

Atlantic Issues

In Atlantic Canada we are accustomed to thinking that we are the underprivileged partner in Confederation. The aim of this newspaper is to examine how and why this is the case.

Compared to most countries in the world Canada is wealthy. And indeed we see everywhere around us superficial signs of wealth. Yet Canada is integrated into an international economic system which has failed to satisfy the needs of the majority of the world's inhabitants. Many of the problems created by this system appear within our own borders: high unemployment, run-away inflation, gross inequality of income, industrial disease, waste, pollution, crowded cities, and so forth. In a peripheral region like Atlantic Canada these problems are compounded by what is usually called "economic underdevelopment."

The term "development" as commonly used is associated by most people with things which do little to improve their daily lives: the construction of an airport, a nuclear power plant, a shopping centre, a clover leaf, or massive but unattractive buildings like Scotia Square in Halifax or Atlantic Place in St. John's.

The editors of **Atlantic Issues** favour a different form of development: the creation of types of work, consumption, accommodation, transportation, health care, education, and leisure which bring a genuine improvement to the quality of people's lives. We also favour a form of development which will enable common people to acquire some real control over the society in which they live. This control is now the almost exclusive preserve of the rich and powerful.

The daily newspapers in our region are controlled by individuals who have a vested interest in the existing economic structures. Only rarely then do they discuss regional issues from a perspective which does not take these structures for granted. We hope to provide Maritimers and Newfoundlanders with a type of information and analysis which they cannot easily find elsewhere.

The principal concern of **Atlantic Issues** is that the existing economic and social structures are not working to the advantage of the majority of Atlantic Canadians, that the region is both underdeveloped and the object of a type of development whose principal beneficiaries are the wealthy. We intend to publish straightforward, critical views of many different aspects of life in Atlantic Canada, and where possible, to suggest ways in which our quality of life can be improved. Occasionally we shall also publish articles concerning the problems of other countries and their relation to our own.

Atlantic Issues welcomes comments from its readers on the articles published in this first edition, and we invite submissions from persons who share our concerns.



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Are you getting a fair share?

Distribution of income in Canada is becoming more and more unequal according to the latest Statistics Canada report.

The report reveals that the richest 40 per cent of our population received 67.7% of the national income in 1975 while the bottom 40 per cent got only 14.5%.

If we look at the top 20% we find they received 42.4 per cent of the total national income, while the bottom 20 per cent got only 3.9 per cent.

One of the most significant findings in the report is that the share of income going to the upper two-fifths is higher than it was in 1965. The bottom two-fifths are receiving less proportionately than they were in 1965. What this means is that the distribution of income in Canada is becoming more and more unequal and the gap between the

rich and poor is widening. The tax system is not correcting this inequality.

In fact it is doing just the opposite. The corporate sector's share of the national tax burden has been declining steadily as a result of tax write-offs and accelerated depreciation allowances.

In the fiscal year 1951-1952 the corporate sector contributed 54 per cent of income tax revenue, while the personal income taxpayers supplied 46 per cent. Since then the corporations' share has dropped to a little over 30 per cent, while the personal income taxpayers share has risen to nearly 70 per cent.

Corporate profits rose from \$7.7 billion in 1970 to \$17.8 billion -an increase of 131%-. This huge increase has happened at the same time as their share of taxes has gone down.

Surette
continued from page 1

that they were interested.

By and large they're not interested. Sooner or later they may be forced to get interested. But by that time the best opportunities may have slipped by.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture has proposed that an Atlantic Provinces Development Corporation be formed to encourage local production of many things we

now import. Atlantic provincial governments should take that proposal seriously. They should--collectively or individually--compile a list of goods we import that could be produced here, and then aim at starting up such production.

One thing is certain: a new burst of "more of the same" will bring about more of the same results--a transfer of the common people's wealth to an outside industrial elite, and no development progress in the Atlantic provinces.