

END LEGISLATED POVERTY

N E W S L E T T E R

#56

September, 1992

People on welfare deserve dignity and respect

This is a quote from a letter written by Joan Smallwood. Smallwood is the Minister in charge of welfare in B. C. She wrote the letter to Front Line Advocacy Workers on July 21st. Maybe you can use this quote in the welfare office if you need it.

"I agree with Irene Schmidt, the advocate from Carnegie Centre, who stated that clients of my Ministry need to be treated with dignity and respect. This is written in Ministry policy and is my personal expectation of all Ministry staff. I also believe that people need to be empowered so that they view themselves as consumers of our services who can expect, and demand, quality service."

Free Law Classes

The People's Law School has more free law classes this fall. Here are some of them. If you would like to attend the class, call the phone number in brackets.

Buying a new or used car
Franklin School (298-3438) Wed.
Oct. 14, 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

Custody and Access
Gordon Neighbourhood House
(683-2554) Thur. Oct. 22, 7:00
to 8:50 pm.

Divorce Law
G. F. Strong Centre (876-3371)
Tues. Nov. 10, 7:30 to 9:30 pm.

Employees Rights
Kensington Centre (327-9401)
Tues. Oct. 20, 7:30 to 9:30 pm.

Immigration Procedures
Marpole Centre (327-8371) Tues.
Sept. 29, 7:30 to 9:30 pm.
Gordon Neighbourhood House
(683-2554) Thur. Nov. 26, 7:00
to 8:50 pm.

Landlord and Tenant Law
Riley Park Centre (879-6222)
Wed. Oct. 7, 7:30 to 9:30 pm.

**Legal Help--where do I get it?
Can I afford it?**

Barclay Manor (689-0571) Mon.
Oct. 5, 7:30 to 9:30 pm.
Riley Park Centre (879-6222)
Wed. Oct. 21, 7:30 to 9:30 pm.

Unemployment Insurance
Trout Lake Centre (876-9285)
Wed. Oct. 7, 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

**Seniors Benefits--Am I getting
them all?**
Renfrew Centre (434-6688) Fri.
Oct. 16, 10:30 to noon.

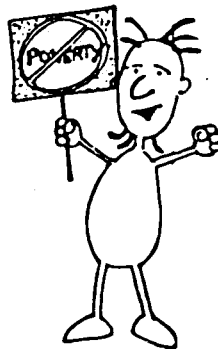
411 Seniors Centre (684-8171/local
7) Tues. Oct. 27, 1:30 to 3:00 pm.

False Creek Centre (665-3425)
Wed. Nov. 18, 1:30 to 3:00 pm.

The People's Law School



Justice, not charity



Mike Harcourt, Premier
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B. C. V8V 1X4

Dear Premier Harcourt,

I have just made a donation to charity to help low income people in B.C. I wanted to let you know how I feel about this donation:

* given the official unemployment rate of 11.6%, I realize my donation will not go far to really helping low income people. In fact, charity is a band-aid solution to the problem of poverty.

* I realize that poverty is NOT the fault of individual low income people. Poverty is a systemic, political problem.

* I think what B.C. needs are politicians who can demonstrate their desire for a truly just and fair society by working to:

1. Raise the welfare rate to the poverty line;
2. Raise the minimum wage to at least \$9.05 an hour. The minimum wage in 1975 was 122% of the poverty line. In April, Minister of Labour Moe Sihota promised he would raise the minimum wage to 125% of the poverty line in 4 years. We need action on this NOW!
3. Enact rent control and provide more support for public housing and housing co-ops;
4. Get out of the free trade deals and ensure that any constitutional agreement ensures that our elected governments will have more ability to regulate and manage the economy;
5. Tax people based on ability to pay;
6. Save and expand universal medicare so all health needs can be met.

Please start working on this NOW so we can end the need for charity in B. C. Please write back and let me know what you plan to do to end the need for charity in B. C.

Yours truly,

_____ (name)
_____ (address)
_____ (city and postal code)

clip, sign, and send

Poor people speak out about cha

How do people who use charities feel about having to use them?

End Legislated Poverty wrote a report on that question. Over the summer 4 researchers came to people who use food banks and other charities and asked them how they feel about having to use charities. The ELP researchers also asked people who use charities what ideas they have for improvements.

The 37 page report is now ready. It is full of quotes from people who use charities. In the report people talk of the tension between having to use charity and feeling humiliated when they do.

Here is what some of the people who use charity had to say about it:

"Charity is nice but power is better."

"(Charity) narrowly beats starving to death."

"More jobs, less charity."

"People that have the wealth are throwing the crumbs. They get the tax writeoffs and justify their

power and control. They don't want to look greedy so they donate to charity. But they still hold the majority of the country's wealth."

"The food here is nothing special...well damn awful actually."

"Its degrading to make people stand in line-ups to beg for food."

"I don't feel very good about charity. I just wish no one would see me there. Only if people are in need will they understand how it is going to the food bank. Others say, 'get a job.' They don't know what we go through."

Here are some of the recommendations in the report:

*Charity users should be able to write their own guidelines of how they want to be treated by charities;

*People who volunteer for charities should be trained in respectful treatment of charity users;

*People who organize and run charities should work for long term changes like jobs, higher welfare, and minimum wages that

Charity

will reduce and end the need for charity;

- *People should start making greed an important issue to be discussed, along with charity;

- *Welfare rates should be increased to the poverty line;

- *Minimum wage should be raised to at least \$9.05 an hour;

- *Fair taxes should be based on ability to pay, with the wealthy and corporations paying more;

- *Governments should build affordable housing and bring in rent control;

- *Government should end the free trade deal so it has the power to manage the economy and reduce and end poverty.

