

first reading

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a publication of the Edmonton Social Planning Council

This edition of *First Reading* finds itself looking both backwards into the past and forwards into the future. The four brief articles on the pages which follow not only provide updates on some of the subjects with which this publication has dealt in the not too distant past, but also looks ahead at how these issues are likely to affect the lives of Albertans in the months to come.

In one article, a perspective on the recent "Nurturing Community" conference sponsored by the Edmonton Social Planning Council is presented. Another article details some of the recent adjustments made to social allowance benefits and the effects that these adjustments are having on welfare recipients. A third article focuses on the \$160 million in undistributed lottery revenues which currently sits in the provincial treasury. The fourth article details the current status of day care in this province and recent federal/provincial actions in this area. All four articles were written by Edmonton Social Planning Council staff members.

All of the topics in this edition have been dealt with to some degree in previous issues of *First Reading*. Two of them - community development and day care - will be covered again, but in greater detail, in future editions.

Included with this issue of *First Reading* is the latest edition of *Alberta Facts*, the subject of which is "The Working Poor."

Summer Recap

In the movie *Network*, the arguably mad newscaster Howard Beale soliloquizes:

"I don't have to tell you things are bad. Everbody knows things are bad. It's a depression. Everybody's out of work or scared of losing their job, the dollar buys a nickle's worth, the banks are going bust, shopkeepers keep a gun under the counter, punks are running wild in the streets, and there's nobody anywhere who seems to know what to do, and there's no end to it. We know the air's unfit to breathe and our food is unfit to eat, and we sit and watch our T.V.s while some local newscaster tells us today we had fifteen homicides and sixty-three violent crimes, as if that's the way it's supposed to be. We all know things are bad. Worse than bad. They're crazy. It's like everything's going crazy. So we don't go out anymore. We sit in the house and slowly the world we live in gets smaller and all we ask is please, at least, leave us alone in our own living rooms. Let me have my toaster and my TV and my hair dryer and my steel-belted radials, and I won't say anthing, just leave us alone."

The next day, Beale continued his ravings:

"in the bottom of our terrified souls, we all know that democracy is a dying giant, a sick, sick, dying, decaying political concept, writhing in its final pain. What's finished is the idea that this great country is dedicated to the freedom and flourishing of every individual in it. It's the single, solitary human being who's finished. This is a nation of transistorized, deodorized, whiter-than-white, steel-belted bodies, totally unnecessary as human beings and as replaceable as piston rods...."

Herein lie many of the conditions which concern community developers. At the April 27-29 *Nurturing Community* conference sponsored by the Edmonton Social Planning Council, some 130

practitioners of community development and interested individuals came together to discuss the application of community development in Alberta. Not only were participants struck by the breadth of experience in this province, but by the similarity in the dilemmas which practitioners confront.

Certainly, one of the central dilemmas faced by practitioners is that of defining "community" in the 1980s. Is community a place, or is it an interest group or does it no longer exist at all? Many speakers referred to the changing face of community, the extinction of the romantic small town and the ethnic urban neighborhood. Without clear ideas about identities and shapes of communities, practitioners and community members experience difficulty taking collective action.

Professor Marlene Brant Castellano of Trent University presented a definition which helped to identify the peculiarities of modern communities. Her four part definition views community as a group of persons engaged in reciprocal relationships, sharing a common culture, having a capacity to act collectively, over a period of time. Whereas in the past community members experienced these community characteristics as an integrated whole, today's communities often only exhibit one or two of the above traits. For instance, it is the norm for one's cultural community (increasingly meaning the nuclear family) and one's collective action community (the workplace) to be entirely unconnected phenomena. In fact, it is because of the fracturing of the integrated community that nuclear families (and in many cases the solitary individual) take on greater and more stressful functions, functions which previously were distributed within a community.

