

May 29, 2003  
For Immediate Release

**Former Vancouver Community College Board Chair  
Decries Effect of the Rule of Market Values on Education in B.C.**

Dr. Bob Smith, former moderator of the United Church of Canada and former Chair of the Board of Governors at Vancouver Community College was a keynote speaker at the Association of Canadian Community Colleges meeting held in Vancouver, May 25 – 27.

He used this opportunity to slam the Campbell Liberals' attack on public services and made special mention of the damage they have caused at Vancouver Community College. An excerpt from his remarks:

"And you don't need me to tell you what happens to government priorities when market values rule. The government of this province, whose ideological stance makes Mike Harris' 'Commonsense Revolution' look like the Regina Manifesto, having rewarded its supporters with a massive tax cut its first day in office and having subsequently pleaded the necessity of drastic cutbacks 'in order to get this province moving again' has abrogated contracts, demonized the public service, and off-loaded educational costs onto already beleaguered communities, with the result that the school board where I live is proposing a four-day school week in order to maintain its balanced budget."

**"Vancouver Community College, which since its founding has sought particularly to meet the needs of the hard-handed folk, with special emphasis on ABE and ESL is having to cut a thousand FTE student places in order to cope with decreased funding, while ESL students themselves are facing fee increases of more than 90% in a little more than a twelve month period."**

"The Fraser Institute persists each year in fatuously proclaiming 'Tax Freedom Day', - when 'we stop working for the government and start working for ourselves.' What codswallop! I am reminded of Clement Atlee who, on a visit to the U.S. was asked condescendingly, 'How's your system of socialized medicine working?' and he replied, 'Not bad. How's your socialized sewer system working – or do you still get along with the old bucket?'"

Dr. Smith's remarks should be taken to heart by those both inside and outside the college system who support what the Liberals have done," said VCCFA President Lizz Lindsay, "the Liberals and the VCC Board have abandoned thousands of students who would have had places at VCC because they cannot conform to the first rule of the Liberal Special Interest Group ... No money – No education."

- 30 -