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AT THE

NOVA SCOTIA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

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REORGANIZATION OF EXTENSION TO URBANIZING SOCIETY^{1/}

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cooperative Extension

Certain characteristics of Extension^{2/} seem particularly relevant to this discussion. Extension is an organization for off-campus, informal, adult and youth education. Extension methods are geared to problem solving. For the most part, the assistant county agent and the federal administrator, and everyone in between, are products of the social system Extension serves. At the same time, Extension people are valued members of that society because they have access to, and freely distribute, valuable technical knowledge and other special assistance. Within the social system to which it has been grafted, Extension has become a respected change agent.

Despite its rather awkward organizational and administrative structure, Extension is, itself, a well integrated sub-system, in which each member has a well defined role and a strong identification with the service. Finally, Extension has been reasonably well funded and normally has been able to show that the benefits from spending on Extension are equal to or greater than the cost of Extension.

An Urbanizing Society

Society has been in the process of urbanization since before the English language had the words, "society" and "urbanization". By the time Extension had reached the quarter century mark, half of the people in the United States were living in urban places. Pandora's box of urban problems has been open for a long time and everyone knows it. But it is equally clear that urban problems are bigger now than ever before. More people are involved; the stakes are higher; the game is more complex. Conflict, doubt, confusion, and uncertainty prevail. In short, a problem situation exists.

Actually, many urban problems have already been quite well defined. The definition of urban problems does not seem to be the critical issue. The critical question is, "What will be Extension's role in solving urban problems"?

II. EXTENSION'S ROLE IN SOLVING URBAN PROBLEMS

As a norm for this discussion it is proposed that all of the people have access to an extension service possessing the characteristics abstracted in the first paragraphs of this paper. That is to say, farmers, labor, small business,

manufacturing and other industry, rural and urban youth, rural and urban homemakers, local and state governments, and others, should have access to a program of informal, off-campus, adult and youth education geared to solving their problems. The rationale for this norm is simply that the Extension idea has worked well enough for one clientele to justify its application to the problems of other clients.

If we compare the existing situation with the norm, it becomes apparent that there is a rather wide gap. Extension, as presently constituted, has a preponderantly rural clientele, few agents in urban areas, few specialists dealing with urban problems, and generally lacks the capacity to undertake a sustained large scale assault on urban problems. Further, with reference to the norm, Extension is short of agents with social science backgrounds and city-raised, city-trained, and city-oriented people. In short, it is poorly linked to urban society and ill-prepared to accept larger responsibilities within that society.

This normative comparison is meant neither as an indictment nor as a criticism of Extension as presently constituted. Extension was given a certain job to do and has done that job, presumably to the best of its ability. Rather, the comparison implies that there is another, bigger job that is not being done.

With reference to the job of providing extension services to all people, Extension as presently constituted can adopt one of a variety of postures: (1) do it all, (2) do nothing, (3) do something without seeking the initiative and (4) do something and seek the initiative.

Do It All

This strategy does not seem feasible. In any event it is too late to do it all. Many agencies, ranging from the Junior Chamber of Commerce to state planning boards, and including other parts of the total educational system, are already involved in extension-like activities and they are doing rather well. In addition, new legislation will provide additional funds for extension-like activity and where there are new funds there will be competition. Other agencies will be getting into extension-like activity whether existing Extension likes it or not.

Do Nothing

Extension can go along for a long time without taking on much in the way of new responsibilities. Following this course of action means that Extension's clientele will shrink in numbers. No doubt the erosion of the client base will eventually proceed to the point where a drastic reorganization of Extension will be imposed from the outside, but the withering away of traditional Extension would be mercifully slow and Extension's twilight would be long and serene.

Doing nothing implies that the responsibility for applying the Extension idea in urban situations will be left to non-Extension people. On balance, doing nothing is a plausible, but certainly not a palatable alternative.

Do Something Without Seeking the Initiative

This, in effect, is to follow the course of least resistance. This strategy implies making adjustments as needed, of introducing some new programs, and generally fitting in with changing patterns. It involves cooperation with other agencies, but not an aggressive search for such arrangements. As with the "do nothing" idea, this strategy leaves the leadership for closing the extension gap largely to non-Extension persons. It is not quite satisfactory to leave the implanting of the Extension idea to people who do not necessarily have that idea. While the Extension approach dominates the thinking of Extension workers, it does not necessarily dominate the thinking of all workers in extension-like activities.

