



queen's park

Not much in Throne Speech

By ALF STONG
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 Though the Throne Speech which opened the session was one of the longest in recent memory, new initiatives were few indeed.

Among the highlights were a promise of an employment development fund to co-ordinate aid to industry and "spur economic activity and employment". The Provincial Treasurer is to be chairman of a special board of Ministers to decide which companies qualify for assistance, and how much money is to be involved in each case. New measures are to be taken to encourage the flow of risk capital into new and expanding small businesses, and the speech indicated that programs to encourage investment in entrepreneurial business ventures have failed in recent years. One rumored possibility is a

form of tax rebate for money invested.

The Minister of Labor will henceforth be known as the Minister of Labour and Manpower, and will be responsible for job creation programs. There is to be greater emphasis on more training in skilled trades and on the development of "a more positive attitude among young people" toward these trades.

Priority is promised for special programs for women in the public and private sectors. An Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee, composed of senior labor and management representatives, is to be established within the Labor Ministry.

FOOD PRICES
 Food prices are, of course, a matter of concern to the average citizen, and the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations is to assist consumers make

informed choices by establishing a program to monitor and report on prices across the province.

Some of the money made on the sale of Ontario's shares in the Syncrude oil-sand project in Alberta is to go to energy-related businesses, including those using energy produced from waste, and the government hopes soon to launch a joint program with the federal government which would make available some \$58 million over a five-year period to demonstrate new technology in energy conservation and renewable energy.

Legislation is to be introduced to allow unorganized Northern municipalities to give locally elected bodies the power to raise revenue and provide basic services.

General insurance agents and brokers will

be permitted to become self-regulating, as a step toward removing what many people consider government over-regulation.

The government has maintained that spending on social services will not be reduced in favor of grants to industry, and "after careful review" it has withdrawn a suggestion mentioned by the Premier in a recent speech, that some drugs might no longer be available under the drug benefit program for the elderly.

The Throne Speech stated that "some may wish to argue as to whether the primary emphasis of this session should be directed to improving the economic climate of Ontario or to improving the social services available to our people. In truth, extensive attention must be paid to both".

HOME CARE

Home care services for the chronically ill will be extended and hospitals will get additional beds. Starting April 1, there is to be a \$9.80 per diem fee for those using chronic care beds for a period longer than 60 days. Steps

will be taken to make permanent special transit services for the physically disabled — a pilot project in five communities, and there will be a gradual expansion of these projects to other communities.

The program will continue to depend on volunteer involvement. At the same time provision will be made for grants to municipalities through amendments to the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act. Home care services for chronically ill patients who wish to live at home, but who require some nursing and other medical assistance, will be extended.

The International Year of the Child is to be marked by an intensive immunization awareness campaign directed at the public, and particularly parents of young children. Specialized services such as poison control centres will be established in the children's hospitals.

The second phase of The Children's Law Reform Act will recognize the best interests of the child in custody and access cases. Foster care programs for mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed children will be expanded. Increased funding will be allocated to programs to counter child abuse. This year's Civic Holiday on August 6 will be declared Children's Day in all provincial parks.

Landscaping will include a shuffleboard area, benches and tables and garden plots for residents.

The anticipated start of construction will be April 30, 1979.

One of the most notable aspects of the Throne Speech was the unprecedented emphasis upon national unity and constitutional reform. The Government's position will no doubt come before the House in the near future, for unanimous support.

In the weeks ahead, I'll be reporting on the debate on the Throne Speech and other matters. Of course, much will depend on the Provincial Budget.

New building for seniors will begin in 2 months

Construction of a new senior citizens housing complex will begin in a couple of months but the date of completion is not scheduled until June of 1980.

Ontario Housing Corporation awarded a \$1,477,760 contract, excluding land, to a Mississauga firm, Napev Construction Limited, February 19, and final drawings have been submitted for review.

The building, west of the existing senior buildings on Dunlop Street, will house 80 units and is proposed to be seven storeys in height and will contain two centrally located elevators.

It will contain the typical OHC one-bedroom apartments with a number of specially designed handicapped units to accommodate wheel chairs.

