

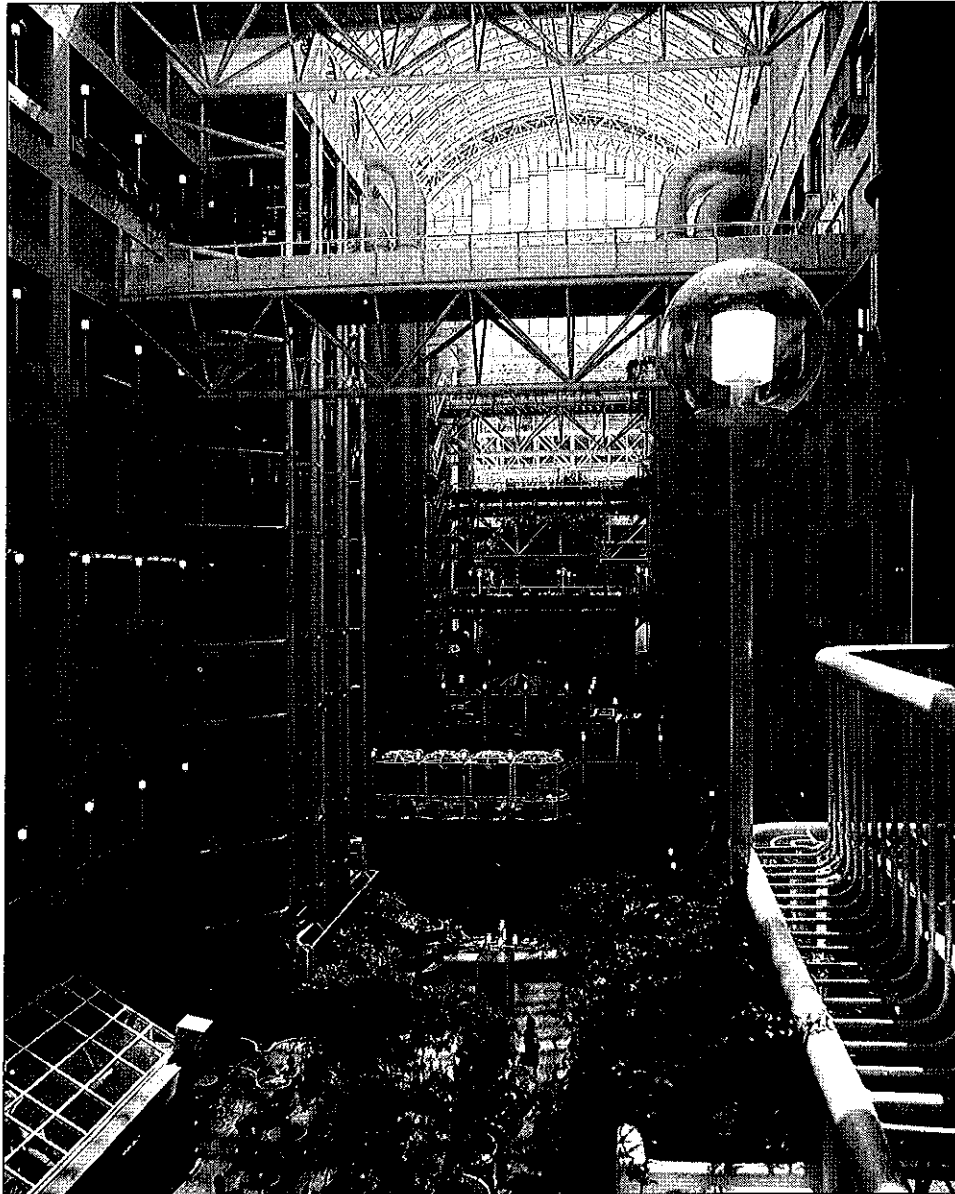
# first reading



Volume 8, Number 1

Edmonton Social Planning Council

March/April 1990



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*Photo by Pat Marston, courtesy of the  
University of Alberta Hospitals*

## The Hyndman Report

# Which end of the Rainbow?

Some were looking to it as a blueprint for the new millenium. Others hoped it would restore some confidence in the future of the health care system. Many feared it would be used as a rationale for cut-backs.

Whatever the expectation, the Hyndman report on future health care for Albertans—two years in the making and costing \$4.2 million—was eagerly awaited.

Health care in Alberta in 1990 is a system under strain. Despite an annual provincial budget of almost \$3 billion, institutions and community-based service agencies are having difficulty making ends meet. In recent months, hospitals have launched fundraising efforts, beds are regularly closed and waiting lists continue to grow.

Faced with the pressing demands of the present and the uncertainties of the future, the Hyndman commission put its collective finger in the air and came up with a rainbow.

"The Rainbow Report: Our Vision for Health," contains Hyndman's 21 recommendations. After the soft-tinted prose of volume one comes a number of critical assessments of the existing health-care system. These criticisms have received little attention to date from the media.

"The current budgetary cycles do not allow for meaningful medium- to long-range financial, physical, program and manpower planning. The various methods of funding capital and operating costs are inconsistent and difficult to rationalize," the report maintains.

It calls for government to study alternative ways to reduce budget uncertainty, including multi-year capital and operating allocations to nine elected regional Health Authorities that would manage the health care system.

### Consistency: a pressing problem

The report notes the present system is uncoordinated and does not properly evaluate its effectiveness. "This lack of consistent and clearly communicated priorities and directions is viewed as one of our major and immediately pressing problems," the report charges.

