



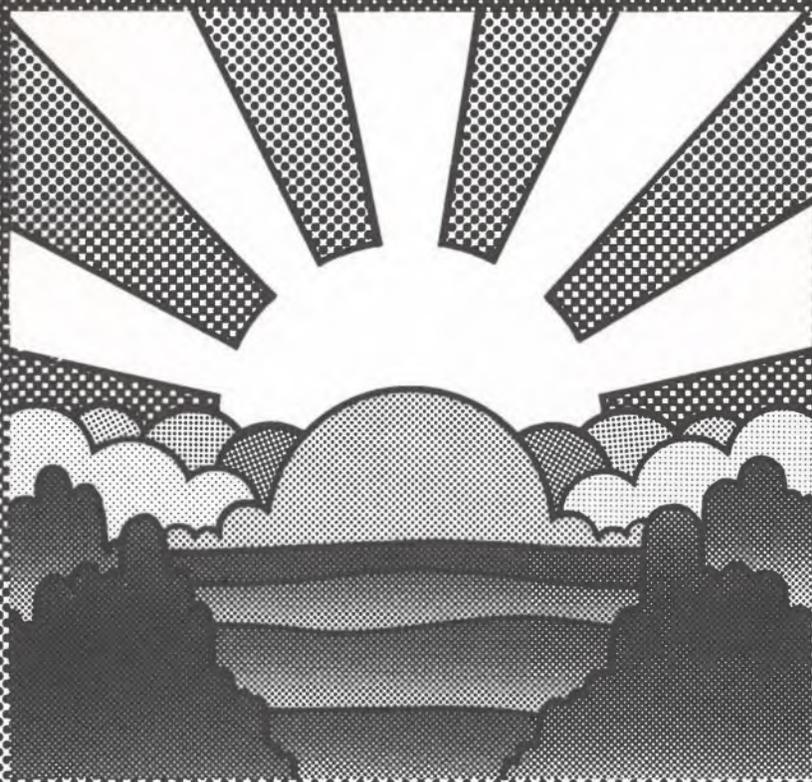
INTERLAKE FLYER

F.R.E.D. ADMINISTRATION, NORQUAY BUILDING, WINNIPEG

November, 1973



YOUTH







Editor's Note

Almost half the population of the Interlake (49 percent) is 24 years of age or under. Seventeen percent are between 15 and 24 years of age.

Whichever way one cuts it, young people represent not only a major segment of the population but are a significant human resource to be reckoned with by those involved in regional or community development. Add to this the fact that young people are staying in school longer and are, by virtue of being members of the communications generation, more broadly aware and influenced by events beyond their home communities. One then cannot help but be impressed by the potency and potential of this segment of our society.

We are devoting this issue of the Interlake Flyer to Interlake youth in the hope that by exploring the character of the region's young people and describing some of their points of view we might encourage more dialogue within the region between youth and adults. In doing so, we are aware that we are guilty of focusing on one portion of the population as if there existed at least two distinct groups--youth and adults--rather than simply one social system made up of highly integrated components. Ideally one should not be able to draw arbitrary lines that separate by age or attitude one group from another and say "here are the little people" and "here are the big people". The interrelationship and interdependency should be so tightly interwoven that such a feat was impossible.

We acknowledge that the writers of the Flyer have created nothing original in this issue. We have simply acted as spokesmen for the many individuals and groups who advised us, talked to us, challenged us and educated us. From the volumes of notes collected we have tried to honestly condense and organize the feelings of those interviewed within several areas of concern. Our thanks are sincere to the student councils, individual students, and young adults who submitted themselves to our questions, and to the school principals, teachers, superintendents, and parents, who made special efforts to accommodate us.

Even before any concentrated interviewing was carried out, we were guided by the advice of a special group of Interlake residents and provincial specialists working in the region who served as an editorial advisory committee. Other background information was supplied by correspondents of the four Interlake newspapers who took time out to fill in a questionnaire on community recreation resources. Some of these people must have taken hours to complete this task and we appreciate their help.

The artwork was done by Gary Styrchak of Mouse Graphics Ltd. in Winnipeg.

We ask our readers to not get "hung up" on the fact that the Interlake Flyer (or the "Norquay Honker" as some call it) is a government publi-

cation. We are not expressing government policy in all that is written. Wherever government programs are discussed we have attempted to plainly identify these and show where they fit in the general scheme of social and economic development. Please recognize, too, that we did not talk to every young person or adult in the region, but have attempted to find representative spokesmen. We know that every community has its own differences so that any situation described in one district is likely to vary somewhat in another.

Appealing to the Senses

Interlake youth (we use the term often in this publication) share some basic values and attitudes that might permit us to develop a mythical profile.

Foremost is the fact that our "average young Interlaker" knows where he wants to live...He's been around a bit and has a pretty good idea of what the world has to offer, but he's convinced that his hometown is just about the best place there is...anywhere. He enjoys the people, his friends and family. He admits that he possesses many of the rural values and attitudes of his parents (although he may express them differently), he enjoys the customs and traditions of his area and he's sort of proud of his community.



Although he often says he's bored in his hometown, he doesn't like the fast-moving pace of the city life and would rather walk down the main street and be recognized by the people he sees.

But he's no longer "an old fashioned country boy" and knowing where he wants to live doesn't necessarily give him any peace of mind--it only creates a confusion, a conflict of values. Having been exposed to all

the luxuries and conveniences of today's modern world, he feels that he wants "some of that stuff" for his own.

He's willing to put out the necessary efforts to achieve those things--study hard, work hard, strive to get the best and to be the best. Is he willing to make that necessary sacrifice, though, of pulling up stakes and moving to a foreign setting--Toronto, Vancouver, or even Winnipeg?

The decision to leave is often irreversible. Putting off that decision and remaining in the familiarity of the home setting can leave a constant, nagging uncertainty. The compromises are few and the opportunity is

limited to take the best out of what the city has to offer while remaining in the country.

The attitudes, values and dilemmas of Interlake youth are expressed in many ways. Some typical reactions to some typical situations are--

"I'd really like to stay but it just doesn't make sense. I can't find a high-paying job around here and it's hard enough to even make a good living. I guess I'll end up going to Winnipeg." This statement by an Ashern girl could have been made by any one of a thousand young Inter-lakers. It reflects the dilemma that is facing young people in rural areas everywhere--a desire to remain in the hometown and a realization that to do so may mean sacrificing other goals such as a career, a higher income, cultural activity or being in the midst of the action.

Those who decide to stay have their reasons. One young man told us, "There's more freedom in the country. I spent four years in the city at university and I tell you it was depressing. I'm back now with a degree and I'm presently unemployed but I'd rather just stay loose around Arbog and work at whatever's available than go back and put up with the city again." The exact reasons for wanting to stay vary but a general appreciation of the rural way of life was reflected in almost all answers.

Many of the people interviewed had spent some time in Winnipeg and had no intention of ever returning. According to a grade ten boy at the Chief Peguis School, "There's lots of fresh air around here. I was down there and it stinks...it's too crowded in Winnipeg and there's too much trouble. Also it's peaceful here and there's no drugs around."

Still, the city can be a strong attraction. One Gimli girl told us, "We go down almost every weekend for shopping and shows. There's nothing to do here but sit in the pub. I wouldn't want to move down there though."

The majority, however, find that they do have to move. Many Interlakers in the 18 to 24 age bracket can be found in Winnipeg--at university or Red River Community College, working in trades and professions or as semi-skilled laborers. Economic necessity dictates that some people leave their home region while a desire for a different life style lures others away.

Those who remain in the region consist of the lucky few who found the job they wanted at the salary they wanted, those who are willing to accept less than they had hoped for and, of course, over 5,000 high school and junior high students.

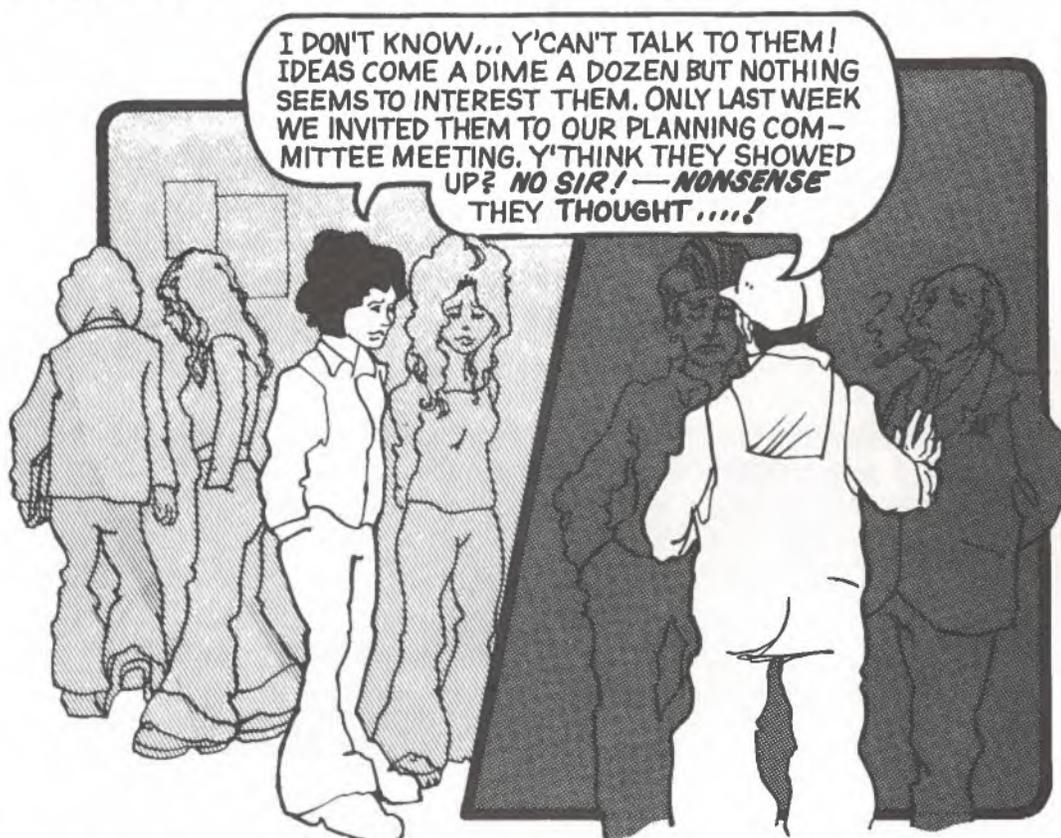
A young man who had recently returned from working in Eastern Canada told us, "Sure there's a lot of drinking in this town and there's a lot of car accidents too. I think it's a result of just sitting around. A lot of times I'd rather go play hockey or do something else than go to a party. And dances...if there's a dance, a lot of times you can have a good time without drinking...Yeah, that's how most of the guys feel about it, I think."

