

# THE LONG HAUL

Speaking out about Poverty

## MacPhail: B. C. won't accept Axworthy agenda



Social Services Minister Joy MacPhail meets ELP delegation on August 19th in Vancouver.

The B. C. government "is not waiting for [social policy] changes from the feds. We're proceeding with the clear understanding that we'll have less money," Social Services Minister Joy MacPhail told an End Legislated Poverty delegation at a meeting on August 19th. "If the feds try to impose rules regarding giving less to people or forcing people to do something, we will carry on with our commitment to public programs," MacPhail promised.

ELP had set up the meeting to discuss the crucial social policy review that the federal government is doing. Leaked plans from the government show that Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy is actively considering plans to

- drastically cut UI and to



Diane LeClaire, Jim Pence, and Shari Nelson (left to right) participate in ELP presentation to Joy MacPhail on Aug. 19th.

people off UI if someone in their family is working,

- force people on welfare and UI to take training or to work,
- privatize higher education,
- abolish the Canada Assistance Plan,
- use money that is now spent on welfare for wage supplements (welfare for employers who pay low wages).

ELP is appalled and scared by these federal government plans because they mean that the poor will get poorer. More people will be forced to work for low wages. ELP wanted MacPhail to make a commitment to fight the changes.

Shari Nelson of the Tri Cities Anti-Poverty Group asked if MacPhail supported making single parents on welfare "employable." Federal changes to the Child Benefit could be designed to force single mothers to take low wage work. MacPhail didn't give a specific answer.

Michelle Des Lauriers asked MacPhail if the government would change the Human Rights Act to give people the protections in CAP  
(continued on page 2)

## Help Terrace Anti-Poverty Group get its grant

By Dave Jaffe

The Terrace Anti-Poverty Group may have to shut down unless we help save it.

"We cover the whole northwest of B. C., providing advocacy and information to over 1200 people a month," says Gerry King, the advocate at the Terrace Anti-Poverty Group. King advises people on welfare, UI, WCB, pensions, and writing resumes, among other things.

The Ministry of Social Services recently turned down TAPG's application for \$31,000. The office will be closed by October unless the group gets the grant.

On August 19th, at End Legislated Poverty's meeting with Joy MacPhail, Rose Brown made an eloquent statement urging the Minister to give TAPG as well as Together Against Poverty in

Victoria, the grants they had applied for. MacPhail said she'd look into it.

Here's what you can do to help save advocacy in northwest B. C.: Phone or write to your local MLA and Joy MacPhail, the Minister of Social Services. Her address is Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B. C. V8V 1X4. Tell them that these two groups need their grants and we need their services. ☐☐☐

### August didn't disappear

Yes this is the September issue of *The Long Haul*. July was the last issue. This *Long Haul* has the September date because it is distributed close to the end of each month. We don't want people to think they are getting an old paper. Thanks to Karen Shillington for the idea. ☐☐☐

## Women, Take Back the Night



Thursday, September 22,  
7:30 pm

Gather at Vancouver  
Art Gallery, Georgia and  
Howe St.

Childcare provided.  
For info, phone 872-8212

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if CAP is abolished. MacPhail said she hadn't considered this but would.

As a survivor of the psychiatric system who had been coerced into programs, Dave Ross said, "I'm really concerned about the talk that people will have to participate in training programs. I don't want the whole public to live with what I've had to live with." Would MacPhail support the part of CAP that forbids workfare? MacPhail said she supports the rights in CAP.

Barb Sutherland asked if the government would create training programs for teens that led to jobs with decent wages. MacPhail said the government would work with ELP on that.

Rose Brown asked MacPhail if the government would make a commitment to learn more about classism and offered to help. MacPhail agreed this was

important.

"We have said no at every opportunity [to Axworthy's agenda]," said MacPhail. The purpose of the Premier's Forum, she said, is to set out our agenda. *(The Premier's Forum is a group of about 30 people from business, academia, labour, and community groups, with no rep from anti-poverty groups).*

"If we aren't successful [in stopping Axworthy's agenda]," said MacPhail, "it doesn't mean that British Columbians will be worse off, if we are government."

MacPhail said that she sees herself as an advocate of low income people, but "funding comes from taxpayers so I try to respect their commitment too." She talked about how the government was creating so many jobs that people were coming from other provinces to get them, so the unemployment rate doesn't go down. The government "needs to expand this to include job creation for women, people on low income

and Aboriginal people," she said.

ELP gave the Minister a leaked federal document on Axworthy's plan, the federal propaganda strategy on the plan, and a copy of Unfair Shares, the list of corporations that owe billions in deferred taxes. Apparently MacPhail's staff did not have copies of these documents.

Additional members of the ELP

delegation included Antoinette Saleh, Diane LeClaire, Jim Pence, Paul Taylor, David Goodwin, Joanne Shaw, Jean Swanson, Gael Marriotte, Tim Heisler, Mable Elmore, and Paul Leighton.

*Next month: what people at the meeting thought about meeting with the Minister of Social Services. □□□*

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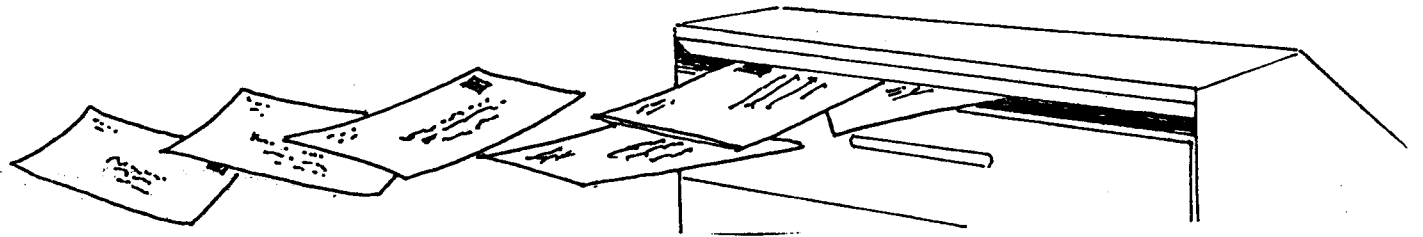
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Send to *The Long Haul*, ELP #211 - 456 W. Broadway, Vancouver, B. C. V5Y 1R3.

Dear ELP,



**Thanks for *The Long Haul***

I would like to thank you for sending us *The Long Haul*. We appreciate it very much.

Betty Wood, Tappen, B. C.

**We need to go on the offensive**

In your last, typically excellent issue, a reader asked in the letters section, "Why are the rich getting richer and the poor poorer? What has gone wrong?"

I don't think anything has "gone wrong." Our system is wrong, but it isn't the case that it isn't "working properly." Capitalism is supposed to make the rich richer and poor poorer, since it exists to profit those who own capital. We (the majority) work to produce wealth for the capitalists, and their political pimps. There will always be poverty under this system.

