

Hearings often lengthy 30 appeal board cases in 5 years

By MARY-LIZ SHAW
Herald Staff

The Ontario Hospital Appeals Board, designed to preside over disputes between hospitals and their doctors has heard 30 cases in the last five years.

According to Health Board Secretariat worker Joy Franklin, the HAB sat for a total of 121 days from January 1982, when the current board was established, until July 1987.

"It may sound like few, but many of these cases take a number of days," Joy Franklin said.

Of the 30 cases heard, the HAB gave 25 written settlements and 5 were adjourned before the board heard the full case.

Joshua Liswood, the counsel for Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital, said he suspects a large majority of the cases have come to the HAB in the last three to four years.

"Doctors are becoming more litigious," he said.

Mr. Liswood added that many hospitals are now facing a "Catch 22" situation.

"On the one hand you have cases in civil courts and malpractice suits saying that hospitals are responsible for the quality and competence doc-

tors are providing," he said. "At the same time, they have to ensure the safety of the community and to respond to that."

But as hospitals try to respond to the community, "they are met by appeals," Mr. Liswood said.

Justice Grange, now famous for his investigation into the Hospital for Sick Children, found a need to establish clearer guidelines when granting doctors privileges at hospitals, Mr. Liswood said.

Joshua Liswood said the original purpose of the HAB in the early 1970s was to deal with new applicants.

"There was a sense that some doctors were being discriminated against," he said. "Hospitals had to come up with cogent reasons to deny access to doctors."

Judge Kenneth Langdon, who chaired the annual meeting of Georgetown hospital in June, said in his speech that "OHA (Ontario Hospital Association) figures indicate that 25 per cent of Ontario hospitals annually restrict privileges of physicians."

"...that number wouldn't surprise me," said OHA Director of Medical Staff Affairs Fernand Scopa. "Many of those doctors would be suspended for having incomplete charts."

A week-long search by the OHA's

records department turned up figures which had been distributed at an OHA conference in 1985.

OHA Communications general manager Peter Wood said the figures belong to a report that does not indicate where the information came from. The report notes that from 1984 to 1985 46.2 per cent of hospitals with over 400 beds restricted the privileges of their doctors.

A table of figures also indicates that 25.9 per cent of hospitals with 200 to 399 beds, 14.9 per cent of hospitals with 100 to 199 beds and 4.2 per cent of hospitals with fewer than 50 beds restricted physicians' privileges that year.

Just over 44 per cent of hospitals with 50 to 99 beds restricted the privileges of their physicians in 1984-1985, the report says.

This figure would include Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital which has 72 beds.

Peter Wood noted that the table does not break down the numbers to distinguish between temporary suspensions for incomplete charts and full revocations for other reasons.

"Those figures may look horrendous on the surface," Peter Wood said. "But, in fact, they are not.

Many of them would be technical restrictions."

The Public Hospitals Act dictates that physicians must submit complete charts of a patient within 72 hours of discharge. Mr. Wood said most hospitals will restrict a doctor's privileges temporarily until his records are brought up to date.

"The number of physicians subjected to restrictions for other reasons would be considerably lower," he added.

Physicians' privileges may be restricted or suspended for reasons which include incomplete charts, or contravening the rules of the hospital in which they practise. The College of Physicians and Surgeons, the licensing body for doctors in Ontario, told The Herald it has no records of the number of physicians who lose their privileges at hospitals. The Ministry of Health staff also said they did not know the numbers.

"What happens between a physician and a hospital is their business," said Doug Enright of the Ministry of Health. "We have no way of knowing that information."

The appeals board hearing into the case of Georgetown's Doctor Jack Ford continues Dec. 7.

Couple plans wedding vows

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Martin are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter Carey to Robert Faber, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Faber. The wedding will be held at Kennedy Road Tabernacle in Brampton on December 26th, 1987. (Photo courtesy The Leighton Image)



400 deer killed in hunt

Close to 400 deer were killed during the recent controlled hunt in the Cambridge district, which includes parts of Halton Region.

A controlled deer hunt in Halton's Agreement Forests began last Monday and ended Friday. Daryl Colson at the Cambridge office of the Ministry of Natural Resources said 377 deer were reported killed in the district from Halton, north of the First Line, Flamboro, North and South Dumfries, Puslinch, Guelph and the northern part of Wellington.

Halton Regional Police said no hunt-related deaths or injuries occurred to persons last week.

"We seemed to have gotten by relatively unscathed," said Sergeant Prewitt.

Raj Mohammed, Commissioner of Planning and Development at the Region of Halton, said he has asked for a report from the Ministry of Natural Resources but has not yet received it.

