

END LEGISLATED POVERTY

N E W S L E T T E R

#59

January, 1993

Community volunteer program improved

The NDP government has changed the community volunteer program. Now the government will provide \$100 a month to people on income assistance who volunteer in non profit organizations to get work experience. This program is for people who are not ready for full time employment or training. It is also for single parents.

People have to work a minimum of 10 hours a month to get the \$100. This is much better than the old requirement of 40 hours per month.

Also, there is no time limit on the number of months you can work with the non profit group.

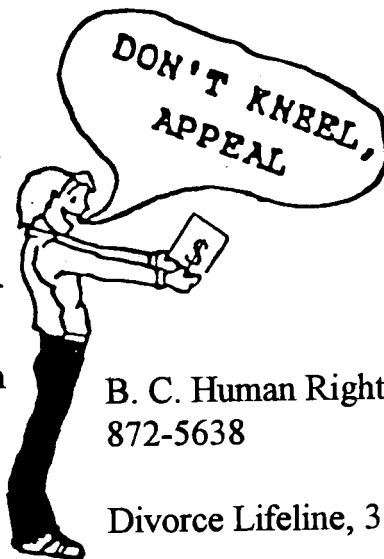
If you would like to work with a non profit group in this program,

tell your worker. If you have any problems, contact an advocate group on the back page. Maybe you could volunteer with one of those groups.

When the Ministry of Social Services first announced this program, they said that non profit groups had to have a criminal record check before they could accept volunteers. However the Ministry has now changed this policy, unless the volunteers are children. This change is a good example of the Ministry responding to community pressure. The non profit groups told the Ministry that they could not subject their staff and volunteers to criminal record checks. So the Ministry ended that requirement.

Advocate list for people in Lower Mainland

An advocate is a person who sticks up for you if you have a problem with welfare, your landlord, unemployment insurance, and other bureaucracies. The advocate is not a lawyer but they know the law. The advocate can help you get your rights. You are stronger when an advocate is on your side, than when you are alone, fighting the bureaucracy. Many advocate groups win over 90% of the cases they take on.



Some advocates are volunteers. Some are paid. Here is a list of groups in the Lower Mainland that have advocates who are paid for by the Law Foundation. If you need help finding out what your rights are, or getting your rights, contact one of these groups for free help.

Battered Women's Support Services, 687-1868

B. C. Coalition of People with Disabilities, 872-1278

B. C. Human Rights Coalition, 872-5638

Divorce Lifeline, 386-4331

Downtown Eastside Residents' Association, 682-0931

Langley Legal Assistance Centre, 530-5811

Mental Patients' Association, 736-2811

North Shore Community Services, 985-7138

Tenants Rights Action Coalition, 255-0456

West Coast Domestic Workers' Association, 669-4482.

● NDP humanizes some more welfare regulations

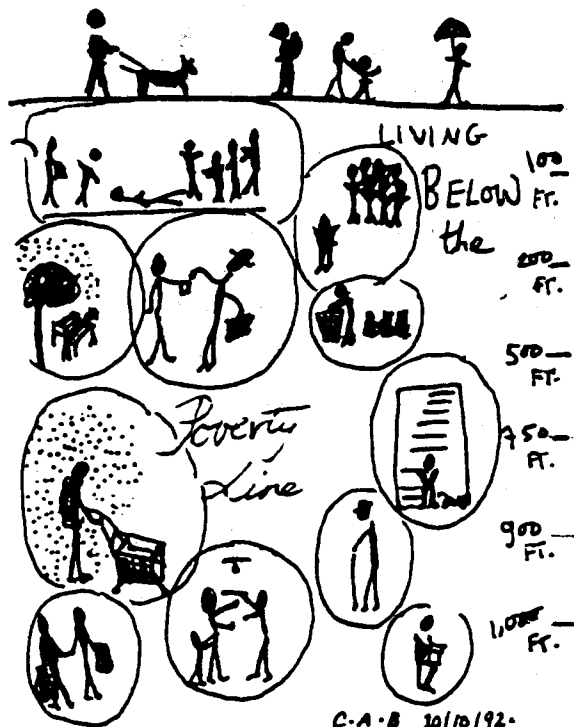
If you are on welfare and looking for work, these new regulations may help you. Be sure to ask your worker about them. If your worker says no, get help from an advocate group on the back page.

