

# END LEGISLATED POVERTY

NEWSLETTER

#4

September 2, 1987

## Low income people take on Richmond

Low income people asked Claude Richmond a lot of questions at the Downtown Residents' Association meeting on Aug. 28th. But they didn't get any good answers. Richmond is the man responsible for cutting back welfare payments to "employable" singles and couples over 26 years old.

"How can your government justify the abuse of people who are poor," asked Michele Christenson, a single mother on

GAIN? "It's a complex subject," replied Richmond, bringing out some charts and a pointer.

"How can you justify cutting welfare when food is going up," asked Paul Taylor of the Carnegie Centre?

"Why are the poor being forced to pay the costs of equality," asked another woman?

Others told Richmond that

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that his cuts would force people to skip two meals. "It will mean that women can't afford a life-saving phone call," said a women from the Downtown Eastside Womens'

"People are a number one priority with me and with our government," Richmond said, looking uncomfortable.

"The most important thing you could do," DERA's Jim Green told Richmond, "is to change your mind about these cuts. If you don't, we'll appeal. We'll go to the federal government. We'll go to court. Green started the fightback campaign by handing Richmond 100 letters from people asking him to add \$7 to their cheque "due to need

## Be sure to get school start up grants

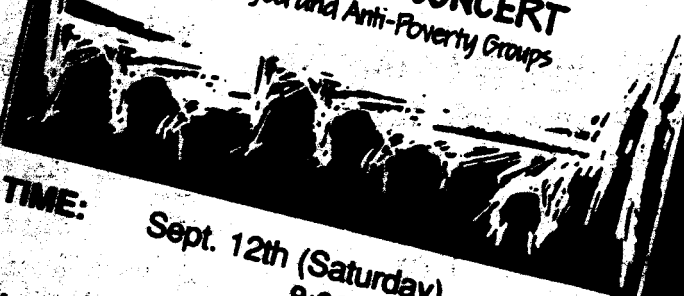
9 If you are on welfare and have children in school, be sure that you get your school start up grant. The grant is \$31 for each child between 6 and 11 years old. It is \$47

for children over 12.

If you haven't got this grant, be sure to ask your social worker for one. If you have any trouble getting it, contact an advocacy group for help.

YOU'RE INVITED!!

**JOBS NOT CHARITY**  
A FUNDRAISING CONCERT  
for Unemployed and Anti-Poverty Groups



**TIME:** Sept. 12th (Saturday)  
8:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** IWA Hall, 13th & Commercial  
Vancouver

**COST:** \$7 or what you can afford

*Proceeds to Vancouver Unemployed Action Centre  
and End Legislated Poverty.*

Pay only what you can afford. If you can only afford 5¢, that's fine.

If you are over 26 years old, don't have children, and are "employable", your September welfare cheque will be reduced by \$7 if you are single or in a couple.

The groups listed on the side will help you fight the cuts in three ways.

1. You can appeal the cut. These groups have appeal forms that have already been partially filled out according to a lawyer's advice. You just fill our part of it with your name and a few other details. If it works, the government has to reinstate your old rate until the appeal is heard. If it doesn't work...

2. You can fill out another form--a letter to Claude Richmond,

# Fight welfare

the government person in charge of welfare. The lawyer also recommended this tactic and wrote the letter. It refers to a section of the GAIN Act which says that the Minister can give extra money to people "due to need." So, you simply sign this letter asking for \$7. Naturally, if you're trying to exist on \$377 per month, you're "in need." When Richmond says "no" to the letter, we appeal it.

3. We can also ask the government in Ottawa to put pressure on the provincial government to stop the cutback. It's possible that the provincial government is going against a federal law by making welfare



# Why is the government

For years the government has been discriminating against young people by paying them less welfare than older people. Recently a court case and a Human Rights Council decision both told the government that it was discriminating against the young.

Lots of people thought that the government would then raise the rates of young people to equal the rates of older ones.

But this would cost \$4.6 million, said the government. It could get this money from extra tax dollars that came in this year. It could simply have an over run in the welfare

department like it has in the highway department. It could put an extra tax on people who can afford to pay more. Instead, the government decided to make the poor-



# cutting back welfare?

est people in the province, single people on welfare, pay the \$4.6M.

Even before the cut, single people on welfare didn't have enough money to survive on. If you're you're on welfare, that's easy to figure out. But an academic study makes the same point. "Regaining Dignity" by the Social Planning and Research Council of B. C., says that single people need a \$275 increase to meet basic needs.

Why is the government doing this? There are two possible reasons:

1. By taking money from people over 26 and giving it to the people under 26, the govern-

ment is trying to show people that when they fight for their rights (as the young people did with their human rights case), something bad happens. We can't let the government get away with this.

2. In Quebec welfare payments to single people are so low that people can't pay rent. Alberta rates have just been slashed \$85. In some places in the U.S. single people can't get any welfare. Cutting rates for single people is a tried and true method of forcing them to take crummy jobs at crummy wages. We have to fight this cut or the government may impose even worse ones.

# Voter registration

In the last provincial election hundreds of people in food bank line-ups registered to vote on election day. Maybe you were one of them.

For many it was the first time in their lives that they had ever voted. Over 157,000 B. C. citizens registered to vote on election day last Sept.

But the Social Credit

government in Victoria is now trying to change that. They are planning to change election laws so that people can't register to vote on election day.

The next provincial election could come as soon as 1989. If you live in Vancouver, you can get on the voters list by calling 660-6848. There is also a New Westminister office at 660-8676.

## GROUPS IN THIS COALITION INCLUDE

First United Church

Fort Nelson  
Advocate and Anti-  
Poverty Group

Downtown Eastside  
Residents' Assoc.

Vancouver  
Unemployed Action  
Centre

Unemployed Teachers'  
Action Centre

Tenants' Rights  
Coalition

New Westminister  
Unemployed Action  
Centre

Vancouver and Dist.  
Public Housing  
Tenants' Assoc.

Vancouver Status  
of Women

Single Mothers'  
Action Committee

Federated Anti-  
Poverty Groups

B. C. Teachers'  
Federation

Branching Out,  
Dawson Creek

Downtown Eastside  
Womens' Centre

B. C. Association  
of Social Workers

Dandelions

Little Mountain  
Tenants' Assoc.

Carnegie Centre  
Community Assoc.

B. C. Yukon Assoc.  
of Womens' Centres