Mr. Mohammed had posted warning signs around the Region's 1500 acres of Agreement Forests advising passers-by of the controlled hunt.

The Ontario Provincial Police said it has heard of no occurrences concerning the hunt from Halton Region.

Meanwhile, Georgetown police reported three accidents last week caused by deer running across the roads.

A 57-year-old Georgetown man was driving south on the Ninth Line when a deer ran out onto the road from a wooded area and hit the left front and side of his vehicle. The 1980 Ford truck sustained \$1,163 damage, police said. The accident occurred at about 5:30 a.m. Thursday.

A 50-year-old Glen Williams woman suffered minor injuries when she tried to avoid hitting a large deer as she drove along 22 Sidersoad Wednesday. Her 1985 Ford slid on the wet road and landed in the ditch. About \$4,500 damage was caused to the car, police said.

An Erin woman, 61, struck a deer on Trafalgar Road Tuesday and caused about \$2,000 damage to her 1984 Dodge.

Metroland papers closer to strike

Workers at Metroland Community newspapers expect to be in a legal position to strike by the end of November.

A strike at Metroland would affect 160 editors, reporters and photographers covering 17 community newspapers, including five in Halton.

The Georgetown Independent, the Acton Free Press, the Milton Champion, the Burlington Post and the Oakville Beaver would be affected by the strike.

Of the 108 members of the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild who voted on Sunday, 105 voted for strike action while only three people voted against it, said Jeff Andrew, a member of the union negotiating team.

The members also voted overwhelmingly to turn down Metroland's latest contract offer, Mr. Andrew said. With one person abstaining, 107 members voted to reject the contract, he said.

The union is waiting for the Ministry of Labor to sign a no board report, said Mr. Andrew. The union will be in a legal strike position 14 working days after the ministry acknowledges the report.

The Guild's members are fully prepared to walk out before Christmas, Mr. Andrew said.

Major issues to be solved are wages, job security and union shop.

said Mr. Andrew.

The union, which is negotiating its first contract since gaining certification on Feb. 12, is asking for a starting salary of \$475 a week effective Feb. 12, 1987, and an increase to \$525 a week effective Nov. 1, said Mr. Andrew. Metroland is offering \$500 a week to start, he said.

Metroland's chief negotiator John Coleman said management is also offering an increase to \$480 after six years.

A sub-editor would start at \$500 a week with a boost to \$585 after three years under management's current proposal, said Mr. Coleman.

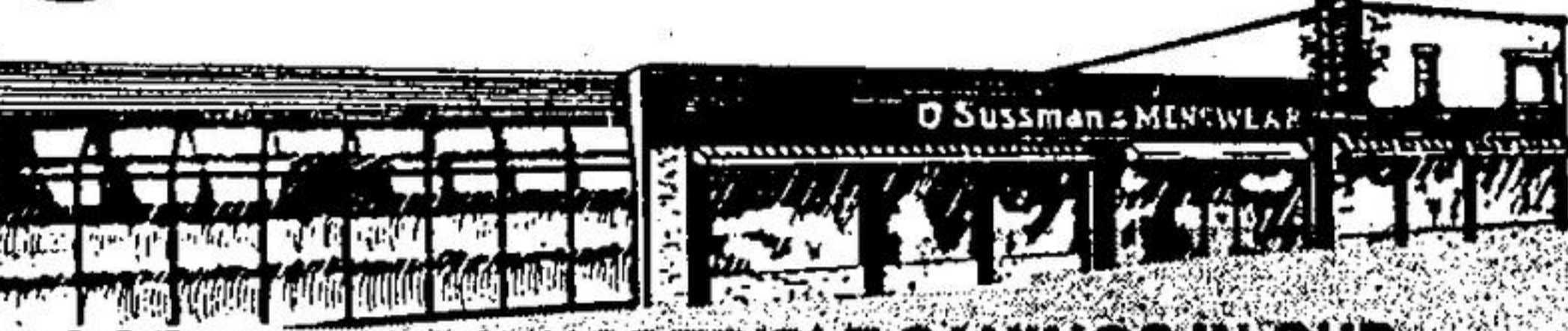
"We have some people who are close to the poverty line," said Mr. Andrew. The poverty line for a family of three is \$18,800 a year, he said.

"We just think that's just ridiculous for a big company like this," said Mr. Andrew.

On average, a reporter or photographer at Metroland makes a little over \$18,000 (a year), Mr. Andrew said. "That's pretty low."

Metroland newspapers combined with the Toronto Star made profits of \$70 million last year, he said.

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