

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Meeting with the Government of Alberta - December 03, 2008

[The] *Catholic Women's League* [provincial council - ABMK] *meets with Premier Stelmach*

President Donna P., Organization Standing Committee Chairperson Fran L., and Resolutions Standing Committee Chairperson Stella W. met with Premier Stelmach in Edmonton at the Alberta Legislature on December 3, at 3:00pm, and with Health Minister Ron Liepert later in the day.

We felt that the meeting was very successful and worthwhile. Both men were friendly, welcoming, open to listen to our concerns and answered our questions.

Issues brought forth were:

- Human Trafficking during the 2010 Olympics
- Sanctity of Life – end of life care, and de-insuring abortions
- Environment regarding pollution levels and toxic chemicals
- Safety, Law and order
- Shortage of doctors and nurses
- Proper burial of human remains
- Alberta's Health Services Board and the new document Visions 2020

Premier Stelmach, on trafficking, stated that he would speak to federal officials on the topic of training of border crossing officials to see what they are looking for so Alberta law enforcement agents can be trained to spot trafficked people, and to co-operate among government agencies and law enforcement.

On sanctity of life, Premier Stelmach stated that there are 7 private clinics in Alberta and these are under federal health legislation and this matter of clinics has been discussed with medical people. On the discussion of toxic chemicals, he did not know details that we were questioning (national resolutions passed in 2008), so will look into it and send us information. On the topic of safety law and order, we found out that Alberta has implemented a safe and secure program. Communities are given a pool of funds to use as they see fit for more police, more crown prosecutors, addiction treatment beds, and psychiatry. He is pressing for legislation on bail reform, for the assets of crime to be able to be seized and sold, for increased compensation of crime, and for community initiatives programs.

With Minister Liepert, we discussed end-of-life care, de-insuring of abortions, shortage of doctors and nurses, and the new Alberta Health Services Board. We thanked him for eliminating health care premiums and he answered with the comment that they were no longer serving the purpose for which they were intended. Many were not paying the premiums and to track them down and charge them through the courts cost more than the unpaid premiums.

Minister Liepert would not discuss de-insuring of abortions. Quote: "This is not a fight I am prepared to take on. De-insuring is about funding but it opens up the other issue (abortions on demand)."

On the topic of end-of-life care, we discussed training in palliative care and standards for hospitals, nursing homes, hospice or at home care. Some answers to our questions will be researched and sent to us.

On the subject of proper burial of human remains, we had many questions and there were not a lot of answers but the minister will get some answers for us and send them – regarding standard hospital policy in the matter of informing the parents that they have a right to bury their pre-born baby.

On the topic of shortage of doctors and nurses, Liepert said it is a much bigger issue than shortage. Alberta has come up with a ‘workforce action plan’ which involves training, spaces, incentives, and rural action plans.

We spent quite a bit of time on the Alberta Health Services Board. He explained the purpose and function of the board, how doctors and health care givers will have input into the management level of the structure. Councils will represent their community on a regional board that reports to health councils. We received a copy of the new document ‘Vision 2020’.

All in all, the politicians were open to discussion and to listening. They took the time to answer our questions completely and we felt that they gave us honest answers. Both the Premier and Health Minister will be forwarding information to us on unfinished topics.

The Premier and Health Minister now are aware of the CWL of Alberta Mackenzie and I think we should make this an annual affair. Perhaps next time get an interview with another Minister . Watch the papers for our pictures.

Donna P. , President

[photos below]

Government Meeting: Stella W., Donna P., Fran L.



Government Meeting: Fran L., Minister Ron Liepert, Donna P., Stella W.



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