

# NEWS

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Exclusive

WATERLOO, Ont. (UPC) - John Farina, a social work professor at Wilfrid Laurier University, says Canada has entered the post-industrial age, when leisure will be king, and we should learn to enjoy it.

Only the work-ethic, which applied to an earlier age but now is outdated, is keeping Canadians from realizing that unemployment can be a good thing.

"Our society claims it values and honors work--no matter how dehumanizing or degrading that work may be," Farina said. "Despite the fact that work often constitutes an affront to human dignity, it is somehow considered good for the worker."

He said present society honours the man who serves as a fireman on a train, because he is "working," although he has no duties to perform.

He leaves home early with his lunchpail and rides around the countryside for eight hours or more and comes home to a family and a community that sees him as a fine example to others.

That same society scorns the welfare mother, Farina adds, although she really does work, getting up early to get breakfast for her children, see them off to school, does her housework, provides lunches, goes shopping, spends the evening in the kitchen and then supervising homework. After her kids tumble into bed, she starts in at her laundering and ironing. But she is viewed as "not working."

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If Farina had it his way, he would abolish work--since our advanced state makes it easily possible for two per cent of the population to do all the labor necessary. Those who enjoy working, the dedicated workaholic, could continue while the rest of us enjoy our leisure.

"After all, this is what we have been building up to ever since the industrial revolution" the Laurier professor said. "We could be enjoying our unemployment if we just realized that the post-industrial age has arrived--and we can start to enjoy living.

As for those currently unemployed, and suffering, Farina suggests that society starts taking steps to alleviate their feelings of guilt, inadequacy, and despair. They should be willingly supported and encouraged to find new "employment," perhaps as volunteer workers for the many agencies that need their help.

"Just because people aren't working, it doesn't mean they can't make a contribution to society," Farina said.

For the future, Farina points to the Hudson Institute which predicts an 1,100-hour work year as ample by the year 2000. Farina says the notion can be predicted further. A 20-year work-life, even with 1,100 work-hours a year, could easily be possible.

"This obligation to society could be fulfilled in an infinite variety of ways. An individual may choose to start to work at age 18, work 40-hours a week for 15 years, and then retire at age 33. After that he might, for example, attend university for enlightenment with no concern for practical subjects that will guarantee him a job."

Farina says a major shift will have to occur before we regard leisure, and unemployment, as normal and good. Until then we will have alienation and depression and people turning to violence and alcohol.

"The choice is up to us and I feel sure we are smart enough to choose to become a leisure society." But he fears it may take 200 years, without a war, before we awake to the possibilities of an entirely new way of living and not working.