

City doctor charges health needs neglected

By JAMES BAILEY
Mississauga residents are receiving "shoddy and unfair treatment" from the ministry of health in its neglect of the growing need for expanded hospital facilities, in this city a Mississauga doctor has charged.

Dr. Boyd Upper, of Elite Drive, says "Mississauga hospital has been servicing Mississaugans with an inadequately-sized hospital for more than a decade." Dr. Upper is upset by Health Minister Dennis Timbrell's recent announcement that funds will not be available for a 130-bed expansion of Mississauga Hospital until April 1, 1979 which

means the new beds won't be ready for occupancy until late 1981 or early 1982. "Even if the health minister's present program does come to pass and Mississauga Hospital does have 625 active treatment beds in 1981, it will still provide only 1.93 beds per 1,000 population or less than half the provincial average," Upper adds. (In 1974, the ministry of health reduced the hospital bed population ratio to four beds per 1,000 population; previously it had been five beds per 1,000.)

Merritt Henderson, administrator of Mississauga Hospital, said the cutback to 130 beds from a planned 235-bed ex-

pansion, means "there is going to be a shortage of hospital beds in the City of Mississauga for some time."

"Even with the original 235 beds we were going for, it was a questionable thing if there would be adequate facilities to serve the city until the hospital in Streetsville opens in the 1980s."

"Patients requiring surgery in non-emergency cases at Mississauga Hospital now are put on waiting lists for four to five months, but emergency cases are being handled quickly. "We juggle our priorities on a daily basis," Henderson explained.

The ministry's approach to hospital funding in Mississauga has also drawn fire from the provincial board of the Streetsville District Community Hospital, a building which will remain but a gleam in an architect's eye for another 10 years.

In a statement, the Streetsville board reacted to Timbrell's statement that its hospital won't qualify for funding until 1980-81 with "deepest regret and disappointment."

"The board feels that not only will the deferral of the construction of the hospital result in a critical reduction in the level of health services provided to

the community but that the cutback of the long-awaited and previously-approved extension to the Mississauga General Hospital from 230 beds to 130 beds adds to the critical and dangerous situation."

The Streetsville hospital won't be ready for patients until at least 1987, if funding is not made available before 1981, the board noted. The board members are seeking a meeting with health ministry officials to have the decision reversed.

Statistics prepared by Dr. Upper show that in 1968 — when the hospital bed-population ratio was five per 1,000

— Mississauga had 495 active treatment beds for a population of 135,950, a ratio of 3.64 beds per 1,000.

This year Mississauga's population is 263,650 but the city still has only 495 beds, so the bed-population ratio has dropped to 1.88 beds per 1,000. In 1981, when the city will have an estimated population of 323,500, those same 495 beds will represent a ratio of 1.53 beds per 1,000.

Concludes Dr. Upper: "The total lack of any planning foresight by the ministry of health in regards to the needs of Mississauga is so irresponsible that it borders on the scandalous."

School program cuts expected

By SID RODAWAY
Claiming that "it's about time that someone dug in their heels," trustees of the Peel Board of Education have told staff to prepare a 1978 operating budget that will provide room only for inflation. It means there are going to be major cuts to school programs, probably in those courses using expensive equipment and large amounts of materials. Fancy photography courses could become a thing of the past.

Area taxpayers have been hit the hardest by education budgets over the last few years. While both city and regional government tax rates were pared in 1977, the school board raised its taxes by 14.6 per cent.

"I can't see how we can survive if we keep doing that," said Mississauga Trustee Marg Marland. "If we have to remove certain programs, then the administration will have just to tell us and we will have to tell the people."

The 1977 operating budget was \$141 million. Growth in student population and additional teachers alone would kick up that figure to \$146 million. Maintaining the present level of service would push it

even further — to \$158.9 million for a tax hike of 14.4 per cent.

Mrs. Marland proposed the staff prepare a budget showing an eight per cent increase in expenditures. Brampton Trustee Ted Conover amended the resolution so that the budget also allowed for that estimated \$5 million in growth.

Approved by an easy 17-3 vote, the eight per cent-plus-growth-budget proposal would cost about \$154 million, or about \$5 million less than is needed for a status-quo budget.

The vote was not a commitment to set that figure as the 1978 operating budget, but to work out the details for examination by trustees. If they gag on some of the recommended cuts, they can still increase the budget and taxes further.

Education Director John Fraser told the trustees that if this was a firm directive to cut spending, those cuts would have to start first thing in the New Year, even though budget approval rarely takes place before late spring. To wait until then would force administrators to cut even deeper into programs to make up for the heavier spending during the first four or five months of the year.

In a report to the finance and budget committee, Fraser explained that with an anticipated 4.8 per cent increase in provincial grants, even if the present levels of operation were continued without any new initiatives or programs whatsoever, taxes would have to rise by 14.4 per cent or about the same as they did in 1977.

