

END LEGISLATED POVERTY

N E W S L E T T E R

#44

Aug. 21, 1991

Voter card is free I. D.

Do you have your voter identification card? It looks like this:

If you don't have a voter's card, call 660-6848 (in Vancouver). Ask them to mail you a voter registration form.



Elections
British Columbia

KEEP THIS
VOTER IDENTIFICATION CARD

This will certify that

VANCOUVER

is a registered Provincial voter as of **MAY 01, 1990**

CARD NO. **0664005**


REGISTRAR GENERAL OF VOTERS

When you get the form, fill it in and send it back. If you need help filling in the form, see any of the groups on the back page.

Then wait for your Voter Identification Card to be sent to you.

Remember to make sure that your whole family gets registered.

If you have this card, you can vote in the provincial election. If you don't have it, you won't be able to vote.

Then keep track of what the politicians say and do about our lives.

The card is free. It is also good identification. You have to pay to get some identification cards. But you don't have to pay to get the voters card.

RISE UP



FOR A
**PEOPLE'S
PROGRAM**

GST tax credit is not a gift

Did you get your GST tax credit in the mail last month? Its nice to get a cheque that welfare doesn't deduct. But the GST tax credit is a cheque that you already paid for.

Every time you buy a cup of coffee, you pay the GST. When you pay your Hydro, you pay the GST. When you buy a stamp, you pay the GST. If you add up all the GST that you pay over 3 months, it probably comes to about the same amount as the cheque you got. You could even pay out more in the GST than you get in the cheque from the

government.

The GST doesn't affect rich people as much as the rest of us. That's because they don't spend as much of their money on goods or services. They buy stocks and bonds. They take foreign vacations. Or they sock money away in the bank. There's no GST on these activities. Corporations don't have to pay the GST either.

The GST helps shift taxes onto poor and middle income people. The rich and corporations pay less.



"I'll be all right. I was suddenly overcome by a wave of compassion for the poor."

ELP writes to politicians about poverty

election is coming up. What would the Socreds do about poverty if they are elected again? What would the NDP do if they get elected?

End Legislated Poverty wrote to ask them. ELP wrote to Rita Johnston, leader of the Socreds and Mike Harcourt of the NDP. ELP asked them about 4 things?

Minimum wage: Will your Party raise minimum wage to \$8.26 an hour if elected? \$8.26 is what minimum wage would have to be today to be at the same percentage of the poverty line as it was in 1975.

Welfare rates: Will your Party raise them to the poverty line? The poverty line for a single person in a city is \$14,078 per year.

Forced employment of single parents on welfare: Will your Party change GAIN regulations so that single parents on welfare have choice regarding employment outside the home?

School food programs: Will your Party fund universal (within the school), non stigmatizing, non

charitable school lunch programs in schools in low income areas throughout the province?

ELP's letter was sent on July 31st. We'll let you know what the politicians write back.

Can you leave town if you're on welfare?

Sometimes people on welfare get letters from the Ministry. The letters say: Be at an appointment at a certain time. Or the letters say: you will be visited at a certain time.

What if you are planning to be out of town? What if you have something else to do at that time?

Just call your worker. Say you are busy at that time. Say you want to change the time of the appointment. You don't have to tell the worker what you are doing. That's your business.

Know your rights

The People's Law School has produced little booklets on welfare rights. One booklet is called: Welfare for Unemployables. One is: Welfare for Employable People. One is: Welfare Appeals. The booklets are in English, Spanish, Punjabi, and Chinese. They are free. To get the booklets, call 688-2565.

What are workers' rights?

In B. C. there is a law called the Employment Standards Act. It is supposed to protect workers. This Act sets the minimum wage. It sets rules about working conditions.

The Employment Standards Branch is the government office that makes sure employers obey the Act. People at the Branch may be able to help you get your rights if your employer is not treating you fairly. In the Lower Mainland the phone number of the Employment Standards Branch is 660-4000. The Branch will not accept your complaint over the phone. You can write a letter or go to the office in person. Their address in the Lower Mainland is

*Employment Standards Branch
4946 Canada Way
Burnaby, B. C. V5G 4J6*

Here are some basic rights that workers have:

The minimum wage is \$4.50 an hour if you are under the age of 18.

The minimum wage is \$5.00 an hour if you are over 18.

Farmworkers, live-in domestic workers, and resident caretakers have different minimum wages.

Your employer can't deduct money from your wages if you accidentally damage or destroy his property.

If you come to work because your employer asks you, you must be paid for at least two hours work even if you do not do any work.

Your employer must let you have a 30 minute period to eat every five hours. The employer does not have to pay you for this time if you are given the time off.

Your employer does not have to give you a coffee break.

if your employer wants you to wear a uniform, they have to pay for it.

