

Local girl heads to Queen's Park



EMILY ROSE BELBIN

mately 8 a.m., dress in their uniforms and then prepare the Legislative Chamber for the morning's debates. As the day progresses, Pages are involved in a number of activities including: delivering messages and water for the MPPs in the Chamber, taking classes in legislative process and mathematics, and meeting with key legislative players such as the party leaders and the Speaker of the House.

Applications for the Legislative Page Program are accepted for two deadlines each year: Dec. 15 and June 15. Grade 7 students are eligible for both of these deadlines. Grade 8 students may apply for the Dec. 15 deadline only. For details: 416-325-7457, page_program@ontla.ola.org.

Emily Rose Belbin, a Grade 8 student from Holy Cross School, begins this week a three-week adventure as Legislative Page at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in Toronto.

During her tenure of duty, Nov. 21 to Dec. 8, she will serve as a messenger on the floor of the Legislative Chamber, meet key parliamentary figures and learn about Ontario's parliamentary system of government. The length of duty depends on the parliamentary session.

Emily Rose earned her spot in the program by submitting an application that included an essay, outlining her achievements, involvements and suitability for the program. Each Page must study and learn the faces, names and locations of the 107 MPPs before arriving at Queen's Park for their first day.

During a typical day in the program, Pages arrive at Queen's Park at approxi-

Non-partisan cooperation is necessary for a workable minority government

In our British parliamentary system, a minority government can be one of two things. At best, a minority government can represent an opportunity for cooperation across party lines, with elected Members working together to get things done.

At their worst, minority governments can mean legislative grid-lock, and shrill, partisan bickering that never ends.

Let's hope the former, not the latter, becomes the pattern in the Ontario's 40th Provincial Parliament. It all starts with the Premier. The approach and tone he takes will largely determine the duration of the Parliament, and thus the date of the next provincial election. He would do well to follow the lead of Premier William Davis, who led a successful minority government which lasted four years, from 1977-81.

Ontario's current economic challenges make a renewed effort at cooperation an absolute necessity. Last month in this space, I wrote about the immediate need for a comprehensive jobs plan for Ontario. I said that the Government should take care to ensure that it provides opportunities to all Ontarians, not just one group or region.

Our actions must work to strengthen confidence in our Province's future. On November 3, I met with municipal councillors to discuss economic development and other local issues in Wellington-Halton Hills. I followed up by inviting the new Minister of Economic Development



Ted Arnott

to visit our riding, as a gesture of non-partisan cooperation.

The very next day, we learned that Ontario had lost more than 75,000 full-time jobs in October. It was reported that this number represented almost five times as many lost jobs as the other provinces combined. Surely this underlines the urgency of the jobs issue, and the need for an immediate response.

On behalf of the Province of Ontario, I want to express appreciation to the members of the Royal Canadian Legion for their outstanding work leading up to Remembrance Day. This year, I was able to attend observances or services in Acton, Erin, Glen Williams, Georgetown, Salem, Fergus and Elora. I want to thank everyone who came out to show their appreciation to our veterans, and to remember those who sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy today. We shall never forget.

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott welcomes your comments at 1-800-265-2366, www.tedarnottmpp.com

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