

Provincial election

French language bill a non-issue, states Elliot

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 in Ontario was denied a translator. Using the example of the Liquor Control Board, Office in Georgetown which has signs in both English and French, Mr. Whiting suggested the province, through Bill 8, has now got its "foot in the door." If the Liberals won the Sept. 6 election and the political opportunity arose, Ontario would be declared officially bilingual. Liberal candidate Walt Elliot, unlike Mr. Whiting, said Bill 8 has

been a "non issue" during the campaign. He also disagreed with Mr. Whiting that Bill 8 is unnecessary. The legislation is essential, said Mr. Elliot, because it legitimizes Ontario's minority French speaking groups. As well, he said, he knew of several cases in Ontario's court system where people's language rights were not respected before Bill 8 was passed. On the issue of Ontario becoming officially bilingual, Mr. Elliot said

if it does ever happen it won't for a long time. The example Quebec has set in dealing with that province's English minority has meant the rest of the provinces, including Ontario are taking a serious look at their own minority language policies, explained Mr. Elliot.

As a two language nation, local Libertarian candidate John Shadbolt argues, French services should be provided in areas where the numbers warrant. But the province shouldn't have two official languages. For example, Mr. Shadbolt argues, it is unnecessary for government information to be distributed in both French and English. It's a waste of time and money, he said. Mr. Shadbolt prefers that government pamphlets be done in French for the provinces French speaking people and in English for English speaking people, where warranted.

New Democrat candidate Noel Duignan called the French language issue "a red herring." But he did confirm that he fully supports Bill 8 to protect the language rights of Franco Ontarians.

Family Coalition Party candidate Giuseppe Gori said Bill 8 was too confusing because municipalities affected by it interpreted the legislation to mean they, instead of the province, were to administer and fund government services being offered in both languages. He called for the legislation to be scrapped and a

return to the status quo. A situation in which it is understood that French language minority rights were to be respected.

Green Party candidate Patricia Kammerer didn't comment on the Bill saying it was not part of the Green Party's platform.

Mental Health Clinic to receive grant

The North Halton Mental Clinic has been given a \$45,500 grant from the Ministry of Health to increase psychogeriatric services to provide more immediate assessments and consultations, said the director of the Halton Mental Health Division, Sheila Flynn McGruff.

She said Elinor Caplan's announcement will bring much needed relief to individuals who need psychiatric care but are lined up on four-week waiting lists. She also said more extensive service will help build "lacking resources" and bring relief to care-givers.

The clinic, located in Milton, submitted a report a year ago to the Halton District Health Council describing the demands on the clinic, said Mrs. Flynn McGruff. In addition to the 61 cases for one psychogeriatric nurse and a Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital doctor, the clinic also works with the Public Health Department and social service agencies, she said. Assessments are done in Georgetown and Acton but the caseload is too demanding, she explained.

With an extra nurse the clinic may be able to soon open a permanent residence in Georgetown to be open once a week, Mrs. Flynn McGruff said. "Then we will be able to give more to Georgetown and Acton," she added.

The clinic has not officially hired anyone yet as it is not known when the ministry funds will reach the clinic, she said.

Increased psychogeriatric care is going to be even more important in the next decade, said Mrs. Flynn McGruff. It is estimated there will be an eight to 10 per cent increase in the 65 and over population in the next decade, she said.

"Another psychogeriatric nurse will expand the education component of the clinics to families," said Mrs. Flynn McGruff. When a family member is affected by a

psychological problem the rest of the family will need a great deal of counselling help to understand what is going on," she said.

For example, Mrs. Flynn McGruff said, when a family member is a victim of Alzheimer's disease the care-givers, especially seniors, need consultation to deal with the stresses. It is difficult for the whole family because the affected member may not even know the people who are close to him, she explained.

The ministry has also approved \$84,500 in funding for a recreational program for chronic psychiatric disorders in Burlington and North Halton. The program, which will be based in Burlington, will provide social recreational activities such as community meetings, outreach integration and leisure-time pursuits. A starting date for the program has not yet been set.

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