

LESSONS FROM MINCOME

1. INTRODUCTION – THANKS TO PROFESSORS MULVALE AND FRANKLE.

GOOD MORNING. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SUMMARIZE ALL THE RELEVANT LESSONS FROM FIVE INTENSE MINCOME YEARS, IN THE TIME AVAILABLE, GENEROUS THOUGH IT IS. IF ANYTHING, I SAY – OR OMIT – PROMPTS YOU TO WANT TO FOLLOW UP WITH ME, PLEASE DO AND I WILL DO MY BEST TO RESPOND COHERENTLY.

FOR FRAMING PURPOSES, I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN WITH THREE INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS.

THE FIRST IS TO UNDERLINE MY UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT FOR WHAT I HOPE WILL ONE DAY BE A UNIVERSAL, NATIONAL AND GOVERNMENT-RUN SYSTEM FULLY CAPABLE OF ASSURING EVERY CANADIAN, IF AND WHEN THEY NEED IT, OF SUFFICIENT INCOME TO MEET AT LEAST THE BASIC COSTS OF A DECENT HUMAN EXISTENCE. TO BE FULLY SECURE, THIS PROGRAM WOULD BE ENSHRINED IN FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL LAWS AND INDEXED, KEEPING AT LEAST ROUGH PACE WITH INFLATION, COST OF LIVING INCREASES AND REGIONAL VARIATIONS.

GETTING TO SUCH A PROGRAM WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY COME ABOUT IF IT DOES, OVER TIME AND IN INCREMENTS, POSSIBLY STARTING WITH A SINGLE PROVINCE, MUCH AS OUR PUBLIC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM BEGAN IN SASKATCHEWAN.

SECONDLY, I MUST RECORD WITH A HEAVY HEART, MY DEEP CONVICTION THAT THIS GOAL WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED ANY TIME SOON; AND QUITE POSSIBLY MAY NEVER BE REALIZED. MANY IN THIS ROOM PROBABLY SHARE A BELIEF IN SOME FORM OF BASIC INCOME. HOWEVER, THOSE SO INCLINED SHOULD ALSO THEN ACKNOWLEDGE A BASIC REALITY: DESPITE INTERMITTENT ADVOCACY, SIX OR MORE EXPENSIVE EXPERIMENTS, DOZENS OF BOOKS, HUNDREDS OF ARTICLES, SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES GOING BACK MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS, NO WESTERN DEMOCRACY HAS AS YET PUT A PERMANENT PROGRAM SUCH AS I DESCRIBE INTO PLACE AND THEN RUN IT SUCCESSFULLY.

SOMETHING HAS BEEN AND TODAY REMAINS IN THE WAY. WHAT IS IT? AS WE ARE HERE TO ATTEMPT DRAWING LESSONS FROM MINCOME, IT SEEMS ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE TO FOCUS ON TRYING TO ANSWER THIS BROADER BUT MORE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION: WHY IS NO BASIC INCOME PROGRAM IN PLACE YET?

THIRD, IT IS TRUE CONFESSIONS TIME. I AM NOT NOW NOR HAVE I EVER BEEN, AN ECONOMIST OR AN ECONOMETRICIAN. I HAVE MY ORIGINAL COPY OF SAMUELSSON'S TEXT, BUT STILL STRUGGLE WITH THE LAFFER CURVE.

MY DISCIPLINE IS POLITICAL SCIENCE, SPECIFICALLY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. WITHIN THAT FIELD, MY MAIN RESEARCH INTEREST IS THE IMPACT OF ELECTORAL POLITICS ON THE EVOLVING EFFICACY OF PUBLIC SECTOR PROGRAM DELIVERY AND THE INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES REQUIRED; SPECIFICALLY, IN HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND INCOME SUPPLEMENTATION. I HAVE BEEN CONCERNED WITH THIS PROBLEM AS AN ACADEMIC, PUBLIC SERVANT, PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT AND POLITICAL ADVISOR IN CANADA, THE US OR BRITAIN.

WHICH BRINGS ME TO BASIC INCOME. IT IS INEVITABLE THAT THE BARRIERS TO BASIC INCOME AND ANY SOLUTIONS TO THOSE BARRIERS I MAY BE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO RECOMMEND WILL, FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE, PRIMARILY INVOLVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY.

2. MINCOME BACKGROUND

LOOKING FOR MORE EFFICIENT ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS DESIGN AND DELIVERY PROCESSES HAVE BEEN WITH ME SINCE SHORTLY AFTER THAT MID-SUMMER DAY IN 1972 WHEN I WAS ASKED TO MEET PREMIER SCHREYER IN HIS OFFICE AT THE LEGISLATURE, TO DISCUSS A FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONTROLLED EXPERIMENT WITH WHAT WAS THEN KNOWN AS GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME.

I AGREED TO THE MEETING AND SUBSEQUENTLY TO HIS REQUEST. MINCOME BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE IN A SERIES OF MEETING OVER THAT SUMMER, INITIALLY INVOLVING MYSELF AND THE FIRST RESEARCH DIRECTOR PROFESSOR MICHAEL LAUB, AN

ECONOMIST ON LEAVE FROM THIS UNIVERSITY, WHO HAD BEEN RECRUITED BY THE PREMIER BEFORE HE AND I FIRST MET.

AFTER A FEW INITIAL ORGANIZING MEETINGS AND INTRODUCTORY TRIPS TO OTTAWA TO DISCUSS COST-SHARING AND RESEARCH APPROACHES, MICHAEL AND I BEGAN SERIOUS WORK ON DETAILED RESEARCH PLANS, THE BUILDING FROM SCRATCH OF A RESEARCH ORGANIZATION ABLE TO COMPLETE THIS PROGRAM, AND A FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RESEARCH AND FUNDING PROPOSAL.. WE ALSO BEGAN MEETING FREQUENTLY WITH OUR TWO NEW HELPFUL FEDERAL COLLEAGUES, CHRIS GILL AND BRIAN POWELL. WE RECEIVED EXCELLENT ASSISTANCE FROM COLLEAGUES AT TORONTO'S YORK UNIVERSITY AND LATER THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON POVERTY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN.

WE BEGAN TO LEARN THAT AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCH AGENCY CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING CONTROLLED SOCIAL SCIENCE EXPERIMENTATION WAS NOT ENTIRELY ALIGNED WITH ASPECTS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR. A MAIN AND EARLY EXAMPLE WAS THE FIXED BUDGET OF \$17.35 MILLION. THE PROJECT WAS CALLED AN EXPERIMENT BECAUSE NO ONE KNEW WITH CERTAINTY WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. BUT WHATEVER IT WAS, WE HAD RECEIVED A SET BUDGET

THE COMPLETED PROPOSAL WAS APPROVED BY PREMIER SCHREYER AND THEN SUBMITTED TO THE RESPONSIBLE FEDERAL MINISTER THE HON MARC LALONDE, MINISTER OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE AND HIS OFFICIALS IN EARLY MARCH 1973. IT WAS APPROVED BY MID-SUMMER OF THAT YEAR.

CREATING A RESEARCH ORGANIZATION WITH SEVEN MAIN DIVISIONS (RESEARCH, SURVEYS, DATA PROCESSING, PAYMENTS, ADMINISTRATION, PERSONNEL AND DATA QUALITY) TOOK MOST OF MY TIME. WE BENEFITTED FROM RECRUITING A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED PEOPLE WHO HAD WORKED WITH ONE OR OTHER OF THE US EXPERIMENTS.