1. Ask your worker for extra money to cover expenses for

- *moving to a confirmed job;
- *moving to another province or country;
- *buying work clothes that are necessary to get work;
- *alcohol or drug treatment, or counselling that can't be paid for by other means.

2. Are you are a single parent or handicapped person who left welfare after Nov. 1, 1992 because of taking a job? If so, ask your worker for up to \$100 a month for transportation costs to and from work.

3. Are you a single parent or handicapped person who may get a full time job? If you do, ask your worker for up to \$200 to cover incidental costs related to getting a job. Be sure to make a list of what these costs are before seeing your worker.



January first was a good day for some of Canada's richest people. That's the day they were supposed to pay million in taxes on family trusts but didn't have to.

So what's a family trust anyway? Back in 1972 Trudeau was Prime Minister. The government changed tax laws. It abolished the inheritance tax. That meant that people who inherited millions of dollars didn't have to pay taxes on it.

The government also brought in a new tax. It was called the capital gains tax. This tax applied to things that rich people own like stocks, bonds, real estate, jewellery, fine art. But the tax only had to be paid when the asset was sold. Lots of rich people never sold these things. They died first. So the government said that the tax on these things would have to be paid when the owner died.

But the rich people didn't like this law so Trudeau passed another one for them. The law said that these rich people could put their wealth holdings into family trusts. Trudeau said the wealthy owners of these trusts wouldn't have to pay taxes on them for 21 years.

On Jan. 1st, 1993 the 21 years was up. The rich were in a terrible predicament. They would have to pay taxes on all this stored up wealth. The government won't let people know how much money is involved. But tax expert Neil Brooks estimates that it is "hundreds of millions, if not billions" of dollars.

Immediately, the Tory government went to the rescue. It couldn't have rich people paying more taxes! The government introduced a law about family trusts. This law said that the wealthy family could put