A grade 12 student council member from a northern Interlake community

complains, "We can't have dances. We've run soc hops and all kinds of other activities but they just won't let us have dances. They're afraid someone will show up who's been drinking." Principals and school boards often reply that dances cause trouble and that safety and insurance considerations prevent them from allowing student councils to hold dances.

Lorenzo Tougas, principal of St. Laurent Collegiate, tells us that the student council there organizes and runs at least four dances a year that are open to the public. "Although there occasionally is a small liquor problem, the dances are generally well attended and orderly. But you see, in many small towns, drinking is still the only social activity that people have except for bingo."

In some cases young people who tried to organize non-liquor related activities received no cooperation from adults. A grade 12 boy from a northern Interlake town told us, "We tried to get the rink for a long time to hold this youth bonspiel. We already had the whole thing organized. For three months in a row they told us they forgot to bring it up at the meeting, it just slipped their mind. We never had the bonspiel."



Evening and weekend usage of school gyms has proven to be worthwhile in some communities. Ivan McBurney, principal of the Stedman Special School at Fairford tells us that the recreation evenings for adults and students have received fair results and participation is increasing. He points out that, like any other school, a staff member, custodian or parent has to be present to supervise such activities.

A student from another town told us that his group couldn't afford to pay the custodian and they couldn't get a parent or teacher to volunteer as supervisor. "They said we could use the building if we had chaperones but nobody will come to chaperone so it's still locked up."

In some cases, parent and teacher support of youth activities is good. A Fisher Branch grade 12 student told us, "Some of the parents and other adults got a canoe building class going and a lot of kids built their own fiberglass canoes. They also helped us organize some canoe trips."

In other cases, the situation is such that kids don't even bother to put out the effort, as indicated by this comment, "We thought about trying to get some kind of help to keep the teen club going...No, we didn't ask because we just knew what kind of answer we'd get. It's been closed for a couple of years now."

An Arborg girl who now lives in Winnipeg recalls, "It's all pretty silly. They never wanted to listen to us and we wouldn't listen to them. Maybe if there had been some kind of communications going on, people would be a lot better off. I really think that's true."

School Daze

School! The place where we send our kids for nine months plus one week of the year for as many years as we can convince, scold, threaten or beg them to go. We send them there to learn about the world and, in theory, how to cope with their society. We worry that they are being taught the "right" subjects so that, in time, they can go off into the world as more mature, wiser individuals and make their contributions to the well-being of mankind.

We put a lot of faith in the school system and in the administrators and teachers in whose trust we place our kids. We watch that the officials spend our money frugally and don't try something "frilly" that just wastes our tax dollars. We watch, too, through our school boards that the schools do not deviate too far from our adult values and standards by exposing our children to "radical" teachers of "soft" teaching techniques.

Yet we're in a dilemma at times. We nearly bequeath our children's minds to the teachers, and even expect teachers to be the policemen of morals, inside and out of class, yet insist on more citizen involvement in the system. We insist our kids attend classes, hopefully for a straight 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. period, yet wonder aloud at the practical value of those classes. We allow our sons and daughters to drive a car at 60 miles per hour plus and send our son out to cultivate a field or even operate a combine, yet accept that these same people cannot plan and run a school dance and should be watched at recess and noon hour.



way we'll intentionally embarrass the administration because they simply trust us not to."

Or hear this from a former clergyman in the region: "Many rural people are resistant to change especially in their institutions. Imaginative teachers are often let go after one year or are pressured into conformity. Authoritarians are backed up and respected by the adults. But young people are more exposed to change and, indeed, symbolize change. They don't play the game in the old way and have little feeling for the unchanging institutions.

"I've talked to a number of young people with intelligence and capabilities far above mine, but who have become so thoroughly fed up with the education system they have dropped out and left the community in bitterness."

As is evident, a series of interviews with students, parents, school

Or we hear this from the teaching staff of an Interlake high school: "Our student council is here to organize student activities so they will acquire training in leadership, social responsibility, and a feeling of having a voice in the affairs of running this school."

Contrast that to this statement from the members of that school's student council: "We may have some ideas about projects but we never have had a final say. We have not been able to organize anything entirely on our own, and do not even have the financial responsibility over student council funds. After a while we get to gauge ourselves and learn what things there's no use even asking for or what things are worth a try."

In another high school, where we asked the principal to tell us about the operations of the student council, we were told, "I'd rather not speak for the student council. They are in charge of their program and responsible for it."

And spokesmen on that council said, "We can do anything we want in running student affairs. Our relationship with the staff is good and they always help us whenever we ask for their help. There's no

division members, teachers and superintendents, and concerned citizens in the Interlake simply indicates that the education system in the region is subject to and reflects a variety of attitudes and opinions. That, of course, is hardly startling. Education has been a hot topic of debate for decades.

Our hopes, in talking to involved Interlakers was to obtain some first-hand feelings that might be useful as the debates continue. Among all the firm opinions, contradictions and conflicts, the following impressions were gleaned:

- Except for four high schools--Peguis, St. Laurent, Selkirk and one whose name we cannot mention--students were given very little latitude in managing and being responsible for student affairs, most especially social events. A little less direct control was exercised in operation of intro-mural sports programs, but even here the variation was extreme with no say on the one hand to virtually complete control on the other.
- Whether this situation is good or bad in adult eyes, students generally are resentful of the firm controls generally imposed on them. In those schools where control is "tight", the students are not only bitter, but seemingly reluctant to take on responsibility. When asked what projects other than dances they wanted to handle, there were few, if any alternative suggestions. Indicated as well was a situation where students in "tightly" run schools often defied authority by means of pranks, "to see how much we can get away with". In those high schools where students were trusted with more authority, defying the staff seemed less common. One could read the frustrations on the washroom walls. In the more open schools the graffiti was less evident than in the "tight" and thus "up-tight" schools.
- School teachers in some schools (where students had little responsibility) told of being caught in a dilemma. They reported that students showed little initiative to get involved in extra-curricular projects unless they were assured a teacher would be there to guide them along. Yet, when the "guiding along" was attempted, the teachers were accused of too much interfering. It was a case of "damned if you do and damned if you don't."
- Staff in one school said that the community was willing to provide community recreation facilities to students after school hours, if the teachers would act as chaperones. There was no offer on the part of parents to do the chaperoning. Yet, in another community, parents who volunteered as chaperones were told by the division administrator that their services were not wanted, nor was the event.
- Students did not have much to say about the relevance of school subjects. They just did not seem to feel strongly about the matter.
- While it seems contradictory, most student groups said that the adults in the community who most understand young people are their school teachers. They noted, of course, that some teachers were better in this respect than others.

● Both the young people and the adults seemed confused that a communications gap should exist, and certainly no one favored its existence. An impression was that, with only a little genuine effort on the part of both youth and adults much better communications could be restored.

Now I'm Asking

No more than 10 years ago, the big personal decisions a person had to make about life styles and relationships to others in society were made in the early adult years, usually after that person had graduated from school.

Today, after some pretty radical changes in values, attitudes, behaviors and, of course, in science, many of those decisions--or the "biggies" as Virginia Bilinsky, student guidance counsellor at the Selkirk High School calls them--are now having to be made by high school students.



Young people, according to Miss Bilinsky, are thus looking more and more for adult advice from persons who they both trust and respect and who have an understanding of the current social, moral and economic pressures being placed on young people. To be effective in this role, adults have to have the capability and patience to explore the problems with the young people and help each individual find his own best solutions. Simply telling them what's right and what's wrong or preaching to them turns critical young people off. Usually the adult cannot have a personal stake in the situation or the advice is suspect. That's why the schools are being considered as one source of counselling.

Guidance counselling in Interlake schools is highly variable, ranging from full-time involvement of two staff members of the Lord Selkirk Comprehensive High School to virtually no counselling at some other schools. In some schools, individual teachers who are sensitive to the students' needs will make genuine efforts to act as a responsible counsellor. These efforts are recognized and appreciated by the students. In smaller high schools, teacher-counsellors may be the best solution to the usual restrictions on numbers of staff. It will then be a matter of hiring teachers with real empathy for students and their problems. (In a few cases, teachers assigned as counsellors have lost the trust of students because these teachers have not kept the information confidential. To these students, this kind of teacher-counsellor is little more than a stooge of the administration.)

Vocational counselling, advising on a student's future job and career, is also highly variable although recognized by many adult taxpayers as being more "proper" and "important" than personal guidance. Miss Bilinsky insists that the two are rarely unrelated.

In all high schools, pamphlets, career booklets, university and community college bulletins, are available somewhere in the building--often in the library. Schools such as Fisher Branch Collegiate add to this by providing career guidance classes once a week. Several schools hold career days and attempt tours to Red River Community College and the University of Manitoba.

Dan McNeil, principal of Fisher Branch Collegiate suggests that, for individual schools, meaningful career days are hard to organize. It's just not possible to provide speakers and representatives who are knowledgeable on a wide variety of careers. He suggests that an Interlake Career Fair should be held in which all high schools in all divisions combine forces. Then spokesmen for many careers and occupations, and public relations people from several institutions and organizations could be present for that two or three-day period.

