



Getting around the riding

The annual Remembrance Day services provided an excellent opportunity for me to visit a number of different parts of the riding and to participate in ceremonies to remember those young people who have given their lives during two World Wars and the Korean War to preserve freedom and democracy in our country. Last Saturday I attended a service in Port McNicoll; Sunday I was in Bracebridge; and on Remembrance Day itself, I joined members of the Royal Canadian Legion in Huntsville and in Midland as they paid tribute to fallen comrades.

On Nov. 9, Greg Sorbara, Minister responsible for Women's Issues, released a report indicating a significant portion of Ontario's female work-force could be hurt by the proposed Canada-U.S. free trade agreement.

The minister said, "Throughout the province's economy, women are disproportionately represented in jobs that appear to be most jeopardized by the trade agreement."

According to the minister, nearly 100,000 women could lose their jobs in sectors of the manufacturing and service

industries. The women particularly affected will be older women, those with little formal education, and immigrant women. Mr. Sorbara concluded his remarks with the statement that, "A deal that stands to hurt so many of Ontario's working women is a bad deal for Ontario."

Many people have expressed very real concerns about the state of the economy. The rapidly fluctuating stock market has led to predictions of recession and hard times ahead. In the past few days, Treasurer Robert Nixon has continued to point to

several indicators that Ontario's economy is strong, and as a result, there is good reason for guarded optimism. In terms of employment, Ontario's total employed increased by 179,000 from Sept. 1986 to Sept. 1987, and our seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained at 5.8 per cent, the lowest since 1976.

The Consumer Price annual inflation rate was 4.5 per cent in Sept., another indicator of a solid economy. Business planned to spend over \$25.8 billion in Ontario this year, a 13.6 per cent increase over 1986 levels.

Retail sales increased by 10.2 per cent over the first eight months of 1987 and the housing sector remains vigorous with housing starts up 109,000 units, the highest level of starts since the first quarter growth of 1974.

All of these facts suggest that although we can expect a slight down-turn in the economy, there appears to be every reason to expect Ontario's economy to remain strong in 1988.

Along with a number of members of the government caucus, I participated in a meeting this past week with the Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare. Over 300 members of the coalition attended this session, at which time they presented their concerns related to day care in the province. Minister of Community and Social Services, John Sweeney, dealt with a number of questions. Of major concern to all is the delay by the federal government in announcing their child care proposals and the cost sharing arrangements with the province. Hopefully, their plans will be made public before the end of 1987.



Top Scout

Boy Scout David Vanstone, a 15-year-old student at St. Theresa's high school in Midland, was honored recently with one of the top awards any Scout can get: the Chief Scout Award. He has been judged by his peers to have exemplified the principles of Scouting through leadership, voluntary service to the community as well as outdoor activity. As well, David completed five badges at the gold stage and 50 hours of community work. The award is signed by Canadian Governor-General Jeanne Sauve.



McLean's Notepad

by Al McLean, MPP,

Tax refunds

The Ontario Ministry of Revenue has begun mailing more than 600,000 Property Tax Grant cheques to senior citizens through the province.

These cheques - the second instalment of the 1987 grant - provide up to \$600 per household to help offset municipal and school taxes paid by seniors who rent or own their own home. Earlier this year, the government raised the grant to \$600 from the \$500 level.

The first instalment - equal to one-half the 1986 entitlement - was mailed to senior citizens last May with approximately 631,000 households receiving a total of \$152 million. By the end of October, the ministry had mailed 1987 Property Tax Grant applications, to more than 690,000 seniors and, based

on the returns, estimates some 600,000 households will receive in excess of \$200 million. The average second instalment cheque is about \$336.

Those who turned 65 years of age on or after July 1 should receive an application by January 1988. First year recipients will receive their grant in one sum. Senior citizens who farm or who are tenants on farms should note that the \$600 maximum applies only to taxes or rent on the principal farm residence and one acre of land. The remaining farm lands and outbuildings are eligible for a 100 per cent tax rebate under the Ontario Farm Tax Rebate Program, which is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

As well, the Ministry will send out the annual \$50

Sales Tax Grant beginning Nov. 27 to seniors who turned 65 in September. Ontario residents turning 65 in the last three months of 1987 will receive their Sales Tax Grant early in 1988.

More information on either the Property Tax Grant or the Sales Tax Grant may be obtained by Simcoe East residents by calling 1-800-263-3960 or my constituency office at 326-3246.

Chamber meeting

The Midland Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Get Together for its retail/commercial members on Nov. 18 between 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at the Chamber office.

At the meeting members will discuss ideas and programs they would like to

see the retail/commercial committee sponsor on their behalf, for them and their staff.

Please call the office to let the Chamber staff know if you plan to attend. Refreshments and finger foods will be served.

ARGOS needs help

The Action Rehabilitation Group of Simcoe is seeking financial support for its work.

A group spokesperson said ARGOS, which works on behalf of physically disabled people, is hoping

a service club will sponsor its activities.

ARGOS can not receive government funding until it is sponsored by such a club, the spokesperson said.

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