

# END LEGISLATED POVERTY

N E W S L E T T E R

#53

May 20, 1992

## You can have more money in the bank and still get welfare

The B. C. government has changed the welfare law about how much money you can have and still apply for welfare.

The new law means that you don't have to use up nearly all your savings before you can apply for welfare.

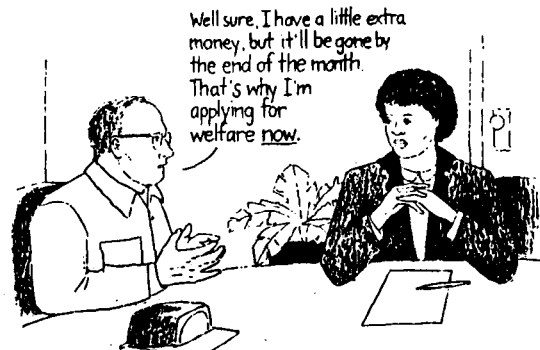
If you are a single person under 55 years of age, you can apply for welfare if you have up to \$2500 in the bank. This is much better than the old amount. The old amount was \$5 for transients, \$160 for employable people under 55 and \$500 for "unemployable" people.

If you are under 55 and have one dependent, you can now have \$5000 in the bank and still apply for welfare. The amount you can have in the bank goes up by \$500

for each person you are supporting.

If you are handicapped or over 55 years old, you can have \$3000 in the bank if you are single. If you are supporting another person, the amount is \$5000 and \$500 for each extra person in your family.

The new law means this: don't wait til you've spent your last dollar before applying for welfare!! It's your right to apply for welfare before your money gets used up.



# \$\$Walk on the Rich\$\$

On April 24th about 50 people from End Legislated Poverty "walked on the rich."

ELP wanted show that we have to end obscene wealth in order to end poverty.

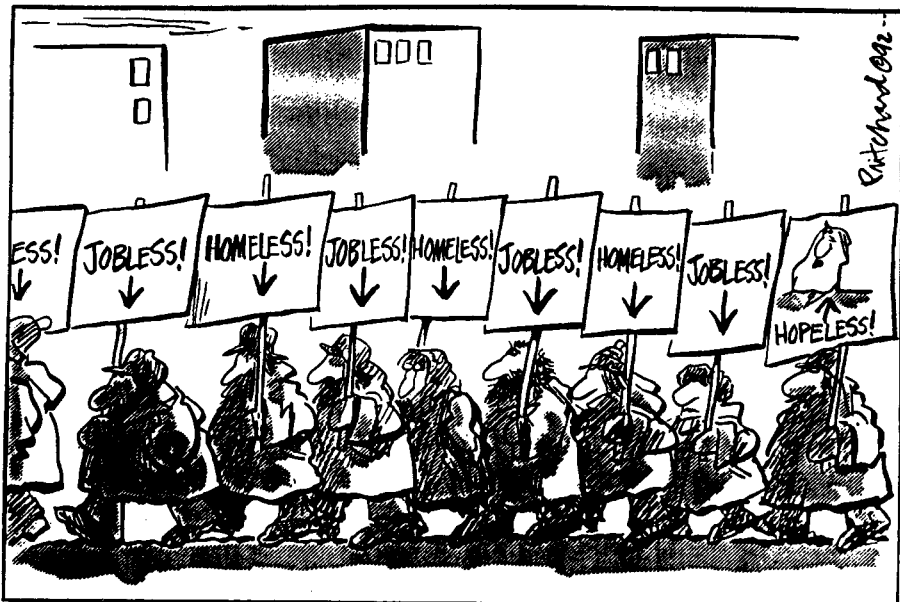
ELP did three skits during the walk. The walk started at the Royal Centre which is owned by Trizec. Then we went to a bus shelter that used to be owned by Jimmy Pattison until he said that wages and taxes were too high in Canada. Then we went to the Bank of Nova Scotia.

The Bank of Nova Scotia had \$63 million in profits and \$88.7 billion

in assets in 1991. In the last four years it made profits of almost \$2 billion and its assets have increased by about \$14 billion.