IN ONE SENSE, MINCOME WAS AN EXTENSION OF US EXPERIMENTS. THE MAIN RESEARCH FOCUS – LABOUR SUPPLY AND THE ACCOMPANYING STUDY DESIGN WERE

SHARED WITH THE NEW JERSEY AND OTHER EXPERIMENTS. THAT WAS IN PART A REFLECTION OF THE PREVAILING POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, PREOCCUPIED AS IT WAS WITH CONCERNS ABOUT THE COST OF AND WHAT WAS BELIEVED TO BE INCREASING DEPENDENCE ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE OR WELFARE, ESPECIALLY IN URBAN AREAS. IN THOSE DAYS CANADA WAS PAYING 50% OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE COSTS AS AN OBLIGATION OF THE FEDERAL CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN.

HOWEVER, EVEN FROM ITS EARLY DAYS, MINCOME FEATURED THREE OTHER IMPORTANT DESIGN ELEMENTS NOT SHARED OR BORROWED FROM THE US TESTS.

THE FIRST AND MOST NOTABLE, WAS THE SO-CALLED “SATURATION SITE” OF DAUPHIN AND THE SURROUNDING RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ABOUT 10,000 RESIDENTS CLOSE TO THE SASKATCHEWAN BORDER. THE ATTRACTIONS WERE THAT DAUPHIN WAS WELL AWAY FROM MAJOR SETTLEMENTS. IT HAD A LARGE UKRAINIAN SPEAKING POPULATION. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THAT, MIGRATION IN AND OUT WAS LOW, AND THE RESIDENT POPULATION QUITE STABLE, FACTORS OF IMMENSE VALUE TO OUR RESEARCHERS. WE CONSIDERED SEVERAL OTHER TOWNS, INCLUDING SELKIRK, MORDEN, PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, AND FLIN FLON, BEFORE SETTLING ON DAUPHIN.

EVERY PERMANENT RESIDENT OF DAUPHIN WAS POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR MINCOME. RESIDENCE AND INCOME BY FAMILY SIZE BELOW A DESIGNATED THRESHOLD WERE THE ONLY QUALIFICATIONS FOR RECEIVING PAYMENT. IN BOTH THE US EXPERIMENTS AND WITH OUR WINNIPEG AND OTHER RURAL SAMPLES, INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES WERE CAREFULLY SELECTED BY US, BASED ON EXTENSIVE DATA COLLECTED BY BASELINE SURVEYS. BUT IN DAUPHIN, THOSE INTERESTED TOOK THE INITIATIVE ON THEIR OWN. THIS WAS THE WAY A REGULAR PROGRAM WOULD PRESUMABLY WORK, SO IT GAVE US SOME SENSE OF THE PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION WHO MIGHT SIGN UP OVER TIME.

FROM THE OUTSET, DAUPHIN WAS OUR ATTEMPT TO COME AS ADMINISTRATIVELY CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO TESTING “REAL-WORLD” PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION. WE SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE COMING PROGRAM ON LOCAL RADIO, IN THE

NEWSPAPER AND BY PUBLIC MEETINGS INCLUDING WITH THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL. THE PEOPLE OF DAUPHIN WERE WELCOMING AND CO-OPERATIVE FROM OUR FIRST DAY; AND I REMAIN GRATEFUL TO THEM TO THIS DAY. OVER TIME, WE HEARD FROM RESIDENTS THAT THEY WERE PROUD TO BE HELPING THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE THE EXISTING INCOME SUPPORT SYSTEM, WELFARE.

WE INVITED PEOPLE TO FIND OUT WHETHER THEY QUALIFIED, BY VISITING OUR LOCAL OFFICE TO SPEAK WITH OUR STAFF. FROM THE OUTSET, THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL NEWS MEDIA WERE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN THIS PART OF THE EXPERIMENT; PROBABLY BECAUSE, BEING MORE LIKE A “REAL” PROGRAM IT WAS MORE UNDERSTANDABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

HAVING A “SATURATION SITE” WAS MICHAEL LAUB’S IDEA. HE RAISED IT IN ONE OF OUR EARLY MEETING, SO IT WAS FIRMLY IN OUR PLANS FROM THAT POINT. IT WAS HIS RESPONSE TO CRITICISM OF US EXPERIMENTS ABOUT SAMPLE “ARTIFICIALITY” FROM ONLY ENLISTING CAREFULLY SELECTED INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES WHO FIT THE ECONOMISTS’ STATISTICAL MODELS. FURTHERMORE, IT WAS HOPED DAUPHIN WOULD GIVE US SOME SENSE OF THE IMPACT OF MINCOME PAYMENTS ON FACTORS SUCH AS THE LOCAL DEMAND FOR LABOUR , LOCAL WAGE RATES, RENTS AND OTHER COMMUNITY ELEMENTS. DAVID CALNITSKY, WHOSE WORK SOME OF YOU WILL KNOW, SUGGESTED IN A RECENT PAPER ON DAUPHIN THAT IGNORING COMMUNITY-LEVEL INTERACTIONS COULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE UNDERESTIMATION OF WORK REDUCTION EFFECTS.

WE ALSO HOPED DAUPHIN WOULD BEING US CLOSER TO A VARIETY OF COMMUNITY-LEVEL QUALITATIVE RESPONSES AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES. FOR THAT REASON, WE RECRUITED A UKRAINIAN-SPEAKING SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST WHO WAS A GRADUATE STUDENT AT YORK UNIVERSITY. HE AND HIS WIFE MOVED INTO TOWN AND BECAME PART OF THE COMMUNITY. FOR MANY OBSERVERS, DAUPHIN WAS AND REMAINS MINCOME TO THIS DAY.

A SECOND DESIGN DEPARTURE WAS THAT, UNLIKE NEW JERSEY, WE DID NOT EXCLUDE POTENTIAL ENROLLEES BY FAMILY TYPE, MARITAL OR EMPLOYMENT

STATUS. WE WERE OPEN TO SINGLE PERSONS AND SINGLE PARENTS OF EITHER GENDER WHO WERE 18 OR OLDER AND WHETHER EMPLOYED OR NOT. NOR DID WE SET ANY UPPER LIMIT BY FAMILY SIZE.

FINALLY, MINCOME WAS EXPLICITLY INTENDED TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT OR MODIFICATION OF INCOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE. HAVING BOTH FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL SPONSORSHIP, IT WAS EXPECTED THAT OUR FINDINGS WOULD BE RELEVANT TO THE FUTURE OF INCOME SUPPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS OFFERED BY BOTH LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.

SOME TIME AFTER MINCOME BEGAN I WAS ALSO APPOINTED ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER FOR INCOME SECURITY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANITOBA REPRESENTATIVE TO THE RECENTLY INITIATED FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL SOCIAL SECURITY REVIEW. THUS, I WAS IN A POSITION TO IDENTIFY AND RECOMMEND THE ADOPTION BY THE PROVINCIAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, OF MINCOME DESIGN ELEMENTS THAT SEEMED TO MAKE SENSE. PRINCIPAL AMONG THESE WAS THE REDUCTION OF THE TAX-BACK RATE ON EARNED INCOME FROM WHAT HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN 100%; ENSURING PEOPLE RECEIVING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE WHO TOOK PAID EMPLOYMENT WERE THEREBY FINANCIALLY BETTER OFF. WE ALSO EXPANDED THE PROGRAM HELPING WELFARE RECIPIENTS TO DEVELOP WORK SKILLS AND FIND PAID EMPLOYMENT.

THIS REVIEW, ORGANIZED AND LED BY MINISTER LALONDE, WAS GUIDED BY A FEDERAL POLICY PAPER CALLED THE ORANGE BOOK. PARTICIPATION IN THE REVIEW CONNECTED US DIRECTLY WITH BOTH FEDERAL PLANS FOR WELFARE REFORM AND OTHER PROVINCIAL WELFARE SYSTEMS AND THEIR MANAGERS.