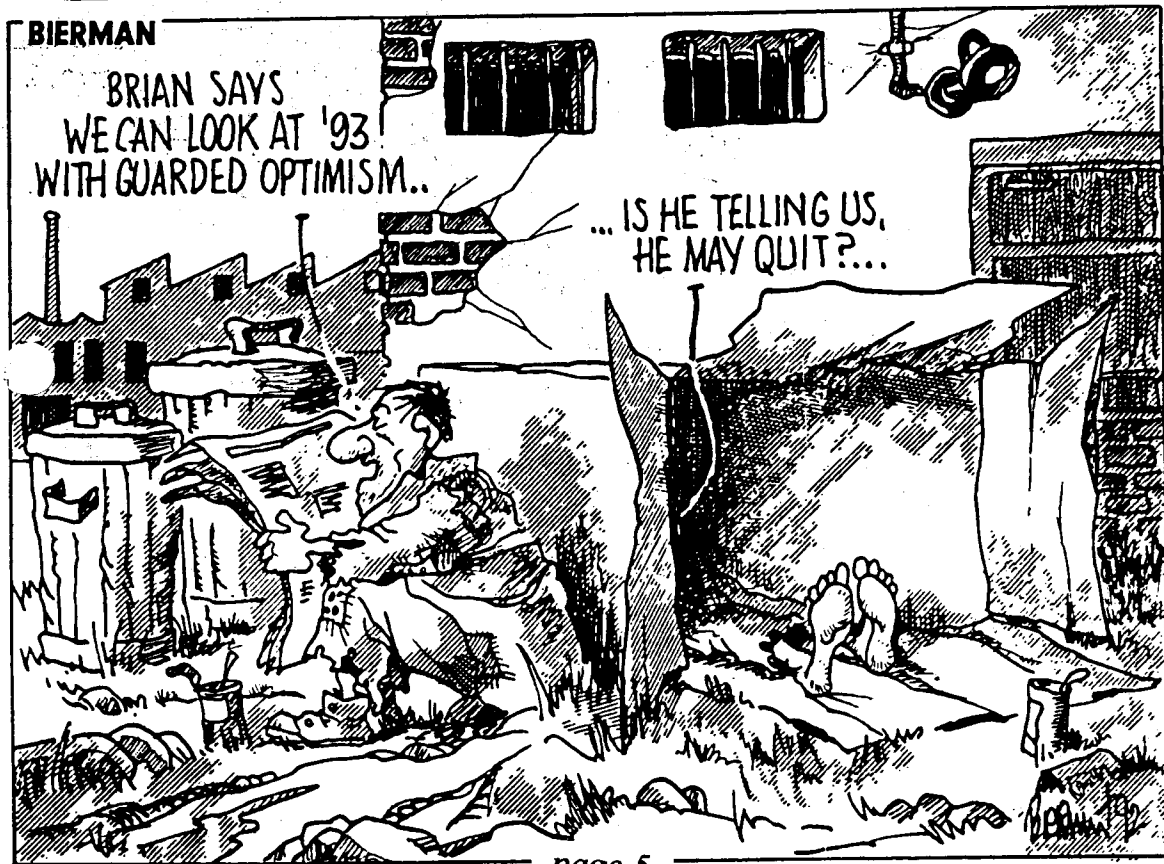
ax windfall

off paying the taxes for another generation--until the death of the last child of the owner of the trust.

What about homeless people? What about people on welfare who don't get enough money? What about health care? What about the deficit? Evidently not a big deal to

the Tory government. They'd rather make sure that the richest Canadians don't pay their share of taxes.

Thanks to Neil Brooks and Linda McQuaig in Our Times for the information in this article.



Get your very own Tenant Survival Guide

The Tenants Rights Coalition has produced a new Tenant Survival Guide. It has lots of good information that tenants need.

The Survival Guide has information on moving in, repairs, harrassment, paying rent, rent increases, evictions, giving notice, and other things.

To get your own free copy of the Survival Guide, call 255-3099. Don't call this number if you have a problem with your landlord. Call 255-0546 for help solving problems with your landlord.

The Tenants' Coalition is also working to get the NDP government to change laws so that tenants will have more rights.

They are working for

- *fair landlord-tenant laws;
- *construction of new affordable housing;
- *rent controls.



What ELP is doing to try to fight poverty

Sometimes the fight against poverty seems overwhelming.

Here are some of the things that End Legislated Poverty is trying to do to help people organize to fight against poverty:

Jan 15: Poverty workshop in Pt. Alberni

Jan 16: Poverty workshop in Nanaimo

Jan 18: Brief to NDP government about how free trade will increase poverty

Jan 23: Richmond workshop

Jan. 25: Grand Forks workshop

Jan. 26: Nelson workshop

Jan 30: Workshops in Richmond and Coquitlam

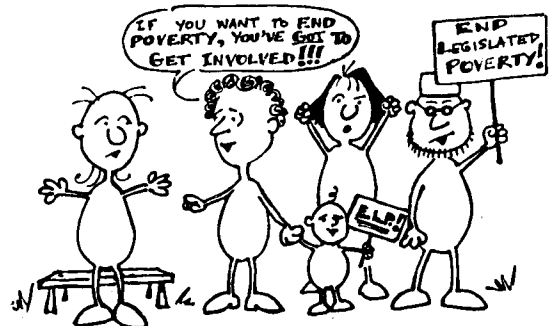
Mid February: Organizers' workshop

Jan 28, Feb. 4, Feb. 11, Feb. 18 workshops at Carnegie Centre

All the time: New ELP offices in Surrey and Victoria are working to organize low income people.

The workshops help people to understand what causes poverty and to get organized to do something about it. For example, in Gibsons, after an ELP workshop, people decided to get together to work on a Cable TV program that explains how poor people are discriminated against.

In December ELP co-ordinated Justice not Charity day. Anti-poverty events were held in Vancouver, Victoria, Nelson, Kamloops, Smithers, Campbell River, and Salmon Arm. In the Spring we hope to have even more action against poverty in more places.



Get help with welfare problems 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 327-6120.
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. Toll free number for people who are outside the Lower Mainland: 1-800-663-1278.

Law Students Legal Advice Program

For help with a wide variety of legal problems. Locations

throughout the Lower Mainland.
Call 822-5911.

For help with landlord and tenant problems:

Call the **Tenant's Rights Coalition Hotline:** 255-0546. If you are outside the Lower Mainland, call 1-800-665-1185 between 9 am and 1 pm Monday through Friday.

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.

If you are outside the Lower Mainland, for the advocate nearest you, call ELP at 879-1209.