

# The SocioTron

By: Tony Foote © 2025 Reprint



New Zealand is no longer the land of milk and honey that it once was. There is an absolute class division in the New Zealand society today. It has destroyed the stability of the country as a whole. The worst thing is that the government will not acknowledge its existence to a large extent, neither will the people themselves. Not only is it rife throughout the society in which we are presently living, but it grows day by day. Throughout history it has been the class divisions which have been responsible for civil uprisings and accompanying insurrection resulting in military coops. From time to time, there are revelations from those who run the country regarding the way in which the poorer people live and conduct their day to day affairs. Such statements are made by those in receipt of a small amount of complaint with regards to a few people, notably the unemployed and other beneficiary's, alleging such things as spending their benefits on alcohol and drugs, not to mention gambling, and living debauched lifestyles. The upper classes see these things as not only true but entirely the choice of the individuals concerned. Unfortunately, though, a generalisation is made that all beneficiary's are the same. There are three definable social classes in this country.

There are the upper class people i.e. businessmen, independently wealthy and assorted highly paid professionals.

The middle class consists of those in work who are well paid. That is to say, those who can afford not only the necessities of life, but any luxury that they may desire including the purchase of their own home without the worry of whether or not they can afford it. They have the intelligence to handle their affairs to a high standard thanks to the benefit of a good education which they were brought up to accept and comply with. Their social standards reflect this.

Then, there is an underclass of New Zealanders who have been created out of economic failures by successive governments over the past twenty years or so. This under class contains around one third of the people in this country. It is likely that it may contain even more than that amount. The politicians do not

consider these people as a major priority in the scheme of things when policies are considered.

One must remember that government's job is to run the country day to day with as little cost as possible, for the most effect. It all comes down to dollars and cents. A policy to satisfy all needs of this country is only a dream. The continued growth of this underclass is the reason for our decline as a nation no matter how well the politicians tell us we are doing in terms of prosperity. I will now give an overview of this underclass in practical terms and definitions. The underclass consists of beneficiary's and those on lowly paid jobs. For these people, many sad facts must be faced each day of their lives, although it may be inconceivable that there is starvation in this country. It is, however a fact of life for thousands of our people daily that they may not be able to feed their hungry children or themselves that day.

Thousands of New Zealand children go to bed hungry on any given night. Schools report that many children come to school daily without the benefit of breakfast because there is no food in the cupboards. Many schools run special food programs to feed their hungry children. Many children who are too embarrassed to ask for food either go hungry or steal food from others. This is not a new problem in this country. It went on when i was at school over twenty years ago. Now though it is far more severe. The se children are members of the underclass. At home, they have no special belongings that are the craze of their age group. Their parents could never afford to buy them the se things so they steal them. Kids as young as five and six years old work in groups to shoplift from stores and are often caught. If a child of one of the other two classes were caught there would be some consequence for their actions because their parents social standards would be much higher, however, these children are learning that there is no consequence under the law for their actions and continue to steal. Because their parents have a lower moral life style, the children generally do not get punished much if at all. Their parents too have learned that there is no legal consequence to the child. At this point we have to accept that these children are tomorrow's underclass. They learn their own standards from their parents, not to mention friends, who will almost certainly be of the underclass.

The government would define this group in numbers as the sum of beneficiary's. That figure would represent in total, about 400,000 people or less. The one thing not taken into account is that many of those people have families. Often there are two or more children. If half of those people had a partner and two kids (not counting solo parents who have no partner)

## **What went on in the 1990s**

*(I saw this with my own eyes)*

In the last four years or so, I have seen many things happen in this group of people which disgusted me but I was unable to do anything about. I will place each type of incident or behaviour into separate categories. This will make it easier to follow. Drugs and alcohol were abused by nearly the entire group. A ten year old boy, whose mother used, and sold cannabis always kept a supply around the house. One night there were two girls who were about 13, who she had arranged to look after this boy while she went out to the pub to pick up a guy for sex. They found her dope since she made no secret of the fact that it was there and smoked four joints between them. I went around at about 11.25 pm to check to see if they were all ok and I found the young boy half naked lying on the bed in the lounge with one of the girls. They didn't seem to be doing anything sexual but they were all as high as a kite on the cannabis. One of the girls was a member of the boy's family. The other one was a friend of hers and had a reputation of sexual promiscuity even at her young age. His cousin was allowed to smoke dope even at age 13.