"The poor" are the result of capitalism's normal operating. What's the point of trying to patch up the system? Better to end it!

Sorry if I'm preaching. It seems to me we won't realize our dreams of "justice not charity" this side of socialism (true socialism, not the Mike Harcourt variety of top

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down reform). I'm sick and tired of hungry babies and slum housing.

A practical suggestion: let's have some debate in *The Long Haul* as to how we can go on the offensive against capitalism as a social movement, rather than fight defensive battles to preserve welfare programs. If we do stay in such a defensive posture, reacting to whatever the right/business do to us, they will always win.

The last will be the first, provided we stop thinking and acting like we are last.

Kevin McNamee-Annett, LIFT Port Alberni

***Long Haul* used in literacy program**

Participants and staff at the R. E. A. D. Y Centre are enjoying reading your newsletter, *The Long Haul*. I think the layout, design and content are excellent.

We are currently using your newsletter as general interest reading in our Level I Literacy Program, and I may add we could use a couple of extra copies for our program.

Thanks for putting us on your mailing list and we look forward to receiving additional copies in the future. Keep up the good work.

Sarah A (Walsh) Sharpe

**Unhappy about photo**

I was very unhappy when I saw my photograph published without my permission in the June edition of *The Long Haul*. When I was asked at the ELP offices to have my picture taken I thought it was for use as a personal photograph, not for publication in the newspaper.

Deborah March

*Editor responds: I'm very sorry that I wasn't clear about what the picture was for. I've learned by lesson and won't do it again.*

**Slum dwelling makes life miserable**

Thank you for sending the newsletter. Eventually I guess I shall be moving from here. The ceiling leaks and there is no heater. This is the second year and the landlord makes no move to improve the place. Rodents have actually touched me while I lay sleeping. I had to stop sleeping on a mattress. I am on a couch now. The landlord knows but ignores my complaints.

Gloria Louie

*Editor responds: Try calling the Tenants Rights Coalition at 255-0546. Maybe they can help you force the landlord to clean up his*



Published monthly by:  
**End Legislated Poverty**  
#211, 456 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3

Vancouver (604) 879-1209  
fax line (604) 879-1229  
Surrey (604) 583-7363

ELP is a coalition of BC groups that want governments to reduce and end poverty.

**Editors:**

Jean Swanson  
Joanne Shaw  
(FLAWline)

**Layout & Design**

Jean Swanson  
Joanne Shaw  
Dave Ross

**Regular contributors:**

David Jaffe  
Anne Miles  
William Kay  
Sandra Asiegbu  
Sandy Cameron

**Cartoons:**

Maureen Davis  
David Jaffe

Printed in a union shop.



## Goodbye, Margaret

By Gisele Guay

I said goodbye to a dear friend today. When I attended my first fapg Annual General Meeting in Naramata in the summer of 1981, Margaret wasn't there--physically. I was a single parent of two toddlers and I was feeling very inadequate. I knew nothing of legislation, government or even social assistance itself. People were so freindly and welcoming, and time after time I heard Margaret's name mentioned. Her name seemed to be synonymous with wisdom, strength and respect. I had to meet this woman.

When I did meet Margaret, I was struck by her down to earth wisdom. She spoke clearly and to the point. I had found a teacher.

I remember one AGM when we had just completed our elections and heard of an important workshop that would be coming up in Ottawa. A small group of us gathered outside to discuss who we should nominate to attend this workshop. We felt that a certain person would be best suited because she was knowledgeable in anti-poverty issues, another was more articulate, another would write a better report. The discussion was becoming quite heated.

Margaret came outside and suggested that we leave the decision to the president. There was general murmuring about how we hadn't decided yet. I will always remember Margaret's



steady, piercing gaze as she reminded us that we had all just taken part in electing the president and if we felt she couldn't represent us, then why did we elect her? I felt petty and ashamed. We needed to remember to stand behind the people we choose. That was the beginning of an important time of learning.

When I arrived at Margaret's funeral my heart was heavy. We all felt such a great sense of loss. As I listened to the service and to the people who stood and spoke of how Margaret touched their lives, I realized Margaret left us each something to carry on.

There were about 145 people at the service--from the very poor to the management of B. C. Housing--each one's life had been affected by Margaret. At the close of the service, her casket was re-opened. I looked around in confusion, as we had all seen her before the service. From the foyer came a procession of young men, each wearing the patch of "Hell's Angels." They too came to show

their respects to a friend.

I was able to let Margaret go with a full heart. She will be remembered deeply by many. She also left clear goals for us to continue to strive for: our leaders need support, families must be preserved and we must be united in our voice against oppression of any kind. Thank you Margaret. □□□

*Editor's note: Margaret Mitchell was the president of the Vancouver and District Public Housing Tenants' Association, on the executive of the federated anti-poverty groups of bc, and a long time worker against poverty.*

## More lunch money for B. C. schools

Over 300 B. C. schools will be getting \$11.6 million in provincial funds for universal school lunch programs this year. This will include funding for 35 more schools than last year. End Legislated Poverty lobbied for 5 years to get this funding for schools in low income areas. □□□



## Women want action to improve social programs

Delegates to the Women and Social Policy Review conference on July 22,23, and 24th want to be active in working to get better social programs. The conference approved workshop suggestions to

- protest against the provincial government for excluding representatives from women's and anti-poverty groups from its special committee on social policy
- become an active, on going coalition and expand membership
- hold a day of action in late October, with banners, leafleting, a march and cultural night or dance

For more information on the conference, see pages 6 and 7. For information on how women and women's groups can get involved in the Women and Social Policy Review Coalition, call Miche at 255-6554. □□□



## Trade agreement threatens jobs and wages

By Dave Jaffe

"It's no big deal," said B. C. Premier Mike Harcourt when he recently signed the Internal Trade Agreement or ITA.

Supposedly the ITA forces all ten provinces to tear down the obstacles that prevent free trade between the provinces. In fact, the ITA could tie the hands of any government in B. C. if, for instance, it wanted to improve working conditions and wages.

"The agreement will definitely limit the B. C. government's ability to intervene in the economy," says Sid Shniad, research director of the Telecommunications Workers Union.

The agreement, says Shniad, is the next stage in the free trade agreements. "First came the U. S.

-Canada Free Trade Agreement. Then came NAFTA, the U. S., Canada, Mexico Free Trade Agreement in 1993"

"The ITA is the next logical step."

Organizations like the Business Council on National Issues that pushed for the first two trade deals were driving forces behind this deal too.

This agreement gives business the right to challenge government policies and projects such as B. C. 21 which provides for hiring workers at union rates to build the Island Highway. The ITA allows non union firms to challenge this fair wage policy and bid to build the highway at lower wages.

"The ITA places the onus of proof on the government enacting the measure rather than on the

person or government challenging it," writes Scott Sinclair about one of the ITA's major drawbacks.