Another speaker, Professor Larry Pratt of The University of Alberta, spoke of the emerging cult of individualism and its impact on the community. In a society which subordinates all human concerns to the servicing of a capitalist economy, the elevation of the individual should come as no surprise. The capitalist economy enforces extreme individualism for the purpose of assuring obedient producers and consumers. Collective producers (as in unionized workers) are seen to pose a costly threat to a capitalist economy. Likewise, individual consumers are seen to be far more useful to the economy if they do not share their property (i.e. everyone owns their own lawnmower). Perhaps individualism would not be such a bad thing were it not coupled with the simultaneous reality that as human beings we are far more dependent on mega-systems than ever before. We know that despite our best laid plans,

convulsions of an economic, ecological, energy or military nature can turn a robust individual into a casualty overnight. So people are forced to live in a vice which promotes the unattainable value of individual self-efficiency while creating a helpless dependence on systems beyond anyone's ability to influence.

Ms. Castellano asserted that the quest for community "arises out of a sense of our frailties; if it is me against the world, the world will win."

The role of the state, according to Dr. Pratt, has been decisive in subverting community. In his words, "the state is invading civil society in an attempt to restructure it." Acting as an accomplice to the captains of the economy, the "new right" state has begun to divest itself of its responsibility as guardian of the general welfare of its citizenry. Instead, the responsibility for safeguarding welfare is dumped on the community, or on individuals. Any spontaneous collective action can be interpreted by the state as an attempt to undermine its authority. The state's often contradictory goals of centralizing authority and privatizing general welfare have contributed to a history of community development in Alberta which another speaker, Hayden Roberts, describes as a "rollercoaster ride."

Five years ago when I came to Alberta, I was advised by a sympathetic government official to never use the term "community development" in this province. He encouraged me to perform "community development," but to be careful to call it something else. It seemed as if communities were expected to be passive instruments of public policy. Ms. Castellano's appraisal, however, is that communities have an importance and integrity which surpass external political dictates. "Rumors of the demise of community are very much exaggerated," she declared. As social animals, human beings will always need a scale of existence which is neither too solitary nor too abstract. The challenge of developing communities as they struggle to adapt to major social and economic forces is the work of today's community developers.

Judging from the attendance at the *Nurturing Community* conference and the innovative ventures described by Alberta practitioners in a host of settings and disciplines, I am pleased to say that community development is very much alive, relevant and legitimate in Alberta.

Tom Grauman is a social planner at the Edmonton Social Planning Council. The next edition of *First Reading* will take an extended look at the subject of community development.

Welfare Report

Gayle Dreaver

Welfare. *First Reading* devoted an entire issue to the subject in the autumn of 1985. At that time the Edmonton Social Planning Council was in the process of preparing a handbook for welfare recipients. *The Other Welfare Manual* was released in April of 1986 and was well received by those on welfare, by human service agencies and by the department of social services. A second edition, due in September of this year, will be distributed through social services district offices, as well as by agencies working with welfare recipients.

Over the past two years, the situation which led the Council to become involved in welfare issues has deteriorated. Increasing numbers of individuals have been laid off from their jobs and, after a year on unemployment insurance, have had no success in finding employment. These individuals, many of them supporting families, are then forced to rely on welfare for shelter, food and clothing.

The largest increase in the welfare rolls has been in the category of single employable

recipients. Alberta Social Services has responded to the increasing number of recipients in this group by cutting back allowances. The maximum shelter allowance for recipients in this category was cut from \$290 per month to \$180, and the monthly food allowance was cut by five dollars. These cutbacks affect approximately 30 000 Albertans.

Soon after the cutbacks to welfare recipients were announced, the Alberta Department of Career Development and Employment initiated a work-for-welfare program. This program provides subsidies to employers of 75% of a worker's wages, if the individual is on welfare when hired. Human service agencies have voiced concerns about the impact of both the allowance cutbacks and the "workfare" program.

One such agency, The Edmonton Food Bank, has estimated an increase of 1000 persons per month receiving food hampers. Based on the lack of housing available within Social Services' maximum shelter rates, recipients will be forced to spend food

Over the past two years, the situation which led the Council to become involved in welfare issues has deteriorated.

money for accommodation, and will consequently rely on food banks to make up the difference.

Also, the Income Security Action Committee (I.S.A.C.) has raised questions about the ability of Career Development and Employment to monitor its workfare program to ensure that workers are not being laid off and replaced by subsidized workers.

I.S.A.C. is also concerned that those recipients who gain employment under the program will be those who most likely would have become employed; those with the most education or the most work experience. The committee feels that more should be done to assist those who are less likely to gain employment. Suggestions have included retraining or upgrading education, in addition to revising the criteria for employability under the social assistance guidelines.