"The system has difficulty accommodating formal, comprehensive and ongoing mechanisms for reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of performance, policies, practices, outcomes and programs.

Most programs are conducted on an ad-hoc, reactionary and program-specific basis. Seldom are such reviews shared widely with providers and the public—they become internal working documents which may become lost in the bureaucracy."

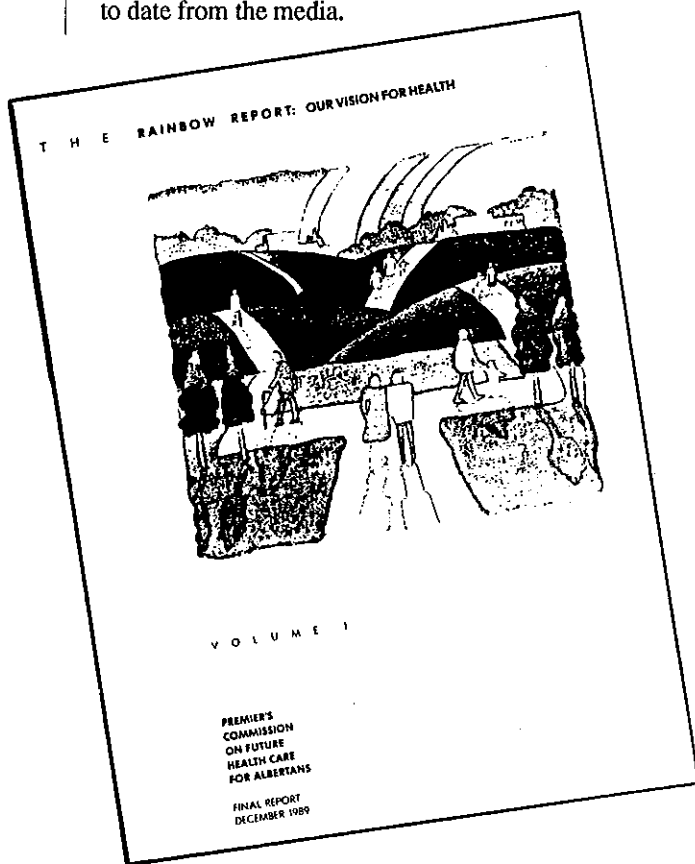
Hyndman also took aim at the lack of ongoing financial support to individuals after discharge from hospital care. Many do not have private disability insurance or access to home care, the report notes.

"Albertans don't want a system that requires us to go on welfare to receive assistance for ongoing health supports," Hyndman complains.

Instead, he suggests a system of direct payments to individuals requiring longer-term care. Each recipient would decide how to spend the funds for his or her care and related needs.

Despite the criticisms, Hyndman feels the health care system is serving Albertans well. However, he would like to see a shift in direction that would de-centralize decision making and enable individuals to "make better choices" about health care.

To meet these objectives, Alberta Health will "require some reorganization." A revamped department would "fund, co-ordinate and monitor regional activities," while the nine proposed Health Authori-



# ALBERTA FACTS

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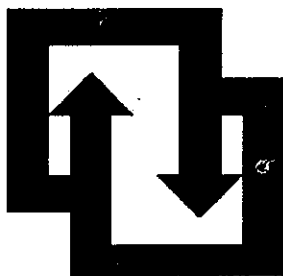
March, 1990

## Poverty and Illness: An Unhealthy Connection

Jane works as a janitor in a warehouse, cleaning at night. Although she is reluctant to admit it, the fumes from the cleaning solutions have been giving her more headaches than ever before. She has a young son, Jeffrey, whom she's forced to leave with a neighbour while she's at work because she can't afford to hire a babysitter. She's concerned he is not well looked after, as he burnt himself last week on a cigarette.

Jane walks to work to save the bus money, but the neighbourhood has become so unsafe she feels anxious every time she does. The apartment's heating system is not working, and Jeff has a constant cough. If she takes him to the doctor, it will mean she won't get any sleep that day. In any event, she won't likely be able to afford the medicine the doctor would prescribe. Jane is nineteen years old.

What could be worse than being poor? Being poor and being sick. Yet many low-income Canadians find themselves in the position of being both poor and sick. The connection between poverty and illness is strong. Yet, only recently, have researchers and other Canadians recognized the link.



What causes this unhealthy connection? Why are the poor burdened with this added weight? More and more, researchers are discovering that a life of poverty means much more than lack of income.

### What's the connection?

Research shows that people who are poor are much more likely than the well-to-do to:

- get more illnesses and stay ill for longer periods
- spend more time in hospitals and use other medical services
- have less education on health and nutrition
- live and work in more hazardous environments
- become injured or disabled
- die from preventable or curable diseases
- be unhappy.

Especially hard hit by the connection between poverty and illness are children. Many studies have shown that poor children are more likely to:

- be born prematurely and underweight
- die in infancy
- suffer from malnutrition
- get infectious diseases
- have chronic health problems
- have impaired physical/intellectual development
- smoke cigarettes
- have respiratory illnesses
- die in childhood accidents.

"If you're poor, you're more likely to be sick, less likely to receive adequate medical care, and more likely to die at an early age."

*Ruth Sidel,*

*Women and Children Last, 1986*

## Questions for discussion:

1. John Oldring, Alberta's Minister of Family and Social Services, recently said that "more money isn't the answer" to poverty. Do you agree with him? What is the solution?
2. Can poverty be eliminated, or is it a necessary evil?
3. What are some of the future implications of a large segment of society growing up in poverty and experiencing an undue share of health problems?
4. What are some of the health implications for all of us if steps are not taken to improve the environment?