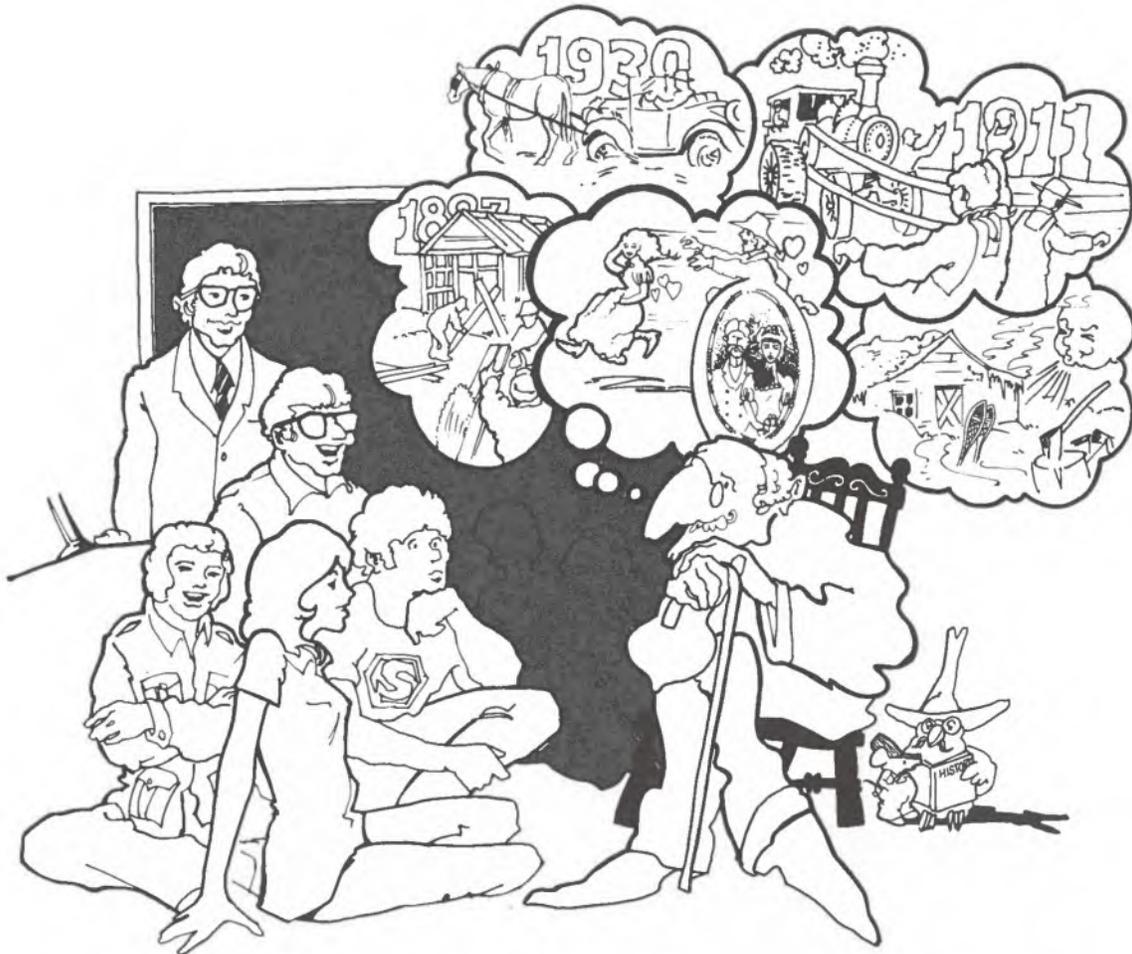
Student groups indicate that, except in the case of a few individual teacher's efforts, the attempts to offer advice on future jobs is not very effective. Few admit to reading the volumes of literature in the libraries. Most say they talk to former students about what they are doing and what it takes to train. They then copy these examples. Comments were also made that university was promoted rather heavily in the schools, even though students question the practical use of university these days.

Virginia Bilinsky pointed out that it is possible to unfairly influence a student's job decisions. At one time, representatives of Red River Community College and the University of Manitoba were highlighted separately at career days over two consecutive years. The year the Community College was featured more students enrolled there after graduation. The next year when the university was featured, more students registered for university.

"Career guidance is far from perfect," Miss Bilinsky said. "It simply lessens the tendency for a young person to get trapped in the wrong

career path by helping a student take a critical look at his or her aptitudes and desires."

School for Sharing



Many parents in the Interlake will heartily agree that efforts to consolidate schools and standardize the curriculum can go too far. In the extreme, these moves can lead to the schools becoming remote and confusing institutions somewhat set apart from the total community. As well, the course material being provided can be questioned in terms of its relevance to the environment of the students. Research into the learning process shows that information that is not relevant is either not learned or is simply memorized for the moment, then soon forgotten.

There's been much talk lately of "bringing schools back" into the community, although the meaning of this varies. So far, in many communities, the action taken has simply involved opening the school gyms

for evening activities (if a chaperone is present) and allowing adult groups to use classrooms and auditoriums after class hours. For the most part, the changes have been token steps and have not really resulted in any close integration of the school with the whole community.

A truly "community school" goes much further. It is a place where:

● Children learn the basic skills needed for interpretation of their environment and for adjustment to change through experiences provided by that environment.

● The school is a learning and recreational resource centre for the total community.

● The knowledge and skills of the adult community are brought in to aid the teacher in his task. (e.g. The pioneer in a history class, a conservation officer in the biology class.)

● Planning of parts of the curriculum, or at least in techniques of presentation, should involve parents and students plus local teachers.

Currently the Department of Education is attempting to meet some of these community school requirements through a new program called the Rural Education Alternatives Program. The program is available principally to residents of 15 rural school divisions where there exist a large number of small schools. Lakeshore and Evergreen Divisions are included on this list. Small schools are elementary schools of up to five classrooms and secondary schools of up to 10 classrooms.

The idea, to date, is to provide workshops with parents, citizens, school authorities, students and teachers to discuss and, eventually, try ways of making more local learning resources available to the students. In no way is the program designed to reopen small schools. Rather, the purpose is to help existing small schools become more viable by linking them to the resources of the community at large.

To date only one example is evident of how a school might benefit from the Rural Education Alternatives Program. That is at Ninette where parents have successfully halted the planned phase-out of their school by committing themselves to participating in its continuing operation. Community efforts have gone so far as:

- donating the kitchen in the rink for home economics classes;
- providing volunteers to work with the teachers in and outside the classrooms;
- direct assistance by businessmen in working with students enrolled in a business studies course;
- setting up a committee of townspeople and district farmers to work on new projects.

Community schools are thus a blend of modern teaching methods and basic rural learning processes of learning by doing. It is assumed that both adults and students will both be learning and that the school will no longer be a building apart where the kids are sent to blot up information of unknown value.

A School with a Difference

● The public address system cracked through the random chatter and the din of footsteps, to inform "the following ten students to call in at the office to pick up their photographs" and to announce the day's schedule of events. The female voice interrupting the bustle was clear and authoritative, suggesting that the exercise was a routine one. In fact, the exercise was routine, not only for Pat Faulkner, president of the student council, but for all other members of the council. After all, the council is responsible for student activities and informing the "electorate" is part of that responsibility.

● There are no ash trays evident in the principal's office. It's not just that he is a non-smoker, but also it's understood that there are places in the school where smoking is permitted during several time slots in a day. The teachers are not encouraged to take advantage of their status and smoke freely. Visitors and school division board members are also politely informed about the general rule. After all, if the students are asked to respect certain behavior, it would be hypocrisy for the adults to act otherwise.

● A parent was challenged to deny that his daughter and son were being ultimately spoiled by a "loose" school system where students are not controlled, where class attendance is a student-parent responsibility, where presence at school is not required between classes and where gyms, offices and classrooms are open from early morning to late night almost as a matter of course. He denied it. He also added, "Look, my kids get good grades, they like school, my son goes back at night for extra classes in extra subjects, both kids have helped organize pretty big events and they think of most of their teachers as trusted friends. Hell, if that's "loose" education, I'm for it."

● A notice in an adult education circular printed with the help of the local area development board appeared as follows:

WHY NOT RENT A SCHOOL?

Is your organization planning a meeting, a concert, or sports evening? Why not rent school facilities? Classrooms, gymnasium, playgrounds and school facilities are available for rental to community groups at reasonable rates--often at no cost. Your group can rent a classroom, a gym, or a whole school. And with a minimum of "red tape". For further information, call

● The day after Hallowe'en the student council met in emergency session and promptly agreed to rope off the "bear pit" or students' gathering area inside the school. The president announced on the public address system that the area would remain closed until candy wrappers and assorted litter were cleaned up. Two non-council members organized a cleanup between classes. The ropes remained in place for the rest of the day, however, as a warning that the area was the responsibility of the students and could be opened or closed by decision of the students. No teacher was directly involved in the episode.

The Lord Selkirk Comprehensive School is a unique community and not only by comparison to other Interlake schools. In the region, the only other high school organizations that remotely approach the Selkirk High in terms of attitude toward students and the community are at Peguis and St. Laurent.

The student council, in fact, does manage the student activities and chooses what activities will take place. Student funds are gathered and spent by the students through their council with no thought of getting permission from the administration. There are no teachers playing watchman in the halls in the morning, at noon and at recesses. Strangely enough, the walls are clean, the bathrooms remarkably free of graffiti, and the boys don't have great wrestling matches in the halls.

Student council spokesmen say quite seriously and in the absence of teachers that relations between students and staff are excellent. They worry more about student relations, although participation in a variety of sports, social and community activities is good.

One grade 10 student noted, "It's a shock to graduate from junior high into senior high and suddenly be expected to control our own affairs. At the outset, though, we're told about the general rules, and damn it! we try hard to respect them."

The rules, as outlined by principal Bill Regehr are as follows:

(a) This is an open campus which means you'll be treated as young adults responsible to yourselves for your own behavior. If you "blow it" it will be your reputation and your school's name that suffers--not the teachers, the school board or the Town of Selkirk.

(b) So long as you don't try to embarrass staff, the staff will support you in all your activities.

(c) You're expected to attend classes, but the school won't police you. If you miss five classes in a subject without good excuse, your parents will be informed. If you miss 11 classes with no excuse, no credits will be given for that course.

(d) Smoking is allowed in the school cafeteria during morning and afternoon breaks and at lunch time--after lunch is served.

Mr. Regehr says that the students learn to limit themselves and assume more and more responsibility as they gain in experience. He notes the example of last year's "Climax '73" a two-day festival of displays, demonstrations, tours, seminars and bear pit sessions on controversial topics entirely handled by the students. "We simply gave the kids the keys to the school and told them if we could help to let us know."

Lord Selkirk School Division superintendent, Arnold Minnish says the school is radical only in that the teaching staff, backed up by the division board, "believe in the dignity of youth and assume that high school students are near-adults and thus should be responsible for their own choices and actions."

"If school authorities, elected or hired, have a disrespect and fear of youth and they are afraid of a genuine one-to-one relationship because their own inadequacies may be exposed, they will react by repressing young people. Our teachers must accept the fact that they, too, are learners who do not have all the answers. The students are capable of helping teachers to learn even in a specialized subject area."

