

## **Federal Budget Undermines Welfare Reform In Ontario**

The unilateral decision by the Federal Government to place a ceiling on the Canada Assistance Plan carries a plain message to Ontario's poor. They are to fall even further below the poverty line as their personal contribution to the federal deficit.

Ontario's Minister of Community and Social Services, Charles Beer, has stated that he hopes to continue the program of social welfare reform, (Globe and Mail, Feb. 23, 1990), but our Treasurer is obviously concerned about the limits on federal financing announced by Michael Wilson in the federal budget. **Your help is needed if we are to maintain the impetus for further action.**

Social assistance reform must continue as one of our top priorities.

Welfare reform is not a quick fix. Welfare reform is very much about the long term investment in human worth, potential and capacity.

We know what happens if we avoid this step. We know that we will add to the burden of suffering in this province. We know that more than a quarter of a million children in Ontario are living in poverty now. We know from repeated research that enduring poverty is a powerful determinant of health problems, school dropouts, and family problems.

Poverty is not a problem which can be solved alone by the actions of any single ministry of government. The problems of poverty reach into our educational system, our skills development and employment sectors, our housing market, and our health care system.

Last May, the province of Ontario announced an important first step in attacking poverty in Ontario. Ontario accepted the report of its Social Assistance Review Committee, entitled Transitions, and introduced a first wave of changes to the social assistance systems in the province. That first wave now needs to be followed by a second and a third.

Poverty in Ontario will not crumble before any single reform. We know from our work in primary prevention and health promotion that addressing the sources and effects of poverty is critical if our prevention efforts are to be effective.

**Please call or write to the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister to express your concern about their withdrawal of support for welfare reform. They can be reached at:**

Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney  
Prime Minister's Office  
80 Wellington Street  
Langevin Block  
2nd Floor  
Ottawa  
K1A 0A2  
Phone: (613) 992-4211  
Fax: (613) 995-0101

Hon. Michael Wilson  
Minister of Finance  
Esplanade Laurier  
East Tower  
140 O'Connor Street  
Ottawa K1A 0G5  
Phone: (613) 996-7861  
Fax: (613) 995-5167

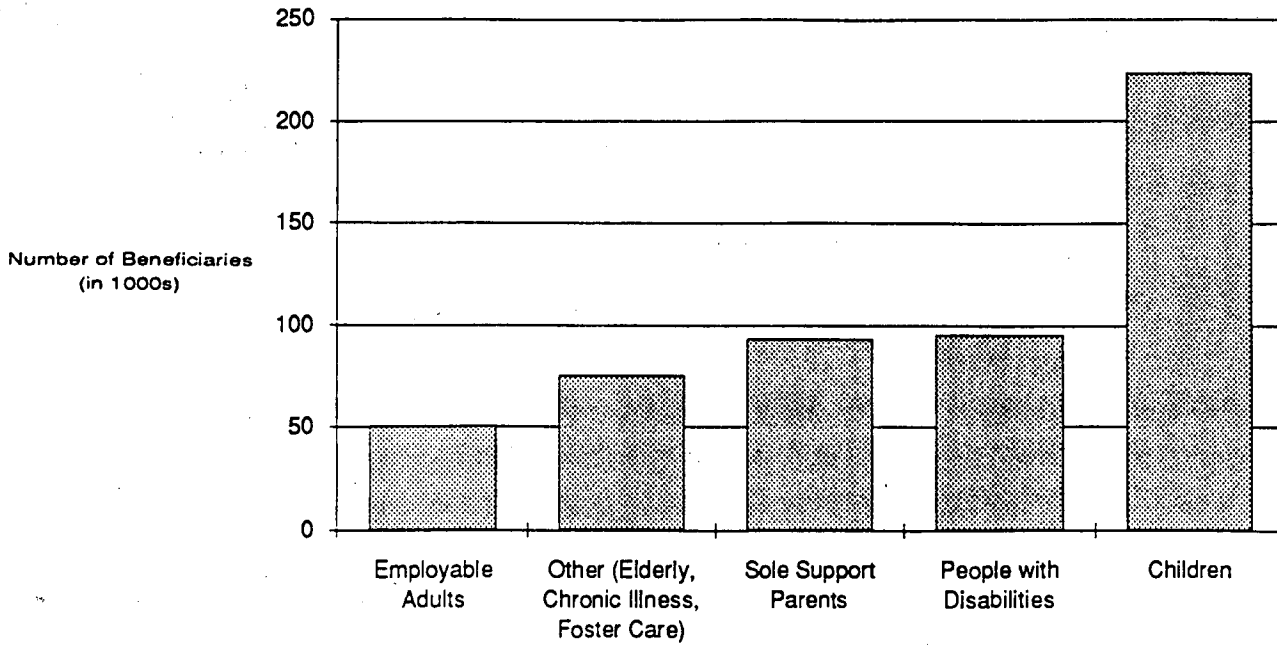
**Our provincial leaders need to hear that you are committed to their work in continuing to attack poverty in Ontario. Our Premier and Treasurer can be reached at:**

