

# York Central Hospital cuts staff and beds

**By KEVIN SHEEHY**  
York Central Hospital has been forced to lay off 42 staff members and close 34 beds to prevent a \$500,000 deficit by year end.

York Central's executive director Jim Hepburn announced the layoffs at a press conference Thursday, explaining that the hospital is experiencing financial problems for two reasons: an insufficient increase in operating funds from the Ministry of Health, coupled with a rapidly growing patient load.

Ironically, the hospital has received \$1.5 million in additional Ministry of Health funding last December to open a 34-bed unit and another operating room that it previously couldn't afford to staff.

Reading from a prepared statement, Mr. Hepburn said, "One problem the hospital has faced is that the inflation rates over the past few years have not been fully funded."

"This year, most Ontario hospitals, including York Central, received an increase of approximately 3.9 per cent. The Ontario Hospital Association determined that hospitals needed 5.2 per cent to break even during this fiscal year. It is this type of financial problem, plus our increasing patient load that has caused the strain on our budget."

Mr. Hepburn noted that the hospital has faced "many financial problems in the past year and has tried to be innovative to try to alleviate them."

Mr. Hepburn and representatives of the hospital's board of trustees have met with the Minister of Health several times in hopes of obtaining more financing, but have not been successful.

## Can't meet payroll

"Our cash position decreased from April 1st's fairly adequate position of \$1.1 million to a level of \$290,000 as of Aug. 31, 1985," he said. "This cash level will not permit us to meet bi-weekly payroll costs of over \$850,000 without borrowing."

On Aug. 31, the hospital was \$233,000 in the red and the deficit would grow to \$500,000 by the end of the year if there weren't any layoffs, he explained.

The layoffs, which will take effect Nov. 1, will save the hospital \$490,000, enabling York Central to be "near the break-even point," Mr. Hepburn said.

# Rowe decides not to seek re-election

Markham school board trustee Earl Rowe won't be seeking a second term.

Mr. Rowe, who currently represents Ward 4, has completed one three-year term on the board.

"I've taken on greater responsibility in my workplace," Mr. Rowe said in an interview. He works as an economist with the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.

"I'm confident that someone (capable) will come forward (to run in Wards 4 and 5)," he said.

He did not rule out a return to the school board at some future time.

"I really enjoyed it," he said of his three years on the York Region Board of Education.

The layoffs will result in 34 beds being closed and the hospital's Physical Rehabilitation Department will end all out-patient services. As well, the hospital has postponed plans to purchase new equipment. (This does not apply to any equipment purchases by the hospital's foundation.)

The rapid growth in southern York Region has significantly increased the hospital's patient load, Mr. Hepburn said. He noted that the emergency department handled 45,000 cases in 1983, 50,000 in 1984, and will likely handle 70,000 in 1985.

## Costs cut

The cost cuts "come as a shock," he said, but admitted the hospital has been concerned about possible financial trouble for some time. Hospital representatives have been meeting with the Ministry of Health since last November, he said.

"If job openings do come up at the hospital, staff that were laid off will be given "first priority to come back," he said.

Mr. Hepburn admitted, though, that, in effect, the layoffs are "permanent layoffs."

Lorne Reesor, chairman of the board of trustees, said it is difficult to "blame" the Ministry of Health for the hospital's financial woes.

"Our own evaluation is that there really isn't enough money in the system and they have a tremendous problem meeting everyone's demands," Mr. Reesor said.

York Centre MPP Don Cousens told The Liberal that he is upset with cutbacks at York Central and vowed to lobby for increased funding for the hospital.

