EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT:  
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK  
AND HUMAN JUSTICE EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

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Employment and Unemployment: 
The Economic and Social Context of 
Social Work and Human Justice 
Education and Practice

Working out the future role of Social Work and Human Justice within the University of Regina and the Saskatchewan community, requires some view of the type of society that is unfolding in this province. This step is necessary as an abiding goal of the Faculty of Social Work and the School of Human Justice is to link educational and curriculum developments with changes taking place in society. Historically, the teaching, educational and practice concerns that have evolved in the Faculty have had a strong research and empirical base. To consider, therefore, the role or roles we might play within this University in the late 1980s and beyond, requires that we first examine current socio-economic conditions that appear to be shaping Saskatchewan's future.

Such an undertaking leads to a number of questions, the answers to which have a bearing upon the need for, and the place of, Social Work and Human Justice studies within the University and the Saskatchewan community. What does the future look like? Can we anticipate a continuous, incremental improvement in general living standards and the economic well-being of Saskatchewan residents? Or, does the evidence suggest that the future may instead be characterized by falling living standards and the increased need for state intervention? If Social Work and Human Justice as an academic, a research and ultimately a practice Faculty is to serve its constituents, future educational, curriculum and practice developments will need to be shaped by the answers that emerge from these questions. Unlike most traditional Faculties within University settings, Social Work and Human Justice, in addition to their substantive, academic and inter-disciplinary developments, have An Unavoidable Date with Intervention.¹ The shape of this intervention depends primarily on social and economic forces operating within a society.

One way to evaluate the questions posed above, is to look at the type of society that is emerging from the changes in employment and unemployment that are currently taking place within the province.

Undoubtedly many other demographic and related economic factors will also influence the future character of Saskatchewan society (eg. the aging of the population and changes in the farm economy). However, levels of employment and unemployment within a society remain amongst the best predictors of economic well-being (Kirsh, 1983:v:xiv).

This presentation is organized as follows: It begins by looking at the relationship between unemployment and the demand for assistance. This is undertaken by briefly sketching out the range of social and personal problems brought on by unemployment. Secondly, the impact of unemployment on government revenue is examined in order to provide a fiscal context for the cut-backs in social spending that are now taking place in Saskatchewan. Thirdly, this paper reviews a number of trends and changes in the structure of Saskatchewan employment. This review serves two purposes. First, it is used to build an empirically based scenario of the type of society that appears to be emerging from the changes in employment, unemployment and underemployment that have been taking place in this province in the 1980s. Second, this review establishes a framework for the final section of this brief that evaluates the type of issues and problems social work and human justice educators and practitioners will encounter in the late 1980s and beyond.

a) Unemployment and the Demand for Assistance

Unemployment has a range of direct and indirect influences on the conditions under which human service workers practice and the type of problems they can expect to encounter amongst their clients. On the demand side, unemployment increases the need for services, help and government intervention. When jobs are lost and people become unemployed, the ramifications of this job loss touch all aspects of a person's life:

... in losing a job, people lose: 1) income and often become poverty stricken 2) access to opportunities 3) unaffordable possessions 4) social identity 5) status 6) a sense of self-worth 7) a work world separate from their home world 8) friendship with co-workers and 9) an imposed time structure [sic] (Kirsh, 1983:47).

The literature on unemployment attests to the human costs brought on by joblessness
means fewer workers and proportionally fewer tax returns from which governments can extract personal income tax revenue. In part, this occurred in Saskatchewan between 1981 and 1986. While the number of tax payers grew by 19,000, all of this growth took place because of the jump in working women. Male employment which pays better (Ternowetsky and Jeffery, 1984) and therefore provides a more lucrative tax base, actually declined in these years by 1.2%. On the other hand, taxpayers reporting unemployment insurance income in these years went up overall by 36,196 (72%). Among women the increase was 14,266 (66%) and for men it was 21,964 (75%) (Statistics Canada, Small Area Data, 1987). A drop in income generated through paid work can also mean a slow-down in consumer spending and a leveling off in government revenue collected through sales and indirect taxes (Ternowetsky, 1987a). In the last few years in particular, revenue dollars in Saskatchewan have also fallen because of the severe downturn in Saskatchewan’s resource and agriculture based industries. In Saskatchewan, a decline in the resource sector reverberates through all sectors and has a clear impact on employment and unemployment.