The Hon. David Peterson  
Premier's Office  
Legislative Bldg.  
Queen's Park  
Toronto M7A 1A1  
Phone: (416) 965-1941  
Fax: (416) 963-3065

The Hon. Robert Nixon  
Treasurer of Ontario  
7th Floor, Frost Bldg. S.  
7 Queen's Park Crescent  
Toronto M7A 1Y7  
Phone: (416) 965-6361  
Fax: (416) 324-7126

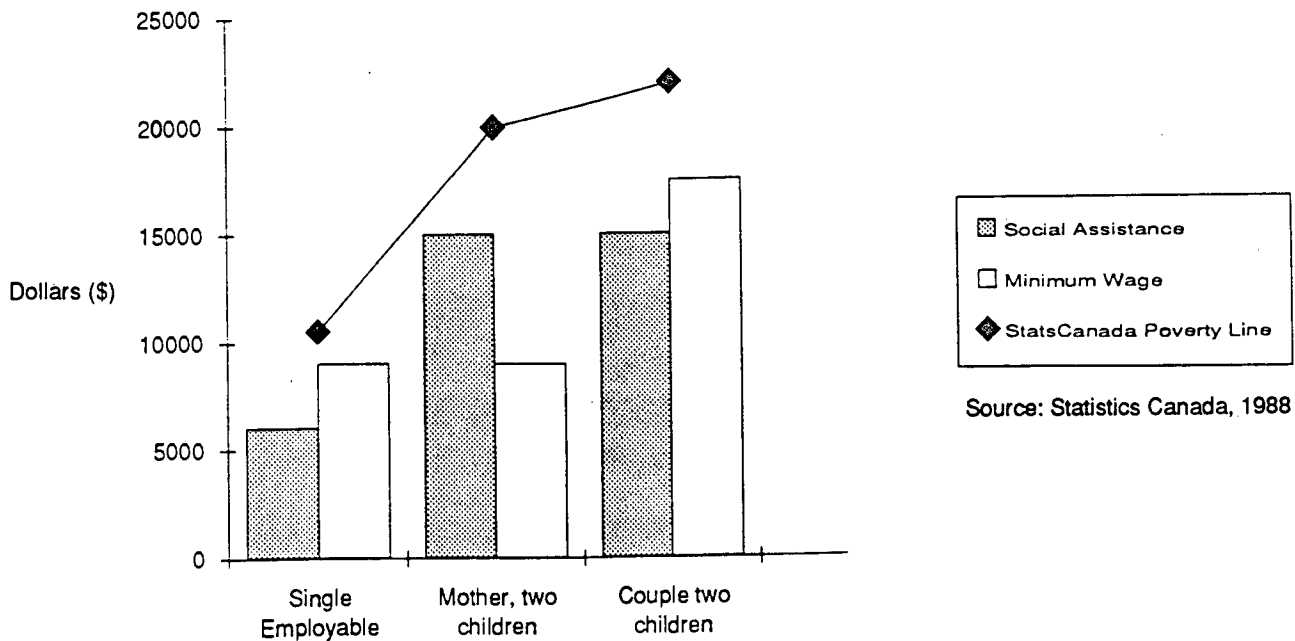
**People living in poverty do not hold the answer to the federal deficit.**

## Who depends on social assistance in Ontario?



Source: Social Assistance Review Committee, 1988

## Social Assistance, the Minimum Wage, and the Poverty Line



Source: Statistics Canada, 1988