at which they left, the reasons they gave for leaving, other factors which the interviewers felt were operating to contribute to the children's decision to leave, the advice they received about leaving or not leaving, and their present feelings about their decision to quit school. Following this, the dropouts' employment history is reviewed.

It is interesting to compare the ages and grades at which the students dropped out. Two were aged 14 and in grade 8; two were 15 years of age, one in grade 8 and one in grade 9; and two were aged 16 and in grade 10. Although our sample is too small for comparison, it is noteworthy that in the Vancouver School

Board Pupil Withdrawal Survey (for the period September, 1961 - August, 1962), it was found that only 7.9 per cent of withdrawals occurred before grade 9,<sup>1</sup> while in our group it was 50 per cent. Also, it was reported in the Pupil Withdrawal Survey that the majority of withdrawals occurred between the ages of 16 and 18 years,<sup>2</sup> while in our sample the students had ranged from 14 to 16 years. The two who had left before the legal school-leaving age in our sample had done so on the advice of the principal. It is worthy of note that in our sample, one-third of the dropouts had left before the legal leaving age, while in the Pupil Withdrawal Survey only .7 per cent had left at that age.<sup>3</sup> The dropouts whom it was possible to interview in the present study were generally speaking ones who had left at earlier ages and in lower grades than the majority of Vancouver dropouts.

The reasons the dropouts gave for leaving were varied. When more than one reason was given, it was difficult to establish which reason was dominant. The two students who left at age 14 had done so on the advice of the principal, one because of poor marks and the other because of disruptive behaviour, and it looked as if in these cases withdrawal had almost been forced by the school. One of these forced withdrawals gave an additional reason for leaving, i.e. lack of interest. Of the others, one had left because of difficulty with certain subjects, one because of poor

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<sup>1</sup> Pupil Withdrawal Survey (September 1, 1961 - August 31, 1962); Dept. of Research and Special Services, Vancouver School Board, p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Pupil Withdrawal Survey, op. cit. p.4.

marks and because he wanted money for a car, one because he was sick a good deal and felt "left out of groups", and one because he did not like school, had a girlfriend, wanted a job and a car, and felt he was "too big for school". The stated reasons for leaving are shown in the following table:

Table 41. Stated Reasons for Leaving School  
Interview Sample

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<u>Reason</u>	<u>No. of Students Mentioning</u>
Difficulty with subjects and poor marks	3
Not interested in or dislike of school	2
Wanted money for a car	2
Wanted job	1
Disruptive behaviour	1
Too big for school or feeling left out	2
Health	1
On advice of principal	2

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It is difficult to compare these reasons with other studies as most studies deal with the primary reason for withdrawal only. However, in the Pupil Withdrawal Survey, desire to work seemed to account for the largest number of withdrawals,<sup>1</sup> and this was found to be true in most other studies, for example the DeKalb Study<sup>2</sup> (which specifies the desire to work as being the dominant

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<sup>1</sup> Pupil Withdrawal Survey; op. cit., p.7.

<sup>2</sup> Reported by Murk, Virgil; in "A Follow-up Study on Students Who Drop Out of High School", Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, vol.44 (February, 1960), p.74.

reason for withdrawal among boys) and the co-operative study of high school dropouts by 14 school systems in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Three pupils in our study were leaving to get employment or money (which would involve employment). The second most common reason for leaving in the three studies mentioned was lack of interest and of ability, and it was found that five students in our sample gave this reason. (In our table this was classified as "difficulty with subjects and poor marks" and "not interested in or dislike of school").

It is interesting that in the present study no students felt they had left because of economic necessity. In the Pupil Withdrawal Survey, 1.7 per cent of the dropouts had left for this reason.<sup>2</sup> Most of the reasons given for leaving are, however, similar to those found in other studies, except for the feeling of being "left out" or "too big" which is not so often emphasized. Also, the element of forced withdrawal does not seem to be brought out in other studies, which concentrate on voluntary withdrawals.

In the case of each of our dropouts, it seemed that there were additional reasons for leaving school besides the stated ones. An attempt was made, therefore, to examine these other factors.

In the first case, it appeared that even if the principal had not advised leaving, the girl would have dropped out sooner

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<sup>1</sup> Brook, George C.; "High School Drop-Outs and Corrective Measures", Federal Probation, vol. 23 (September, 1959), p.32.

<sup>2</sup> Pupil Withdrawal Survey; op. cit., p.7.



or later. She had attended 10 different schools, was not interested in school as she "could not understand it", and felt she had low intelligence. She was of the opinion that people in school laughed at her because of her clothes; therefore, low income had some effect here. Her family relationships were also poor. She was living with her father who favoured her sister and who criticized her and "treated her brutally". Her sister had also wanted her to drop out so that she could look after her brothers. Clearly there were many factors influencing this girl's leaving school besides the stated reason.

The second girl who had left on the advice of the principal had also had a very negative school experience, and a corresponding negative attitude. She had repeated two grades, and felt there was nothing good about the school and that it was of no use to her. She hated everything about it, including all the teachers. She had difficulty studying and always forgot what she learned by the next day.

The boy who had stated he left because of difficulty with certain subjects seemed, on the other hand, to have had a positive attitude toward the school. He had repeated one grade, and was doing average in most subjects except for the two which he found very hard. The fact that three of his friends left when he did may have been an influence.

Concerning the boy who stated he left because of poor marks and because he wanted money for a car, there seemed to have been the added factor of lack of interest. He was looking for the "easiest program" in school and did not like to put any effort

into his school work. He felt there was "nothing wrong with the school".

The girl who had stated she left because of sickness and because she felt left out of groups had also been affected by frequent changes of schools. She felt she just could not get used to the change in courses from the school she had attended earlier in another city. She had repeated two grades and did not see much value in the school.

The boy who left because of not liking school, having a girlfriend who took up a lot of his time, wanting a job and a car and because of feeling he was too big for school seemed to have been influenced also by the fact that three or four of his friends left when he did.

Obviously there are many complex and subtly intertwined motives influencing a person's decision to quit school and the subject is one which calls out for more systematic study.

It was felt that the question of what advice the students received concerning remaining in school was important. Only two of the six dropouts had been advised against leaving, one by the teachers and a counsellor, and the other by her mother and by the counsellor, and in both cases the advice had been unavailing. The two others who had left voluntarily had received no advice and it seems that this is an area where the counsellor could play a more active role.

When asked how far they thought people should go in school, five of the six dropouts stated they felt people should finish grade 12, and one felt a person should take further training

after that. One on the other hand felt women only needed grade 10. However, they did not all regret their decision to leave. Three felt they might have had a better job and one thought she might not be unemployed at present, but most of them felt their decision was right under the circumstances. Only one seemed to actually regret the decision to leave school before grade 12, and this was a boy. A study of 72 dropouts in DeKalb, Illinois, on the other hand, found that most of the boys in their study had regretted their decision.<sup>1</sup>

#### Employment Histories of the Dropouts

Our findings agreed with many other studies in the area of employment experience of dropouts. Although our sample was too small to be statistically significant, the work history of each dropout shows that generally speaking, they took a relatively long time to find employment, their jobs were short-term and of the blind-alley type, they suffered from periods of unemployment, they tended to end up in unskilled, service, and labouring occupations, and some were not content with what they were doing.

The first dropout is a 19-year-old girl who left school in grade 8 and has been out for six years. She is now a housewife. She is rather a special case as far as employment is concerned, as she had been forced to leave school on the advice of the principal and at the insistence of her sister who "coerced" her into looking after her younger brothers. This she did for two years. The jobs she has had were short-term work in a cafe

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<sup>1</sup> Murk; op. cit., p.75.

as waitress and looking after children. The longest period of employment she experienced was four months. She did not express any feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with her life, but felt uncertain of herself as a person.

The second dropout has been out of school for three years. She left school at age 17 in grade 8. At the time of leaving she had no specific plans. She has never had a job, except the occasional babysitting, and is "doing nothing" now. She did not speak of having ever looked for a job. She is not married but has a young baby, and states she is bored at home. She thinks she might like to work as a cashier at a grocery store, but does not seem to be making any plans in this direction. She stated that if she had been more intelligent, "things might have been different", but as they are, she still would have left school.

The third dropout is an 18-year-old boy who left school in grade 10. He has been out of school for two years. At the time of dropping-out, he had planned to work on a golf course where his grandfather is employed; however, he got a job delivering telegrams for the C.P.R. He did not have a job waiting for him when he left school and it took him one month to find the C.P.R. job. He found this through an advertisement in the newspaper. He stayed on that job for four months, then had a part-time temporary job in a warehouse as shipper and receiver. This job he quit after two months and was then unemployed for two more. He is now working as a labourer in an upholstery factory and has been there two months. The dates he gave the

interviewer do not seem to jibe with his two years out of school. When asked how content he was with his present employment, he replied that he liked it all right because it's easy. His plans for the future were rather hazy. He thought he might learn the upholstering trade or work on the golf course; however, his hay fever bothers him and he feels this might interfere with both these plans.

The fourth dropout is 18 years old, left school in grade 9 and has been out of school for approximately two years and nine months. He had had a part-time job delivering groceries (about which he spoke disdainfully) while at school. When he quit, he planned to start a bakery business or a pig farm. However, he ended up as a delivery boy for a stationery company. It took him about two months to find this job and he found it by going from warehouse to warehouse. He is now a shipper at the stationery company. He is not very content with what he is doing and feels the company expects too much work for the amount of money he earns. He plans to finish grade 12 at night school in order to get a better job paying more money. He felt his decision to quit school would have been "stupid" if his family had not been on social assistance. His main objective was to earn enough money to buy a car.

The fifth dropout is a girl who left in grade 8 at age 15. She has been out of school for about two years and three months. She is now married and expecting her second child. She had no plans when she left school, and was "waiting around to get married". She was not very interested in working. It took her

about five months to get her first job. She had phoned answering an advertisement for a job as telephone solicitor but was unable to handle this. She was given a job around the office at \$100 per month (sticking on labels, etc.). She had to leave as the office required someone who could type. They offered her the telephone soliciting job, but she quit because she could not do it. She remained at the job about three months. She feels she is reasonably content with her present life, but feels she would be better off if she had more education in case her husband "had an accident or something".

The sixth dropout was in grade 10 when he quit, and was 16 years old. He has been out of school for about three years. About a year and a half after leaving school, he went back to his old school which directed him to King Edward Education Centre; however, he stayed only two weeks. At the time of leaving school, he planned to go to Manitoba and get a job, as he wanted to "move around". He did not have a job waiting for him. He followed through with his plans and got employment as a labourer for a relative in Winnipeg. It took him two months to find this job. He stayed for a few months, then took another labouring job in a large city. Following that, he came back to Vancouver where he has had three labouring jobs since. He was laid off his last job and has been unemployed for three months. He is not content with his present situation. There was some mention of taking an Art course, but he felt this was impossible as it takes four years. He felt it might be an idea to go to night school if he gets a job. Concerning his decision to leave school, he thought perhaps "it

wasn't such a good idea".

