

# KERR'S COLUMN

M.P.P. REPORTS TO GEORGETOWN FROM QUEEN'S PARK  
by GEORGE KERR

One of the highlights of the Legislature this week was the announcement by the Hon. Les Rowat, Minister of Labour, that changes would be made in the Workmen's Compensation Act affecting coverage and amount of benefits.

Minimum rate of coverage for volunteer firemen and employers will be increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per annum, with the maximum to remain the same, \$5,000. This coverage is by application only and thus permits municipalities to respect

to volunteer firemen and employers to select an area of coverage between \$2,500 and \$5,000 which will reflect reasonably the varied earnings throughout the province.

In negligent cases where more than one party is involved, the injured workman presently has the choice of either taking compensation or going to Court. In cases where the third party is an employer or workman in the course of employment, this choice does not exist. The injured workman must take compensation. The act is being amended to make it clear that this denial of the right of suit is limited to those cases where both parties are within the course of their employment at the time of the accident.

Independent operators and those persons who do not employ workmen but who do carry on a trade, business or profession will now be covered under the terms of the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Act is to be amended to allow coverage to farm work-

ers. It is hoped this change will encourage more people, particularly students, to work on part farms and help relieve the labour shortage in this industry.

The most important change will be the permanent total and permanent partial disability awards in years past when the benefits of the Act were at a much lower scale and wages upon which these benefits were based also were at a substantially lower level. It is now recommended that all pensions be increased to the level of 75 per cent of average wage which will reflect current average earnings to a greater degree. The minimum pension for a totally disabled pensioner will become \$100 a month un-

der the new formula developed even though current averages may be below this level. This will affect many handicapped workers in Halton and throughout the Province who have been receiving benefits based on a scale as long as 25 or 30 years ago.

The Dept. of Energy and Resources Management has approved a special grant of \$10,000 to the Credit Valley Conservation Authority to relieve flood and pollution conditions on the Credit River at Glen Williams. This money is to be used to hire blasting crews and equipment to open up the river so as to have a flow to carry away ice and lower the water level. There is still some danger that flooding will re-occur, particularly if we have another

THE GEORGETOWN HERALD  
Thursday, Feb. 25th, 1965  
PAGE 7

As for damage to homes in Glen Williams, the Minister of Municipal Affairs has informed the Reeve of Esquimaux that a special disaster grant will be made by the Province after the Township has an appraisal made of the damage to homes in the village and sets up a committee to determine the relief to be given in each individual case.

There will be some responsibility on the part of the Township Council to get the village money locally which will be supplemented by the Provincial Government. The Province will match, dollar for dollar, the total amount of money raised in the County either from private subscription or by way of grant from a Municipality.

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