Alberta Career Development and Employment expects to create 3000 to 4000 jobs through the work-for-welfare program. The welfare cutbacks have affected approximately 30 000 Albertans. Even if the workfare program achieves its objectives, over 25 000 single employable welfare recipients will remain forced to survive on a total income of less than \$350 per month.

The increase in the numbers of welfare recipients, combined with the reduction in their incomes, has placed great strains on non-profit agencies. As already outlined, when individuals pay shelter costs which exceed maximum rates, the food allowance must be used to pay the difference. They are then forced to turn to non-profit agencies for food and clothing. Yet these agencies are excluded from the workfare program, and are unable to hire extra staff to meet the increased demand on their services.

The welfare cutbacks, and the work-for-welfare program are the two major issues affecting single

social assistance recipients this year. However, there are also issues affecting other welfare recipients -- issues which are ongoing concerns.

Single parents received a \$21 a month increase in their allowances, effective June 1, 1987. When compared to the severe shelter cutbacks imposed on this group in 1983, and taking into account ever-increasing prices, the increase is inadequate.

The federal government increased pension payments to the disabled. Individuals requiring additional assistance from Alberta Social Services has the federal increase deducted from their total social allowance cheques. Their total income remains the same.

The Minister of Social Services in Alberta, Connie Osterman, in a letter to the editor of the Social Services newsletter, stated that she was considering hiring more inspectors to check for welfare fraud among recipients. Income security workers presently have caseloads of between 300 and 600 per worker. Each case may represent one family. It would seem that finances would be better spent on hiring more income security workers. With fewer clients, they could then assist recipients with referral services and counselling, which they are unable to provide now due to their large caseloads.

In summary, many of the changes in the delivery of welfare in Alberta have been punitive measures directed at those least able to defend themselves. The changes have been defended on the grounds that our government cannot afford to support the large numbers of Albertans who have been forced onto welfare due to the recession. The reality is that it is a case of pay now or pay later - and we will pay later. We will pay more health care costs as a result of poor nutrition, more incarceration costs as a result of desperation by the poor, more mental health costs as a result of depression and frustration and more foster care costs as a result of welfare parents being unable to feed their children. We need to pay now, both as an investment in the future, and as a testimonial to the dignity and worth of every Albertan.

Gayle Dreaver is a researcher at the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

ALBERTA FACTS

NUMBER 3

Poverty in our Province - *The Working Poor* Published by the Edmonton Social Planning Council

Congratulations! You have a job! In a province with more than 144,000 unemployed, you are one of the lucky ones. You should be able to make ends meet and support your family, shouldn't you?

For 154,500 working Albertans, the answer is NO. These people are the working poor. In fact, they make up 60% of the poor in this province. This is the highest proportion of working poor in all of Canada. For these people, no matter how they budget, there is never enough to meet even their basic needs.

Poor in Spite of Working...

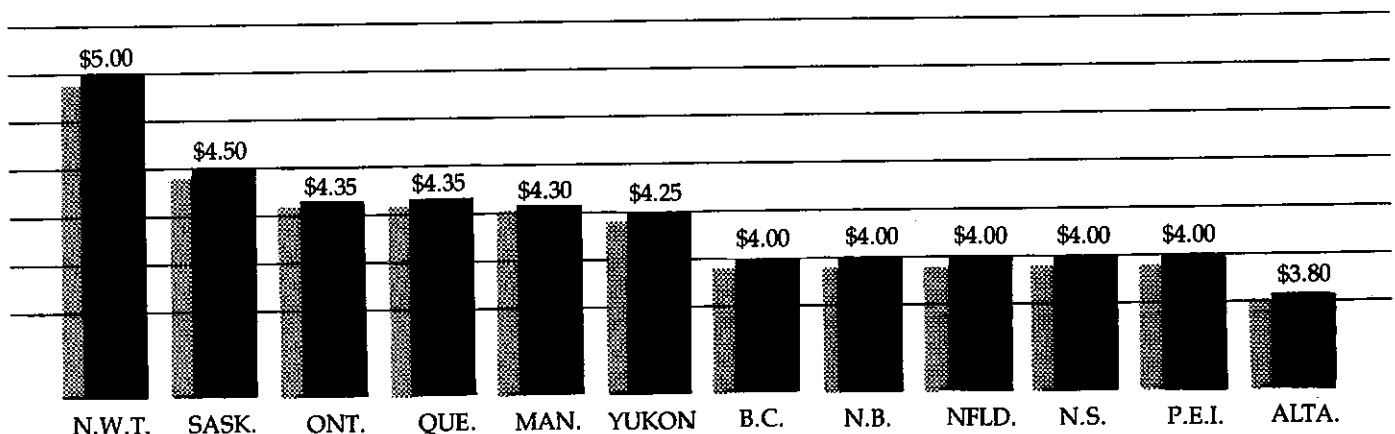
One reason for the high number of working poor in our province is that our minimum wage is the lowest in Canada. There is little chance it will

