

The way we were



The Snow Queen

GDHS Grade 10 student Kathy Robbins was crowned Snow Queen to kick off the 1975 GDHS Winter Carnival. She was chosen from eight other hopefuls.

File photo

From our readers

NATURE'S BEAUTY

Niagara Falls isn't the only frozen waterfall this winter. This photo was taken by Ken Madill at nearby Hilton Falls Conservation Area.



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Bill C-51 gets tough on terror

Last month's column mentioned the need for new legislation to combat terrorism. On Jan. 30, 2015, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-51, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015. I would like to take this opportunity to explain why this bill is necessary and why I am supporting it.

In the last year, there has been an alarming increase in the number of "lone-wolf" terrorist attacks. Paris, Copenhagen, Brussels, Sydney, St. Jean and Ottawa are just some of the places where these attacks have taken place. It is clear the attacks in Canada could have been prevented, but authorities were impeded by a lack of information sharing, a too-high threshold for arresting suspects and legal barriers that prevented authorities from countering terrorist recruitment activities on the Internet.

Bill C-51 will lower the threshold for arrest and detention, allowing law enforcement to arrest somebody if they think a terrorist act "may be carried out", instead of the current standard of "will be carried out". It will also increase the period of preventive detention from three days to seven, allowing authorities more time to interrogate suspects and prevent an attack. Bill C-51 will also criminalize the promotion of terrorism on the Internet.

The bill would also allow CSIS (Canadian Intelligence Security Service) to disrupt the Internet activities of radical jihadists, their travel plans and financial transactions, both inside and outside of Canada. In addition, the bill will allow officials to apply for a court order to seize or remove websites that promote

terrorism. Finally, the bill expands the no-fly list to include anyone who might be travelling to engage in terrorism and allows the sharing of information about terrorist suspects between government department and agencies.

The provisions in Bill C-51 are already in place in many other jurisdictions like the United Kingdom and Australia. In fact, many of the provisions in the bill do not go as far as what is currently in place in these jurisdictions.

Furthermore, these new powers will be accompanied by some increased oversight. Security agencies will be required to get court approval before infringing on a suspect's legal rights. In addition, CSIS agents will not be given the power to arrest or detain Canadians, which will remain the exclusive purview of the RCMP and local police.

However, while I fully support Bill C-51, I also believe we need greater oversight of Canadian security and intelligence agencies by a parliamentary committee of elected MPs, who are directly and democratically accountable to Canadians. That greater oversight is even more important as we give these agencies new powers to combat terrorism. It is also why the Senate should pass the Reform Act, to ensure that parliamentary committees can carry out their oversight function free of the control of party leaders and the Prime Minister's office.

For more information on Bill C-51, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, please contact me at (866) 878-5556 or at michael.chong@parl.gc.ca



MICHAEL CHONG

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Thursday, February 26, 2015 - The IFP - Halton Hills - www.theifp.ca Page 7

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