Do Something and Seek the Initiative

In reality, Extension has already been drawn into urban problems, and there is no easy way to avoid them in the future. At the same time, Extension has neither the desire nor the capacity to dominate urban extension activity. Extension can share the Extension idea without being involved in every activity where the idea is used, but to increase the influence of the Extension idea, Extension must take the initiative. Having the initiative involves being in a position to threaten to compete with other agencies, to fill gaps, to operate new programs on an interim basis, to seek joint ventures, and to exploit fully the basic strength of the Extension idea. The remainder of this discussion assumes that Extension has chosen or will choose the broad strategy of "doing something and seeking the initiative".

III. CLOSING THE GAP

In order to close the gap between a norm and an existing situation, factors working to keep the gap small must be isolated and methods found to enhance their effect. Factors working to widen the gap must be isolated and their effect removed or minimized. New success factors must be discovered and made operative.

Enhancing Success Factors

Serving old clients in new ways. Certain forces are already operating to help Extension to meet the needs of urban clients. In areas where suburbanization has occurred or is imminent, old clients are asking new questions. Agents and specialists are dealing with urban problems. The more aggressive agents and specialists have sought and found new clients and have met new needs within the existing Extension framework.

Helping old and new clients with new programs. At the same time Extension programs in public affairs education, the Rural Areas Development Program, and under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, have operated to widen Extension's horizons. In each of these programs the active and aggressive agents and specialists have been able to serve new clients, both in traditional geographic service areas and in the cities. By and large, these efforts have received good programming support from the Federal Extension Service. This is especially true in the case of work under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

Urban pilot projects. In addition, on-going pilot projects serve to demonstrate the use of extension methodology in urban settings. Urban areas are served by numerous competing public and private agencies. However, the South Providence, Rhode Island, pilot project seems to show that Extension can be accepted by the client community as well as by the agency community. In the former, Extension, using agents from the same social system as the clients, carries on a youth and home-maker program; in the latter, Extension activities are generally accepted as complementary to the activities of other agencies. In neither case was acceptance automatic, but it did come within 18 months of the time the project was initiated.

Serving new clients in old geographic service areas, serving old clients in new ways, helping old and new clients with new programs, and operating pilot projects in new areas for new clients, constitute a modest but significant effort to bring Extension to all of the people. There are, however, ways to enhance the effects of these efforts.

Making the whole community a client. It would appear that the rate of population turnover, even in communities that do not experience rapid population growth, exceeds the rate of Extension's client turnover. In areas where population is growing rapidly, the imbalance between rates of population turnover and client turnover is intensified. Consequently, the socio-economic make-up of Extension's clientele differs markedly from the socio-economic make-up of the total community.

In existing geographic service areas the Extension staff is funded and in place, the offices are in place and the pace of change is manageable. Thus, programming aimed at making the community as a whole the Extension's clientele constitutes a very efficient way of moving toward the norm of serving all of the people. By and large, Extension does have the resources to undertake sustained efforts to orient itself to all of the people in the traditional geographic service areas.

Extension has always exhibited a "built in" propensity for serving old clients in new ways. Programs aimed at making the clientele and the community one and the same can further enhance Extension's capacity to serve old clients in new ways.

Exploiting urban pilot projects. Urban pilot projects play a pivotal role in any effort to move Extension toward the

norm of serving all of the people. Such projects help Extension compile a record of demonstrated competence in serving new clients in new ways. Until Extension established its urban credentials, it will have great difficulty in being taken seriously in its efforts to serve all of the people.

The execution of urban pilot projects, their integration with existing extension programs, and their evaluation present certain difficulties. Once these are overcome, a larger difficulty remains. Project findings and results must be made known to the urban power structure. For, in the end, success in enlarging the influence of the Extension idea rests on Extension's ability to be included, directly or indirectly, in decisions about what will be done in urban areas and who will do it.

Extension has accumulated a great deal of theoretical and practical knowledge concerning the way farmers adopt new practices. Yet Extension has been strangely blind to the fact that the same process must be gone through if the urban power structure is to adopt Extension. While Extension is aware, interested, learning, and trying to serve urban areas, it is disconcerting to observe that many urban leaders (and some rural leaders as well) are not even aware of Extension. Urban society can not adopt a practice of which it is unaware. Urban society cannot be aware of Extension unless Extension makes them so.

In short when Extension takes the initiative by helping with new programs, in public affairs education, and by other forms of voluntary cooperation with agencies serving the urban clientele, it is enhancing its ability to serve all of the people.

