

HOUSING

Owner of apartment units may sell out, leave Canada

Elijah Elieff says he has lost faith in the Canadian system and is ready to sell his Cheyenne Avenue apartments and move away in search of capitalism.

By Don Collins
The London Free Press

On a wall near a bunk bed in Vuth Nov's apartment hangs a child's oversized drawing of a car licence plate, which, in spite of a missing letter, carries a familiar message:

ONTARIO
YOUR TO DISCOVER

Almost within reaching distance of the drawing is something Vuth Nov didn't really want to discover about Ontario after coming here from his native Cambodia — a deteriorating window ledge and frame where the plastic looks like a mess of badly

scrambled eggs. There is a hole in the ledge right next to the single window pane.

"No good ... very cold at night," says Nov, who lives with his wife and four children in an apartment at 95 Cheyenne Ave. in northeast London.

A small electric heater stands next to the sliding glass door in the living room. It is necessary, says Nov, because the bitter winter cold also finds its way through this door.

CONTROVERSY: There are similar heaters in other apartments at both 95 and 105 Cheyenne Ave., two buildings that have been the centre of controversy for several years. Amid stories about slum-like conditions — cockroach infestation, faulty plumbing and appliances, deterioration and cold — the city went after owner Elijah Elieff. When orders for repairs didn't always bring the right results, Elieff was fined.

Monday, as the Cheyenne Tenants' Association went before a city hall committee with a plan that would replace the apartments with an owner-occupied housing co-operative, Elieff sat in another part of the city explaining why he thinks the system has turned on him and why he is just about ready to leave the country.

"It's all over, I guess," he said, speaking to a reporter for the first time in years.

He told of coming to Canada with his wife and three small children 22 years ago from the part



Sam McLeod/The London Free Press

Vuth Nov, a tenant at a controversial apartment building at 95 Cheyenne Ave. in London, shows the crumbling plaster and a leaky sliding door where cold air pours into his apartment.

The condition of four apartment buildings on Cheyenne Avenue — 95 and 105 Cheyenne, owned by Elijah Elieff, and 75 and 85 Cheyenne, owned by an Ottawa company — were under scrutiny at London city hall on Monday. More details are on Page B2.



The London Free Press

See **TENANTS** page B2 ▶