

# END LEGISLATED POVERTY

N E W S L E T T E R

January, 1992

## We won!!

Single parents on welfare don't have to look for work or training.

The new welfare rule goes into effect immediately.

End Legislated Poverty worked for three years to get this change in welfare rules.

A lot of single parents on welfare also worked really hard.

They talked to reporters about their lives. They wrote briefs. They went to Victoria to lobby the Socreds and NDP for change. They took the government to court. They went down to the Manpower Centre on Hastings Street to look for jobs, and they took their children with them and called the media. They held a "Sanctuary" last February. At this event single parents told their story about forced employment to the media. They attended all candidates meetings. They wrote letters to politicians.

One of the single parents who fought to change this law is Theresa Tressider. Theresa has three girls. She went on radio talk shows. She talked to lots of reporters. She put up with a lot of nasty people calling her names; telling her to get a job. Theresa said she had a job--raising her children. She kept fighting.

ELP asked city councils in B. C. to lobby the province to end forced employment. Over 20 cities did, including Vancouver. ELP tried to support the single parents who fought to change the law. ELP organized the events that brought attention to forced employment of single parents.

If single parents *want* to work outside the home, they can ask for help from the Ministry.

# HEROIC WOMEN

By *Pat Chauncey*

There wouldn't be a food program without heroic effort from a handful of low income women.

One or two people get attention from the press when an issue is raised. Usually there are lots of other people involved.

Low income people rarely get attention and success from their efforts.

Other people get called experts when they have never lived with poverty.

Some of the real experts are low income women.

Here is a partial list of women who deserve credit for the food program. Many others contributed.

Vancouver: Debbie Ellison, Georgina Isaac, Rose Brown, Pat Garret, Mary Ellen Johnstone, Georgina Marshall, Yvonne Marks, Cora Case, Irene Schmidt, the real Margaret Mitchell, Jacquie Cowlan, Katherine and Georgine Zeron, Ellen

Woodsworth, Colleen Burke, Pam Cooley, Betty McPhee, Dee Martin, Sheila Baxter, and honorary women Dave Martin and Alan Alvare.

Victoria: Cindy McLaren, Brenda Pohl, Dorothy Livingstone, Kathy Edwards, Abby Kindlan, Gloria Harris, Evelyn Hammond, Susan Noakes.

Surrey: Saffron Kanzeon, Ann Regan, Jennifer Chobotuck, Val Watson,

Burnaby: Anita Gingrich, Antoinette Naaffa, Carol Withers-Chow, Tim Tarter.

Nanaimo: Karen Shillington, Gail VanDerLeek, Janet Doherty, Louise Ross, Mary Wasley..

The staff at End Legislated Poverty worked for years with low wages and continued to live in poverty while working to get a food program in place.

These people continued to work through family crisis, hunger, homelessness, depression, sick and emotionally upset kids, legal problems, child apprehensions and Ministry Investigations.

Lots of times people had little support in their lives and had families and friends who were embarrassed by their efforts.

Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

We can all celebrate our victory and each contribution.



## **NDP government to fund food for 100 schools**

*By Pat Chauncey*

Premier Mike Harcourt and Education Minister Anita Hagen announced a \$7 million package for a provincial food program. They made the announcement on Jan. 14th in Surrey.

The program is a result of End Legislated Poverty's community organizing since 1987.

The new food program could be exactly the kind of program End Legislated Poverty wanted. Food will have to be available to all children within a school. People who can afford it, pay what they can. The meal is free for people who can't pay. No one will be identified if they need free food.

The food program will be expanded to at least 10 more schools in Vancouver.

"It just goes to show you that if low income people work together we can get what we need," said Linda Marcotte one of the long time food program organizers.

One problem with the food program is this: the government wants School Boards to decide between hot and cold food and between breakfast, lunch, and snacks.

Children like the hot lunch program most.

End Legislated Poverty is concerned about communities not admitting that they have hungry school children.

If you are interested in getting food in your school phone: 879-1209 and ask for Linda or Pat.

# NDP raises welfare

On Feb. 1st, welfare rates in B. C. will go up. The cheque you get at the end of January should include the increase.

For some people the increase is less than the cost of living. The cost of living has gone up 5 and a half percent. But the increase for single employable people is only 5 per cent. The increase for employable couples is only 4.2 per cent. These people can buy less now than they could last year—even with the increase.

The highest increase is for 12.8 percent for two parents with five children.

For singles and couples the only increase was for shelter. These people can only get the increase they promise to give it to their landlord. Rent will automatically go up for people in public housing and co-ops. Private landlords will probably raise rents.

End Legislated Poverty wants the government to raise welfare rates to the poverty line. We want them to stop separating support and shelter payments. That way people can get the full amount even if they don't give it to their landlord.