Removing Failure Factors

Some of the methods for enhancing success factors are also means for removing failure factors. These include (1) seeking new clients in geographic areas now served by Extension, (2) seeking, through urban pilot studies, new clients in new geographic areas, (3) making the urban power structure aware of Extension capabilities, (4) seeking new cooperative arrangements with other agencies, and (5) establishing acceptable credentials for entry into urban society.

There exist, however, other failure factors. These are: (1) lack of agents and specialists with urban backgrounds, (2) lack of specialists trained to treat urban problems, (3) lack of administrators with experience in urban work, (4) anxieties, often poorly defined, regarding the assumption of strange new programs, (5) lack of money and facilities to carry on a sustained effort in urban areas, (6) suspicion and hostility on the part of the other agencies in the urban community, (7) poor linkage with the urban clientele and (8) lack of an "urban tradition".

Methods to ease the problem of shortages of agents, specialists, and administrators with urban-oriented training and experience include: (1) in-service training, (2) assigning interested existing personnel to urban-oriented jobs and (3) using non-Extension people in certain specialist roles.

The lack of agents, specialists and administrators with urban backgrounds can be remedied by (1) recruiting young people from urban areas for Extension careers, (2) hiring persons with urban backgrounds and the required skills and using in-service training to transform them into Extension workers, (3) using people from colleges other than colleges of agriculture, and perhaps, from other than land grant universities, as specialists through joint Extension appointments and (4) entering into working arrangements with other agencies. In the Rhode Island Cooperative Extension experience, no young people from urban areas have been recruited for Extension careers, and no joint Extension appointments exist outside the College of Agriculture, however, the other means of removing failure factors given above have been used with success.

The incidence of anxieties regarding strange new programs can be reduced by good internal communication, by demonstrated success in pilot programs, and by maintaining as much contact as possible among agents and specialists. However, it is doubtful that this difficulty can be completely resolved until the transformation of Extension into an agency serving all of the people has been completed.

Shortages of money, space, and time, constitute what is, perhaps, the most serious failure factor. There can be no large scale sustained effort in urban areas until Extension has a large scale budget for urban activity. A variety of devices, seem helpful, including shifting resources into urban programs, participating in urban programs under provisions of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and various other federal programs, and seeking of foundation and local financial support. They do not, however, appear sufficient and there is, apparently, no easy solution to this problem.

Poor linkages with the urban clientele can be remedied once agents and offices are in place and programs are underway. Existing Extension methodology, the use of urban-oriented personnel, and the use of persons from the clientele in agent-aide capacities, can, together, remove this failure factor. The lack of an urban tradition in Extension can be remedied by inventing an urban tradition and grafting it into the experience of new and old Extension workers.

Adding New Success Factors

Most of the ideas in the sections above are already a part of Extension's experience. A few seem feasible but remain untested. Taken together, they can be applied to allow Extension to make a modest but sustained effort to serve the urban community. When Extension has thus established its urban

DISCUSSION: REORGANIZATION OF EXTENSION TO
URBANIZING SOCIETY

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I think that Mr. Gratto has done a commendable job in delineating many of the problem areas which face the Cooperative Extension Service today. It should be noted from the start that the term "urbanizing society" means much more than the mere shifting of people from rural to urban areas. The challenge which Extension faces in the years ahead is not necessarily urban as opposed to rural. It would be much more appropriate to discuss the needs of our "changing society". Many of the clients which we have worked with in rural areas have moved to urban areas. In like manner individuals living in urban areas are moving into rural areas and establishing vacation homes, camps, and ski lodges. These changes are a reflection of our "changing society" rather than simply an urbanizing process.

In studying Mr. Gratto's paper, I got the impression that I was reading the review of an agency whose responsibility was primarily technical assistance. In only one or two instances was the word education mentioned.

The role of Extension was well stated in the "Scope Report" prepared a few years ago. I will quote directly from this report: "Extension has a single function to perform--education for action, supported by facts derived from research, and directed at specific needs and problems". (Note--this doesn't refer to either rural or urban clients. Nor does it refer specifically to farmers, landowners, or homemakers. It refers to education directed at specific needs). This is Extension's role in a changing society.

This means that we should give assistance where there is an evident unsatisfied need. This means that we don't make a distinction between urban and rural, nor do we make a distinction between adult and youth, rich or poor, small or large. We consider first the needs of our society and give assistance where there is evidence of a need not being adequately served.