It is in this context of falling revenue and increased demand that, we are now told, the Saskatchewan government can no longer continue the ambitious level of social spending witnessed in earlier, more prosperous years. For example, in the 1987-1988 Provincial Budget some $800 million has been earmarked for spending cuts. However, cuts in social spending started several years ago (see Riches et al., 1979). Since the mid-1980s there has been a restructuring of social services in an effort to curtail expenditures. This restructuring has taken place under the rubric of Welfare Reform I introduced in 1984, and Welfare Reform 2 that started in late 1987. These reforms have resulted in substantial reductions in monthly SAP benefits to single unemployed employables; the use of the employability of family heads as a criterion for setting welfare rates for the first three months of dependency; the elimination of travel allowances; the standardization of some entitlements; the caps on utilities and the lowering of earning exemptions for welfare recipients (Riches, 1988).

These changes have been the source of considerable public debate and scrutiny. There are, however, other, less publicized changes that have the
TABLE 1
Initial Reason for Applying for Saskatchewan Social Assistance, 1980-1985
(percent of caseload)

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<tr>
<td>Awaiting UI</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insufficient Earnings</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absence of Spouse</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (includes age, disability, personality problem, required at home, on strike)</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<td>100.0%</td>
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* based on March 1985 only.

Source: Saskatchewan Social Services, averages based on quarterly figures (March, June, September, December).

potential to undermine the quality of service and care provided by Social Services. These include the changes in personnel that have taken place in Social Services. Between January 1986 and 1987, the monthly Social Services payroll declined by 36.4%, from $4,112,233 to $2,616,403. Table 2 shows what is quietly happening within Saskatchewan Department of Social Services. The number of permanent employees is declining while less expensive, part-time and casual help has grown by 138% and 505% respectively. Whether these changes will affect the quality of care provided by the government awaits analysis. What these cut-backs and personnel changes do point to, however, is a future where statutory bodies, like Social Services, will be expected to do more with less. The consequence of this devolution of state responsibility depends very much on the demand for assistance in the future ... a subject examined below.

c) Employment and Unemployment in Saskatchewan

In the introduction a number of questions were raised concerning the future economic well-being of Saskatchewan residents. These questions focused on the type of society that appears to be emerging from the changes in employment and unemployment that are now taking place in this province. To sort out the role(s) that Social Work and Human Justice might play in this University and community in the 1980s and beyond, it was argued that some view of the future of Saskatchewan society is needed. It is to this future that this brief now turns.

At the time of writing this paper the rate of unemployment in Saskatchewan is being heralded "as amongst the lowest in Canada" (Government of Saskatchewan, 1988:5). Over the last few months of 1987 unemployment has fallen and the province’s unemployment rate has hovered around 7.0% (Statistics Canada, 71-001, August-November). There is, in some quarters, a sense of optimism that is reflected in an August 1987, Leader Post article entitled "Unemployment Rate Dips in Saskatchewan". This article, based on September 1987 Labour Force figures, reports that "the new unemployment rate ... is the best it has been since the post-recession recovery began" (Leader Post, 1987:3).

Mixed in with this falling rate of joblessness are, however, other signs that suggest caution is in order when unemployment rates are considered in isolation from other Labour Force details. While the rate of unemployment dropped from August to September 1987, in this one month alone Saskatchewan’s labour force (the employed and those seeking work) shrunk by 14,000; the number of people working fell by 7,000; full-time work declined by 17,000 and only part-time work increased by 10,000 (Statistics Canada, 71-001. September, 1987). These additional pieces of Labour Force data point out that a drop in the rate of unemployment does not necessarily mean things are improving.

The two graphs in Figure 1 further illustrate the type of Labour Force changes taking place in this province. These show that while the rate of unemployment over four months (August to November 1987) is relatively low and /or declining, the number of workers has fallen over four months by 3.6% from 475,000 to 458,000. Within this period full-time work slipped by 32,000 (7.9%) overall and by 20,000 (7.6%) for men and 12,000 (8.3%) for women (see Figure 1a). The only area of job growth is in part-time work (Figure 1b) which is still not large enough to compensate for the general decline in the number of working people that has occurred in Saskatchewan during the latter part of 1987.

