

Queen's Park report

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Full requirements direct employers to conduct (a) a workforce analysis which provides a profile of the makeup of the workforce; (b) an employment systems review which identifies barriers to equal employment opportunity; and (c) development and implementation of an employment equity plan. Streamlined requirements could include a simplified workforce analysis and modified reporting requirements.

What is the next step?

The Minister will continue to meet with her advisory group, comprised of business, labor, and the designated groups, to develop regulations for the employment equity legislation. This process will be chaired by the Employment Equity Commissioner. The goal is to present the draft regulations by second reading of the bill. The legislation will be phased in as follows: 12 months after proclamation of the Act for the Ontario Public Service;

18 months after proclamation for the broader public sector; and 18 to 36 months after proclamation for private employers, depending on their size.

Fact sheets and a copy of the Employment Equity Bill itself can be obtained by calling 1-800-567-0356. A number of employers have already implemented employment equity programs. Employment equity has also been endorsed by several organizations including the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Union of Public Employees. It makes sound business sense not to ignore the abilities of a substantial pool of qualified people.

This will be the last Queen's Park Report until August. The activities of the Legislature have wound down for the next few weeks and my staff have scheduled their summer holidays during the recess. I look forward to discussing provincial issues again next month. In the meantime, please have a safe and happy summer.

O Canada Foundation song highlights Ottawa's festivities

By GARTH TURNER
Halton-Peel MP

For the first time since I was elected as a Member of Parliament, Dorothy and I went to Parliament Hill on the night of July 1. We knew this was not going to be a usual Canada Day show.

First of all, this was the 125th anniversary of Confederation. And the Queen was there. Moreover, few people knew that the show this night would end with the singing of the revitalised O Canada by almost two dozen recording stars.

I've told you before about local disc jockey Ross Carlin and how he asked for my help in creating new versions of the national anthem, as a gift to Canada for the 125th. Together with promoter Brian Lyon and producer Hayward Parrott - and the help of major corporations who paid all the bills - we actually pulled it off.

The new versions were sent to every school in Canada; a TV show was made on the project; Kurt Browning skated to the music; ten thousand people joined the O Canada Foundation; even department and drug stores across Canada showed the videos and played the song. Now, this night on Parliament Hill, it would be performed for Queen and country.

Dorothy and I just had to be there, wishing that everybody else in Canada could have joined us.

We travelled by taxi from the airport, getting within about a kilometre of Parliament Hill, before we were blocked by the crowds. From there we walked - slower and slower, as we approached the Hill, trying to weave our way through a tangle of people carrying lawn chairs and blankets and babies and coolers.

It was three hours before the show was slated to start, and already there were more than 100,000 people on the lawn under the Peace Tower. By the next morning, police were estimating that up to 500,000 people eventually arrived to hear Anne Murray, Gordon Lightfoot, Jeff Healey and Celine Dion sing.

But there was much more. A CF-18 fighter jet screamed out of the sky and over the heads of the delighted crowd. Kurt Browning, astronaut Roberta Bondar and pop

scientist David Suzuki added their thoughts. And the crowd - that great beat which roared with one voice - was alive with waving maple leaf flags, hands thrust into the air and cheers for every mention of what a great country we all share.

At the end, it was time for the anthem. Rita MacNeil started, followed by people like Gino Vanelli, Patsy Gallant, Paul Janz, Michael Burgess and rapper Maestro Fresh-Wes. At the end of the first verse in English, the crowd roared. At the end of the verse in French, it roared again - louder. And at the end of the next verse and chorus, the stage was met with a wall of noise.

Seconds later, the sky behind the Peace Tower was alive with fireworks. As they lit up the Ottawa River and the shoreline of Hull, Quebec across the water, it seemed that there was absolutely nothing wrong with this country; nor anything that Canadians could not do.

Dorothy and I slipped up the stairs, and backstage. Ross and Brian were there - with Paul Janz, Randy Bachman (he played my electric guitar during the show), Gino Vanelli and the other stars who had come to sing the national anthem for free. Later, in the hotel room, some of them spoke about how hard it had been to sing.

"Just walking out and seeing that huge crowd," Quebec star Natalie Choquette said, "gave me a real lump in the throat. But it was wonderful to be there and perform for Canada."

It was wonderful just to watch - to meet a group of artists committed to Canada, to see Ross Carlin's dream completed, to experience the energy of a sea of patriotic people, and to feel for a couple of magical hours that the common will of the common people will bust through any political logjams that block our national way.

Well, we're back to Parliament in a few days for more debates on the Constitution. Yes, the talk is necessary. A new law has to be written down.

Still, as I sit there at my desk, I'm sure I'll feel the solution to any woes Canada may have is not on the floor of the House of Commons, but out front, on the grass.

I'll do all I can to bring that spirit inside.



Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of Ford Trucks are, left to right, Don Marshall, sales manager; Paul Macdonald, sales; the winner of \$7,500, Steven Fletcher; and owner of Park Lincoln Mercury, Walt Dixon.

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