

LONDON COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Dec 1/92

Tenants may have water, power cut off

BACKGROUND

► The two buildings have been a headache for property and health inspectors for years because of cockroach infestations, faulty plumbing and damaged walls.

► In August the Ontario ministry of housing turned down a proposal to have the building torn down, along with two others in the area, to make way for a new co-op housing project. A revised proposal to extensively renovate the existing buildings is now before the ministry.

► Last month, landlord Elijah Elieff was ordered to clean up when a sewer backed up, pumping raw sewage into some apartments. Two weeks later, Elieff was called before the Ontario Human Rights Commission because of complaints he had discriminated against his tenants.

Elijah Elieff, owner of the Cheyenne apartment buildings, is about \$8,100 behind on his bills.

By Hank Daniszewski
The London Free Press

Having survived cockroach infestations and sewer backups, the long-suffering tenants of two northeast London apartment buildings are now threatened with having their power and water cut off.

A London council committee was warned Monday the London PUC could shut off utilities to 95 and 105 Cheyenne Ave. on Dec. 14 because owner Elijah Elieff is about \$8,100 behind on his bills.

Bob Carson of Middlesex-London health unit said a PUC official warned him about the potential cut in utilities but he can do little until the power is actually shut off. Health unit officials conducting an inspection of the building will be warning tenants today with the help of an interpreter. Most of the tenants are recent immigrants from Cambodia and Vietnam.

Ward 3 Councillors Pat O'Brien and Bernie MacDonald, who represent the area, said the city may have to step in and pay the utility bills and then add the amount to

Elieff's property tax bill.

The city has a right to seize and sell the buildings if the tax bill is not eventually paid.

"It is not really fair for taxpayers to pick up the bill so we would have to regard this as a last resort," O'Brien said.

In the past, city council has declined to step in when Union Gas has threatened to cut off service to apartment buildings. But MacDonald said council may be more willing to intervene in the case of an unpaid PUC bill, since it is a municipal service.

Ted Power, the PUC's customer service manager, said it is not unusual for the PUC to forward unpaid final bills to the city's property tax department. He said this is only done after the service has been cut off. He said tenants faced with the prospect of a utility being shut off usually pay the bill and deduct the cost from their rent.

MacDonald said the current problem is frustrating because the provincial government is considering a proposal to turn the buildings into co-op housing. He said a decision from the ministry of housing is

expected within a few days.

PIONEER VILLAGE: City council is being asked to chip in \$500,000 over the next five years to help expand and improve Fanshawe Pioneer Village.

A \$4.2-million expansion plan would include the creation of two separate historical villages, three historic farms, a system of ponds and picnic grounds.

Bill Finlayson, director-general of the non-profit corporation that took over the village last year, said about \$1.4 million has already been gathered in a fund-raising campaign, mainly from corporations and foundations.

He said Fanshawe Pioneer Village is the only historic park in the province that does not rely heavily on government operating subsidies.

The community and protective services committee deferred the funding request to capital budget sessions.

UNHAPPY NEW YEAR

□ London Councillor Joe Swan says New Year, 1993, could begin with chaos downtown if revellers can't rely on London Transit. Page B5