The cuts, Fraser said, would be made with several priorities in mind: that people (staff) come before material, that no new efforts can be made without a corresponding reduction somewhere else; that when consideration is given to staff cuts it be aimed at all groups and classifications of employees, not just those unprotected by big unions; and that the trustees play a major role in guiding the administration in its cost-cutting efforts.

On this final point, Fraser had some pretty strong words for his elected bosses. He said that in the past few years the school board had been guilty of providing a lack of direction for the staff.

In those same few years, more and more trustees have revealed their increasing frustration at trying to understand and direct the complex budget-making process. Some have gone so far as to say openly that they, as elected politicians, should not be required to decide on what areas should suffer such cuts and that this kind of work should be carried out by the experts.

"We talk tough, but we don't act," said Trustee Terry Lewis. "The decisions must be made at this table. We are the ones who set budgets. We are the ones who set programs."

Bridge subsidy now in question

The one part of the financing of the Burnhamthorpe bridge which councillors thought was firm, the subsidy from the province, now seems to be in question.

After an in camera session of general committee, a motion was passed to send a delegation to the ministry of transportation and communications to negotiate concerning the subsidy.

Council has been squabbling for the last three weeks about the \$8 million project. The main bone of contention has been whether the developers or the city would pay the \$2 million share of the project. The ministry was assumed to be committing \$6 million.

But after reading a letter from Transport Minister James Snow to Mayor Ron Searle, councillors concluded there has been no firm commitment of funds.

A decision to defer the bridge until next year, a motion already recommended by the budget committee, could have serious financial consequences since the MTC is reducing its subsidy for bridge construction year by year.

If Mississauga were to go ahead in 1978 with the subsidy would likely be 80 per cent. Next year it would be 75 per cent with a minimum five per cent reduction in each additional year.

Councillor Hazel McCallion commented that if the project begins in 1978, Ontario should pay 80 per cent of the entire bridge cost, not just 80 per cent of the work done in 1978.

A delay in construction could also result in the ministry further reducing or totally removing the subsidy for the Burnhamthorpe structure since Highway 403 is scheduled to be built across the Credit River valley just slightly to the north in the early 1980s.

The delegation named to go to Queen's Park includes councillors McCallion, Terry Butt and Mayor Searle.

Earlier, councillors expressed dismay that they are being excluded from levy negotiations between the Big Three developers and city staff. Those negotiations could have a very direct effect on the financing of the bridge. The city manager has promised council a report on the negotiations by Dec. 30.

Staff complimented for belt-tightening

For pulling off what must be a financial miracle compared to the inflationary spending habits of most government agencies, Peel's social services department has received strong praise from Mississauga Ward 2 Councillor Mary Helen Spence.

In a recent report to Peel council, she pointed out that for the last three years the social services department, the body responsible for welfare administration, senior citizen homes and day care across the region, has managed to maintain a virtual zero

growth budget, despite a 37 per cent increase in local population.

In 1975, the department spent a little less than \$2.3 million. In 1976, the department cut back by \$30,000 and in 1977 prevented the budget from rising above \$2,317,821, or only one per cent above the 1975 expenditure level.

Her report stated that in early 1974 the department employed 404 people, with 299 of those in the region's two big homes for the aged. By this year, the staff had climbed by only 13 more people.

Mrs. Spence said that

the department and its commissioner, Jim Crozier, had maintained a strong public image and had helped remove the stigma of "welfare" from Peel while at the same time expanding the department's programs with little increase in expenditures.

She predicted that this restraint would not be maintained in 1978 because of continuing growth and changing social needs within Peel.

"It is imperative that council recognize that to withhold growth in per-

sonal services, while allowing unbridled growth in our population base, is to address folly," she stated.

Mrs. Spence predicted marked increases in services to senior citizens, particularly in view of the freeze on the construction of long-term health-care facilities in Peel for the next two years. Increased marriage breakdown, unemployed workers' training programs and the encouragement of job-creation programs in the free-enterprise field will all make increased

demands in 1978 as well.

While conceding that financial restraint will have to be exercised next year, she urged that such restraint be imposed equally across all regional government departments. In past, some supporters of the department have said that it trimmed its budgets too effectively, while other regional departments saw their budgets grow.

Mrs. Spence served as chairperson of regional council's social services committee during 1977.



Times photos by GORM LARSEN

Great horned owls may lose their nesting place in the city if a proposed sewer line is allowed along Harkiss Road, according to Bernice Inman, caretaker of the Winding Lane bird sanctuary. Mrs. Inman appeared before the Credit Valley Conservation Authority executive committee to seek a stop-work order on the project.

Sewer line could harm owls' home

By JOHN STEWART

One of the last wildlife corridors through Mississauga and the last preserve of the Great Horned Owl in the city will be destroyed if a sanitary sewer line is allowed along the Harkiss Road allowance.

Bernice Inman, who runs the Winding Lane bird sanctuary on the west side of Mississauga Road, about a quarter mile north of Dundas Street, told the Credit Valley Conservation Authority executive committee that it is "your job to preserve the environment."