Without any question this requires initiative on the part of the extension worker. But an educator without initiative is not truly an educator. We shouldn't try to cast our role as a "do it all or do none" challenge. We don't need to worry about running out of work. If we are doing our job the way it should be done we will be confronted with new areas every day where Extension is capable and well equipped to provide assistance. We shouldn't hesitate to offer assistance in areas that are new to us. If our service will benefit society we should be quick to respond to the call.

It should be recognized that Extension can serve in a way that very few other agencies are capable of serving. Most

Extension workers are trained not only in technical fields but also in the art of teaching. This unique combination is peculiar to Extension.

Mr. Gratto states, and I quote: "Other agencies are going to be getting into Extension-like activity whether existing Extension likes it or not". I think these other agencies should get into these activities. Extension should encourage it. Our role in Extension is education. We should be training others to carry on activities by themselves so that Extension might move into new areas.

If I may again quote from Mr. Gratto's paper, he states that "Extension generally lacks the capacity to undertake a sustained large scale assault on urban problems". I would comment that Extension shouldn't attempt an undertaking of this nature. This becomes a community problem. Extension should train community leaders to undertake this assault themselves. Other agencies should be encouraged to join in the assault. Extension is well equipped to initiate such action and serve as the educating and coordinating force.

By "closing the gap" Mr. Gratto refers to serving more people than we are now serving. He has very carefully and thoroughly delineated our responsibility as it relates to our old and new clients. In my mind we have two very different jobs in serving our old clients. Our old clients are moving in two directions--some of them are going out of farming and making a major transition from farm to off-farm work. The second group is "tooling up" to a larger production unit. The way in which we serve these two groups of clients will be considerably different. The man who is moving toward an expanded farm production unit will need highly specialized technical assistance. Extension should be preparing staff members to provide this service. The farmer who is making the transition from farm to off-farm work needs guidance of a more general nature. Extension personnel working with this latter group should be familiar with both the urban and rural environment if they are to be of maximum service. One type of individual cannot adequately serve both groups.

Many people living in rural areas yet working in urban areas like to dabble in agriculture to satisfy certain basic desires. Some of these individuals will request assistance from Extension in agricultural production practices. In the past, Extension's primary approach has been maximization of profit for the farm operator. In the case of these part-time farm operators this may not necessarily be the goal. Under such conditions, suggestions and recommendations which Extension should make may differ substantially from those recommendations made to an individual whose livelihood is based on farming.

Mr. Gratto's second suggestion for enhancing success in "closing the gap" relates to helping old and new clients with new programs. Extension's horizon has been widened considerably in activities associated with public affairs, rural areas development, Economic Opportunity Act, etc. Another major

program area operating in the Northeast relates to the development of electronic accounting programs for farmers, grocery stores, town managers, and even youth camps. Extension developed the program called ELFAC to serve farmers in the Northeast. Now, this same program is being molded by research workers to serve others who have called for Extension's assistance in this vital area. Extension can serve effectively as the educating force to harness the computer to better serve those who can't afford a technical data processing department.

As a way of closing the gap further, Mr. Gratto suggests that we make the whole community our client. Most of the work that we are doing in rural areas development has been based upon this premise. However, in our work with local communities we have a major educational job ahead of us. I think that we as economists should be deeply involved in this educational effort. Local citizens want and need more information on the economic and sociological consequences of development upon their community. We have this information and should be passing it along to those who can use it.

Another educational task which we in Extension face in working with community leaders relates to our work with local planning bodies and to the development of zoning. While zoning is tied very directly to the economic benefits of community development, there is a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding about such control. Everything that Extension can do to further education in this critical area is needed and needed now. We fall way short of fulfilling our responsibility as educators if we try to stay clear of this area for fear of local criticism.

In like manner, we have a very strong responsibility in furthering educational efforts at pollution control. As the demands upon our waters for domestic and recreational uses are increased, pollution control becomes increasingly important. We, as educators, have a very definite responsibility in keeping the public informed about this problem and assisting in every way possible toward its rapid solution.

A major educational job is in order in the "conditioning" of the attitude of local people to outsiders. If recreation and tourism is to be a major sector of our economy in the Northeast, local people must make these outsiders feel welcome. If there is evidence that they are not welcome, they will go somewhere else next time! Competition for the tourist dollar is getting keener every day. Aggressive communities in other parts of the country have taken extensive measures to encourage tourism. We must show local leaders and the people of the community the importance of this industry. This type of education should be a major part of our work in rural areas development. Development is dependent on recreation and tourism in many areas of New England.

