

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, thank you for letting ordinary people like me express their opinion. It's delightful to see openness from our government, in trying to find solutions to problems that ordinary citizens live all year. To get down to the point, I'd like to know how we can get 3,2 million people, including 634,000 children, to lead a better life than to live below the level of poverty in Canada. It seems an impossibility to settle the matter in the short term, but it would be great if every Canadian could have the same purchasing power, and the same capability to have a better quality of life. I know you were talking about a " guaranteed minimum income ", but I'm afraid that Quebec would probably veto the motion, and create a class of low budget citizens who wouldn't have the same advantages as those who will be living in other provinces of Canada.

Now what solution can we put forward to guarantee that we can put forward a measure that Corporate Canada won't qualify as an expensive handout, and that the low incomers won't be slapped as " system profiteers " that are living at the hook of society, working under the table, and all other sarcasms that are being thrown freely at welfare recipients across the country ? Although welfare represents 0,1% of the NRI of the country, it is sad to see that employers label welfare recipients as lazy, up to no good exploitants, who'd rather stay home to receive a check than to get up and go to work. Most welfare recipients would like to return to the work force, but some have been indicted and have a criminal record, some have physical or mental disabilities to deal with, some have dependancy problems, and some are plainly uneducated or have no job experience at all.

I have submitted time and time again to reform welfare to a new concept, in accordance with today's reality, but it seems that my suggestions are disregarded for sake of economy, and respect for the " status quo " that prevails, in order to not get the civil servants unions upset on the changes that would be brought to federal and provincial employees. But with today's global market economy, it would be a non-sense to disregard restructurations that would make a significant difference in tax revenues brought by a wider spectrum of job creations. I am not without knowing that there are measures to accomodate people with physical disabilities, and that discrimination is forbidden in the work force, but lets state an example here: You're close to 56, suffering from diabetes, obese, with a mental disabilty known as " borderline syndrome ", have a criminal record, and receiving minimum allowances from the workmens compensation board of Quebec ( CNESST now ), with a welfare compensation to receive \$ 1,400 per month, and you've been off the work force for more than ten years. Find me ONE employer who'd give this man a chance to get his life back on track. The feasability is merely impossible. Say all you want, but I'm sure he won't be selected with all the applicants to a position, who are younger, healthier, and have more potential to remain longer on the job, and who, if they are landed migrants, receive grants for employment from both level of governments.

So tell me, what can we do to correct this obsolete system, in order to prevent segregating a segment of the population, and condemning them to a life of poverty, exclusion, and low budget sacrifices that they often have to impose on their kids because of a

lack of revenue ? Let me suggest what I would see as a convenient approach to the " restructured welfare program ". First of all, let's do away with the able and disable allowances, with different brackets for every type of possible recipients, and replace it with admissability to receive minimum wage at signature of the request form, and with no deductions made, and at " per capita ". In Quebec, recipients are asked to submit three type of jobs that they'd like to occupy, as a condition to approval for their monthly income. The only thing missing, is what kind of experience the subject really has, in order to bring about a long-term employment in the appropriate position. Most of the time, some hardcore welfare individuals will give false information in order to remain on the program, and make sure they don't have to return to work at all, blaming the employers of discriminating against them, and all kinds of scams to avoid to go to work. That's why it would be of importance to have counsellors formed to recognize the " troublemakers " so that they have to submit to a psychological evaluation in order to determine the seriousness of the condition. I can already hear the Humans right commission claiming an abuse of power and discrimination towards given individuals in regard to that part of the process, but it should be mandatory to have a clear picture of the situation for given individuals who try to " fix " the program to their advantage.

Upon signature for the financial assistance program, the claimant is informed that he has an OBLIGATION to show up at the office when requested, in order to respond to a job proposal, and set a date for an interview with the potential employer. He must be informed that the program is not negociable, and that he has to make everything he can to hold the position and remain on the job as long as possible. Coaching by the employment agent can be made with the individual present to determine what is wrong in case of a problem between the employer and employee. If it is recognized that it is the participant's bad wills that make it unbearable for the employer, he would be penalized , and receive bottom compensation until corrective measures are took to ensure that the participant agrees to cooperate actively, and recognizes the fact that he is solely responsible for his faith.

If a person would like to occupy a position like let 's say, car mechanics, and doesn't have the experience needed, an agreement with school board commissions could permit a recipient to be evaluated for probable competence in acquiring the skill, and be sent to formation at his request. But it shouldn't serve to send individuals to demand a student loan and disqualifying them from the program, as I have witnessed. There should be immediate formation upon request by the agent if the evaluation process shows that the person would benefit from the said formation, and not be inscripted on a waiting list for a group formation. This inadequate measure should be revoked, and considered abusive towards the program at large.

Individuals who have some experience in a given sector of activity could be sent on a training session in accordance with a given employer, in order to update the participant's skills and render him capable of occupying and remaining on the job from there. I insist once again on the importance not to create group sessions for that matter, because it doesn't serve the interest of the sole individual, the one being to return to the work force in the lesser time frame. The experienced and knowledgefull individuals will be the group we should have less needed implication towards the return to work process. All they need are the tools to make it

happen quickly.

International cooperation, provincial cooperation could make it possible for candidates to meet employers on e-conference, and special allowances put in place to provide for displacement of individuals who have been accepted as employed by an employer, so to make it possible for the participant to relocate as a part of an active implication to occupy a position. This measure should be considered possible **ONLY IF** the employer agrees to hire the person on a full-time basis, and cannot find a suitable regional participant to occupy the position, if the job is a part-time venue.

For closure, I strongly insist that **EVERY** individuals on welfare programs across the country, this **INCLUDING** Quebec, with no rights of regards to the non-withstanding clause, have the **RIGHT** to receive minimum wage, as an incentive to a return to the work force, so to prevent Canadian citizen to be segregated and branded as **INADEQUATE** individuals. Laws should be formulated to give a broader scope of possibilities to make **EVERY** Canadian **CAPABLE** of occupying a job, and thus, receiving salary for their involvement. **NO LONGER** should shady practices be accepted as a normative process, voluntarily retarding the feasibility for Canadians to return to work **ASAP**. That's the only way we can tackle poverty in this country, and this, is what I call **REAL CHANGE**.

Thank you for reading me out, and I sincerely hope that you fully understand my suggestion, and if it would be found to be acceptable and practical, may it be implemented and legislated in order to give individuals a fighting chance to get a permanent job, and be members of the Canadian work force. No more poverty stricken families, excluded or unfairly branded individuals, just Canadians who have a passion in the trade they occupy, and this, regardless of handicaps, age, physical or mental disabilities, sexual orientations, race, religion of beliefs. **JUST CANADIANS WORKING FOR CANADA**. So let's make this **REAL CHANGE** happen. Goodnight everyone.