Another downside to the ITA is that it may forbid any government putting conditions or requirements on people who invest in B. C. "These requirements," Sinclair points out, "can be important for consumer protection and can protect jobs."

The ITA is a huge agreement that totals hundreds of pages. "It's a massively complex document," says Shniad. "So I can't tell you for sure all of its long term effects."

But it's possible, he says, that B. C.'s higher welfare rates compared to Alberta's rates could be claimed by an Albertan company doing business in B. C. as an unfair labour cost.

"It's hard to see where the ITA might lead, but there's no doubt that the agreement is set up to constrain governments from meeting the needs of their citizens," said Shniad. □□□





# Organizing around the province

## The Fourth Encounter

By William Kay

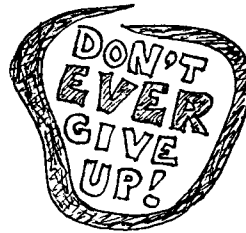
Captain's Logue, Stardate: July 21, 1994

End Legislated Poverty's fourth meeting on Commercial Drive was held on the above date at the Britannia Centre. There were 16 in attendance, but lest morale slip, I hasten to add that we had the highest number of new people at this meeting when compared to the

previous three. Moreover, the much bally-hoed attendance list crisis has been resolved effectively, much brimming the prospects for future growth.

The discussion rocked. Virtually every one in attendance participated in an open debate that ranged from handicapped welfare benefits to teenage prostitution to subliminal advertising, to the virtues of "fun food."

There was definitely a consensus that more meetings like this need to be held. For details about the next Commercial Drive meeting, call ELP at 879-1209. □□□



ELP is working toward having regional training schools for people on welfare, UI or working for low wages, and their allies who want to fight for justice. Is your group interested? If so, call Rose or Linda at 879-1209 with your ideas.

□□□

## The advocacy dilemma

By Anne Miles

We won a tribunal last month. It was the first time I'd done advocacy at a tribunal and I have to admit, winning was rush!

Sometimes I feel resentful that we're helping people on a volunteer basis, when it seems that the paid workers at MSS ought to be helping folks get what they need from the system. It says right in their own policy manual that they are supposed to "help: the clients get what they are entitled to."

On the other hand, I appreciate the dilemma workers find themselves in. They are under pressure not to pay out too much money at a time when their caseloads are growing (not, of

course, because welfare is an easy ride, but because the economy is in trouble). I think they'd rather have a tribunal of three citizens decide that yes, the client is entitled, even though he or she may not be an exact fit into any of their categories. If the FAW or even the District Supervisor or Area

Manager chooses to bend the rules to accommodate need, then they may be in for criticism from their superiors. Many times they know their clients need advocates, but advocacy becomes just another one of those tasks done largely by women--unpaid and unappreciated by most of society. It's a dilemma. □□□



## Tri City group working to increase membership

Shari Nelson of the Tri-Cities Anti-Poverty Coalition reports that their group is working on building their membership. They have recruited Gus Long to talk on welfare rights, poster the community, and made community announcements about the event, scheduled for August 23rd.

After the membership drive Shari is hoping the group can develop a project together, and perhaps get funding for it.

The group wants people to become aware of their rights and what's available to them. □□□

## ELP gives a corporate agenda workshop in Victoria

By Rose Brown

It was 7 on a sunny Monday morning on July 18th. I left home to go to Victoria to do a workshop on the corporate agenda. At 9 am I got on the new super ferry docked at Tsawassen for the trip to Swartz Bay.

Three hours later I was in the Together Against Poverty office. Nine of us attended the workshop. Before getting started we had some snacks together and chatted. We talked about the up-coming Commonwealth Games. "These games haven't benefited low or middle income people at all" said Debbie Beach. "I was told that a man on welfare wanted to be a volunteer at the games, but he was denied a bus pass by MSS. Because he could not travel back and forth, he would be left out." Someone else spoke about a working family that isn't poor, but

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couldn't afford to go to the opening ceremonies where their daughter is performing. Who are these games for? And what are these games for? It seems to me that they support the competition of wealth! A lot of really wealthy folks will get to fly in and a lot of money will be spent to entertain them while ordinary folks will be left on the sidelines once again.

When we started, I asked people as part of introductions to answer the question: why do we do this work, whether paid or volunteer." Eileen Henry said, "I've been a member of TAPS for two years and I care deeply about poverty. Our work is really valuable." Two members said they had got started in anti-poverty work by first being helped with a problem they were having. Dorothy Livingston believes community action causes change.

To start the corporate agenda workshop off we made a list of what are the causes of poverty.

Here's some that people came up with:

- layoffs
- NAFTA
- women's low wages and discrimination
- Canadian economy is not self-sufficient
- Western American culture
- inequitable distribution of wealth

Just as I expected, there was no need to talk about the blame the victim reasons as to why people are poor. Low income anti-poverty workers know what the real reasons are. From this beginning we say how corporations set the agenda that governments follow. The social security review that the Liberals are not carrying out with "slashing social programs, ending universal family allowances, and the possible loss of the Canada Assistance Plan are part of the review. This is heading us toward the cheap labour agenda which is what

corporations have lobbied for for years," I said.

The workshop was being videotaped, and at one point some of the group members spoke into the camera about their lives and how the social security review could hurt them. We will use this portion in ELP's video submission to the government's review.

The workshop lasted for about four hours. "We learned a lot and appreciated the change to do the video," said Debbie.

On the way back I ended up on the same super ferry. Final time home? Nine at night. It had been a long but worthwhile day.

A big thank you to all who came and took part, and to Joanne Smids, the Volunteer Co-ordinator who invited me. Together Against Poverty will be saying a sad goodbye to Joanne as the ministry funding for her work was not granted. □□□

## AROUND THE GLOBE



### Quebec

## Deficit doesn't haunt the PQ

By David Jaffe

The Parti Quebecois that may win the Quebec election seems to be the only mainstream political party in Canada that isn't gripped by the mania of deficit reduction.

According to a recent column by Rick Salutin, the PQ finds deficit reduction "desirable" but "not something to be achieved blindly at the price of all of the PQ's past achievements."

The PQ's official programs also include free drugs for seniors, free eye exams, free dental care for kids, lots of daycare and a

purchasing policy requiring government to buy products from Quebec based companies.

This last policy, Salutin points out, "probably contradicts both the Canada U. S. free trade deal and NAFTA."

The PQ has usually supported the Quebec Liberal government's tough approach to welfare recipients. Yet its program on social issues has what one *MacLean's* columnist calls "a leftist tilt." □□□

Source: *Globe and Mail*, August 12, 1994.

### Hong Kong

## Seniors may get pensions

By David Jaffe

Some seniors in East Asian countries may get pensions soon. In Hong Kong, Governor Chris Patten recently announced a plan that would go into effect in 1997. The proposal would pay out a pension of about \$409 (Canadian) a month.

Patten's proposals were attacked from all sides. Hong Kong's business people fear that the crown colony will go down the supposedly destructive road of the welfare state.