Selkirk students moved from a rigidly disciplined high school to the new composite high just over three years ago. In some respects fortune shone upon those who felt a new philosophy was needed. The new school was to be more than an academic institution. As well, it was supposed to be a community resource and a skills-training school. That's the happiest situation to have--to start from scratch with something not too many others know much about. The school board called upon the teachers to advise in designing the new building. The teachers recruited the students to help. As a result of travels, debate and studies of blueprints, not only a new kind of building was decided upon, but also a new way to run things was worked out.

Other Interlake divisions are about to construct new or enlarged high schools and to some extent may be able to take a fresh, critical look at the building, and the people who work and learn in it. The fact that Lord Selkirk Comprehensive School has 1,100 students and over 700 adult enrollees in evening classes, is not in itself an excuse to reject some of the Selkirk ways in smaller communities.

"It takes guts to change a school system," said Arnold Minnish. "Adults have to think about giving up some dearly-held attitudes like the master-servant relationship, the idea that a school should serve only a few, and the idea that the janitor runs the school. What really takes nerve is accepting, for awhile, some normal chaos without withering under the fire."

He adds, "The kids will come through. It's the adults who may not."

Recreation—What's the Score?

The heart and soul of a rural community are its social resources--the people of all ages who like to do things with others, the groups and organizations that plan and carry out social activities, and the facilities available for social events.

Ask any rural person what he likes best about his town or district, and you'll be told about the people who live there and the social gatherings they share. "People know each other," you're told, "and they do things together. No one's a stranger."

So what goes on in a community and how meaningfully everyone can take part, provides the stuff that leads to a special sort of loyalty and to a

greater or lesser degree of community spirit. Young people, too, have a personal stake in the social life, whether they intend to stay in the area or eventually move out. Their assessment of social activities and social opportunities is hardly novel, not entirely consistent, and often is not flattering.

With few exceptions, the feeling expressed by older teenagers interviewed for the Flyer could be summed up in the words, "There's nothing to do in this town unless....."

The "unlesses" included: "unless you get your kicks hanging around the cafe; unless you're good in hockey or baseball; unless the other kids come home from Winnipeg on weekends and get a party going; unless you're a boy; or unless a bunch of us can get together and drive into the 'city'."

Many adults would say and did say that the "nothing to do" complaint is hardly fair and simply shows a typical wish for an unreasonable variety of activities, readily available on demand. Those adults deeply involved in organizations providing some form of recreation were less charitable. "If some of the teenagers would get off their butts and get involved in organizing and running some things, they would find themselves too busy to complain."

Yet other adults said there was some truth in the young peoples' remarks, especially these ones:

● "There are things to do if you're a sports nut, but if you're not sports-minded you're pretty well left out."

● "Nobody asks us what kind of activities we want. The adults just organize the things they think we need or the things they want to get involved in and expect us to get with it and be happy."

● "There are hardly any young people on any of the committees that run things in this town. In fact, we don't think we would be welcomed if we tried to get elected to these committees."

In one of the communities where the last complaint was aired an adult reaction was: "In a small community, participation means that individuals must motivate themselves to seek out activities and to get involved. All organizations in this town, except a few with special qualifications for membership, are open to young people. At times young people have been named to committees and have not shown up, while for some groups there are no youth at the annual



organizing meetings. In a few cases, young people have been invited to serve on the executive and they have refused to get involved.

"I'll admit, though, that rarely have special steps been taken to reach out to young people on their terms."

As for the activities unrelated to sports, the situation in the Interlake is changing, as indeed it is throughout rural Manitoba. Perhaps today's young people will look back in disbelief three to five years from now and comment on how lucky the youth of that period are to have so many options so handily available. Part of the responsibility for ensuring that such a situation becomes reality rests with the young people of today who make their voices heard in the right places.

General interest courses ranging from creative crafts to skills training are currently being sponsored by area development boards and by some school divisions. Some restrict these courses to adults while others do not. The provincial government, through the Community Recreation Branch, is assisting in training of local instructors for many more recreation activities far removed from the organized sports categories. The community has to commit itself to supporting the trainees, so the local leaders must be sympathetic toward the need for better-organized activities and for more choice.

Discussions are underway between several provincial government departments to coordinate recreation programs so rural community residents will get a fairer break in terms of access to facilities and organization assistance.

Programs for summer activity for students, such as STEP and OFY projects, have proven their worth in the rural community as alternatives to young people wanting something to do during the "dead" period of July and August. Rural STEP crews broke down some generation barriers by proving they could work hard at jobs that adults don't relish. By far the majority of comments received from farmers who had STEP crews on their place this past summer were highly complimentary.

While the apparent scurry to provide rural communities with more alternatives to add to the lists of "things to do" will go some way in meeting the complaints of young people and reduce the differences between rural towns and the cities, much responsibility still rests with rural adults, and youth alike. Will new opportunities be available only as adults permit? Will the programs be run by adults alone? Will a mere addition of more social activities really strengthen the bonds between community groups or draw them further apart by straining the communities' social resources? Will young people truly involve themselves or is the complaint simply a reflection of restlessness that becomes resolved with age?



More than a Facelift

An old organization with a new face, a rehabilitated body and a hormone injection to enhance vigor may be one answer to many of the complaints expressed by Interlake youth about things to do in their communities and about sharing the job of planning activities.

The revitalized organization is intended to provide:

- Opportunities for young people to tackle relevant issues in rural communities;
- A means of exercising imagination, decision-making and organizing talents;
- A forum, outside the institutions, to share opinions and responsibilities with adults;
- An opportunity to learn new skills, socialize with their peers and have new experiences.

While it may be a surprise for some, the "new" organization is the Manitoba 4-H movement.

In the Interlake, the dynamics of the 4-H program have not been universally felt, although it is the one region of the province where membership has increased. So drastic are the changes being applied to the program that adult leaders and many rural extension staff are hardpressed to make personal adjustments. When one considers that 4-H in this province is 60 years old it is understandable that ways of doing things have become not only routine, but "proper" as well. Major changes in a short time can be upsetting.

Basically, the changes introduced are aimed at:

- Giving local people--leaders and members--more control on how the program is carried out locally;
- De-emphasizing the importance of the project as a task to be carried out according to a fixed routine;
- Emphasizing the opportunities for members to make decisions, to be trusted to carry out activities, to learn leadership, and to relate on a more equal basis with adults;
- De-emphasizing the old individual awards system that sets one member in competition with another and turns off those who are not in the top bracket in completion of their project. Rallies and achievement days are no longer considered essential.

One district where many of the changes in the 4-H program have been tried with reasonable success is in the Stonewall-Warren extension area. The program is largely run by an adult leaders' executive and a junior leaders' executive. The junior leaders are members of a senior 4-H club open to anyone over 15 years of age. The group does not focus around any one standard project but tackles projects that members choose (such as a conservation project) and organizes social events for its members. In fact, most of the organized social activities for the teenagers in the community are initiated by this club, since dances and parties cannot easily be organized within the high school.

Members told us that this is the one organization in the district where young people can "feel a sense of accomplishment and social responsibility."

As a result of efforts to update the 4-H program and make it meaningful to the present generation of youth, a number of broader projects have been added. Included among these are:

- A home-away-from-home project for members to confront adjustments to possible urban living;
- A proposed community study project to look into structure, function and importance of the rural community;
- A self-determined project for 4-H'ers over 14 years of age. The idea is to choose, organize and evaluate a project that is relevant to the members;
- A junior leader project emphasizing leadership skills and inter-personal relations;
- A proposed youth association program for older youth.

Other projects added in recent years are: home nursing, conservation, photography, power toboggan handling, mechanics, dog care and training, and hunter safety.

Along with this list are some more well-established projects that are periodically being updated. Included are: clothing, foods, crafts, home design, woodworking, electrical, beef, dairy calf, swine, light horse and pony, sugar beet, garden field crops and potato.

When questioned about the possible duplication of 4-H projects with other skills courses and activities now becoming widely available in rural communities, Orval Henderson, chief of the 4-H division pointed out that a healthy 4-H club offers more than learning technical skills. The project is simply the task focus and is no more important than the leadership skills and personal development exercises that should be part of the club's activities. He adds that members should not only help plan their projects, but also be involved in planning such things as camps, seminars, trips, and social events.

Jim Wade, the Interlake 4-H and youth specialist is one of a team of young adults coordinating Manitoba's 4-H program. Jim recognizes that the rapid changes in 4-H over the past five years have taken a toll. Adult leaders, accustomed to the once clear-cut, well-defined structure of 4-H clubs are wondering where it's all at and how they fit into the new system. It takes training and special qualities to be able to teach young people and, at the same time, learn from young people. "Putting themselves into a position of dealing with kids as equals can be frightening if you aren't used to it," he says. "That's why we are trying hard to offer training sessions where both adults, young junior leaders and members sit down together and work through a process of communication. A number of these sessions have been held and more are planned."

If 4-H can come through the trauma of a revitalization treatment, and can claim to be relevant to the critical, but capable young people in rural areas, it should be a strong social force for developing future leaders of the rural community. In terms of the stay option, 4-H has a vital role to play in the Interlake so long as young people and adults take an active part in keeping it in tune with the times.

Interlake Activities— Here's Where They're At

Even in small communities where it might appear that little goes on, a closer examination of social resources can provide some surprising results. With this in mind we have attempted to obtain some information that might be helpful to an Interlake resident--youth or adult--who is interested in getting involved in community activities.

Most young people interviewed said that, unless a person is sports-minded, there is little of interest available in a community. Certainly, sports dominate. Perhaps that's because the men of the community participate along with the boys. It seems, however, that sports do represent one type of activity in which age is not a particular barrier in communication.



Among the "newer" sports that are now being encouraged by the Community Recreation Branch of the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs are: canoeing, field hockey, sailing, lacrosse, rifle, rugger, wrestling, golf, table tennis, tennis, badminton, and judo. If such better established activities as gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, swimming and track and field are not currently organized in a community, assistance will be given to train instructors.

For those less sports-minded, or more than sports-minded, the Community Recreation Branch instructors assistance program also supports these social and creative activities (if they are not now organized): macrame,



sewing, nature crafts, music (bands), print making, Ukrainian dancing, pottery, yoga, ceramics, tap dancing, baton twirling, interior design, gourmet cooking, bead and leather work, and creative writing. Your Community Recreation Committee or recreation coordinator may apply to:

Community Recreation Branch
3rd Floor, 189 Evanson St.
WINNIPEG, Man. R3G 0N9.

Within the Interlake, there are already a large number of trained instructors in recreation activities. Gerry Maurice of the Community Recreation Branch provided a list of those who attended special sessions at the Leadership

Training Centre in Gimli over the past three years. The list does not include those people who participated in local clinics, nor can it be expected that all the persons named are still in their communities today. These people have taken the courses on the assumption they are available in their communities to instruct others.