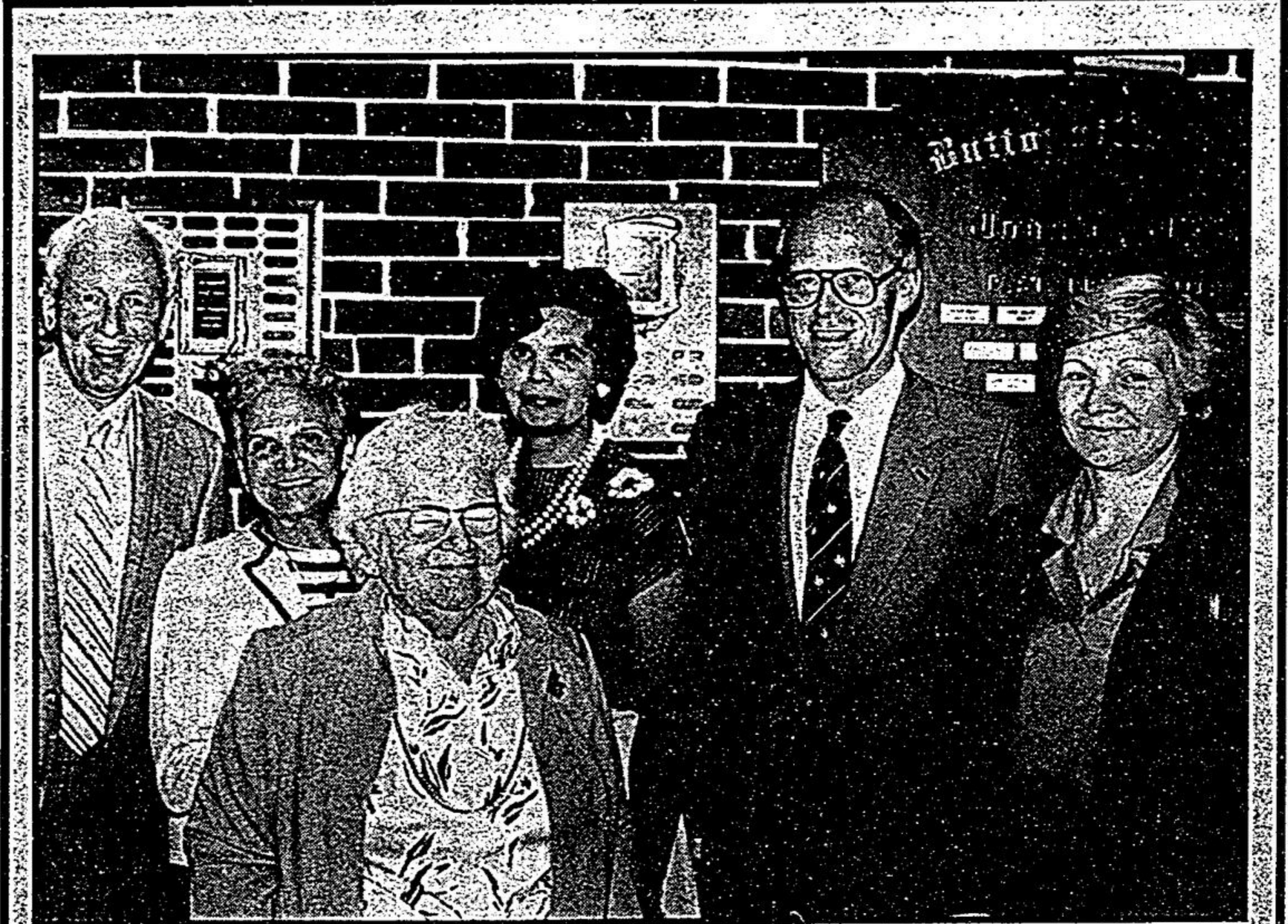
## Being punished

"I want a solution, there's no way we can tolerate a cutback in essential services. It's imperative that the province accept the responsibility of serving the fastest-growing community in North America. Our community is being punished for being a growing community."

Mr. Cousens said he did not fault the hospital administration for its decision.

"I have a lot of respect for the hospital which is efficiently run as there's no fat in the system."

He said he has already asked the Minister of Health to meet with him as soon as possible to review the situation.



York Centre MPP Don Cousens stands among several members of his Seniors Advisory Council. From left are: Jack MacKay, Audrey Annan, Alma Walker, Carla Monk and to the right of Mr. Cousens, Mary Mirkopoulos. — Paula Crowell

## Seniors Advisory Council

# Group set to study needs

Senior citizens are an important part of society now and will be an even more significant group as years go by. That's why York Centre MPP Don Cousens has established a new council to study their needs.

Mr. Cousens, the shadow cabinet critic for Senior Citizens Affairs, has set up the Seniors Advisory Council to help him gather facts on the problems of seniors.

One of the issues discussed at the first meeting of the council was housing.

Mr. Cousens said, "We know there are shortages of rest homes, care beds and chronic care beds, but I need to know how serious the problem

is, and what we can do to solve the present housing crisis."

The council is made up of men and women from across the riding who have experience and interest in senior citizens affairs.

Members include: Jack MacKay, Hope Holmstead, Irene Evans, Audrey Annan, Mary Mirkopoulos, Carla Monk, Joyce Stirling, Vi Lamb, Alma Walker, Jim Jackson, Shirley Burchell, Betty Leadbeater and Alex Litt.

The next meeting of the council will be held in late November. Mr. Cousens hopes to meet about four or five times a year to discuss the findings of his council.

# Burnett runs for hydro again

Bill Burnett will be seeking a third term on Markham's Hydro Commission, he announced Monday.

The 14-year resident of Markham is currently vice-chairman of the five-member commission. Four of the five seats are up for grabs—the fifth member is appointed by Markham Council.

## Studio 134 still serving

Studio 134 will continue to serve liquor, despite the fact that its liquor licence has not been renewed.

The tavern was refused a licence renewal by the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario (LLBO) last week but owner John Lazarou has since filed an appeal.

If the licence had been revoked or suspended, there is a provision in the law that allows a stay of the decision until the appeal is heard.

But Town Solicitor Ray Kallio said there is no precedent in the law for an appeal of an unexpired liquor licence.

"We're (the Town) of the opinion he (Mr. Lazarou) shouldn't be operating, but until the court decides, you can't say who's right."

"He's flaunting the decision of the board and flaunting the law," Mr. Kallio said.

His appeal will be heard by the Commercial Registration Appeal Tribunal, the next stage at the LLBO. Any action after a decision of the tribunal would go to divisional court, the solicitor explained.

Mr. Burnett, technical director at Unionville High School, was first elected in 1980. His other involvements have included past supervisor of the night school at Thornlea Secondary School and past president of the Minor Hockey Association. He is also on the Markham Fair Board, is a member of Unionville Alliance Church and is a volunteer instructor with St. John Ambulance.

In a press release, he noted that Hydro issues include a fight for low rates, innovative approaches to cost reduction, co-operation in attracting new industries, updating of services in older areas of Markham, negotiation of purchase of assets from Ontario Hydro, and maintenance of reliable service for Markham's high technology firms.



BILL BURNETT Seeking third term



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