The Chinese government, which will take over the colony in 1997, hammered the idea too.

"Following inflation, contributions needed by the scheme will be bigger and bigger," said one paper from the People's Republic of China. Other people who argue against pensions in Hong Kong say that Chinese children always support their parents and so pensions aren't needed.

In Taiwan in June thousands of seniors marched to ask for pensions by age 65. □□□  
Source: *Vancouver Sun*, July 20, 1994



"So when I get out, I've got a job investigating fraud!"

### PEI

## Insurance fraud artist hired to check welfare fraud

A man who went to jail for three months for defrauding PEI insurance companies of almost \$70,000 has been hired by the PEI Health and Community Services Agency to investigate welfare fraud. According to Wayne Hooper, regional manager of Queen's Region of Health and Community Services, "...part of

the objective we have is to help people who are in particular circumstances. A person might have some experience or have some particular skill sets or expertise in certain areas."

Now all we need is a job creation program where people who have been convicted of welfare fraud are given jobs to investigate insurance or corporate fraud. All

people need jobs, including people who get out of jail. But the government should create good jobs, not jobs that force people to confront the poorest people in the country. □□□

Source: *PEI Guardian*, June 18, 1994 (Thanks to Valerie Lapointe)

### USA

## Government to cut addicts on welfare off

The U.S. government is planning to cut people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol off of their \$446 a month social security benefit if they don't get addiction treatment within three years.

Congress has passed a new law that requires the Social Security Administration to find out who the addicts are, and tell them that they have three years to get treatment.

Even Senator William Cohen, a supporter of the new law, admits that treatment will not be available for all the people who want it.

A quarter of a million people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol could be involved. □□□  
Source: *Seattle Times*, August 14, 1994

### Newfoundland

## Wells' world of corporate tax holidays

By David Jaffe

If a business wants to escape taxes, then it should head straight for Newfoundland. That's Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells' message to those companies who want to invest \$500,000 in the province and show the potential of selling goods worth about \$1 million.

"We've got to generate economic activity," says Wells, in offering firms who fit the above rules a ten year rebate on all provincial taxes.

Wells' message fits the new economic message in NAFTA and the Inter provincial Trade Agreement. Many U. S. states offer tax free holidays for business.

But Wells seems to require nothing from the companies in

terms of decent wages or environmental protection. Many businesses were lured to parts of Atlantic Canada by tax breaks but haven't produced a lot of permanent jobs.

Wells' ten year tax break goes way beyond past practices. It will be made into law this fall in the Newfoundland legislature. □□□  
Source: *Vancouver Sun*, July 6, 1994

# Stop the attack on our social programs

Over 200 women, mostly from B. C., got together on July 22, 23, and 24 to share their understanding of what's happening to Canada's social programs and to figure out how to fight to make them better. The conference, Stop the Attack on Our Social Programs, was sponsored by the Women's Social Policy Review Coalition and held in Vancouver at the Masonic Hall. A report from the conference will be sent to the Parliamentary Committee that is expected to be holding hearings on changes to Canada's social policy.

The voices and experiences of the 200 women at the conference made it clear that women want social programs that end poverty and meet the needs of women for education, health, and services. We don't want programs changed to promote discrimination and hatred on the basis of race, class, sexual orientation or anything else. We want programs that respect the contributions and needs of all people in Canada. We want our interests served, not just corporate interests.

## Look at each other as human beings

Rosalee Tizja, who is with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs, and has a long history of working for Aboriginal People, said that the root of Canadian social policy is in English colonial times. The goals of the people who designed social policy in those days was to get Canadian resources. Rosalee said that 97,000 English children were shipped to Canada and abused. "People victimize and blame themselves. We are the subjects of dysfunctional policies created by dysfunctional people," she explained. "Policy makers who don't know their own history think that what they do is right."

"Politicians have to understand why there is so much anger and hurt in people," said Rosalee. "The real solution is to set all of that aside and look at each other as human beings--healthy human beings."

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## Policies shouldn't divide parents from their children

Antionette Saleh of End Legislated Poverty described her experiences having to be a "bionic" woman on welfare with 3 children. "The government should be taking from the rich--making them pay higher wages, and higher taxes. Then we wouldn't have to have any poor. I don't like the idea of taking money from the parents on welfare to give to the children. Welfare has enough power over our children now. Parents have to be respected. Governments shouldn't divide parents from children by saying that the money is for the children, not the parent, and the parent should work at a low wage job. Some parents might want to stay home with their kids. It might be best for their families. We parents should have that right and a decent income too. Raising children is real work too."



## Alberta is Canadian testing ground

Anne McGrath works with Oxfam in Calgary. She said that her role at the conference was to alert people to what is happening in Alberta where programs are being slashed and redesigned. "Alberta is a testing ground," she said, and if the Alberta government can get away with trashing programs, then other governments will know that it will be easier for them to do it. Social program cuts in Alberta include

- \*\$239 million cut from education. This means there will be no kindergarten in Edmonton.

- \*\$734 million cut from health means that 3 city hospitals will close.

- \*One third of social assistance recipients have been completely cut off and all disability benefits are being reviewed.

While these programs are being cut, said McGrath, 40 new millionaires were created in Calgary last year.

Programs are also being redesigned to promote privatization. In education, Charter Schools are opening. Tax money is going directly to the government while responsibility for what happens in local schools goes to local parent councils. The same method is being used to introduce privatization into the health field.

While the cuts are being made, the government has also tried to

end the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Attacks on gays and lesbians, people of colour, immigrants, people with disabilities, and young offenders have scapegoated the victims of programs cuts.

While Premier Ralph Klein is still popular with most people, community groups and labour are building a Common Front to fight the changes. McGrath says a shift in popular opinion is beginning. The Common Front is trying to connect the economic and social agenda and beginning to organize action teams to resist Klein's devastation.

## Who is the Women and Social Policy Review Coalition?

Members of the coalition include Women and Work, Vancouver Status of Women, South Asian Women's Network, Women for Better Wages, End Legislated Poverty, Women's Employment and Training Coalition, Aboriginal Women's Council, Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights, Women to Women Global Strategies, Indian Homemakers Association and several women's centres in the Lower Mainland of B. C.

## Conference report

History of social policy review

### Cheap labour is government's goal

The government's current ideas on social change come from the old MacDonald Commission on the economy, said Jean Swanson of End Legislated Poverty. MacDonald wanted free trade which gives corporations the right to move to where wages and taxes are low. He also wanted to change social programs so they would top up low wages in Canada as part of the free trade arrangement. MacDonald came up with a big business version of a guaranteed annual income that has four parts: destroy existing social programs, keep the GAI very low, keep minimum wage low, and use the GAI as a wage top up. The government has already implemented phase I of MacDonald's recommendation by destroying the family allowance and child tax credit and creating the Child Benefit. The leaked Liberal discussion paper shows that the present government is continuing with MacDonald's recommendations. They are considering drastically cut UI, end the Canada Assistance Plan which provides money and rights for poor people, forcing people to work for welfare or UI, wage supplements, and even a "GAI for kids."