SO WHAT HAPPENED? WHY NO MINCOME DATA ANALYSIS.? WHY NO IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROVINCIAL OR NATIONAL PROGRAM? AS I STAND HERE TODAY, I AM STILL NOT SURE I KNOW THE COMPLETE ANSWER. BUT MID-WAY THROUGH THE EXPERIMENT THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE AROUND US BEGAN TO CHANGE, AT BOTH LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT., THOUGH IN DIFFERENT WAYS. I WILL

PROVIDE A LITTLE MORE DETAIL ON THIS LATER WHEN I DISCUSS BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING A BASIC INCOME PROGRAM.

I SHOULD HERE RECORD MY REGRET THAT NO COMPLETE HISTORY OF MINCOME EXISTS, FOR THE STORY STILL DESERVES TO BE ASSEMBLED AND TOLD. IF ANY OF YOU WISHES TO TAKE IT ON, EVEN AT THIS LATE HOUR, I PLEDGE MY FULLY COOPERATION.

NOW, TO TAKE A CRACK AT THE BASIC QUESTION: WHY HAS NO PERMANENT AND UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE PROGRAM AS YET BEEN ESTABLISHED IN A WESTERN NATION?

3. WHAT IS BASIC INCOME? IT DEPENDS.

A FUNDAMENTAL FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO COMPLICATIONS IS THE VERY CONCEPT ITSELF. BASIC OR GUARANTEED INCOME IS NO MORE THAN A SLOGAN, AN IDEAL LIKE TRUTH, BEAUTY OR JUSTICE. IN THE FORM OF A CONTROLLED SOCIAL SCIENCE EXPERIMENT HOUSED INSIDE A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF A PRAIRIE PROVINCE AND EMPLOYING NEGATIVE INCOME TAX DESIGN PRINCIPLES, IT IS AN AWKWARD AND EXOTIC BEAST.

IN APPLIED ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE, BASIC INCOME CAN TAKE MANY DIFFERENT FORMS. THE CONCEPT DOES NOT DESCRIBE ANY SPECIFIC DELIVERY SYSTEM. AT ANY ONE TIME SEVERAL DIFFERENT VERSIONS ARE LIKELY TO BE JOUSTING FOR PUBLIC ATTENTION. A FEW VERSIONS CAN, I BELIEVE, BE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL; WHILE OTHERS CAN PRODUCE ABJECT FAILURE.

IN ONTARIO SENATOR HUGH SEGAL WROTE A PAPER CALLING FOR A NEGATIVE INCOME TAX SYSTEM, BUT THE PROVINCE IS PILOTING WHAT HAS LABELED A “TAX CREDIT” SYSTEM. BASIC INCOME IS MORE SUCCESSFUL AT INSPIRING GENERAL PUBLIC ENTHUSIASM THAN SIGNALLING WHAT PRECISELY IS BEING CALLED FOR. THE RESULT IS A GREAT DEAL OF DEEP ENTHUSIASM, FOLLOWED BY A DELIVERY ORGANIZATION VACUUM, LEAVING ROOM FOR EXTENSIVE AND COMPLEX DECISION-MAKING AND DISAGREEMENTS. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR THE BASIC POLICY

OBJECTIVES A PROGRAM COULD SERVE; SUCH AS INCREASING WORK INCENTIVES, POTENTIALLY REDUCING POVERTY, ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEXITY, THE EXISTING COST BURDEN, THE RANGE OF EXISTING PUBLIC PROGRAMS OR EVEN THE SIZE OF GOVERNMENT. ALL ARE POSSIBLE OR UNLIKELY, DEPENDING UPON THE CHOSEN DESIGN.

THIS DISPUTE POTENTIAL IS REINFORCED BY THE OFTEN-NOTED FACT THAT SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS CAN BE FOUND ON BOTH THE POLITICAL LEFT AND THE RIGHT. LOOK A BIT CLOSER AND YOU CAN SEE THEY OFTEN MEAN SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT PROGRAMS, FOR ACCOMPLISHING MUCH DIFFERENT ENDS.

IN DESIGNING A BASIC INCOME DELIVERY SYSTEM THERE ARE EASILY TWENTY-FIVE MAJOR SYSTEM DIMENSIONS ON WHICH SPECIFIC ADMINISTRATIVE CHOICES CAN BE MADE. EXAMPLES INCLUDE: PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY RULES, EARNED AND TRANSFER INCOME DEFINITIONS, SUPPORT LEVELS BY FAMILY SIZE, TAX-BACK OR REDUCTION RATES, BREAK-EVEN POINTS, PAYMENTS CALCULATION AND ACCOUNTING PERIODS, ACCOUNTING RULES, TREATMENTS (IF ANY) OF NET WORTH AND FINANCIAL AUDIT AND ANTI-FRAUD PROVISIONS. ONCE MADE, THESE CHOICES INFLUENCE THE REACTIONS OF INTERESTED PUBLICS TO THE SYSTEM'S EXISTENCE AND IMPACT.

THEN THESE MUST BE MELDED INTO A COHERENT AND FUNCTIONAL WHOLE, IDEALLY INFLUENCING PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOURS IN WAYS THAT ARE CAREFULLY ALIGNED TO SUSTAIN RATHER THAN CHALLENGE OR UNDERCUT ESTABLISHED POLICY OBJECTIVES.

THEN ALL THIS MUST BE ACCURATELY ENSHRINED IN PUBLIC LAW AND REGULATIONS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH BOTH POLICY AND OPERATIONAL DESIGN INTENTS; AND MADE TO RUN AT AN ACCEPTABLE COST WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF SPEED AND ACCURACY. ALL THIS CREATED FOR MINCOME THE NECESSITY FOR AN EXTENSIVE AND DETAILED OPERATIONS MANUAL OF SEVERAL HUNDRED PAGES.

NIXON AND MOYNIHAN

MANY OF THESE REALITIES COULD BE SEEN CLEARLY WHEN NO LESS A POLITICAL LEADER THAN THE RECENTLY ELECTED US PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON GAVE A PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON WELFARE REFORM ON AUGUST 8, 1969. HE TOLD THE COUNTRY: "WHAT I AM PROPOSING IS THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BUILD A FOUNDATION UNDER THE INCOME OF EVERY AMERICAN FAMILY WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN THAT CANNOT CARE FOR ITSELF, WHEREVER IN AMERICA THAT FAMILY MIGHT LIVE." ALMOST FIFTY YEARS LATER, NO SUCH PROGRAM EXISTS IN THE USA.

PRESIDENT NIXON WAS ASSISTED IN THIS PROJECT BY ONE OF THAT COUNTRY'S MOST RESPECTED ACADEMICS IN GOVERNMENT, DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN OF HARVARD. YET ULTIMATELY, THEY BOTH FAILED TO HAVE ENABLING LEGISLATION FOR THEIR SOMEWHAT LIMITED PROGRAM PASSED BY THE CONGRESS.

FORTUNATELY, THE STORY WAS THOROUGHLY AND ELEGANTLY DOCUMENTED IN MOYNIHAN'S BOOK "THE POLITICS OF A GUARANTEED INCOME." THEN JUST THREE YEARS AGO STEVEN HESS, AN ULTIMATE WASHINGTON INSIDER WHO IN THOSE DAYS WAS MOYNIHAN'S ASSISTANT, RELEASED "THE PRESIDENT AND THE PROFESSOR," COVERING THE SAME EVENT. MANY OF THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED ARE IN THESE TWO TOMES. WHEN MOYNIHAN LEFT THE WHITE HOUSE, HIS PLACE WAS TAKEN BY JOHN EHRLICHMAN, OF WATERGATE FAME.