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## What can you do?

1. Recognize that health is a fundamental human right which we all deserve, and that poverty keeps people from health as well as from happiness.
2. Support programmes which try to break the cycle of poverty and illness, including food programmes in schools for poor children, and life skills and vocational training for the poor.
3. Join or start a group to look at issues of poverty and illness. Start by looking at your own neighbourhood for ways to begin. Convince others of the need for action.
4. Challenge governments, businesses, and all

voters to help raise the level of financial assistance to the poor, including minimum wages, social allowance, disability benefits, old age security, and to legislate such changes as: affordable housing, child care, and dental care, stronger occupational safety regulations, and pay equity for women.

*Write to your Member of Parliament (MP), your Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), and your local Chamber of Commerce, and ask them what they are doing to encourage the above changes.*

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## Recommended reading:

Harding, Michele, *The Relationship between Economic Status and Health Status and Opportunities: A Synthesis*, Toronto: Ontario Social Assistance Review Committee, 1987.

Rootman, Irving, "Inequities in Health: Sources and Solutions", *Health Promotion*, Health and Welfare Canada, Volume 26, Number 3, Winter 1988.

Ross, David P. and Shillington, Richard, *The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty: 1989*, Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1989.

Sidel, Ruth "The Impact of Poverty on Health and Wellbeing", ch. 7 in *Women and Children Last*, Markham, Ontario: Penguin, 1986.

*Surviving on Welfare: A No-Frills Flight*, Edmonton: Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1986.

Wigle, D. T. and Mau, Y., *Mortality by Income Level in Urban Canada*, Ottawa: National Health and Welfare, 1980.

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**Poverty and Illness: An Unhealthy Connection** is one of a series of fact sheets on social issues produced by the Edmonton Social Planning Council. Copies are available in bulk for classes and study groups.

The Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent, non-profit social action agency which seeks social justice through policy analysis, applied research, community development, and training and consultation.

For more information about the Council, its regular publications **First Reading** and **Alberta Facts**, or other publications, please contact:



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A United Way Member Agency



ties would allocate funds locally and determine regional priorities.

An Advocate for a Healthy Alberta would ensure that planning, policy development and evaluation took place.

The Advocate would be a "catalyst for change" and bring attention to broad issues concerning health.



*Above, Lou Hyndman*

Albertans would be armed with a smart card which would include their medical history, and would receive a personal budget for health care that

### **A big consumer role**

Hyndman's vision of future health care puts the onus squarely on consumers. Increased personal responsibility and choice in health management is the goal; the government's role, in part, becomes one of improving the availability of information to consumers.

*Deputy commissioner Alex McPherson*

## **Consumers need information**

The health care system must reach out to the poor to improve their access to available services, says Alex McPherson, deputy commissioner of the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans.

"There has to be a balance between reaching out and just simply providing bricks and mortar," McPherson told a lunch-time discussion group organized by the Alberta Futures Network.

Inner city residents in Toronto, he noted, live near a broad variety of hospitals and clinics, yet, with the exception of native Canadians, their health status is the worst in the country.

McPherson defended the reluctance of the Hyndman report to deal in detail with specific issues or health care services.

The commission's focus had to be on setting out a vision for the future, he maintained. It would have been "absurd" to have tried to deal with the myriad of specific concerns as the commission just wouldn't have had the time to complete its work.

"We formed, normed, stormed and performed,"

would be tracked with the help of a debit card.

Hyndman insists there would be no limit to expenditures allowed each health care consumer. Instead, the report predicts wiser health care decisions will be made, resulting in reduced costs to the system.

Consumer choice would also be enhanced by access to supplementary health care insurance for services not covered by the government-run insurance plan.

In choosing not to define what would be included by public health insurance, Hyndman has left the door open to charges that his suggestions would lead to a two-tiered system. The commission felt this was a matter best left to government and chose instead to focus on increasing personal choice.

These, then, are the principal elements of the Hyndman vision of future health care: a system that promotes prevention, regional decision making, smart consumers and a framework that the commission feels will allow for greater personal choice.

Nancy Belkowski and a review committee will now look into Hyndman's crystal ball and decide whether they see a rainbow or a gathering storm.

McPherson said in describing his fellow commissioners' efforts to develop a framework for future health care.

McPherson, former deputy minister of Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care, emphasized personal responsibility for health care decisions but underlined the need to improve the availability of information to consumers.

Developing a health care system that enables consumers to take more responsibility for health care decisions could be risky, McPherson conceded, but "it is better to give the person the opportunity to make a mistake" than have the system impose its will on an individual, he added.



*Above, Alex McPherson*

# *Reactions to the Hyndman report*

## **Sherry McKibben**

*Health Co-ordinator, Boyle McCauley Health Centre*

If the Hyndman report were used as a blueprint for the future, there would be "a worsening of the health care" of poor Albertans, according to Sherry McKibben, health coordinator at the inner-city Boyle McCauley Health Centre.

Funds to address issues relating to poverty and health would likely be diverted to other areas under a Hyndman-inspired health care system.

The report's failure to deal adequately with such issues as substance abuse and poverty in health care could result in these issues being ignored, says

McKibben.

She faults Hyndman for failing to develop an agenda for action for the poor, even though many groups submitted briefs to the commission on the subject.

McKibben would like to have seen more discussion about access to health services by the poor, a plan to improve employment opportunities particularly for disadvantaged young adults and a focus on health promotion programs geared to low-income people.

