

END LEGISLATED POVERTY

N E W S L E T T E R

#63

July, 1993

An election against the poor?

Are Kim Campbell and the Tory government planning an election against the poor?

Kim Campbell has created a new Ministry of Human Resources. It will control welfare, unemployment insurance, post secondary education, training, labour policy, pensions and all other income security programs.

Linda McQuaig is a reporter who is an expert on social programs. This is what she says the Tory government in Ottawa wants to do: "Eliminate social benefits (welfare and unemployment insurance) for all but the poor, slash benefits, and then redefine the poor so that almost no one qualifies to receive the meagre benefits anyway."

The government could change the rules to force people on welfare to work for welfare. It could force people on welfare to take training courses for jobs that don't exist. These are all things that newspaper writers think are likely with a Tory government of the future.

These changes would fit in with the free trade deals. How do you make people work for low wages, as low as Mexican workers? Cut back social programs and UI so that people have nothing to fall back on.

What can we do? Spread the word: we want decent jobs and decent wages and a good welfare program above the poverty line. Don't vote for people who want to win an election on the backs of low income people.

Should we have inheritance taxes?

By Karen Shillington

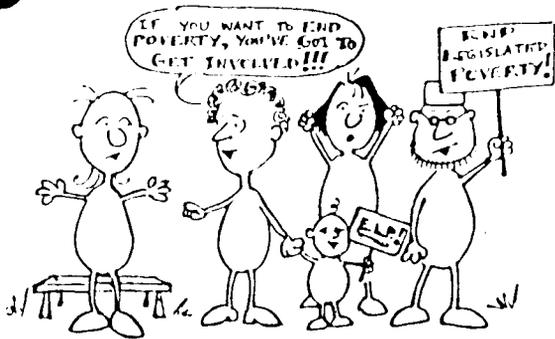
One thing that really irks me is the common misconception that the poor don't pay taxes. Of course we do. We pay our landlord's property taxes. It's called rent. We pay GST and PST on all the luxuries of life like hydro, gas and telephone. And of course, if we have paid employment or are collecting Unemployment Insurance, we pay income tax too.

So when the so-called tax revolters complained about higher taxes on their \$500,000 homes and \$30,000 cars, you can bet there were no tears shed for the revolting wealthy in my neighbourhood. The media circus would have happened no matter what had been in the provincial budget. And just for good measure, better start up a hate campaign against welfare recipients and call it a crackdown on welfare fraud.

You know, the rich have a pretty good scam going themselves. It's called trust funds. Not even the federal government knows how much money is in these tax free trusts. Trudeau gave the rich a 20 year holiday from paying taxes on these trusts. Since then, it has been estimated that wealthy families saved well over \$20 billion in deferred taxes.

At a time when even the Queen of England has agreed to start paying taxes, isn't it time we insisted our elite pay their fair share? The more cynical among us would say it can't be done; all wealth would move down to Australia or New Zealand, the only other industrialized nations without inheritance taxes.

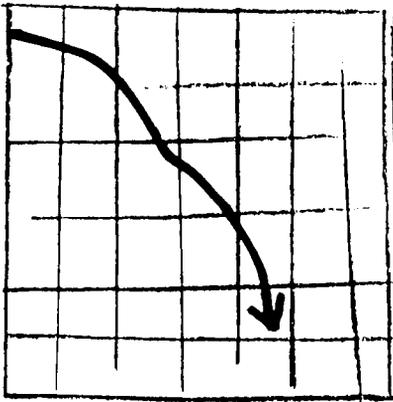
Let's compromise. The rich can let Junior have half the fortune so he won't ever have to work a day in his life. The other half could be donated to governments as a goodwill gesture to be used exclusively for schools, hospitals,
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"I heard Mexico and Taiwan are good places to look for work."

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(Inheritance taxes continued) and environmental cleanup. The government would, in return, name these places so as to immortalize their benefactors. After all, since they already control our lives more than we can imagine, wouldn't it be nice to put names to these faceless ones?



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Things are looking up !

(Thanks to Nanaimo Magazine)

How to write a letter of complaint to the police

By the B. C. Civil Liberties Association

What counts as a complaint? If you think you have a complaint about any actions of an RCMP or municipal police officer, then you do. The Police Act and the RCMP Act set out your right to complain, and your right to an adequate response.

