

SUMMER 1986: UPDATE IN VANCOUVER

THE PROVINCE January 17, 1986. In an article entitled "Hooker Law Working", Const. Slater reports he had not seen any prostitutes in Mt. Pleasant on his patrols through the area late Tuesday. A check by the VANCOUVER SUN newspaper also found the area hooker-free.

By March 18, the Province was headlining "Hookers just may reclaim streets", and by June 9 Mt. Pleasant residents paraded with signs demanding that their neighbourhood be hooker-free. On March 27, the Mayor of Vancouver was back to the Attorney General to ask for another injunction -- this time against a bawdy house.

It is clear that, at least in our city, the anti-street soliciting law is not working. Despite massive repression and brutality by the police and protests from residents, the situation has not changed, according to reports from those same residents. Women are visibly out on the streets again.

Because of their courage and ingenuity and resistance and outright defiance, what some have called a legal sledgehammer has not succeeded. The price has been paid by women on the streets -- 6 of them with their lives. Murders and disappearances and 408 arrests by July 4, 1986, according to the police. Only 30% of arrests have been johns, 70% have been prostitutes.

On April 10, 1986, because a prostitute challenged the new law, a Vancouver provincial court judge ruled that C-49 was unconstitutional. The police put 67 cases on hold; women continued to work the streets.

May 7, 1986. The B.C. Supreme Court ruled that the law was not unconstitutional and overturned the lower court ruling. Since then, 341 arrests have been made. The police are back at the entrapment, harassment and brutal treatment of prostitutes and so are the courts. The convictions since the Supreme Court



A simple comparison of the yellow pages for Vancouver for 1984 and 1986 show an alarming increase in the number of businesses listed under the heading "escort services" (from 19 lists in '84 to 39 in '86), as well as the size and sleaziness of the graphic and printed materials in the display ads. Generally, the '86 ads were larger and more sexualised, with women's bodies draped over them, for example. The '84 ads were clearly advertising genuine 'escorts' (or at least pretending to) and did not appear so much to be a cover for prostitution. Ads in the older directories had sales pitches directed at those who needed escorts for business.

It is also true that some massage parlours really are all about massage -- but not many anymore.

The history of prostitution law illustrates that none of the three approaches (regulation, prohibition and rehabilitation) was successful in eliminating the trade in female sexuality because of the pervasive class, race and sex discrimination inherent in their formulation or

Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter

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25¢

Ban on hookers 'curbs freedom'

By BOB HENDRICKSON
Staff Reporter

Vancouver prosecutors want convicted hookers banned from red-light areas.

But at least one judge has vetoed the idea.

Vancouver Provincial Court Judge David Moffett yesterday fined Michelle McLean, 18, \$25 for soliciting an undercover policeman on Seymour Street Jan. 30.

Prosecutor Allan Mandell asked that she be barred from that area

during the night hours and from loitering or hitchhiking in Vancouver.

He said "a fine simply gives the accused a licence to carry on the activity."

Mandell said that restricting hookers from a small area was reasonable under the Charter Rights. Those rights involve movements in and out of Canada and from province to province, he said.

But Moffett ruled such a ban violation of the constitutional right of freedom of movement."

JANUARY 18, 1986.

THE WAVE-IN

About 100 chanting and banner-waving prostitutes and their supporters gathered at two Vancouver corners in the pouring rain to call for the review and repeal of the new Federal law, Bill C-49. They