

END LEGISLATED POVERTY

N E W S L E T T E R

#61

March, 1993

You're Invited!!

Rally and march for justice!!

Time: Thursday, April 15, 1993 at 5:30 pm

Place: Steps of Art Gallery (facing Georgia St. in Vancouver)

Protest: No jobs
Low minimum wage
Low welfare rate
The increasing need for charity
UI cuts
North American Free Trade Deal
Federal cuts to social services, education and health
High taxes for low and middle income people; low taxes for rich
Federal cuts to housing
And other manifestations of the corporate agenda



Put justice into "Hunger awareness week"

Justice not charity!!

Round trip bus fare paid for low income people who attend.

Sponsored by End Legislated Poverty . Call 879-1209 for more info.

Free leaflets about your rights

The People's Law School will send you free leaflets about your rights. They have leaflets on these rights:

- Fair working conditions
- Farmworkers rights
- Foreign live-in domestic workers
- Notaries public
- Welfare for employable people
- Welfare for unemployable people
- Welfare appeals
- Wills and estates: Planning for parents of children with disabilities

Some of these brochures are available in Chinese, Punjabi, and Spanish.

Call the People's Law School at 688-2565 if you want a leaflet. Or, drop in at #150 900 Howe St. on Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm.



I'd like to earn that

Canada's richest resident is publishing baron Lord Thomson of Fleet. He makes \$628,560 on an average day.

(Thanks to the Canadian Association of Labour Media)

People on welfare help to train people who work in welfare offices

(On March 3rd Antoinette Saleh, a single parent on welfare and a member of the Board of End Legislated Poverty, attended a meeting in Victoria to help train District Supervisors who work in welfare offices)

Antoinette says that the meeting was in a "fancy dancy" hotel. "When people talked, they talked in general. 'How can the Ministry be the best?' they asked. Antoinette told them they should talk about specific things.

"They were pleasant and nice," said Antoinette, "But they don't feel what I feel. We are angry because of us and them, because of the relationship between the worker and the client. At the meeting we were trying to tear down the barriers a bit."

"I'm really happy that the Ministry is trying to have some communication with people on

welfare and see why there is a barrier," Antoinette said.

Here are some of the things Antoinette told the Supervisors:

"I have a lot of pain and anger. After 6 years of torture (being on welfare).

Antoinette told the Supervisors that she attended a job training course. The trainer said, "I know you're looking for jobs but there are no jobs."

"Are we playing games?" asked Antoinette.

"Welfare should help the family when they are asked for help. They shouldn't wait until the mother collapses," Antoinette said, referring to her own experiences with her daughter.

Antoinette pointed to a paper

(continued on the page 6)

Let's fight the unemployment insurance cuts

Question: What exactly is the government in Ottawa planning to do to unemployment insurance?

Answer: The government has introduced a Bill called Bill C-113. This Bill will make three changes to UI that are really bad for low income people.

1. In the past we got 60% of our old earnings when we went on UI. With Bill C-113, we only get 57%. For example, if we earn \$100 a week, the old UI would pay \$60 a week. The new UI would only pay \$57. And we have to pay tax on top of that!
2. If you quit your job without just cause or are fired, you wouldn't receive any UI.
3. If you leave a job without proving that you have a good reason ("just cause" in legal lingo), you won't be able to use up any of the weeks you paid into UI before quitting if you get

a new job and are laid off from it.

Question: What's wrong with these changes?

Answer: Here are some reasons we should fight the changes:

- The changes will be hardest on low paid workers. Statistics show that low paid workers have to quit their jobs more than high paid workers. Even if low paid workers have "just cause" for quitting, their benefits will be cut from 60% of earnings to 57% of earnings.
- These changes will put more people on welfare. The Finance Minister in B. C. believes that these UI cuts will cost the province \$35 million more in welfare payments.
- Working conditions will get

(continued on the next page)

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT TENANTS?

