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MICHELIN makes all the difference

Report from Queen's Park



by Julian Reed
MPP Halton-Burlington

The appointment of a Minister with special jurisdiction over issues of particular concern to women has been strongly favoured by the Ontario Liberal Party for some time. However, we are far more interested in substance than symbolism. We have therefore called upon the new Minister to take early and decisive action on a number of issues.

Equal Pay Legislation: Three decades after the adoption of the Female Employee's Fair Remuneration Act in 1951, how much progress has been made? Full-time working women earn, on average, 64 per cent of a man's wage. Average income of families headed by women is about \$15,000 a year, compared to a man's \$29,000. Wage gap between men and women workers is almost as great as at the height of the depression 50 years ago.

Our Party has been on record in favour of equal pay for work of equal value since 1977/78.

Affirmative Action: The government's three-year-old Affirmative Action Program in the Ontario public service is a bitter joke for women. Its total lack of effectiveness is abundantly clear from 1981/82 statistics. In the executive ranks, there are 598 men and only 44 women. Of public servants earning more than \$59,000 a year, 275 are men and only 40 women... in spite of the fact that women make up 42 per cent of the total public service.

Our party is definitely in favour of mandatory Affirmative Action, of equal opportunities for women.

Family violence: When is the government going to take action on the serious and widespread problem of family violence, including funding for transition houses? When will the Select Committee's Report on Wife Battering be brought before the Legislature. When will the government make some serious and sincere attempt to bring hope and assistance to battered wives and their children?

Our Party has been constantly and actively concerned with this problem since 1977, and three years ago David Peterson tabled a Private Member's Bill proposing a surcharge on every marriage licence for the purpose of creating a fund to establish and support transition houses.

Pornography: The Government must make a real attempt to come to grips with the issue of the new pornography—filled with violence, cruelty and hatred. This is a social issue which requires a swift response by Government.

accept tokenism, stalling or empty gestures. There is a crying need for effective and far-reaching legislation. They want action—and so do we.

Women's Perspectives '83

On the 14th May, the Ontario Liberal Women's Perspective Advisory Committee sponsored a highly successful all-day conference, "Women's Perspectives '83" in Toronto, at which David Peterson urged women to become political pioneers. "We need more people to step forward (despite) the pitfalls", he said. One way "to get a different perspective at the caucus table" or Cabinet table is to have women such as Sheila Copps, Liberal MPP for Hamilton Centre, in positions of power.

Minaki Enquiry Rejected

Conservative members of a legislative committee have rejected an attempt by the opposition to instigate an investigation into the province's \$28.3 million refurbishing of Minaki Lodge. They maintained that nothing new would be learned by such an investigation.

In the Public Accounts Committee they strongly defended the \$45 million total expense (including the \$16.7 million spent to improve roads and the airport) saying it will help tourism and create jobs in the North.

Liberal James Bradley (St. Catharines) said the opposition is not anti-North or anti-tourism. However, he said the committee should investigate to see if the province's money could have been better spent elsewhere.

Diploma Mills

According to a spokesman for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States, three mail-order universities in Ontario have issued diplomas and medical degrees for a fee without requiring their graduates to do any school work or even attend classes.

Legislation is being introduced by the Minister of Colleges and Universities which will spell out clearly who can award university degrees in this province. The Minister told the Legislature that Ontario's degrees are recognized worldwide, but that fly-by-night operations which work out of post office boxes have recently sullied the province's reputation.

Until the legislation becomes law, this province will remain one of the few which doesn't require regulation of degree-granting organizations.

Region briefs

Welfare cases up 35%

Despite talk of a growing economic improvement, the region's welfare caseload increased 35 per cent in March, compared to the same month last year.

The report, presented to the region's social service committee, attributed the growth to the poor jobs market and the fact that employable Halton residents now make up the majority of the caseload.

For the first time in at least five years, more employable than non-employable Halton residents are receiving benefits, according to acting income maintenance manager David Szwarc.

The social services department stated that there were 1101 people collecting welfare benefits in March this year, up from 815 people receiving the benefits last year at the same time.

Double payment

Visitors to the Halton Region Museum can be faced with paying an entrance fee to it as well as another fee to get inside Kelso Conservation Area—a problem curator of the Museum Ernie Buchner is hoping to rectify.

The problem of the double fee was brought up at the Wednesday regional administration and finance committee meeting.

"It's quite right that the double gated fee does cause problems because the public doesn't realize the region runs one and the conservation authority runs the other," explained the administrator.

"All they realize is that they are paying about \$5 to get into the gate and then they're hit with another fee," he added.

He told committee members that a joint admission fee is being considered as a solution to the problem.

Day care problems

Two representatives from day care centres warned the region's social services committee last Tuesday afternoon that the quality of day care services could suffer in the long run if the region does not increase its subsidies to centres.

Brenda Eastwood and Peter Brant from two Burlington day care centres both pleaded their cases to the committee, claiming they could not continue to operate with the region paying less than full fee paying parents.

The region is now paying \$11.87 a day for the services, while full fee paying parents are paying \$12.20 for the same services.

OMB upholds decision

The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) recently upheld the region's appeal of the Land Division Committee's decision concerning a proposed development just east of Stewarttown on 15 Sideroad.

Last October, the LDC approved an application from Aler Investments and Senga Construction to sever a 3.6 acre lot into separate lots. Developer Al Pilutti wanted to demolish two older homes, reconstructing three new homes in their place.

In March of this year, regional council opted to continue the appeal of the LDC, on the basis that it contravened the regional Official Plan, despite councillors from Halton Hills objecting it was a "common sense" decision.

The region's planning and public works committee was told Wednesday that the OMB upheld council's decision because the proposal does not conform to the Official Plan.

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