

Docs vs OHIP!

Three-day 'doc-out' wage fight

BATTLE LINES DRAWN

Docs walk as pay war heats up

As of press time last night, many of the province's doctors were still involved in a two-day walkout which was to have concluded today.

Ontario's hopes for a settlement in a pay war that has been rocking the province of late were dashed earlier this week after the Ontario Medical Association rejected Health Minister Larry Grossman's most recent offer.

Grossman's new offer would have stretched the doctors' pact with the province to five years and would have given physicians three per cent increases in the fourth and fifth year.

Meanwhile about half of Orillia's doctors agreed last Friday to stay on the job this week during province-wide protests saying that although they support their colleagues across the province they'll not take part in the walkouts but instead will give their profits from their work yesterday to a hospital building fund in the city.

Charges galore

Midland police laid 45 charges last month in town under the Criminal Code, five under the Liquor Control Act, two under the Narcotics Control Act, 39 under local bylaws and 84 under the Highway Traffic Act including 52 for speeding.

During March a total of 490 parking tags were issued in Midland.

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After May 1st
You're
On Your Own

by Shirley Whittington

The doctors are fed up and they're not going to take it any more.

Hurononia's physicians and surgeons are staging a three-day "doc-out."

As far as medical services are concerned yesterday today and tomorrow are like Sunday - with only emergency service being provided.

"This is our only weapon," says Dr. Peter Cameron, area Ontario Medical Association representative. "Believe me, the decision to use it was not undertaken lightly."

Another withdrawal of services is planned for May 5, 6 and 7.

The doctor's strike means elective surgery will be deferred at Huronia District Hospital. To ensure that patients will not suffer any adverse effects, a three man committee has been struck at HDH to review all instances of cancelled elective surgery.

Dr. Herman Jilesen, president of HDH medical staff explains, "In the case, say, of a biopsy for suspected malignancy - we would call that essential surgery. We will assure that patient care does not suffer."

HDH administrator Ted Pritchard said the withdrawal of services would not cost HDH any more money. "There is perhaps a slightly heavier load in emergency," he says. "But physicians have been cooperating in looking after patients, and it is no different than the service offered on weekends."

Ontario Minister of Health Larry Grossman has sent a telegram to HDH asking the Board to assure that good medical care is being continued during the doctors' strike.

One Midland surgeon is so fed up with what he feels are misleading statements published about doctors' earnings that he decided to make his income public.

Dr. Peter Brasher is enclosing a

letter with all his surgical billings outlining his earnings over the past decade. An accompanying graph shows that his net income increased only \$932 in a 10 year period - a figure which he calculates amounts to a loss when inflation and dollar devaluation are taken into account.

Another Midland physician dramatised his position this way: "I heard today of a patient who opened his mouth for his dentist, was examined, pronounced to be free of cavities and then closed his mouth. This cost him \$45."

In Ontario, a doctor earns about \$11 for seeing a patient in his office.

Meanwhile Dr. Brasher is including the following statement with current patient mailings from his Midland surgical practise.

"As there has been so much nonsense publicized recently about doctors' earnings I would like you to know exactly how much I have been paid since 1970. My gross income, net income and office expenses are set out below."

"My net income in 1981 was \$51,732 and out of this amount I have to pay my own pension, sick pay, insurance OHIP premium - and when I go on holiday, I am not only unpaid but have continuing office expenses."

"This \$51,732 buys just less than half the 1970 \$50,800 bought. I am running faster to stay in the same place, but in fact falling behind."

"If fringe benefits are deducted from the \$51,732, the actual salary I take home is \$41,000 - the same amount that the Simcoe County Board of Education is paying a vice-principal of the local secondary school."

"My qualifications are as follows: five years of medical school to obtain my degree; two years service as a medical officer in the armed forces;

seven years postgraduate specialist training and research in surgery in the University of London (England), Chicago and Saskatchewan. I am a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and Canada, and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. I have published six scientific papers. I have practised surgery in Midland for 25 years."

"At \$41,000 per annum, I think I am under-rewarded by the Ontario government. A \$900 raise over 11 years is not much. But it is not only with regard to doctors' pay that the Ontario government is cheap. The same attitude runs through the Health Service so that the quality of care has already deteriorated and will continue to deteriorate."

"Did you know that OHIP pays nothing for extra seniority, extra qualifications or training skill or experience? Did you also know that OHIP have encouraged and continue to encourage doctors to see more patients in the same time by the recent offer of 4.5 per cent extra for "utilization"? The system encourages quantity not quality."

"I opted out of OHIP in 1979 so that I could deal directly with my patients and also so that my patients could appreciate how OHIP works. You are beginning to find out what all Ontario doctors know - OHIP is a little less efficient and rather slower than the post office. I did not opt out of OHIP to make more money and as you will see, my income dropped slightly."

"The Ontario Government has a monopoly on health service. The Government say they will insure your health care and then they say that they cannot afford to do so fully. The Government has lots of money for other projects. Apparently health care is not top priority. It is you, the patient, who is getting short changed."

Permits reveal story

There were six building permits issued in Midland last month for construction valued at \$373,100.

In March of '81 there were 10 permits issued for a value of \$45,800.

So far in 1982 a total of 22 permits have been issued for a value of \$457,900. During the same period in '81, a total of 20 permits were issued for a value of \$80,900.

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