It is obvious, then, that the dropouts have had chequered employment careers. The ones who have worked have obtained short-term work and have had periods of unemployment. Their futures do not look at all bright. One plans further education and another seems to have some hazy thoughts in that direction. One is thinking of going on to learn a trade. Whether they follow through on these plans or not is another story.

CHAPTER 5. PARENTAL INFLUENCES AND CHILDREN'S SCHOOL  
EXPERIENCES: THEIR COMBINED EFFECT ON SCHOOL PERSISTENCE.

It is generally assumed that parental educational level and general interest in education correlate very closely with student desire to graduate and actual graduation. Both Canadian and American studies indicate that the higher the level of education attained by the parents the more likely the children are to graduate. The Maryland study found 30 per cent of the fathers and 24.4 per cent of the mothers of the dropouts had completed six years or less of formal education. An additional 32.0 per cent of fathers and mothers ended their education between grades 7 and 9. Nearly 80 per cent of the parents of dropouts did not finish high school.<sup>1</sup> A look at the percentages of children in school in Canada from the different occupational classes will give a rough approximation of the same trend. Occupational status of course is not only a level of education but this is one of the factors considered.

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1. Maryland State Department of Education; Our Dropouts, Baltimore, June 1963, Tables 6 and 7.



Table 42. Children Aged 14-24 Years Living at Home and at School, Canada, 1951.

<u>Occupational Class</u>	<u>Number of Children aged 14-24 living at Home</u>	<u>Percentage at School</u>
Class I	13,502	71.0
Class II	173,937	55.2
Class III	40,130	50.6
Class IV	60,739	45.6
Class V (with farmers) (without farmers)	573,095	38.9
	237,925	45.6
Class VI	200,517	38.2
Class VII	186,862	34.8
Occupations		
Unstated in Census	41,316	
	<u>1,290,098</u>	

It is easily seen that the percentage of children in school from families with a relatively high level of education is much greater than for children whose parents have a lower level of education. The percentage for class I is more than twice as high as the percentage for class VII.

A point of special interest is whether a positive school experience in the child can overcome the effect of a "poor" educational background on the part of the parent.

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Source: DBS, Census of Canada, 1951, vol.III, Table 141, cited in M. Oliver, Social Purpose for Canada, University of Toronto Press, 1961, p.115.

Table 43. Relationship Between Parental Educational Experience, Child School Experience and the Probability of Student Graduation

Student	Sex	Education Level of Parent	Educational Aspiration for Child	Parent Attitude to School(a)	Parent Interest in Education	Child School Experience	Child Educational Aspiration	Considered School Withdrawal	Grade Retardation	Average Grade	Probability of Student Graduation
1	F	8	no grade stated	pos. with res.	some	N.A.	no grade	no	N.A.	N.A.	low
2	M	9	10	ind.	little	N.A.	no grade	yes	N.A.	C	low
3	F	2	12	pos. with res.	little	positive	12	no	1	C	?
4	M	12	12	negative	actively	negative	12	no	0	D or E	?
5	F	8	12	pos. with res.	some	positive	12	no	0	C	high
6	F	7	12	ind.	some	negative	12	no	2	D or E	low
7	M	11	12	negative	little	positive	12	no	0	C	?
8	F	10	12	pos. with res.	some	positive	12	no	0	C	high
9	M	9	12	pos. with res.	some	negative	10	yes	2 (partial)	D	low
10	F	6	12	ind.	little	negative	10	yes	2	D	low
11	F	10	?	pos. with res.	actively	positive	13	no	0	B	high
12	M	?	12 and university	pos. with res.	some	positive	12 and university	yes	0	C	high
13	F	10	12	entirely positive	actively	negative	10	yes	1	D	low
14	M	11	12	pos. with res.	some	N.A.	12	no	1	B	low
15	M	8	no grade stated	pos. with res.	some	mixed	no reply	yes	1	B	low
16	M	2	12 and vocational	ind.	little	positive	12 and university	yes	2	B	low
17	F	7	12 and vocational	ind.	some	positive	12	no	1	C	high
18	F	10	12 and university	pos. with res.	some	mixed	12	no	0	C	?

Source: Interview Sample

(a) res: reservations

1

When parental educational experiences and student school experiences were considered the probability of graduation was in doubt for four students. When other factors were considered it was possible to reach a decision as to probability of graduation in three of the four cases. This explains the apparent discrepancy of graduation-prediction statistics between this table and table 44.

Relation Between Parents' School Experience, Expectations and Attitudes and Probability of Children's Graduation.

The items included in assessing parental educational experience and attitudes were grade achieved, aspiration for their children, child's school.

Of the 18 students in the interview sample it is predicted that five students are highly likely to graduate. These are numbers 5, 8, 11, 12 and 17. It is predicted that nine students have a very high chance of dropping out of school before graduation. These are numbers 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 16. Numbers 3, 4, 7, and 18 were classified as uncertain.

The Research Department of the Vancouver School Board found that the total number of dropouts for the year 1961-1962 was 1, 267 or five per cent of the school enrollment. The rate varies from school to school but nowhere does it come close to the 50 per cent dropout rate forecast for this sample of families on social assistance. What are the characteristics of these families which result in a prediction of an extremely high dropout rate?

The significance of a comparison of the level of education of the parents of those likely to graduate with those likely to drop out is limited by the small numbers involved. Among the parents of the five students predicted to graduate, two had reached grade 10, one grade 8, one grade and the education level of the fifth was unknown. In the group expected to drop out, two of the parents had achieved grade 10 or better, two had completed grade 9, two grade 8, one grade 7, one grade 6 and one grade 2. No great difference is discernable in the

average levels for such small groups. The average education level for those expected to graduate was 8.75 and for those not expected to graduate 7.7. The small difference is however in the direction expected. The range is much wider for those expected to drop out, going as low as grade 2. This also suggests that grade level of parents can be a factor in school continuance.

Looking at the parents' attitude toward the child continuing in school it is noteworthy that all but one parent expressed a wish for their child to graduate. The one exception had a child in special class and wanted her to continue in school as long as possible. She recognized the fact that she wouldn't graduate. From the mass expression of parents that they wish their children to graduate it is possible to conclude that the parents have interpreted that this is the expected or socially accepted answer. Thus this factor may be interpreted for its significance in the last chapter in the light of all the factors operating on the family, but it will not be useful in saying anything about the two groups of parents presently being considered.

More revealing are the parents' feelings toward school and their actual interest in education. Of the parents from the group expected to graduate four were rated as having some interest in education and one was classified as being actively interested in education. This classification is from a rating scale having "actively interested" at the top; "some interest" in the middle, and "little or no interest" at the bottom. In contrast, three of the parents of those expected to drop out

were rated as having little or no interest, five as having some interest and one as being actively interested. The conclusion that can be drawn is that as a general rule actual interest of parents in education does correlate with the child's likelihood of staying in school. The results of this comparison point out just as strongly that in many situations only a careful examination of the many factors involved can possibly explain possible causation of school withdrawal. The fact that five of the parents of those expected to drop out rated the same as four of those expected to graduate, and one of the parents of the expected dropouts was rated at the top of the interest scale, makes it very clear that it is necessary to consider other factors operating in the lives of these children.

Some possible explanations are considered in the concluding chapter but in the meantime this case is presented for illustrative purposes of a child who is predicted to drop out but whose parent is rated as having a high degree of interest. The education experience of this child was rated as negative. The child has repeated one grade and is obtaining below average grades at the present time. This does not necessarily mean the child lacks ability as attitude can be just as important a factor in success in school, but there is a suggestion that she may lack ability. A study of the interviews indicates the intrafamilial relationships between this girl and her widowed mother are not the best. The focus for much of the disagreement appears to be school continuance. The girl appears to be reacting to this pressure by threatening to withdraw from school. Another factor

operating is that the girl does not participate in school activities. She spends much of her time with her boy friend who goes to university.

Consideration of the feelings of the parents of the two groups toward the child's school reveals that four of the parents of those expected to graduate were rated "positive with some reservations" and one was rated as "indifferent". In the group of parents of those students not expected to graduate four were rated as "indifferent", four were rated as "positive with some reservations" and one was "entirely positive".

The rating scale used included ratings of "entirely positive", to "positive with some reservations", to "negative", to "indifferent".

The same conclusions seem to be obvious here as in the previous consideration of implied interest in education on the part of parents. There is a definite correlation between parents' attitudes to the school and the child's likelihood of continuing. The parents of the likely dropouts rated lower than the parents of those expected to graduate. Again just as clearly it is not a clear cut observation, as in both groups "positive with some reservations" was prevalent and there was an "indifferent" rating in the expected graduates. There was also an "entirely positive" in the expected dropouts. The latter happens to be the same family which was previously used as an illustration and substantiates the suggestion that the mother's interest and support of the school probably increased the daughter's desire to withdraw. A careful study of the reservations of those rated "positive with some

reservations" might show a greater distinction between the two groups.

The general parental educational experience is now compared with the child's school experience in the light of the prediction of graduation or withdrawal. This attempts to throw some light on the relative importance of the two factors to school continuance.

Of the five students that were predicted to graduate all were rated as having a positive school experience. As previously noted, only one parent was rated low on either of the parental interest or attitude scales discussed. The indifference to feelings about the school in this case seem to have been offset by a satisfactory performance at school and a positive relationship with some teachers. The interview indicates that although the father was indifferent about feelings toward his child's school he did have some interest in education. He suffered from a serious accident and had himself lost jobs in preference to people with university education. These two things could well explain his apparent indifference to his daughter's school. His accident may be the focus of most of his feelings. Indifference may be a defence in response to his employment experiences.

Consideration of the expected graduate group has lead to only one obvious conclusion, that positive parental experience with education and a positive school experience on the part of the child combine to make the possibility of graduation high. There is a hint that parental indifference can be offset by a strongly positive school experience.

Of the nine students predicted to withdraw four were rated as having negative school experiences. Three were either in special or occupational classes and their answers and situation did not permit a reliable rating. One student was rated as having a "mixed" school experience and one was rated as having a positive school experience.

Of the four who had negative school experiences, the parental ratings vary and suggest the necessity of individual interpretation. The one situation where the parental interest and attitude ranked high has already been considered. In the situation where the negative experience of the child and indifference and lack of interest of the parent coincide we can conclude that given this combination, the likelihood of school completion is very low. Similarly where there is some parental interest in education but indifference to the child's school combined with a negative school experience on the part of the child, the chances of graduation are reduced. The situation where the boy had a negative school experience and the parents expressed some interest and had a positive attitude with some reservations requires closer scrutiny. The possibility of lack of ability again cannot be overlooked, but more pertinent to this situation seems to be the influence of an older brother whose delinquent pattern seems to be counteracting the mother's positive influence regarding school continuance. The effect of being in such a low income bracket is another factor which appears to have combined with the negative school experience to offset the mother's influence.

For the three students in special classes their ability



makes it next to impossible for them to be expected to do anything else but drop out, considering the definition of a dropout used in this study. These point up the limitations of suggesting the only acceptable pattern is to complete grade 12. Reference was made to this idea in the first chapter pointing out that it is a new value to our society.

