

Don't worry ? it's paid for

by BRIAN LOCKHART

Throughout history, Western societies have always understood that sometimes people experience hardships beyond their control.

A person could become sick and unable to work, or an injury could prevent them from doing their job and earning a living.

If the breadwinner of a family died suddenly through disease or accident, a young widow with children could find herself in a desperate situation.

Older people who had completed their life's work could be vulnerable, alone, and in need of help.

Even during medieval times, cities and small towns across Europe organized a type of community chest that was used to help the vulnerable and people in need.

I emphasize Western society because in certain societies in other parts of the world, it was easier to throw a widow on her husband's funeral pyre and kill her rather than use resources to keep her alive. In some historical circumstances, the old and weak were dragged off to a field and left to die so their family members wouldn't be burdened with helping them.

The concept of a type of welfare system is not new. However, a community chest or welfare system was in place to help people temporarily when they really needed assistance.

Those community chests were not designed to support able-bodied people who were lazy.

The modern Canadian welfare system began in the 1930s and expanded significantly in the 1960s.

There is a lot of good that comes from this system.

I don't think any kid should go to bed hungry because their caregiver doesn't have money for food, or go without health care because they can't afford a vaccination to prevent measles.

However, modern welfare systems seem to have lost the idea of helping the vulnerable, and started doling out money ? taxpayer money ? to anyone who wants it.

The Canadian system doesn't seem to be as mismanaged as some other countries.

There was a rather famous case in the UK where a Pakistani immigrant demanded ? not asked for ? but demanded a free larger new home, because his wife had just given birth to their sixth child and they needed more room.

The man hasn't worked a day in his life and lives free on welfare, courtesy of the British taxpayers.

Not surprisingly, the local response from taxpayers was not sympathetic. Most people suggested the man try getting a job to support the family he was raising ? just like everyone else.

I was at a local football game a couple of years ago and standing next to relatives from the visiting team from Mississauga.

The group of five or six younger people was all excited about going out and partying that night, because they had all just received their public assistance cheques in the mail.

There is no reason a young, able-bodied person should be receiving welfare paid for by the rest of us.

If government agencies can coordinate welfare payments, the same agency can coordinate with employers to find people jobs to support themselves.

I visited a local manufacturing company not too long ago. They were desperately trying to find employees.

At the same time, there is a local public parking area where people sleep in their cars. There is a very simple solution for both problems here, and it doesn't take a genius to figure it out.

There is a theory from several lobby groups that generational welfare is a simple but effective government solution for controlling the population.

The theory is that if you give people just enough money to get by every month, they will toe the line to keep receiving those funds, because if they don't, they will be cut off and actually be forced to find money somewhere else.

There's a lot of merit to that theory. What better way is there to control people than financially?

I don't understand how a person can raise a family and remain on welfare.

A job gives you a reason to get up in the morning, and it provides a level of self-respect knowing you earned the money to feed the children you brought into the world.

Now there are suggestions of creating a 'guaranteed income' system, where people receive more taxpayers' money for simply being on the planet.

That's a perfect way to weaken society.

Sooner or later, and judging by the amount of debt the federal government has incurred, it's going to be sooner, they will run out of other people's money to spend.

This country wasn't built by people who relied on government money.

It was built by strong people who knew the value of work and what it accomplishes.