There are also several features of part-time work that need to be clarified. According to recent national surveys close to 30% of part-time work constitutes involuntary, underemployment (Akeampong, 1987:26-29). Part-time work also pays less than an equivalent full-time job (Economic Council of Canada, 1987:100; Labour Canada, 1985:43), and has few of the occupational and career benefits of full-time employment (Economic Council of Canada, 1987:99; Labour Canada, 1985:53). What has happened since August 1987 is that even with the low and/or falling rate of unemployment, fewer people are working and, given the nature of the part-time job creation that is occurring, it is likely that the economic well-being of Saskatchewan residents is on the decline.

One clear problem with the data presented in Figures 1(a) and (b) is that they are restricted to a four months time frame. Another problem is that the changes noted in these graphs are, in part, influ-
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<td>% Change</td>
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**Source:** Compiled by Janet Campbell, Social Administration Research Unit, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan

**Table 2**

Changes in Saskatchewan Social Services Personnel
FIGURE 1
Saskatchewan Employment: August to November 1987

Figure 1a. Employment and Unemployment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total Employed</th>
<th>Male Full Time</th>
<th>Female Full Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUG-87</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>145</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEP-87</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCT-87</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>134</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOV-87</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Monthly Unemployment Rate
- AUG-87: 7.1
- SEP-87: 5.8
- OCT-87: 6.2
- NOV-87: 6.9

Figure 1b. Part Time Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Part Time: Both Sexes</th>
<th>Male Part Time</th>
<th>Female Part Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUG-87</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP-87</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT-87</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV-87</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>19</td>
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</table>

enced by annual, cyclical changes in the labour force.

There are, however, other time series data bases that are consistent with the conclusions presented so far. Annual tax action statistics, for example, illustrate that from 1981 to 1986 employment conditions deteriorated considerably in this province. This is suggested in the following changes: First, by the end of 1986, there was a very small growth in the number of Saskatchewan people that were working. For men, the number reporting income from employment in 1986 actually fell below the 1981 level. The numbers reporting income from Unemployment Insurance, on the other hand, increased each year since 1981 and by 1986 was 72% greater for the total population, 66% higher for women and 75% greater form men. (see Figures 2a(i) to (iii)). Second, the ratio of individuals reporting unemployment income to employment income was approximately 10% in 1981 and around 18% for men, women and the total population in 1986 (see Figures 2b(i) to (iii)). A third indicator of this growing vulnerability of Saskatchewan workers is suggested when annual percentage changes in income gained from work and unemployment insurance are compared (Figures 2c(i) to (iii)). Using 1981 as the base year, these comparisons demonstrate the small and marginal growth in income from employment when compared to the substantial increase in income gained through unemployment insurance. For men the change in the share of annual income from work is always under 20% while income gained from Unemployment Insurance ranges from 156% in 1984 to 227% in 1986. Most of the growth in employment income in this period came from the income reported by women. Through these years, however, this income is always considerably below the growth in income from Unemployment Insurance received by unemployed women.

To the above we can add figures released in the Forget Report on Unemployment Insurance (Forget et al., 1986:54). Forget’s data show that in 1985 one in five members of the Saskatchewan workforce was without paid work for some period during that year. Accompanying this 20% incidence of joblessness is the growth in the duration of unemployment. In 1981 the average length of unemployment was 10.5 weeks. By 1985 this had grown to 18.9 weeks (Ternowetsky, 1987a; Forget et al., 1986:54-55).

A further point is that official statistics on unemployment miss out a substantial number of people that are without a job. Unemployment statistics only count people who are actively seeking employment in a survey week (National Council of Welfare, 1985:66). Excluded are "jobless persons who want to work and are available for work, but are not actively seeking employment" (Akyeampong, 1987b:85). This group of 'hidden unemployed' includes 'discouraged workers' who believe no work is available. Adding these 'marginal' or 'fringe' workers to the official rate produces what the National Council of Welfare calls the real rate of joblessness which in 1982 exceeded the official level by 6.4% (National Council of Welfare, 1985:66). In March 1987 Statistics Canada estimated the size of this fringe labour force at 359,000 Canadian workers. This equalled 26% of the total 1,397,000 people who were then counted as the officially unemployed.