With all this loot, the bank actually brags in its annual report that "in 1991 Scotia Bank gave more than \$4.1 million to over 1,200 charitable and non profit organizations around the world." This is less than .6 percent of their profits for one year.

The "walk on the rich" was filmed by the National Film Board for a film on the feminization of poverty.



## Letter

Dear friends,

I am writing a book on children and poverty. I am poor myself.

I have the strong opinion that as a society we don't love our children. We leave them to be raised at 50% below the poverty line. Our children are not guaranteed housing or minimum wage. Welfare is not enough to take care of our children. When people work, the tax credit for children is pathetic. Schools are overcrowded. Abuse is on the rampage.

Many older adults are of the opinion that if you have the child, *then its your problem.*

It is the children growing now who will be the nurses, the doctors. All the helping professions will be worked by our children. Their taxes will keep the pensions and the health care plan afloat.

Our children and the earth are our most precious possession. Society neglects and abuses both. I am collecting sketches and writings from children and youth. They can use their first name or any

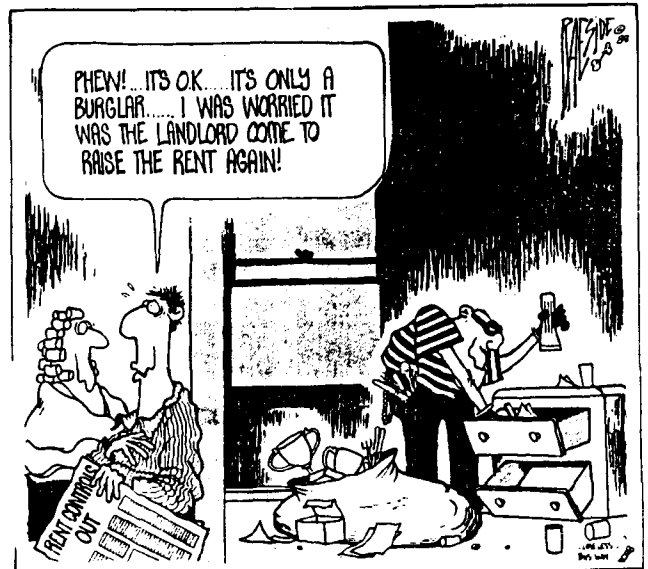
name they want. If you can find the time from your stressed out life (raising children is hard work), please mail these drawings and writings to me at this address:

Sheila Baxter  
Apt. 1401 1650 Haro St.  
Vancouver, B. C. V6B 2X9

My previous books were No Way to live and Under the Viaduct. They were published by New Star.

Good luck in your struggles,

Sheila Baxter



# We need a higher minimum wage NOW!!

In March a group from End Legislated Poverty met with Moe Sihota. Sihota is the government person who is in charge of minimum wages.

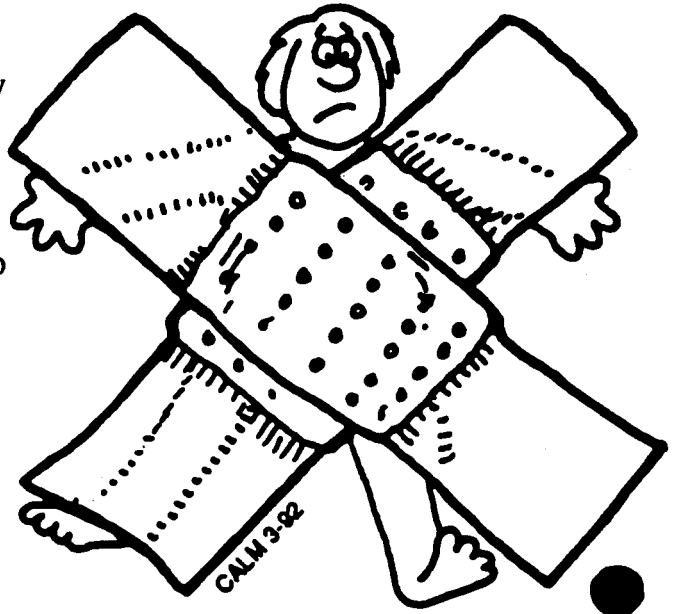
Raising the minimum wage is a good way to reduce poverty without increasing government spending.

