

QUEBEC FEDERATION of PROTESTANT HOME and SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

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Brief To The Family Superior Council oct. 65

The Quebec Federation of Protestant Home and School Associations appreciates the opportunity to present suggestions and ideas to the Family Superior Council at this time. During the 21 years of Federation's existence, Local Home and School Associations have continually fed the Provincial Home and School group the results of their studies and concerns about Family Life in Quebec communities. We rejoice in the setting up of the Family Superior Council, and look forward to new opportunities to help improve Family Life in Quebec Province.

The numbering of the following sections relates to the numbering of questions posed by M. Philippe Garigue in his letter of July 6, 1965.

1. a) Relationships and members of family:

- The Family unit is basic
- Every child needs a loving home
- Husband and wife are partners, and ought to be seen as equals (bill 16 is to be applauded)
- Adolescents need responsibility and challenge.
- Continuous research is needed on all aspects of Family Life

1. b) Number of Children:

- Every child has a right to be wanted
- It follows that it ought to be the parents' decision whether they will have children, and when and appropriate information making such a decision possible should be available officially

- It is possible that in the future, for sociological reasons, parents will have to decide themselves to limit their families

1. c) Relationships of family and society:

- We believe education ought to be available to everyone to the limit of his or her capacity, regardless of financial means, and we support the steps the Minister of Education is taking to meet this requirement.
- With reference to the difficulty of administering welfare in such a large area as Quebec, some type of Regional structure might be developed with full community representation, possibly guided and supported by the Provincial Department of Family and Social Welfare. Its functions might include - a co-ordination of existing services and - provision of new services to insure that all families operate on some minimal level - services such as:-
 - marriage counselling
 - family counselling and rehabilitation of families
 - education in nutrition (and diet supplements if needed) as is done by the Montreal Diet Dispensary, a Red Feather Service
 - records on (for example) the handicapped children, and children in trouble (neglected or abused)
 - Facilities for the placement of foster children off the Island of Montreal are grossly inadequate if they exist at all. This might be looked after by Diocesan or Regional Services.
 - To avoid present common-law arrangements, a Welfare structure is needed to facilitate marriage or re-marriage in case of separation or death
 - according to the needs, it might provide such services as a Visiting Homemaker Service for families in trouble
 - Better training of clergy, school principals and police, among others, in order that they may recognize troubled families or individuals and know what facilities are available to refer for help

- There is a need for improved legislation concerning child abuse and child neglect, and it should be mandatory for doctors, teachers, and other public servants to report known or suspected cases of either of these
- School Boards and other appropriate agencies should be encouraged to take responsibility for offering courses to parents in child-rearing, budgets, nutrition and other important aspects of Family Life.
- More health clinics are needed for school-age and pre-school children, for diagnosis and assessment, with facilities for follow-up treatment and counselling. More attention should be paid to individual and family health from the emotional point of view
- Early assessment of troubled families and/ or individuals, through schools, doctors' offices, universities, industry (and referral for help)
- Family Courts are imperative, to handle all separation and family problems, with full staff of psychiatrists and psychologists available.
- More personal counselling in universities
- More pre-marital training courses in co-operation with churches and/or universities, etc.
- More boarding-house type of accommodation (private or not) meeting established Government standards for young people working away from home.
- More homes for the aged. Provincial standards and inspection are needed.
- Visiting home services for the aged (food carts, nurses, cleaning work).
- More visiting homemaker services for families in trouble (where the mother is ill, etc)
- Training schools for domestic help
- More probation officers and 'open' institutions with assessment and treatment of young offenders - and more foster homes

- Juveniles ought not to be sent to penitentiary. Some separate institution providing help in rehabilitation is much preferable
- A training program for young mothers in homemaking, child-rearing, money-management, food and nutrition, etc. (T.V. courses? or a visiting homemaker living with the family for a short period?)
- Marriage counselling - private or publicly-supported, the important thing is that whoever does it (including the clergy,) ought to be trained.
- Older people - part time work for the elderly
- An agency, club or other resource in each Region for the mildly retarded citizens, providing recreation, counselling in money management, job finding and adjustment, and help in finding living accommodation (from time to time), counselling in human relationships, planning for old age, etc.
- Sheltered workshops for the mildly-retarded or retarded, as needed.