## **Michael Phair**

*President, Edmonton Social Planning Council*

The rainbow report is a hodge-podge of ideas rather than a coherent vision of the future, says Edmonton Social Planning Council president Michael Phair.

Phair, doesn't think the Hyndman commission clearly identified priorities and, he feels, it neglected to deal with some important issues.

"We are not convinced the report takes into account health concerns of the poorest people in our society," Phair told *First Reading*.

The commission's emphasis on enhancing personal choice is a mirage, he said. Health providers are actually in control of consumer choice.

"If you're ill, you don't want sixteen different places to run to," he said. "Consumers want the

system to provide quality and coordination. It's not the consumer who should have to do the coordination."

Phair applauds Hyndman's emphasis on health promotion and thinks the suggestion of creating nine health care regions is "worth discussing." But he feels the commission should have initially produced a draft report and then finalized its conclusions after consulting with stakeholder groups.

"The recommendation regarding health promotion would have been of more benefit if there had been more feedback," says Phair.

"They might have taken a different direction."

## **Jim Killick**

*Executive Director, Alberta Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled*

A proposal by the Hyndman commission to direct payments for ongoing health supports to individuals with special needs was greeted with enthusiastic support by Jim Killick of the Alberta Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled.

Killick notes that it costs government over \$43,000 a year to maintain an individual in an auxiliary hospital. For those who can live in the community, a direct payment of \$20,000 to \$25,000 would, he feels, allow a person to make independent arrangements for home care or other services.

"Disabled people are not sick," said Killick,

"and as such we should control our own destiny." Under a direct payment system Killick thinks many handicapped people would leave long-term care institutions and make a life in the community.

Killick feels the provincial government must follow through with appropriate social policy that emphasizes the dignity of the individual and the family. One step would include support for home care for individuals under 65 years old.

## Richard Plain

*Professor of Economics, University of Alberta*

The Hyndman commission missed the boat when it didn't look at how to finance present and future needs of the health care system, says Richard Plain, a U of A economist and chairperson of the health care committee of the Consumers Association of Canada (Alberta branch).

"For all practical purposes, the report is innocent of any consideration of health care economics," says Plain.

He is particularly concerned about the impact of an aging population and new and costly technology on our ability to maintain an affordable public

health care system. "If we don't address these issues, Plain asks, "what's the point of the exercise?" He suggests, somewhat tongue in cheek, there will be "a whole new set of Royal commissions" to look at issues missed by the rainbow report.

Plain likes Hyndman's emphasis on improving consumer awareness, but suggests more attention is needed on controlling how many physicians enter the health care system. Between 1984 and 1987, while Alberta's population didn't grow, Plain says there were 20-25% more physicians and costs rose by 35%.

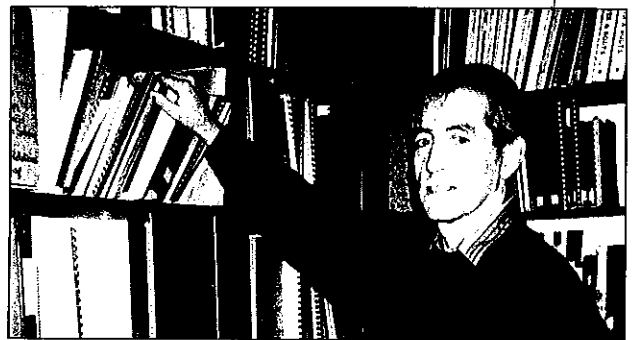
## *Editorial Comment* **Rainbow offers no promise to the poor**

*By Peter Faid, Executive Director  
Edmonton Social Planning Council*

The Hyndman Report fails to clarify government responsibility in health care, and ignores poor Albertans.

The report calls for locally-elected Health Authorities, who will advise government on regional priorities for health care funding. This is similar to the Ontario Health model, which has been criticized for adding one further layer of bureaucracy to the health care system. We have to wonder if this innovation is merely a way of further shielding the government from the people.

A great disappointment to the Edmonton Social Planning Council is the lack of concern for the ef-



fects of poverty on health care for Albertans. The Commission was well aware of the frightening statistics on poverty and illness, and of the numbers of Albertans living in poverty. Even so, the report fails to appropriately deal with the issue. For example, the development of community-based health centres received little attention.

The so-called "smart cards" will include not only medical histories, but whether or not health insurance premiums have been paid. Will this lead to health care of lower quality for those who have not paid their premiums? In no place does the report mention the issue of eliminating premiums, although the Edmonton Social Planning Council's brief had recommended this, and seven of Canada's ten provinces do not charge premiums.

Especially distressing is the recommendation of "some form of reward" to Albertans who use the health care system less than others. This would certainly have the effect of persuading low-income Albertans to avoid proper health care rather than lose this 'reward'.

The rainbow can certainly be a sign of hope. But the provincial government needs to do more than promise a pot of gold in the future, and deal with the realities which their past health care policy has brought to the present.

*First Reading* is published 6 times a year by the Edmonton Social Planning Council. We invite your comments:

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## Income Security Action Committee findings

# Action overdue on shelter rates

An increase in shelter rates in Alberta's Social Allowance Program is long overdue, according to the Income Security Action Committee (ISAC).

At a news conference at the Edmonton Food Bank on February 13, ISAC called on the government to provide for a cost-based shelter allowance in the upcoming provincial budget.

The inter-agency group was formed two years ago to address issues related to income security.

Margaret Duncan, senior planner at the Edmonton Social Planning Council was elected ISAC chairperson at the November meeting.

"It's time the government made good on its promise to support families in Alberta by ensuring that every Albertan has the funds necessary to maintain a home," says Duncan.

