Report From Queen's Park



Julian Reed MPP, Halton-Burlington

Discussion still continues about hospital closings in the Province, and the Acting Minister of Health has indicated that four of the nine Ontario hopitals given orders to close will remain open for an indefinite period while the Health Ministry studies other possible uses for the institutions and other ways to cut

The four - Doctors Hospital in Toronto and public hospitals in Clinton, Durham, and Paris - are still in the process of appealing the orders to close. There is, apparently, no chance that the remaining hospitals scheduled to close will be reprieved, and the Minister told the Legislature that the Government has not altered any decisions but is simply keeping an open mind while studying briefs which have been presented. Even if some of the hospitals being closed are put to other uses. the Government still hopes to save close to \$45-million.

The Acting Minister of Health also told the Legislature that the entire population of Ontario will be inoculated against swine flue if the Provincial Government can obtain enough vaccine. If sufficient vaccine is not avallable, those at highest risk will be vaccinated. The Minister said the province hopes to use health units throughout Ontario to carry out the vaccination programme to eliminate any charge for the procedure, although no decision has yet been made about whether there will be a charge for the vaccine itself.

According to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, whose Ministry administers the rent review programme, an additional 20 rent review officers will be hired to help clear a backlog of rent review applications estimated at 245,000, although this figure may include duplicate applications where to protect himself a tenant has filed an application and the landlord has already done so with respect to the tenant's rental accommodation. Rent review legislation was introduced last fall, limiting increases to 8 percent unless a landlord can justify a higher raise to rent review officers. The 8 percent ceiling was retroactive to last July 31 for one year, and the Ministry recently announced increases will be held to 8 percent anmully until July 31, 1977. Speaking at the University of Western Ontario last week, the Minister said he will resign or ask for a transfer to another ministry if the Ontario Government extends the rentcontrol programme beyond July 31, 1977. "I don't want to be a minister in charge of a mess," he sald.

Ontario awarded a contract to Drake Personnel to provide 277 trained workers for the provincial rent-review programme. The Chairman of the Management Board told the Legislature that the contract called for trained clerical stenographers, typists, clerks, support personnel and administrators. Liberal Leader Stuart Smith asked for the terms of the contract, and was informed it was worth \$1.0 million, which included the

cost of employee benefits. The Minister of Colleges and Universities admitted that a community college in Ottawa has an investment portfolio of nearly \$5 million. He had been criticised by Opposition Members for allowing colleges to build up such large portfolios from public funds. Seneca College in Toronto has a \$3.4 million investment portfolio, and the Minister said that he is preparing a full report on the portfolios held by the province's 22 community

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