IN MARCH 1970, THE NIXON BILL (THE FAMILY ASSISTANCE PLAN), SAILED THROUGH THE DEMOCRATIC-CONTROLLED HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE 21 TO 3 AND A MONTH LATER THE FULL HOUSE OVERWHELMINGLY PASSED THE BILL.

BUT IT DID NOT SURVIVE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE, BEING DEFEATED BY A VOTE 10-6 AGAINST THE BILL. IT NEVER GOT OUT OF COMMITTEE AND ONTO THE SENATE FLOOR FOR A VOTE. NOTABLE AMONG THE 10 AGAINST WERE POTENTIAL 1968 DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE EUGENE MCCARTHY, AL GORE THE

PARTY'S 2000 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE AND NOTABLE OKLAHOMA POPULIST FRED HARRIS, DEMOCRATS ALL.

THIS WOULD NOT BE THE LAST TIME THE LEFTIES WERE AGAINST AND THE CONSERVATIVES IN FAVOUR OF BASIC INCOME. STARTING WITH THE NIXON INITIATIVE AND MINCOME AND THEN MOVING ON TO SIMILAR INITIATIVES, BEGINS TO DISPLAY A PATTERN: GREAT INITIAL HOPE FOR THE CONCEPT, FOLLOWED BY VARIOUS TESTING AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES FOR DIFFERING VERSIONS, BACKED BY MIXTURES OF DIVERSE SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS; FOLLOWED BY FAILURE.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT IN THE UK

FOR EXAMPLE, IN 2010, AT HIS PARTY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE FORMER LEADER OF THE BRITISH CONSERVATIVE PARTY IAN DUNCAN SMITH, THEN WORKS AND PENSIONS SECRETARY, ANNOUNCED A PROGRAM KNOWN AS UNIVERSAL CREDIT (UC). THIS WAS HAILED AS A NOBLE CONCEPT, PROMISING GREAT SOCIAL PROGRESS. THE AMBITIOUS PLAN WAS TO COMBINE SIX MEANS-TESTED BENEFITS INTO ONE SINGLE PROGRAM, TO ACHIEVE IN IDS'S WORDS, "FAIRNESS AND SIMPLICITY." A MAIN EXPECTED BENEFIT WAS GREATER INCENTIVE TO TAKE PAID WORK, RESULTING FROM A LOWER REDUCTION OR TAX-BACK RATE ON EARNED INCOME.

PAYMENTS WERE TO BE MADE MONTHLY AND THE SYSTEM WOULD BE EASIER FOR RECIPIENTS TO COMPREHEND AND ACCESS. PROGRAMS TO BE CONSOLIDATED AND HARMONIZED WERE: JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE, RENTAL HOUSING SUPPORT, A WORKING TAX CREDIT, CHILD TAX CREDIT AND TWO EMPLOYMENT INCOME SUPPLEMENTATION ALLOWANCES. UC, WHILE STOPPING SHORT OF WHAT WOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS A TRUE BASIC INCOME, WAS TO INCORPORATE MANY OF BI'S DESIGN ASPECTS AND BENEFITS.

TROUBLE AROSE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. REPORTS BEGAN OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT PAYMENTS BEING LATE, SENDING RENT PAYMENT ARREARS SOARING. BY LEAVING

THOUSANDS OF LOW-PAID WORKERS UNABLE TO PAY THEIR RENTS, FAMILIES WERE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS. FOOD BANKS COMPLAINED THAT MARRIAGES WERE BREAKING DOWN AS THE RESULT OF EXTRA FINANCIAL PRESSURES. SOME LANDLORDS REFUSED TO RENT TO TENANTS ON UNIVERSAL CREDIT. GOVERNMENT FIGURES SHOWED TWO IN FIVE RENTERS ON UNIVERSAL CREDIT WERE IN RENT ARREARS EIGHT WEEKS AFTER THEIR INITIAL CLAIM.

IN FEBRUARY 2017, MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT WORKS AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE LAUNCHED AN OFFICIAL ENQUIRY INTO UC, BECAUSE OF FEARS IT WAS “LEAVING THOUSANDS OF LOW-INCOME CLAIMANTS FACING EVICTION AND RELIANT ON FOOD BANKS.” (THE GUARDIAN FEB 22, 2017.) THE ATMOSPHERE AROUND UC HAS BEEN SOURED BY GOVERNMENT CUTS IN SOME CASH BENEFITS AND INTRODUCTION OF A “HOUSEHOLD CAP” ON TOTAL BENEFITS RECEIVED. SENIOR LIBERAL DEMOCRATS, WHO WERE IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH THE CONSERVATIVES AND SUPPORTED IT WHEN UC WAS FIRST ADOPTED, JOINED THIS CALL FOR AN OFFICIAL ENQUIRY.

APPLICATIONS WERE TO BE MADE AT GOVERNMENT JOB CENTRES. BUT BY EARLY 2016 ONLY 364,000 PEOPLE HAD MADE A CLAIM. VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS LED TO CONTINUED DELAYS. IMPLEMENTATION COSTS, ORIGINALLY FORECAST TO BE AROUND 2 MILLION POUNDS, THEN ROSE ABOVE 12 MILLION POUNDS AND ARE NOW ESTIMATED TO REACH 16 MILLION BY COMPLETION. DELIVERY TO ALL INTENDED RECIPIENTS IS FORECAST TO BE COMPLETE BY 2022, WITH A POTENTIAL ENROLLMENT OF 7 MILLION PERSONS.

FAILURES WITH THE COMPUTER PAYMENTS SYSTEM HAVE BEEN CHRONIC AND TURNOVER IN THE RESPONSIBLE SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANTS CONTINUOUS. DUE IN LARGE PART TO THESE FAILURES, IDS WAS DROPPED FROM THE CABINET. FOUR DAYS AGO DAVID GAUKE, WHO REPLACED HIM AS SECRETARY, RECEIVED A PUBLIC LETTER FROM TWELVE TORY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT DEMANDING A DELAY IN THE ROLL OUT OF THE PROGRAM. THE PARTY’S MAJORITY, REDUCED BY THE

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION OF THIS SUMMER, COULD LOSE A VOTE ON UC IF THESE 12 VOTED AGAINST IT.

THE SAME DAY A PAGE ONE REPORT IN THE CONSERVATIVE-LEANING DAILY TELEGRAPH, UNDER WHAT THE BRITS CALL A SPLASH HEADLINE, READ: UNIVERSAL CREDIT THROWN INTO CHAOS.” THEN, THREE DAYS AGO, JUST BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE ANNUAL TORY CONFERENCE, DAME LOUISE CASEY, A RECENTLY RETIRED FORMER AND WIDELY RESPECTED SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANT PUBLICLY ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO DELAY THE PROGRAM.

SHE MADE A FAMILIAR POINT: THE PRINCIPAL OF UC IS FINE, THE INTENTION IS SOUND, THE NEED FOR REFORM EVIDENT AND URGENT. A GREAT AMOUNT OF MONEY AND TIME HAS BEN INVESTED. BUT THE DELIVERY OF UC IS SO SERIOUSLY FLAWED IT MUST BE STOPPED. THE CITIZEN’S ADVICE BUREAU AND THE NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE HAD ALREADY JOINED IN THE CRITICISM. UCs FUTURE IN NOW UNCERTAIN. THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CONCEPT AND EVERYTHING TO DO WITH THE ADMINISTRATION.

YESTERDAY MORNING MR. GORKE ANNOUNCED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD GO AHEAD WITH THE ROLL-OUT BUT WOULD BEGIN MAKING ADVANCE PAYMENTS TO RECIPIENTS WITHIN FIVE DAYS OF INITIAL ENROLLMENT. WHILE FEW DETAILS ARE YET AVAILABLE, THIS “PATCH” MAY RUN THE RISK OF CREATING MORE CONFUSION, INCREASING THE POSSIBILITY OF LARGE PAYMENT ERRORS AND INCREASING COSTS.