The student whose school experience was rated as "mixed" had parents whose attitude and interest were rated as "positive with some reservations" and "some interest" respectively. Careful scrutiny of the interviews indicates that this boy may be on the occupational program although he himself could not identify it by name. He has also had his school performance hindered by having to learn English when he came to Canada. Thus ability and cultural barriers seem to be quite predominant in suggesting this boy will drop out. Again the complexity of causation is seen. Ordinarily it might have been expected the chances of graduation would be at least average in view of parental attitudes and the child's school experience.

The student predicted to drop out who had a positive school experience is of particular interest. Here the parental interest in education was rated as "little or not interest" and the parental attitude rated as "indifferent". The question is, was parental attitude dominant over school experience or were there other factors operating? Careful study of the interviews suggests that the weak parental investment in school continuance was supported in its influence by the fact that two of this boy's brothers had dropped out of school. The parents saw the neighborhood

as also being a negative influence. Careful study of the boy's school experience indicates that his present grades are not in line with past performance. He reported getting B's and yet has repeated two grades. He saw his reason for failure as being laziness. Therefore while this situation might be interpreted as a case where negative parental attitude aided by other factors overcame a positive school experience, there is some doubt as to how positive the boy's school experience actually was.

With regard to the four students whose future is problematic the balance of influences is more difficult to determine. In two of the situations the child's school experience was quite definitely positive but the parent had either little or no actual interest in education, an extremely low level of education themselves or were negative to the child's school. These two cases have other factors operating as well, but this is probably the clearest example of parental attitude and motivation counteracting a child's positive school experience so that it becomes impossible to predict with certainty completion of grade 12.

The case where the student had a mixed school experience, the parent was rated as being "positive with some reservations" in attitude toward the school and showing "some interest" in education. Careful study of the family indicates other factors than general parental attitude to education will be the deciding factors in whether this student continues. Family mobility and school mobility along with intrafamilial relationships would be the pertinent factors. The marital status of this mother seemed to be in flux and the ten changes in schools experienced by the

student were taking their toll. School participation was gradually dwindling and program satisfaction had been sacrificed.

The fourth student that was not definitely classified as a dropout or graduate was rated as having a negative school experience although he had not repeated any grades. The parent's attitude to school was negative, but the actual interest in education was rated as "actively interested". Careful study of the interviews of parent and student indicates that this may be an example where individual experience at school may counteract active encouragement from the parents to continue, but this must be qualified. The student has been active in athletics and has a part time job which he obtained through his "Big Brother". Before anything definite could be concluded it would be necessary to know more about the effect of his parent's divorce on his acceptance or rejection of his mother's attitudes toward education. The educational attitudes and aspirations of the "Big Brother" would also have to be assessed. There is also indication that social assistance may have been a factor in making this student's school continuance questionable.

#### Students Who Have Dropped Out of School

The school experience of all the dropouts interviewed would be rated negative using the same rating as used for students in school. In four of the situations where the parental attitude or interest were not supportive to continuance the most obvious conclusion is that where negative school experience and unfavourable parental attitude combine the chances of school continuance are very slight. This was obvious in the study of students in school

as well. It becomes more complex to try to establish which was most influential in school withdrawal, generally negative or indifferent parental attitude or the negative school experience. It is also to be remembered that these two are closely linked together.

In one case anti-social behaviour and lack of ability seemed to overshadow school experience and parental attitude to education to bring about school withdrawal. In another case grade retardation would suggest ability was the main factor in withdrawal. In the third situation it would seem parental attitude and lack of parental control were of more importance than the negative school experience. In the fourth situation the student's health, ability and school mobility seem to have been other factors operating and perhaps overshadowing the influence of parental attitude and negative school experience in bringing about school withdrawal.

Careful consideration of the interviews of those parents of dropouts who felt "positive to the school with some reservations" and expressed some interest in school revealed that in one instance the negative intrafamilial relationship, perceived lack of ability and school mobility, all coincided with the negative school experience to counteract the positive effect parental attitude might have had on school continuance. This student was asked to leave school. The large family, 13, might also be regarded as contributing to school withdrawal.

In the other family the boy quit during the father's serious illness and just prior to his death. The parental attitude

to education was also counteracted by low income and the stigma the boy felt at being on public assistance. The boy is employed and plans to finish grade 12 at night school so the influence of parental attitude to education may still be operative along with the post-school experiences.

### Graduate Students

The graduate student's parent would not be interviewed and so it is impossible to determine the relative influences of parental attitude and school experience in the student's decision to complete school. It is known the parent had completed grade 12 and encouraged her son to finish school. His ability combined with this to counteract a not too positive school experience. The information available suggests that parental influence played as important a part if not more important than school experience in effecting school graduation.

### Conclusions

This study indicates there is a definite correlation between student school experience and school continuance. Similarly there is a correlation between parental attitude and school continuance. Parental educational achievement was significant in this study but not to the high degree suggested by other studies. It is clear that in many cases positive school experiences and parental attitudes favouring education go hand in hand. When this occurs chances for grade 12 graduation are quite high even for families on public assistance. When negative school experience and negative parental attitudes appear together as they often do, the chances for graduation are very low.

These general conclusions are frequently qualified by a complex of factors operative in a particular family situation. The study hints at the fact that negative parental attitude will dominate over a positive school experience and possibly bring about withdrawal. This hint was based on two cases where other factors seemed to be having minimal influence. There was however one case in which an indifferent parental attitude was apparently being overcome by a strongly positive school experience.

The other possible suggestion from this part of the study is no more encouraging. It is that a positive parental attitude may be overcome by a negative school experience on the part of the student with school withdrawal a probable result. In the sample studied it seemed that a variety of other factors combined with negative school experience to bring about withdrawal rather than supporting the positive parental influence and encouraging continuance. The fact that several of the students felt they did not have clothes required for school social activities, the lack of supplies for home economics classes and athletics, the dearth of organized recreational facilities in the neighbourhoods, and the fact that the only hope many of the boys could see of getting a car was to withdraw and get a job; all these material resources were lacking in the lives of these children. The parents did not have the resources to put their positive attitudes into practice in ways they might have liked to. Books were scarce in these homes. Study accommodation was crowded and in some instances non-existent. It is interesting to speculate whether these factors might not have been supportive of positive

parental attitudes and tipped the scales in the direction of school continuance if the socio-economic situation of the family had been better.

No definite conclusions can be drawn from this study about the relative significance of school experience and parental attitude to school persistence but there are disturbing indications that neither the school system nor other social resources are a sufficient counterforce to other negative parental attitudes in families on social assistance.

#### Predicting School Persistence of Withdrawal

As outlined above, predictions are based on a combination of two sets of variables: on the one hand, a subjective judgment about the level of the family's motivation, having regard to their feelings about receiving social assistance, their attitude to education and to the school, residential and school mobility, intra-familial relationships, health, and community experience; and on the other, a judgment made about the quality of the child's school experience, attitudes, and ambitions. From a comparison of these two sets of variables it was hoped to determine whether certain individual features, such as positive school experiences and positive attitudes and ambitions of the child could outweigh negative family motivation and keep a child in school until graduation, and also whether negative school experiences, attitudes, and lower ambitions could outweigh positive family motivation and cause a child to drop out. When it was not possible to interview the in-school children, predictions were made on the basis of parents' statements about

the child's progress, attitudes and vocational ambitions.

The total sample of 44 children in the families interviewed plus four children who were at school but living away from home was classified according to the level of family motivation and actual or predicted school status of the children. The results are summarized in Table 43. This table shows many interesting features.

Table 44. Relation Between Family Motivation and Children's Actual School Status or Predicted Status

<u>Families</u>		<u>School Status or Predicted School Status</u>					
<u>Motivation Rating</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Children.</u>	<u>Graduates.</u>	<u>Predicted Graduates</u>	<u>Drop-outs</u>	<u>Predicted Dropouts.</u>	<u>Prediction Unknown.</u>
+2 Strong Positive Motivation	3	6	1	3	0	1	1
+1 Positive Motivation	9	14	3	4	2	5	0
0 Mixed Positive and Negative Motivation	2	5	0	0	3	2	0
-1 Negative	4	5	0	1	3	1	0
-2 Strong Negative Motivation	9	18	1	0	9	8	0
Total:	27	48	5	8	17	17	1

Three families were considered to have strong positive motivation, and nine moderately positive, to give a total of 12 families with positive motivation. There were two families in which motivation was felt to be mixed positive and negative. On the other hand, four families were moderately negative and nine



very negative as far as motivation is concerned, making a total of 13 where the influence on the child could be considered to be negative. Thus the families were quite evenly split between those with positive and those with negative motivation. This points out the fact that it is not possible to stereotype motivation of families receiving social assistance. The groups of families with different motivation ratings are examined in more detail below.

In the three families with highly positive motivation, there was one graduate and no dropouts. However, when the predictions are added to these figures, it is expected that the eventual outcome will be a total of four graduates and one dropout. And so it cannot be expected that all children in highly motivated families will graduate. In one case, the negative school experience, attitudes and ambitions of the child are expected to outweigh family motivation and cause the child to drop out.

In the nine families with moderately positive motivation, there were three graduates and two dropouts. And so in two cases, negative individual factors actually outweighed positive family motivation. When the predictions are added, it is expected that in this group there will be a total of seven graduates and seven dropouts, an even split between the two. And so if our predictions are correct, it may be concluded that positive family motivation is not the only consideration. It seems that personal factors will outweigh the moderately positive motivation in a larger percentage of the cases than they will the strongly positive.

In the two families with mixed positive and negative

motivation, there were three dropouts and no graduates. In addition, no students were expected to graduate and two were expected to drop out. This seems to be a poor record, but the group was too small for conclusions to be drawn.

In the four families with moderately negative motivation, there were no graduates and three dropouts. However, with predictions added it appeared that there would eventually be a total of one graduate and four dropouts. It seemed that generally positive school experiences, attitudes and ambitions would outweigh the negative family motivation in one case out of four in this group.

The nine families with strongly negative motivation had the largest number of children, i.e. 18. In this group there were nine dropouts and one graduate. It was predicted that in these families no more children would graduate and eight would drop out, giving an eventual total of one graduate and 17 dropouts. Accordingly, in this group it was expected that there will be one out of 17 who will have been able to overcome very negative family motivation and finish school.

To summarize these expectations, taking the total of 11 graduates and predicted graduates, 11 of these are from positively motivated and two from negatively motivated families. And of the total 34 dropouts and predicted dropouts, eight are from positively motivated, five from "mixed" motivated and 21 from negatively motivated families.

It can be said then, that on the basis of the totals of actual graduates and dropouts plus the predicted graduates and dropouts, the ratio of graduates to dropouts will be high in the

positively motivated families in our sample, and low in the negatively motivated and in the "mixed" motivated families, although the latter group is really too small for consideration. But there were also several exceptions to this generalization, which indicate that the child's school experience, attitudes and ambitions were or could be more influential than family motivation in several cases. Some illustrative cases are described below.

MARY G.