be raised soon. According to government officials, raising the minimum wage will increase business costs and might force employers to cut staff or reduce hours of work.

Yet what are the consequences for many Albertans? More live and work in poverty. A single person earning the minimum wage is still more than \$2,000 a year below the Statistics Canada poverty line. A single mother supporting a child is more than \$5,500 below the poverty line and a family of four is more than \$12,000 below the poverty line!

Farmworkers, domestics and the mentally handicapped have even less protection than the average worker. They are not covered by Alberta minimum wage laws.

Our Minimum Wage is The Lowest



Source: Canadian Law Reports, 1987

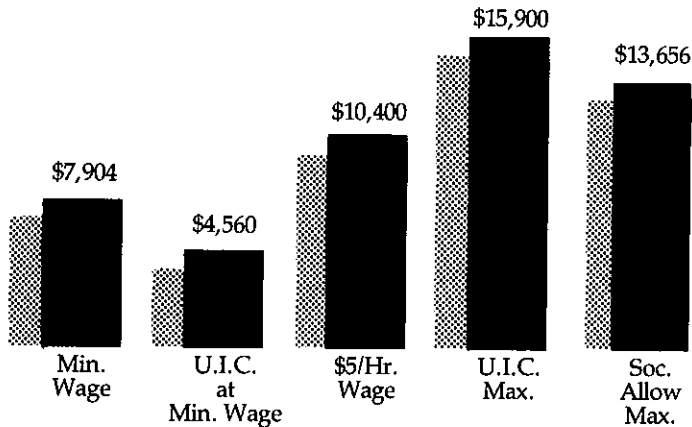
Alberta's average weekly wage is about \$444. At \$3.80 an hour, a minimum wage earner makes \$152 per week, or one third of the average.

In our society we believe that if you work hard you won't be poor. Yet a family whose wage earner makes the minimum wage actually earns less than a family on welfare. This is shocking since welfare rates are meant to meet only basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter (and little else). Surviving on a minimum wage is even more difficult.

The Poverty Gap

For a family of 4 in Alberta, 1985

Poverty Line \$20,810



Cheated by the Work Ethic...

The one thing the working poor have in common are their jobs. They are low paid, often seasonal and usually dead end. No matter how hard they work, there is little chance to move ahead.

These people cannot afford to be sick or laid off as their jobs have no fringe benefits. This means no health and dental plan, no paid sick leave, no life and accident insurance and no private pension plan. Low wage earners are the ones who need these services. They have little opportunity to save for emergencies.

Even public benefits such as unemployment insurance and worker's compensation are inadequate for someone earning the minimum wage. They are scaled according to previous earnings. For example, if someone earning the minimum wage of \$152 per week is laid off, they are only eligible to receive \$91 per week on unemployment insurance.

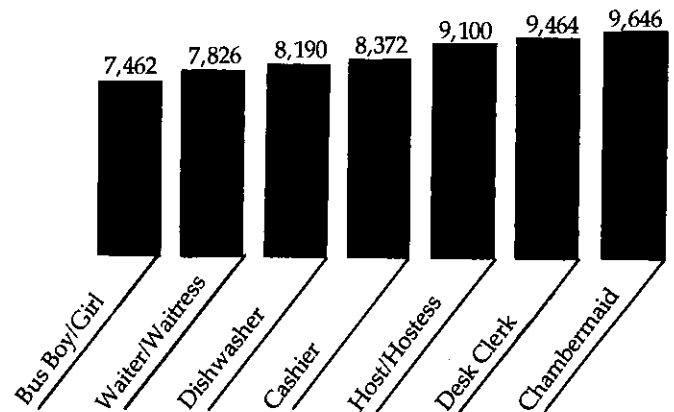
The Numbers are Growing...