OTHER EXAMPLES

THE CLEAR DEFEAT OF THE SWISS BI REFERENDUM EARLIER THIS YEAR, FOLLOWING AN EXTENSIVE NATIONAL DISCUSSION, IS NOTEWORTHY.

ON JULY 21, 2017, THE NEW YORK TIMES CARRIED A STORY ON THE FINNISH EXPERIMENT UNDER THE HEADLINE “WHY FINLAND’S BASIC INCOME EXPERIMENT ISN’T WORKING, BY THE TWO CO-DIRECTORS OF A FINNISH ECONOMICS THINK TANK. THEY CLAIMED THAT THE INITIAL SAMPLE SIZE WAS CUT TO ONE-FIFTH OF THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL, “AND IS NOW TOO SMALL TO BE SCIENTIFICALLY VIABLE.” THE

AUTHORS CONCLUDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE WAS TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR WORKERS TO "ACCEPT LOW-PAYING AND LOW-PRODUCTIVITY JOBS," WHILE ALSO TIGHTENING ELIGIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT, DISABILITY AND CHILD CARE BENEFITS."

LASTLY, WITHIN THE PAST FEW DAYS AN AMERICAN ACADEMIC FROM A PROMINENT EASTERN UNIVERSITY, WITH AN INTEREST IN BI, WHO WAS PLANNING A TRIP TO UTRECHT IN THE NETHERLANDS, WAS TOLD BY OFFICIALS THERE NOT TO COME, AS THE CITY HAD AT SOMETHING LIKE THE LAST MOMENT FAILED TO APPROVE THE WIDELY ANTICIPATED TRIAL.

IT IS OBVIOUSLY TOO EARLY TO REACH CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE ULTIMATE FATE OF THE FINNISH OR OTHER EXPERIMENTS. BUT IT IS POSSIBLE BY STARTING WITH THE ILL-FATED NIXON PROJECT AND MOVING THROUGH MINCOME FORWARD TO TODAY, TO DETECT A PATTERN OF PERSISTENT CHALLENGE IN THE OVERALL ARC OF BASIC INCOME'S POLITICAL APPROVAL, TRIAL AND IMPLEMENTATION. FORTY YEARS AGO, IN THE CONCLUDING WORDS OF HIS BOOK ON THE NIXON BI PROJECT, DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN WROTE THIS: "...THE NATION AND ITS SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT SHOWED A CONTINUING IF SOMEWHAT CONFLICTED DISPOSITION TOWARD GENEROUS SOCIAL POLICIES. A CONTINUING ISSUE WILL BE WHETHER GENEROSITY CAN BE MATCHED BY COMPETENCE." IT IS HARD TO AVOID THE CONCLUSION THAT THE US IS PRESENTLY MUCH LESS CONFLICTED TODAY IN ITS PREVAILING PREDISPOSITION TOWARD GENEROUS SOCIAL POLICY, THAN IT WAS THEN.

AND WHILE MOYNIHAN IS NOT SPECIFIC ABOUT THE KINDS OF COMPETENCE HE FELT WERE LACKING, I'D OFFER THE SPECULATION THAT HE WAS REFERRING IN PARTICULAR TO PROFICIENCY IN POLITICS, PUBLIC POLICY MAKING, PROGRAM DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLEMENTATION.

4. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS NOW LET US TURN TO A FEW SPECIFIC BARRIERS IN THE WAY OF GETTING TO AN ACTUAL, FULLY-FUNCTIONAL BI PROGRAM. I FEEL COMPELLED, AT THE OUTSET, TO FREELY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT, GIVEN MY

INTERESTS, THESE ARE THE ONES MOST LIKELY TO SEEM EVIDENT AND IMPORTANT. IN MITIGATION, ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT IT DOES STRIKE ME AS OBVIOUS THAT SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF A BASIC INCOME PAYMENTS SYSTEM IS IMPERATIVE. I SHOULD ALSO NOTE THAT I AM NOT THE ONLY PERSON IN THIS HALL TODAY WHO HAS, WITHIN THE PAST FEW MONTHS HEARD A SENIOR EXECUTIVE OF THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT SAY QUITE EXPLICITLY THAT, WHILE THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMMITTED TO DOING A PILOT, IT HAD MADE NO DECISION ABOUT WHETHER SUCH A TEST WOULD LEAD TO AN ACTUAL BASIC INCOME PROGRAM FOR THE PROVINCE.

ONE COULD INTERPRET THAT AS STATING THE OBVIOUS: ANY DECISION SHOULD AWAIT THE PILOT RESULTS. BUT I SENSED BEHIND THAT STATEMENT A DEEPER ASSERTION: THE GOVERNMENT RETAINS THE OPTION TO MAKE A POLITICAL JUDGMENT SOME THREE OR MORE YEARS FROM NOW, ABOUT THE WISDOM OF FULLY IMPLEMENTING ANY SUCH PROGRAM.

ON THE FUTURE DAY SOME CABINET MEETS TO DECIDE ABOUT GOING AHEAD WITH AN ACTUAL BASIC INCOME PROGRAM FOR ALL THOSE ELIGIBLE WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION, OR NOT, WHAT MIGHT BE THEIR CENTRAL CONSIDERATIONS?

OBJECTIVES TO BE ACCOMPLISHED [THE VALUE PROPOSITION]

THE ANSWER WILL PROBABLY BE INFLUENCED BY WHAT THE GOVERNMENT DESIGNATES AS THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY BI. IN MY VIEW, THE MOST PRODUCTIVE SOCIAL BENEFIT OF SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD BE A WIDESPREAD REDUCTION IN FINANCIAL INSECURITY AMONG LOWER-INCOME CANADIANS, ENDING THE CONTINUING FEAR OF BEING UNABLE TO MEET THE PRIMARY COSTS OF EXISTENCE. YET FOR SOME MAINTAINING THIS MOTIVATION IS AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL NECESSITY AND THAT DEBATE SEEMS UNRESOLVED.

THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE EFFECTS OF REDUCING OR REMOVING FINANCIAL INSECURITY SHOULD BE TESTED AS TO WHETHER IT DOES IN PRACTICE PSYCHOLOGICALLY ENABLE A POTENTIAL ARRAY OF CONSTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOURS,

AND TO WHAT RELATIVE EXTENT. THIS WAS THOUGHT TO BE A SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE OF MINCOME. RELEVANT POTENTIAL OUTCOMES COULD INCLUDE: BETTER NUTRITION, MORE ADEQUATE AND SECURE HOUSING, BETTER CHILD CARE AND GREATER INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL. ANALYSIS OF DAUPHIN DATA SUPPORT THIS AS WELL AS IMPROVED PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND REDUCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES

BEING ANCIENT, I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MOVING SOMETHING LIKE 20 PUBLIC PROGRAMS FROM THE PLANNING TO THE CONSTRUCTION TO THE OPERATIONAL REALITY STAGES, IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT JURISDICTIONS. IN ALL THAT TIME I HAVE YET TO FIND A SINGLE PROGRAM, SOME A GOOD DEAL LESS COMPLEX THAN BASIC INCOME, THAT FUNCTIONED WHEN AT LAST OPERATIONAL, JUST AS THE INITIAL DESIGNERS, THE SYSTEM CREATORS, THE MANAGERS AND SUPPORTING POLITICIANS INTENDED OR IMAGINED.