Mary G. illustrates a situation in which strong parental interest in education is associated with a positive attitude towards school on the part of the child. The family consists of the mother, Mrs. G., who is forty-two years old and has been separated from her husband for several years after enduring a miserable life for herself and her seven children when her husband was present in the home. These parental difficulties resulted in all seven children, who range in age from eight to 25, being taken temporarily in the care of the Children's Aid Society at one period, though they have been together now for the past few years. The father has been in and out of the home since 1938 and his periodic returns have caused family difficulties; he has not however been in the family picture for the past few years. Despite these disintegrative forces, the family has remained cohesive and the family motivation towards school is classified as plus two on the rating scale.

Mrs. G. sees social assistance as having a stigma attached to it, but also as a useful resource in raising her

family. The children's attitude towards assistance parallels that of their mother, in that while they feel it has some stigma attached to it, they also see its value as a family resource.

This family consists of two boys aged 25 and 23, who graduated on the university program and who now have completed apprenticeships and are practicing journeymen in skilled trades. A daughter, age 18, completed grade 13 and a hospital course which has qualified her as a registered laboratory technician. Three younger children are performing successfully at school, though one child in grade 6 is experiencing some difficulty. They all seem to like school.

Mrs. G. has a positive attitude towards education and is hopeful of ultimately adding to the grade 10 education which she presently has. She belongs to the P.T.A. and is in contact with the school periodically in regard to her children. She speaks well of the school and their attitude towards the children, with some reservations towards one counsellor who advised Mary to give up all ideas of attending university. Mrs. G. indicates she has plans to approach service clubs to help Mary continue her education beyond high school, and feels she could successfully manage this.

The family are living in a comfortable home which is owned by a friend of Mrs. G. and which they obtain for a reasonable rental. They have lived in this home for six years, and are not experiencing any real crowding. Residential and school moves for all the children in the family have been minimal.

Family relationships are good. Mrs. G. is able to

individualize in regard to the children, and has realistic expectations of them educationally and otherwise in terms of their abilities. The children appear to relate well to each other and to their mother. In addition to the fact that family stress in inter-personal relationships is minimal, family stress through health is also minimal as the health of all members is good.

The family take some part in community activities but is largely home-centered. Mrs. G. has a good knowledge of social services in the community. She has no reluctance in making use of them when she needs them. She looks upon social assistance as one of these sources of help which is available for her use.

Mary is in grade 12 on the university program and despite some weakness in mathematics should graduate this year. She feels she is doing fairly well in school with an average grade of C plus. She has never really considered leaving school, as she has always done well, never failed a grade and sees no reason not to continue. She observes that her sister finished grade 13 and she wishes to do so as well, as she feels this is necessary for a general education. She particularly likes art and home economics, and is attending extra evening sessions in mathematics at school to bring up her grades in this subject. She thinks that the attitude and support of her mother has been a help to her in her school career. She plans on taking further training in nursing or teaching when she finishes grade 13 and her mother is in accord with these plans and will help her, with them.

Mary does not take part in many social activities as

she feels uncomfortable in mixed groups and does not enjoy athletics particularly though she does enjoy her classes in physical education. She has a number of hobbies which she pursues in so far as limited family income will allow. She does not feel that a higher family income would make any difference as to whether or not she finishes grade 13, but indicates that it would make it an easier goal to achieve. She noted that whereas now she walks 10 blocks back and forth to school to save car-fare she would be able to take the bus and have more study time available. She would like to be able to afford more books and clothes, and study upstairs at home which she doesn't now do because of the higher light bill which would result.

Mary sees school in positive terms. The course she is taking leads ultimately to the vocational goals she wants; teaching, nursing, laboratory or X-ray technician. The school have been particularly helpful in extending themselves to help her. The example of three older siblings who are graduates seems to have been a family factor influencing her to complete high school and on the university program. The older sister indeed, has provided an area of identification which will probably result in Mary completing grade 13. The attitude and support of Mrs. G. towards education for Mary, coupled with Mary's sensitivity towards the importance Mrs. G. places on education, have been a positive contribution to Mary's staying in school.

A strongly held belief in this family is that a good education is necessary, a good education consisting in graduation from high school on the university program. Mary has accepted this value and consequently considers that junior matriculation

is a goal worth achieving, even though it be at some personal or family cost. It seems in this case then that the positive feeling of the family towards education has been a major factor in influencing Mary to complete school rather than drop out.

SALLY F.

An exception to the positive correlation between strong family motivation and school persistence is the case of Sally F. The family motivation was rated at the plus two level, with family features appropriate to this high classification. The family attitude towards education is positive and three children in the family, other than Sally, who are attending school take considerable part in athletic and other activities at school and in the community.

This family consists of Mrs. F., a 50-year old widow of the Protestant faith, her three sons aged 13, 12, and eight and Sally, who is aged 16. Mr. F., of Jewish background, died some five years ago. The attitude of the father was positive towards education, as is that of the remaining family members, Sally excepted. The boys all like school, the oldest boy, who is in grade 9 is a straight A student and well-liked, and is doing particularly well, but they are all successful scholastically.

Mrs. F. who has herself only a grade 10 education, feels her insecure position could be improved considerably if she had more education, and consequently is anxious for her children to get as much education as possible. She has had contact with the school from time to time regarding the children and has found these to be beneficial. She does feel, however,

that the school counsellors could take more interest in the children. She has taken out educational policies, out of an already tight budget, for the children so that they might go to university if they wish to upon completion of high school.

The family has lived in Vancouver for 20 years and for the last 10 years have occupied comfortable quarters in a low-rental housing project. School moves for the children, including the subject, have been kept to an absolute minimum as a result.

The health of the F. family has been good with the exception of Sally. Sally has for the past two years suffered from minor complaints which Mrs. F. feels is an attempt to stay away from school on her part. It seems quite possible that Sally's ill health may be psychogenic in origin as a reaction to stressful relationships with the school, for her attitude to school is very different than that of the family as a whole.

Sally proves to be an exception to this positive family attitude towards education. She has had considerable difficulty at school, repeated grade 5 and failed two subjects last school year. Whereas the boys talk to their mother about school with some enthusiasm, Sally does not talk to her mother about school at all.

Sally is on the general program having changed from the university program early in the school year as she found it too difficult on the university program. She thinks it is better to finish grade 12 but plans only to finish grade 10 and then pick up more education later on if she needs it.



She doesn't feel she gets along very well at school, doesn't participate in school athletics or social events, and stays home from school as often as possible. She doesn't feel that there is anything at school which either helps or hinders her and she is undecided as to whether or not the school deals fairly with her. She doesn't feel that a higher family income would make any difference in her feelings about leaving school. She expressed a dislike for all the academic courses at school, and didn't think any of them would help her in the future with the possible exception of home economics.

In all, Sally is plainly apathetic and uninterested in school. She indicates that people are always advising her against leaving school, her aunt, her mother, the counsellors, but she still wants to leave and get a job; probably as a salesgirl or a waitress. There seems to be little doubt that she will drop out of school before graduation.

Although this family is positively motivated towards education, Sally remains negatively inclined towards it. Her concern with employment, and her negative views in regard to the courses she is taking, appear to point out that she sees no great value in continuing at school, for graduation will not enhance her job possibilities in her view. This seems particularly pertinent in view of her vocational goals of waitress or salesgirl which do not require high school graduation.

There is some suggestion that the family places greater importance upon education for boys than for girls, possibly there are some cultural considerations involved, but nevertheless Mrs.F.

is extremely disappointed that Sally will probably drop out. One can only speculate as to whether Sally's position as the older sister to three younger brothers has any relation to her decision to leave school, but it is a possible consideration. It seems likely that the approbation offered the oldest boy who is so successful in school has caused Sally to withdraw from the educative competition and look for an area (employment), where she would not be in competition with any other family members, and would indeed in some respects place her in a superior position to other family members.

While any comparison of the intelligence of Sally and her siblings is undocumented, it does appear that she may be of lower intelligence and thus handicapped in the competition for highest school marks. She has consequently rebelled against the high expectations made of her in this respect, and seeks to withdraw from an unfair competition through withdrawal from school.

At the same time as Sally is encountering difficulties, both from the home and the school, she is also undergoing the travails of adolescence. She is searching for independence, and is in a state of hostile rebellion towards authority, as represented in her mother and the school. Leaving school to obtain employment is one way of meeting the need for independence, and at the same time gaining personal satisfactions.

It seems, in this case, entirely plausible to conclude that the high family motivation towards education which has been a contributing factor towards negative feelings to education on the part of one family member. The case of Sally F. proves an

exception to the generalization that the children of families with high motivation towards education stay in school. It also points up the influence of mental ability on school retention.

JOAN C.

Two families in the group interviewed were rated as having mixed positive and negative motivation. Of the five children within the vulnerable age group three had already prematurely withdrawn from school and the other two were predicted to drop out. Typically representative of this group were the "C" family, second generation Chinese Canadian, who had recently become dependent upon social assistance when Mrs. C's common law husband deserted. The oldest two children in the family had dropped out; one in grade 9 and the second in grade 10. It was predicted that Joan C. presently in grade 9 would also fail to complete grade 12.

The family expressed moderately negative feelings concerning their dependence upon social assistance. They did, however, appreciate the help it afforded, enabling Mrs. C. to remain in the home to keep the "family together".

Mrs. C. stated routinely that grade 12 was considered a minimum requirement for obtaining a job. She did not, however, see any purpose or value in obtaining an education for its own sake. She had no contact with P.T.A. or school personnel concerning the children's progress at school or their decision to withdraw. Intra-familial ties appeared to be strong but there was little discussion of school in the home. The oldest daughter whose premature withdrawal was necessitated by illness has been

unable to find satisfactory employment and is presently starting a program of night courses to upgrade her educational level. She left high school in grade 9.

Academic difficulties were a significant factor in the child's negative experience in school. Joan had already failed two grades and was presently having difficulty in academic subjects. Dislike of teachers and the absence of friends at school added to the frustration of the school experience. Joan, consequently, was not able to recognize any purpose or value in completing high school which would help her in future life experiences.

A strong emphasis upon family centred activities which is typical of Chinese cultural values discouraged the child's motivation to participate in school or community athletic or social activities.

The predominant factors influencing a negative motivation to continue in school were academic difficulties, negative parental attitudes toward school and community and a cultural factor which discouraged participation in community activities on the part of the child. In short it appeared that a negative school experience coupled with the family's general apathetic attitude toward education was a significant factor in the high dropout rate among this group.

#### JOHN K.

In the group rated with a moderately negative motivation there were four families. Only one child presently in school in this group was expected to complete grade 12. This

was John K. aged 15. John lives with his mother aged 55 who is separated from her second husband. Born in Germany, John lived for seven years in the Interior of British Columbia before moving with his mother to Vancouver one-and-a-half years ago. John, who is now in grade 9, has attended three schools in the last five years. Mrs. K. has suffered from chronic physical ailments for the last 20 years. This has made it impossible for her to obtain employment which would enable her to financially support herself and her son.

Mrs. K. expresses much negative feeling concerning their dependence upon social assistance stating that she intensely dislikes accepting public money and shows little appreciation of the help it provides. She states "it prevents one from starving and that is all".