Sales clerks, cashiers, waiters, cooks, typists, laundry workers, janitors... These are some of the jobs of the future. According to Statistics Canada, most new jobs now being created are service related. These jobs are not much above the legal minimum wage and many are part-time.

Some Low Income Jobs in Alberta, 1985

Poverty Line for a Family of 4, \$20,810

Poverty Line for an Individual, \$10,233



Most of these jobs are above the Minimum Wage.

Source: Alberta Pay and Benefits
Alberta Bureau of Statistics, 1985

Because of this growth in service jobs, the number of working poor will increase in the future. Women will likely be the hardest hit as they make up the majority of service workers. In Alberta, 58% of service workers were female in 1984.

Overall, women have a greater chance of being poor as, on average, they earn 60% of a man's salary even when they have the same training and work in the same jobs.

Treading Water...

For many families, both the husband and wife need to work to stay out of poverty. According to a study done by the National Council of Welfare, one out of every five one earner families was poor in 1983. Even more startling, one out of every sixteen families with two wage earners was poor. The National Council estimated there would be 68% more low income families in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba if wives quit work.

Part-Time Better Than No-Time...

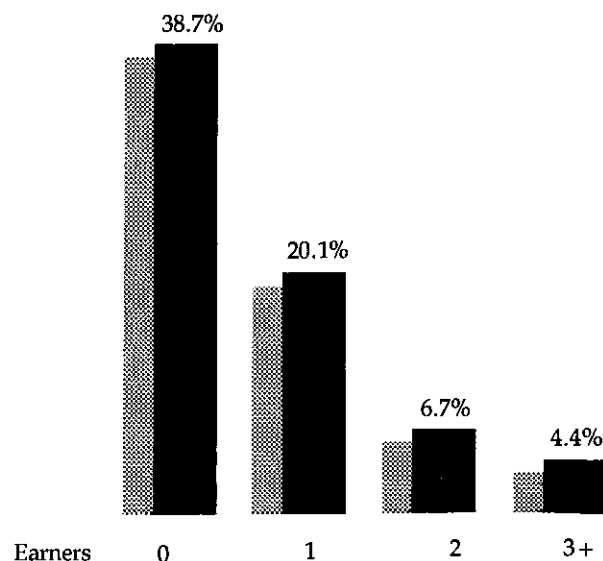
Recent employment figures show there is a move towards part-time work. Since 1975 part-time work in Alberta increased by 45% from 96,000 to 175,000 jobs.

Many part-time workers would like to work full-time. In 1985, nearly one third of all part-time workers (over half a million Canadians) could not find a full-time job.

Part-time workers are paid less than full-time workers. In 1984, they made an average of \$6.85 an hour compared to \$10.41 for full-time workers. As well, only 9% of part-time workers are covered by a company sponsored pension plan compared with 49% for full-time workers.

Again, the people most affected are women. In 1985, they made up 73% of all part-time employees in Alberta.

Family Poverty By Number of Earners, 1983



(Source: Poverty Profile, National Council of Welfare, 1985)

What Can Be Done?

The working poor are trapped into low paying jobs by family responsibilities and lack of skills. Seasonal work and low pay make it hard for them to save any money.

One way to help the working poor is to raise the minimum wage. According to the 1968 Special Senate Committee on Poverty, it should be raised to 60% of average weekly earnings. In Alberta this would mean that the minimum wage would need to be raised by an extra \$3 an hour!

Raising the minimum wage alone will not solve the low income problem for all families. What is enough for a small family to live on is not enough for a large family.