Another time, this boy and a DSW foster boy stole dope from the house and took it to the home of the foster boy. He was older than the this one. Once at his house the two boys used a portion of the cannabis. I was asked to look for the younger one an hour later. I found him at the foster boys home heavily stoned. He refused to come home. Another time I saw, along with one of my foster boys who was with me at the time, the foster boy (12) drinking beer he had been given it by his foster parents and they were there with him. These foster parents had also on occasion given alcohol and cannabis to most of my foster boys. One day, I arrived at their house to find one of my boys stoned. The foster father had given him the dope, and a can of beer that he drank as I watched in disbelief. He had other cans of beer before that. This boy was 14-15 at that time and had a history of drug and alcohol abuse which I had managed to get under control. My fiancé, who turned out to be a slag (now dead) also provided drugs and alcohol to these kids without my knowledge. The foster boys were given beer, rum & coke and screwdriver. (Vodka and orange). This almost always started a party in which the young boys in that group were invited to get drunk. Usually this ended in sex with women having the boys strut naked around the lounge to be selected for sex. Runaway girls from a DSW facility also ended up there at this house. They would get drunk and have sex with the boys.

Really young kids were not allowed to drink alcohol but got it as their parents became drunk and weren't able to watch them. I have seen very young children vomiting through extreme intoxication. They didn't have the strength to get to the toilet. Just lay there in their own vomit. I always found myself in the position of having to put a stop to these incidents since I did not drink or use drugs – I am known as teetotal and have always been so. In the past couple of years I was going to the parties where there were kids and taking them out of it. I was always hassled and threatened after doing this, but in the end I wound up looking after all the kids while their parents raged. I felt good about that at least.

At least the kids I took out of there were not getting drunk and being exposed to sex and drunken behaviours. I did report the sex, drugs and booze incidents to DSW social workers for the boys but was rebuffed by them. Although I looked after the really young ones, the ones from 12 up would not come away. They were allowed by their social workers and adults around them no matter what I said to stay and get involved in what was going on. One 9 year old stole beer from a carton in a delivery area at the Shirley lodge pub. He drank most of it before he arrived staggering home. They all thought it was funny. I showed my disgust and was told to mind my own business. One time I arrived at one of these houses. The mother and her son (10) were there. A very heavily drunken teenaged male arrived. He sat on a chair in front of the mother. He calls over the boy and sat him on his knee. What followed then was nothing short of petting. This teenager began stroking the boys legs and hugging him. He told him repeatedly how much he loved this boy and began kissing him. The mother looked on. I told the teenager to stop and I became agitated as he began kissing the boys neck in the way that a man would caress a woman. The boy was quite embarrassed and tried to push the teenager away. He would not stop, and I was not prepared to wait any longer so I stood up and pulled the boy away. The mother didn't want any trouble and I had to leave. The guy was so drunk that he had to crawl to the toilet where he collapsed into a heap of his own vomit. That night he slept in the bedroom with the boy. That has bothered me to this day. Alcohol was the instigator, but the behaviour was not normal. I was shown as the bad guy. Each Thurs a night there was a "dole day rage." Large amounts of people would go to these. Children of any age would be taken as well. They ran around outside while the party raged inside. I saw a 12 year old boy running around with a loaded rifle at one of these rages. His father told him to go and get it because someone said that gatecrashers were coming. Someone could have easily been killed that night. I saw many a drunken punch up with terrified kids looking on. There was shouting and screaming and lots of crying as kids watched their fathers getting the guts kicked out of them as they lay on the ground moaning. That's probably why all those people had trouble with their kids being violent at school. I should stress the fact that I do not personally drink or use drugs of any kind. My involvement with these people was to do all I could to protect the kids. A lot of these parents would get drunk or stoned through the day when their kids were at school. On many occasions though there was something wrong with the kids at school which would require the parents to attend but they were unwilling or unable so asked me to go to the school to sort it out. I often had to do that part as the parents were out of it and couldn't handle it. If they were still out of it when the kids came home, the kids would find something to eat and just go about their own business. This often meant that I was called several hours later to find a child who had not come home after school. In nearly all cases he had, but his mother was so drunk or stoned that she either didn't notice or had passed out. You would know when certain people were using dope because their stereo would be turned up extremely loud and could be heard easily many houses away.