For too many years now, tenants in B.C. have had to put up with too much in rental housing. In B.C. your rent may include:

- Pests: cockroaches, mice, rats and other vermin (otherwise known as shared accommodation);
- Lack of Security: you too can try to find an affordable place to live, when your landlord gives you an eviction notice because he/she wants to demolish or sell your home; wants to build a condo; or wants you out to raise the rent;
- No Repairs: not only do you have a roof over your head, but do you really expect to have heat, working appliances, electricity and water too?
- Harrassment: your landlord enters your place when you're not home, your landlord tells you your friends can't visit and you can't have overnight guests, your landlord threatens to kick you out/ raise your rent/take your stuff...
- No Rent Controls: your landlord can raise the rent as much as he/she wants.
- The Right to Move: if you don't like any of the above, you do have the right to move.

TELL US WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT TENANTS!

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Give us your story on the opposite page**
- **Organize a tenant's group where you live (TRAC can help)**
- **Write to Moe Sihota and demand that tenant's get more protection under the law:**

Hon. Moe Sihota
Minister of Labour & Consumer Services
Room 109 - Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

- **Write to Robin Blencoe and demand that more affordable housing be built in B.C.:**

Hon. Robin Blencoe
Minister of Municipal Affairs, Recreation & Housing
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4



On May 2nd the Tenants Rights Action Coalition (TRAC) will celebrate it's first "TENANTS SURVIVAL DAY"! We are collecting stories of problems you have survived as a tenant in B.C. Some of these stories will then be selected and prizes given out at our day of celebration. If you have a story you would like us to know about fill in the form below and send it on to us (address on other side).

Dear TRAC, here is my "tenant survival story":

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Place
Stamp
Here

Tenants Rights Action Coalition

2681 E.Hastings

Vancouver

B.C

V5K-1Z5

On May 2nd Come Celebrate Tenants Survival Day

(Keep your eye on this newsletter for more info)

worse. Employers will be able to threaten to fire workers to get them to work in unsafe conditions. Workers will know that they can't get UI unless they can prove that they had "just cause" for quitting.

- These changes will shift more power to employers. With the UI safety net full of holes, workers will have to submit to more mistreatment in order to feed themselves and their families.
- The problem isn't too much unemployment insurance, its too much unemployment. The Tory government acts like people are lounging around on UI because they want to. They suggest that if UI were not there, more people would work. But the jobs don't exist! We need more jobs, not more cuts.

Question: What can I do about these UI cuts?

Answer: Write a letter to your member of Parliament. Kim Campbell would be a good one to write to also. She may be the new Tory leader. Demand that she respond to your letter. That way we can find out if she and Mulroney have the same policies.

Write to Kim Campbell, Minister of Defense, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario K1A OA6. You don't need a stamp. If you get a reply from her, let ELP know, Maybe we can put it in the newsletter.

(Thanks to the B. C. Federation of Labour for this information)



People on welfare help educate Ministry staff...continued from page 3...

distributed by the Ministry. It said, "expect the best." Then she told about how she had been called a liar by a worker.

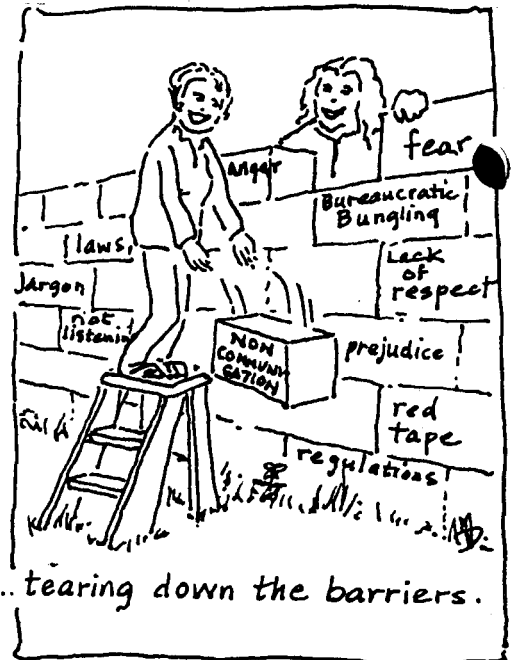
The Supervisors asked Antoinette why she didn't get a job even though it would be at \$5 an hour or so. Antoinette explained that "if you are on the system, you are on it from a to z. You have to fill out forms and and make appointments and wait. You are scared. You are either in the system or out of it." Antoinette works as a volunteer at the food bank and at ELP.

