

## Odd numbers: food banks and liposuction

Indicators of either impoverished or lavish lifestyles invariably come under immediate assault as being entirely in-

valid or little more than sheer mathematical trickery. In the interest of avoiding such a tedious debate, what

follows (Box 1) are not indicators but, rather, just a few odd numbers, compiled by Wayne Kondro, *CMAJ*

### Box 1: The balance sheet

#### Canadians and poverty

- Percentage of Canadians living below StatsCan's low-income cut-off line (defined as a family that spends more than 63% of its gross income on food, shelter and clothing): 15.5%
- Percentage of Canadians falling under the poverty line using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development definition, i.e., those making less than half the nation's median after-tax income: 10.3% (sources: StatsCan and OECD)
- Annual welfare incomes by category and province (from high to low) in 2005:
  - Single employable: \$8198 (Newfoundland) to \$3427 (New Brunswick)
  - Disabled person: \$12 057 (Ontario) to \$7851 (Alberta)
  - Single parent, 1 child: \$16 181 (Newfoundland) to \$12 326 (Alberta)
  - Couple, 2 children: \$21 213 (PEI) to \$17 567 (New Brunswick)
 (Source: National Council of Welfare)
- Jurisdiction with the lowest minimum wage: Newfoundland, \$7 per hour
  - The highest: Nunavut, \$8.50
  - Number of jurisdictions with a minimum wage over \$8 per hour: 3
  - Number lower than \$8 per hour: 5
 (Source: provincial labour ministries)
- Number of people who used a food bank in March 2006: 753 458
  - Percentage of food bank clients who are children: 41% (268 774 kids)
  - Percentage who are pensioners: 6%
  - Percentage on disability income: 11%
  - Percentage who are employed: 13.4%
  - Province with the highest per capita food bank use: Newfoundland, 5.6%
  - Next in line: Manitoba, 3.78%; Ontario, 2.64%, Saskatchewan 2.57%
  - Number of food banks in Canada: 649
  - Percentage of food banks that limit frequency of use to once per month: 62.4%
 (Source: Canadian Association of Food Banks)
- Federal government estimate of the number of homeless people: 150 000  
Non-governmental estimates: 200 000 to 300 000
- Average income, Aboriginal population, 2000: \$14 157  
Average income, Canadian population: \$30 062  
(Source: Statistics Canada)
- Percentage of Aboriginal communities in Canada that must boil their water: 12 (roughly 100 communities)
  - Number of houses on reserves without sewage services: 5486 of 88 485
  - Percentage without hot running water: 3.7
  - Percentage without cold running water: 3.5
  - Percentage without flushing toilets: 3.5
 (Source: Assembly of First Nations)

#### Canadians and luxury

- Estimated amount spent on cosmetic and plastic surgery in Canada in 2003: \$665 million (Source: Medicaard, Canada's Patient Financing Company). More current numbers are unavailable, says Karyn Wagner, executive-director of the Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons. "We can't afford to collect that kind of data."
- Credit Medical Corporation's estimated cost of cosmetic and plastic surgical procedures:
  - Breast implant: \$5000-\$6000 (saline); \$7000-\$8000 (cohesive gel)
  - Facelift: \$10 000
  - Browlift: \$6000
  - Liposuction: \$2500 for first area, \$1500 for each additional area
- Annual membership dues for the Luxury Institute, which advises the chic on the best buys: US\$995
- Annual cost of Toronto Maple Leafs season tickets: \$1665-\$15 750
  - Cost of renting 1 of 6 "Gondola Hospitality Suites" for a single Maple Leafs game: \$9061-\$10 861.
  - Cost of renting such a box at a Toronto Raptors game: "as low as \$1900."
- Daily summer rate at Vancouver Island's Aerie Resort "Villa Cielo," where the offerings include a king-size bed, double walk-in shower, yoga classes, organic meals and mushroom-foraging expeditions led by a Benedictine monk: \$625
- Average home price in Canada: \$311 495 (Source: Canadian Real Estate Association)  
Most expensive home now on the market: the 14-acre Edgemere Estate in Oakville, which is listed at \$45 million for 9 bedrooms, 17 bathrooms, sauna and therapy rooms, 21-seat theatre and private pebble beach
- Typical online dealer price of a stainless steel Rolex Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona watch, for which waiting lists of up to 7 years have been reported: \$15 000
- Mercedes-Benz Canada vehicle sales in 2006: 14 544
- BMW Group Canada vehicle sales in 2006: 23 430
- Number of private aircraft registered in Canada as of Dec. 31, 2006: 31 018. Number of single engine aircraft registered: 24 314. (Source: Transport Canada)
- Cheapest of 163 Prada handbags listed in the Fall/Winter Styledrops 2007/2008 catalogue: US\$223 (most expensive: \$3059)
- Online cost of a single Bolivar Gold Medal cigar manufactured at the Partagas factory in Cuba: \$25.60 (box of 10: \$230.40)
- Going rate for 1 ounce of Almas Golden Caviar, which is culled from either albino sturgeon or those of an Oscietre sturgeon over 60 years of age: \$700
- List price, Park Avenue Liquor in New York, 1 bottle Macallan Lique 50-yr-old 92 single malt scotch whisky: \$10 000