

May 7/93

CHEYENNE APARTMENTS**Tenants again
given a break
with heat, water**

Union Gas delays its shut-off date because of legislation introduced in the legislature.

By Dahlia Reich
The London Free Press

Cheyenne Avenue apartment tenants once again have been given a reprieve.

Union Gas Ltd. has decided to delay cutting off heat and hot water until at least May 19, when it will again review its position. The company had planned to cut off gas to 95 and 105 Cheyenne Ave. next Monday because of a bill of \$3,648 owed by landlord Elijah Elieff.

Union Gas decided on the delay because legislation that would allow the city of London to direct rent deposits to landlords' unpaid utility bills won't be passed at Queen's Park until May 19 at the earliest.

INTRODUCED: The legislation was introduced this week by MPP Irene Mathyssen (NDP-Middlesex). It now goes to an all-party committee of MPPs for review, unlikely before May 19 because of tight scheduling, then back to the legislature for second and third reading.

In a letter to Mathyssen, Bill Haskell, manager of customer information for Union Gas in London, said "given the relatively short time difference, we will extend the shut-off date to May 19."

The Cheyenne tenants faced having their heat shut off once before — in February — be-

cause of an outstanding gas bill of more than \$5,000. The city and Middlesex-London district health unit stepped in and paid the bill and will go after Elieff for the money.

City and health officials have said they likely won't pay the \$3,648 bill — owed since February — because the weather is warm and the tenants don't face the same health hazard by losing their heat.

LAST INSTALMENT: On Thursday, meanwhile, the tenants paid their last instalment on an outstanding electric bill owed by Elieff, said community worker Susan Eagle. They handed over a cheque for about \$9,400 to the London Hydro-Electric Commission, bringing their total payments to the utility to nearly \$20,000.

The tenants have been paying their rent into a trust fund rather than to Elieff and, after receiving permission from the courts, had the fund directed to the hydro-electric commission.

In March, the tenants paid the commission \$10,000. But even after paying the \$9,400 Thursday, more than \$5,000 is still owed to the utility by Elieff.

Eagle said the tenants closed the trust fund Thursday and no longer will pay Elieff's utility bills. Rents will be paid to Elieff or the city, depending on the proposed legislation.