The whole focus of this strategy, said Jean, is promoting cheap labour. This fits in nicely with a recent report on jobs from a group of rich nations called the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. It called for trashing social programs and keeping minimum wage low, as well as training programs and forcing unemployed people to do job searches in order to create "wage moderation" or cheap labour. Jean ended with a list of things that people should watch out for in the social policy debate:

- Language that blames the victim, not the system
- Dividing workers against workers, parents against children, deserving against "undeserving", people on welfare and UI against workers, immigrants against others; all to keep us from seeing that the rich are too rich and should be made to share by increasing the wages and taxes they pay
- Policies that require taking from the poor to give to the poor, not taking from the rich
- No real job creation, instead implying that training, reduced minimum wage and cut social

programs will create jobs  
Using the deficit as an excuse  
to cut programs

### Don't let the government set us up against each other

Social programs are a key part of women's equality, said Sunera Thobani, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. When social programs are cut, women end up doing the work and paying the costs. Women have a key role to play in the review of social programs because women's poverty is increasing, because women have networks of women's centres across the country as well as the expertise to put forward an alternate vision of good social programs.

Sunera said that when women fight for better social programs, they are labeled a "special interest group." Meanwhile the "interests of capital and business are being put above the interest of people."

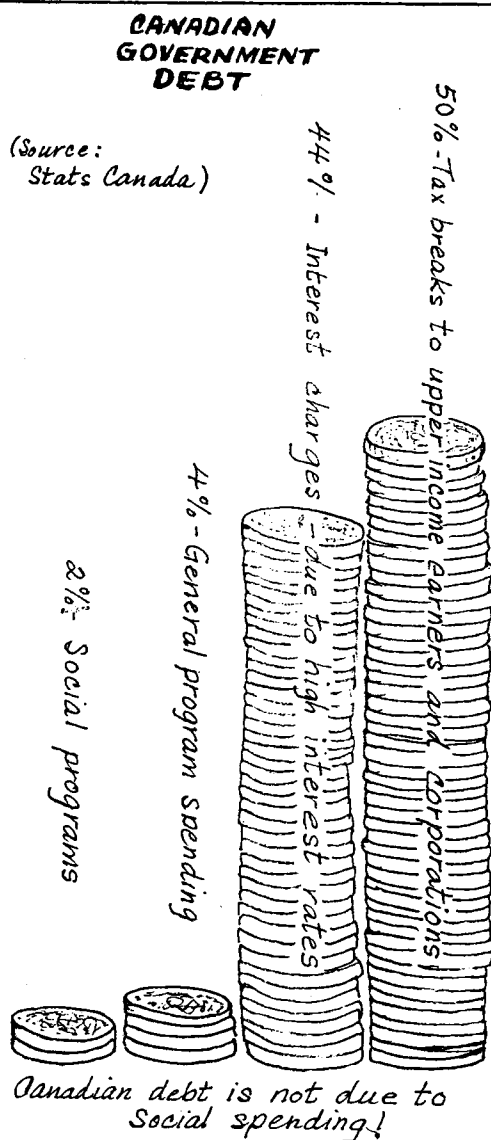
"Training for what" is a good question, said Sunera. Immigrants have training when they enter the country. They don't want to be slotted in the lowest paying jobs in the economy. The government is targeting people of colour with its immigration review, and immigrants are being blamed for fraud. We need to put these pieces together to understand how all the reviews impact on each other, Sunera said. "They're setting us up against each other, the deserving and the undeserving."

Ideologically, there is a shift from citizens with rights to consumers with choice, Sunera explained. This sets us up for privatization and things like education vouchers.

"People of colour have always been treated as people without rights. Now this is being expanded to include the rest of the people."

The only groups that want social program cuts, Sunera noted, were business groups. All the others want improvements. Business is the only group that hasn't been targeted in the review. We need a united front to fight for our vision of social programs.

**For conference actions: see page 3**



### We can afford good social programs

We can afford good social programs. That was the message of Leah Vosko and Lynne Bueckert of Women to Women Global Strategies. At the end of World War II, Canada was in twice as much debt as it is now, they said. But the Bank of Canada created more money for the government to borrow at near zero interest rates. Now governments borrow from private banks at high interest rates. That's a major reason for the deficit. (You can read more about this in *The Deficit Made Me Do It*, a booklet from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. If you'd like a copy, call ELP at 879-1209).

The government could create 600,000 childcare spaces or 64,000 social housing units just with the tax money that Imperial Oil has "deferred" and will probably never pay.

We can't afford not to have social programs, Lynne said. There are other deficits besides money. Not having social programs will create deficits of poverty, homelessness, sickness, and despair.

Women at the conference attended workshops that made a gorgeous banner, discussed "acts of subversion," and came up with recommendations for more actions to fight for better social programs. The Women's Social Policy Review Coalition plans to continue and to work on actions that alert people to social policy issues in the fall. □□□

**If you'd like a copy of the Women and Social Policy Review overview on social program changes, call ELP at 879-1209 and we'll mail you one.**

*The Long Haul, Sept., 1994--page 7*

### People with disabilities want a separate pension

Freda Mac Lellan of the B. C. Coalition of People with Disabilities reported that the disability organizations

- want a separate pension/assistance plan for people with disabilities to take them out of provincial welfare plans
- favour a definition of handicapped where employability is not a factor
- are opposed to a guaranteed annual income because it's meaning has been taken over by corporations.

Women with disabilities are in all sectors of society, Mac Lellan said.





# FLAWLINE

## FRONT LINE ADVOCACY WORKERS

### ELP asks for "Social Condition" in Human Rights Act

~ by Joanne Shaw

**End Legislated Poverty and FLAW have been participating in the BC Human Rights Review over the past few months to try to ensure protection against discrimination for low-income people.**

The review, headed by Bill Black, Special Advisor, has involved a wide variety of groups with regard to all aspects of BC's Human Rights Act (HRA). On August 18th, ELP met with Paul Winn, Assistant of The Special Advisor to recommend that "social condition" be added as a protected category in the HRA.

Quebec's HRA has had "social condition" for years. This has been used to protect welfare recipients from discrimination. If

BC added "social condition" to its HRA, we could automatically be able to use Quebec winnings as legal precedents to protect BC welfare recipients.

**"If BC added "social condition" to its HRA, we could automatically be able to use Quebec winnings as legal precedents to protect BC welfare recipients."**

"Many groups have been asking that "social condition" be included, said Paul. The August 18th meeting was set up for him to get further clarity on what "social condition" would cover that "source of income" would not.

Peter Beaudin and Susan O'Donnell of the BC Human Rights Coalition described "social condition" as broader than "source of income" and so would cover more areas of poverty, and allow better protection where multiple discriminations are present. Susan also said that it would cover situations where either temporary poverty or long-term poverty is a factor.

