

### Minister's comments explained

By JULIAN REED  
MPP Halton-Burlington  
A further lay-off of 4,000 medical workers and an imposition of \$5 a day fee on patients by hospitals was recently stated by the Executive Director of the Ontario Hospital Association.

However, the Minister of Health announced that while hospitals may have to close active treatment beds and undergo a staff reduction by attrition, he simply does not intend to introduce deterrent fees. The lay-offs were a possibility. These changes are stated to be the result of provincial grants that will not keep pace with the rate of inflation, which has been forecast by Ottawa to run at about 6 per cent.

The Minister of Health has outlined to the OHA, exactly what monies they can expect at least until 1980: no increase in capital expenditure for two years; a further reduction in active treatment beds by increasing out-patient, home and chronic care; and a further staff reduction, mainly by attrition.

And according to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, those firms offering instant cash for income tax refunds, will be driven out of business in Ontario by proposed legislation that will limit their profits. More than 5 per cent from the refund a taxpayer is expected to receive will become an illegal practice on the part of the tax discounters according to the new legislation, including over-payments of unemployment insurance premiums and Canada Pension Plan contributions. 45 income tax discounters in the Province of Ontario charged up to 50 per cent of refunds this year, according to the Minister. Fines of up to \$5,000 will be payable according to the proposed legislation should this repeat itself. Exorbitant fees for any service, and that includes completion of the income tax form, will also become illegal.

Opposition Members maintain that the public should no longer be asked to have blind faith in the ability of the police to control organized crime, because too little information is available on the extent of such organized crime and police measures to combat it. Pat Reid (Liberal MPP for Rainy River) said the time has come to let the public know how deep the "tentacles of organized crime" go within the Province. The Solicitor-General once again rejected the Opposition's demands for a public enquiry into this matter, although he admitted that organized crime in Ontario is a major problem in the areas of loansharking, gambling, fraud, investment in legitimate businesses that subsequently operate illegally, drugs and pornography.

A Private Member's Bill has been introduced by Liberal MPP Robert Nixon, that would make insurance of all motor vehicles in Ontario compulsory. Drivers would no longer be able to pay \$100 into the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Fund to avoid buying insurance. Introducing the Bill, Mr. Nixon alluded to increased use of roads at higher speeds "and occasionally ruinous losses arising out of motor accidents" when the offending driver is not insured.

Significant reforms of the administration of the courts is required to improve the quality of justice as the caseload crisis presently in operation in Ontario courts has the potential to undermine it, according to the Attorney-General. The use of French has also been expanded in the criminal division of the provincial courts, according to the Attorney-General, and this will assist 6 per cent of Ontario's French-speaking residents.

Foreign parent firms who refuse to allow their Canadian subsidiaries to compete in export markets, was brought to the Premier's attention by Stuart Smith - Anacanda Canada Ltd. of Toronto which may have to close for this reason was mentioned. Mr. Davis indicated that he had no intention of setting strict conditions under which companies may establish new plants in Ontario, and stated that imposing conditions on investment is not the ideal method of attracting new industry to the Province. However, allowing foreign parent companies to set the rules is surely disastrous.

Regarding raising the drinking age, a Cabinet source said that the government would probably not "dare to go through with" legislation to raise the drinking age to 19. Telegrams and letters have poured into Queen's Park following reports that Government Members would reject the Private Member's Bill of Remo Mancini, (Liberal MPP for Essex-South) to raise the drinking age. Rumours have also been heard that even if the government did not oppose the Bill on second reading, it would be allowed to die on the Order Paper at the end of the session, leaving the government to introduce its own legislation next year.

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