### Purchasing power goes down

An analysis of shelter rates was done by Karen Potts, a practicum student at the Council. She found that single people on welfare have lost 81 per cent of their purchasing power for housing as a result of cuts in shelter rates combined with increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) since 1980.

Alberta families receiving social allowance have lost 44 per cent of their purchasing power for

housing over the last decade.

"This has left 150,000 people in Alberta - 70,000 of whom are children under the age of 18 -- in desperation," Duncan notes.

In 1981, shelter rates were increased up to nine per cent, during a year when the CPI for housing rose 14 per cent. In 1982, shelter rates were again increased by as much as 13 per cent as the Consumer Price Index rose 13 per cent.

However, in 1983 when the CPI rose by five per cent, shelter rates were cut 10 per cent for families and 23 per cent for single people. In subsequent years, there have been no increases in shelter rates as the CPI rose.

In 1987, single people suffered an additional 38 per cent cut in their housing purchasing power when Family and Social Services began to differentiate between "employable" single people and "unemployable" single people. This cut was made even though unemployment rates stood at nearly 10 per cent for Alberta as a whole and at 11.3 per cent for the City of Edmonton.

"It is self-evident that the cost of living for people who are classified 'employable' is no less than for people who are called 'unemployable'," Duncan points out.

ISAC would like to see an end to discrimination against single people labelled "employable" in the setting of rates and provision of benefits throughout the Social Allowance program.

"The unequal treatment of single people raises questions of horizontal equity under Canada's Charter of Rights," Duncan points out. "It also raises questions of the Alberta Government's compliance with the Social Development Act which requires that the province provide for people's basic needs."

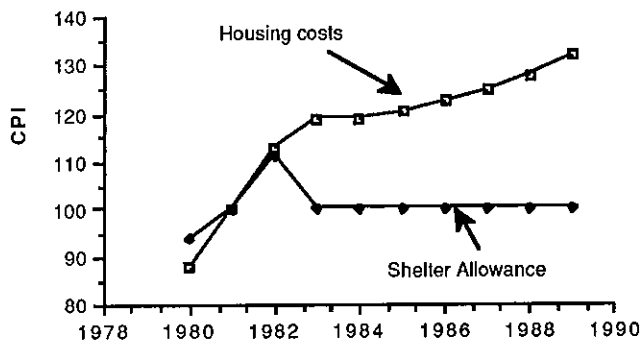
One of the avenues being explored by ISAC is the possibility of a legal challenge as a means of safeguarding the interests of low-income Albertans.



*Margaret Duncan and Jon Murphy (of Operation Friendship) face questions at ISAC's press conference.*

### Shelter Allowance Buying Power

(Alberta Shelter Allowance for a family of four, compared with CPI for housing in Edmonton)



*The shelter allowance for a family of four (pegged at \$505 since 1983) has lagged far behind the Consumer Price Index for housing in Edmonton.*



*Action Overdue on Shelter Rates*  
(continued from page 6)

Duncan points out that during the 1980s, salaries and expense allowances for Alberta's members of the legislative assembly increased over and above the Consumer Price Index. MLA's salaries increased 83 per cent and their expense allowances increased 210 per cent, for an average 112 per cent increase in MLA spending power.

During that same period, the overall CPI increased by 61 per cent for a real spending increase of 51 per cent.

**Working poor**

The committee is also concerned about the plight of the working poor.

"We are alarmed at the apparent increase in the numbers of families with one or more breadwinners whose wages are not adequate to provide the basic necessities of life," says Duncan

Approximately 11,000 of the people receiving Social Allowance are employed, but aren't earning enough to support themselves and their families. This trend is created in part by a shift from full-time to part-time employment—during the 1980s, 34,000 full-time jobs were replaced with 36,000 part-time jobs.

"With Alberta leading the nation in replacement of full-time jobs with part-time jobs and with a minimum wage that yields an annual income of \$9,500, it's not surprising that Albertans find a need to supplement their incomes with Social Allowance," Duncan says.

**Demands on the food bank**

Since last October, approximately 60 per cent of the users of Edmonton's Food Bank have been people receiving Social Allowance.

A comparison between the cost of Agriculture Canada's nutritious food basket and Alberta's food allowances shows that the latter falls short by an average of \$51.80 a month.

The inadequacy of food allowance rates is compounded by inadequate shelter allowances that force people to pay out food dollars for shelter costs. "Spending food dollars on housing costs is not an act of choice, it's an act of desperation for all people living on low incomes," says Duncan.

Further pressures on the housing dollar are being felt in rental markets in cities throughout Alberta. Last October, vacancy rates on rental units were 1.1 per cent in Edmonton, 1.2 per cent in Calgary

and .5 per cent in Lethbridge. Rents have increased by as much as eight per cent in Calgary in the past year and Canada Mortgage and Housing projects further increases of between eight and ten per cent in Edmonton and Calgary in 1990.

In a recent telephone survey, the Family Service Association of Edmonton found that 50 per cent of clients receiving Social Allowance who responded, had a rental increase since last October.