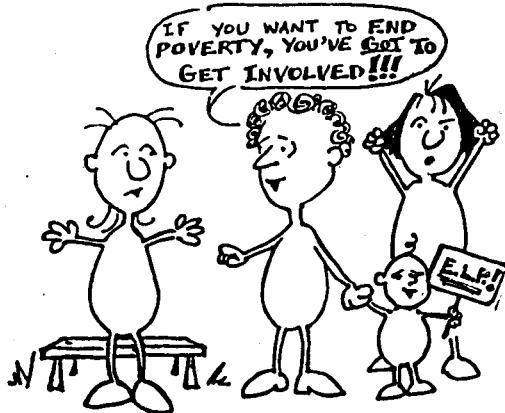
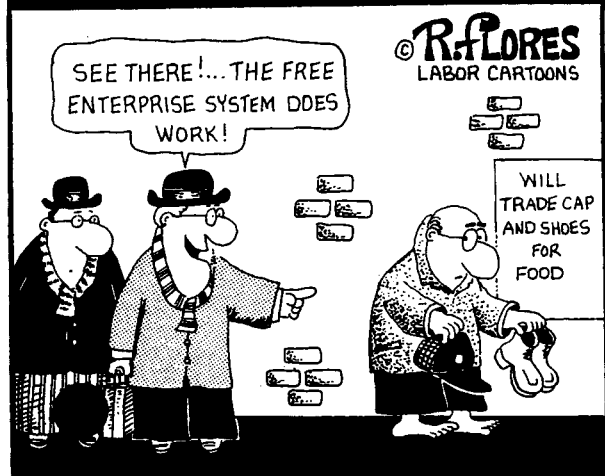
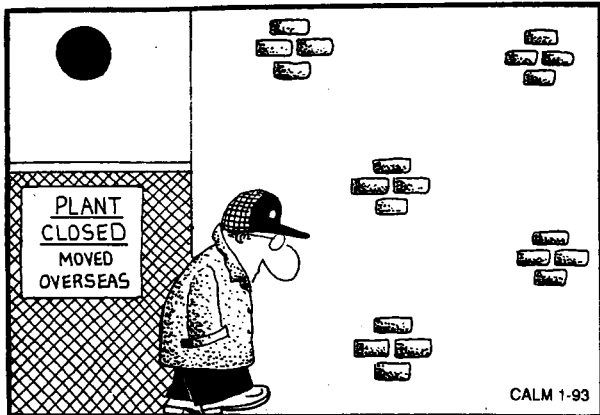
Antoinette told of the fear and frustration of having to deal with the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program. She didn't know what the meetings were for, just that she had to go. She was afraid that the Ministry wanted to apprehend her children. When she asked the worker outright if this was what she wanted, the worker said no. They only wanted to get

money for her from her ex husband. But, said Antoinette, her ex husband didn't have any money, so why go through the hassle?

Building a new understanding between workers and people on welfare will be hard. But Antoinette is "thankful and grateful that there is communication. They were writing down what I said. I don't know if they'll pass it on. It's a good step to know how the other side feels."

Antoinette offered to provide more help to the Ministry if they need it.





Women and Classism

Women are invited to this meeting.

Time: March 27, 10 am to 1 pm
Place: Jim Green room of Four Sisters Co-op, 133 Powell in Vancouver

This meeting is for women who were raised poor or working class. Learn how class (discrimination against poor people) has affected us in growing up and how it still affects us.

Why do we feel like we do? This is a safe place for women to talk about the discrimination they face. We can learn more about it and do something about it.

To reserve childcare, call Linda at 879-1209 or 583-7363 before March 20th.

Busfare and snacks provided.

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.