Mrs. K. is openly critical toward the Canadian educational system feeling that programing is of inferior standard to that of Germany. Discipline is lacking in the school and consequently children have little respect for their superiors. It is apparent that Mrs. K. feels that her son has adopted American values of affluence as opposed to her own of frugality.

Mrs. K. stated her belief in the purpose and value of education in equipping an individual personally and vocationally to meet the requirements of the labour force but apparently provided little encouragement in her son's educational endeavours. She refuses to attend P.T.A. meetings or have any contact with the school or community groups because of her feelings of inferiority concerning her poor mastery of English.

John K. narrated a very positive experience in school, expressing a general satisfaction with the teachers and subjects. He participated actively in social and athletic activities. Academically he has made satisfactory progress, with an average "C" grade and marks ranging from "A" in his favourite subjects to "D" in those in which he is "bored".

Although the expressed parental attitudes were predominantly negative this boy's positive school experience and apparent intellectual capabilities indicate that he will probably complete grade 12. Among this group of families the nature of the child's experience in school and community seemed to be the determining factor in his motivation to remain in school.

This section deals with families who were rated low on the family motivation scales. The first family is an illustration of the general rule that the probability for school graduation in a negatively motivated family is very low.

This is a two parent family. The father was born in the Ukraine in 1917. The mother who is 44 years old does not speak English. There are six children in this family. Two of the children, a boy and a girl born in 1951 and 1956, are in elementary school. One son who was too old to be considered in our sample had quit school in grade 11 at the age of 17. Of the three boys in the 15 - 21 age range, two had dropped out in grade 10 and one was in grade 8 and is predicted to drop out.

This family's attitude to being on social assistance was classified as being "generalized negative" which means they

were not happy about being on assistance but saw some positive aspects. The father said "he didn't mind being on assistance too much, but people do think you are a bum". He saw it positively in that it kept him from going into debt until he got a job. He thought people's opinions about recipients of social assistance were improving. He linked his low income with the difficulty his children had had with the police. He saw the lack of money as necessitating their living in a neighbourhood which he saw as being a bad influence on his children. This must be interpreted as being more the result of low income than of specifically being on social assistance. The family had been living in the same house for nine years yet their first application for assistance was four years ago. Although the father may be failing to accept his part in his son's trouble, this part of the city is certainly not a favourable one in which to raise children.

The family was rated as apathetic in its attitude toward the school. The father said he wanted his children to finish high school and then go to vocational school, but the rest of the interview indicated he had little serious interest in education and a "laissez-faire" attitude toward the school. School was only discussed when he tried to make the boys go to school. Their reaction was to run away from home. He saw education of value solely in terms of an occupation.

This family has, as has already been mentioned, resided in the same house for nine years and there has been no school mobility. The housing is a low standard private home.

The intrafamilial relationships seem at present to be "laissez-faire" between father and sons. The family ties appear quite weak at this time. To understand the present situation and its effect on school continuance it is helpful to look at what appears to have gone on in the past. This family would be classified as one in which the father assumed the authoritarian role. The mother who does not speak English seems to have assumed the submissive, hard-working, mother role which often complements the authoritarian father in the traditional European family.

The father used corporal punishment with his children to obtain obedience and even dragged them to school. When they became old enough and big enough they rebelled and his methods were no longer effective. He now looks down on their life pattern but can only assume a "laissez-faire" approach. The boy's defiance of his verbal desire for them to continue in school may well have been part of a general pattern of rebellion against their father's authoritarian approach. They seem to have identified more with his actual interests in school which are low. The often discussed first generation cultural conflict may well have been operative in the behavioural pattern of the boys.

The mother had been in ill health for seven years and this may have created further economic stress in the family. It does however not seem to have been a major factor.

The father and mother did not seem to have ties with the community. The boys seemed to identify with the delinquent element in the community.



The dropout who was interviewed had quit school about three years ago. He had returned to school after being out for about a year and a half. He originally returned to the school he left, but was referred to the adult education centre. He attended only two weeks and quit again.

He had been on the general program and saw it as being the easiest. All his friends were on this program. He was satisfied with his program because all he wanted was the easiest course.

He had repeated grade 8 and saw himself as being bigger than the other students in his grade. He thought the school "treated you like little kids". He said he had been in a lot of trouble with the school but felt a lot of it had been his own fault. His academic progress was not too good although he said he was getting "C's" when he left school.

He saw his dislike for school, the fact that he wanted a car, the late hours he kept, his girlfriend and his boy friends, all being influential in his poor progress in school. He said he made his own decision to leave school. He had talked to the counsellors but this hadn't helped much.

He did not see any value in education for the type of work he had been doing since he left school. He thought it might be helpful if a person wanted to take vocational training. He is presently unemployed but it does not seem likely he will take further training.

The illustration of the typical negative family motivation and school withdrawal has pointed to the fact that

negative school experience and negative parental motivation often go hand in hand. Factors which seemed to have been particularly significant in bringing about school withdrawal were the close identification of the boys with the delinquent element in the community. The authoritarian parental approach along with the cultural conflict which may have been the beginning of the child's rebellion which carried over into the school, another authority figure, and the unsatisfying school experience of the boy.

There was only one child who had graduated or was expected to graduate from the families rated as being very negatively motivated. This one was not available to be interviewed so that it is not possible to use this case as the most obvious exception to the typical trend. There was however a family where the student's school experience rated as "mixed" and it appears the student had the ability to graduate. This case provides an illustration of how the positive aspects of a student's school experience can be counterbalanced by a variety of factors stemming from family experience.

The family unit consisted of mother age 40 who was born in Canada, two girls, one in a special class and the other in grade 10, and a boy aged 12. There was apparently a common-law husband who although present at times in the home did not take a leadership role in accepting responsibility for family problems.

The mother was rated in her attitude to assistance as being "subsistent resigned-dependent." She saw assistance as being a living but seemed to see little else but existence as a possibility. This limited assumption of possibility was beginning

to affect her daughter's view of possibility. The mother had been on assistance for five years and although it was a subsistence level of income her anxiety over medical and dental bills had been lessened and she had been able to remain at home with her family.

The mother's attitude toward school and interest in education were rated as "positive with some reservations" and "some interest". Her main reservations about the school, centered around her youngest daughter being in special class. She had agreed to her being placed in the class, but the daughter is now dissatisfied and the mother blames the school for not advancing her to the occupational program which she sees as having less stigma attached to it in terms of the child's ability. Although she was positive in her attitude toward the school this positiveness seemed to be in terms of a lack of negative attitudes. The resigned attitude was apparent when she said "The school knows what it is doing so why interfere". Her implied interest in education was in general terms and her actual knowledge was quite limited. She had, herself, a grade 10 education.

The family had a history of 10 moves in the last five years, not only within Vancouver but also involving an out of province move. This appeared to be in this family one of the negative factors most influential in the prediction that the girl would drop out. The girl's school experience had been strongly influenced by these moves. Her program choice had been disregarded because of differences in regulations from school to school. Her participation in school activities had been curtailed because she

felt she got left out when she changed schools, and she doesn't know how to get into the activities again. It seemed the constant demand on her to adjust to new situations had reached the point where she saw little purpose in investing herself in the school or its activities because of the probable temporary nature of the contact. The family mobility had disrupted any positive influence the child's contact with a neighbourhood house might have had, and the present location prohibited her from continuing attendance.

The intra-familial ties seemed also an important factor in determining the possible withdrawal of the student. The mother's pattern of life involving the common-law husband seemed to be a possible reason for the present eviction from the advantage of low rent in the housing project. Neighbours had complained. This suggests a correlation between intra-familial relationships and residence mobility which seemed important in discouraging school continuance.

It was also noticeable that although the mother-daughter relationship gave evidence of being quite strong the dependent mother seemed to lean on the daughter for advice thus putting additional responsibility on a 16-year old girl who had already been asked to cope with extreme school mobility.

Health had also been a stressful factor in this family. The younger daughter received considerable attention due to hospitalization for her asthma. The older girl did not get along with her sister and thought she stayed at home from school for the smallest excuse.

This mother's only contact with the community seemed to be in terms of obtaining help for her children. An example of this was her use of the welfare services offered by the Canadian Legion branch in her area, and friends who lived in rooming houses in the West End district of the city. Neither of these contacts seemed to be of the type that would influence the daughter to remain in school.

This girl's progress in school seemed to have been satisfactory up to this point and many of her dislikes of school were directly traceable to family mobility. Her present lack of faith in her ability to complete this school year successfully is quite realistically interpreted by her as being partly due to the fact that many times the change in schools resulted in omission of blocks of subject matter. This becomes more crucial in high school. Her view of her mother's cooperation in helping her do well in school was that she stayed out of her way.

The girl sees marginal income as having had some effect on her future. Financial stress is quite prominent in the family especially when school starts in the Fall. The hidden costs of our free education system become visible in September. She says she knows it takes a lot of money to finish school and when she thinks of all the things she can't have without her mother having to scrimp excessively it makes her feel angry and discouraged. She observed that even such things as gym fees and home economic supplies are difficult for her to obtain.

This case seems to illustrate a student with sufficient ability and desire to finish school, but who because of lack of parental motivation to education, and more particularly because

of the family mobility, will likely drop out.

The point of tragedy here is that even under these adverse influences had the school counselling system been flexible enough to assess the situation and enable the girl to pursue the desired program and fan her flickering flame of interest her assumption of what is possible might be different. The pitifully inadequate social assistance can clearly be seen to have hammered away at this girl's ray of hope of improving her situation through education. This policy is, and will in the future, cost this girl untold loss of satisfaction. Besides that, it seems to be a good example of how the community is willing to save nickels at the price of dollars in the future. Money spent on making education a satisfactory experience could well have overcome apathetic parental motivation and saved probable cost to the community in the future when this girl drops out of school.

## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study has considered the complex of factors which operate to influence children to remain in school or to drop out. Certain significant aspects of family life which tend to motivate children to remain in school or discourage them from doing so were studied in regard to each family. The children were studied in relation to parents' level of motivation for school continuance. They were considered from the point of view of their individual attitudes to school, their school experiences and performance, as well as educational and vocational aspirations. The children were then grouped according to their actual educational status and prospects. The separate groupings were, (a) graduates, (b) those who appeared to have good prospects to graduate, (c) dropouts and (d) those who seemed to be headed for premature withdrawal. These groups of children were studied to determine the relative importance of family motivation and other variables on school persistence.

The bases for the estimations made of the levels of family motivation, which were rated from +2 to -2, included six main areas of consideration. Since the sample for study was made up of families in receipt of social assistance, the matter of their attitude to being a recipient of public funds as well as their feelings about living on a marginal income were considered. In regard to their feelings about being on assistance, it was found that those who exhibited an attitude of resigned dependency had been on assistance for a long period of time.

Such a situation tended to lower the level of family motivation. Those who had been on Social assistance for only a short period of time and who retained a negative or frankly hostile attitude to being on social assistance were deemed to have better prospects for rehabilitation and independence. Two of these families had actually obtained employment which appeared to be secure. A feeling of being different was associated both with receiving public funds and with living on a marginal income. Inadequate income in some cases accounted for lack of participation in activities. Inferior clothing and lack of money to spend on school equipment added to this feeling.