If you would like a copy of the report, give ELP a call at 879-1209. We would like to hear what people who use charities think about the report. It has already been sent out to politicians and people who work at social agencies.

Christmas bonus goes up

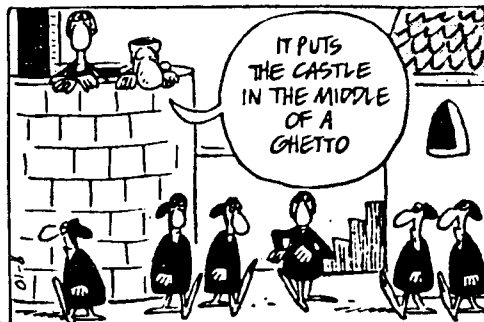
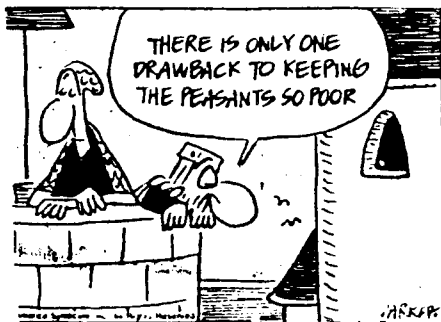
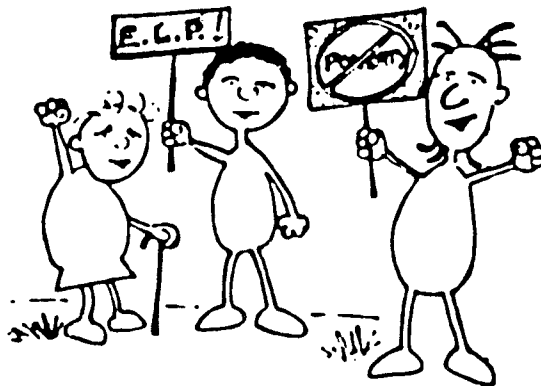
The Christmas bonus for people on welfare will go up a little bit this year.

These are the new rates:

- *\$30 for a single person with no dependents, or

- *\$70 for a couple with no dependent children, or

- *\$70 for a family with dependent children, plus \$7 for each dependent child in the family.



Vancouver Park Board to have cheaper fees for low income people

Starting on Jan. 1, 1993, the Vancouver Park Board will have a new policy about fees for things like swimming and skating.

The Park Board calls it their "Economic Access Policy."

The policy will let low income people get a "Leisure Access Card." This card will let low income people participate in community recreation for half price plus free swim and skate. This does not apply to seniors who already get a 50% reduction.

These people can get a Leisure Access card:

- *People on GAIN;
- *People on GAIN for Handicapped;
- *People on short term refugee assistance;
- *Any person who has a limited income and cannot afford to participate in Park Board programs or services.



These Vancouver schools have lunch programs

If a school has a lunch program, it means that students can eat lunch for free if their parents have low incomes. With these lunches, parents who can afford to pay, do pay. Parents who can't afford to pay, don't have to. The school is not supposed to identify or discriminate against parents and children who don't pay.

Here is a list of the Vancouver schools that have lunch programs.

Elementary schools:

Britannia
Brock
Carleton
Dickens
Dickens Annex
Grandview
Hastings
Lloyd George
A. R. Lord
Macdonald
Mt. Pleasant
Nelson
Nightingale
Queen Alexandra
Queen Victoria Annex
Roberts
Roberts Annex
Secord
Selkirk
Seymour
Strathcona

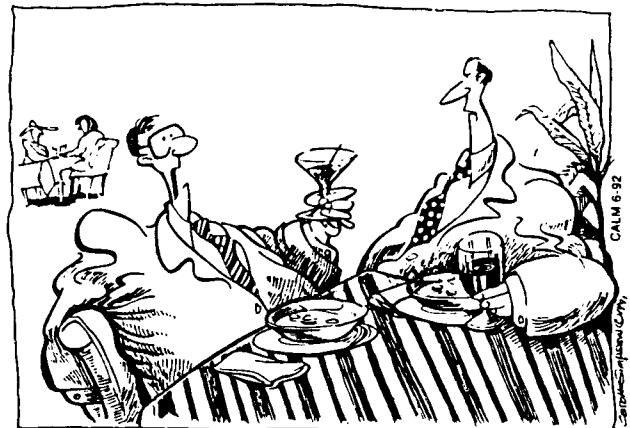
Thunderbird
Tillicum Annex
University Hill
Wolfe

Secondary schools:

King George
Templeton

Secondary alternative Programs:

Britannia (8J-9J, Aries, Street Front, Phoenix, Outreach)
Lord Byng (Byng Satellite)
Gladstone (East Side)
John Oliver (J. O. Bridge, West)
Kitsilano (Avalon, Vinery)
Templeton (Kumtuks, Step-Up, Templeton Bridge)
Tupper (Tupper Mini)
Vancouver Technical (Tumanos, Sunrise East, Spectrum)
Windermere (Foundation, Southtown)



"IF WE PAY THEM STARVATION WAGES,
WHY DO THEY NEED A LUNCH BREAK?"

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.

#105 E. 37th. Phone 321-6120. 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.

Law Students Legal Advice Program

For help with a wide variety of legal problems. Locations throughout the Lower Mainland. Call 822-5791.



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.