

Unite against euthanasia, group tells Quebecers

By OMID GHOREISHI
Epoch Times Staff

EDMONTON—A newly formed grassroots group has launched a campaign calling on Quebecers to oppose euthanasia and assisted suicide from being brought into the province's health care system.

"We thought we would need to have a group that would really represent an option different than the one that is proposed by the euthanasia lobby," says Dr. André Bourque, president of Vivre dans la Dignité (Living with Dignity), a non-partisan, non-religious group focused on end-of-life issues.

The group plans to make a submission to a travelling parliamentary commission that will hold hearings in late summer or early fall to get the views of Quebecers on the issue. One of the group's key arguments is that euthanasia and suicide are killing and as such shouldn't be "confused with health care."

The group also has concerns over last November's announcement that the Quebec College of Physicians and Surgeons, the province's medical regulatory body, supports legalized euthanasia in some circumstances, such as when an individual faces imminent death.

The college came to its decision after a three-year reflection period, making it the first time in Canada that such a body has come out in favour of euthanasia.

"We are saying death can be an appropriate type of care in certain circumstances," college secretary Dr. Yves Robert said at a news conference in Montreal. "This is a major breakthrough."

Although it is illegal under the Criminal Code to aid in suicide or for a doctor to administer a lethal injection at the patient's request, the college says that should be changed to allow doctors to



The group Living with Dignity is worried euthanasia and assisted suicide will be brought into the Quebec's health care system. PHOTOS.COM

legally take the life of certain patients.

Dr. Bourque, a family physician and the head of family medicine at the Montreal University Hospital, says he is worried about the college's vocabulary implying that euthanasia is a part of end-of-life care.

Dr. Jeff Blackmer, head of the Canadian Medical Association's office of ethics, has also criticized the college's stance.

"It's a group of physicians that are regulators who set the moral and ethical standards for practicing physicians. So they carry a certain amount of weight that could sway public opinion," he told the National Post.

MORE PALLIATIVE CARE NEEDED

An Angus Reid poll conducted earlier this year shows that 67 percent of respondents support euthanasia in Canada. In Quebec, the regional stats show the support to be 77 percent.

Right-to-die organizations and people in favour of euthanasia, which is legal in Washington and Oregon, Colombia, Japan, and the Netherlands, believe it is an acceptable and humane way to alleviate the suffering of those who are in severe pain or terminally ill.

They say it allows people to die with dignity while avoiding invasive and possibly futile hospital treatments.

Last week, Germany's Federal Court of Justice acquitted a lawyer who advised the daughter of an el-

derly woman in a coma that she may cut off her mother's feeding tube based on the patient's prior request. The court's decision was a landmark ruling on assisted suicide in Germany.

Dr. Bourque says legalizing euthanasia would be a "foot in the door" to opening and expanding a practice that will place vulnerable patients in a dangerous position.

"There will be lives taken without their consent, there are people who don't want to die who are going to die, and there are going to be decisions taken by third parties for people who have not asked that their lives be shortened."

He notes that in the Netherlands, legalized euthanasia has slowly broadened to the point that parents can now request euthanasia for their newborns, and some elderly Dutch are emigrating from the country out of fear that their children will take advantage of their vulnerability and shorten their lives.

"Once you start giving permission to do this, you're changing something fundamental, and you will find that it's going to be huge."

Last year, a total of 2,636 Dutch people were killed by euthanasia, a 13 percent rise compared to the previous year. Voluntary euthanasia has been practiced in the Netherlands without sanctions since 1984, and legally since 2002.

"If somebody's suffering, you don't need to kill the patient to kill the pain, there's always a way to take away the pain," Dr. Bourque says, adding that what is needed is increased investment in palliative care and making it more available.

"The answer to fighting this death mentality is to offer better care and at the end you have a better society, you have a better civilization—one that's based on solidarity, not on shortcuts."

Queen delighted to be 'home' in Canada

By ARNAUD CAMU
Epoch Times Staff

MONTREAL—Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philipp arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Monday, beginning a nine-day tour that will culminate on July 6 with an address at the United Nations in New York City.

The couple was greeted by Governor General Michaëlle Jean and Prime Minister Stephen Harper, while several hundred onlookers braved the rain to catch sight of Her Majesty, who has been Canada's symbolic head of state for 58 years.

"My mother once said that this country felt like a home away from home for the Queen of Canada," she told the crowd near the Halifax Citadel at the official welcoming ceremony.

"Prime Minister, I am delighted to report that it still does and I am delighted to be back amongst you all. As Queen of Canada for nearly six decades my pride in this country remains undimmed. Thank you again for your welcome. It is very good to be home."

Noting that this trip is Elizabeth's 22nd tour of Canada, Prime Minister Harper talked about how royal visits have impacted local Canadians who had the chance to see her. He recalled the time when he saw the Queen's motorcade drive through his neighbourhood during his childhood days in Ontario.

"Those people treasure those experiences for a lifetime," he said, adding that Canadians were "honoured that you have given so generously of your time."

On Tuesday, the Queen, 84, participated in events celebrating the Canadian Navy Centennial, including conducting an international fleet review of vessels from eight countries.

The royal couple will be in Ottawa for Canada Day on July 1. It is the seventh time during the



Queen Elizabeth arrives for a Canadian navy luncheon at Canadian Forces Base Halifax in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Tuesday. REUTERS/PAUL DARROW

Queen's reign that she has been in the country for Canada Day.