THEREFORE, I ASK FOR FORGIVENESS IF I DECLINE TO ANTICIPATE THAT BASIC INCOME WILL BREAK THAT STRING. MAJOR POLITICAL QUESTIONS MIGHT INCLUDE: HOW BIG IS THE DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THE BI DREAM AND OPERATING REALITY LIKELY TO BE, AND IN WHAT DIRECTIONS? FOR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, THIS IS THE CRUCIAL MATTER. AS ATTRACTIVE AS IT IS, BASIC INCOME IS NOT A SELF-IMPLEMENTING CONCEPT. AND IT IS, I SUSPECT, PRECISELY THE SIZE OF UNAVOIDABLE SENSED RISK THAT HAS KEPT POLITICIANS UP TO NOW FROM THROWING THE BI SWITCH INTO THE ON POSITION.

ROLE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC INCOME, SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART. BUT WHAT, EXACTLY IS THE BEST ROLE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE IN ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE IN THE FUTURE? DESPITE SIX AND SOON TO BE SEVEN SUCH TESTS, THERE IS NO UNIVERSAL AND HARMONIOUS CONSENSUS ON ALL THE RECORDED RESULTS. ON THE KEY QUESTION OF LABOUR SUPPLY, MANY

COMMENTATORS FOUND THE DEGREE OF WORK DISINCENTIVE TO BE MODEST AND ACCEPTABLE. OTHERS HAVE DISSENTED FROM THIS INTERPRETATION AND CONTINUE TO DO SO.

PILOTS OR EXPERIMENTS MIGHT HAVE OPTED FOR STARTING WITH AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING DATA FROM EARLIER PROJECTS, POSSIBLY INFORMED BY THE RELATED WORK OF HALF A DOZEN RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE LOOKED AT THIS NOW AND AGAIN. THAT WAS A POLITICAL CHOICE, POSSIBLY STIMULATED BY THE BELIEF THAT “OUR” DATA WOULD BE MORE RELEVANT, UP-TO-DATE AND LEGITIMIZING FOR THE GOVERNMENTS.

THIS CAN BE CONTRASTED WITH THE POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES OF A SYSTEMATIC SERIES OF INTEGRATED EXPERIMENTS, MOVING PROGRESSIVELY FROM MACRO TOWARD MICRO, FEATURING INCREASINGLY SPECIFIC EXAMINATIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF PROGRESSIVELY NARROWER DELIVERY SYSTEM DESIGN OPTIONS ON CRUCIAL BEHAVIOURS.

SUCH A CUMULATIVE ACCRETION OF VERIFIED AND COMPLIMENTARY DATA MIGHT HAVE MADE IT EASIER FOR POLICY DECISION-MAKERS TO HAVE SUFFICIENT CONFIDENCE TO MOVE AHEAD TO REAL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION. IN LIGHT OF THE UNCERTAIN NATURE OF BASIC INCOME AT THE LEVEL OF A META-CONCEPT, RESEARCH INCONSISTENCY IS HARDLY SURPRISING.

INTEGRATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

AMONG THE KEY MATTERS ANY TEST MUST DECIDE UPON IS THE MAJOR MATTER OF THE CHOICE TO ADD ANY PROVEN BASIC INCOME PROGRAM ONTO THE ENTIRE EXISTING ARRAY OF FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS; OR TO REVISE OR EVEN REPLACE SOME OF THE PRESENT PROGRAM INVENTORY WITH A NEW ONE. OF COURSE, THE FACT THAT ONTARIO IS GOING IT ALONE WITHOUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROBABLY REDUCES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO CONSIDER THIS ISSUE.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, NOTABLE RISKS AND POTENTIAL REWARDS DOWN EITHER BRANCH OF THAT DECISION: ADD ON TOP OR REPLACE? RISKS INCLUDE THE FACT THAT ANY INTENDED REPLACEMENT OR EXISTING PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS WILL ENERGIZE THE OPPOSITION OF SOME OF INDIVIDUALS, AND THE ORGANIZATIONS SPEAKING FOR THEM WHO ARE CURRENTLY RECEIVING SUCH BENEFITS; ADDING ON OF COURSE MISSES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR COST REDUCTIONS.

WE CERTAINLY EXPERIENCED THIS IN MINCOME, ESPECIALLY FROM WORKERS' COMPENSATION RECIPIENTS AND FROM THOSE ELIGIBLE OR ANTICIPATING ELIGIBILITY FOR PROGRAMS FOR THE ELDERLY AND CHILDREN. NEXT WOULD COME THE CONSIDERABLE PROBLEMS, AS EXPERIENCED BY UNIVERSAL CREDIT, OF TAKING PROGRAMS DESIGNED MANY YEARS APART AND FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS AND POLICY PURPOSES, BY DIFFERENT PLANNERS AND GOVERNMENTS, AND ACTUALLY MAKING THEM WORK MORE HARMONIOUSLY TOGETHER.

PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT POLITICALLY WOULD BE THE ANGER AND HOSTILITY OF THOSE WHO FEARED ANY MODIFICATIONS IN EXISTING INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS WOULD MAKE PRESENT OR LIKELY RECIPIENTS WORSE OFF BECAUSE OF INTRODUCING BASIC INCOME. THE LOGICAL ANTIDOTE TO SUCH FEARS IS A "NO LOSERS" PLEDGE, ALREADY MENTIONED IN CONNECTION WITH THE ONTARIO PILOT. BUT PLANNING ON AND THEN DELIVERING ON SUCH A PROMISE CAN LIKELY PROVE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE ADMINISTRATIVELY 100% OF THE TIME; AND AFTER SUCH A PLEDGE EVEN A FEW LOSERS COULD BE POLITICALLY COSTLY. ONTARIO APPARENTLY INTENDS TO MAKE SOME DISABLED PERSONS INELIGIBLE FOR CERTAIN PROGRAM ELEMENTS THEY ARE NOW RECEIVING, ONCE THEY MOVE ONTO BASIC INCOME.

DESIGN AND OPERATION OF THE DELIVERY SYSTEM

THE ABILITY TO MAKE GOOD ON ANY SUCH PROMISES WOULD, OF COURSE, BE INFLUENCED BY THE DESIGN, GENEROSITY AND FUNCTIONALITY OF ANY NEW PAYMENT CALCULATION AND DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS IS ITSELF AN ISSUE OF IMMENSE OPERATIONAL AND ESPECIALLY POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. AS ALREADY NOTED, THERE ARE SEVERAL DOZEN ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS AND

OPERATIONAL DELIVERY PROCESS CHOICES TO BE MADE, PUT IN PLACE AND MANAGED OVER TIME. HOW EFFECTIVE THESE PROVED TO BE IN PRACTICE COULD INTENSIFY, NEUTRALIZE OR UNDERCUT THE INTENDED BEHAVIOURAL EFFECTS AND LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES OF THE INTENDED POLICY; SOME OF WHICH COULD HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE PILOT ITSELF.

THE DESIGN AND OPERATION OF THE PAYMENTS INFORMATION GATHERING, CALCULATION AND DELIVERY PROCEDURES IN PARTICULAR, MUST BE CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH THE INTENDED BEHAVIOURAL OUTCOMES OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OF MAIN RESEARCH INTEREST

ACHIEVING THESE OBJECTIVES IN PRACTICE ARE CRUCIAL FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM'S CONSISTENT ATTAINMENT OF DESIGNATED POLICY OUTCOMES. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WILL TAKE A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED IT SYSTEM CAPABLE OF THE PROMPT AND ACCURATE CONTINUOUS ADJUSTMENTS TO FLUCTUATIONS IN RECIPIENT AND FAMILY EARNED AND OTHER INCOME, CHANGES IN JOB SEARCH AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE PUBLIC-SECTOR RECORD IN DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF SOPHISTICATED AND EFFECTIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING SYSTEMS IS NOT CHARACTERIZED BY UNALLOYED SUCCESS (RECALL PHOENIX, UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT).