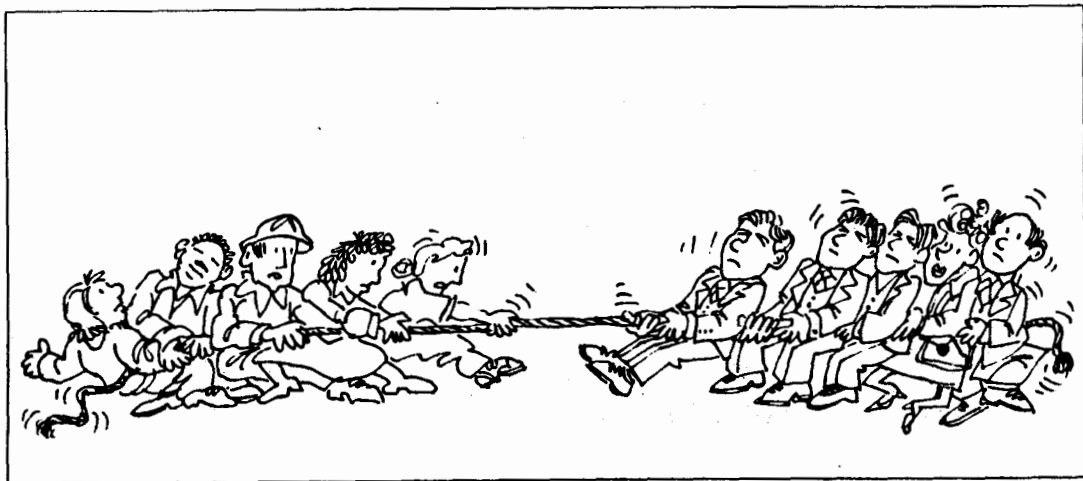
These rights are in the booklet, Fair Working Conditions. You can get the booklet from the People's Law School. It is free. Call 688-2565.



Borrowing money from the Ministry

What happens if you get robbed?
What happens if you need extra money for something that welfare doesn't like to pay for?

Sometimes your worker will say that you can borrow the money from the Ministry. If you are in this situation, see an advocate before you sign anything. Look on the back page to find an advocate. The advocate may be able to help you. The advocate might be able to make the Ministry give you the money. You might not have to pay it back.





Poor take a stand

Homeless, jobless, and angry supporters of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty set up a tent city in Toronto at the base of the CN Tower. They named the tent city Mulroneysville. The tent city was set up to protest policies of Mulroneys's Tory Party which held a convention nearby.

At the tent city, 12 tents were arranged in rows along Layoff Lane, and Poverty Row. A graveyard of tombstones was off to one side. Each tombstone listed a factory shut down by free trade and the number of jobs lost.

Some of the people who stayed at the tent city were homeless people from Ontario. Some were Ontario anti-poverty organizers. Some were from Rural Dignity, a group that is fighting to keep rural post offices open. Over 50 labour, church, and social agencies supported the tent city with food, tents, and other donations.

This is what the Ontario poor people want:

1. Dump the free trade deal. It has already cost over 200,000 jobs. We need international

trading relations based on guarantees of social programs and workers rights.

2. Stop the cuts. The Tories gutted UIC and payments to the provinces for welfare, education, and health. Drop the Tories, not the social programs.

3. Make the rich pay. Tory policy has allowed corporations and rich people to reduce their taxes while the rest of us have had to pay more and more.

4. Housing now! New affordable housing will house the homeless and provide jobs for many of the unemployed.

(From the Mulroneysville News, August 5-10, 1991)

RISE UP



FOR A
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PROGRAM**

GET HELP WITH WELFARE FROM THESE GROUPS

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION,
9 E. Hastings. Phone 682-0931.
Open 9 to 4 Monday through Friday.

FIRST UNITED CHURCH,
320 E. Hastings. Come
Monday through Friday, 9 to 11
am.

VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS ASSOCIATION, 246 E. Broadway. Phone 872-8648.
Open 9 to 4 Monday through Friday.

LITTLE MOUNTAIN TENANTS ASSOCIATION,
125 E. 37th. Phone 324-0555.
Open 10 to 3 Monday to Friday.

B. C. COALITION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, 456 W. Broadway. Phone 872-1278.

Open 9 to 5 Monday through Friday.

FOR HELP WITH LANDLORD TENANT PROBLEMS:

Call the **TENANTS RIGHTS COALITION** Hotline: 255-0546.

FOR HELP WITH SERIOUS CRIMINAL PROBLEMS OR URGENT FAMILY PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE LAW:

Go to the **Legal Services Society**, 191 Alexander St. Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9 to 3:30, and Wednesday from 12:30 to 3:30. Legal Services may be able to help with child custody and restraining orders.

