

DON O'HEARN

Hospital controversy continues to rage

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TORONTO - The government, once again, is in a controversy over hospital and other beds for the sick and ailing.

In the Queensway Hospital in Toronto patients on admittance have been held in emergency wards while upstairs in the institution the beds they have needed have been occupied by convalescent patients who should properly be in nursing homes or convalescent wards.

The Queensway situation probably has been overdone by the opposition and the press, as these things tend to be, but there's no question that the hospital bed situation is in a bit of a mess.

It would, in fact, be strange if it were otherwise. For now this mess is an old, old and seemingly permanent story.

MASTER PLAN

It is a scene which Leslie Frost from his grave would view without much comfort.

For the root of the trouble of today really goes back to Frost.

It is not the habit of government to use foresight but occasionally the odd man comes along who has it and tries to use it. Dr. Mackinnon Phillips, who was health minister in the late 1950s, was one of these.

Phillips was a bit of an eccentric. But he had vision and, with it, sound common sense.

He could see a crisis coming in hospital beds. But even more, he was alert to the need for facilities for patients needing convalescent and chronic care, many of whom then—even more than

now—were occupying expensive active treatment beds.

So he devised a plan for a new type of health care unit.

It would have had three parts. At the core would have been an active treatment hospital. There would also have been a chronic care hospital. Along with these there would have been convalescent and nursing home units.

All three would have had their own facilities to quite a degree, but they would have had common heating and laundry plants, perhaps kitchens, and, of course, would have been about as inexpensive an operation as there could be.

HANDS OFF

It looked like a good plan (and still does).

But Frost wouldn't buy it. In fact it is doubtful if he even seriously considered it.

And for one prime reason.

For such a plan to first get started and then work the provincial government would have had to play a considerable hand and perhaps even order the form of health care programs there should be in the municipalities throughout the province.

Frost would have none of this.

Hospitals then were built largely through local subscriptions and run by local boards.

It was a loose system (one hospital could cost \$8,000 a bed in one municipality and the same hospital \$17,000 a bed in another municipality) but one of Frost's principal political tools was defense of "local autonomy."

So prospectively a good system was lost. We have been wallowing ever since.



POLICE WEEK

Constable Don Cousens gave Michael Simpson a little boost while Michael was fingerprinted at Holy Cross School last week. Constable Cousens visited the public schools

in the Georgetown area last week as part of Police Week, and talked to students about safety and the operation of the police force. (Herald photo)

Town council okays commercial building

Plans for a 9,000-square foot commercial building on Highway 7 just west of Acton have been approved by town council.

Council last night (Tuesday) accepted a planning board recommendation to amend the zoning bylaw so that Gino Civiero can use the two-acre rural property on the south side of the highway for a commercial venture.

According to town planning director Mario Venditti, the site is currently occupied by a

large concrete building which houses a discount merchandise and bargain store. Mr. Civiero's original application involved the construction of a 12,000-square foot commercial building, but ran aground briefly when municipal officials discovered that an error had been made in the zoning bylaw.

Although used for commercial purposes, the town learned, the site remains zoned for rural use only, with the commercial designation applicable

to an adjacent property. The town agreed to switch the two designations and allow Mr. Civiero to proceed with his proposal.

Responding to municipal concerns over the scale of his proposal, Mr. Civiero revised the plan so that the existing concrete building will simply be expanded to 9,000-square feet. A commercial designation for the site would allow him to build a 25,000-square foot structure, Mr. Venditti reported.

An economic staging study which will determine the methods by which Halton region should develop financially and industrially, is among the ongoing projects reviewed last week by regional council.

In the first of a series of quarterly reports, the region's chief administrative officer, Ernie Reid, brought council up to date on the status of seven separate objectives defined for Halton in February.

According to the objectives, regional council is to implement Halton's first official plan, plan Halton's economic development, provide engineering services involving sewers, roads and solid waste management, formulate a long-term capital budget, establish and implement a sewer surcharge policy, meet the social and health care needs of all residents, develop staff potential and efficiency and complete work on the new regional headquarters.

EMPLOYEE TRANSFER
"Transfer of an employee to the department of business development during March made it possible to initiate the Economic Staging Study," Mr. Reid reported.

Business development officer Bill Marshall has arranged for a private consulting firm to undertake the

study, Mr. Reid explained, which will take inventory of "locational factor", prepare an industrial analysis of Halton resources and ultimately formulate a plan of action. The results of the study will assist council in planning Halton's future economic growth.

Mr. Reid also informed council that staff has categorized all 341 policies set out in Halton's official plan, assigned them to eight departments, determined departmental priorities and drawn preliminary conclusions as to their cost and manpower implications.

OFFICIAL PLAN
The official plan remains in the hands of the provincial government, awaiting final approval by the ministry of housing.

With regard to the region's sewerage servicing commitments, Mr. Reid noted that Halton's solicitor and public works director are reviewing current subdivision proposals to make sure they are consistent with long-range servicing goals.

Terms of reference have been established for council's new solid waste management committee, which has thus far held three meetings, Mr. Reid said. The committee is studying reports on site selections for a proposed resource recovery facility, waste quantities and markets for recovered waste.

"In addition, the regional solicitor is preparing terms of reference for obtaining proposals from the private sector on establishment of a waste management program, including a facility," he said. The region's road reclassification study appears likely to be tabled until the provincial ministry of transportation and communications has completed, a subsidy re-evaluation study, Mr. Reid said. Since the ministry expects to complete its study by the fall, he added, regional officials are "hopeful" that road reclassifications can be presented for council's consideration by the year's end.

GUIDELINE APPROACH
"The 'guideline' approach used with the operating budget this year has been extended to the capital budget process," he noted. "Some delay may occur in information required from the study on capital contributions which is required to complete projections."

"Also, further delay is anticipated because of pending legislation on capital contributions. We may have to proceed with estimated figures instead of the details the consultants report will provide."

Mr. Reid reported that the region's treasurer will be meeting with officials of the area municipalities before preparing his report on the new sewer surcharge proposed by council for implementation next January. The surcharge policy, if approved by council, will see all four areas paying equal amounts for work done on sewer systems.

Mr. Reid also commented on recent meetings between regional staff members and officials of Halton's children's service and senior's servicing organizations. Recent decisions by council, he noted,

have seen extensive improvements to health care services and senior citizens facilities slated for the near future.



FLYING HIGH

Heather Clark placed third in two events at the Peel-Halton last week. Here she flies through the air in the long jump and she was also third in the 100-metres hurdles for senior girls.

(Herald photo)



REACHING FOR THE TOP

These two youngsters, in Glen Williams are sure enjoying the nice weather the Georgetown area has

enjoyed in recent weeks. The Herald photographer found them reaching for the top of this old tree in Glen Williams. (Herald photo)

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