INEFFICIENT IT SYSTEMS ARE JUST ONE OF THE DELIVERY ELEMENTS THAT COULD POTENTIALLY CONTRIBUTE TO SYSTEM ABUSE, INABILITY TO MAKE ACCURATE PAYMENTS OR EXCESSIVE SYSTEM COSTS. FURTHER, THE ATTAINMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS SUCH AS A DECLINE IN THE DEGREE OF FAMILIAL FINANCIAL INSECURITY, ARE DEPENDENT IN VERY LARGE PART ON THE EXISTENCE OF HIGHLY EFFICIENT PAYMENTS SYSTEM PERFORMANCE. TWO FORMS OF MALADMINISTRATION TO BE CRUCIALLY AVOIDED ARE UNDER AND OVERPAYMENTS.

THE FIRST SUSTAINS A SENSE OF FINANCIAL INSECURITY AND LACK OF TRUST IN THE SYSTEM; WHILE THE SECOND IN A SENSE IS EVEN LESS WELCOME AS IT INCREASES FAMILY INDEBTEDNESS AND LOSS OF FINANCIAL CONTROL. IT CAN ALSO GENERATE

NEGATIVE PUBLICITY AND THE NEED TO MAKE ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS IN REVISED SYSTEMS.

COMMUNICATIONS

ARRANGEMENTS ARE NEEDED TO GUARD AGAINST THE NATURAL TENDENCY TO OVERLOADED COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS BETWEEN RECIPIENTS AND RESEARCHERS OR ADMINISTRATORS. THIS PROVED TO BE AN INCREASING CONCERN WITH MINCOME. THERE IS SOME REASON TO BELIEVE THIS CONTRIBUTED TO ATTRITION PROBLEMS. AS JUST ONE EXAMPLE, WE PRODUCED A “SIMPLIFIED” GUIDE FOR MINCOME RECIPIENTS IN THE HOPES THAT THEY WOULD BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW PAYMENTS WERE CALCULATED AND MADE – IT WAS ITSELF 3,000 WORDS LONG. THIS LED TO CONCERNS THAT RECIPIENTS’ FAILURE TO ACCURATELY UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM’S OPERATING RULES COULD INFLUENCE RECIPIENT BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSES

IN OUR EARLY PLANNING TO ENSURE RESEARCHER DOMINATION OF THE OPERATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF MINCOME , RESEARCH DIRECTOR LAUB WAS DESIGNATED THE DECISION-MAKER AND ADJUDICATOR ABOUT WHAT COULD OR COULD NOT GO INTO SURVEYS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH ENROLLEES. PEOPLE LINED UP AT HIS DOOR, SEEKING SPACE AND WORDINGS IN RESEARCH DOCUMENTS. AN EARLY AND UNINTENDED RESULT WAS EXCESSIVELY DEMANDING COMMUNICATIONS. WE BEGAN TO RECEIVE COMPLAINTS AND EVIDENCE IT WAS CONTRIBUTING TO ATTRITION. NEVERTHELESS, WE WERE LEARNING. WE HIRED AN EXPERIENCED WINNIPEG NEWSPAPER EDITOR TO MAKE OUR PUBLICATIONS MORE READABLE.

A RECENT NEWS REPORT SUGGESTED THAT ONTARIO’S BASIC INCOME PILOT HAS RUN SMACK INTO THIS PROBLEM, MAILING OUT A 40-PAGE ENROLLMENT PACKAGE TO 28,000 RECIPIENTS. THIS LED TO COMPARATIVELY FEW APPLICANTS AND EVEN FEWER CHEQUES MAILED OUT.

WE WERE CONCERNED TO HELP PEOPLE HAVE A REASONABLY ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WAS EXPECTED OF THEM AND OF THEIR PART IN THE SYSTEM, SO AN EFFORT WAS MADE TO GAIN INSIGHTS INTO THE EXTENT OF THE BALANCE BETWEEN ACCURATE COMPREHENSION AND MISUNDERSTANDING. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN A GREATER PROBLEM WITH OUR DISPERSED SAMPLES, WHERE THERE WAS LESS OPPORTUNITY FOR FACE TO FACE CONTACTS WITH OUR STAFF WHEN DOUBTS AROSE. IN DAUPHIN, BECAUSE WE HAD A LOCAL DOWNTOWN OFFICE, PEOPLE WHO HAD QUESTIONS COULD EASILY DROP IN AND ASK THEIR QUESTIONS. FOR A PROVINCE OR NATION-WIDE PROGRAM, HOWEVER, SUCH A SOLUTION IS PROBABLY NOT FEASIBLE, WITHOUT HARNESSING NEW TECHNOLOGY.

FINDING THE BALANCE BETWEEN RESEARCHER DESIRE AND EASE OF UNDERSTANDING IS PROBABLY AN INEVITABLE COMPANION TO SUCH PROJECTS. THE CLEAR NEED TO BE SENSITIVE TO THIS ISSUE AND THE CONSEQUENT NEED FOR COPING STRATEGIES ARE AMONG THE CLEAREST OF LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM MINCOME.

STAFF RETENTION

UNFORTUNATELY FOR MINCOME AND FOR ME PERSONALLY, WE HAD ANOTHER HARD LESSON TO LEARN. OUT OF THE BLUE, MICHAEL LAUB, ON WHOM I HAD COME GREATLY TO DEPEND, ANNOUNCED HE WAS LEAVING BOTH MINCOME AND ACADEMIA IN FAVOUR OF OWNING AND RUNNING A HOTEL ON A SPECTACULAR GLACIAL LAKE IN THE ROCKIES. MICHAEL WAS OUR SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT EMPLOYEE AND HIS DECISION TO DEPART AFFECTED ME BOTH PERSONALLY AND MINCOME OPERATIONALLY. HE DID, HOWEVER, BRING US PROFESSOR DERRICK HUME, ALSO FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT, WHO QUICKLY TOOK MICHAEL'S PLACE AS RESEARCH DIRECTOR. TRAGICALLY, MICHAEL LAUB WAS TAKEN BY CANCER A FEW YEARS AGO.

IN A RELATIVELY SHORT RESEARCH PROJECT, LOSS OF KEY STAFF IS ALWAYS A RISK AND IT CAN BE HARMFUL TO DATA INTEGRITY. FORTUNATELY, WE LARGELY AVOIDED OTHER EQUIVALENT LOSSES. BUT ANTICIPATION OF THIS ISSUE AND THE

RECRUITMENT OF POTENTIAL KEY REPLACEMENTS WOULD BE PRUDENT. ANY MULTI-YEAR PROJECT IS GOING TO ENCOUNTER UNWELCOME SURPRISES IN PERSONAL PERFORMANCE; BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY IN THE POLITICAL AND POLICY CONTEXTS BY WHICH YOU ARE SURROUNDED; AND WHICH CONSTRAIN OR FACILITATE YOUR DAY TO DAY ACTIONS.

ENVIRONMENT AND FUNDING

THREE YEARS IN A COMPLEX RESEARCH PROJECT IS A SHORT TIME; BUT IN POLITICS IT CAN BE SEVERAL LIFETIMES. ELECTED GOVERNMENTS AND APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE, MOVE ON DIFFERENT TIME SCALES AND ACT FROM DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES.

IN DECEMBER 1975, THE CONSIDERABLY MORE CONSERVATIVE STERLING LYON DEFEATED THE CONSIDERABLY MORE PROGRESSIVE HARVARD-EDUCATED SID SPIVAK FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE MANITOBA CONSERVATIVE PARTY. MR. LYON BEGAN TO PICK UP FRESH SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY FROM RURAL VOTERS AND FROM WHOM THE MORE URBANE SPIVAK ATTRACTED LESS ENTHUSIASM. THE PROSPECT OF A GOVERNMENT CHANGE IN 1977 BEGAN TO CAST A LONGER AND LONGER SHADOW. COMPLICATIONS IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS EMERGED AND TOOK UP MUCH TIME.