Other actions that can be taken are:

- Make up the difference between a family's earnings and the poverty line through wage supplementation programs.
 - Improve labour standards laws to ensure that unorganized and part-time workers have the same fringe benefits and working conditions as organized workers.
 - Better enforce existing labour standards laws.
 - Bring domestics and farm workers under the protection of minimum wage laws.
 - Improve job creation programs so that they offer long-term jobs with decent wages and working conditions.
 - Improve the access to and quality of on-the-job training programs.
-

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think is a fair minimum wage? What are the advantages and disadvantages of raising the minimum wage?
 2. Many low income people are forced to choose between low wages and inadequate social assistance benefits. Why do you think more working poor do not quit their jobs and go on welfare?
 3. What changes in your lifestyle would you have to make if you had a job at the minimum wage? Work out your own family budget based on minimum wage earnings.
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This is one of a series of factsheets on social issues produced by the Edmonton Social Planning Council. They are available for bulk distribution at \$15.00 per 100 plus a small mailing and handling charge. The contents may not be commercially reproduced; reproduction for other uses is encouraged.

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For more information on Alberta Facts and other publications produced by the Council, please contact:

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For many families in Alberta and across the country arranging child care for their children is a major headache. While an estimated two million Canadian children need some form of care outside the home, there are only 200 000 licensed child care spaces in the entire country. This means most Canadian children (over 80%) are being looked after by unlicensed caregivers. The major disadvantage of this form of care is that it is not subject to any kinds of standards. The onus is on parents to trust their own judgment when it comes to the quality of care their children are receiving.

Parents are confronted with major stumbling blocks in their search for child care. Most don't know where to look for reliable care, even if they are fortunate enough to have child care available where they live. Many others simply have a lack of knowledge about what constitutes good quality care. Moreover, once they've made their decision, if, like most, they've placed their children in the hands of unlicensed caregivers, they have little opportunity to monitor the appropriateness and quality of care their child is receiving during the day. To further confuse and complicate the situation, even licensed child care in this country does not necessarily signify quality.

The child care situation is particularly serious in Alberta. Although this province spends more on daycare than any other province in Canada, and Albertans have more daycare spaces per capita than anybody in the country, we have little to be proud of. Over 70% of all our child care spaces are provided by for-profit centres operating under the most minimal of government supervision. The standards that are in place are deplorably low, quite often are simply not followed, and are infrequently monitored by the provincial government.

The province believes, in keeping with the free enterprise ethic, that legislation regarding daycare centres should be kept to a minimum. There is a strong belief in Alberta that government should not interfere in the raising of children. What this means for Alberta families is a bewildering assortment of child care centres, with conditions ranging from the mediocre to the frighteningly shoddy, and mostly staffed by untrained and underpaid workers.

Federal Public Hearings - An Exercise in Futility?

Last year, in response to many groups stating that child care was in a state of crisis in Canada, the federal government struck a Parliamentary Special Committee to review daycare across the country. The results of the task force were released in March

1987. As part of the review process, the Special Committee held public hearings across the country between March and June 1986. A total of 975 groups and individuals made presentations. Out of these presentations, from parents and a large variety of provincial and local organizations, it became apparent that a clear consensus on the main child care policy issues is emerging in Canada. The majority desire that:

- public funding be directed at increasing and improving child care services rather than being given to individual parents through tax measures,
- for-profit child care should not receive public funding,
- child care funding and services should be universally accessible, and
- support should be given to a comprehensive child care system including full- and part-time group programs, regulated family care, programs for school-aged children, parent-child programs, services for special needs children, parent education and parental leave.

Despite what the public overwhelmingly told them, the major recommendation of the Special Committee was for the provision of an additional \$200 per year tax credit. This tax credit would only apply to one-half of Canadian families, with nothing available for the remainder. Many child care organizations in Alberta are enraged and frustrated with this recommendation, as tax credits do nothing to make child care more accessible to those who need the service. They also do nothing to deal with the existing lack of quality child care standards. Moreover, the Special Committee offered no recommendations to encourage non-profit child care; in fact more funding is to be directed to private operators. It appears the public hearing process has been a monumental waste of time, as the public's expressed desires have been completely disregarded.