Arts and Crafts I - 1972

Helen Berheim	Selkirk
Peter Myska	Pineimuta
Cathy Scraba	Matlock
Glenys Dubowski	Selkirk
Janice Barrie	Gypsumville
Gwen Tronrud	Inwood
Charlotte Berg	Inwood
Lois Metner	Moosehorn
Clara Grahn	Moosehorn
Winnie Jonason	Arborg

Drama I - 1972

Douglas Whittingham	Hodgson
Annabella Whittingham	Hodgson

Ukrainian Language Camp - 1972

Veronica Prystupa	Gimli
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Creative Arts Week - 1972

Marguerite Horner	Selkirk
Dora Osterbeck	Eriksdale
Susan Stefansson	Lundar

Creative Arts Week - 1973

Sandra Clayton	Selkirk
Gwen Falk	Eriksdale
Wayne Govereau	Koostatak
Mavis Rawluk	Eriksdale
Cathy Richard	Stony Mountain
Cathy Scraba	Matlock

Summer Leaders' Course - 1972

Lorraine Foster	Petersfield
Rosemarie Schilling	Selkirk

Provincial Recreation Conference - 1972

W. McGillvray	Stonewall
Gordon Lockhard	Stonewall
Ron Chekosky	Poplarfield
Rita Beczewicz	Selkirk
Edgar Taylor	Selkirk
Lorne Hasinoff	Eriksdale
Vern Desmet	Selkirk

Recreation Leaders' Course - 1972

Lorraine Monkman	Vogar
Yvette Dubuc	Vogar
Beverley Paul	Vogar

Refrigeration Course - 1972

S. Erickson	Gimli
Eddie Gudmundson	Arborg

Provincial Sports Schools - 1972

Marg Balcaen	Selkirk
Kathy Kindrat	Selkirk

Sailing Instructors School - 1972

Hart Macklin	Gimli
John Senow	Gimli
Shelley Senow	Gimli

Gymnastic Camp - 1972

Ting Lee	Selkirk
Michael Dubois	Gimli
Steven Gilroy	Gimli
Ron Bahaud	Gimli

Gymnastic Camp - 1973

Bonny Bahuaud	Gimli
Louise Valgardson	Gimli
Wanda Dawson	Gimli
Terry Larlham	Gimli

Provincial Sailing School - 1973

Murray Reimer	Camp Arnes
Kimberly Chudd	Gimli
Robert Hitesman	Arnes

Summer Leaders' Course - 1973

Greg Kelner	Winnipeg Beach
Craig Comack	Winnipeg Beach
Tim Nicholson	Winnipeg Beach
Norman Nikkel	Clarkleigh

Provincial Recreation Conference - 1973

Tom Harrison	Winnipeg Beach
Wendy MacDonald	Winnipeg Beach
Joanne Warwick	Winnipeg Beach
John Chalaturnyk	Gimli
John Haas	Gimli
Barry Wherrett	Selkirk
Vern Desmet	Selkirk
Edgar Taylor	Selkirk
Joe Tergeson	Arbrog
Gordon Podalas	Stony Mountain

Figure Skating Judges Clinic - 1973

Jo-Ann Campbell	Stonewall
Lynn Wengoski	Stonewall
Betty Morgan	Stonewall
Bette Sigurdson	Stonewall
Muriel Lillies	Stonewall
Dawn Oliver	Selkirk
Betty-Anne Wilkinson	Selkirk
Dora Friofinsson	Arborg
Clara Smith	Arborg
Gertrude Miller	Eriksdale
Marge Kaartinew	Eriksdale
Helen Malcolm	Lundar

Figure Skating Instructors - 1973

Lyla Neal	Inwood
Shelley Price	Ashern
Jolana Obelnicki	Fisher Br.
Kelly Copeland	Ashern
Susan Malkoske	Ashern
Cindy McKay	Ashern
Diane Bazinet	Eriksdale
Dawn Kindzierski	Arborg
Beverley Vandersteen	Fisher Br.
Sherryl Boyd	Fisher Br.
Brenda Sigurdson	Riverton
Maureen Vandersteen	Fisher Br.
Brenda Shepell	Stony Mtn.
Janice Benedictson	Riverton
Cheryl Ostertag	Riverton
Audrey Mallon	Stony Mtn.
Donna Newton	Stony Mtn.
Edna McNabb	Warren
Shelly Duncan	Eriksdale
Norma Greenham	Clarkleigh
Cindy Twersky	Camper
Barbara Blue	Eriksdale
Elizabeth Bazinet	Eriksdale
Joyce Erickson	Lundar
Kim Malcalm	Lundar
Connie Bergthorson	Lundar
Cindy Sigurdson	Lundar
Michelle Gibbings	Eriksdale
Maureen Sigurdson	Arborg
Lynn Isbister	Stonewall
Jennifer Fridfinnson	Arborg
Wendy Whall	Selkirk
Lesli-Lea Oliver	Selkirk
Karen Sigvaldason	Arborg
Wanda Finnson	Arborg
Sharon Croy	Inwood
Gayle Miskiewicz	Stonewall
Yvonne Walsh	Teulon
Heather Campbell	Teulon
Lorna Hoey	Teulon
Karen Burton	Balmoral
Debbie Bloodworth	Teulon
Kathryn Kitching	Inwood
Beverley Arnason	Gimli
Valerie Magnusson	Gimli
Constance Thordarson	Gimli
Jo-Ann Magnusson	Gimli
Liane Wlosek	Gimli
Wanda Josephson	Gimli

(Cont'd on next page)

Rita Wilkinson	Selkirk
Betty-Ann Wilkinson	Selkirk
Ardith Kerntoph	Ashern
Alice Buizer	Selkirk
Kathy Chudy	Fisher Br.
Shannon Gard	Fisher Br.

Diane Grenkow	Stonewall
Joyce Johnson	Grand Rapids
Adele Mecredie	Grand Rapids
Wanda Korpan	Ashern
Sandra Foster	Clandeboye
Janet Cain	Winnipeg Beach
Jonina Johnson	Riverton
Debbie Blanchard	Riverton
Linda Thomas	Gimli
Darlene Demchuck	Gimli
Kathy Rudolph	Gimli
Lillian Solmundson	Gimli
Robin Dowsett	Eriksdale
Andrea Fairbairn	Eriksdale

Youth Leaders' Course - 1971

Pat McQuire	Stonewall
Barbara Wiens	Selkirk
Judy Furness	Stonewall

(Cont'd next column)

The Research and Planning Branch of the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs has conducted surveys in all regional development corporation regions to find out what recreational facilities exist. Most communities in the Interlake were included in the surveys in 1971 and 1972 although a few communities with limited facilities are not accounted for. The Interlake Region has the second lowest number of facilities inventoried.

The breakdown is as follows--
(facilities outside of townsites are not included).

ARBORG

- 1 arena
- 1 curling rink (4 sheets)
- 2 gyms
- 1 indoor theatre
- 1 billiard hall
- 2 tennis courts
- 4 playing fields/playgrounds
- 6 halls

ASHERN

- 1 arena
- 1 curling rink (6 sheets)
- 1 gym
- 1 indoor theatre
- 1 billiard hall



Ashern Cont'd

- 3 playing fields/playgrounds
- 1 rifle range
- 4 halls

CLANDEBOYE

- 1 outdoor rink
- 1 gym
- 2 playing fields/playgrounds
- 1 hall

ERIKSDALE

- 1 arena
- 1 curling rink (3 sheets)
- 1 gym

Eriksdale Cont'd

1 indoor theatre (Orange Hall equipped)
2 billiard halls
3 playing fields/playgrounds
2 halls

FAIRFORD RESERVE

1 outdoor rink
1 band hall
1 billiard hall
1 gym
1 library
4 playing fields/playgrounds

FISHER BRANCH

1 arena
1 curling rink (4 sheets)
2 gyms
1 indoor theatre
1 billiard hall
3 playing fields/playgrounds
3 halls

GIMLI (Including Industrial Park)

1 arena (artificial ice)
3 curling rinks (1 artificial ice)
1 indoor theatre
3 gyms
1 outdoor running track
3 tennis courts
9 playing fields/playgrounds
9 halls
1 golf course (9-hole)
1 swimming pool (indoor)
1 race track (cars and motorcycles)

GYPSUMVILLE

1 outdoor rink
3 playing fields/playgrounds
2 halls

HODGSON

1 curling rink (2 sheets)
1 outdoor rink
1 indoor rink
2 playing fields/playgrounds
1 billiard hall
1 hall

INWOOD

1 arena
1 curling rink (2 sheets)
3 sports fields
3 halls

LAKE MANITOBA RESERVE

1 band hall
1 hockey rink (outdoor)
4 playing fields/playgrounds
1 billiard hall
1 beach

LAKE ST. MARTIN RESERVE

1 band hall
1 outdoor rink
4 playing fields/playgrounds
1 beach

LITTLE SASKATCHEWAN RESERVE

1 band hall
1 billiard hall
3 ball diamonds
1 beach

LOCKPORT

1 outdoor rink
2 playing fields/playgrounds
1 billiard hall
2 halls

LUNDAR

1 arena
1 curling rink
2 playing fields/playgrounds
1 gym
4 halls

MARQUETTE

1 curling rink (2 sheets)

MATLOCK-WHYTEWOLD

1 outdoor rink
2 playing fields/playgrounds
1 tennis court
2 halls

MOOSEHORN

1 curling rink (2 sheets)
1 outdoor rink
1 gym
3 playing fields/playgrounds
1 billiard hall
7 halls

NETLEY

1 outdoor rink
1 playing field/playground
2 halls

OAK POINT

1 curling rink (5 sheets)
1 outdoor rink
2 playing fields/playgrounds
1 racing track (horses)
1 hall

PEGUIS RESERVE

1 arena
1 outdoor rink
1 band hall
1 library
1 gym
1 billiard hall
1 park
3 playing fields/playgrounds

PETERSFIELD

1 curling rink (3 sheets)
1 hall
1 playing field/playground

POPLARFIELD

1 playing field/playground
4 halls

RIVERTON

1 arena
1 curling rink
2 gyms

Riverton Cont'd

1 indoor theatre
1 shooting range
3 playing fields/playgrounds
4 halls

ROSSER

1 curling rink
1 hall
1 golf course (in R.M.)