ELP wants Sihota to raise the minimum wage to \$8.26 an hour. That is about 122% of the poverty line for a single person. ELP wants this phased in over two years.

Sihota told ELP that he wanted to announce another increase this year. But he hasn't done it yet. He also said that he wanted to raise the minimum wage to 125% of the poverty line in four years. This means there have to be regular increases every six months or so. The last increase was in February.

ELP wrote to Sihota and asked him to announce a substantial minimum wage increase for August.

You can add your own voice to ELP's. Just sign the letter on the opposite page. Fold on the dotted line, and staple or tape. Be sure to put a stamp on and mail to Sihota.



**!!Justice  
not  
Charity!!**

Moe Sihota  
Minister of Labour  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, B. C. V8V 1X4



May, 1992

Dear Mr. Sihota,

I'm writing to ask you to make an immediate announcement of a substantial increase to the minimum wage, to apply to all workers, and to take effect in August, 1992.

You told End Legislated Poverty that you are committed to raising the minimum wage to 125 % of the poverty line within four years. As the last increase was in February, we must have another substantial increase in the fall if you are to meet this commitment.

Will you please write back and tell me what action you will be taking?

Thank you.

Other  
comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Yours truly,

\_\_\_\_\_ (name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (address and postal code)

\_\_\_\_\_ (phone)

Cut Here

(fold here)

From:

Put  
Stamp  
Here

Moe Sihota  
Minister of Labour  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, B. C. V8V 1X4

(fold here)

(tape or staple here)

## Report from the Fraser Valley

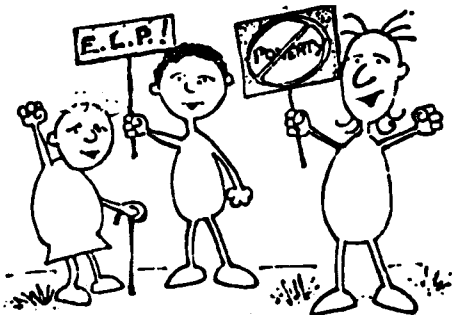
Dan Larsen is a volunteer advocate who works in the Abbotsford to Hope area.

He helps people on welfare get their rights. His phone number is 852-3744.

Because of the 5 week month lots of people came to him because they had to go for crisis grants. When they asked for a crisis grant, the people in the welfare offices said they would divide the cheque in half and administer it.

Dan went to the supervisor to get things straightened out.

Dan also reports that the fishing law is passed. This is the law that lets handicapped people get a fishing license for \$1 instead of \$12.



## Having problems with the Family Maintenance Enforcement Act?

Welfare usually wants women on welfare to use the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program. This program is supposed to get money from the the woman's partner to pay for child support.

Sometimes this is very difficult or even dangerous for the women. They may not want to have anything to do with their ex partner. He may be abusive. But sometimes welfare threatens to cut off your cheque if the women don't co-operate.

With this program, the Ministry decides what is good for the woman and not the woman herself. If you have problems with the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program, you can get help.

Call Lanny Campbell at Legal Services in Gastown, 687-1831.

## 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

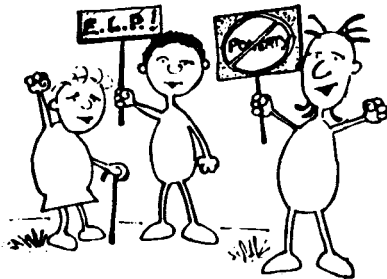
246 E. Broadway. Phone 872-8648. Open 9 to 4 Monday through Friday.

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

#204 456 W. Broadway. Phone 872-1278. Open 9 to 5 Monday through Friday.

### Little Mountain Tenants' Association

125 E. 37th. Phone 324-0555. Open 10 to 3 Monday through Friday.



*For help with landlord and tenant problems:*

Call the Tenants' Rights Coalition Hotline: 255-0546.

*For help with welfare, 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.