The second main aspect of family motivation considered was the attitude of parents to education and to the schools their children attend. These attitudes ranged from an active interest in education and a positive attitude to the school to no interest in education and an indifferent attitude to the school. Factors such as the parents' own school experience, and the grade they had achieved themselves, as well as their present reaction to that experience were considered. The nature of the contacts with their children's schools also contributed to these factors. The present study sought to reach beyond the professed interest in education and interest in seeing children graduate to the actual degree of concern. Public propaganda which stresses the importance of completing school for vocational reasons had obviously influenced some of the parents, and of course fits with the majority view that education is primarily a vocational asset. The level of concern was determined from external evidence of



behaviour. For example, did the parents discuss school with their children? Did they take advantage of opportunities to learn what the school program and activities are? Did they keep children out of school for reasons other than illness or close their eyes to truancy? Were they aware of their children's preferences in courses and knowledgeable about their strengths and weaknesses in school courses? Did they seek help if problems arose for their child in connection with the school or in particular courses?

The third consideration which influenced the level of family motivation was residence. This factor was used partly to measure the stability of the family. Residential mobility was analyzed from the point of view of how it affected the adjustment of the family as well as the part it played in determining the number of schools the children attended.

The quality of housing and the degree of crowding that prevailed were seen as factors which influenced intra-familial relationships. The conclusions reached in this interpersonal area were based on observations made in one, two or three interviews with family members. Because of the nature of the sample, "broken homes" predominated. The fact that these homes were broken was not considered paramount in assessing the family atmosphere.

Table 45. Intra-familial Relationships

<u>Relationships</u>	<u>One-Parent</u>	<u>Two-Parent</u>
Good or adequate	11	3
Unsatisfactory	10	3

Where the present relationships appeared to be good, even if they had not been always so, they were regarded as good. Among the six two-parent families, three were judged to be adequate or good and three either had loose family ties or had poor relationships. In the one-parent families 11 had adequate or good relationships. The remaining 10 were unsatisfactory in some way. In two of these the problem in family relationships centred on one child in the family. The other eight were either non-cohesive or had tension in their relationships. Unsatisfactory relationships in families were considered to have a negative effect on the motivation of the family, and good relationships a positive one.

The fifth main factor which influenced family motivation was health. Health was reviewed from the point of view of the resultant stress, if any, on the family. Illnesses were examined for their frequency, severity and chronicity. The family's reaction to these conditions, and the degree of incapacitation the family experienced were the points considered.

The matter of how these families related to the community was considered important in their motivation. It appeared that these families were for the most part isolated. Twenty had no community activities and frequently indicated that they had no friends, or just one friend. Four families participated in the community to some extent and three were active. Where a sense of isolation prevailed, it was regarded as detrimental to family motivation for school continuance.

The children's actual school achievement and prospects were considered in relation to level of family motivation. In

some cases children had managed to graduate despite low motivation in the family or else had good prospects for finishing school. In some cases the reverse appeared to be the case, and highly motivated families had dropouts or probable dropouts in them. In these cases it would appear that individual potential, personal relationships, attitudes learned outside the home, and school experience all played a part in outweighing the influence of the family. School experience included such factors as the grade achieved in relation to the child's age, grade failures, success in courses, absenteeism, attitude to individual teachers, likes and dislikes at school and attitude to the university, general, and special programs. Vocational aspirations and feelings about being on social assistance also played a part in influencing the children's interest in finishing or not finishing school. All these individual considerations as well as the level of family motivation were taken into account in predicting which children would or would not drop out of school.

#### Resources and Recommendations

In the present study, it was obvious that some children who came from families with high motivation and who had had positive school experiences and attitudes were almost certain to finish school, and there were others, for example those with very low ability, who were almost certain to drop out. On the other hand, it is with the marginal group that the authors are particularly concerned, that is, those children for whom the scales seem to be delicately balanced between finishing school and dropping out.

Certain existing services may play a part in influencing this group of children to complete their formal education or at least obtain suitable vocational training. There are provisions within the social assistance program, in the Vancouver school system, in the Department of Labour and in voluntary community services which have particular relevance for this group. In view of the experience of the families interviewed certain adjustments to these services should be considered.

#### Social Assistance Policy

The Policy Manual of the Department of Social Welfare of British Columbia states that social allowances may be granted to provide necessities for a basic standard of living to a person in need of financial assistance who is unable to meet this need in whole or in part by his own efforts or from other income or resources.<sup>1</sup> In order to be eligible for social allowance as a dependent member of a family in receipt of social allowance, a child over 16 years of age must satisfy one of the following conditions: (a) he is regularly attending an academic, technical or vocational school or taking a high school course from the Department of Education and making satisfactory progress in his studies and he is not eligible for a training allowance under Schedule "M" and "R", or (b) he is prevented from attending school or taking correspondence courses by reason of physical or mental disability, or (c) he is registered for employment and unable to

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<sup>1</sup> Province of British Columbia, Department of Social Welfare; Policy Manual, p. 293.

find work.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the children in our study over 16 years of age were eligible under one of the above conditions. In addition, the child is permitted to take on part-time employment to a certain extent. A child included in the family's social assistance grant is allowed to earn and keep \$40 monthly plus 30 per cent of his excess earnings and anything over this amount is deducted from the social assistance grant. If the child is living in the home but is not included in the social assistance grant, he is allowed to earn and keep \$150 monthly plus 50 per cent of excess earnings before a deduction is made.<sup>2</sup> While these amounts are not small, a psychological factor may operate to prevent a child from taking part-time employment; that is, he may feel he is penalized for taking the initiative and trying to assist his family financially. It is recommended, therefore, that no ceiling be placed on a child's permitted earnings.

Within the social assistance program, fees for the rental of school texts are paid as an "extra" allowance. It was found, however, that all students did not take advantage of this benefit because doing so would entail informing the school of the fact that their families receive social assistance.

While all social assistance rates need to be raised to a level above mere subsistence living in order to enable people to retain their self-respect and look upon themselves as

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<sup>1</sup> Province of British Columbia, Department of Social Welfare; Policy Manual, p. 293

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 297.

participating members of the community, there is a particular need for rates to be raised for children in the age range of 15-21. It is nearly impossible for families on assistance to bear the cost of such children, particularly at an age when they are growing at a very great rate and when appetites are hearty. There are also hidden costs in keeping a child in school, such as laboratory fees, special equipment, and costs dictated by social activities.

It is felt that in addition to helping with the actual costs of keeping children in school, raising assistance rates would prevent some of the factors which make for poor family motivation. This study has shown that it is highly likely that children in poorly motivated families will drop out of school. Increasing the assistance rates could be expected to have a positive effect on family motivation by lessening the family's feeling of being "deprived" or "different", by providing for better housing conditions (overcrowding is believed to adversely affect family relationships), and by making it possible for the family to participate in social activities. Increased assistance rates would also affect the child's school experience, attitude and ambitions, all of which are influential in determining whether or not he will continue in school, in the following way: although some of the children in our study stated that they did not feel that a low income adversely affects their plans for school continuance, the more subtle aspects of the low income, such as the feeling of being "different", being ashamed of their clothes, not having the proper school equipment and the inability

to participate in school activities were felt to be influential.

The actual amount of assistance income needed to meet these conditions is a subject for further research. The authors of this study feel, however, that the present rates of assistance for children in this vulnerable age group need to be doubled. An alternative method of approaching this problem would be to provide a special issue cheque on or about August 15 and January 5 to assist the family in the provision of clothes, school equipment, and in some of the cost of participation in social activities. The latter is believed to be a vital factor in the normal growth and development of a child.

In addition, the necessity of concentrating more attention on the rehabilitation of the families on social assistance is evident. Provision of funds to enable parents and children alike who have dropped out of school to attend night-school classes such as those given at King Edward Education Centre would enable social assistance recipients to have some feeling of control over their own destiny, to feel less like victims of circumstance.

#### Family Allowance

The recent budget brought down by Finance Minister Gordon provides for Family Allowances to be paid to 16- and 17-year-olds who continue school, at a rate of \$10 per month. While this is commendable, it is likely to make it easier for those children without severe age-grade retardation to continue, but will not provide any incentive for those children who are old for their school grade and who have the added psychological difficulty

of feeling they are "too old" or "too big" for school. This factor was brought out in several cases in the present study. Therefore, it is recommended that Family Allowance be continued for children up to age 21 attending school.

### School Programs

There are three programs at the high school level; occupational, general and university. The university program is, as the name would indicate, designed to prepare a student for a university education. It is almost entirely academic in nature, offering little in the way of practical courses. It is worthy of note that graduation on the university program is also a requirement of entrance to nurses' training, officers' training, and the B.C. Institute of Technology.

The general program provides a simplified academic course and an increase in industrial arts and commercial courses. Most boys in the general program take the former stream while the girls follow the latter. In addition to vocational and commercial courses each stream offers an array of academic courses, which are diluted versions of academic courses offered on the university program, though some courses offered on the university program, such as foreign languages, are not required on the general program. Others are taken for fewer years, for example English, which is a four year course on the university program and is only a three year course on the general program.

The occupational program is designed for those whose intellectual capacities are so limited that they cannot cope with either the university or the general programs. It provides a



three year course emphasizing core subjects, the three R's and some shops such as woodwork and metal work. It is intended to provide some training for service occupations such as garage attendant, bus boy, and waitress. In actual fact while it has served to retain children who would otherwise have left earlier, it does not enhance their job opportunities upon completing the course. In terms of status it is well below the general program which is in turn considerably below the university program.

In the present study, it was found that a large number of the children of vulnerable age were enrolled in the general program. With the exception of the "office stream" which is proving highly valuable for girls who graduate, the general program does not appear to lead to a job for boys. They may therefore be tempted to give up the struggle to finish the course and drop out in order to secure immediate employment. While the connection between the vocational aspects of this program and future employment possibilities should be made evident to the student, the child should also be made aware of the value and importance of a general education. The popular conception of education for vocational purposes and material gain prevails to the exclusion of the less tangible values of personal development and self-realization. Furthermore a narrow vocational training which eliminates a general education fails to prepare one for vocational as well as personal adjustments which will need to be made in an unknown future. A broad education is essential to the development of responsible citizens in a democracy.

### School Counsellors

The school counsellors are concerned with both career and course counselling. It is necessary for the school counsellors to acquire a fuller knowledge of job requirements than many seem to have at present. While counsellors, as a result of their own backgrounds are familiar with the requirements for the professions, such as nursing or teaching, they have considerably less knowledge as to how one becomes a sheet metal worker, skilled tradesman, or service worker. To familiarize the counsellors with job requirements and trends in employment opportunities a Central Information Centre could be set up, to which employers could report job requirements, opportunities, and particularly apprenticeship plans, about which little seems to be known. Counsellors could consult this Centre to keep abreast of changing employment conditions.