ST. ANDREWS--LITTLE BRITAIN

1 outdoor rink
1 gym
2 playing fields/playgrounds
5 halls

ST. LAURENT

1 outdoor rink
1 gym
3 playing fields/playgrounds
5 halls

SANDY HOOK

1 golf course
1 playing field
2 halls

SELKIRK

1 arena (artificial ice)
1 curling rink (6 sheets)
2 indoor theatres (includes one
in the High School)
1 bowling establishment
1 rifle range
5 gyms
2 outdoor rinks
2 running tracks
2 billiard halls
1 golf course
1 outdoor swimming pool
11 playing fields/playgrounds
19 halls

STEEP ROCK

1 curling rink (2 sheets)
2 playing fields/playgrounds
2 halls

STONEWALL

1 arena (artificial ice)
1 curling rink (4 sheets)
1 indoor theatre
1 bowling establishment
2 gyms
10 playing fields/playgrounds
1 swimming pool (outdoor)
1 golf course
1 running track (outdoor)
2 tennis courts
1 racing track (horses)
6 halls

STONY MOUNTAIN

1 arena
1 curling rink (3 sheets)
1 billiard hall
1 ski resort
1 swimming pool
3 playing fields/playgrounds
5 halls

TEULON

1 arena
1 curling rink (4 sheets)
2 gyms
4 playing fields/playgrounds
1 golf course
6 halls

VOGAR

1 outdoor rink
3 playing fields/playgrounds
1 billiard hall
2 halls

WARREN

1 arena
1 curling rink (3 sheets)
2 gyms
2 playing fields/playgrounds
3 halls

WINNIPEG BEACH

1 curling rink (4 sheets)
2 outdoor rinks
9 tennis courts
3 playing fields/playgrounds
1 golf course
1 hall

WOODLANDS

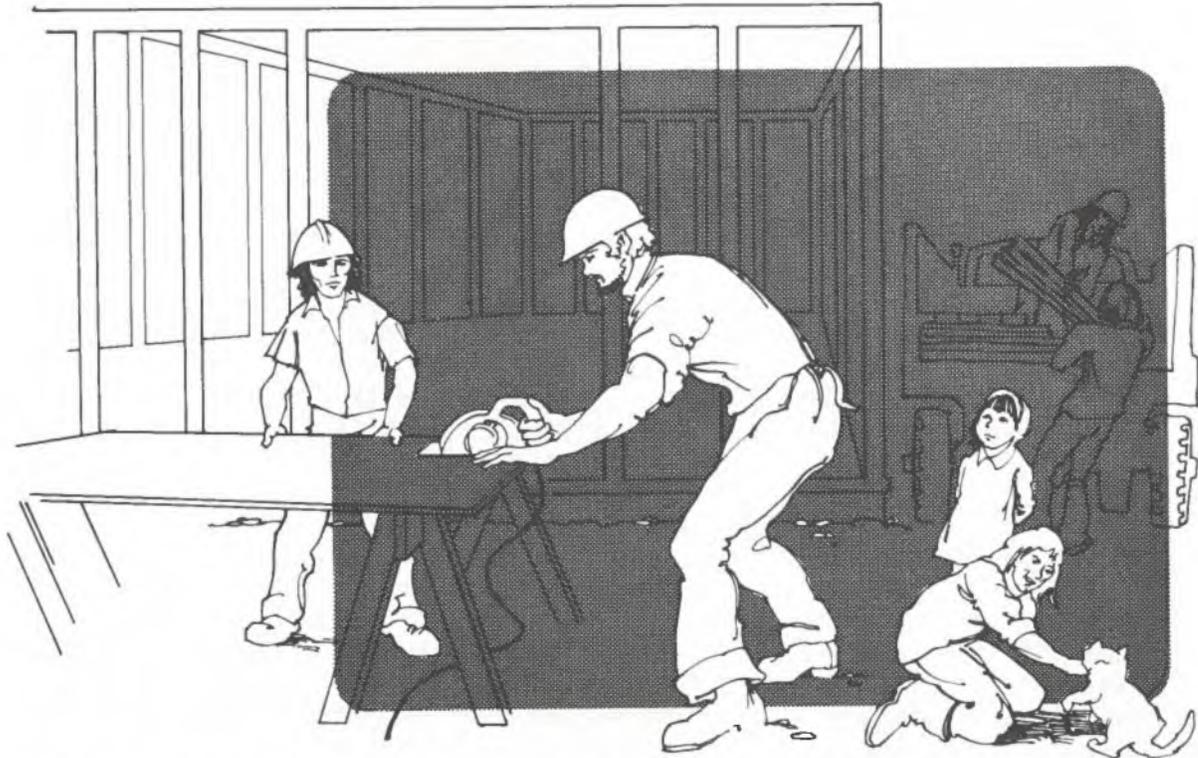
2 outdoor rinks
1 curling rink (2 sheets)
2 playing fields
2 halls

Along with these facilities, the Interlake also has:

36 picnic areas and waysides
66 docks and 11 launch ramps
7 public campgrounds
19 private campgrounds
13 summer camps
16 beaches
12 licensed dining rooms
25 licensed restaurants
33 beverage rooms
10 cocktail lounges

Maintaining all these facilities are literally hundreds of associations, societies, church groups, service clubs, and social groups, most of which are open to young people in both an active and passive way.

Metis Youth—The Non-Gap Society?



"Sure I'd rather stay here. I'm making less money than I was in the city but I'd rather live in St. Laurent and work for these wages than work in the city and make big money. I'd say 100 percent of the people working here in St. Laurent today have worked in the city at one time and have come back." That's how one young Metis Manpower Corpsman working on the MHRC housing project explains why he returned to his hometown.

Interlake Metis youth from Vogar down to St. Laurent and Selkirk up to Riverton express similar sentiments. Vogar, a Metis community of 160 in the northwest corner of the region probably best exemplifies this attitude. Employment has increased substantially in the last couple of years but living conditions have not really changed. Although housing is still inadequate and the only source of water is still the school well, young people in Vogar seem to prefer the security and familiarity of their hometown over the modern conveniences available in Winnipeg and other large towns in the region. Vogar men who work in Ashern commute daily and construction crews from Vogar that range as far as Neepawa and Dauphin return every weekend to be with friends and family. Although unique in many ways, Vogar does typify the strong family and community ties found in Metis settlements.

Lloyd Peltier, chairman of the Vogar MMF, feels that this close relationship between individuals allows young people to become easily accepted into the community, a situation seldom found in non-Metis towns. When

adults and young people live and work in close proximity, they come to know each other better and share common attitudes--the "generation gap" diminishes and adults are more willing to listen to young people. The move from the world of a school kid into the world of an adult is less traumatic if it comes slowly and naturally. The transition begins when the two age groups are able to communicate freely and adults are willing to let young people assume responsibility for and have authority over certain community functions. It would appear that young people have a greater desire to remain in and work for a hometown where they have been accepted by adults and allowed an equal say in matters. There are 20 MMF locals in the Interlake and all have young people on their governing boards. Similar involvement is not as obvious on committees and boards in non-Metis communities.

There are certain problems, however, that are shared by all Interlake youth. The need for organized recreation and local employment is as obvious in Metis communities as it is anywhere in the Interlake. While the employment problem most directly affects those males who are beyond school age, the need for recreation affects both boys and girls from the primary grades right on up through adulthood.

Willy Dumont, community affairs worker for the St. Laurent area, feels that lack of recreational facilities and organizations is presently the biggest problem in the area. Noting that St. Laurent fields four ball teams in the summer but has very little in the line of winter recreation, Willy tells us, "There's a lot of drinking and car accidents in the winter...in the summer it's not as bad. If we get our rink built it should help a lot."

Is excessive drinking by young people a result of their having no recreational outlet or are there no recreational organizations because too many young people use up too much of their mental and physical resources at the pub? There is no clear answer to the question and young people themselves often replied that they sit in the pub on weekends because it's easier than trying to get anything else going. Which-ever the case may be, it seems that communities with well-organized recreational programs experience less drinking and driving, crime and vandalism problems.

There are, however, notable examples of young people taking the initiative to organize recreational activities. The Selkirk MMF, for instance, has an active teen club, pow-wow group, and travelling basketball, baseball, and hockey teams--all organized and run by young people.

Murray Sinclair, former Interlake vice-president of the MMF, feels that youth involvement in the Selkirk area is higher than in other communities because the overall housing, employment, and education situation is better. Although recreation is the obvious need for most Metis communities, many people feel a stronger local economy may be a necessary prerequisite. While youth involvement in the Selkirk MMF provides a good example of this, a situation in Vogar last winter tends to point out that when a community's desire for recreation is strong enough, goals can be met.

Young people in Vogar complained last winter that maximum use of their new outdoor hockey rink was difficult because there was no lighting. When attempts at getting lighting facilities through government programs failed, those men in the community who were employed made contributions to a fund and the necessary lighting equipment was obtained.

While most of the concerns voiced by Metis youth were similar to the concerns of young people in any rural area, there was a stronger and more conscious desire to remain in the town that is considered home.

Indian Youth—A Separate Situation?

"There's lots of things we're trying to change on the reserve here that affect the young people...housing, jobs for people, and the schools... but recreation is the main thing. When we started building the hockey rink there were several people opposed to it but now they see the benefit of recreation. We're setting up a park and a playground on the reserve pretty soon. There never was any kind of a playground here before except for the three baseball diamonds. The thing that we need the most, though, is to hire a full-time, year-round recreational director instead of just a winter director." Alvin Thompson, 19 year-old band administrator for the Fairford Indian Reserve feels that recreation is vitally important to the well-being of any community. He points out that it's the lack of employment possibilities and adequate housing that often causes young people to leave the reserve, but when they are home, it's the lack of organized recreation that's the big issue.



As with most reserves, Alvin adds, approximately 20 percent of the population is gone at any one time but most of the absentees are only temporary. Those who remain often find that either the facilities for recreation are unavailable or the necessary leadership and organization doesn't exist. There usually isn't any form of recreation on a day-to-day basis, such as can be found in the city, and organized baseball teams and hockey teams are only active during the summer and winter. "There was lots of turmoil here last spring concerning the elections. As soon

as baseball season started the trouble subsided. I think if we had something else going on at that time there wouldn't have been any trouble."

