

Salford.

Dear Peter.

This area really calls for an anthropological type study in addition to ours.

- Feels v. depressed last night, one address that I had constantly put to the bottom - no doubt for psychological reasons, eventually came to the top.
- The poemman had committed suicide a couple of years ago!

One lady I interviewed had a large 'mother's' purse with lots of compartments, all stuffed with folded pieces of paper, which she unfolded for me, - they were all notes; many looking H.P. 'agreements', or children calculations of outgoings. - They all started with "Social Security" "£6.90" and sorted of faded out after about 6 entries.

If we ever have the resources in the future there are things that need following up such as Dist + foremost. - the local S.B. offices, which seem to be incredibly tight.

- ② Hire Purchase companies that operate from Regent Rd. - they require no sort of guarantee that payments can be met. The goods are of the shoddiest quality, imaginable, and at exorbitant prices. One can only assume

that the lack of security is compensated by the high profits

③ The Secondary schools insist on uniform. Whilst one can understand the thinking behind this, it doesn't seem to be supported by provision from LEA in form of uniform grants.

④ I have obtained (from respondents) some information about ~~the~~ metered T.V. but I must pursue it. It is regarded as a marvellous way of saving since there is usually a 1/2 yearly rebate, but as far as I can make out, there is a severe charge made when the meter is emptied (monthly), and since all other "services" seem to operate in a detrimental fashion, I am very suspicious.

⑤ I have discovered - on one of the new 'high rise' estates, a community centre, which looks after the children all day, during school holidays at the cost of 25p. per week for 1st child.

20	..	..	--	2nd
15	"	..	..	3rd
10	..	..	..	4th + so on.

CHEAT! one might think. BUT on the application form I saw, it said, a badge (different colour for each week) is issued - this must be worn at all times, any child not wearing it will be assumed not to have paid, and not admitted to Centre!

The Centre takes them on outings, and they make things, learn to sew, cook etc. - Peter can you imagine the anguish in the little hearts of kids who can't afford to go? I am going to try + interview the organiser, + get the feel, perhaps it's not as bad as it appears.

All services, and potentially good ideas, seem to operate as sieves, and the really needy always seem to be left behind.

I had a letter from Ed Collison - passed on by Titums to Brian with an instruction to pass to me. Titums wrote "...far more complicated than Marie Brown imagined". But it wasn't. Collison had been given information which, although not wrong in fact, carried implications ~~the~~ such as: - one daughter & husband were also living at the house, - this wasn't so. They <sup>(Locals B)</sup> did in fact lie about visits to the house, saying she wasn't ~~in~~ in, but it's difficult to imagine her being out when she was desperate and how far can one go without shoes? The upshot is, that the electric bill was paid, and a grant given for clothes & bedding. - I haven't called yet - (don't spend the time) but I drove past and saw the lights on - what a relief!

I think Titums was referring to the fact that it was a common-law marriage (of 9 years duration) and that at one time the man had been in prison. I knew all this, but refused to discuss either point with anyone @ S.B. or Social Services, maintaining that they were totally irrelevant to the central fact that 3 small children were living in the dark & cold for 3 months (it eventually became 5):.

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I suppose objectivity is too much to ask for, but I would have thought absence of moral judgemental attitudes could be taken for granted. - Why in the name of heaven does Collison find it necessary to mention imprisonment in the context of payment or non-payment of special needs grants!

The letter was a catalogue of dates, and I couldn't help but think - if only bureaucrats could imagine the human suffering embraced by those cold dates, and accounts of correct procedural actions, ~~at a point where~~, when faced with ritualists who proudly show, by balancing dates and amounts that everything is fine, I feel very mean when I point out that it isn't right - it is only their departmental problem that have been solved.

Oh dear! None of this makes much sense, but I had to get it off my chest. All I can say is thank God for you and Ruth.

I wondered vaguely if it would be possible for Peter to spend an hour or so in Salford - perhaps visiting a couple of addresses with me, (where Jim pretty sure they would be welcome) - after the Brandes Council meeting in Manchester? - Although I realise that it will be the usual tight schedule everyone arranges for Peter. It would be marvellous 'cos I do get frustrated that perhaps I don't communicate the totality of it all, - the stupefaction - (it is only after about an hour's chat that the real horrors become apparent). The utter necessity of these rowdy gaudy objects that they put their lives in lock for - display cabinets, gold painted china ornaments, cuckoo clocks, and imitation parrots. - All would be

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considered 'wasteful' + 'extravagant' by social workers no doubt. But they are not.

Oh! when I'm here I feel I never want to talk to anyone again, who doesn't understand their problems. Who can't imagine the feelings of these Mothers. They are so brave.

I suppose that angers social workers and social security officers about 'wasteful expenditure' is that it symbolises independence, it means they haven't given up yet, and therefore they are not as malleable as they should be.

What a ramble!

lots of love  
Mavis.

P.S. Collins said in his letter they were analysing for a social worker to ~~special~~ supervise the spending of the special needs grant for bedding etc.!!

