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Praises York Centre Workers

NDP Leader Lewis Speaker Here

NDP Provincial Leader Stephen Lewis in Richmond Hill High Auditorium on Wednesday evening of last week told the York Centre Riding Association annual general meeting he was pleased to find a riding association working hard and in a financially sound position.

York Centre riding is comprised mainly of Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill Towns.

Lewis said he hasn't found any attitude of defeatism among members of the party in the province over last October's failure to unseat the long time Progressive Conservative regime. He said he finds only frustration in the party over its inability to sufficiently inform the voters of the real situation in the province and despair about the obvious crying need there is for adoption of the NDP's platform.

Speaking to an audience of 50, mostly party members, Lewis said the NDP's predictions about the economy and high unemployment are already proven to be true by the figures about joblessness being published during the week.

Lewis pointed out to the Prairies where the lowest rate of unemployment exist. He said it is significant that the lowest rate of unemployment in Canada is in Manitoba, a province that dramatically switched to NDP government a few years ago. Along with Manitoba, the traditionally NDP province of Saskatchewan also has a much lower rate of unemployment than Ontario, he said.

"In Manitoba you have an NDP Government working in a much more creative way... showing the value of economic planning. There it's not just small handouts here and there to cut down trees killed by Dutch Elm disease. Even with the \$125,000,000 tax incentive fund so highly touted by the Tories during the election, I've

yet to hear Premier Davis say exactly where one single job has been created," said NDP Leader Lewis.

"In spite of all the Tories' highly touted winter works programs, they haven't made any appreciable dent on the unemployment problem at all," he said.

Lewis told the York Centre Association he was pleased to find a local organization that is financially "in the black." He said he realized the riding association is in an area where it has had a tough road to follow. He congratulated the York Centre members for achieving a slight increase in its total vote in the last election.

He said he realizes York Centre is a riding the provincial party hasn't treated well enough and hopes they're going to be able to correct that situation. The provincial organization's efforts have been concentrated elsewhere for a variety of reasons, whether or not they have been valid, he said.

"I feel the York Centre Association has worked mightily in the last year or two and has become one of the most committed and viable the party has in the province. It's paid up 1972 membership of over 100 is one of the best in the province and is especially heartening when one realizes the membership payment deadline isn't until July," said Lewis.

The party leader said provincial workers driving through York Centre during the last election, as he did from his home in Newmarket area, were struck by the number of Clifton NDP signs in evidence in a riding where the Grit and Tory campaigns were concentrated in an unusually "high" fashion. "It showed there was a solid hard working NDP core in this riding," said Lewis.

"There was a very real seriousness about the election cam-

aign in York Centre that made me especially happy to come here to visit today. I know that I haven't been able to visit enough," he said.

Turning to the party's provincial situation, Lewis said there is a very good spirit in the party throughout the province. "I get a good feeling travelling about the province since October that we are building strength for 1975. The Tories are clearly feeling the intoxication of their position and elitism is already emerging in such things as the reorganization into an authoritative super-Cabinet," he said.

The NDP Leader said he sees a Tory elitist emergence where it is likely the Legislature will only be tolerated and indulged, and where the job of opposition for the 19 NDP members will be more difficult.

"We've never lacked for policies... we've never lacked for alternatives, but now going on is a basic questioning of some accepted matters within the party," said Lewis. He said one of the main things being reviewed is the election campaign voter canvas organization.

"We seem to need a concentrated educational year-round campaign," he said, mentioning that the provincial organization is studying the possibilities of establishing a party publishing house and news media outlets that will "get the party's message across" to the public and provide public media support at election time.

The general meeting unanimously confirmed the new executive recommended by the previous nomination meeting, including the following: President Roy Clifton of Richmond Hill (last year's provincial election candidate and a past president several times), Vice President Peter Burnett (past president of Richmond Hill), Treasurer Fred Pamplin of Unionville; Secretary Barry Rollinson of Thornhill; Provincial Council Representative Michael Jones of Maple; Membership Secretary Mrs. Helen Clifton of Richmond Hill; three organizers Soren Christensen, Blake McMaster and Mike Morrone (1971 candidate York Mills), all of Richmond Hill; executive members at large Fraser Duff of Markham, Robert Skakie of Markham, Karl Killingbeck of Woodbridge.

Those presenting reports were as follows: finances Mrs. Lynn Kulesh of Thornhill, organizer Roy Clifton who also reported for Campaign Official Agent Ron Moran of Dickson's Hill, membership Mrs. Clifton, Auditor Angus Philip of Richmond Hill.

Unemployment Insurance "Snafu" Raises Anger Of Gladys Rolling

Three months of frustration experienced by an East Gwillimbury resident waiting to receive his cheques from the federal government's Unemployment Insurance Commission was related to members of York Regional Council Thursday afternoon of last week.

East Gwillimbury Mayor Mrs. Gladys Rolling told council how she attempted to assist the person involved and had become ensnared in a "sea of red tape."

Mrs. Rolling said the unemployed resident was subjected to an endless round of frustration "and humiliation by unemployment authorities. They apparently weren't too interested in assisting this person to get what was rightfully his."

She said the unemployed man made his initial claims November 9 of last year and up until the week of February 6 received just one cheque for \$91.

NO MONEY 3 MONTHS

"This person was forced to go without benefits from the unemployment insurance commission for almost three months at a time when a desperately needed money. Now he will receive some \$646 all at one crack," she said.

Mayor Rolling said it was situations "like this that force people to go on welfare and suffer unnecessary humiliations. It also costs our municipalities considerable money in welfare costs when it shouldn't even be necessary."

She described how the unemployed person filed a claim for unemployment in the first week of November and from there on received a series of forms to fill out for almost every week of the next nine weeks.

HOT OF FORMS
"He got a host of forms mailed to him, which he filled out and sent in only to get more forms," she said.

The person was further frustrated by visits to the claims office in Barrie where he — and later Mrs. Rolling was confronted by a wall of "nameless people" who said they would check into it but could do nothing at the time.

"I met the same problem, Mrs. Rolling said, "when I first tried to assist him."

But the mayor of East Gwillimbury wasn't to be denied by "nameless" people.

She told council she proceeded to launch a series of strategic assaults on the claims office in Barrie, the Department of Manpower Office in Newmarket, "and on any other office I happened to come across."

She ended up by placing a call to the manager of the claims branch and to John Roberts MP York Simcoe in Ottawa.

STIRRED HORNET NEST
"This seemed to stir up a hornet's nest," she told councillors "and the first thing you know I was getting apologies and results all over the place. It's just too bad this couldn't have all happened in the beginning."

Mayor Rolling felt the problem was being aggravated by the system used by the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

"They process all the claims in Barrie," she said, "and then send them on to Belleville where the cheques are then mailed. This has resulted in a lot of confusion."

Council approved a resolution by Mayor Rolling to have

the York Region Council petition Ottawa to establish an unemployment commission office in Newmarket "so our people can deal directly and to improve the processing of claims."

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