When something worthwhile is happening, youth enthusiasm is generally high. Students and supervisors alike agree that this summer's OFY and Recreation and Learning projects on the Lake St. Martin, Little Saskatchewan, and Peguis Reserves were successful. Building playgrounds, painting and running day-care centres are some of the activities that can turn a potentially wasted summer into a worthwhile personal experience as well as provide a summer source of income for students. When nothing is happening, the temptation can be high to sniff glue or gasoline, try to find some liquor or hitchhike into Winnipeg to look for some action. Although all the young people interviewed stated that such habits are harmful and should be avoided, many students throughout the region admitted that they know kids who do indulge in such activities.

The problem of recreation isn't unique to the reserves--it's a concern of young people throughout the Interlake and the rest of rural Manitoba. There are a number of problems facing Indian youth, however, that are unique. Of immediate concern to school-age kids is the fact that if they want to finish grade 12, they're forced to leave home and go to a strange town for two years. The task of adjusting to a new society with different traditions and standards is a difficult one and the toll it takes in terms of dropouts is high. Most of the young adults interviewed felt that if they had the opportunity to finish school on the reserve, they would have had little problem completing grade 12.

Many of the grade nine and ten students expressed a reluctance to go to Winnipeg or even to a nearby town to finish school. In addition to having to leave friends and family, discrimination was mentioned as a factor in not wanting to go out to school.

Language is another concern that is unique to Indian youth. Until recently, native languages were discouraged in the schools. Many Indian students grew up speaking only English. Laura Wasacase, Indian Affairs social counsellor stationed at Ashern, explains that modern educators now realize the value of incorporating native language and native culture into Indian schools. "Language is important--if you lose your language you lose part of yourself. I think it's really possible that Indian youth can grow up with Indian identity and native pride and still gain a good education and be economically integrated into the society. For instance, a native language program was introduced at Fisher River this year and the results are encouraging--little kids want to go to school, especially on the days when they have their Cree lessons." The education situation is improving and many people are talking about a way to bring grades 11 and 12 to reserve schools.

The problem goes beyond the education system, however. Finding a job, becoming economically integrated into society, is the problem that faces the young Indian man or woman who does finish grade 12 as well as those who didn't go so far in school. A youth migration survey of three Interlake towns this fall reveals that only 15 percent of those young people who were leaving were doing so because they couldn't find any type

of employment. Compare that with the fact that nearly all of the young people who leave reserves do so because they can't find a job. Employment opportunities that may enable white youth to remain in their hometown are virtually non-existent for Indian youth. Although most reserves are attempting to establish industries or other regular sources of employment, the need is great and it will likely be some time before it can be met. Alvin Thompson estimates that between 100 and 150 jobs would be required to meet the demand for employment just on the Fairford Reserve. A very basic problem facing Indian youth in the region is the economic reality that an adequate number of jobs are not available and if a person wants to earn a regular income, the only practical means is to leave the reserve.

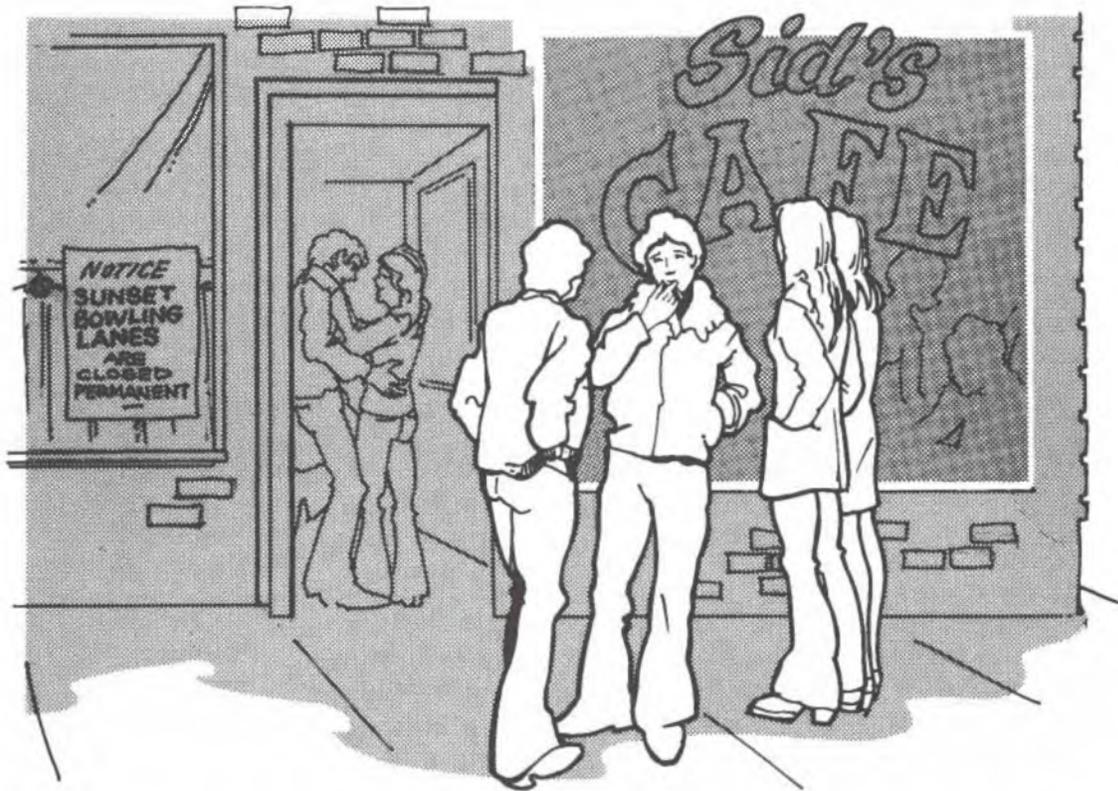
Housing is another factor that may be responsible for the winter depopulation of Indian reserves. Crowded housing and a lack of modern conveniences isn't so bad during the warm months, but when the Manitoba winter sets in, the temptation to move to Winnipeg can be strong.

Older Youth—Caught in the Middle?

"I've got an office job with the government during the day. In the evening I work here in the pub, mainly just because I like it....I'm just about the last one left from my high school class. The others have moved away and the few that are still here are married and live on farms... No, I wouldn't want to move away. I'm happy here in Riverton but I just wish there was something else to do evenings." A young lady from a northern Interlake community explains that she's one of the lucky ones to land a good job in her hometown. Most of Pat's friends in the 18 to 24 age bracket, however, now have Winnipeg phone numbers and addresses. But even the majority of those in Winnipeg still consider themselves to be Interlakers and they point to the fact they return "home" at least once a month. The situation is typical.

If the Interlake is still home, why do they leave? A recent survey indicates that almost half will leave to continue their education, either at a technical school or at university and when their education is complete they will become permanent Winnipeg residents. The next biggest factor is that young people can't find the type of career they want or make as high an income if they stay in their hometown. A few indicated that there was absolutely no type of job available, no recreation available or that they were leaving because their friends had all left. We encountered no Interlakers in the 18 to 24 age bracket who expressed an actual dislike for the region and most people agreed that they'd prefer to live in their hometown, in another Interlake town or, at least, in some other town in rural Manitoba. Few actually wanted to live in Winnipeg. Although most of the regular weekend returners are students and single people, many young married couples also come home regularly on weekends until their own family obligations become too heavy.

What are the concerns of those who did stay in the region? Recreation, again, is the most obvious need and is always the first problem to be mentioned by any group. Older youth, however, seem to be more aware of what is available in their local area and their complaints zero in on the lack of organized activities in the spring and fall and the lack of regular daily recreation available.



Many people in this age group are working full-time and raising families and say that they don't have all that much time for recreation. They would appreciate more day-to-day recreational facilities, such as seven-day movie theatres or bowling allies, that they could conveniently fit into their time schedules. Pool hall and pub operators in the region note that a portion of their regular clientele consists of young married couples.

Farmers in the 18 to 24 age bracket had absolutely no complaint about being bored in the spring and fall and expressed less dissatisfaction with the recreation situation than did the young town dwellers. They pointed out that, like the married couples, they couldn't always allocate time for the various scheduled events and activities that take place and what recreation they did engage in couldn't always be planned in advance. Again, the need for some sort of regular, daily recreational service was expressed.

Many of the young farmers felt that they weren't as much a part of the community as the town dwellers and they point to the school bussing

situation as evidence. One young man recalled that while in high school, he averaged 14 hours per week on the bus. By the time he got home in the evening and finished his chores, there wasn't time to go back to town to take part in any extra-curricular activities. The recreational opportunity often times did exist but he couldn't take advantage of it. The same problem exists on weekends and during the summer for many high school age farmers and their older sisters and brothers. Although most of the young farmers expressed regret that they hadn't been able to take greater advantage of school-related activities, everyone seemed to accept the fact that the distance and transportation factors were responsible. One young man, who figured he'd eventually take over the family farm, said "I don't think farm kids feel as attached to this region as the town kids do. The town people are always getting together for one thing or another it seems. That's why, when the older kids left the farm, they were happier in Winnipeg."

Many young Interlakers, farmers and town people alike, felt that their high school education was not very relevant to their present situation. The general feeling was that the curriculum was geared to those students who were leaving to go to university and those people who intended to remain were ignored by the system. Great emphasis was placed on academics and university entrance and little attention was ever paid to such areas as vocational training, local government and economics, guidance counselling and personality development, sex education and even personal budgeting. While some Interlake high school principals are now talking about expanding the curriculums to perhaps include courses in agriculture, environmental management or auto mechanics, other principals still talk proudly of how many "good students we send to the city each year."

The comments of a young man in St. Laurent are typical of many from all over the region. "It wasn't really relevant. Maybe instead of reading about China we should have studied something about our local governments and problems and then the provincial ones and then work out from there. It seems they tried to teach us how to build the rafters before we knew how to make the foundation." Yvonne Dumont continues and talks about why he didn't finish grade 12. "Those social animation seminars a few years ago accomplished more and were more educational than all the grade 11 and 12 stuff you can ever learn...we learned about ourselves and the people around us. But you know, student council is one of the good things in a school. Young people can learn something about how to run meetings and things and learn about responsibility and how to get things done. A lot of old people say they don't want young people around when they're conducting business and at meetings because young people don't know anything. Maybe if we'd learned something more worthwhile in school, then they couldn't say that about us." A young lady from Arborg put it even more bluntly when she said "We never learned to be leaders, just followers. Somebody else is supposed to do the leading."

There are a number of adults who feel pretty strongly that young people should be seen and not heard. An established businessman in one Interlake town stated, "...That's right, we don't want kids around trying to take things over. They don't know bugger all about how to run things. A guy's still wet behind the ears till he's at least 30 or 40. After that maybe he's got something to say, but maybe not."

