

# 'Mealy-mouthed'

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# welfare hurts needy: MP

The present system of providing welfare for the disabled, war veterans and abandoned families is "mealy mouthed" and should be replaced by a scheme that would not penalize recipients for taking the initiative to work, Mississauga MP Don Blenkarn said this week.

In addressing the Sherway branch of the One Parent

Families Association of Canada, Blenkarn said present welfare programs are "patchwork schemes where an allowance is given provided that you can demonstrate that you need the allowance.

"The moment you earn a thing, the allowance is reduced by the amount of earnings."

He suggested the Work-

man's Compensation formula of assessing a percentage disability and then allowing the recipient to augment the income by working is preferable to systems that lock a recipient into an income very near the poverty line.

Blenkarn recounted the plight of a mother of three who would like to work but could only find work that

would bring her salary to \$400 more yearly than Mother's Allowance.

He noted that it would be more expensive for her to work because of babysitting, transportation and increased clothing costs than it would to simply accept the allowance.

And if the woman tried to take on part time jobs to make her life better, the

system has inspectors to check that she isn't making more money, or she loses an equivalent amount off her allowance, he added.

"We organize her affairs to make sure that she will never be able to participate in the labour force. She will always be a client of our welfare system."

The result is that "bit-by-bit, day-by-day, her incen-

tive and her work ability will be bleached away from her."

Blenkarn suggested it would be better to assess the woman at a disability of 50 per cent of a living wage and allow her to collect that regardless of what income she earns herself.

She could receive a \$250 monthly allowance and earn the rest. She would be well off, he argued, because she

could "go out and do something — go out and create."

Blenkarn felt taxpayers would save through lowered allowances, the cost for "snooping" inspectors would be drastically cut and society "would gain a contented, happy person who could go out and create and build and develop herself and her children into wor-

thwhile citizens."

He said the same principles could apply to those with physical disabilities or mental disorders.

"Our so-called social justice system is a pretty miserable system. It is time that we in government realized that man is a thinking social being, that man is a creative being."