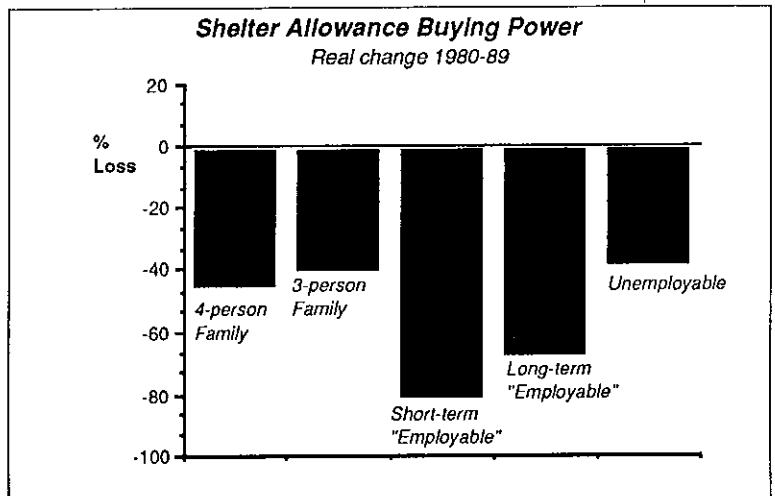
"The only discretionary funds these people have are in their food and clothing allowances."

**Other issues**

Research shows that people who are poor are much more likely than the well-to-do to get more illnesses and stay ill for longer periods, spend more time in hospitals and use other medical services, and die from preventable or curable illnesses, Duncan says. (*See Alberta Facts insert in this issue*)

ISAC made a presentation to the Hyndman Commission and will be responding to the report. The inter-agency committee also plans to examine and report on the Alberta Health Care premium subsidy program with respect to its adequacy in meeting the needs of the poor. The committee will also investigate the availability of health resources in low income neighbourhoods, and the availability of mental health services to the poor.

ISAC represents more than 50 social agencies, municipal organizations, church groups and counselling services.



*The net loss in buying power of Alberta's shelter allowance ranges from 38% in real terms for unemployable single people, to 81% for single people who are "employable" and have been receiving social assistance for less than three months.*

# Albertans in Poverty: *Their own words*

*No-one knows the reality of poverty like those who live there—and no-one can be more eloquent on the subject. The following letters are by Albertans living in poverty, written as part of a public education campaign advocating improved service for people receiving social assistance and more realistic social allowance rates. Letters are used with the permission of the writers.*

January 17, 1990

To: John Oldring:

I'm a disabled person and I live on AISH. I'm thankful for the program but I can't help wondering why there has been no raise for so long. If poverty level for one person is \$12,000 per year, why is AISH at \$8,640 per year?

I'm 35 and a victim of Crohn's Disease. I cannot work so I get AISH at \$720.00 per month. I'm eligible for \$555 a month from CPP, but I'm not allowed to keep any of it. If I could keep even half it would make all the difference in the world to me.

As it stands now my budget looks like this:

\$400.00	Rent
\$100.00	Utilities
\$100.00	Gas, auto insurance, clothing, payments, extras, etc.
<u>\$120.00</u>	Food
\$720.00	

I'd sure like to see some of you try to live on that.

I'll never own my own home, or have new furniture, new clothes are a luxury, entertainment is impossible. My son turned 18 and I couldn't support him so he had to move.

When my 14-year-old van breaks down ... I'll have to go without a vehicle from then on. I cannot afford to replace things that break down or get old.

You can say "move to a cheaper place" but anything cheaper is a dump that only makes me more ill trying to live in them. I do not have the room to share.

I don't see why I have to be a second class citizen just because I got sick. It's not enough. Please, make it better. For all of us. Thank you.

J.H.

January 2, 1990

To: John Oldring:

I'm pleased with your idea of getting in touch with people living on an impossible income. I am one of them!

I work 4-days a week, 5 to 6 hours a day at \$4.00/hr. I rent our apartment (Edmonton Housing Authority) for \$81.00 a month and pay our bills for utilities, heat, etc. -- another \$80/mo. The housing authority wrote us that they are going to increase our rent this year!

This is our problem, we are senior citizens (Canadian citizens). Me and my wife live in this apartment. My income, if you realize it, is below the standard way to live.

I would like to be in the meeting, but I've got to work, otherwise I lose part of my income.

Please! If you could arrange for us, with the government social welfare, to help us have an additional assistance to our income. Things are kind of hard to make both ends meet. Thanks, and I would be counting on you for this favor.

Sincerely,  
Juan C. Delera, Sr.



December 20, 1989.

To: John Oldring

It is with deep regret and complete frustration that I am writing this letter.

I am a single parent raising three children who happen now to be in their early teens. It is on their behalf that I believe you must listen to a person whom your decisions and actions directly affect. The young are generally powerless and need to know their society has their interests at heart.

. . . I am appalled by what I see of you, especially as seen through the media. The perception seems to be in the black/red pages of profits and losses. This department which you head should be more concerned with human dignity and well-being. Being poor should not be a crime and limit the future.

I was upset by the remarks made about low-income people not being able to budget their cheques. First of all, we are human and are not perfect. While there are people who have difficulty doing this, it not limited to the poor. Those in debt are more likely not poor—believe me.

There is simply not enough money to be able to budget in the first place...The utilities are not fully covered; the clothing allowance does not cover one person, let alone a family of four—especially teenagers.

### *Children in Poverty:*

## What does the Future Hold?

The Social Planning Council's Brown Bag Lunch on children in poverty attracted a capacity audience—including social services minister John Oldring—on March 7.

ESPC planner Margaret Duncan provided an overview of the extent of the problem: some 41,000 Edmonton children (one in six) live below the poverty line.

ESPC president Michael Phair discussed some federal and provincial initiatives in the area. In particular, he reviewed the proposed international Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

Canada is considering becoming a signatory to the declaration. Alberta's labour minister Elaine McCoy will be responsible for carrying this province's response to the federal government.

