

## HUMAN RIGHTS

# Discrimination at Cheyenne deserves a 'strong remedy'

A list of grievances against the owner of the apartments are cited.

By Eric Bender

The London Free Press

A "strong remedy" for discrimination against a tenant should be applied to London Cheyenne Avenue apartment owner Elijah Elieff because he began reprisals after an Ontario Human Rights Commission board of inquiry began last November, counsel for the commission said Monday.

Elieff, now owner in name only after defaulting on the mortgage on the two buildings at 95 and 105 Cheyenne Ave., embarked on harassment after he found himself before the commission on a complaint by Cambodian immigrant Chippheng Hom, Geraldine Sanson told hearing adjudicator Ajit John.

Sanson, in her summation, said Elieff:

- tried to illegally raise Hom's rent.
  - entered her apartment to take pictures without permission.
  - tried to evict her.
  - questioned her daughter as to who her father is.
  - blamed deteriorating conditions at the buildings on Hom's action against him.
  - refused to do maintenance.
  - refused to pay the utility bills so that the entire Cambodian/Vietnamese faced a heat and hydro cutoff before Christmas.
  - removed garbage bins from the apartment complex leaving no place to store garbage.
- Sanson and her assistant Kim Inksater argued

### THE COMPLAINT

Chippheng Hom alleges her right to equal treatment for accommodation and freedom from harassment has been infringed by Elijah Elieff's comments so that her living conditions were "poisoned by discrimination."

The Ontario Human Rights Commission launched an investigation into her complaint in April, 1990. The hearing began in November, 1992.

The adjudicator will reserve judgment. If the complaint is upheld a "remedy" will be imposed.

that Hom was a victim of double discrimination because of race and sex. They said Elieff's public remarks sparking the human rights charges that his Asian tenants were like "little pigs" and that they liked the cockroaches that infested his apartments, applied to her race.

She was a subject of gender discrimination, counsel contended, when Hom had requested a move into a bigger apartment and Elieff asked if she was "a good girl or a bad girl." The questioning of her daughter was another instance, Inksater said.

Inksater said because Elieff's comments were made public the "environment" of the Asian community at the Cheyenne buildings was "poisoned." She said Elieff did not do maintenance at the apartments even when faced by health or building inspection orders and fines because he believes the Asian tenants like living amid cockroaches, garbage and units in disrepair. Thus, he was guilty of unequal treatment of the Asians, treatment he would not have accorded white or Canadian-born people, she said.

**NEGATIVE EFFECTS:** All the labels Elieff assigned to the Cambodians have negative psychological and physical effects on the victims, Inksater said as she quoted authorities. The remarks harm the southeast Asian community and the larger community of London, she said.

Sanson suggested Elieff either "directly or indirectly invited" the Cambodian and Vietnamese immigrants to his buildings because they don't know English or the law well, were unlikely to complain to authorities about conditions and he would not have to spend much on upkeep.

Sanson said Elieff was untruthful in his testimony before the board and demonstrated he has no respect for authority by ignoring court orders. Continually, she said, Elieff has blamed the victim for his woes.

Today, at the conclusion of the hearing, Robert Metz, leader of the Freedom Party of Ontario, who is voluntarily representing Elieff, is scheduled to present his arguments.

Metz said he will contend Elieff has been "victimized by a well-orchestrated lobby effort to gain control" of the apartments. He said he would argue that the Human Rights Commission and Board of Inquiry are advancing racist agendas and they "harbor a prejudiced view of the minority groups they purport to support."