The counsellor must be prepared to explain to the child the tie-in between the general program and a job or occupation, as well as stress the value of the academic subjects. It seems that some "reaching out" on the part of the counsellor to the child's family and engaging them in program planning would avoid the feeling of being "left out", which seemed to be experienced by many families in the present study.

The special counsellors are concerned with the emotional and learning problems of students. Their responsibilities include acting as consultants to teachers, some personal counselling and referral of students and their families to other community agencies.

There is a tendency for City Social Service workers to

minimize their contacts with the school. Perhaps because of inadequate time to discharge their basic responsibilities, there seems to be some feeling that school contacts are less important than other social work functions. Yet it is vital for social workers to maintain contact with the school counsellors and special counsellors in order to interpret to them the special needs of the child and to gain an understanding of the child's school performance and relationships. When the City Social Service worker and the special counsellor are both involved in any one case, there is need for them to clarify their respective roles.

#### Study and Tutoring Programs

Some consideration might be given to the possibilities outlined in a recent experiment conducted at a local high school in which the school was opened at night, during exam periods, so that students with crowded home situations could study at school. A teacher supervised the class and provided extra tutoring. One child in our study particularly appreciated the help one teacher had given with difficult subjects. In the area from which our study group was chosen, there is a high degree of crowding in the homes. A plan of this type would appear to be of assistance to adolescents having school difficulties due to unsatisfactory home conditions. A program has been established in Toronto, through the co-operation of the Junior League and Toronto social agencies, of providing tutoring help, group study, and good study conditions, in social agencies. This plan is new and its success is moderate, but it points out the possibility of school and social agency

co-operation in meeting some of the problems of the potential dropout. The community centres in the area of our study might be used in this way.

#### Upgrading and Vocational Institutions.

Two separate institutions which are administered by the Vancouver School Board are designed for students who have either completed grade 12 or who have dropped out of school. One is the King Edward Adult Education Centre which provides an accelerated academic program for dropouts. Vancouver School Board research has shown that of those students who appear able to complete grade 12 one student in six who prematurely withdraws from school returns to an adult program within a 12 to 18 month period.<sup>1</sup> The other School Board program that has particular relevance for the dropout or the potential dropout is found in the Vancouver Vocational Institute. This school provides vocational training for students with a minimum of grade 10 education. The Institute in co-operation with the Department of Labour also provides upgrading for those who wish admission to vocational courses but who have insufficient academic qualifications to do so.

Consideration should be given to a program which would provide for job upgrading. Such a program has met with considerable success in Detroit. It provides for special classrooms in 10 Detroit high schools in which dropouts have a 16 week course,

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mr. Earle L. Heisler; Supervisor of Counselling Services, Vancouver School Board.

which provides schooling, work experience, and job placement. The purpose of this program is to restore interest and confidence. Discussions are held on a range of subjects, from grooming to social behaviour. Good work habits are taught, and in the work experience part of the program the children learn different skills, for example cooking. After the course, the dropouts return to regular or trade schools, get permanent jobs, or are put in "work experience" jobs in private businesses or public agencies. For children still in school and particularly those on the general and occupational programs, joint planning between the Board of Education and employers could provide for part-time or summer job experience for these children in the employment field of their choice.

Another experiment which has been carried out in New York and which merits consideration in Vancouver is the "Higher Horizons Program". This program attempts to raise the level of academic aspiration of students who do not receive stimulation at home. It consists of lectures, attending plays and operas, and tours of universities and of industry. This experience enables the children to see higher education in action as well as its practical applications and leads eventually to an appreciation of the less tangible values of education. These experiments have met with considerable success, particularly in some of the slum areas of New York City. Such a program for children of negatively motivated families would be well worth trying in Vancouver.

### Other Educational Resources

While there are no provisions within the Social Assistance program for academic education or vocational training outside the regular Secondary Schools, provisions are made in the Departments of Education and Labour. The first of these is the High School Correspondence Division of the Elementary Correspondence School, Department of Education of British Columbia. Instruction is given in all high school and senior matriculation subjects and in a number of technical and vocational fields. Fees are waived for anyone on Social Assistance.<sup>1</sup>

The second resource is the Federal-Provincial Vocation and Apprenticeship Training Programs, designed to provide pre-employment and pre-indentured apprentice training in designated trades.

More specifically, pre-employment courses are open to anyone wishing to be trained in a field of his choice. The student is required to pay nominal fees averaging \$15 per month and up, but under certain circumstances the cost may be borne where financial need can be proved, as follows:

Under Schedule 'M', assistance may be granted to the applicant who is (a) unemployed, (b) unable to obtain suitable work due to insufficient vocational training or previous suitable work experience, (c) registered for employment with the National Employment Service, or (d) who would be placeable after short-term intensive training in a suitable occupation. Also, provision

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<sup>1</sup>

Province of British Columbia, Department of Social Welfare; Policy Manual, p. 480.

exists under Schedule 'R' for financial assistance for vocational training and maintenance during this training to the physically or mentally handicapped.

For apprentice training, there exists the Pre-Indentured Apprenticeship Course Plan 'b'. Under this category the accepted trainees are enrolled for training in the designated trades under the "Apprenticeship and Tradesmen's Qualification Act". Trainee fees are paid in full by the Department of Labour. In addition, the Apprenticeship Branch, Department of Labour, will pay a subsistence allowance of \$14 per week to those whose homes are outside the city or municipal boundaries of the training centre and \$10 per week to those boys who live within the boundaries.<sup>1</sup>

Other resources include educational grants for soldiers' children, Government of British Columbia Scholarships (half tuition fee for first-class and one-third for second-class students) for up to 2,000 students, and Government Bursaries for capable students who can show financial need and who desire to embark upon or continue studies in higher education or nursing. There is also a Student Aid Loan Fund and special grants for veterans and their dependents.<sup>2</sup>

None of the dropouts in our study mentioned any of these resources, and it was concluded that these were not well-known.

In the voluntary field, there are two programs to note.

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<sup>1</sup> Province of British Columbia, Department of Social Welfare; Policy Manual, p. 492.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; pp.494-497.

The Y.M.C.A. offers a program for dropouts and graduates which assists them in learning how to apply for a job effectively. It includes such things as personal grooming, filling in applications for jobs, training in the art of communication and physical training. It also provides the participants with an experience of being in a group with others who are unemployed and who need a similar type of self-improvement program. No attempt is made to make job placements.

Another voluntary program, which is administered by the Vancouver School Board, is a bursary fund which has been set up with private monies. This fund was established to assist students who wish to continue their education but whose financial position makes it difficult for them to do so. These grants which range between \$10 and \$60 per month are made on the basis of individual circumstances. In cases where the child is from a Social Assistance family, the child's income from this source is disregarded in writing the family's cheque.

The problem of school dropouts is a complex one. The question of providing adequate educational opportunities for children with various intellectual capacities and degrees of motivation and of enabling them to make optimum use of such opportunities is of critical significance for the total community.

The fact that no single causation exists in a child's premature withdrawal from school alerts us to the futility of aiming remedial services at any one cause or symptom. Several studies have attempted to identify those things which influence a child's decision to drop out of school. Few research projects, however, have directly considered the family's influences upon



a student's motivation for continuing in school.

The dynamics of motivation are many and complex, and it is difficult to disentangle the separate strands for individual comment. This study, by focusing upon those families in receipt of social assistance, endeavoured to identify the effects of a marginal income and the experience of being a member of a disadvantaged, minority group upon the ability and motivation to make optimum use of educational opportunities.

Contrary to what might be expected, the strength of family motivation with regard to school persistence varied considerably. There did, however, appear to be a higher incidence of premature school withdrawal among those children whose families received public assistance than among the general population. There was a strong indication that the family's marginal income greatly influenced school withdrawal among those children with low motivation. Apparently neither the school system nor other community resources have succeeded in providing a sufficiently satisfying school experience to overcome the handicaps of those children from families with a negative or indifferent attitude toward education.

There is strong evidence to suggest that a family's feeling of alienation from the community is a determining factor in their lack of appreciation and use of educational services. This raises serious questions about the adequacy of present methods of coping with the school dropout problem - methods which all too frequently concentrate on the eradication of specific personal problems. Remedial and preventive services directed

toward the understanding and modifying of the social and economic forces which have played a part in producing negative motivation are urgently needed.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire to Parents

1. What has your health been like? (Other members of family, kinds of illnesses, prolonged illnesses, disabilities, absenteeism, stress on family, feelings re type of care).
2. Do you find you tire easily?  
How about your children?
3. Do your children take part in sports and school activities?  
Which ones?  
Activities other than school?  
If not, why?
4. What do you think about the school your child attends?  
(Courses, counselling, after-school activities).  
How does this compare with the school you attended?
5. Do you feel that school is important for your child?  
What are some of the ways?
6. How much education do you want your child to have?
7. How does your child get along in school?  
(Academically, socially).
8. Is there discussion re school between you and your child?  
What is it about and who initiates it?
9. Has he considered dropping out at any time? Why? What made him decide not to? How do you feel about it?
10. How many schools has your child attended?
11. Do you think school is fair in its dealings with you and your child?
12. What would you like your child to be?  
What are the requirements?
13. How does this compare with your child's ambitions?  
What influenced him?
14. What kinds of jobs do your closest friends have?
15. Do any of your friends receive social assistance?

16. How do you feel about being on assistance?  
Do you think being on social assistance has helped you?  
Hindered you? How?
17. How do you feel about your child's chances for future employment?
18. Where would you suggest your child go to get employment? Why?
19. Where do you turn when your family needs help?  
(Financial or other).

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire to Children in School

1. What program are you in at school?
2. Would you rather be on some other program?
3. What are your reasons for feeling this way?
4. Have you always been on this program?
5. If not, why did you change?
6. Who helped you decide?
7. Did you repeat any grades? If so, which ones?
8. What grade would you like to complete before leaving school?
9. In what ways has school helped you? Has counselling helped?
10. What do you like about school? (Teachers, students, activities, regulations).
11. What do you dislike about school?
12. Do you think the school deals fairly with you?
13. What activities do you take part in at school, or out of school? (Athletics, hobbies, others).
14. If none, is there a reason?
15. How do you feel you are getting along in school? Why?
16. What sort of grades do you get?
17. Have you seriously considered leaving school? Why?
18. What made you think of it?
19. Why did you decide against leaving?
20. Are you content with this decision to stay in school?
21. Are there things in your life that make it difficult for you to do well in school work?
22. What are these things? (Family, needed at home, physical problems of study space, need to work, lack of money).

23. Are there things in your home life that help you to do your school work?
24. What are these things?
25. If your family income were higher do you think it would have any effect on your staying in school?
26. How do you feel about being on social assistance?
27. Do you think being on social assistance affects your chances in life?
28. Are there things that you have learned at school that will help you in the future?
29. What do you want to be? Why?
30. What helped you decide?
31. What will your chosen occupation require in terms of education, training, cost?

