

KITS BUDGET REJECTED....AGAIN

or Gee, it's getting hard to communicate in here

"In here" is in the Greater Vancouver Mental Health Project. For five months a group of citizens have been working, hard and voluntarily, to have a budget accepted by the Provincial Government so that a Mental Health Team can begin work in Kitsilano. At first the project tried to get a budget approved without consulting citizens. "Stop the machinery," said the Kits Committee. Stop it did, and the people drafted their own budget.

The first citizens' budget was turned down by the Project's Coordinating Committee because it proposed equal salaries for almost all workers. Wage equalization didn't correspond to the graduated pay scales of unions and professional organizations and would get the Provincial Government into trouble. The Kits Citizens Committee tried again, compromising itself into a schizophrenic state. The second budget was approved, but only after three workers, a crisis hostel and various expenses were lobotomized into non-existence. It was then sent to the Metro Board of Health, approved again, and then committed to Victoria for final rubber stamp approval. It bounced back two months later with a traumatic look



of rejection on its face.

The Kits budget was unique. It was the first one by a representative citizens group and spoke to needs unmentioned in any other areas.

It was rejected because:

1) The citizens wanted two equal secretaries; the Victoria(n) Mental Health administrators wanted one secretary to supervise the other.

2) The citizens wanted a public health nurse with community medical experience and psychiatric experience; Government administrators didn't because no other area had asked for one.

3) Kits wanted patient travel of \$2,000 to be distributed among 80-100 clients; the officials didn't (although they were willing to give nine staff members \$5,850 for travel).

4) Kits wanted an extra \$5,400 to provide a drop-in service, activities, recreation and crafts--not O.T.; the officials didn't--no other area had requested such services.

5) The people wanted an extra \$3,300 to provide patients with

emergency food and clothing, baby-sitters and day-care, minor household repairs and moving expenses; the money managers didn't--no other area asked as much.

6) The people wanted to hire two non-professional Mental Health workers just as the government hires paraprofessional child-care workers; the managers want to create their own Mental Health Worker categories. Until they do, Kits can hire only professionals and psych aides at minimal salaries.

Some project employees have suggested that Victoria would accept a budget more in line with the original one which was created with citizen participation.

What does citizen involvement in this project mean? Bowing to unclear government guidelines? Offering advice? Assisting with programs which don't properly meet community needs?

Effective citizen participation seems to be rhetoric rather than reality. The Kits Citizens Committee is discouraged, but is angrily discussing future action. Will they continue to "participate" or pull out? Kow-tow or confront? Will they do a bit of both?

Tune in next time. The results might be an infuriating compromise or an electroshocking demand for more control.

- Barry Coull

ANTI-POVERTY GROUPS GAIN SEATS ON RESOURCE BOARD

"A major breakthrough," said MPA representative Valerie Shackleton of Human Resources Minister Norm Levi's plan to give Federated Anti-Poverty Groups two seats on the interim Vancouver Resource Board.

Levi announced October 19th that legislation would be introduced at the spring session of the legislature to decentralize control of social services in the city of Vancouver. Thirteen local boards in various sections of the city would be set up, each to take over policy direction of functions now split among City Welfare, Children's Aid Society and Catholic Family and Children's Services. Provincial funding and ultimately election of members of the community resource boards in municipal elections are other parts of the proposed plan sketched by the minister.

The Vancouver Resource Board would include one representative from each of the 13 local community resource boards, when established. The interim board will include a representative from the first local community board now being set up in the Sunset-Victoria Fraserview-Killarney district--two members to be appointed by FAPG and others by the province and city.

Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of Greater Vancouver had demanded in their brief to the government that citizens have control of the social

services needed by them, through 15 to 20 community resource centers in the city. The eight-page brief, "Toward a Community-Controlled Integration of Major Social Services In Vancouver" was put forward by Margaret Mitchell (Chairperson, FAPG Welfare Committee) and Mel McDonald (Coordinator, FAPG of Greater Vancouver) to the last of the public hearings, August 30th, on Levi's original integration proposal.

The minister's announcement of October 19th shows sharp departure from his earlier proposed massive crown corporation for family and youth services in Vancouver which had been the subject of the public hearings. Under that plan there were to have been five local units and only token participation of citizens, as advisors to and volunteer workers for the professional teams.

The more democratic plan, as announced October 19th represents a marked improvement over the prior proposal.

(Valerie Shackleton and Allan Barker represent MPA on the Welfare Committee of the Greater Vancouver Federated Anti-Poverty Groups.)

I have spent a lot of my life climbing walls that aren't there.

- Molly Dexall

You are really a beautiful person.