

Queen's Park agenda is packed

The legislative agenda here in Toronto is jam-packed as the government is trying to complete as many reforms as possible before we all break for the summer recess. This has been an exciting week indeed! Besides having the Select Committee on Constitutional Reform submit its final report, changes were made to improve health care and to make insurance rates fairer, while a major set of reforms to the Workers' Compensation Act were introduced by Labour Minister Greg Sorbara.



By WALT ELLIOT
Halton North MPP

First off, Health Minister Elinor Caplan has announced funding of \$18 million to enhance province-wide prevention and treatment initiatives for heart and circulatory diseases.

The funding will greatly expand our ability to care for individuals with heart disease and related conditions. It is a further example of a commitment of my Ministry to renew the emphasis in Ontario health care on disease prevention and health promotion," Mrs. Caplan said.

The financial support will enable the expansion of a heart and health promotion program, which is part of a new three-year healthy lifestyles media campaign being launched by the Ministry this fall. The campaign is aimed at reducing smoking and alcohol consumption while increasing nutrition awareness.

The initiatives include the appointment of a cardiovascular coordinator to oversee all of the Ministry of Health's heart and circulatory disease programs. As well, a central registry to collect data useful in measuring the effect of car-

diovascular surgery on the overall health status of Ontarians will be established.

This financing will dramatically expand heart and circulatory care facilities in Ontario's major hospitals.

Increased consumer protection against unfair insurance practices highlights amendments to the Insurance Act which were introduced by Financial Institutions Minister Robert Nixon this week.

To reduce consumer uncertainty, the new law will require insurance companies to provide individual consumers with the details on how their premiums are determined, and to design application forms that are easily understandable.

In addition, the bill will prohibit the practice of tied-selling, that is, making the issuance or amendment of an automobile policy conditional upon the purchase of another insurance policy.

The bill includes provisions which ensure that there is no discrimination in respect to age, sex, family, marital status or handicap, with respect to contracts of automobile insurance. You may recall that I asked you about those concerns in a recent householder.

The proposed legislation also addresses the existing industry-wide practice of penalizing all household members for the driving record of one family member. The amendments provide the consumer with the option of excluding certain persons for coverage in a policy, giving the policyholder the opportunity to obtain lower rates.

Labour Minister Gregory Sorbara has introduced a package of amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act aimed at making it fairer to both employees and employers, and more effective in helping injured workers return to work. The reforms will correct problems with the workers' compensation system which has been widely criticized for a number of years.

The proposed amendments create a "dual award" system for workers with partial, permanent disabilities. This new approach will compensate

workers for loss of earnings suffered as a result of an injury at work. It will also explicitly recognize, for the first time, the non-economic losses suffered as a result of injuries in the workplace.

The level of earnings-loss benefits will be based on the difference between workers' pre-injury earnings and post-injury earnings capacity. The level of awards for non-economic loss will vary with a worker's degree of disability, and age at the time of injury, up to a maximum of \$65,000.

The earnings-loss provisions replace the current approach, commonly referred to as the "meat chart", which calculates compensation levels purely on the basis of the degree of physical impairment. "It's time to go beyond the meat chart and treat people as human beings," Mr. Sorbara said.

The legislation also establishes a framework for vastly increased emphasis on the goal of helping injured workers return to the workforce earlier and more successfully than in the past.

Employers will be obligated to re-instate injured workers in the jobs they performed prior to their injury, or face financial penalties. Excluded from these provisions are small businesses with fewer than 20 employees, and industries, such as construction, where work patterns make re-instatement unfeasible.

Employers will be required, as well, to maintain their share of contributions for health care, pension and life insurance benefits for up to one year following the date of the injury. "This will serve to strengthen the relationship between employers and their injured employees, thereby facilitating the legislation's return to work provisions."

New responsibilities will be imposed on the Workers' Compensation Board to provide injured workers with vocational rehabilitation services on a timely basis to facilitate re-integration into the workforce.

"We're going to make sure that an injury at work does not mean permanent exile from the workplace," Mr. Sorbara said.

Dial One solar heating system can save pool owners money

Halton Hills can Dial One for solar heat.

In this season of pools, swimming and costly pool heating bills, Bill Orr, Georgetown resident and pool specialist recommends a solar heating system for every swimming pool.

"You stand to save \$8,000 to \$10,000 over 10 years with solar heating, it's the only pool investment with a payback," he said.



Bill Orr

Mr. Orr opened a solar heat company with his brother-in-law 14 years ago, concentrating almost ex-

clusively on installing solar panels and heater systems, in Toronto.

The heating system consists of a heating tank, one-quarter inch linear tubing panels and a valve employing into the swimming pool. The heat and wear-resistant pipe is made of a mixture of polyethylene and polypropylene. Inside the pipe, water generated from the pool is heated and then pumped back into the pool. The result: warm water, heated naturally by the sun.

"Though the initial cost of the system can be upward of \$3,000, Mr. Orr says it is money well spent."

"Within two and a half years, you're going to break even," he said.

Mr. Orr's company is the eastern distributor for FAFCO, the American manufacturer of the solar heating systems and part of the Dial One enterprise, a compendium of over 40 trades and services with a common logo.