In addition to these hidden unemployed we can add the jobless that are regularly excluded from unemployment calculations. These include Status Indians living on reserves where unemployment and poverty are endemic and inmates in prisons and correctional institutions. The point to be made is that although official unemployment has dropped, the real rate is much higher. A substantial element of the unemployed in Canada and Saskatchewan remains hidden or officially ignored.

A new Economic Dependency Ratio (EDR) compiled by Statistics Canada (Statistics Canada, Small Area Data, 1987) shows that since 1981 the proportion of income gained from government transfers to employment income has jumped in this province from 9.7% in 1981 to 16.4% in 1986 (see Figure 3). Increasingly, the people of this province are becoming more dependent on government transfers as the quantity and quality of work opportunities continues to deteriorate.

Innovation and Jobs in Canada, a recent report of the Economic Council of Canada (1987) suggests we are now only at the tip of the iceberg in terms of some of the employment changes noted in the brief. As firms "openly embrace" (Economic Council of Canada, 1987:158) new technology to improve effi-
FIGURE 2a

Change (%) in Number Reporting Income From Work and Unemployment: Base Year 1981

Figure 2a (i)
Both Sexes

Figure 2a (ii)
Men

Figure 2a (iii)
Women

% Change with 1981 as the base line
Source: Statistics Canada, Small Area Data, Special Output, 1987
FIGURE 2b
Ratio of Number Reporting Unemployment Insurance to Number Reporting Employment Income (1981-1986)

Figure 2b (i)
Both Sexes

Source: Statistics Canada, Small Area Data, Special Output, 1987
FIGURE 2c

Change (%) in Work Income and Unemployment Insurance Income

Figure 2c (i)
Both Sexes

Figure 2c (ii)
Men

Figure 2c (iii)
Women

Source: Statistics Canada, Small Area Data, Special Output, 1987
FIGURE 3

Economic Dependency Ratio: 1981 to 1986

ciency and competitiveness, the "final consequences" are always the same ..."job loss and skill re-orientation" (Aldcroft, 1984:80). For groups that are already marginal in the workplace (the disabled, natives, those with little education, women, young entrants into the labour force and older, unemployed workers), there is a strong possibility that they will fall further behind. That is, their labour marginality (unemployment and under-employment) will grow as the competition for scarce jobs increases and the need for certification grows.

For women, who have made some recent gains in the workplace, the part-time employment that follows technological innovation, once again raises the specter of growing involuntary part-time work (Economic Council of Canada, 1987:167). In addition, the majority of new service sector jobs that have been created in the 80s employ mainly women and pay less than jobs in the goods producing sector (Lindsay and McKie, 1986). These 'female' jobs are again threatened by the second wave of technological change taking place in the workplace. In a study subtitled A Future For Canada, Cy Gonick (1987:367) warns that unless women move into "other work there will be an alarmingly high rate of [female] unemployment ... in years ahead." For example, between 1981 and 1985 over 11,000 jobs were eliminated in Canada's top five chartered banks even though their business and profits had expanded considerably (Ternowetsky, 1987b). With innovative 'labour displacing technology' work that was traditionally performed by women is being performed by machines and a shrinking workforce. This is the way of the future.

d) Social Work and Human Justice
Education and Practice

Part i:
What type of society is emerging from the changes in employment and unemployment that are now taking place? The proceeding discussion suggests we have entered a period of shrinking employment opportunities, declining living standards and an increased reliance of more people on state provisions. In the absence of full employment, Martin Novick predicts that Canada will move towards a two or three tiered society with a growing underclass "living at the margins of economic sufficiency through state maintenance and turnstile jobs" (1985:11). When considered in conjunction with the re-shaping and devolution of state welfare within Canada and Saskatchewan, we arrive at a scenario of an increasingly vulnerable population. It is to this unfolding context that Social Work and Human Justice must respond as they fashion a future role within the University and community. Only a few possible directions for the future are considered below.