Parents Under Siege in Alberta

In addition to the federal lack of commitment to good quality, universally accessible daycare across Canada, many Alberta parents are increasingly concerned by several provincial developments. Connie Osterman, the Minister of Social Services, has vowed to "fight like hell" about "unbelievably unfair" daycare funding rules. The province would like to expand the cost-sharing arrangements which currently exist under the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) to include funding for commercial centres. Many child care groups in Alberta strongly oppose

such a move as it would amount to pumping more money into commercial centres which already lack adequate standards. Commercial child care offers neither accountability to parents for programs provided nor accountability to the public for funds spent on child care. Opening up CAP funding would have the effect of strengthening the commercial child care sector and act as a disincentive to the development of good standards of care.

Of additional concern to Alberta parents is the possibility that the operating allowance, which every daycare in Alberta currently receives (whether it be a non-profit or commercial centre), could be discontinued or be provided only on the basis of need. Either "solution" currently being considered by the government would have a great impact on Alberta parents. If implemented, only the very rich and the very poor will be able to afford child care in this province. Middle income parents will be the hardest hit, as they could be looking at fee increases ranging from \$67.50 to \$240 per child per month.

The Debate About Child Care - An Academic Exercise?

The question today is no longer whether we need daycare or not, but rather what quality of care we are willing to provide for our children. Not all parents can or want to stay at home. The Canadian family has changed over the past 20 years, with a dramatic increase in the number of two-earner couples (from 14% to 49% of all families) and a significant increase in the number of single parents (from 6% to 11% of all families). Governments can provide a range of good quality day care options for all Canadian parents (whether working or at-home parents) if daycare is made a top priority of policy makers. Undoubtedly this will cost money. However, if a commitment is made to children it can be done. What it boils down to is where our priorities lie. Governments at both the federal and provincial levels have opted for a do little or do nothing approach, but the needs of working parents will not disappear. Eventually they will have to be dealt with.

Diana Salomaa is a researcher at the Edmonton Social Planning Council

Lottery Leftovers

Henry Dembicki

Lotteries are a growth industry in Alberta. Last year Albertans spent a record \$166 381 823 on lottery tickets. This is up from \$125.7 million in 1985.

Did you ever wonder what happens with the money that is left over after prizes, retailer commissions, administrative and other expenses are paid out? Last year, lottery profits in Alberta were distributed to 14 foundations, associations and councils. They in turn disbursed money to groups throughout the province.

In 1986, for example, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation received \$952 000 from the Western Canada Lottery (Alberta Division). In turn, the Foundation gave out 38 grants to fund activities as diverse as the purchase of period costumes and accoutrements, the printing of an historical directory, and the restoration of an old church.

Not All Money is Distributed

According to the annual report of the Western Canada Lottery (Alberta Division), about one-third of sales revenue was left over for distribution to cultural, heritage and recreational organizations

across the province. Last year, \$51.2 million was available for distribution, the year before more than \$35 million.

Contrary to what most Albertans believe, all lottery profits are not necessarily disbursed each year. In fact, the Alberta government has, over the past few years, built up a \$110 million nest egg in undistributed lottery profits.

The Present Situation

There is no debate in the provincial legislature on how lottery funds are to be disbursed. Decisions are made by the government caucus and cabinet behind closed doors. Why has this money not been distributed, especially during these hard economic times? What does the government intend to do with the \$110 million?

When asked in the legislature about the government's plans for this money Rick Orman, the minister responsible for these funds, replied:

"I can assure the honourable member and assure the Assembly that the money will go to the areas

of greatest need. And with regard to further initiatives in that area, I will be discussing allocations of those funds with my caucus and with my cabinet to be sure that we are channeling the moneys into the areas of the greatest need." (see Alberta Hansard, Monday April 6, 1987 - evening sitting p.626.)

There is little chance that in the near future these questions will be brought before the legislature for public debate.

In fact, the Alberta government has, over the past few years, built up a \$110 million nest egg in undistributed lottery profits.

Disbursements May be Illegal

The way in which lottery proceeds are currently disbursed may be illegal. As the situation stands now, the Western Canada Lottery Corporation, based in Winnipeg, acts on behalf of the province as a general administrator of the *Western Express*, *The Provincial*, *Super Lotto*, *Lotto 6/49* and *Lotto 6/36*. Its activities as general administrator include the distribution of net profits and the investment of any undistributed funds.