2. Benefits and Allowances

- Financial aid to families whose incomes are inadequate for basic needs such as needy mothers allowance etc.
- More education of doctors, lawyers, clergy, teachers etc., on 'what' and 'how' of this and other allowances, and more education of the public about what is available
- Women in receipt of such allowances ought to be able to supplement these by earnings without penalty, more than they now are permitted to do
- Student loans
- Help to mobile and migrating families
- Pre-natal care ought to carry over into nutrition education and the provision of adequate food for families whose incomes are below those needed for a basic standard of living
- The care of handicapped children ought to be subsidized where the cost is a burden to the family or institution providing such care.

- No one ought to be deprived of medical, dental or other health care (including assistance for emotional or mental disturbances) due to inability to pay. Travelling clinics of all kinds ought to be considered in the planning of the regional services mentioned earlier. Hospital benefits ought to include hospitalization for psychiatric patients.

3. Preparation of young people to assume family responsibility

(Previous topics make references to some ideas on how this may be done)

- There ought to be extensive training of school teachers so that they can deal informally and formally with the everyday living concerns of children (jealousy, anger, shame, anxiety, etc). This pre-supposes careful selection of candidates for the profession of teaching, in the first place)
- Puberty, physical and emotional, to be dealt with in full and open discussion by SKILLED teachers (not necessarily the school teacher but certainly someone with training). This should NOT be presented by lecture
- Adolescents: day to day discussions as above, on their concerns: work, parents, money, dates, sex, etc.
- Adolescents: should observe and help in planned programs in hospitals, clinics, kindergartens, nurseries, and in tutoring and coaching other 'teen-agers' (boys as well as girls). See the program begun by Lower Canada College, Montreal.
- Late 'teens: pre-marital course essential for engaged couples

4. a) Urban recreation

- More parks with shade trees needed - also tennis courts, golf, etc.
- CLEAN rivers and beaches
- Development of parklands for camp and picnic-sites, Provincially owned and supervised. These ought to be kept clean, and perhaps more education of the public of the public on cleanliness will be needed. Long-term planning will be needed. For example, large areas of Gaspé might be conserved as a "green Area" for the rest of industrial Quebec. With increased leisure and an increased population, planning for future Green Areas cannot be left to haphazard chance.

- No housing development ought to be allowed without provision for parks by by-law
- Provincial Town Planning Department needs to be in constant touch with municipalities to ensure green belts and parks are arranged for.
- School playgrounds should be used by the public, and this should be planned for
- More co-ordination of agencies on recreation is desirable

4. b) Family housing:

- Low rental housing is essential
- There ought to be SEVERE by-laws to force landlords to keep property in repair - rodent and pest control, heating, plumbing etc.

4. c) Working women:

- If mothers are working outside a home where there are young children, an excellent permanent mother-substitute is necessary
- The salary for domestic help for working mothers ought to be deductible from income tax
- There is a need for more part-time and full-time domestic help TRAINED and available
- More good day nurseries are needed in communities and in industry
- Re-training programs for professional and other middle-aged women who wish to re-enter the working field are badly needed
- Opportunities for women to do part-time work in schools laboratories, industry etc. could be planned and encouraged

4. e) Family Affairs Courts

- In addition to Family Affairs Courts, a need is seen for a special Enforcement Branch, which would follow up such things as maintenance orders
- We understand that, in the case of deserting husbands who have left the Province of Quebec, Quebec's maintenance orders are enforced by only 3 other Provinces, British Columbia, Ontario and Prince Edward Island. It is suggested that a Reciprocal Enforcement Act be passed by Quebec.

- Family Courts might set up a fund from which a deserted family could immediately draw an adequate allowance, the debt to be repaid by the delinquent husband

4. f) Other matters:

- Compulsory immunization of children. It is shocking that any child should suffer either complications or death as the result of contagious diseases for which there are known preventions
- A program for pre-school children from deprived or broken homes which would give them medical and nutritional assistance as well as educational help to get them ready for school. (see "Opportunities for the Family")
- Early discovery, diagnosis, treatment and PREVENTATIVE measures of physical, mental and emotional problems EARLY are a matter of economy as much as anything else. Each dollar spent in prevention saves untold thousands later, to say nothing of sparing families and individuals unnecessary agony and suffering.
- Parent-Teacher and Home and School groups could help in many ways if direction was given by the Family Superior Council. The Quebec Federation of Protestant Home and School Associations is as yet a comparatively untapped resource which the Family Superior Council might seriously consider using. We are committed to helping to raise the standards of Family Life of Quebec citizens, and we look forward with eager anticipation to opportunities to work with other similar groups of both languages and of all faiths, to this end. We would welcome renewed opportunities to communicate with the Family Superior Council, and to hear how we may help.