The Economic Council of Canada's (1987) review of the social, economic and job-loss consequences of technological change, has a number of implications for Social Work and Human Justice teaching, research and practice. The Council's report highlights the growing problem of worker dislocation and the need to develop appropriate strategies to assist individuals that are forced to adjust to labour market changes. In general, two kinds of adjustments are foreseen. One is associated with job loss or labour market marginality of the type outlined above (unemployment and underemployment), and the other with retraining, or skill re-orientation. Both outcomes affect the well-being of workers and therefore have a number of program implications for future studies in Social Work and Human Justice.

In terms of job loss adjustments, two facets are stressed by the Council. These are the human costs and the unequal distribution of these costs. Job loss, according to the Council (1987:162)

encompasses such hardships as reductions in family income, deteriorating health, neighborhood and community decline, loss of self-confidence, depression, marital strife and drug and alcohol abuse. And the longer the spell of joblessness persists, the lower the chances of successful re-employment.

The distribution of these costs, according to the Council's analysis (ECC, 1987:162-163) will be uneven. Those without jobs because of age (older unemployed workers), low education, ethnic and racial background (natives persons), gender (women) and regional labour market inequalities, will continue to experience a disproportionate share of the unemployment and underemployment brought on by changes in the job market.

Traditionally, studies in Human Justice and Social Work have emphasized issues of unemployment, poverty, violence and justice for marginal groups
like the unemployed, the poor, aboriginal people, women, youth, children and other victims of the structured inequalities that exist in our society. An important aim of the program has been to provide courses that enable both the poor and dispossessed as well as professionals in the community "to define, diagnose and alleviate social problems and create alternative strategies" (Faculty of Social Work, 1987).

The findings discussed above indicate that the "context" of human service practice will increasingly be shaped by problems and issues evolving from labour market marginality (More and Howell, 1986). In serving the needs of the people in this province, human service educators and practitioners will increasingly confront the "realities of unemployment" and the marginality unemployment produces "in the lives of their clients" (Riches, 1987). How to deal with the personal and family problems that are systemic and structural in origin, will be a central challenge of Social Work and Human Justice education and practice in the 1980s and beyond. Given that Social Work and Human Justice have historically addressed related issues, we are well-placed to continue this role in the University and the community. Our ability to respond adequately to the unemployment related needs that will multiply in this province, is contingent upon a stable and predictable resource base for Social Work and Human Justice. Cut-backs in our resources, added to the uncertainty of future budget funds, has already denuded the Human Justice program and will continue to undermine our efforts (Social Work, Human Justice as well as the University of Regina) to serve the people of this province.

A second type of adjustment dealt with by the Economic Council (1987:159) concerns the skill re-orientation and re-tooling that workers now face with the introduction of new technologies. The rapid obsolescence of skills, the prospect of re-training, re-schooling and continuous learning has changed the work environment. Job security has been replaced by uncertainty and a growing sense of vulnerability. Can Social Work and Human Justice play a more pro-active role in this new work environment? In addition to the traditional 'underdog perspective' of Social Work and Human Justice, in the future a more forthright commitment to the problems of workers in transition, in the workplace, before jobs are lost or changed, may be required. Is there, for example, a role to play in promoting a fairer and more equitable handling of the retraining exercises facing many workers (ECC, 1987:159)? Are we preparing our graduates for the challenge of worker dislocation that the Economic Council predicts will characterize the late 1980s and beyond?

In the Council's plan for the future, the human resource skills of the type nurtured in Social Work and Human Justice are central. Specific areas noted by the Council (ECC, 1987:159) include research into the social and labour market impact of technological change; and the working out of 'best practice' methods that foster more attention to the 'softer', human side of technological change. The Economic Council's call for more research on the both the 'social impact' and 'best practice' methods of implementing technological change would seem to fit the pro-active policy, justice and practice goals of Social Work and Human Justice. In what ways will our future role in the community and University be shaped by our response to the human and practice issues that result from the introduction of new technologies?

Part ii:

There is, however, a bottom line that sets the context for the type of input 'students' of Social Work and Human Justice bring to issues of the type noted above. The work and orientation of Social Work and Human Justice at the University of Regina is organized around principles of justice, fairness and equality. While there is a shared commitment to assisting the unemployed, the poor and the victims of unemployment, there is also a commitment to asking questions about 'winners' as well as 'losers'; about the underlying causes of inequalities in income, class, status and power. Why is it that some groups prosper from the changes taking place in Saskatchewan society, while a growing number fall behind and face futures of work and economic marginality? Is there something about the structure of power and decision making, the relations between different groups, and the way this power is used, that accounts for the economic polarization that is taking place in this province?