On July 3 in Winnipeg, the Queen will dedicate a cornerstone at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the newest Canadian national museum. She will also attend the unveiling of a statue of Her majesty created by deceased sculptor Leo Mol.

In the Greater Toronto Area from July 4 to 6, the royal couple will attend horse races at the Woodbine Racetrack where contenders will be vying for The Queen's Plate, a trophy dedicated to Elizabeth's great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria.

They will also visit the facilities of Research in Motion (RIM), creator of the Blackberry phone, in Waterloo. The tour will culminate on July 5 with a state dinner in Toronto hosted by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife Lauren Harper. Here, the royal couple will meet Canadians who have made significant contributions to Canadian society.

The Royals will depart from Queen's Park, Toronto, on July 6 with military honours.

What's the big idea? Inaugural conference aims to find out

By JOAN DELANEY
Epoch Times Staff

Just as the G8 and G20 summits have wound up in Ontario, a conference of a very different kind is being planned on the other side of the country in Victoria.

Called IdeaWave, the aim of conference is to bring innovative thinkers together to brainstorm a wide range of issues, from sewage treatment and drug prohibition to health and public transit.

The two-day conference will feature 50 short talks on any topic the speaker desires, giving critical

thinkers from the Pacific Northwest a forum to explore issues that affect both their immediate region and further afield.

"There's a lot of critical thinkers out there who are meeting regularly, talking about ideas informally, and so I just thought, 'What would it take to get all of those people together in a room?' To me, having 200 critical thinkers in a room is quite exciting," says event organizer Kris Constable.

Constable believes his conference is the first ever to keep the talks to 10 minutes with no limit on the subject matter. Established ideas

conferences that take place annually in Vancouver and California cost between \$3,000 and \$7,000 to participate, he adds.

"I, like most North Americans, can't afford to attend such a thing. So this is kind of my answer to that. I'm going to make this the first approachable ideas conference ever. We've got both speakers and attendees coming from Washington State and all over B.C."

Limiting the talks to 10 minutes keeps them from becoming boring and "cuts right to the meat" of the topic, he says.

"It separates the wheat from the

chaff essentially. You've got 10 minutes to make sure that you've clearly articulated your idea in the best way that you can. With 10 minutes you're concentrating your talk to be as effective as possible."

Frank Heidt, a chief executive officer with a company in Seattle, will talk about expanding on the idea of transforming abandoned shipping containers into housing. There are about three million unused shipping containers in the Pacific Rim because it's cheaper for companies to leave them there than return them to their country of origin empty or partially filled, according

to Heidt.

His talk will be about using these shipping containers as lending libraries of hand tools, enabling people in developing countries to "build their own future."

Margaret Pulton, a nurse from B.C., will explore using technology to create clothing as a treatment for Lymphedema, while Clem Persaud, a professor of biotechnology, will devote his 10 minutes to how we can positively impact our lives by influencing the expression of our genes.

As well as airing their ideas, there will also be a chance for both speakers and attendees to mingle

and network.

"If your idea's good enough that other people are excited, they're going to go ahead and talk to you and hopefully get a few people helping you make your idea happen," says Constable.

"These are the people who are kind of the thinkers and the doers in one."

Being still a few shy of the required 50 speakers, Constable is looking for more people to submit their proposals. The conference will take place July 10 and 11 at the Ambrosia Centre in downtown Victoria.

'Citizenship challenge' launched

By JOAN DELANEY
Epoch Times Staff

Students in thousands of classrooms across the country will take a mock citizenship test over the next three years under a new national program designed to promote civic pride and integration.

Starting this summer, the Historica-Dominion Institute will be encouraging more than 5,000 middle and high school teachers to register their classrooms for the initiative, called the Canadian Citizen-

ship Challenge.

Each classroom will receive the new citizenship guide, "Discover Canada," along with specially designed learning activities and copies of a mock citizenship exam. Students will take the citizenship test as a class and the teachers will return the completed exams to the Historica-Dominion Institute for grading. There will be prizes awarded for the best scores.

"Our schools need to be training our young people to become the citizens of tomorrow. Citizen-

ship is not only about new Canadians, it's about all Canadians, young and old," Andrew Cohen, president of the institute, said in a press release.

"The Canadian Citizenship Challenge will encourage students to learn more about what it means to be Canadian and then put that knowledge to the test."

The 32-month project is being run by the Historica-Dominion Institute and funded to the tune of \$525,000 by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

"This will be a fun way for students to learn about Canada and feel proud of our shared history and accomplishments," said Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism.

"As we learn about our past and the people and events that made Canada what it is today, we become more proud to be Canadian. We are inspired to see how we can defend our rights and live up to our responsibilities and we feel much more strongly how valuable it is to be a citizen of Canada."

The Historica-Dominion Institute will announce the exam results on Flag Day (Feb. 15) each year for the next three years. For more information, visit the institute's website at www.historica-dominion.ca.



The Historica-Dominion Institute and Citizenship and Immigration Canada hope to instill a sense of civic pride in young Canadians. PHOTOS.COM

Alberta's free-roaming horses



A free-roaming stallion with his mare in Williams Creek, Alberta. Feral horses roam in the foothills west of Rocky Mountain House and Sundre, as well as south of there to the Alberta-U.S. border. BOB HENDERSON