

Alcohol Management in Public Recreation Facilities

"Individual volunteers on the front line, providing the program, whether its driving a car or counselling somebody or even providing food to somebody who's shut in, they carry a whole bunch of various liabilities for which they can be sued" and "a volunteer board member can individually be sued." Those were comments by Mr. John Fisher, President of the Institute for Non-Profit Organizations, as he addressed a workshop in Sudbury on June 6

attended by municipal officials and volunteers. He stated that "volunteers and volunteer organizations are a good deal more vulnerable than they have ever been. Last year, something in excess of two million dollars in lawsuits were brought against gymnasias, community halls, where people participated as volunteers in programs led by volunteers. That has come as quite a shock to everybody," he said. Fisher spoke to 120

mayors, reeves, municipal councillors, recreation directors, addiction workers and clergy. Hailed by organizers as the first of its kind, the workshop focussed in on the "Management of Alcohol in Public Recreation Facilities." It was sponsored by the Addiction Research Foundation and included other presentations by Sudbury Mayor Peter Wong (who gave the keynote address); Doug Rolling, Director of the Special Occasion Permit Department of the L.L.B.O.; Ron Douglas, Program Consultant for the Northern Region of the Addiction Research Foundation and Mrs. Marg Thomson, Policy and Planning Developer for the Thunder Bay Parks and Recreation Department.

In speaking about volunteers' functioning in alcohol related events in Public Recreation facilities, Mr. Fisher stated that "there's an interesting body of law called 'loco parentis' (That's Latin) and what it means essentially is, 'transferring the responsibilities of a parent, as it were, onto the shoulders of a volunteer', when dealing for example with disabled people - meaning somebody who is not as equipped or as enfranchised as you are to cope in this world." "And," he stated, "that it often happens in volunteer programs that you're working with disabled people mentally or physically." He added, "I don't know in law how a court makes a

judgement about somebody who is inebriated and their relationship with a volunteer from a municipality who might for example be serving them a substance to inebriate them - what responsibility the individual doing the serving or supervising the program may have. But I think its interesting to note that according to common law, when there is a factor of disability present, that in relation to that disability the onus on the volunteer increases. And that would suggest to me that anybody who is involved with the serving of alcohol or supervising programs where

alcohol is apparent, may from time to time, because of the factor of inebriation, carry an unusual burden of responsibility!"

Queried about the possibility of getting volunteers to participate in the face of these liabilities, Mr. Fisher stated that careful selection and the training of volunteers is absolutely essential for volunteer organizations which value their name and position in the community. Under these conditions, volunteers are fully ready to serve because they know where they are at.

Mrs. Marg Thomson, Policy and Plan-

ning Developer for the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Thunder Bay made it clear that in the Thunder Bay Alcohol Management Policy (believed to be the first such policy to be implemented for municipalities in Canada or the U.S.), provides for the training of volunteers who operate alcohol related functions in Parks and Recreation facilities. "Furthermore," she stated, "procedures for people obtaining special occasion permits for functions in Community Centres are very clearly outlined and followed."

In his review of volunteer liabilities and res-

possibilities for alcohol related functions, John Fisher made it clear that municipal officials like a Mayor and Councillors are also liable in part for what goes on in these activities and may also be subject to civil suit should there be negligence that results in injury to party or parties.

The one day workshop held in Sudbury was attended mostly by people from North and Northeastern Ontario. A few were present from Kenora, Thunder Bay and Terrace Bay. Organizers are hopeful that a similar conference may be arranged in the fall for the Northwestern Region.

THANK YOU

The family of the late Mrs. Agnes McCouan wish to express sincere thanks and appreciation to all the relations and friends for their kindness shown during the loss of a dear mother, grandmother, great grandmother and great, great grandmother. To all who sent flowers, cards, food and charitable donations. To Dr. Lau and the nurses of the McCausland Hospital, to Rev. Bigelow, Mrs. Wendy Martin, the choir, to the U.C.W. for the lunch after the service, to the King Funeral Home and to the five grandsons and Chris for serving as pallbearers.

Also thanks for the food, cards and flowers we received on the passing of our sister Lil who passed away on May 29, 1984. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated and will always be remembered.

The McCouan Family

Our Forests Aren't that Great

Natural Resources Minister, Alan Pope, has a lot to answer for! He has been claiming for some time now, that Ontario's forests are in better shape than critics claim. Now a report from within his own ministry is a damning incident of past reforestation practices.

According to a report by George Marek, a thirty year professional forester, our forests are not going to give us the wood supply as previously promised by Mr. Pope.

Mr. Marek examined forests in the north central region of the province, and there is no reason to believe that his observations would be different in other parts of Ontario.

Among his observations:

(1) "The majority of silvicultural treatments in all three subject areas did not result in fully stocked stands of desirable species, except in a few isolated areas. Most of the treated cutovers will not produce stands of conifers which would compare favourably with the original stands which grew on these sites. There are too many failures throughout the North Central region."

(2) "Sometimes only a close inspection with confirmation of records could distinguish the treated from the untreated area."

(3) "It was obvious from the beginning that the past and current silvicultural strategies in the districts have been and are the subject of frequent changes.

These changes are rather experimental in nature, proving that there is no long-term commitment to any one silvicultural strategy."

(4) "It is extremely difficult for the Ministry of Natural Resources staff to adapt to such frequent changes in strategy, especially where the district target assignment seems to be the prime preoccupation."

(5) "The district staff quite casually admitted that the situation in the bush was quite different from the situation shown in the records."

(6) "It is recommended that better utilization of merchantable timber be enforced. There is still a lot of pure waste."

The criticisms go on and on, but Mr. Marek

does not stop at being critical; he has one positive suggestion for the Ministry. Among them:

(1) "Survival rate of planted trees must be improved."

(2) "The stocking to valuable conifers must be higher."

(3) "Better quality site preparation must be more specific and improved equipment must be made available to the field manager."

(4) "Vigorous tending of young stands must be ensured."

Mr. Marek has done us all a service by presenting a frank and honest report to the Minister. It's time we had a similar kind of response from Mr. Pope. Mr. Pope's passion for secrecy and his bunker mentality are not appropriate.

Northwest receives Operating Grant

Northern Affairs Minister Leo Bernier has announced a \$57,500 operating grant to Chambers of Commerce Northwest Inc.

This advisory group, representing the business community in Northwestern Ontario, will use the grant to cover operating expen-

ses to the end of December, 1984. It was formed in 1980 with members from the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce and maintains close links with the associated Chambers.

Commerce Northwest president Larry Fontana of Atikokan, says his group will continue its mandate to advise the Ministry of Northern Affairs of business concerns. This year they will focus on such issues as:

- How to reduce imports to Northern Ontario by the forest and mining industries;
- Changes needed in the types of business incentives now available;
- Financial and consulting services needed to help restructure the northern logging industry; and
- Determining the priority issues business people want to bring to the provincial government.

In announcing the grant, Bernier said that advisory groups such as Commerce Northwest,

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