Examples the group gave were:

- Being employed and poor.
- Being perceived as having a lack of class status.
- Having a lack of education.
- Being born or living in an area that is known for a high poverty rate.
- Having dress, mannerisms or dialects that may be associated with working class.

Some common situations where people are discriminated against for being in poverty (or perceived this way) are being refused housing even when one could pay for it, not being considered for employment where qualified, and being refused services such as bank accounts and police protection.

**"Other people often determine the fate of low-income individuals — in a climate that basically seems to hate them. And all this is perfectly legal since there is not yet any relevant protection in BC's Human Rights Act."**

ELP wants the government to make efforts to end classism the same way it has started to make efforts to end other forms of discrimination. Other people often determine the fate of low-income individuals — in a climate that basically seems to hate them. And all this is perfectly legal since there is not yet any relevant protection in the HRA. Let's hope this changes soon.

Bill Black will present his recommendations to the government. We'll let you know what happens.

□□□

### Five week month still a problem

FLAW member and advocate, Karen Spears started a letter writing campaign to Joy MacPhail asking to get a proportionate amount of support money added to welfare cheques during 5 week months. "Since our income assistance rates are already way below the poverty line, it is absolutely impossible to stretch this little amount to last over 5 weeks," she writes.

Karen used the example of a single unemployable person getting \$271 support per month, which works out at \$67.75 per week for a 4 week month. For a 5 week month, \$67.75 should be added automatically onto the cheque, or sent out a week before cheque issue date.

If you would like to join Karen in her campaign, please write Joy MacPhail about this issue, or phone Karen at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre at 681-4786 for more information.

You can write:

**Joy MacPhail  
Minister of Social Services  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 1X4**

□□□

### Call for submissions

I know you advocates are busy, but I sure would like to hear from you. Anyone who would like to submit an article for FLAWline can mail or fax it to me.

Joanne Shaw  
#211, 456 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC  
V5Y 1R3  
fax 879-1229

Please use simple language to make it accessible. No jargon. Nothing larger than 4 syllables. Thanks.

**THE LAW FOUNDATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

The Law Foundation of British Columbia funds the FLAWline section of The Long Haul.

The Long Haul, Sept., 1994--page 8

### Tribunal nominees needed

The Downtown Granville Tenants' Association needs people with knowledge of the GAIN Act and Regulations (or a willingness to learn) and a familiarity with the Ministry of Social Services to appear at tribunals as client nominees.

A nominee should be reliable, accountable and have an ability to assess needs of the individual who has appointed them. If you believe you have these abilities and would like to be a nominee, please contact our office at 683-5048 or drop in at 1-1067 Granville Street. We look forward to having your help.



# FLAWLINE

## FRONT LINE ADVOCACY WORKERS

### Legal Services Society's reform means more services for those in poverty

~ by Joanne Shaw

**Legal Services has plans to change its structure which will lead to increased services around poverty, family and immigration law and legal education.**

The reform program was announced in February 1994, after a 10 month consultation with 55 BC communities, four government reviews and on-going discussions with the legal profession.

The provincial government has froze the society's funding. As well, the society spent \$10.9

million in 1993/94 on an annual budget of \$90 million. Without reform that deficit is calculated to grow to \$60 million by the year 2000, according to a press release from Legal Services Society, August 17. The new system will relieve these financial pressures while improving services.

**"Without reform that deficit is calculated to grow to \$60 million by the year 2000."**

"Although we are paying out a lot of money we are not delivering

the full service, or an equal level of service to the poor in BC," says Margaret Cissell, Chair of Legal Services Society (LSS). The society, which served over 100,000 clients in 1993, maintains its principal that everyone has the right and the access to legal counsel. The new system is aimed to improve services, equalize access to legal aid throughout BC, and control costs.

Currently, 15% of cases are handled by LSS staff and 85% are contracted out to private lawyers. The internal lawyers are paid a fixed salary which is often cheaper than the fees (tariffs) that the contracted lawyers are paid. The split will remain, but the proportions will shift, with half of the cases to be handled internally, and half contracted out. The cases

which are handled by Legal Services staff will then be performed more economically than before with more paralegal hired to do some of the work.

**"The result of the reform, which was passed unanimously by the board, will be a balance between poverty, family, criminal and immigration law, increased public legal education, and ensured access regardless of geography, culture and language."**

The contracted lawyers generally specialize in criminal law and not family, poverty, or immigration law. The staff lawyers typically handle these cases, so when the portion of staff lawyers increases from 15% to 50%, so will the portion of services in these areas of law.

The result of the reform, which was passed unanimously by the board, will be a balance between

### Welfare appeal process seems safe

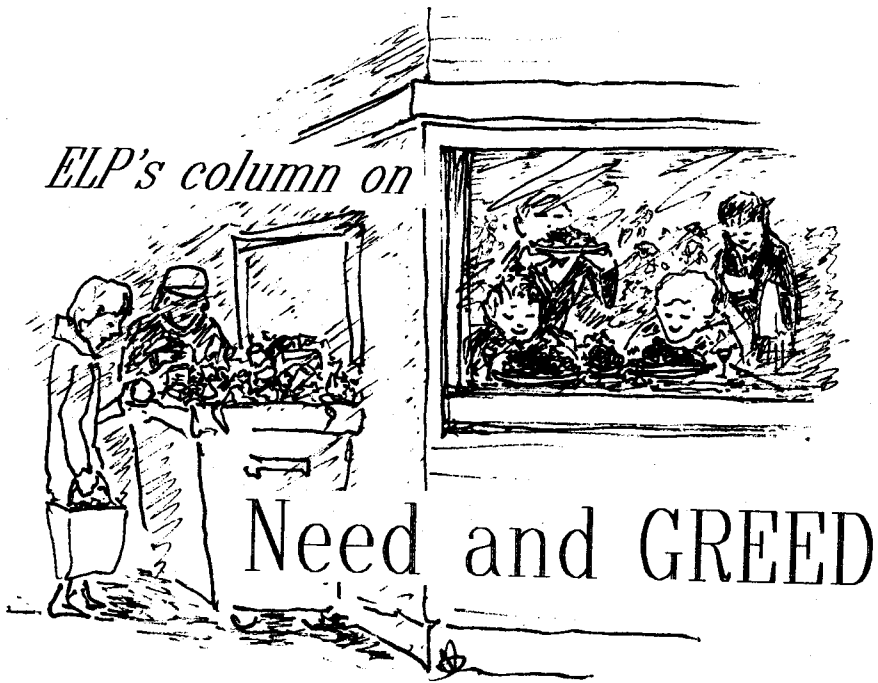
~ by Joanne Shaw

BC has one of the best welfare appeal processes in Canada. It's cheap. It's fair. It's quick. It's community based and FLAW members told consultant, Marylee Stephenson, that we'd like to keep it that way. Stephenson was hired

She said that she initiated the review because the appeal process doesn't work as well as it once did. She described it as inconsistent, unfairly disadvantaged to those in rural areas, with frequent violations of the GAIN regulations (although she described these decisions as just). She suggested

**Joan Smallwood is attending a FLAW meeting**

Minister of Housing, Joan



## Billionaire list grows obscenely

While children and adults around the world die of preventable causes, while even Canadians go hungry and homeless, the world gained 47 billionaires last year. The new total number of billionaires is 358. Together they have about \$765 billion worth of wealth.

