

MPP's report from Queen's Park

By JULIAN REED, MPP
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SECRET
WELFARE REPORT

A strongly worded report to the Cabinet contends that welfare payments should be increased across-the-board before November, because benefits have, in recent years, been distributed unevenly and have actually penalized some of the most needy people in Ontario.

The report, drafted by the ministry of community and social services in June, has not been made public.

"There is a need for a detailed examination of the ministry's rate structure to ensure that, within available funds, the ministry is meeting needs equitably," says the report, and policy experts have warned that the government will come under severe attack if welfare increases are not tied

to inflation. According to the report, "Rates are coming under criticism for their over-all level of adequacy. This criticism will



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be heightened by any rate adjustment that is less than inflation."

In spite of the fact that his own officials have recommended across-the-board increases for the more than 400,000 Ontarians who receive family

benefits and welfare, the minister is expected to apply any increases on a selective basis.

UTDC AND THE YACHT CLUB

Liberal deputy leader Sean Conway has demanded that the Ontario government crack down on the Urban Transportation Development Corporation, which has signed a 20-year lease with a yacht club near Kingston. He termed the \$120,000 which the provincial crown corporation will spend for the use of facilities at the club a "shameless expenditure" which sets a wretched example for Ontario's poor. It's time, he said, that the government "trimmed the sails" of the corporation. If the government was serious about restraint it would not allow such "outrageous" spending by one of its agencies.

REFUSAL OF TREATMENT TO RAPE VICTIM

It's been announced that the Ontario Hospital Association is to review emergency services for rape victims after a 21-year-old woman was refused treatment at Humber Memorial Hospital in Toronto.

The doctor on duty in the emergency department at the time is to face a "review from his peers", according to the hospital, and the Attorney-General has ordered a police report on the case. The Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons has undertaken to "make enquiries about this case".

A spokesman for the Rape Crisis Centre has charged that it is "quite common" for treatment to be refused all over Metro Toronto, and the police have stated that they would welcome a Ministry of Health investigation because doctors at the hospital have been refusing to treat rape victims for four or five years. Liberal leader David Peterson asked in the Legislature why the government has delayed so long in taking action about this type of incident in view of the fact that it has been aware of discrimination and refusal to give treatment to rape victims. Why is the government not moving with despatch, he asked.

RESTRAINT PROGRAM
Opposition members continue to press the government on the subject of OHIP fees, asking why these have not been included in the restraint program, as administered prices. Under what section of the Act are they excluded, asked David Peterson.

While the Liberal Caucus has supported the restraint program as a first step, we have proposed that a committee be struck to consider a number of areas where improvements were necessary, including the following:

- broader controls, and particularly tougher restraint on administered prices

- a rollback of doctors' fees next year to 5 per cent, if voluntary restraint is not forthcoming

- a more flexible "sliding scale" to cushion employees at the lower end of the ladder

- no pass-through price increases for Ontario Hydro above 3 per cent

- extension of the length of the program by one year to allow sufficient time for economic restructuring

- detailed consideration of the "post-control" phase to guarantee that we are prepared to ensure that "catch-up" settlements do not trigger another inflationary pattern

- review of the blanket removal of the right to strike with consideration for maintaining such rights over non-monetary issues such as health, safety, and working conditions.

Compensation

Everything you'll need to know

Continued from Page 11
earning capacity, and so on.

This is true whether the worker is a dock labourer or a violin maker, and yet the violin maker may be completely unable to earn a living while the dockworker could return to the same job after he or she recovers. The Board justifies this by saying that the capacity of each worker to earn a living is similarly impaired.

In some cases, where earning capacity is impaired far more than is usual for that sort of injury, the Board may award a pension supplement. But you must cooperate with the Board's plan for your rehabilitation and look for a job. A pension supplement is also allowed if you are disabled about the face or head. You can receive up to \$200 per year for damage to your clothing from wearing a back or leg brace, and \$145 per year for damage from an upper limb brace.

Pensions are increased by 10 per cent after one year so long as they were awarded after June, 1981. After that they remain fixed.

Pensions are also awarded for psychiatric claims: brain damage; shock from terrible accident; reaction to treatment; long-term depression; loss of self-confidence and anxiety that results from being out of work; family problems; and so on. These pensions can be permanent (rare), temporary, or paid in a lump sum. Usually they are

quite small.

The Board offers two types of rehabilitation to help you after your accident: medical, and vocational rehabilitation. Medical rehabilitation involves physiotherapy, teaching you how to operate artificial limbs, and so on.

Medical rehabilitation is headquartered at the Board's own hospital in Downsview, the Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre. Vocational rehabilitation is available if you are partially disabled and looking for light work. It involves language training, job search techniques, and job retraining. Your program will depend on your level of education, knowledge of English, disability, age, and "motivation".

You can choose to receive your pension in a lump sum, though often the Board is reluctant to do "commute" the pension on the principle that it must be to your advantage to receive a lump sum. The Board will consider what investment strategies you have, whether you intend to start a business, or if you have some other good use for the money.

The information in this article is accurate as of September 1982. For more information on this and other topics contact COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION ONTARIO, 62 Noble Street, Toronto, M6K 2C8. For legal advice contact your local lawyer or the Halton Hills Community Legal Aid Clinic at 5 Wesleyan St. in Georgetown, 877-5256.

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