

**Subject: Harry Rankin****Date:** Fri, 1 Mar 2002 13:01:47 -0800**From:** Ernie Crist <CristE@district.north-van.bc.ca>**To:** "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

March 1, 2002

> *As one who was associated with the recently deceased and one time  
> Vancouver Councillor Harry Rankin for many years I would like to pay  
> tribute to this man who, among many other things, helped to bring the  
> British Columbia Landlord and Tenant Act to fruition. The Act which puts  
> the relationship between Landlord and Tenants in British Columbia within a  
> framework of legality and human dignity as opposed to the master - chattel  
> relationship existing previously, had to be fought for through a hard and  
> bitter struggle and it all started in North Vancouver.*

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> *The time was when the Federal Government put a limit on wages, salaries  
> and price increases to 4 % maximum. While the freeze was ostensibly an  
> effort to control spiraling prices, in reality it was nothing more than  
> putting the burden of inflation on the shoulders of wage earners.  
> Typically, rents which were a major expense for families were exempt.  
> Landlords could gauge without opposition.*

>  
> *Tenants, who had moved into brand new apartments in Maplewood in the  
> District of North Vancouver, after only 6 months and without warning  
> were handed a 37% increase in rent. As there was a critical shortage of  
> rental accommodations, it created a real hardship for many and there was  
> no protection or recourse under the law. In my capacity at that time as  
> president of the North Shore Tenants Association I put out an appeal for  
> help. But my appeal fell largely on deaf ears although I did receive one  
> offer of help from an Anglican minister.*

>  
> *I was not serving on North Vancouver District Council at that time but I  
> did turn to Council for moral support. After all these were residents  
> of the District I told the members of Council. But all I received were  
> insults from the then Mayor. When I objected to his disparaging remarks  
> against tenants he threatened to have me removed from the Council  
> chambers. That was the situation I faced.*

>  
> *I turned to Harry for help. You have to come over to the North Shore and  
> give the tenants a pep talk to stiffen their resolve I told him - it is  
> crucial Harry came and spoke and he spoke as only Harry could speak.*

>  
> *The result was that a group of Tenants from North Vancouver won the first  
> successful rent strike in British Columbia. The apartment owners  
> rescinded the absurd increases but what was even more important, the  
> government was obliged to bring in Legislation which henceforth would  
> protect not only tenants but also landlords. Harry, as usual, was there  
> to help without charging a fee. That was Harry. I am not surprised that  
> the people of Vancouver demanded that the flag at Vancouver's City Hall be  
> lowered to honor our Harry Rankin even though he never got to be Mayor.*

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- > *Ernie Crist*
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