The richest of all is the Walton family, owner of the same Wal Mart stores that are being pushed in TV commercials right now, and entering Canada for the first time. The Walton family is worth \$23.6 billion.

The U. S. has 120 of the billionaires, Latin America has 42, with 24 of them in Mexico. Asia has 46 billionaires outside of Japan including Li Ka-shing who bought



the old Expo site in Vancouver. Charles Bronfman, heir to the Seagram fortune is on the list from Canada. □□□

\$

## ELP'S billionaire contest

If all the 358 billionaires in the world were reduced to having a mere million each, that would leave \$764.4 billion worth of wealth. If you could decide, how would you use it? Write in to The Long Haul with your suggestions. We'll print some of them in the next issue. □□□

\$

## Ten original ways to handle stress

1. Jam tiny marshmallows up your nose and try to sneeze them out.
2. Pop some popcorn without putting the lid on.
3. When someone says "Have a nice day!" tell them you've got other plans.
4. During your next meeting, sneeze, and then loudly suck the phlegm back down your throat.
5. Make a list of things you have already done.
6. Dance naked in front of your pets.
7. Go shopping. Buy lots of clothes; sweat in them; return them the next day.
8. Drive to work in reverse.
9. Read the dictionary backwards and look for subliminal messages.
10. Bill your doctor for the time you spend in his/her waiting room. □□□

Thanks to CALM



## General Motors profit skyrockets

General Motors Corp. reported a profit of \$1.9 billion in just 3 months (April, May, and June, 1994). In the previous three months they made a mere \$889.1 million. □□□

## This months' thanks

Thanks to the following volunteers at End Legislated Poverty this month: Lynne Melcombe, Bill Den Hertog, Barbara Sutherland, Sandra Pronteau, Denise Brown, Teckla Henderson, Maureen Davis, William Kay, David Jaffe, Dave Ross, Antoinette Saleh, Pauline Silverwood, Pat Gibbs, Irene Schmidt and the Hospital Employees Union. □□□

## Coal Town

Here the death rate for women is the highest  
 Here we die younger/older faster than anywhere else in this country. It is the stress they say, not the water, not the air quality but stress;  
 Stress of birth, death, separation and poverty, always poverty. The worry of how to pay the rent the bills, buy the food--the food; don't eat too much, its gotta last. Lasting, everything hangs upon the balance at the end of the month. Months lasting into years the years of my child's life.

Cheryl Ashley

## Legal Services not on strike

Legal Aid offices are not on strike. Some private lawyers who take legal aid clients are on strike. But people who need legal aid should still be able to get it from the Legal Services Society.

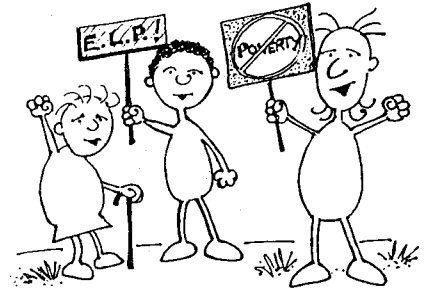
"The Legal Services Society is continuing to provide service through a number of in-house lawyers and paralegals," explained Margaret Cissell, Chair of the Legal Services Society Board.

Some members of the Association of Legal Aid

Lawyers, which represents 500 private bar lawyers, are refusing to accept new legal aid business. But Legal Services has a list of over 2500 private lawyers who accept legal aid cases.

Some private lawyers are refusing to accept legal aid cases. They are protesting against changes in the way the Legal Services Society delivers legal services. In the past about 90% of legal services were provided by private lawyers. Legal Services wants to change that

system. They want private lawyers to provide half of the services and legal aid staff lawyers to provide the other half. Legal aid plans to hire a lot more staff lawyers to work in community law offices around the province. □□□



Thanks to the Legal Services Society for funding for pages 11 and 12 of *The Long Haul*.

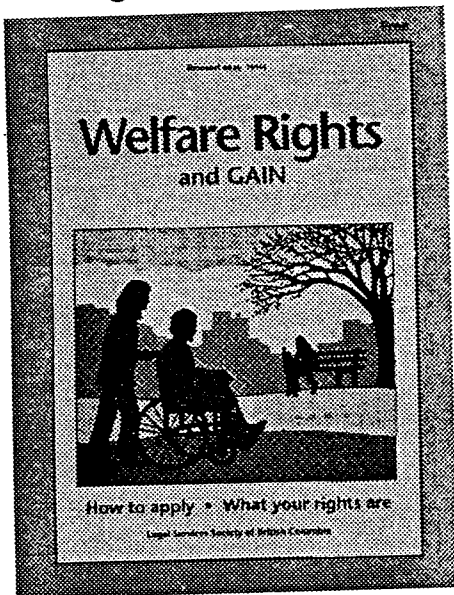
## Welfare tip: Don't go to your welfare office without it

You can now get the latest booklet on *Welfare Rights and GAIN*. It's free! The booklet gives people information on

- how much welfare you can get

- extra benefits that you might be able to get
- how to appeal if you think decisions are unfair
- how to apply for welfare

The book is written in plain language. It is published by the Legal Services Society. It is a very useful book to have *before* you apply for welfare and *before* you ask your worker for something extra. To get the booklet, ask your local MSS office, or fill out the order form below and send to the Legal Services Society. If you can't get the booklet at your MSS office, give ELP a call at 879-1209. □□□



## Unemployable by reason of what?

Tapping his pen, the doctor pondered  
 You say you're crazy, i see  
 Well, anyone crazy enough to walk in here  
 Claiming to be crazy, must be  
 Real Crazy so i better write you  
 A note for Social Services stating  
 That in my medical opinion  
 You are crazy.  
 Need any pills today?

Tapping his pen, the worker wondered  
 This note says you're crazy so  
 You must be, a doctor says so, after all  
 But only for a year, then we'll review  
 Just how crazy you are  
 You may need another letter

Tapping his pen, the doctor pondered...