A complaint could include any of these: rude or disrespectful behavior; arrest, detention, or search without reasonable grounds; release of confidential information; neglect of duty; and excessive force.

When should I complain? As soon as possible after the incident--while evidence is still available and the memories of any witnesses are still fresh. After 6 months a municipal police department can refuse to investigate your complaint.

How do I complain? The best way is to write a letter of complaint addressed to the Chief Constable or to the Commanding Officer (for a complaint against an RCMP officer). We suggest you write your letter in four parts, all of which are important.

The letter should begin by stating that you wish to lodge a complaint under the Police Act (for a municipal police force) or the RCMP Act (for the RCMP).

What information should I give about my complaint?

- the time and location of the incident
- the events which took place, in the order in which they happened
- the names and or badge numbers of the police officers involved or a physical description of the officer
- the names, addresses and telephone numbers of any witnesses
- the name of the doctor who examined you and or the name

- **Filing a complaint continued...**
of the hospital or clinic which you attended, if you received medical treatment as a result of the incident
- prints of photographs taken of any injuries to you in the incident.

In the third part of your letter, state the specific actions of the police officers about which you wish to complain. Describe and number each action or set of actions

In the fourth part of the letter, say what you want to happen because of your complaint. If you don't know, say you want a "full and reasonable" response.

Sign your letter and include your name, address and telephone number. Make at least two copies and keep them.

How do I deliver my complaint?

There are several ways:

- deliver it by hand or mail it to the municipal police department or RCMP

- deliver it by hand or mail it to the B. C. Civil Liberties Association and they will submit it for you

The B. C. Civil Liberties Association will tell you other ways to deliver it (call them at 687-2919).

What will happen then? Your complaint will most likely be investigated by the internal investigation section of the police department or RCMP.

If the police refuse to investigate your complaint, you will receive a letter saying so. You should contact the BC Civil Liberties Association for advice and assistance in a possible appeal of this refusal.

It will take 3 to 4 months for you to receive a formal written response.

If you aren't satisfied with the response, call the B. C. Civil Liberties Union for advice and assistance. Their number is 687-2919.

Number of people on welfare is still growing

Sometimes you might feel all alone when you are on welfare. But you're not. In fact if you are on welfare in B. C., there are 324,400 others in the same boat as you are. That was in April when the last statistics came out.

Here they are:

Single men on welfare: 84,436
Single women on welfare: 40,943
Couples: 7,540
Two Parent Families: 13,169
One Parent Families: 48,723
Total recipients: 324,401
Total children: 108,881
Handicapped: 19,735



How much money do Old Age Pensioners get?

Since April pensioners over 65 with no other income were eligible for this much money:

From Old Age Security: \$381.60
From Guaranteed Income Supplement: \$453.49
From Social Services: \$49.30

Total: \$884.39

OOps!!

Last month we told you about a group that was gathering information from single parents about housing. They want to answer the question: does housing make a difference to a family's health and well-being? But we put the wrong phone number in. Their right phone number is 879-2604. Call if you are a single parent in East Van who would like to fill out a questionnaire. A \$15 honorarium is available.

People with mental handicaps get a new advocate

There is a new advocate for people with mental handicaps. Her name is Pat Vickers. She was appointed by Joan Smallwood, Minister of Social Services. But she works independently of the day to day operations of the Ministry.

Pat's job is to help people with mental handicaps, and their families get good quality services from the Ministry of Social Services, the Ministry of Health, and other service providers.

You can call Pat if:

- you want a service from the Ministry of Social Services or Health but your worker or someone else doesn't think its a good idea.
- you do not like one of the services you are getting
- you think you are not treated fairly or with respect
- you have problems with your social worker, financial aid worker, or support worker

- you have problems with where you live.

You can contact Pat from 8:30 to 12 noon and 1 to 4:30 pm. Her telephone numbers are 775-1238 in Vancouver; 755-1238 collect outside Vancouver; or call 1-800-663-7867 and ask to be transferred to 775-1238.

Pat's mailing address is
Suite #103
1675 W. 10th Ave.
Vancouver, B. C. V6J 2A3



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.