This issue of substance abuse was always a very serious one for me. I knew of an incident where a foster boy, together with a younger boy was at a local park. They had a teapot and it contained methylated spirits. They were using

this teapot as a sort of 'bong' (a tin for smoking or inhaling intoxicating substances of their fumes). They were inhaling the fumes of this stuff in an attempt to get high. After they began getting dizzy from it the foster boy tipped it onto the adventure playground and ignited it. Luckily it didn't catch or the area would be without an adventure playground. I talked to both sets of parents about it and it was not only denied but I was told to mind my own business. I had to fight against this all the time. Soon after, another boy who knew those two, stole dope from his mothers freezer, where it had been kept for safety. It was taken to the home of the foster boy and smoked by two of these boys. I told the foster parents about it and they told me to keep my mouth shut. I then told them that if they didn't do something about their foster son that i would. For this reason they reported it to their social worker. she covered it up and the issue was put to rest and out of sight.

I put in an official complaint about these incidents to the DSW. I was surprised when they told me i was lying, especially since it had been proven by the social worker. I tried many times to fix these things up but was ignored by the DSW. This particular foster boy was often left to fend for himself when the parents went to the pub or Kaiapoi for the day. One of the neighbours saw him set fire to a mattress and burn down their back fence. Other times he went to Shirley and stole many times from DEKA. When he did steal, his foster parents let him keep what he took and told him off lightly. it seemed to me that the more I tried to stop all of this, the more trouble I got myself into. I've seen very young kids being given smokes or cannabis by their parents with the logic " I'd rather them do it in front of my face than behind my back". Well, some of the se kids were 10 and 11.

Proper diets went to the wall too. kids would grab whatever they could. I frequently had local kids around at my place for a feed. They would be very hungry so I always cooked them a solid meal. Often it would be the only decent one that they had for the week. It usually consisted of roast meat, mashed and roast potatoes, roast pumpkin (which was not that popular) mixed veges and kumara. Two particular boys used to take food home with them. This would be given to brothers or sisters at home, often without the parent knowing or there would be trouble. One boy used to come around more that three times every week. I always saved him the drumsticks of chicken or the cold cuts of the roast. He was 12 years old and very small. The cost of all this was extremely high. I found myself selling off my possessions to keep it up. I feel that it was worth every cent. So that the se kids didn't have to wear the rags that embarrassed them so badly, I opened a store account so that they could at least look decent and could keep their dignity. Those accounts cost a hundred dollars a month to keep going. When glasses or special fees for things were not provided by the parents, I paid those too. I financed through several finance companies and went through thousands of dollars over a period of years so that all these kids could have their pride and the things that are so important to them. After a while the parents would come and ask for these things and where possible I provided them. I also gave food from my own supply when the families were hungry. I did it for the kids wouldn't suffer from their parents mismanagement.

## Why I Was Involved – What Happened

Eventually this would cause a problem for me. It broke my heart to see kids suffer. After a while though I found that this was taking all of my money. I still kept going. Still kept spending. Still kept giving until it drove me broke. I managed to keep it up for four years though. The kids almost never got anything for their birthday or Christmas. I made sure that they did. And I made sure that it was something that they would really want. Something that was able to be shown to friends without being laughed at. In addition to this I would take as many as even of the kids, at once, fishing or camping, on boats, swimming at QE2 pool or many other things to keep them not only off the streets but away from the influences of their adult counterparts in their social group. It was a full time occupation which ran me into the ground most days. One of the kids would not go to school. I got him going again, and through the use of a telepager managed to keep him there for the first year since school began for him five years earlier. His school attitude was destroyed by his very violent father, who held a pistol to the head of the headmaster over a matter of the boys behaviour. The telepager cost me \$90-00 per month but was well worth the cost.

If any of the kids ran off from school I would know where to find them. If they were in trouble they would call me. The message would instantly appear on the pager and I would go and help. I was used to take many of the kids to school each day and pick them up as well. I guess the bottom line is that I brought those kids up myself. Even though their parents made them turn on me because they thought that I was turning them in for all their crimes (everyone in the group) and eventually misconstrued my motives in caring for the kids and had me locked up. I still believe that it was all worth while. Those few years of decent life have shown them that there is another way to live than what they were used to.

One day I, and others witnessed an attack on a young boy by his father. The 11 year old was getting into his fathers van and wanted to sit in the front. His father made a big thing out of it and we watched in horror as his father punched him repeatedly in the face and head making his nose bleed then quickly drove away. The boy later told us that this was a common occurrence and it was why he behaved so badly. This same boy told several of us that his father made him sleep with him often in the past. He called his father a ("dirty old cunt").He told us that the father slept with all of the kids(4) until they got too old and then he would sleep with the next one down in age.