The licence to act on behalf of the province is supposedly authorized by the Interprovincial Lottery Act. This authority is however, in doubt. A legal opinion obtained by the Auditor General of Alberta indicates that under current law lottery funds must be put into the Government General Revenue Fund. According to the legal opinion, the Interprovincial Lottery Act neither makes provision for allowing funds to remain outside the General Revenue Fund nor does it authorize the licence to do so.

The Auditor General has raised his concern about the illegality of the present process in his last three reports. He has recommended that lottery proceeds be paid into the General Revenue Fund

where they would come under the authority and scrutiny of the legislature.

There are a number of options available to the government which could allow it to continue bypassing the legislature. The government could either legislate a special statutory fund or a provincial agency to receive and disburse lottery proceeds, or it could amend the Interprovincial Lottery Act to except the requirement that lottery proceeds be paid into the General Revenue Fund. The legal options are currently under review by the minister responsible for lotteries.

In an effort to force the government to either obey the law or change it, the Alberta Liberal caucus has commenced legal proceedings against the Alberta government.

Why Should We Be Concerned?

Ostensibly, lottery funds have gone to activities that are outside the traditional responsibility of government. Recent moves by the government indicate that lottery funds may be used to finance government activities, thus making up for government spending cuts.

At the end of June the resources of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation (a lottery fund recipient) and the Cultural Heritage Division of Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism were consolidated into the Alberta Multicultural Commission. Actions such as these blur the distinction between government activities and activities outside governmental responsibility. Furthermore, all members of the Multicultural Commission will be government appointees, further limiting public input into funding decisions.

Just before the last provincial election, the Alberta government announced an increase of about 25% in financial support to recipients of lottery funds. While there may have been no connection between the increase and the provincial election, doubts will continue to exist as long as decisions regarding the distribution of lottery proceeds are made behind closed doors.

So far, the government has refused to specify if it will make the disbursement of lottery proceeds accountable to the legislature. The government has, as well, not been forthcoming about its plans for the unspent \$110 million.

Henry Dembicki is a researcher at the Edmonton Social Planning Council.



Council News

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New Board Members

The Edmonton Social Planning Council is pleased to announce the election of four new board members to two-year terms. They are:

Beverley Decore: Beverley comes to the Council with a wealth of volunteer experience with the Junior League of Edmonton and the Alberta Foundation for Research and Education in Alcohol and Drug Abuse. She is presently a part-time student in the Master of Public Management Program in the Faculty of Business at The University of Alberta. She also holds a B.Sc. (with distinction) in Pharmacy from The University of Alberta.

David Este: David is employed as a social worker in the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program at the Glenrose Hospital. Previous to his current position, David worked at Alberta Hospital Ponoka. He has two masters degrees, one in History from the University of Waterloo and another in Social Work from the University of Toronto. He has been an active volunteer with the Northern Alberta Brain Injury Society and the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

Elvira Leibovitz: Elvira has been an extremely active volunteer for a number of Edmonton area social service agencies, including AID Services, the Youth Emergency Shelter and the Edmonton Social Planning Council. Originally from Romania, Elvira graduated from the University of Alberta with a B.A. in Sociology. In addition, Elvira has a Certificate in Business Computers from N.A.I.T. and a Business Diploma from Alberta College.

Jeffrey Pearson: Jeff is currently Manager of the Planning Branch at Alberta Municipal Affairs. He has held this position for the past 10 years. Jeff received his undergraduate and masters degrees in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Waterloo. Jeff has a passion for lifelong learning and a strong interest in developing the planner's role as a facilitator for healthier settlements.

These four new members join the current Board of Directors:

Pat Hirsche (President)
Andy McCready
Archbishop Kent Clarke
Caroline Fairbrother
Al Harris
Harvey Krahn
Terry Lind
Elizabeth Massiah
Bill Phipps
Kathy Vandergriff
John Young

The Council would like to acknowledge the outstanding contributions made by departing board members Walter Cavaliere, Cal Lee, Beth McCullough and Sarah Miller.

Brown Bag Forum

Date: Wednesday, September 16
Time: 12:10 to 1:10 p.m.
Topic: "Medicare: Could Alberta Care Less?"
Speaker: Heather Smith
Co-ordinator
Friends of Medicare
Location: 4th Floor Boardroom
10010 - 105 Street
Edmonton