The final presenter was Martin Garber-Conrad, executive director of the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation. He stressed the importance of early childhood programs such as Head Start school programs, in helping children overcome the barriers

There is no extra money left for seasonal needs, warm coats, boots, winter clothing, etc. The food allowance has to be stretched beyond all endurance.

The list could go on and on. The stress alone causes depression and general lack of enjoyment of life. Children go to school—field trips are a big problem. That too comes off the cheque, or else they stay home. They fast become "Welfare Kids," and thus face cruel and separate treatment in their lives.

Please—do not blame the 95% for the 5% cases of abuse. We are basically families who are simply trying to survive under very difficult circumstances.

Look for abuse in your own department. Why is it that on Monday and Fridays it is difficult to find anyone?

In conclusion, the effect on my children is my greatest concern. I have bright, beautiful young people who have come to the conclusion that they always have to accept second-best.

These children are our future! Who knows—one of the children could discover the cure for cancer, be a great artist, or move the world they do not see themselves as even being able to dream . . .

For their sakes, help light their world once again.

Yours truly,  
A single parent, low-income

posed by poverty.

It has been shown that each dollar invested in such programs will save up to seven dollars in other social costs for such things as remedial education and the criminal justice system, Garber-Conrad told the audience.

### Lobby Public School Board

On April 10, the Edmonton Public School Board will be considering a motion to direct their administration to bring back a plan for implementing three Head Start programs.

The Child Poverty Action Committee encourages those interested in this issue to call their trustee to express support for the Head Start program and to attend the meeting at the Centre for Education, #1 Kingsway Avenue, 6:00 p.m.

Call the Council to find out names and telephone numbers of the school trustees and what time this item will appear on the agenda.

*Fifty years of change*

## History in the making

Fund raising has been a problem for the Edmonton Social Planning Council from the beginning. "It was a major issue in 1939, and it hasn't let up over the years," reports freelance writer Marsha Mildon.

Mildon has been wading through "boxes and boxes of stuff" in the archives and interviewing the people who have been associated with the Council throughout its history. Her findings will be the basis for *Fifty Years of Change* -- a chronicle of the people, events and influences of the Edmonton Social Planning Council. The book is being published as part of the Council's anniversary celebrations.

Mildon brings to the job her "absolute delight in history". She has particularly enjoyed reading the correspondence between John Imrie, chairperson of the organizing committee, and the Canadian Welfare Council in the late 1930s.

"You can get a real sense of the excitement and what was involved in getting the Council going," Mildon says. "People were nowhere near as guarded in their assessment of people and places as we are now."

The sense of personal commitment in the face of adversity is what really stands out for Mildon, as she goes through the materials and talks to the people who were involved. "There is a quite remarkable sense of commitment and importance of what they

were doing and the need to struggle on."

Mildon worked for the Council herself in 1969-70, so she started her research by talking to the people she knew and took it from there.

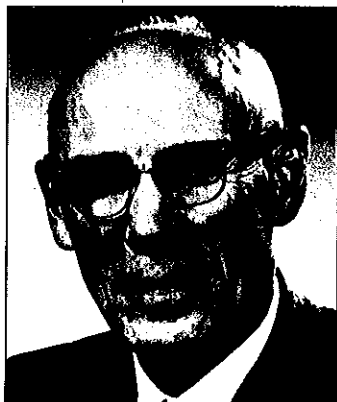
"Each person I talk to knows the whereabouts of someone else," she says. In fact, a friend's parents are friends of Elmer Roper, who was president in 1943 and now lives at the coast.

Tracking people down has required quite a lot of detective work. "There are lots of letters in the boxes that give clues as to where people might be found, and the telephone book has been a help," Mildon says.

However, if anyone else has any leads, she would appreciate hearing from them. She is finding the years 1945 to 1952 the most difficult as "there is very little in the archives and most of the people involved don't seem to be around either."

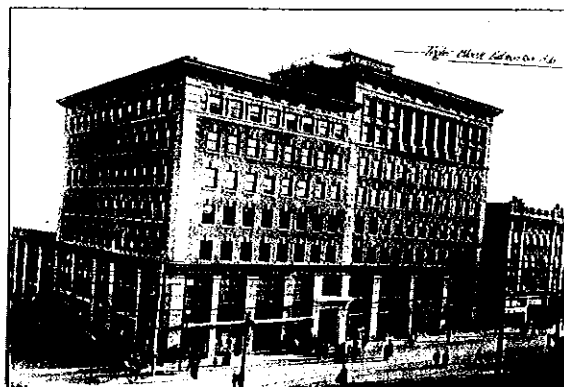
Mildon can be contacted through the Council office (423-3021) if you have any photographs or information you think should be included, or know the whereabouts of any of the key players over the years.

Copies of *Fifty Years of Change* will be available later in the summer.



*Top photo: Elmer Roper, president in 1943.*

*Bottom photo: the Tegler Building, first home of the Edmonton Social Planning Council*



### Edmonton Social Planning Council Annual General Meeting

April 9, 1990  
All Saints' Cathedral  
10039 - 103 Street  
7:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Mayor Jan Reimer  
"Urban Development:  
As If People Really Mattered"

Presentation of Annual Report  
Election of Board  
Reception to follow

# Tracking the Trends Families with children

During the next decade, what trends do you think are likely to have a significant influence on services for families with children? That is the question being asked of participants in a study on community trends.

Research on Families With Children -- the second volume of Tracking the Trends: Future Directions for Human Services In Edmonton will be published in June, 1990.