AS 1976 BEGAN TO DRAW TO A CLOSE, OUR ENVIRONMENT BEGAN TO REALLY CHANGE. NATIONAL STAGFLATION WAS THE ECONOMIC WORD OF THE HOUR. THE NEWSPAPERS BEGAN REPORTING FEDERAL REVENUE PROBLEMS. THIS WAS COMPOUNDED BY THE HUGE COST OVERRUN FROM THE MASSIVE EXPANSION OF THE FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HON BRYCE MACKASEY. WE BEGAN TO HEAR STORIES THAT THE FEDERAL DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL COSTS OF ANY NEW AND EXPENSIVE PROGRAM. I HAD THE FEELING HE MEANT MINCOME.

ON FEBRUARY 5, 1976 MINISTER LALONDE WAS QUOTED IN THE WINNIPEG FREE PRESS SAYING: “[HE] EXPECTS FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENT ON A GUARANTEED INCOME SCHEME BEFORE THE SUMMER.” THIS ANNOUNCEMENT

CAME AT THE END OF A TWO-DAY FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL WELFARE MINISTERS CONFERENCE IN OTTAWA. HE FURTHER SAID THAT: "...THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD ADMINISTER ANY GUARANTEED INCOME PROGRAM, EVEN THOUGH OTTAWA SHOULD SHOULDER MOST OF THE COSTS." WE SMILED.

FOUR MONTHS LATER, AS THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT CHANGED BEHIND US, A REPORT IN MACLEAN'S MAGAZINE ISSUE OF JUNE 14, 1976 SAID THAT AT THE 8TH FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL WELFARE MINISTERS MEETING IN THREE YEARS, GUARANTEED INCOME SEEMED DEAD. ONLY TWO PROVINCES, QUEBEC AND BRITISH COLUMBIA WERE FULLY SUPPORTIVE. MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN WANTED MORE GENEROUS PAYMENTS, WHILE THE FOUR ATLANTIC PROVINCES SAID IT WAS ALREADY TOO EXPENSIVE. FINALLY, THE ONTARIO MINISTER SAT SILENTLY IN THE MIDDLE AND SEEMED TO DISAPPROVE OF EVERYTHING. THIS DIVISION MIMICED THE SPLIT THAT KILLED THE NIXON PLAN. ONE SIDE SAID "TOO EXPENSIVE", ANOTHER SIDE SAID "INADEQUATE". A MINORITY APPROVED. A YEAR LATER MR. LALONDE LEFT HEALTH AND WELFARE.

MY REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE ALREADY PAID-FOR AND COLLECTED MINCOME DATA ANALYSIS, WAS REJECTED BY MANITOBA.

5. CONCLUSION

EXPERIMENTAL SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL COSTS CAN PROVE POLITICALLY NEGATIVE, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY OVER-RUN PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED LIMITS. AND WHAT LIES BEHIND THIS IS THE SPECTRE OF THE POTENTIAL FOR OUT OF CONTROL IMPLEMENTATION COSTS, LEADING TO PRESSURE FOR HIGHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT REVENUE EXTRACTED FROM TAXPAYERS.

SOME, OR ALL, OF THE ABOVE RISKS GO SOME WAY TO EXPLAINING WHY THE DEVELOPED WORLD IS AWAITING ITS FIRST UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME PROGRAM. SOME OF THESE CAUSES OF FAILURE ARE IDIOSYNCRATIC AND LOCAL. OTHERS ARE PROBABLY SHARED ACROSS SEVERAL ATTEMPTS. UNFORTUNATELY, EVEN DATA OF

SOLID QUALITY CANNOT BY ITSELF OVERCOME WHAT I TAKE TO BE THE **CENTRAL PROBLEM.**

FOR THIS I NOMINATE THE VERY REAL DIFFICULTY ELECTED DECISION-MAKERS HAVE BEING SUFFICIENTLY CERTAIN THAT THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR SYSTEM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION CAN IN FACT TRANSFORM A VERY ATTRACTIVE VISION INTO AN EQUALLY APPEALING AND FULLY FUNCTIONAL OPERATIONAL SYSTEM. THIS TRANSITION REQUIRES THE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY SUFFICIENT TO DELIVER THE QUALITIES REQUIRED BY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, WHILE AVOIDING ALL OR CERTAINLY MOST OF THE NEGATIVE RESULTS.

INDEED, I SUSPECT IT IS FEAR OF LARGE NEGATIVES RATHER THAN DOUBT ABOUT ATTAINING THE PROMISED POSITIVES THAT IS THE CENTRAL POLITICAL PROBLEM. YET OVERCOMING THESE OPERATIONAL FEARS HAS RECEIVED RELATIVELY LITTLE ATTENTION, LET ALONE SYSTEMATIC DEMONSTRATIONS THAT THEY CAN BE EXPLICITLY ANTICIPATED AND PREVENTED. IN THAT REGARD THE RECENT RECORD OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IS NOT REASSURING. SEE FOR EXAMPLE EXCELLENT RECENT WORK BY PAUL LIGHT AND DAVID KETTL.

CONSEQUENTLY, MY FINAL SUGGESTED LESSON FROM MINCOME IS THIS APPROACH TO ORGANIZING RESEARCH:

1. ASSEMBLE EXISTING QUALITY DATA ON THE MAIN POLICY-RELEVANT ISSUES FROM THE BEST AVAILABLE INTERNATIONAL SOURCES AND ASK QUALIFIED ANALYSTS NOT INVOLVED WITH CREATING THIS INFORMATION TO DECIDE WHAT IS REASONABLY CERTAIN AND WHAT NEEDS FURTHER EXAMINATION.
2. ASK QUALIFIED EXPERTS TO ANSWER THOSE OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS.
3. USE THIS NEW AND EXISTING RELEVANT DATA TO BUILD AN OPERATIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEM, WITH VARIOUS DELIVERY OPTIONS, AND MAKE A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVENESS OVER A SUBSTANTIAL PERIOD. WE ASSUME ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE, SO WE SEEK TO

IDENTIFY THE SPECIFIC INDEPENDENT VARIABLES THAT PRODUCE DIFFERING PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES. LET THIS KNOWLEDGE GUIDE CONSULTATION.

4. EVALUATE THE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AND THEN USE THE RESULTS TO REVISE THE PROPOSED DELIVERY MODEL.

5. RE-RUN THIS SYSTEM AS A FINAL TRIAL.

6. ASSUMING THE RESULTS ARE NOW SUFFICIENTLY SATISFACTORY, BUILD A PERMANENT DELIVERY SYSTEM AND HOLD A START-UP CELEBRATION. IF THEY ARE NOT, GO HOME AND STAY THERE.

THIS APPROACH REQUIRES ONE OR MORE GOVERNMENTS TO BE WILLING TO TAKE THE LONG VIEW; AS WELL AS POLITICAL COURAGE, MONEY AND TIME. BUT HAD THIS APPROACH BEEN TAKE BACK IN THE 1960S OR 1970S, WE MIGHT BY NOW HAVE A FULLY FUNCTIONING SYSTEM OR AT LEAST THE CERTAIN FINAL KNOWLEDGE THAT IT IS BEYOND HUMAN INGENUITY. YET I CANNOT SAY THAT I SEE A CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OR GOVERNMENTS READY TODAY TO TAKE SUCH AN APPROACH AND KEEP TO IT FOR THE TIME REQUIRED. I HOPE I AM WRONG.

THANK YOU.