

# Grit minister lauds federal environmental efforts

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
Special to The Champion

Canada's revenue minister paid a visit to Milton last Thursday, but the focus of her address wasn't taxes, deficit reductions or any other fiscal projections.

Jane Stewart, who represents Brant County, was the guest speaker at a Liberal fundraising dinner at Halton Hills Place. Accepting the invitation from Halton-Peel MP Julian Reed, she brought party supporters up to speed on two bills she has recently sponsored and helped pass in both the House of Commons and on the international scene.

The first was in an effort to safeguard the environment, and was co-sponsored by Mr. Reed and two other MPs. The initiative, dubbed Bill S-7, calls for a switch to alternative fuels in 75 per cent of all government vehicles by 2004.

"It (Bill S-7) was approved 194-46, which is quite rare for an individually sponsored bill. They usually don't go through or do so by a slim margin," said Ms Stewart, a former employee of Imperial Oil.

Mr. Reed said alternative fuels, such as ethanol, burn more thoroughly than traditional gasoline and emit up to 30 per cent less carbon monoxide and 15 per cent less carbon dioxide.

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**MPP Julian Reed, on legislation he sponsored**

Reed, whose federal riding will include Milton starting in January. He seconded Bill S-7 after Ms Stewart introduced it.

Her father Bob Nixon — former provincial party leader for the Liberals — also paid a visit to Milton last Thursday, exactly 21 years after he came to town in support of Mr. Reed's first North Halton election campaign — the first of three.

Ms Stewart also used Canada's passive, peacekeeping status to push a private member's bill through last year. The bill — putting a stop to the manufacturing, sale and exportation of land mines — came into being at the World Summit when Canada relayed its intentions to do so.

The federal government will also champion a push towards an

international ban of land mines at an upcoming United Nations conference. Ms Stewart's campaign to ban land mines followed visits to several Middle East and Asian countries where she saw first-hand the devastation caused by this weaponry.

"On a trip to Cambodia I saw the killing fields depicted in war movies. There's a tower about 100 feet tall there that is filled with skulls dug out of the holes. It was just incredible to see, the country has literally been to hell and back," recalled Ms Stewart. "Today there are still over 110 million land mines in 64 countries."

"Over 100,000 are disposed of each year, with Canada being one of the leaders in land mine defusing, but at the same time an additional two million are being made and sold for almost nothing in these countries. They're a plague of great proportions in modern times."

The revenue minister also talked about Canada's need for unity. She said the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords have sent a strong message that Canadians want to stay together, but that this can only happen through understanding and tolerance.

While not including a fiscal report in her speech, Ms Stewart said taxes aren't expected to go down, at least not until the government gets the deficit under control.

"We're restoring stability to the economy. Taxes may not go down, but interest rates have dropped four per cent since May and unemployment insurance rates have gone down as well. We're the first government in a long time that is keeping its promise to lower the deficit," Ms Stewart said.

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