



Viewpoint

by Alex Shepherd, MP Durham

Next week the federal government's throne speech will come down. There was a time when the throne speech was anticipated.

The speech itself goes back to medieval times and demonstrated how the monarch no longer controlled the governing process.

In recent history the speech set out the bold initiatives government wanted to achieve and gave people an idea of the policy direction government was headed in and what the tone of the opposition parties would be in the House.

Today, like many of our institutional traditions, the throne speech has become a hollow event. The language is often vague and non-committal. No risks are taken because someone will come back later and point out that the government failed to reach its objectives. Or, the objectives are unclear.

Monday's Throne Speech will address accountability in government and the importance of making government work efficiently. The speech will address aboriginal affairs because there is likely no other department in government so inefficient or ineffective.

Aboriginal self-government will be given a new go around. I'm saddened by the fact that so much time and effort, by well-meaning legislators, has gone up in smoke

over this issue.

Former Indian Affairs minister Bob Nault has taken some pretty brave stands on this issue. It is somewhat disconcerting that the new government will not back the objectives Nault set.

Self government also means responsibility and accountability. Sometimes people want power but not the responsibility that goes with it.

It's a difficult file but there is no doubt we are wasting millions of taxpayers dollars when we continue to witness poverty, abuse, alcoholism and drug dependency on many reserves. Throwing more money into these areas is not the answer. More has to be done to ensure benefits go first to those who need it.

People with disabilities will also be mentioned. We judge a society on how the disabled are treated and clearly Canada needs to do more to address the problems of people who do not have the opportunity to compete fairly in the labour force.

Next Monday the governor general will mouth the words to the government's throne speech and we as legislators will look on dutifully with the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

But the real debate on healthcare, municipal government, defence spending, aboriginal self government will start after this.



Orono's Peeewe 3 team won their game 5 -1 Saturday afternoon at home.

Red Cross winter courses scheduled

DURHAM—The Canadian Red Cross, Region of Durham is hosting a series of courses throughout January and February. The 'Yes You Can' series teaches Life Saving Skills, Baby-sitting Skills and provide the opportunity to become a First Aid Instructor.

Learn important child care skills, injury prevention, safety tips and simple meal preparations by attending the Red Cross Babysitting course Jan. 31 or Feb. 14. Cost for this 8 hour course is \$35 and includes first aid skills for such common problems as choking, bleeding, burns, poisoning and fire prevention.

Standard First Aid course is scheduled for Feb. 17, 18, 24 and 25. This 16 hour evening course covers life-threatening priorities such as choking, rescue breathing, response skills plus skeletal, soft tissue, head and spinal injuries and and CPR 'Level C.' Participation during all four dates is expected to complete certification. The Standard First Aid course is also available Feb. 7, 8 or Feb. 21, 22. Cost is \$98 and includes manuals, taxes and materials.

For more info or to register, call the Canadian Red Cross, Durham Branch at 905-723-2933. All courses are held at the Branch, located at 585 Wentworth St. E., Unit 40 in Oshawa.



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