This boy used to ring me when something was wrong and I would drive across town to see him. His father always got very angry and would attack his son after I had gone. It was the same man who was selling scrap etc, while on a benefit and all the extras.

I reported to the special Education service, the abuse he was suffering at the hands of his father. He was a suicidal boy too as a result of this abuse which is why his father didn't like him talking to anyone outside the family or staying away for the night. He was always very happy with us and cried, even at his age, each time he had to go home. One night he had been beaten up by his father and had locked himself in his room threatening to kill himself. I was called. We had to break into his room to get him to safety. Another boy, about

the same age was also suicidal and still is. He was treated like rubbish by the many live in girlfriends that his father had. One day as he left the house to go to school, the current girlfriend of the time attached a large tag to his jersey. It read ("ragamuffin" He was terribly embarrassed by it. He wet his bed every night and was forced to sleep in it. He always smelled of urine and suffered humiliation as a result. I made myself very unpopular sticking up for him in the face of his parent/s. He always did badly at school, where his father's skanky girlfriends would pick him up and abuse him immediately that he got into the car.

On many occasions he would want to play with friends but these women would drag him across the playground in front of his friends shouting at him as they went. Eventually he came to live with us through the DSW until finally returning to his mother.

So much child abuse in this group that could have been stopped if police and DSW would only listen and act out of abundance of caution. After I was dragged off by the police and locked up, there was nothing to stop the rampant abuse of these kids by their caregivers and foster parents from continuing unabated.

I was, after a period of years informed by a number of the kids, now adults that it did continue but worse.

### Living below poverty level

The total figure when it comes to people living in poverty, be it their own fault or otherwise is somewhere around one million people. This equates to just under 10 percent of our population. Who knows the true figures? The government doesn't seem to be forthcoming with them. Far and away, these people are below proper living standards. Many issues surface to do with their entitlements to the luxuries of life. For example, the solo parent receiving a domestic purposes benefit that was brought up in one of the middle class homes mentioned earlier who simply can't understand why she can't afford to feed her children and buy the luxuries that she has always been used to. Bills get juggled around and things get repossessed. Food money will be used to keep the power on or the telephone from being disconnected. This woman does not understand the concept where by the state pays benefits and support based entirely on food, clothing, heat and light and that's all. People who do accept that fact barely get by. There is no benefit paid to any beneficiary who provides for anything more than the se basic essentials of life and the poor don't seem to understand this.

Over the years, these people have found alternative ways of having what they see as their proper lifestyles. Within the underclass, the following things are most common in terms of general behaviour and what may be considered by some as a means to an end. Keep in mind that the economic climate in so far as it affects these people has produced a serious decline in their inhibitions due to what they see as a state of continual hopelessness. I am basing this next section upon what I have seen with my own eyes. Things which have occurred among a group of more than one hundred beneficiary's and their families.

## Drugs

I have seen many of these people buying and selling drugs, the most common being cannabis. They would be visited by a contact who would buy in bulk to get a better price. This contact was not always a beneficiary. I can never remember one who had a job. If the cannabis was bought in bulk you would pay ten dollars for a "foil" or "bullet". That dealer would sell it to another one for fifteen dollars each unit if he bought more than ten, or slightly more if he bought only one or two. In general that mark up carried over to the purchaser. The most common profit that the beneficiary made was five dollars per unit depending on the quality. Head sold for twenty five to thirty dollars per unit. Cabbage/Dross (low grade, no head) sold for fifteen to twenty.

A good week would net a beneficiary several hundred dollars that is unless he/she was given dope instead of money. That beneficiary could then use it themselves or resell it or both. To achieve both, you would simply remove about a quarter of the quantity and loosely wrap the balance in foil. Almost no one ever checked. It was an unwritten rule. To check would be tantamount to accusing the dealer of ripping you off.