"The logo on trucks take away the fly-by-night aspect of our com-

pany," said Mr. Orr.

"Fly-by-night" is how Mr. Orr described the nearly 72 companies emerging since the seventies with the claim of solar heating for life. The companies folded, and left all solar heat installers with a bad name, he said.

"People say to me, 'Friends of mine had that system and it didn't work.' They don't realize solar is a generic name," he said.

Dial One solar heating installations is above reproach, he said.

"The industry has come and gone, and I'm still here."

The customer asking for solar heating will receive panels installed on the roof in a south west to south east location (northern exposures don't receive enough light). The heat from the sun is absorbed in the plastic tubing and water is carried through. The whole process becomes less expensive than conventional heating systems in the long term, said Mr. Orr.

OPP support Special Olympics

Ontario Provincial Police officers and other law enforcement officers from across the province are supporting Special Olympics by running in a series of torch relays culminating in the lighting of the official cauldron at the opening ceremonies in Hamilton, Ontario, on Friday, August 12, at 7:30 p.m.

Special Olympics is an international program of physical fitness, sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with mental retardation.

Officers, from most of the 180 OPP detachments across Ontario, will run over 2,000 miles while carrying ceremonial torches on eight routes that crisscross the province.

The support of local area residents, schools, service clubs, business and municipal leaders is needed to raise funds for Special Olympics on behalf of a participating officer, who then runs in the individual or group's name.

In 1987, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police instituted a Torch Run Relay for the benefit of Ontario

Special Olympics athletes. The program started in 1981 by the Wichita, Kansas, police department as a way to involve local law enforcement personnel with the community and with Special Olympics.

Anyone wishing to support a law enforcement officer in the Special Olympics Torch Run should contact their local police department.

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BILL 113 - RETAIL BUSINESS HOLIDAYS ACT, 1988 AND BILL 114 - EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT, 1988

The Standing Committee on Administration of Justice will meet to consider Bills 113 and 114 commencing Wednesday, August 3, 1988 in the Legislative Building, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario and other locations throughout the province as may be required.

The Committee invites written submissions from individuals, groups or organizations wishing to comment on the above-mentioned Bills. All briefs should be deposited with the Clerk of the Committee no later than Wednesday, September 14, 1988. Requests for appointments to appear before the Committee to make an oral presentation should be directed to the Clerk of the Committee not later than Friday, August 5, 1988 for consideration of the Committee.

ROBERT CALLAHAN, M.P.P. DEBORAH DELLER
Chairman Clerk of the Committee

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Halton overturns decision

Halton Region has overturned a committee decision to allow a Burlington man permission to hook up two houses to a nearby water reservoir.

Rudy Reimer wants to build two houses on 14 acres of land located just north of the Headon reservoir on the Guelph Line in Burlington.

Mr. Reimer plans to build one 12,000-square foot house and one 5,000-square foot house on the property. The land would have about \$1 million worth of landscaping.

Between them the houses would have seven Jacuzzis, nine bathrooms, and three swimming pools (one indoor).

The houses would cost about \$2 million.

Because the property sits outside the Burlington urban area, there is no water services for the land.

Mr. Reimer didn't want to drill a well so he applied to have a small pipe placed across private land (he had obtained an easement) to service his house which sits just north of the reservoir.

Halton's Commissioner of Planning and Development, Rash Mohammed, said the proposal violates Halton council policies as well as the policies of the Official Plan.

The proposal would therefore require an official plan amendment. That process usually requires an application to amend the plan, followed by comments from many different agencies, then a staff report.

However, the committee voted June 29 to approve the application and prepare an official plan amendment, bypassing the process which calls for comments from other agencies, including the City of Burlington.

The decision resulted in phone calls from residents to Burlington Mayor Ioly Bird citing favoritism toward Mr. Reimer, who showed up

at the committee meeting in a white stretch limousine.

The committee decision was precedent setting because the land is not eligible for urban services, growth is not desirable in the area and it was in direct contrast to a motion passed by Regional council one year earlier saying that "no further connections to the Headon trunk feeder main be permitted outside of the urban area."

"If such a position is taken in Burlington, the Region would be forced into re-thinking its servicing objectives and looking at other areas where the urban reservoir is located outside the urban area, and pressure could be brought to bear to connect from homes surrounding the reservoir," said Mr. Mohammed.

"Its approval would be a dangerous precedent."

Approval would also change another major planning policy because servicing would precede planning, said Mr. Mohammed.

"The intent of any planning document is to provide for where growth should most appropriately occur and then to determine the best method of servicing the land," he said.

Both the Region and the city have said they don't want growth in that area, said Mr. Mohammed.

"If council is willing to grant such an application then it can expect pressure from other surrounding residents."

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After a lengthy debate, which included three recorded votes, Regional council overturned the committee decision July 6.

That leaves an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board as Mr. Reimer's last resource to hook up to the reservoir.

Burlington Coun. Joan Little said July 6 a property owner to the south of Mr. Reimer, even closer to the reservoir, had previously applied for the hook-up but did not proceed with it because they were told Regional staff would not support it.

Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller said the vote to turn down the application "takes the rights away" from Mr. Reimer to go through the formal application process.

"I feel very guilty about taking somebody's rights away," said Mayor Miller.

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