

# END LEGISLATED POVERTY

N E W S L E T T E R

# 36

Sept. 19, 1990

## ONTARIO WIN MEANS HOPE FOR POOR PEOPLE

It CAN be done. In Ontario people elected politicians who are committed to help end poverty.

The Party that won in the Sept. 6th election in Ontario said it will do these things:

- Raise minimum wage \$7 an hour;
- Take provincial income taxes off poor people;
- Build housing;
- Have rent control;
- Tax corporations and speculators;
- Spend more on childcare and education.

All of these things will help reduce poverty.

One of the people who ran was a single mother on welfare. A winner was a man who is deaf. Hopefully poor people will now have strong voices inside the Ontario Legislature.

In Ontario the party with these policies and candidates is the NDP. We won't tell anyone how to vote. Only you can make that decision.

Poverty isn't the fault of poor people. If we vote for politicians who are committed to end poverty, we CAN make a difference. Our lives CAN get better.

## ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

How do we decide how to vote? How do we know when to believe a politician and when not to? How can we translate what politicians say into what they really mean?

This is not an easy task. Here are some pointers: Keep an eye on your elected reps between elections. What are they DOING to reduce poverty or to help in that fight?

Attend meetings of the political parties. Here are some phone numbers you can call to find out when and where they are:

NDP 430-8600  
Social Credit 270-4040  
Liberal 872-1636

Watch and read the news critically.

Phone the Parties and ask what they will do to end poverty.



WHEN IS THE ELECTION?

Provincial elections are called by the Premier. He can set any date he wants with one exception. The date can't be more than five years from the last election.

Bill Vander Zalm may call an election soon. He has to call one before the fall of 1991.

The election will happen 29 days after the Premier announces it. You can register to vote for the first 10 of those days.

# WHY THIS GRANDMOTHER IS VOTING

Hi!

I am a grandmother living on GAIN for the Handicapped in B.C. Housing. I don't feel secure. I feel like the present government could sell this social housing.

So many things have been cut back. Its frightening.

I am asking all the welfare poor and the parking poor and the

middle class too, to VOTE because my vote with all of your votes could change things in B. C.

Your vote really counts. Its the only power you have. Its the only power I have. Vote for a platform that will do things for us, the people so that we can live in dignity--not on handouts.

We need good jobs, decent wages, higher GAIN rates and minimum wage, housing. We need a party that will give us HOPE.

Please vote with me. Together we have power. I can't tell you who to vote for. Its your choice. But me, I'm going with NDP.

--Sheila Baxter



# IMPORTANT ISSUES

**WELFARE RATES:** Welfare rates are far too low to live on decently. The poverty line is about \$1000 a month for a single person in a city.

**POLITICIANS** should commit themselves to raising welfare rates to the poverty line. That way all people in Canada would have enough to eat and decent shelter.

**MINIMUM WAGES:** In B. C. the minimum wage is \$5 an hour. This is about \$3000 a year below the poverty line if you are single. If you have even one dependent, welfare looks better than minimum wage work.

**POLITICIANS** should raise minimum wages to \$8 an hour. Does that seem like a lot? That's what minimum wage would be today if it increased with the cost of living since 1975. The NDP in

Ontario called for a minimum wage of \$7.20 an hour.

**JOB:** Unemployment in B. C. is over 8% and rising. People need decent jobs.

**POLITICIANS** should have a goal of full employment at decent wages. If private companies won't create the jobs we need, then government should. There is plenty of work to be done in forests, daycares, hospitals, and building housing.

We don't have enough decent housing in B. C. Most of the housing we do have is too expensive. Many people on welfare have to pay 60% or 70% of their income on rent.

**POLITICIANS** should build more public and non profit housing that poor

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people can afford. We need full and complete rent control.

**TAXES:** Poor people DO pay taxes. We pay sales tax. We pay hidden taxes. We pay our landlord's property tax in our rent. We'll have to pay the GST of 7% on nearly everything unless it is stopped. Poor people even pay income tax.