Without a commitment to publicly raising the debate on unemployment and poverty to include the powerful and affluent (the favoured few who re-
ceive a disproportionate share of benefits), we will not be able to address adequately the above ques-
tions. We will obscure the reality of how unem-
ployment and poverty are produced and rein-
forced. Part of the role of Social Work and Human
Justice is to take the above questions "beyond the
production of information, to the level of theory,
ilogy and choice ... in terms of what constitutes
justice and equality" (Ternowetsky, 1983:14). Two
examples of such a method of analysis are worked
through below.

In 1984, under the auspices of Welfare Reform,
Saskatchewan Assistance Plan benefit levels for
single, unemployed employables were lowered by
approximately $177, from $522 to $345 a month.
Over a year this represented a reduction from
$6,264 to $4,140. That same year, 170 of the top 1%
of Saskatchewan earners paid no personal income
tax. Through tax deductions, tax exemptions and
tax credits, the government chose not to collect
some $10,681,000 in tax from these 170 residents,
with average incomes of $136,123 (Revenue
Canada, 1987). For these favoured few this
represented an average saving of $62,820 a year or
$5,235 a month. Single, employable welfare clients
received around 6% of the 'hidden welfare' gained
by the richest of the rich in this province. Who
wins? Who loses? and What role does the state play
in reinforcing inequality?

Between 1981 and 1985 Canada’s top five char-
tered banks reported cumulative profits of $8.458
billion. Over 32% of that profit ($2.786 billion) re-
sulted directly from federal and provincial govern-
ment decisions not to collect statutory taxes
owed by the bank (Ternowetsky, 1987b). While at-
taining these profits and over $2.7 billion in gov-
ernment aid, the workforce of these banks fell by
11,119. In 1985, the government provided these five
banks with $542 million in aid while the banks cut
2,197 employees. Is the government funding the
creation of unemployment? One way of interpret-
ing these facts is that in 1985, it cost the government
$246,812 in public money, for each job that was lost
in the top five chartered banks. Who wins? Who
loses? and What role does the state play in rein-
forcing inequality?

These above examples bring to light the struc-
tured context of the creation of unemployment and
some of the hidden dimensions of government
spending. Unemployment cannot be countered
without taking into account the boardrooms of cor-
porate power where decisions on employment and
unemployment are first made. Neither is the deficit,
that is now used to justify cut-backs, created only
through spending, but also by governments that
decide not to collect taxes from rich individuals
and powerful corporations.

In responding to the economic realities unfol-
ding in this province, Social Work and Human
Justice will need to continue to publicly engage
‘facts’ about the creation of unemployment and
poverty within the context of a state that is re-
stricting aid to the poor, while it provides enor-
mous sums of hidden welfare for the rich and
powerful. A part of our mission is to bring these
facts to the attention of our students, the con-
sumers of welfare and the public. A mission that
will inevitably produce conflict with other vested
interest groups that prescribe to a different vision
of society.

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**Endnotes**

1. This phrase originated with Yves Vaillancourt from the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM). He was referring to the role of Social Policy and Administration within Canadian Schools of Social Work. This phrase is now incorporated into a title of a text published by the Social Administration Research Unit from Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina. The full title is *Unavoidable Dates with Intervention: The Meaning of Canadian Social Policy and Administration*.

2. A recent study of earnings in Canada offers some support for this assertion. While these data are not disaggregated by province, they show that post-1982 recovery earnings have slipped in real dollars by 1.8% since 1983 (Wong, 1987).

3. The Economic Dependency Ratio (EDR) is calculated from tax returns. The transfers included in its calculation are unemployment insurance income, family allowances, child tax credits, Old Age Security benefits, Canada-Quebec pension plan income, and income from other pension sources. The transfer part of the EDR index does not include money gained through welfare or public assistance. The EDR therefore underestimates the real growth of dependency taking place in Saskatchewan.