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire to Dropouts

1. How long have you been out of school? (Months)
2. What program were you in at school?
3. Would you have rather been on some other programme? Why?
4. Were you always on that program?
5. If not, why did you change?
6. Who helped you decide?
7. How old were you when you left school?
8. What grade were you in? Did you pass it?
9. Were there some grades you repeated?
10. How far do you think people should try to go in school before quitting?
11. Do you think school helps you on your job?
12. Do you think school has helped you in other ways?  
In what ways?
13. What did you like about school?
14. What did you dislike about school?
15. If you had remained in school, do you think things would be any different than they are now?
16. What do you think are some of the things that make a person do well in school work?
17. What things helped you?
18. What do you think are some of the things that make it difficult for a person to do his school work?
19. What things made it difficult for you?
20. Do you think the school dealt fairly with you? Explain.
21. What activities did you take part in in school or out of school? (Athletics, hobbies, other).

22. If none, what were the reasons for not taking part?
23. How do you feel you got along in school?
24. What sort of grades did you get?
25. Why did you leave school?
26. What advice did you get on whether or not to stay in?
27. How effective was this?
28. Did any of your friends leave when you did?
29. What did you plan to do when you left school?
30. What did you do?
31. Did you have a job to go to when you left school? What kind of job?
32. How long did it take you to find your first job?
33. Who helped you find it? (Friends, school, National Employment Service, other).
34. What are you doing now?
35. How content are you with this?
36. What have you been doing since you left school? (Work history, including length of time on each job).
37. What are your plans for the future?
38. If your family income had been higher, do you think it would have made any difference to your staying in school?
39. Was your family on assistance at the time you left school?
40. How did you feel about being on social assistance?
41. Do you think being on social assistance affected your chances of making a success of your life?
42. How do you feel now about your decision to leave school?



APPENDIX D

Questionnaire to Graduates

1. How long have you been out of school?
2. What program did you graduate on? Were you always on that program? If not, why did you change programs?
3. Do you think your choice of program was the right one?
4. Who helped you decide your program?
5. How old were you when you finished school?
6. Were there some grades you repeated?
7. How far do you think people should try to go in school?
8. Do you think school helps you on your job?
9. Do you think school helps you in other ways? In what other ways?
10. What did you like about school?
11. What did you dislike about school?
12. What do you think are some of the things that make a person do well in school work?
13. What things helped you?
14. Do you think the school dealt fairly with you? Explain.
15. What activities did you take part in either in or out of school? (Athletics, hobbies, others).
16. If none, what were the reasons for not taking part?
17. Do you take part in any now? If not, why not?
18. How did you feel you got along in school?
19. What sort of grades did you get?
20. Why did you stay in school until graduation? What things helped you stay in? Were you given any advice concerning this? By whom?
21. Are any of your friends high school graduates? Any dropouts?

22. What did you plan to do when you graduated? What did you do?
23. Did you have a job to go to when you left school? If so, what was it? If not, how long did it take you to find your first job?
24. What job was this? Who helped you find your first job?
25. What are you doing now? How content are you with this?
26. What have you been doing since you finished school? (Give work history including length of time on each job).
27. If your family income had been higher, would this have affected your educational plans? If so, in what ways?
28. Was your family on social assistance at the time you graduated?
29. How do you feel about your family's being on social assistance?
30. Do you think being on social assistance affects your chances of making a success of your life?
31. Did you ever think seriously about quitting school before graduation? What changed your mind?
32. What are your future plans?
33. Do you think being a high school graduate will help you in these plans?

APPENDIX E.

Letter to Families Requesting Interview

Mrs. Cathy Client,

Dear Mrs. Client:

Your co-operation is being requested by a Research team from the University of British Columbia. They are undertaking an important study in regard to children who leave school before completing grade 12 and they would very much appreciate knowing your opinions and experience in this matter.

A member of the team would like to interview yourself and those of your children who have passed their fifteenth birthday.

You are, of course, under no obligation to take part in this study, but your co-operation would be of great assistance to their work.

A member of the team will contact you during the next few days to see if you are willing to take part in the study and if you are, to arrange an appointment to visit you.

Yours very truly,

Administrator

APPENDIX F.

Survey Schedule

File No. ....

1. Name ..... Male.... Female.....
2. Address..... Phone No.....
3. Place of Birth ..... Date of .....  
Birth Day Month Year
4. Marital Status s...m...wid...des...sep..div..C/L...Date.....
5. Members of Applicant's Family

Dependents

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rel. to Int.</u>	<u>Birth date</u>	<u>Occupation or school</u>	<u>Highest Grade attained</u>	<u>Highest Grade completed</u>	<u>Age left school</u>
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							

Non-Dependents in Home

9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Dependents out of Home

13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Date last worked regularly (of Head of Household) .....
7. Monthly Income of Applicant and Dependents .....
8. Total Assets .....
9. Reason for Application .....
10. Date of Application ..... Current period.....  
on Assistance
11. Date of First Application ..... Total Applications .....  
approved
12. Accommodation
  - a) House ..... Duplex ..... Apt. bldg. .... Suite .... Other ...  
Monthly rent.....Monthly mortgage payments(incl.taxes)....
  - b) Self-contained .....Shared .....
  - c) Rooms ..... Total .....  
Kitchen .... Dining .... Living ....Bedrooms.....
13. a) Length of residence in house:..... years..... months  
b) Length of residence in Vancouver:... yrs..... months  
c) Place of residence before Vancouver: .....  
d) Number of changes of address in last 5 years .....  
(List if possible) .....  
.....  
.....

APPENDIX G

Table 46: Distribution of All Children at Home by Age, Sex,  
Family Type for Survey Sample

<u>Year</u>	<u>One Parent Family</u>			<u>Two Parent Family</u>			<u>Grand Total</u>
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Sub Total</u>	
1939	1	0	1	0		0	1
1940	2	2	4	2	1	3	7
1941	4	1	5	2	2	4	9
1942	6	5	11	6	2	8	19
1943	7	7	14	3	5	8	22
1944	5	7	12	2	4	6	18
1945	15	16	31	12	9	21	52
1946	19	18	37	10	6	16	53
1947	27	26	53	14	11	25	78
1948	21	25	46	16	15	31	77
1949	28	24	52	17	16	33	85
1950	24	24	48	21	12	33	81
1951	20	11	31	11	7	18	49
1952	14	6	20	10	15	25	45
1953	17	14	31	6	14	20	51
1954	11	15	26	2	7	9	35
1955	9	19	28	11	8	19	47
1956	7	9	16	11	6	17	33
1957	11	5	16	6	9	15	31
1958	8	7	15	6	7	13	28
1959	10	9	19	8	4	12	31
1960	7	6	13	4	4	8	21
1961	6	2	8	5	1	6	14
1962	2	2	4	31	0	3	7
1963	5	2	7	1	3	4	11
Total:	286	262	548	189	168	357	905

Table 47. Type of Housing Accommodation of Families Interviewed  
Number of Bedrooms in the Home and the Number of  
Persons living in the Home

(i) FAMILIES OCCUPYING OWN HOMES

<u>Type of Accommodation</u>	<u>Number of bedrooms</u>	<u>Number of Persons in home</u>
<u>House</u>		
Owned	4	4
	3	2
Paying mortgage	2	5
	2	9
	2	5

(ii) SUBSIDIZED HOUSING ACCOMMODATION

<u>Type of Accommodation</u>	<u>Rent Paid</u>	<u>Number of Bedrooms</u>	<u>Number of Persons in home</u>
House	\$64.00	4	7
	57.00	3	4
	57.00	3	5
Duplex	\$32.00	3	4
Row Housing	\$47.00	3	7
	45.00	3	5
	28.00	2	4
Apartment	\$28.00	2	3
	28.00	2	5

(iii) NON-SUBSIDIZED HOUSING ACCOMMODATION

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<u>Type Accommodation</u>	<u>Rent Paid</u>	<u>Number of Bedrooms</u>	<u>Number of Persons in Home</u>
House	\$88.00	4	8
	85.00	4	4
	85.00	3	6
	85.00	3	8
	75.00	4	4
	55.00	2	3
	40.00	1	2
Duplex	\$60.00	2	3
	55.00	2	2
Apartment	\$65.00	2	5
Suite	\$65.00	1	3
	45.00	2	4
	30.00	1	3

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APPENDIX H

April 16, 1964: Letter to Editor, Vancouver Sun.

"IS THIS JUST A CRUEL CYCLE?"

Editor, The Sun: Sir, - I am writing this letter in hopes that it will be published as an appeal to anyone who can help to improve British Columbia's education system in order that the capable, but poor, may attend an institute for higher education.

A visit to the Unemployment Insurance Commission revealed that government grants are given only for vocational training, not for academic achievement. I want to be a teacher; one year of university in addition to Grade 13, which I am now taking, will enable me to fulfill this ambition.

Will I be able to fulfill my ambition? Can I possibly get \$1,300 by next September? What does our government do to help people such as me?

A friend of mine, who accompanied me to the U.I.C., is in a similar situation. She earned her way to senior matric by a scholarship, but through lack of a government grant she can't attend university next fall.

I am 17 years old, the second oldest child in our family of six. Both of my parents are unemployed. My father is at present collecting \$26 per week in seasonal benefits of unemployment insurance. In addition to this, my mother earns \$20 a month doing janitor work for a local church.

This income, plus \$16 a month family allowance, supports our family.

This is when conditions are fairly good; sometimes in winter we do not have as much. In summer my father is able to get part time jobs as a labourer; sometimes he picks apples.

If we are lucky, this enables him to get seasonal benefits; if not, we must turn to welfare to carry us through the winter.

What provision does this make for the education of children?

My parents spent their prime years surviving the depression; those were the years they should have been using to establish themselves in a life's work. Now, employment is refused them because of no training, no experience, or being too old. Is this to be my fate?

I had a job as a car hop at a drive-in restaurant during the summer, and part time while I was going to school. Without this job I would not have been able to attend Grade 13 this year. I paid my fees (\$125), bought all of my other school supplies, paid my book rent, bought clothes, shoes, and winter boots. In addition, I have paid over \$100 to have my teeth fixed; they have not been looked after for many years.

Under these circumstances how can I save between \$1,300 and \$1,500 to go to university?

All through my high school years I have made above-average marks. Why should I not be able to continue my education when others with a lower scholastic standing, but much more money, can go on?

The tuition fee at UBC's faculty of education has gone up. Why do I have to pay more just to assure the large number of

"mama's boys" their place in all the fun and frolic of swishy fraternities and other social institutions of the university? Why?

What will happen if I don't go to university? I was told that since I had gotten this far I should have no trouble getting a job.

What can I do? Employers want someone with technical training; they require experienced workers. No one is willing to give me a job which will help me gain experience.

Will I spend the rest of my life working for a dollar an hour as a waitress? Or will I even get a job such as that?

Out of five ads in The Sun want ads section seeking waitresses, four state that inexperienced persons need not apply.

What shall I do now? Become another case of the already too prevalent "teenage bride?" What will this mean for my children? Will they not have any better chance?

Is this just a cruel cycle of which our lives are destined to be a part? Can we never break through into a dignified way of life?

A refrain keeps going through my mind: It isn't fair! It isn't fair! It isn't fair!

A STUDENT  
IN SALMON ARM.

APPENDIX I

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