I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Gratto in his discussion of the importance of pilot projects. The pilot project is

one of the best ways to ease into a new area with which Extension has worked very little. It is certainly better to learn about the problems involved and their implications on a small scale before opening the project on an unrestricted basis.

In the State of Vermont, the Cooperative Extension Service in conjunction with the Federal Extension Service, a year ago, initiated a pilot project in the recreational development of land. This effort has proved extremely worthwhile in spotlighting the problems associated with recreational development of land. In some cases the clients with whom we are working are the same clients that we have worked with in agriculture. However, in most cases we face a new set of clients. For the most part, individuals requesting assistance in recreational development are those who have purchased land from farmers for the specific purpose of recreational development.

To adequately appraise a landowner's recreational development potential requires knowledge of soil and water conditions, woodland conditions, the engineering aspects of sewage disposal, water and road development, as well as basic knowledge of economic principles. Very few individuals from any single agency possess (or should possess) such diversified knowledge. However, within the Extension Service, the Experiment Station, Soil Conservation Service, Department of Forests and Parks, U.S. Forestry Service, etc., are found personnel trained in these specific areas. No single agency has a specialist who can answer all the questions needed to adequately advise a landowner on recreational development. However, by a pooling of the skills of these agencies, the landowner can be given the type of consultation that he deserves. One individual from one agency working alone can seriously mislead the landowner through an incomplete appraisal.

Extension's responsibility in this area should be coordination of a team effort. Someone must maintain contact between the landowner and the various agencies involved. Most logically this job should fall upon the shoulders of an educational agency rather than a specific technical information agency. The Extension worker should not hesitate in assuming the role as a coordinator. His training and experience equip him well to serve in this capacity.

Mr. Gratto next discussed the removal of the "failure factors" which have hampered the closing of the gap between present Extension activity and needs. He cites specifically the lack of agents with proper background to work with urban individuals as well as the lack of urban tradition. In my mind this is not a serious restriction. The basic principles used are the same in working with urban or rural people. An individual with a broad educational background should be able to move, in an unrestricted sense, from one group of clients to another. However, he must constantly strive to keep updated in the technical field in which he is working. There

is a very definite need for more in-service training to better equip the extension worker for his changing role.

Mr. Gratto's point concerning the use of people from other colleges by the Extension Service is well taken. Extension might follow the lead which has been taken by several Experiment Stations in expanding facilities to include specialists from disciplines outside of the College of Agriculture. The Board of Trustees at the University of Vermont established the Vermont Resources Research Center within the Agricultural Experiment Station early in 1963. The purpose of the Center was to co-ordinate, promote, and facilitate research in the development and management of natural resources in Vermont and in regions of which Vermont is a part. Membership consists of University of Vermont staff members who are actively engaged in research concerning resource use and management or development. The present membership of the Center is made up of 10 staff members from the College of Agriculture, three from the College of Arts and Sciences, one from the College of Medicine, and one from the College of Technology.

While Mr. Gratto says little about Research and Extension coordination in his paper, I am sure that this is implied. To quote from the Scope Report once again: "Research has been, is, and will continue to be the basic resource on which all of Extension programs draw". Extension's name originally was tied to the responsibility to "extend" the findings of research to the people who can use them.

I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Gratto's feeling that there should be cooperative arrangements for Extension to work with other agencies. Such arrangements or agreements should be of the positive type rather than the negative; in other words, the agreements should be to work with one another not to simply keep out of each other's hair. I believe Extension must take the initiative if such arrangements are to be made with other agencies. The ability of Extension to work in new areas must be brought to the attention of those outside of our traditional circles. Our past position has been altogether too modest--we need to speak up and make the general public aware of our existence.

I personally feel that Extension has done a good job in the establishment of its urban credentials. Probably radio and television have been instrumental in developing a good image for the Extension Service. In the State of Vermont, nearly every homemaker is familiar with the Extension Agronomist and his tips on lawn care. The garden clubs and the many home gardeners have become familiar with the Extension Horticulturist. His name is brought to their attention through a regular series of newspaper articles. In similar manner, the name of Retail Marketing Specialist is familiar to the operators of most of the retail grocery stores in the State of Vermont. This familiarity comes through a newsletter issued periodically.

In summary, may I say that I personally feel that

Extension is effectively meeting the challenge of our changing society. It can look with pride on its past accomplishments and the transition that has been made since the end of World War II. However, Extension personnel should never be lulled into a pacified feeling of complete accomplishment. The job is not done. We must continually reappraise our work and make changes both in content matter and educational approach.