Landscaping will include a shuffleboard area, benches and tables and garden plots for residents.

The anticipated start of construction will be April 30, 1979.



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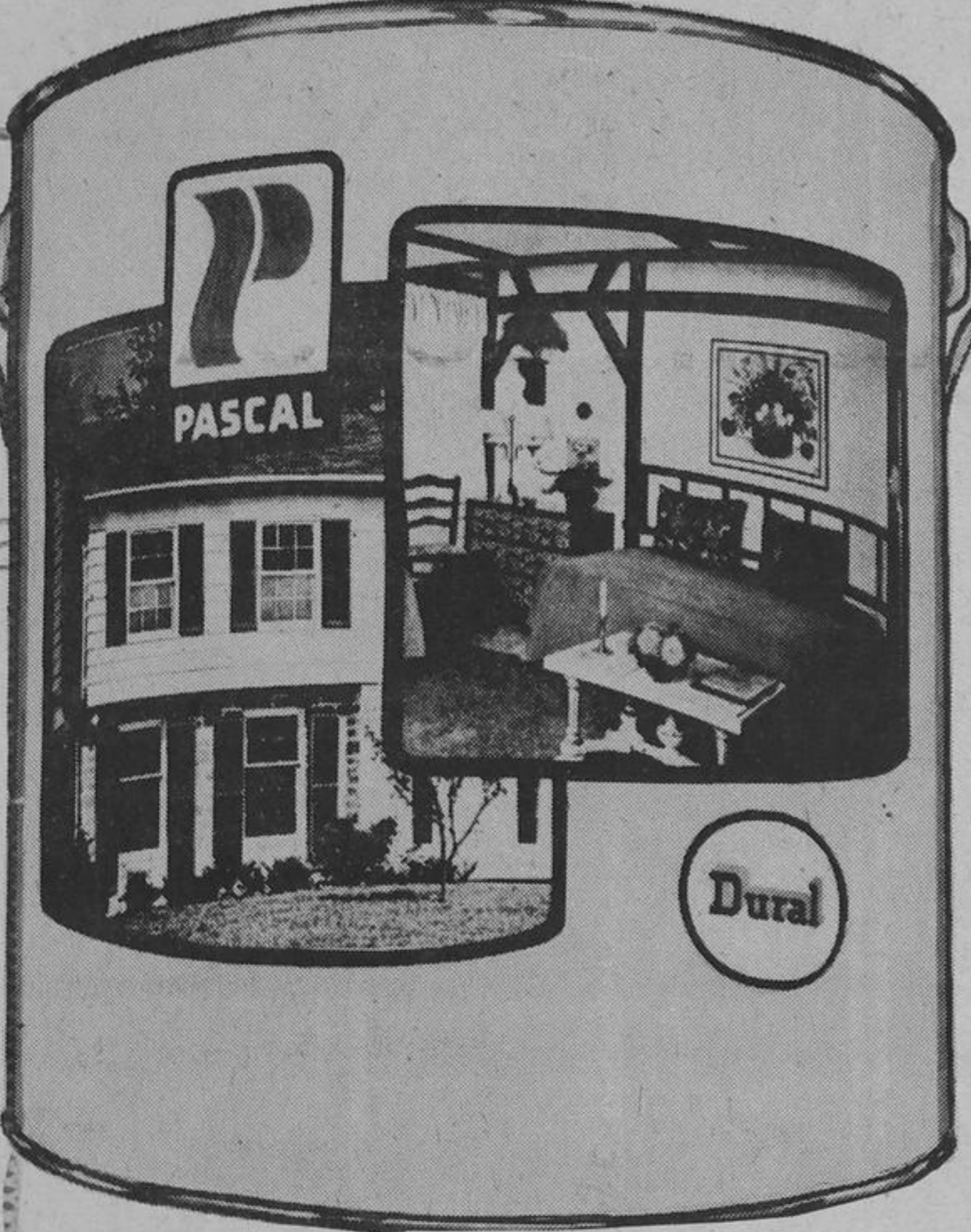
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