

# Air ambulance contracts approved

Toronto, May 30 — Air ambulance contracts estimated to be worth 8 million have been announced. Contracts for service starting May 31 have been approved for helicopters flying out of Sudbury, Toronto and Thunder Bay and for a fixed-wing aircraft flying out of Sioux Lookout. In addition, the contract for the fixed-wing ambulance service in Timmins has been extended for one year. The five specially equipped air ambulances, Bandages 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, last year flew 2,130 patients, most of them critically ill or injured, from

hospitals in outlying areas to major medical centres. Charter aircraft are used to transfer less critical patients, primarily in Northern Ontario. Altogether, the air ambulance service carried about 8,000 patients last year.

"The air ambulance service has been one of the government's most effective health care initiatives," said Health Minister Larry Grossman. "This year, we are expanding its capabilities by opening additional 24-hour heliports. There are 21 now in operation."

"The air ambulanc-

ce makes a significant contribution to health and peace of mind for those in northern communities," said Mr. Bernier. "It means expert medical help for those in critical need of it, is only minutes rather than hours away."

Contracts for Bandage 1, a Bell 212 helicopter, operating out of Buttonville Airport near Toronto, and Bandage 2, another Bell 212, operating out of Sudbury, go to Toronto helicopters.

Bandage 3, a Sikorsky helicopter, operating from Thunder Bay will be provided by Dominion Pegasus.

The ambulance service in Timmins, Bandage 4, will be provided again by a Citation Jet, operated by Aust-in Airways.

Bandage 5, a Beechcraft King Air 200 aircraft, operating out of Sioux Lookout, will be run by Air Dale Limited.

The contracts cov-

er aircraft, air crew and maintenance. The Buttonville, Sudbury and Thunder Bay contracts are for two years with options to renew for a third year. The Sioux Lookout and Timmins contracts are for one year.

Total 1983-84 costs for the five dedicat-

ed air ambulances, including specially trained attendants, are expected to be 10.5 million, with 3.8 million provided by the Ministry of Northern Affairs and 6.7 million by the

Ministry of Health. The health ministry has allocated a further 5.2 million in 1983-84 for chartered air ambulance service and out-of-province ambulance costs.

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