When councils, committees and boards ignore young input the resentment only builds up on both sides. One young man just out of grade 12 put it this way. "There's no sense staying here, sitting around and talking about what should be done when nothing happens. They don't even listen to us. They'll spend \$10,000 of the town's money putting up that useless structure and won't bother spending \$500 for some kind of recreational facility. The wildlife federation's just as bad when it comes to that drainage project. They'd just as soon sit back and watch the country get sold out."

One group of young people interviewed suggested that the problem is communications and it's a mutual responsibility for young and old. Although they admit that all the positions of authority in the local governing body and in various local social organizations in the community are held by older people, they point to projects and committees in their own town and other Interlake towns where all age groups seem to work well together.

Herb Taylor, secretary for Winnipeg Beach's "Wonderful Winter Weekend," tells us "In the last little while the young people have been helping quite a lot....taking charge of the dog sled races, the snowmobile races and things. Out of the 18 main organizers, I think almost half a dozen of them are younger people."

John Stefanson, a 21-year old beef farmer from the Lundar area who works the home farm with his father, was recently elected as a councillor to the R. M. of Coldwell. John, the youngest councillor in the region, says "I don't see that there's anything different that I'll be doing from any other councillor. I'm just younger, that's all."

Still, those who claim that young people don't have a voice actually do have a point, especially in light of this age breakdown of the 94 rural village and town councillors in the region:

18 - 30 years	1	(1%)	40 - 50 years	31	(33%)
30 - 40 years	18	(19%)	50 years +	45	(48%)

The 18 to 30 age group makes up over 20 percent of the Interlake population.

One nagging concern was brought up by several groups from student councils to married couples--a shortage of available housing. A young man from Ashern told us, "I'd be a lot more likely to stay in the area if there was some way I could rent an apartment or something. There's not many guys my age that can afford to go and buy even an old house. A person should have the opportunity to live on his own if he wants to. There's a lot of people thinking about getting married, I bet, and they don't even know where they'd live except with the folks. Either that or move to Winnipeg."

We're Willing, But....



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One of the main underlying causes of the discontent expressed by young people in the Interlake is lack of tangible influence on the decisions that are made concerning their lives.

Whether one is discussing school, recreation, 4-H clubs or local government, the same complaint is voiced one way or another. Certainly this is not a situation confined to youth, as adults often mention the same frustration. The difference lies in the ability of adults, if they are

so inclined, to express their opinions and concerns to those who make the decisions or to get involved in the decision-making process. Young people feel they are not yet recognized as people who should be listened to, nor would they be accepted if they tried to join the decision-making groups in their communities.

No doubt some examples could be and have been cited to show that Interlake youth are in fact involved in running things, and a number of reasons could be and have been expressed on why involvement is not greater. Yet the fact remains that a large percentage of young people from several different communities talking on several different subjects expressed the same frustration.

In the school system, the general situation appears to be one of allowing students the forms of democracy in the guise of student councils. Yet authority, which is also part of democracy, was in all but four cases looked into, denied to the students. They weren't fooled into believing they made and were responsible for their decisions.

Members of 4-H clubs, except for the Junior 4-H Leaders' Association in the Stonewall district said that, the structure of their clubs was such that the adult leaders had final say in decisions and, in fact, played an active role in establishing what decisions could be made. A common reaction has been to drop out of 4-H after a few seasons and label the 4-H program as "sissy."

Most boys and some girls are very active in sports in their communities--as participants. Cases of actual involvement in running the hockey and baseball, for example, in conjunction with adults were the exception. In sports, however, the frustrations were said to be not as great, since there were more opportunities to express opinions to adults and to be tolerated for having opinions--especially if the player was reasonably skilled in the sport.

Other social and recreational groups did not seem to provide the same forum for involvement in decision-making as the sports teams. Adults did say that most groups were open to youth if they would come forward prepared to accept leadership roles.

Formal organizations, such as local governments of quasi-government boards (school division boards, health services and hospital boards, and LGD advisory committees) were of direct interest to young adults, but not to those youth under 18 years of age. Students in some schools still expressed resentment that decisions were made by these governing bodies that affected young people, yet no prior efforts were made toward consultation. There is, of course, no reason why an 18-year old cannot run for a local government body, but there may be a real problem for such a person being considered mature enough to attract many votes. In reality, few adults in their late teens or 20's run for office because they are more concerned with establishing themselves in their occupations or homes, or are involved in organized sports.

Six years ago Interlake adults were angered by arbitrary establishment of school division boundaries at a time when other Manitobans were allowed to vote on the issue. The frustration of having no opportunity to express their acceptance or rejection of the new districts sparked many an angry debate not for months, but for years. Residents who recall this situation may be able to be sensitive to the current feelings of many young people. It would appear that few young people are prepared to radically change things if they were given an effective voice or a responsible role in the affairs of their communities. It's the fact that they are seemingly bypassed that bothers them most.

Stay or Leave—Is There an Option?



So what does all this mean to Interlakers? It means, simply, that young people are attached to the Interlake Region and they want to stay. They want to stay, but they see that many of their personal needs won't be fulfilled if they do.

Approximately two-thirds of the grade 12 students plan to leave their hometown when they graduate, almost a third are undecided about where they'll live in the future and only less than ten percent say they expect to stay. Those are the results of a Youth Migration Survey taken in the Evergreen School Division last June through

the Regional Analysis Program of the provincial government in cooperation with the Interlake Development Corporation. The specific reasons for leaving include: "I expect to continue my education at a technical college or at university"; "I will not be able to find the type of job I want in my home locality"; or, "I expect I could earn a higher income in some other place." It's worth noting that in Riverton and Arborg the percentage of those who would leave is higher and employment (jobs or careers) was a much greater consideration than in the semi-industrialized town of Gimli. The underlying factor is economic--rural Manitoba produces more people than it can support.

In its recently published "Guidelines For The Seventies," the Manitoba Government introduced and defined Stay Option: "The Rural Stay Option represents an attempt by this Government to provide people with the opportunity to live and work without disadvantage in the particular region of the province in which they have their roots. Based on a

revitalized agricultural sector, the Stay Option in rural Manitoba will mean that economic and social opportunity must be provided to rural Manitobans to enable them to live and work in their region of the province."

Farming being the primary source of income to rural areas, the Manitoba Department of Agriculture has applied itself to the implementation of several programs that are in direct support of the Rural Stay Option:

- The Farm Diversification Program provides financial and management assistance to marginal farms with the goal of making them viable, self-supporting units, thus allowing those families to remain in rural Manitoba.
- The Agricultural Crown Lands agency has recently introduced new lease arrangements whereby a farmer can sign a life-long lease for government-owned land and thus have a better base for planning his agricultural future.
- The Rural Farm Water Services Program is a means of assisting those farms with insufficient water facilities for livestock to develop a dependable supply on tap.
- The Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation has introduced a scheme whereby an older farmer can more easily turn the operation over to his son without imposing severe economic strains on anyone in the family.
- The Farm Labour Placement Service keeps up-to-date records of what type of farm labourers are needed in which areas at what times and channels available workers into those spots as quickly as possible.

These programs are all designed to upgrade and stabilize the rural economy and improve the general standard of living for young and old alike. Other provincial programs which are of significance to youth are STEP, Manpower Corps and, in many instances, PEP. The federal OFY and LIP programs also provide a valuable source of income and opportunity for young people.

Decentralization of government services, actually bringing administrative offices to rural areas, is a major aspect of a workable and worthwhile Rural Stay Option. Logically, the Department of Agriculture has been one of the first government units to establish regional offices. Although some of the paper work is still done in the central Winnipeg office, the power to direct the various programs and to adapt government policy to the specific needs of the area now lies with the regional director. In this way, decisions can be made quickly and with a more complete understanding of the situation and government programs can become more relevant to the people they serve.

Other agencies that have been regionalized to some extent include the Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management, Department of Highways, and Department of Northern Affairs. The Department of Health and Social Development is presently in the midst of a massive regionalization program. Once fully implemented, the department will

have a full staff, living in the region, able to provide a whole range of services that will enhance the quality of life in the Interlake. Dental, medical and counselling services will be readily available to Interlakers without the traditional drive to Winnipeg.

The Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation is moving to fill the housing gap that exists in so many rural communities and over 200 units, including elderly persons' housing as well as low-rental units for moderate-income families, have been provided in the region this year. The Manitoba Water Services Board has provided grants and loans to five Interlake towns this year to help them install water and sewage systems. Loans to small businesses in rural communities are available through the Small Business Loans Division of the Manitoba Development Corporation. While Lotteries Commission grants have helped enable eight Interlake towns to build new arenas or curling rinks, the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs is working to establish better recreational facilities and programs in rural communities as well as develop the tourist industry in the region--a potential major source of employment for some areas. The Department of Education is involved in a continual process to improve the educational system in rural Manitoba and the recently introduced Child Development Program is a good example of the type of improvements that are coming about. The Department of Industry and Commerce works closely with the Interlake Development Corporation to bring needed jobs into the region and the fact that over 600 new part-time and full-time jobs have opened up in the Interlake in the past year is an encouraging sign.

FRED, the Fund for Rural Economic Development, has provided about \$5 million per year in cost-shared funds in advisory and financial assistance specifically to the Interlake since 1967. A federal-provincial cost-shared agency, FRED has worked closely with the Departments of Agriculture, Highways, Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Mines, Resources and Environmental Management and with local government districts, rural municipalities, towns, villages and area development boards. Specific youth-related FRED projects include improved educational facilities (Selkirk School), recreational facilities (Winnipeg Beach), Gimli Leadership Training Centre, Youth Manpower Corps, and various Manpower Corps projects such as band halls, training courses, the Selkirk Manpower Training Plant, and the Louis Riel Co-operative in St. Laurent.

The fact remains, however, that a region's greatest asset is its people and not merely programs. A region drained of its youth cannot long remain productive and alive. The Rural Stay Option can only be looked upon as a means of helping a region maintain that one vital resource--its people. The future success of a region depends on the attitude and cooperation of those people--every one of them.

YOU TELL US

We realize that we are dealing with a very broad and complex subject in this issue of the Interlake Flyer, and may have, in your view, handled our job well or poorly. Let's hear it from you! What are your opinions? What would you add by way of more information? For some later issue we will compile your opinions into what should be an interesting article. We will not use names unless specifically requested to do so.

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