Appearing as an unscheduled deputation, Mrs. Inman asked the conservation authority to place a stop-work order on engineers for a developer who will be constructing a sewer route beside the three-acre sanctuary. Mrs. Inman described the area as "virgin forest" and said the sanctuary performed several important functions besides being a place where injured birds are cared for.

It is the site of research, which is very important because the problems in the birds' food cycle can often anticipate similar problems in man's, explained the head of the preserve. It also serves as an educational area. "It's the only place where children can learn the basics of preservation of nature and within an hour can be changed over so that they will not go into the wilderness and destroy everything."

The site, which has been designated in the city's draft Official Plan as an environmental protection area where development should take place only under strict supervision, will be largely destroyed if there is haphazard intrusion by man claimed Mrs. Inman.

She said Mississauga had passed bylaws 10 years ago to protect the area and to provide "all quiet greenbelt" around it.

Last April, the executive committee approved the crossing of the Sawmill Creek Valley to service the development coming in Erin Mills South between Dundas and Burnhamthorpe, Erin Mills Parkway and Mississauga Road.

CVCA chairman Grant Clarkson said he had been fighting to preserve the Sawmill Valley for many years. "If you'll go back in history you'll see that it was us who got the sewer out of the valley of the creek and up onto higher ground."

The route for the sanitary sewer line was selected by the region of Peel because going along Mississauga Road would require affecting a designated "scenic route" and the destruction of trees. It is also \$75,000 more expensive.

An alternative is use of the Featherstone Drive Road allowance. However, a pumping station in someone's backyard would be necessary and it is likely that a lengthy expropriation would also be required if any existing homeowner refused to co-operate.

The authority's regulation enforcement officer, George Papadopoulos, said the developer had already been required to change his proposed crossing of the creek. He will now be asked to put the sewer underneath proposed channel works in the Sawmill valley.

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Instant wealth: Three different views

By SID RODAWAY
We all dream of winning big. It's dreams that lotteries are made of and most of us have put in at least several hours fantasizing what we would do if Faye Dance and Fred Davis picked our ticket's number on Thursday night.

It appears that winners are divided into two basic categories: Those who can use the money (some almost desperately); and those who are happy to have won it, but are doing just fine without it, thank you very much.

Cecil and Annamarie Hightower are the classic representatives of the former. Their boat came in last April 28 with a \$100,000 on board from Wintario Lottery.

Then residents of an apartment on Queen Frederica Drive, the Hightowers' win brought two years of hard luck to a close.

Cecil, 26, had earned his living as a truck driver, but in March, 1975, his leg was badly crushed between a truck and a boxcar at the Ontario Food Terminal in Toronto.

Living off workmen's compensation since the accident, the doctors told Cecil that he could start looking for less demanding kinds of work last December. But with his disability, he could not find a job. Things looked bleak.

Then Wintario came to the rescue. The young couple had few bills owing, despite his injury, and at the time they told this

reporter their main purchase would be a new van. The Hightowers are van nuts and were members of a van-owners' club.

In July, however, they decided to buy a home for cash in nearby Etobicoke. "That was the best thing we did with our winnings," Cecil said on Friday.

What with cash gifts to the relatives, most of the money was used up. They haven't travelled, but they do have a newly-decorated home with no mortgage payments and a new van to show for their good luck.

Cecil continued to look for work, but with the exception of a three-day stint doing deliveries with his own van, he has remained at home.

With a permanent partial disability, he now has a pension from the Workmen's Compensation Board.

Meanwhile, Annamarie, the buyer of the Wintario Ticket, is working for an express outfit driving vans on delivery.

The cash may be gone, but the Hightowers figure they got their money's worth.

A completely opposite situation was experienced by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Loudon of Pinkwell Drive in Mississauga. They were delighted to win the big one (\$100,000 Wintario) in October, 1978 and now are feeling the warm glow of never having any financial worries. But life was already good for the Loudons and they

have continued to live just as they always did.

"There hasn't really been any change in our lives," Robert Loudon said before Christmas. "We had a few friends over for one big party and we paid off what was still owing on the mortgage, but other than that life has continued much like it always did."

"It's not that we had everything before, but we were well enough off already. Any changes are in our future security. Winning that money gives you a hell of a secure feeling."

Mrs. Loudon has much the same attitude. She has continued to work part time at a local bank.

Jack Hillis hit the jackpot earlier this month with the \$100,000 win from Wintario. Subdued in his initial response, Hillis soon knocked back "a couple of fast belts" to steady the occasion. He didn't even bother to tell his fellow workers.

Hillis is 48 and single. He is an engineer with Bell Telephone.

"At this point, it won't alter my lifestyle one bit. I put the money into a sound investment."

Hillis didn't even celebrate. His friends at work found out about his good fortune a week later, seemingly much to his displeasure.

"I'd appreciate it if you'd really play this down," he said in a telephone interview.



Cecil and Annamarie Hightower won \$100,000 last May. While most of the cash now is gone, they have a mortgage-free home and a new van. Other winners, though, are enjoying the security of sound investments.