Prescribed drugs were often sold, or given away in the trade for sex when that sex was required from a minor. It was widely known that the minor would not talk about either the sex or the drugs. Heart pills, epilepsy pills (Frisium, Tegretol (quite popular), Dolobid, Doloxene, i.v. morphine) and many others were sold for from one to twenty dollars each depending on the beneficiary's need for cash at the time. Tegretol was the most common one I saw. There were many other types. When the prescription was gone, the person would go to the doctor and say that one of the kids had washed them down the toilet, or they'd been misplaced. They would then be given enough pills to last the rest of the duration of the prescription time until it was due to be filled for another three months. The most common users of these drugs were minors. Some were in social welfare care. Some were as young as ten years old. Most were males, supplied by females. As far as Cannabis goes, it was better to know a grower. A woman that I had known for some time had a sister who lived on the west coast who supplied her with reasonable quantities of dope that she had got from her boyfriend who grew it. She would keep one third of it for herself and sell the rest. Smoke a third, and sell the rest. Half of the money she got to keep. Her sister was also a domestic purposes beneficiary. Her other sister who also lives in Christchurch, does the same deal except that she usually smoked her share. Sometimes she sold foils to several DSW foster boys which I witnessed on at least two occasions. The dope was mostly sold by the sisters as small bags; sometimes foils.

They are well known as dealers. I was there through several deals of which 90% were done with beneficiaries.

## Alcohol

In this line of moneymaking, alcohol was sold to minors. One man made his own beer which he sold at fifteen dollars per dozen 1.5 litre bottles; twenty dollars to minors. He often sold it to several well known local children including three who were DSW foster kids. Another scam was to go into the pub for someone who would be as young as eleven or twelve and buy them

beer. The person buying it would keep half for himself, or be given five dollars each half dozen. I saw, on several occasions boys as young as ten lying drunk on the footpath.

### Scrap Metal and Under The Table Work

Scrap metal dealing is another way to make the dollars come in. I know of businesses that pay beneficiary's to collect scrap metal, and or strip cables or motors to get the aluminium or copper etc out and separate. One man goes around rubbish dumps collecting things to sell, and looking for scrap. One day he got several hundred dollars for his van load. The money he is paid for it is hidden in records at the company; who buys it, or pays him. Up to sixty dollars in one week is paid to him, the figures go on the books. After that amount the dealer enters it in the same book but under the mans first name only to prevent issues with benefit payment. I heard them bragging about this arrangement one day when I went down with him while he unloaded a van full of scrap. That one load netted him 164.00 .It was only three days work. He also collects things from the dump and sells them at a goodly amount after they have been cleaned up. In the summer, he does work at peoples houses with the help of his so son and a beneficiary. At times several hundred dollars is paid to him, whether it be for taking away rubbish, painting lawn mowing etc. He has been doing this for at least three years. I know quite a few that do this .They never declare the money, especially that over their weekly earning limit. They say that it would not be worth doing if they had to do that.

### The Boarder and Other Scams

Another scam, the boarder scam. beneficiary will arrange to stay with another person, be he beneficiary or not (the one who he will be staying with). between the two of them, a deal will be worked out whereby the beneficiary will tell the DSW that he is paying \$100.00 per week board when he is in fact paying \$40-00 to \$60-00 per week. This is done to have the benefit raised by about \$20 or so per week for the beneficiary. It is preferred by beneficiaries who do this, to use the title of rent as opposed to board because there is no complication involved. If you are boarding, there is no need to consider any other expenditure because generally everything is provided with board .The DSW will usually not pay out an increased benefit for boarders, but will do it readily if the beneficiary is renting.

To facilitate the facade /deception of the DSW, a rent book will be bought from a bookstore and filled out by the other party involved who is pretending to be the landlord.

It will be pre filled in for several weeks by them to give the effect that the person has been living there that long. A back payment of arrears will be gained by that action. I have seen many such incidences of this type of thing. I have watched these people doing it.

### The DSW Advance Scam

Another way in which I have seen beneficiaries obtain money is by applying for a DSW advance to buy something that is an 'urgent necessity', like a

washing machine or bed. The dealer is asked if he will do a deal with the beneficiary. That deal involves the dealer getting the cheque from the person, since the DSW only send cheques to the business. The dealer will cash the cheque when it arrives and keep an agreed portion of the money. Often \$50-00. It's the only way that these people can get any quick money since their credit ratings are usually shot. It is not as easy from all accounts to have a dealer sell you a cheaper appliance and give you the change from the cheque. I've seen these deals take place.

While on the subject of special needs grants. I have watched beneficiaries who I know, apply for a grocery grant, (You are entitled to an annual amount of approx \$200-00) and get it. Only to sell it for about half its value to a friend as per pre arranged deal. If a special needs grant is given for an appliance, That appliance can and, I have seen it happen, be sold. Sometimes for even more than the beneficiary paid for it.