R. Loewen

## Legal aid changes policies

By Carol McEown

The Legal Services Society has changed its policy about giving legal aid to people charged with criminal offenses. In the past, all people charged with

*indictable* offenses received legal aid if they met the financial test for qualifying for legal aid. (*Indictable offenses are more serious, with higher penalties and more complicated court cases*). Now, legal aid will be granted to someone charged with a crime only when there is a reasonable chance that the person will go to jail if he or she is convicted. A person turned down for legal aid can appeal the decision to the chief Executive Officer, Legal Services Society, Suite 300, 1140 W. Pender St., Vancouver. B. C. V6E 4G1. If you have questions, contact your legal aid office. □□□

### Legal Services Society Order Form

### Welfare Rights and GAIN

Revised 1994

To order, please send the form on the right to:

Publications Clerk  
 Legal Services Society of B.C.  
 #300 - 1140 W. Pender Street  
 Vancouver, B.C.  
 V6E 4G1  
 FAX: 660-9578

Please send \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *Welfare Rights and GAIN* to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**The Long Haul, Sept., 1994--page 11**

# ELP HELPS - information for low income people

## Get help with welfare problems from these groups

These groups have advocates who will help you with legal and other problems. The advocates are people who will stick up for you. They are not lawyers, but they have experience getting people their rights.

### *In the Lower Mainland*

**Downtown Eastside Residents Association.** 9 E. Hastings, Vancouver. Phone 682-0931. Open Monday through Friday.

**First United Church.** 320 E. Hastings. Come on Monday through Friday, 9 to 11:30 am. Phone 681-8365.

**B. C. Coalition of People with Disabilities.** #204 456 W. Broadway, Vancouver. Phone 872-1278. Open 9 to 5 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.

**Tenant's Rights Coalition Hotline.** Phone 255-0546.

**Legal Services Society.** 191 Alexander St., Vancouver. Open 9 to 3:30 weekdays except Wednesday. Open 12:30 to 3:30 on Wednesday. For help with welfare, serious criminal problems or urgent family problems related to the law.

**Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of BC.** Phone 533-4818 for information and referral.

**Battered Women's Support Services.** Crisis line is 687-1867. Support groups, legal advocacy, counseling.

**Langley Legal Assistance Centre.** Phone 530-5811. Appointments preferred. Drop-ins welcome. Welfare, landlord-tenant, small claims, wills, etc. #204 20189 56th Ave., Langley.

**United Native Nations.** Phone 688-1821. Appointments preferred. Help Aboriginal People apply for status, get documents, medical services. Help with welfare, child apprehension, etc.

**Welfare and Handicapped Persons Rights.** Welfare, UI, CPP, etc. Call 852-3744 for appointment or drop in at #61 2800 Allwood St., Clearbrook.

**Downtown Granville Tenants' Association.** Tenant, CPP, UI, welfare rights. Drop in at 1067 Granville, Vancouver. Open 9 to 5 Monday through Friday.

### *Outside the Lower Mainland*

**Grand Forks:** Boundary Family and Individual Services Society. Counseling and legal support services for women, families, and youth. Call 442-5355.

**Grand Forks:** Women's Support Services. Advocacy, counseling, support groups and referrals for women who have experienced verbal, emotional, sexual, childhood or financial abuse. Call 442-5355.

**Greenwood:** Boundary Creek Fighting Against Poverty Advocacy Society. Advocacy, information and referrals on human rights and income assistance issues. Call 445-6726.

**Terrace:** Terrace Anti-Poverty Group. Drop in to Room 200, 4721 Lazelle Ave. Welfare, UI, tenant, etc. Phone 635-4631.

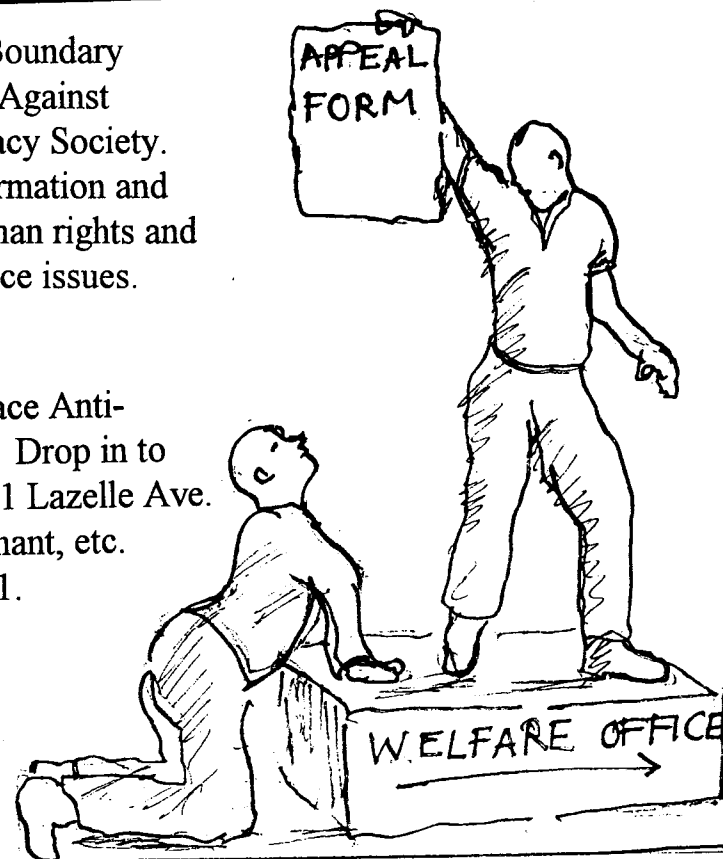
**Gibsons:** Sunshine Coast Advocacy Action Group. Welfare, UI, and other advocacy and education about poverty. Phone 886-2425. Open Monday and Wednesday 10:30 to 12:30.

**Smithers:** Bulkley Valley Anti-Poverty Group. For welfare advocacy. Contact Ruth Milne at 847-2840 or Vince or Diana at 847-8959.

**Pt. Alberni:** Pt. Alberni Women's Resource Society. Call 724-7111. Prefer appointments. Help with family court, women and children's counseling, transition house.

**Nelson:** The Advocacy Centre. Phone 352-5777. Prefer appointments. Open Monday through Thursday 9 to 4 at #4 560 Baker St., Nelson. Welfare, handicapped, custody and access, separation and divorce, child apprehension, sexual abuse, wife assault, etc.

**Victoria:** Together Against Poverty. Phone 361-3521.



**DON'T KNEEL: APPEAL!**

Appointments preferred. Help with welfare, UI, tenant problems. Public education and organizing on poverty issues.

**Powell River:** Legal Services. Legal info, assistance with welfare, pensions, small claims, landlord-tenant problems, etc. 4746 Joyce Ave. Call 485-9871.

**Penticton:** Legal Services. Legal info, assistance with welfare, pensions, small claims, etc. #103 304 Martin St. Phone 493-0210.

**Prince George:** Active Support Against Poverty. Phone 562-6112. Welfare, resumes, filling out forms. Tenant drop in clinic. Free clothing.

**Tenant's Coalition Hotline:** 1-800-665-1185.

**B. C. Coalition of People with Disabilities Hotline:** 1-800-663-1278.

If your group would like to be listed in this section, call ELP at 879-1209.