Here is a list of the new rates:

For employable singles, couples, and two parent families:

Number in family	Support	Shelter	Total
1	\$200	\$325	\$525
2	352	520	872
3	447	610	1057
4	542	650	1192

For a single handicapped person:

Support: \$414    Shelter: \$325    Total: \$739

# re rates--but not much

For unemployable or age 60 to 64, singles, couples, and two parent families:

	Number in family	Support	Shelter	Total
1		\$250	\$325	\$575
2		402	520	922
3		497	610	1107
4		592	650	1242

For one parent families:

	Number in family	Support	Shelter	Total
2		\$426	\$520	\$ 946
3		521	610	1131
4		616	650	1266

End Legislated Poverty will continue to work to get the government to raise welfare rates to the poverty line and minimum wage to at least \$8.26 an hour.



## Free law classes

The People's Law School is holding free law classes. Some of them are listed below. If you want to go to a class, call the phone number that is beside it.

### Divorce law

People's Law School (688-2565)  
Tuesday, March 31st at 7 pm to 9 pm.

### Custody and access

Kerrisdale Community Centre  
(266-8331) Monday, March 9th at  
7 pm to 9 pm.

### Employees' rights

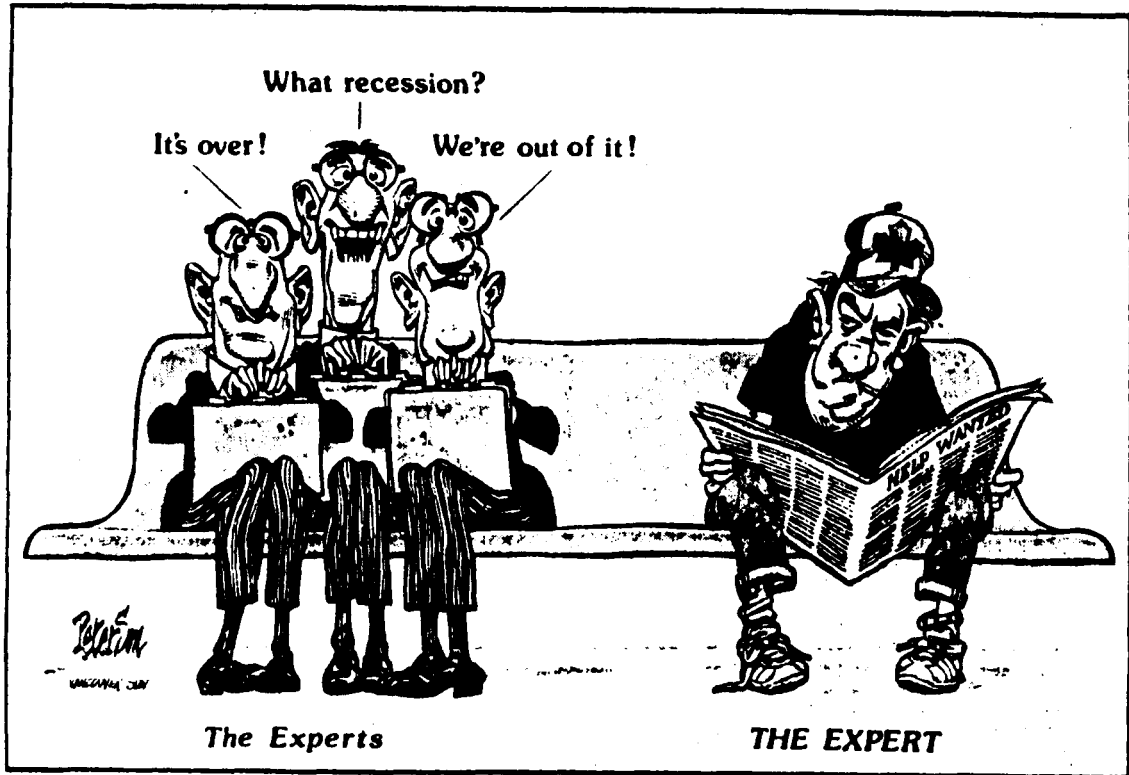
Riley Park Centre (879-6222).  
Wednesday, March 25th at 7 pm  
to 9 pm.

### Immigration procedures

Riley Park Centre (879-6222)  
Wednesday February 26th at 7 pm  
to 9 pm.

### Kensington Centre (327-9401)

Tuesday March 24th at 7:30 pm  
to 9:30 pm.



## Don't forget to get your tax refunds

Low income people may be able to get money from the government

Ottawa. If you have children, you can get a child tax credit of \$585 per child, maybe more.

You can also get a GST tax credit. The amount hasn't been announced yet. Last year it was \$190 for single people on welfare.

The Downtown Eastside Residents Association is at 9 E. Hastings.

