MPP Reed's report from Legislature

By JULIAN REED, MPP Hallon-Burlington INFANT DEATHS AT "81CK KID5"

While acknowledging that the Hospital for Sick Children is "one of the most respected...of its kind in the world", Liberal Leader David Peterson has called for a public inquiry into the series of infant deaths in the hospital's cardiac ward. He has raised 16 "questions that need to be answered", including the following:

 A hospital study in early 1961 showed that 15 of 20 deaths between July and December 1980 were unexpected. When did the cardiac unit notice the unusual incidence of deaths and what did the unit consider to be the cause?

- Why did the hospital make that study and why wasn't the coroner told about the unexpected deaths, as required by law?

- Were the parents of the children whose deaths were probed notified?

- The coroner learned that high levels of digoxin, a potent heart drug, were found in one dead infant and, coincidentally, was later told of another strangely similar death. Had a pathologist reported to another coroner, as could easily have happened, the murders might not have been uncovered. What systems are required to ensure better co-ordination of information to the coroner's office?

- The police, in early 1981, were told of numerour unexplained deaths in the cardiac ward. Why have they not yet determined, 15 months later, which of these deaths were homicidal?

- Why was Susan Nelles charged after only a few days of police investigation and what was the basis for the charges?

- The police decided to start an investigation after being told March 21, 1961, of two specific deaths, but did not actually start the investigation until March 23. Meantime, two more bables were murdered. Why was the investigation

not begun immediately and why did the coroner not insist on this?

- Why did the Crown not withdraw the charges against Nelles when it became known she was not on duty when one of the deaths occurred, given the Crown's case was built on the credibility of circumstantial evidence?

- The Deputy Crown Attorney has said the whole story is not yet out. Why isn't it? RETAIL SALES TAX

In response to a written question by Liberal Finance Critic Pat Reid (Rainy River), the government has made public a survey done by Goldfarb Consultants in 1980. This public opinion poll, carried out for the provincial government, found that a majority of those surveyed favored extending the retall sales tax to previously exempt items, rather than raising the tax rate across the board. Asked which measure they would prefer in principle, 53.2 per cent of the 794 people surveyed opted broader tax base, while 39.3 per cent favored raising the rate to eight per cent from seven per cent. Some 7.5 per cent of those surveyed had no opinion. Other questions in the survey elicited the information that: 63 per cent thought small business carried more of the tax burden than large corporations or farmers; 36.7 per cent favored raising taxes

on liquor and alcohol; 35 per cent felt low-income earners were most in need for relief from income tax; 82 per cent opposed a mortgage tax; and about 70 per cent would support

the government if it set up

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We, in the Liberal Party, are very anxious about the impact on Ontarians, particularly those with limited income, of the extension to previously exempt items of the retail sales tax. It's our intention to bring pressure to bear to have this question reviewed by a Committee of the Legislature, and to provide for public submissions to that Committee.

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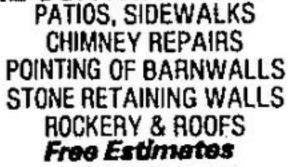
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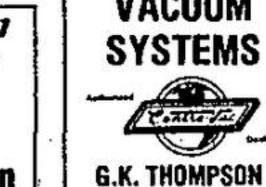
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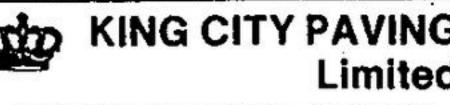
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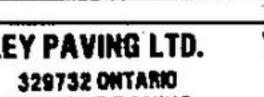
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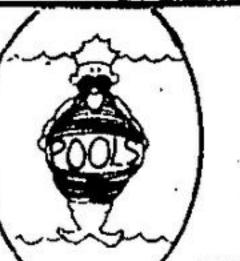
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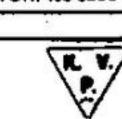
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