

# Bookshelf

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## Canadian Social Welfare

*Edited by Joanne C. Turner and Francis J. Turner*

*Published by Collier MacMillan Canada Inc., 1981, Toronto.*

### REVIEWED BY NATHAN GILBERT

*Executive Administrator, Laidlaw Foundation*

In 1975, Andrew Armitage, a professor at the University of Calgary wrote the first introductory text on Canadian social welfare. Although far less ambitious an undertaking than previous studies of social welfare, e.g., Wilensky and Lebaux's *Industrial Society and Social Welfare (U.S.)* and Titmuss' *Social Policy (U.K.)*, it did provide the Canadian student with an analysis of Canadian institutions and programs. In addition to outlining basic concepts, Armitage attempted to articulate the shortcomings of Canadian social welfare. He challenged the reader not just to understand the complexities of the current social welfare system, but to conceive of an ideal Canadian society that is more equitable, more tolerant and more humane.

*Canadian Social Welfare*, edited by Joanne and Francis Turner (Laurentian University, Sudbury) fulfils a different need. It is an introductory textbook for the entry-level undergraduate student which includes 28 contributions from 21 academics and three social administrators/researchers, divided into six sections.

Essays on the philosophical, historical and knowledge bases of social welfare are presented in Part I. These show that the public attitudes to the social welfare system fall into four general categories: (a) social welfare as charity—a person blessed by Divine Providence has a responsibility to help the less fortunate; (b) social welfare as a right—a citizen can expect and demand society's assistance in times of need, (c) social welfare as economic redistribution—it is desirable for the state to assist in the distribution of wealth in a complex economic society; and (d) social welfare as social control—to maintain peace and order, the government should ensure that no citizens are in dire need.

Part II outlines the historical, physical and social factors which shaped Canadian social welfare and shows how microscopic and macroscopic social phenomena in Canadian geography, history, psychology, political science, economics, law, medicine and social administration combined to provide the knowledge base of current social work theory and practice.

Parts III and IV outline several service profiles for particular groups such as children and youth, adults and the aged, offender groups and special status groups such as veterans and native peoples as well as the institutional arrangements and

networks which have evolved to provide these services.

Part V is directed to the student undertaking basic social research. Methodological considerations and the importance of program evaluation are stressed.

Part VI describes international social welfare and the development of social work education in Canada in a very superficial way.

In their preface, the authors state that the book is directed to three audiences. The first is the undergraduate student. As an introductory text, the book serves this audience well.

The second and third audiences are intended to be the board members and volunteers associated with social service organizations and critics of social welfare who have an unclear or distorted perception of the welfare system. In addressing the needs of these groups the book falls short. It lacks passion, personality and opinion, and as a result will neither inspire the highly motivated volunteer nor silence the uninformed social welfare critic.

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## **Scholars and Dollars**

*by Paul Axelrod*

*Published by University of Toronto Press, 1982, Toronto.*

### **REVIEWED BY JUDGE SIDNEY DYMOND**

*The Ontario Surrogate Court*

*Former Vice-Provost, University of Toronto*

In an expansion and partial update of his doctoral thesis, Dr. Axelrod examines post-World War II public funding of Ontario universities and its effects upon the directions taken by those universities. In an interesting historical approach, in order to bring into perspective the unprecedented growth of universities which occurred after 1945, the author outlines briefly the haphazard pre-World War II funding that resulted partially from private negotiations between premiers and presidents and partially from capital funding provided by corporate donors.

The theme appears to be that because both the provincial government and industry perceived universities as the means by which society would produce people who would be educated in a manner that would provide an ever-expanding economy and provincial wealth, large provincial grants were made and Ontario universities expanded at an unprecedented rate until about 1969 or 1970. A turnaround occurred at that time and, as the author puts it, universities then were perceived as "a costly holding ground for unproductive citizens" during a period of recession.

There is a discussion of some of the aspirations and manipulations of the various chairmen of the Ontario Council on University Affairs and of the relationship of

that organization to the provincial government and to the universities themselves; of the great problems of planning in the universities; of the development of government financial aid to both undergraduate and graduate students and its effects on the directions taken by universities; of the unionization of certain university faculties; and of the general increase in provincial government intervention in the financing of post-secondary education.

The author's conclusions at page 100:

“From the preceding account, it is evident that the university system which evolved in Ontario during the postwar period was shaped by the values, the culture, and the political forces of a mixed capitalist economy. For all intents and purposes, the universities were publicly funded, privately operated, and primarily designed to fulfil economic functions. Yet one major question remains. How, precisely, did the universities set out to satisfy their *raison d’etre*? If the main purpose of higher education was to contribute to economic prosperity, then how did the universities engage in this task?”

and at page 218:

“A class-divided society continues to perpetuate elitism in the university; an unstable economy removes any guarantee of productive employment for graduates; and a consumerist, essentially anti-intellectual culture, fed by the mass media and shaped by capitalist values, has sullied the quality of higher education itself.”

may have been meant to provoke discussion of the purposes of a university and certainly deserve consideration.

What has been left out of the book is any close study of the functions of the university other than teaching. The book focuses on the university as a teaching institution and almost totally ignores the university as both a storehouse of knowledge and the means of advancing the frontiers of knowledge. There is very little mention of the large part played in universities by funds provided for research projects conducted by the faculty and graduate students. This is an omission which results, in this writer's view, in a serious imbalance. Nevertheless, the book is well worth reading and should lead to some very interesting discussion and, perhaps, re-evaluation of the direction to be taken not only by universities and government, but also by corporate and charitable donors.