They will fill out your tax forms for free so you can get the money. First United Church will also do this. Call them at 681-8365 to make an appointment. Before you go to either group, you have to do two things:

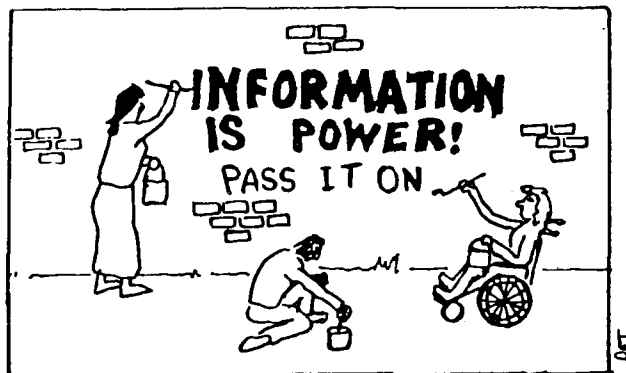
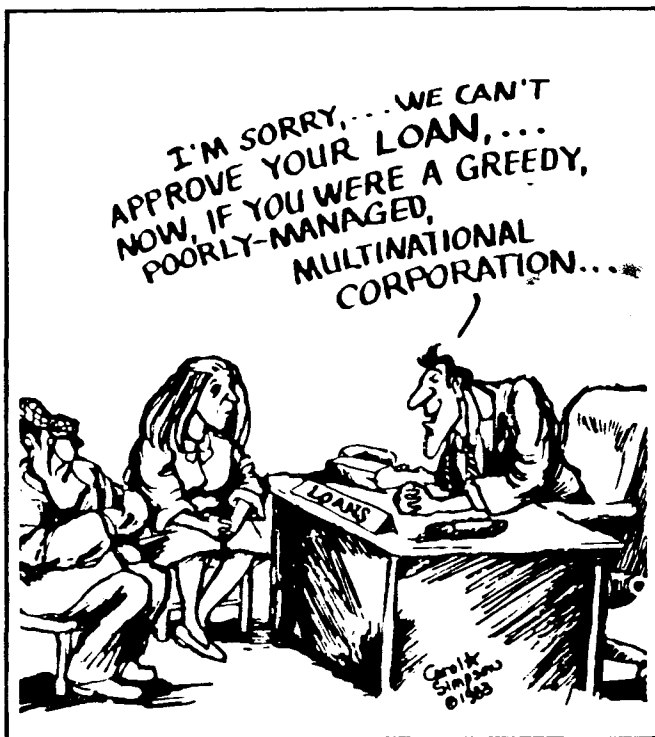
1. Get a tax form at a Post Office;

2. Make sure you have all your information slips. These are the forms that you get from your job, from Old Age Security, GAIN, Unemployment Insurance, CPP, your bank, and family allowance.

Both groups will start doing taxes in about the middle of February.

Anthony Williams of DERA says people should watch the private companies that fill in tax forms for money. "The legal limit they can charge is 15 per cent," says

Williams. "But they may charge extra for the GST form."



## Get help with welfare from these groups

### **Downtown Eastside Residents' Association**

9 E. Hastings St. Phone 682-0931. Open 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.

### **B. C. Coalition of People with Disabilities**

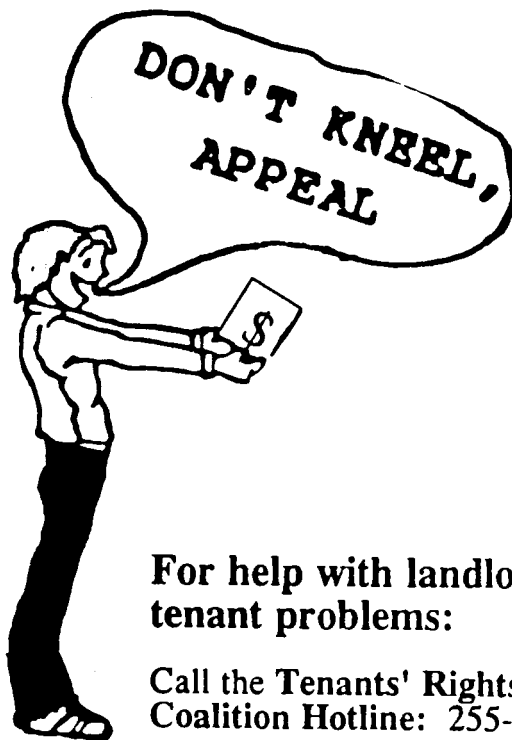
456 W. Broadway. Phone 872-1278. Open 9 to 5. Monday through Friday.

### **Downtown Eastside Womens' Centre**

For women only. Open 11 am to 5 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Open 12 noon to 5 pm on Wednesday. Drop in or call 681-8480.

### **Little Mountain Tenants' Association**

125 E. 37th. Phone 324-0555. Open 10 to 3 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 9 to 3:30 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Open 12:30 to 3:30 on Wednesday. Legal Services may be able to help with child custody and restraining orders.