The first volume, released last September, focused on youth and seniors. The plan is to "track the trends" annually for target populations -- revisiting them for an update every third year.

"In times of fiscal restraint, it's crucial that government departments and community agencies monitor the significant trends likely to influence the need for human services," says ESPC Executive Director Peter Faid. "It's hoped that Tracking the Trends can help in planning new programs and policy initiatives."

Tracking the Trends is written and compiled by an inter-agency group called the Community Trends Working Group. Members include: Joni Morrison-O'Hara of Alberta Family and Social Services; Virginia Smith of Alberta Mental Health Services; Penny MacDonald of the Edmonton Board of Health; J.P. Lebourgeois of Edmonton Community and Family Support Services; Peter Faid and Jennifer Hyndman of the Edmonton Social Planning Council;

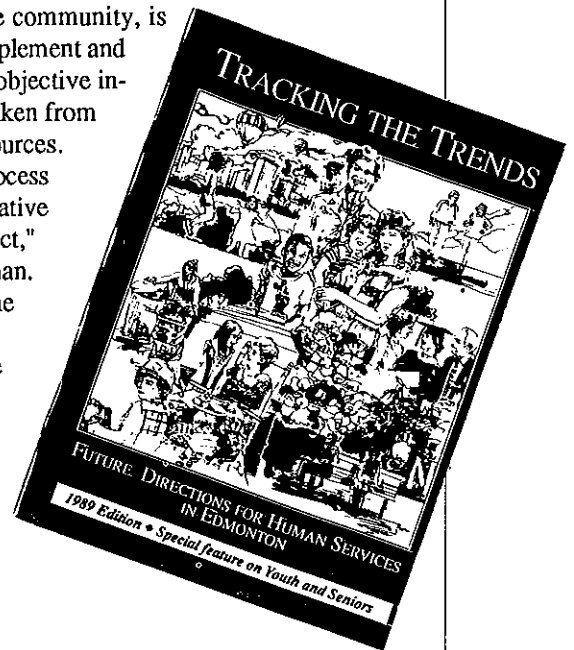
and Willie Kwong of the United Way of Edmonton and Area.

The method used to identify trends combines quantitative statistical data with more qualitative information from key informants in the community.

"The focus-group process we use provides a unique forum," says Jennifer Hyndman. "People working and living in the community identify their own issues and share practical experience with other group members."

Information from these groups, together with data taken from questionnaires distributed to informants in the community, is used to complement and explain the objective information taken from statistical sources.

"The process is as informative as the product," says Hyndman. Copies of the first issue are available through the ESPC for the cost of postage and handling.



## Celebrate our 50th year

Mark your calendar now for the Council's 50th anniversary celebration dinner, at the Westin Hotel, October 17.

"The purpose of the 50th anniversary is to celebrate the accomplishments of 50 years and gain momentum for the next 50," says Bettie Hewes.

Hewes is chairing the anniversary committee which includes the following members: Michael Phair, Elsie McFarland, Cynthia Lazarenko, Keith Wass, Elizabeth O'Neill, Judy Padua, Terry Lind, Lynn Hannley and Peter Faid.

"We want to honour those people who have worked with the Planning Council, as well as examine issues facing our community in the coming years," says Hewes.

Past-presidents of the Council will be recognized in the program and at a special table at the banquet.

The ESPC is also selling commemorative coffee mugs. The anniversary mugs have been designed for the Council by Noboru Kubo, a fourth-generation potter born and educated in Japan. Kubo currently teaches for the Faculty of Extension, U of A. He is represented in private, corporate and government collections in Japan, the U.S., Great Britain and Canada.

The mugs are available from the ESPC office at \$10.00 each. They are sand in colour and are decorated with the ESPC logo and the years 1940-1990. They will also be on sale at the annual general meeting on April 9.

To:

From: Edmonton Social Planning Council  
#41, 9912-106 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 1C5  
Phone: (403-2031) Fax: 425-6244

Second Class Mail Registration Number 6390 i.d. 03/90

## Council Briefs

### *MLA Breakfast - March 20*

Board members and executive staff from non-profit human service agencies had breakfast with local politicians on Tuesday, March 20.

This was the third year the Edmonton Social Planning Council hosted an MLA breakfast. "The breakfast gatherings provide an opportunity to informally mingle with, listen to and question Local MLAs and key Ministers," says ESPC president Michael Phair.

"There were no speeches, so the maximum time could be spent with the elected officials of your choice on key issues and concerns."

### *Brown Bag Forum*

Marjorie Bencz, executive director of the Edmonton Food Bank, will be the guest speaker at the next Brown Bag Forum. She will be discussing "Breadlines Then and Now" -- the role of the food bank in the community. The forum will be held on Wednesday, May 16 at 12:00 noon. The location will be announced as soon as it is confirmed.

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## Membership Application

### Membership Categories:

Individual	\$25.00
Family	\$35.00
Associate*	\$20.00
Organization	\$45.00

\* Associate members don't have a vote or receive a discount on publications.

As a member you benefit by receiving:

- First Reading (a bi-monthly newsletter);
- Alberta Facts (a bi-monthly fact sheet on an issue);
- notice of all ESPC public activities;
- a vote at the Annual General Meeting;
- a 15% discount on all publications distributed by the Council.

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First Name

Last Name

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Organization

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Address

Postal Code

---

Home Telephone

Business Telephone

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Social issues of interest

Please make cheque payable to:

**Edmonton Social Planning Council**

**#41, 9912 - 106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1C5**

**Telephone: 423-2031 Fax: 425-6244**