From experience, that is what I have personally seen, this money is mostly used for drugs, alcohol or a good time.

### Benefit Misuse

What has always surprised and appalled me, is that many of these people who get and sell their SNG's, often have no food in the house for the kids to eat.

A case in point is a solo mother with two boys, one of which is intellectually handicapped as the victim of a stroke at 2years of age. The mother gets various allowances for the IHC child, a DPB, regular church assistance and visits food banks regularly, and there was nearly always no food in the house. I watched with despair as her kids asked for food and were told that there was none. These boys often ate at my house as they were hungry. Their usual diet at their own home consisted of two minute noodles and toast with Marmite and no butter. She was also getting \$60-00 each week from a boarder. What I did notice was that she always had cigarettes, coffee and money for booze, housie and strip shows. The kids often arrived on my doorstep asking for food. People who were visiting me on those occasions always commented on this.

The kids were both very undersized for their ages.

There is also the most common method of benefit abuse. This is when a mother who is supported by the state, by way of the domestic purposes benefit, who has a lover living with her and supporting the kids. This occurs in several different circumstances. The mother, on DPB may live with the natural father of the kids and he will be working as well. The lover may be the natural father, or not the natural father, but will be living with her on an unemployment benefit, or some other. Finally, the mother will be on the DPB, and working as well. That would not matter particularly, but she doesn't stop at the maximum allowable income, and doesn't declare it. Alternatively, both the mother and the lover could be on benefits and working full time jobs. I know of people who fill all these categories and have done so over a long period of time. The way that co habitation is hidden, is to leave a separate bedroom set up with all of the mans things in it. He will undress in there too so that there will be no

clothes left inadvertently lying on the floor. He will be under the guise of a boarder.

The kids are not usually allowed to see this so that they can't tell anyone, if asked. When the DSW is told of one of these sort of allegations, they have the house watched by an officer of the DSW (presumably DSW) who reports who comes and goes and if someone stays the night and how often etc. I have seen all these things go on over the past 4 years. I can put names to all of them. Beneficiaries who work 'under the table' usually use the name of a friend or family member so that they can't be caught by the DSW.

As you can see there are many ways in which to abuse the benefits provided by the DSW. These are quite a few of them. But there are more.

### Leisure for Beneficiaries

The next aspect of the underclass is their leisure, to use the term loosely. Of all the beneficiaries I have known in the past several years. The chief form of leisure is what's called in benefit circles, 'The Dole Day Rage'. It is when groups of beneficiaries get together and buy as much alcohol "Piss" as they can afford. They will have put aside a quantity of cash to buy cannabis as well. Police know these 'rages' too well as they frequently turn into full scale punch ups. Wives and kids are often beaten about and on many occasions I've seen big sex sessions taking place as earlier described.

It may be or maybe not intentional, but children often see this taking place. Everyone is so drunk that they don't care about anything. Drinking and drugs, mostly coupled with loud music were they mainstay of leisure time activities. When the booze runs out there is always someone to go and buy more. Even though they may be too drunk to walk they will still drive down to get it. Movies for the kids are sometimes used to keep them busy. Not the appropriate ones either. The selected one's were always violent and often had far too high a content of a sexual nature. The minister of social welfare once made a comment to the effect that the beneficiaries had too much money because they always had enough to spend on booze etc. She was far more accurate than she will ever imagine. Another popular pastime was the driving around of groups of these people, in old and rough cars, looking for fights. That was usually on Friday nights. Getting stoned through the day is another fave activity. Also, sex is enjoyed immensely as a way to while away the hours until the kids come home from school – also great for increasing the population of future beneficiaries. Sitting in groups and running down others seems very popular too. You won't believe the things that I have heard in those groups. This entire group of people trusted me with all their secrets – probably because they didn't know I was a journalist.

Pubs and pool are another activity. Only around once a week though because of the cost, as well as strip shows for the women, yes, the women! This used up a fair bit of the budget too since booze could be bought there. All of these things take up money which was never meant to be spent that way. Most of the people in that group made sure that there was money to spend on their own leisure. Even if it meant their kids went without. You can buy a kid a pair of shoes for the price of one right at the pub. That leaves only staying in bed all day, often not getting up to get the kids off to school, and visiting; mostly to someone's house who had drugs to spare after a weekend.

These activities represent over 90% of the people who I knew and saw regularly. I would sincerely hope that this is not an accurate representation of the population of this country who are its underclass.

