

Table VI-2
Caseload and Recipients
 (Basic provincial and municipal assistance programs 1977-78)

	Average Monthly Number of Cases	Average Monthly Number of Recipients	Recipients as % of Population	Average Monthly Recipients Per Case
B.C.	79,510	139,410	5.6%	1.8
Alta	35,074	82,919	4.3%	2.4
Sask.	15,860	34,360	3.6%	2.2
Man.	22,974	47,954(e)	4.8%	2.1
Ont.	168,302	353,949	4.2%	2.1
Que.	242,964	456,944	7.2%	1.9
N.B.	28,024	65,796	9.6%	2.3
N.S.	20,289	49,616	6.0%	2.4
P.E.I.	2,717	6,847	5.7%	2.5
Nfld	18,700	49,649	8.8%	2.7
N.W.T.	1,393	3,824	8.8%	2.7
Yukon	422	859	4.1%	2.0
TOTAL	636,229	1,292,127		
AVERAGE			5.6%	2.0

(e) estimate

Source: Report for the Interprovincial Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Services, *The Income Security System in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat, 1980), p. 145.

stances. Additional funds might be provided through a system of differential cost-sharing in income maintenance, as was proposed by the Atlantic provinces in 1970. Provinces with greater needs, determined by a formula based on labour force participation rates and average personal incomes, would receive more than 50 per cent cost-sharing for their social assistance expenditures. Alternatively the extra sharing might be based on the proportion of caseload enrolled due to economic circumstances, as discussed in the first section of this chapter. Extra sharing would ensure that any additional funds committed by Parliament would in fact go for the intended purpose. A similar objective might also be achieved by an extra grant in times of economic distress for purposes of job creation. Such a grant could be paid if a province fell below a specified level on a socio-economic index, and might be combined with higher rates of cost-sharing in an attempt to remove the causes of regional economic distress while at the same time relieving its effects.

The Task Force notes that the concept of paying more to provinces that need more was greeted favourably by witnesses everywhere in Canada, as well as by most provincial governments. It is an

encouraging sign of the fundamental health of the federation that Canadians in all provinces are willing to assist those who are less fortunate. For example, during Task Force questioning Mr. G. Pawson of the Saskatchewan Council on Social Planning stated that:

We have to take a look at some regional disparities and provincial disparities in terms of economic income. For those people, I would like to see perhaps more cost-sharing provided by the federal government in order to raise and establish a higher quality of programs in some of those provinces, particularly the Atlantic provinces.¹⁹

Although additional equalization would provide less well-off provinces with the means to improve social assistance, and differential cost-sharing will provide positive encouragement as well as the means, neither of these measures will necessarily result in a reduction in interprovincial variation in levels of social assistance, or national minimum standards, because discretion is still left with the provinces.

The Hon. Marc Lalonde, when he was Minister of National Health and Welfare, proposed that:

In the interest of combating poverty by way of a fair distribution of income among people all