



FOUR LIVE ON \$187.66 a month?

If you think that the level of welfare payments in this province is high enough, try this experiment. Live on the amount of a welfare payment for one month.

First, take up to \$60 and try to rent an apartment. Sixty dollars per household is the normal rent allowance for welfare recipients. Walk the streets for a couple of days, and see if you can find anything. If you can find a place, chances are you won't like it, but move in anyway. - You have no choice.

Next, calculate your food allowance. If you are a single adult you are entitled to \$26 for the month (86 cents a day). If there is a second adult in the household add another \$17.30 (58 cents a day). Don't bother asking why two can eat cheaper than one. Have any children? Then add 43 cents a day for each of them.

Now go shopping. Under the welfare voucher system this will be your only shopping trip of the month. No dropping down to the corner store; you'll have to buy everything you will need for the whole month now. And you will have to buy everything at this one store, since they won't give you any money back if you don't spend your full voucher allotment.

Don't buy milk; it won't keep. Don't buy meat; it's too expensive. Don't go over your budget; how could you pay for it? Don't go under your allotment; they won't give you any change. Don't buy any cigarettes; what do you think welfare is?

Now, try and carry it all home.

Don't count on buying any clothes for the month; you are not entitled to any clothing allowance for the first three months on welfare.

There is an allowance for personal items you might need, like toothpaste, soap, shoe polish, etc. etc. A single adult is allowed 20 cents a day for these items, two adults are allowed 34 cents a day. Spend it carefully.

If you really want to see what it's like to live on welfare in New Brunswick, repeat the experiment month after month.

Lowest welfare payments in Canada

New Brunswick has the most inadequate welfare programme in all of Canada. A family of four is expected to live on only \$44 a week including food, shelter, and clothing. More than 50,000 people in the province are condemned to day-to-day subsistence sponsored by the Hatfield government.

In total, welfare payments

amount to \$36 million a year, about \$700 per recipient. Half of this money comes directly from the federal government, the provincial contribution therefore is only \$18 million.

The \$18 million spent by the Hatfield government this year is not lost to the provincial economy. Sobeys and Dominion Stores receive part of the

money through food purchases, and slum landlords across the province collect the welfare rent money for their deplorable housing.

The government, too, gets a good deal of the welfare payments back through the 8 per cent sales tax, property taxes which are included in the rent payment, and other hidden taxes.

So, the money paid out to people on welfare at the beginning of the month is back in

the pockets of the rich or returned to the government coffers by the end of the month.

The welfare system is a bargain. For a price of less than 2 per cent of total output of the province, the government is purchasing financial and social control over more than 8 per cent of the population. These are the most impoverished and socially oppressed people in the province. Without the controls of the welfare system, this

group might seriously threaten the power and privileges of corporations and the Hatfield government.

However, it is becoming clear that the New Brunswick government cannot purchase social stability so cheaply. The recent report of the task force on social development in the province points out the rising undercurrent of social revolution in this province. Is Richard Hatfield smart enough to know his own self-interest?

POWER FROM THE TOP DOWN

The New Brunswick Welfare system with its hundreds of administrators, bureaucratic forms, and embarrassing questions is slowly but surely dragging down the poor.

Most of the welfare workers are conscientious and well intentioned people, but they too are caught in the system. Investigation of welfare recipients are required by law.

When applying for welfare you must submit yourself to a barrage of questions. Just why aren't you working? Do you have children? How many? Why so many? Where is your husband? How much do you have in the bank? And on. And on.

What difference does it make to your kids whether their father is here or in Toronto when their food is running out and their clothes are wearing thin? What difference does it matter whether you've gone to grade 10 or grade 12?

Applying for welfare is a bureaucratic obstacle course: appointments, interviews, forms, waiting rooms, and "come back tomorrow."

If you manage to answer all the interviewers questions in the right tone and with the proper look of humility, you are promoted to a waiting room. Most of the people in the room stand in a line waiting to be called, only a few sit down. When your turn comes the officers discuss in loud voices all the aspects of your financial statements, removing from you whatever dignity remained.

But this is only the beginning, the beginning of an endless stream of advice all delivered in self-righteous tones, like an adult talking to a naughty child.

Theoretically, the poor can appeal to the Appeal Board for a better deal. But in New Brunswick the Appeal Board does not include even one representative of the poor. In reality the poor have no power over the welfare system. The power goes in one direction, and one direction only: from the top down.

For the poor the results of the system are humiliating and brutal. It destroys personal dignity and takes away the rights of people to control their own lives.

Table 7: Monthly and Annual Budget Standards for items of Basic Welfare need, by Provinces, December 1970 (For a family of 4 - i.e., 2 parents and 2 children (a girl of 8 years and a boy of 13 years)).

	Monthly	Annually
Newfoundland (1)	\$230.00	\$2,760
Prince Edward Island (2)	244.00	
Nova Scotia (3)	263.00	
New Brunswick (4)	187.66	
Quebec (5)	218.00	2,616
Ontario (6)	271.00	3,252
Manitoba (7)	246.10	2,953
Saskatchewan (8)	215.75	2,589
Alberta (9)	335.00	4,020
British Columbia (10)	211.00	2,532

Source: Monthly Budgets for items of Basic Need under Provincial Assistance Programs (Revised December, 1970). Welfare Research Division, Department National Health and Welfare, December 1970.

High taxes don't match welfare payments

Many people, especially the working poor, resent the welfare programme, blaming it for higher taxes. While it is certainly true that the poor pay excessive taxes, welfare is not the culprit.

Welfare payments will account for only \$7. out of every \$100. spent by the provincial government this year (and half of this amount will be paid by the federal government).

The reason for high taxes and at the same time miserable social assistance payments is the

fact that the government operates in the interests of the rich.

A recent study has shown that the poor pay higher tax rates than the rich. Families with incomes below \$2000. a year pay sales taxes, tobacco taxes, customs duties property taxes etc. Which in total take a phenomenal 60 per cent of their income. People with incomes between \$10,000. and \$1,000,000 pay a total of only 38 per cent on all different types of taxes.

Many rich people are able

to use large tax loopholes. For example, K.C. Irving and Standard Oil do not pay a cent in corporation taxes for their oil refinery in St. John.

Every year these idle rich get richer. And every year the poor, whether working or on welfare struggle to eke out an existence.

Working people have a right to be angry over high taxes and the low level of government services. But welfare recipients are the wrong target for their hostility.