

Doctors close to being civil servants ...but without benefits

by Murray Moore
The chief of staff at Huronia District Hospital is concerned more with the tone rather than the specifics of Emmett Hall's recommendations for improvement of Canada's health-care system.

Hall's call to curtail extra-billing (charging

a patient in excess of the money the patient will be refunded from OHIP) is "not of too much significance" here, Dr. Hollister King says, because the local family physicians work within OHIP and do not extra-bill.

However, the option to leave the plan should be available, and the decision to opt out be

left up to the individual doctor. Otherwise, King says, "doctors are closer to becoming like civil servants, but without the benefits, such as pensions, holiday time, and study time."

King commented that it seemed to him that people were reacting to Hall's report without having read it. He is one

of three or four doctors belonging to the 20-member Ontario Council of Health, the senior advisory body to the minister of health. This body, he stated, wouldn't be making any comment until it has studied the report.

King said he understood Hall has concluded that doctors' incomes have not kept

pace with inflation since the early 70's.

On the one hand he understands Hall to say that physicians should be adequately paid, and on the other hand, that premiums should be dropped and that doctors not be allowed to opt out.

If that's the case, he says, health will be financed out of general revenue, and taxes will go up. Society will have to choose between higher taxes or something akin to what it has now, he says.

King pointed out that employers now pay half the premiums of many people.

Arbitration
Binding arbitration could well benefit doctors, if, for example, the province awarded an increase less than the rate of inflation, but "most of us would hate to see the arrangement go that route."

Doctors have never struck in Ontario.

Fee schedules have been agreed on after "fairly vigorous negotiation." The medical profession, King says, has not adopted a union-like stance to date, but when binding arbitration is

suggested, it sounds to him as if society expects the profession to act like a union.

This would, he says, move the profession away "from the profession we would like to have."

Anti-noise bylaw unfair says couple

A Sixth Street, Midland couple who asked that their names not be published for the time being, feel a municipal anti-noise bylaw is unfair.

The couple was recently charged under the bylaw for making noise after 6 p.m.

The pair has been reconstructing their home which was hit by fire some time ago.

"We've tried to make our place look nice and enhance the area so you can imagine what a shock it was to be charged," the wife told this newspaper yesterday.

She said she had approached her member of

council "but he wouldn't do anything for us. We also met with the public works and it looked for a time that they might be able to get a special permit for us to work on our place after supper...but it appears that has failed to even though one of the public works officials said his department has worked after 6 p.m. lots of times this year."

The Sixth Street couple plan to attend Monday night's regular council meeting.

They hope others in the town who are opposed to the bylaw will show up as well.

Polling booth location assigned

Port McNicoll Council chose a new polling booth location for the upcoming municipal elections at a meeting held Tuesday in the Port McNicoll Municipal Office.

The decision, under the title of Bylaw No. 673, made effective immediately the choice of the Port McNicoll Legion as the location of the polling booth.

Deputy Returning Clerk will be Helen Duncan, with Poll Clerks Sandra King, Judi Dubbin and Barbara Young.

The advance poll will also be held at the Port McNicoll Legion with Helen Duncan as the deputy returning officer and Sandra King as the poll clerk.

The returning officer will again be the clerk-treasurer of Port McNicoll Council for the municipal elections.

It was also provided for by the bylaw that the fees paid for these duties would be \$45 for the deputy returning officer, \$35 for the poll clerks and \$150 for the returning officer.

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