### Abuse of Special Alternative Care Payment

One other form of financial abuse that I have witnessed was the abuse of the Alternative care payment for those who cared for handicapped children. It is paid at the rate of \$67-00 per day to the carer. The carer is not the parent, but the person who takes care of the child for up to a maximum specified time per year. This is about 28 days per year. The method I have seen used over a period of two or three years, to obtain this money by the parent is as follows.

- The parent and a friend made arrangements for a non-existent period of care for the child.
- The friend puts in the form to get the money for looking after the child and the parent did the same. In this instance it was actually once with her sister and twice with her friend Margaret. There may have been other times of which I am unaware, but I was privy to these three, in knowledge only.
- After the end of the specified time period, the money would be paid into the account of the friend who would then withdraw it and it would be divided between them both.
- The child never left the care of his mother.

It really is high time that these people be weeded out. Although I got myself into strife financially, it was mainly due to the fact of feeding half the kids in the social group to which I belonged. I have tried most earnestly to have the police act on these things, but they refused. I have recently been in communication with a television channel who are making a documentary on my present situation. They were very interested in this part of my own dilemma. They, like I, feel that there are certain things that are not widely known which should be brought to the notice of those in places who could make a difference.

### What's Next

These issues have caused me to be incarcerated at H.M. Paparua Prison. Evidence and witnesses were always able to be provided but no one would take the time to check it out. No one, that is but the TV Company (un-named until broadcast, on their wishes). It upsets me badly to know that there are kids out there who are going hungry through their parent's inadequacy and there is nothing that I can do about it. I think that by telling you some of the ways in which these people abuse the system that you may, as the policy makers, be able to cut off the access of such people to this source of capital through their use of fraud.

It seems to me that information on the lifestyles of beneficiaries should be extracted from those at the centre of the situation. I have been medically unemployed since 1978. I am only 35 years old too. Thinking back, it is a

waste of a life. To others around whom I have lived, consider it a great feat to have been able to not work for that length of time. I am not proud of it at all. even though six years of it was spent looking after foster kids. I ended up in prison all the same.

There is a feeling which pervades everyday life for the beneficiaries. I have known. It is the feeling of hopelessness. Unfortunately though, these people feel that the DSW owes them. It is not the duty of the Income Support service to give handouts to them at the drop of a hat although they seem to think that it is. All you need to do is watch the amount of abuse suffered by DSW workers from irate beneficiaries to see at. The disabled people that I know are no different from any other type of beneficiary, except that they always get more than they need in the way of grants etc, and a lot more of them need not pay the money back. This group of New Zealanders must be forced to get off their back sides and do more for themselves. Any socially oriented professional will tell you, that no matter what you do, people will complain. They will also tell you that no matter what changes are made, the noise only goes on for a short time and the majority will get used to it and forget the issue.

### Youth

There is a lot to be said for making people work for their benefits, especially the young. It is obvious, even to a fool that there is too much money in the hands of the young. I know that laws governing the entitlement of youth living with their parents at home are in effect. But in effect they do nothing. The youth are free to leave home after turning 16, and with the advent of family group conferences, free to live with an appointed person and receive the unsupported child allowance. Kids who I know consider it their right to handle this allowance and it is only a matter of short order before they are doing so.

This allowance gets to those from 16 to 17 years and is no different from handing the young person the unemployment benefit. At \$108-00 per week, board is normally around \$60-00 per week. That leaves \$48-00 per week. There are no prizes for guessing what that money is spent on. Cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. I know of several young people under 17 who run drug bills. They are in receipt of benefits. When they run out of credit, they steal to buy more or use cheaply obtained alternatives. These are petrol, glue, paint etc.

The social responsibility for these young people should lie at the foot of their parents, but I am sure that you have heard that reiterated often. My guess is that the DSW spend most of the time trying to sort out the social impact of things that they often miss the point altogether.

### What Should be Done

Beneficiary's need to be treated like children. Children know that they must face the consequences for whatever actions they select. It really is time to take off the kid gloves and make them live up to their social and personal

responsibilities. There are many ways to cut the DSW benefit payout per annum, if there are those of you who will take the chance. The plain truth is that people are simply not living within their means. A means test should be employed for all beneficiaries. Food should be provided by means of vouchers. Each family would get a voucher that provided for the weekly/fortnightly meat, bread, milk and vegetables. Govt run farms using untenanted crown land could grow the produce associated with all of these foods. Surplus meat could be bought by the govt and distributed through cool stores in unused or underused buildings. All staffing would be by beneficiaries under a no work no dole policy. To cover the costs of state purchasing of meat and the costs of growing and other connected liabilities could be met by a reduction in the benefits already paid out. There would be no reason to complain if there is always food on the table, that the benefit is reduced.