**POLITICIANS** should end taxes for poor people. Rich people who can afford to pay should

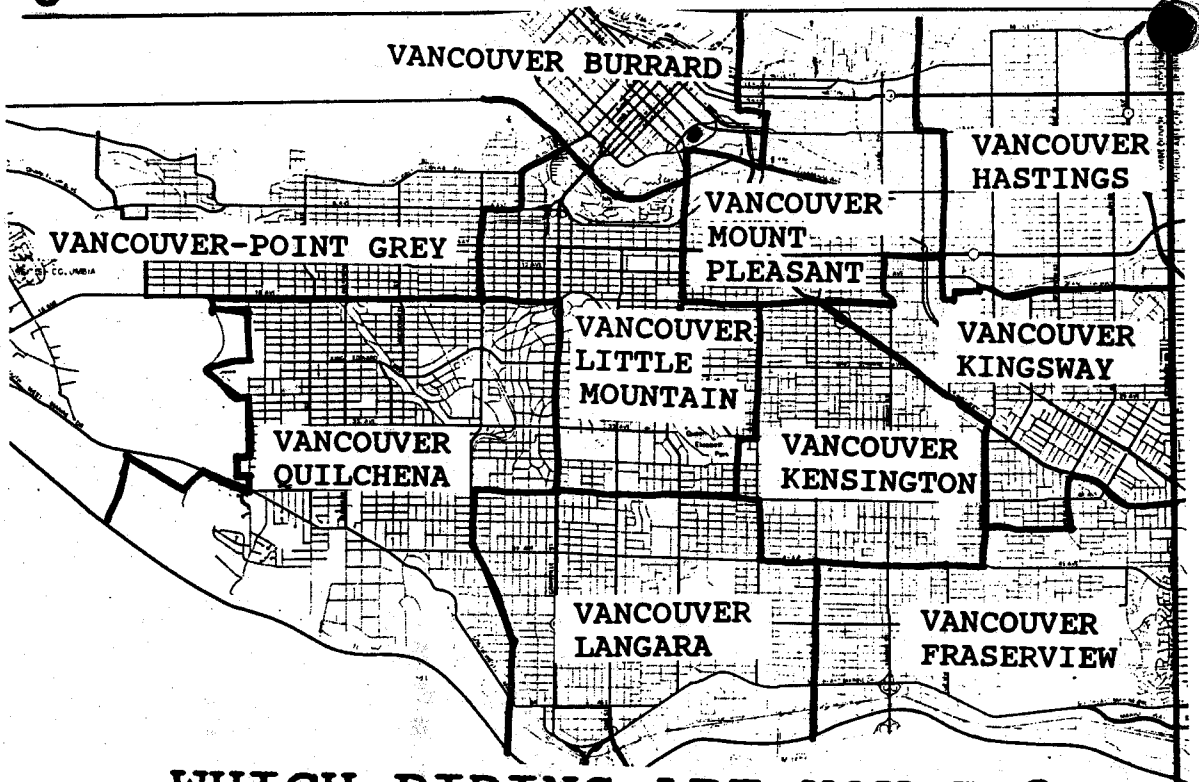


"That's a good question which demands some real evasion."

make up the difference. In Ontario, the NDP has said that poor people will not have to pay provincial income tax. Instead they will tax corporations, speculators, and people who inherit over \$1 million.

**ENVIRONMENT:** People of all incomes are concerned about the environment. Poor people often live and work in the most polluted parts of cities. We often have jobs that expose us to poison. Farmworkers, for example, are exposed to pesticides every day.

**POLITICIANS** should have a record of tough action to clean up and preserve the environment. They should make plans to create decent jobs for some people who might lose jobs due to environmental concerns.



## WHICH RIDING ARE YOU- IN?

Vancouver will have 10 reps in Victoria after the next provincial election. Each rep will come from one of the areas on the map. These areas are called "ridings." To find out which riding you live in, call one of the political parties or the voter registration office. Or look on the

map and try to figure it out.

When you know what riding you're in, you can phone your representative. You might talk to the representative. Or you may talk to a secretary. Ask them what their party will do to end poverty.

# WHY THE HELL SHOULD I VOTE?

Reasons not to vote are easy to come up with: "It doesn't matter", "it's useless", "all politicians are the same". But I get frustrated when a joke like VanderZalm can make my life miserable on a whim if he wants to.

I have a rage inside that burns when forests get raped, when rich people get richer at my expense, when someone who deserves better gets stepped on like a bug just so some dismal excuse can get what they have no right to.

Things like single parents with a child 7 months old having to look for a job; when the worth of people I know is judged by how much money they have or where they've gone to school..on who they know instead of who they are.

What it comes down to is this: If I don't register, I can't vote, even if I want to. If I register, I can still choose not to vote, but that leaves me saying nothing

and not doing anything about my being poor--and poverty--about free education--and making this a better place for kids--even about not having a decent place to live--and about housing for all. It goes on and on and not voting says that I, at least, accept the way things are.

If you've gotten this far, you can likely figure how this ends; please go through the process..register..vote. Every person counts. Thanks for your time.

By Paul R. Taylor