The community services card is seriously underused. It could be extended to cover vouchers for clothing, power and anything else barring non essentials. The balance of the benefit could be paid as present, by direct credit. A system such as this would be of benefit to the people in a seriously disadvantaged situation. As far as govt run farms etc are concerned. Those who work on them for their benefits would only need to work the equivalent amount of hours weekly, to the value of their benefit. They would then not be unemployed. Neither would the ones that take over from them for the second part of the day.

Those who refuse to work for their benefits would not get them. They would be voluntarily unemployed and suffer the six months stand down as a result. Either way, there would be a drastic reduction in the number of unemployed and it would not be artificial. There is an enormous amount of money spent on training programs for people who are almost certain not to get jobs at the other end, so why not train them on the job on a set up like this? The govt is spending all that money on nothing at the moment. There should be a product to show for it. Since the same money would be paid, it doesn't matter how many people are at work on one site. If there is a saleable product then it has to be better than throwing away tax dollars to keep people in booze etc. because people would object to being made to work for their benefit, it could be called a part time job, and offered to those who are unemployed there or if they refuse it, they stand down for 28 weeks. These ideas may sound stupid to you, but we have to do something. I do fully understand all of the political and social issues involved, but the kid gloves must come off some time.

## Overview

This is a (1992) social commentary on New Zealand's decline into class division, focusing especially on the struggles and dysfunctions of what the author calls the *underclass*. It combines personal observations, anecdotes, and policy opinions.

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## Key Points

### 1. **Class Divide**

- New Zealand once seen as prosperous is now deeply divided.
- Society is split into:
  - **Upper class:** wealthy, professionals, business owners.
  - **Middle class:** comfortably employed, homeowners, educated.
  - **Underclass:** unemployed, low-paid workers, beneficiaries (~1/3 of the population).

### 2. **The Underclass**

- Lives in poverty, often unable to feed children.
- Children frequently go to school hungry; schools run food programs.
- High levels of theft, substance abuse, neglect, and intergenerational poverty.
- Government statistics undercount the true size of this group.

### 3. **1990s Observations**

- The author recounts first-hand experiences with families affected by drugs, alcohol, abuse, and neglect.
- Reports widespread substance abuse, child exploitation, violence, and lack of accountability among caregivers, including foster parents.
- Describes efforts to protect and feed children, but eventually being ostracized, financially ruined, and even imprisoned.

### 4. **Poverty & Survival Strategies**

- Around 1 million people live in poverty.
- Beneficiaries often misuse or exploit the welfare system through scams, undeclared work, and benefit fraud.
- Issues include drug dealing, alcohol sales to minors, scrap-metal schemes, and fraudulent benefit claims.

### 5. **Leisure & Culture**

- "Dole Day Rages": parties involving heavy drinking, drugs, violence, and sex, often exposing children.
- Leisure activities prioritize adult indulgence over child welfare.
- Cycle of neglect and abuse entrenches poverty.

### 6. **Personal Involvement**

- Author provided food, clothing, and support to children at personal cost, but this led to financial collapse and imprisonment.

- Suggests systemic failure of authorities (police, DSW/social services) to intervene effectively.

#### 7. Proposed Solutions

- Stricter accountability for beneficiaries (work-for-dole, no-work-no-benefit).
- Replace cash benefits with vouchers for essentials (food, clothing, power).
- Government-run farms and production schemes staffed by beneficiaries.
- Stronger consequences for fraud and refusal to work.
- Reframe welfare as conditional, not an entitlement.

#### 8. Conclusion

- The underclass is trapped in hopelessness and dependency.
- Without reform, poverty and social dysfunction will persist and worsen.
- The author calls for urgent, tougher policies to break the cycle.

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#### **In short:**

The document argues that New Zealand's growing *underclass*, caused by decades of poor policy, is eroding society through poverty, welfare abuse, drugs, neglect, and intergenerational dysfunction. The author shares harrowing personal experiences with neglected children and systemic failures, and proposes strict reforms such as compulsory work-for-benefits and welfare delivered as vouchers instead of cash.