

7 holidays, too

# Sunday closing to be ordered for large stores

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Large retail stores that open on Sundays or any one of seven annual public holidays face fines of up to \$10,000 under a bill introduced in the Ontario Legislature yesterday.

The bill defines as a holiday New Year's Day, Good Friday, Dominion Day, Labor Day, Christmas Day, Victoria Day and Thanksgiving.

The legislation—to take effect Jan. 1—leaves the minimum fine for offenders to the discretion of the courts.

But Solicitor-General John MacBeth said he expects the courts will "far exceed" the penalty of \$250 allowed under the Lord's Day Act.

Unlike the Lord's Day Act, the new legislation does not require police to get the approval of the attorney-general to lay charges.

## MILK STORES EXCEPTED

The legislation will allow small grocery stores, milk stores, news and tobacco stands and small drug stores to stay open.

Also exempted are gasoline stations, antique stores, nurseries, fresh fruit and vegetable markets between April 1 and Oct. 31, restaurants, hotels, laundromats, boat and vehicle rentals and servicing operations.

Also exempted: A retail outlet that sells food, newspapers, magazines, tobacco or pharmaceutical, hygienic or sanitary products; has no more than three employees, including the proprietor; and a total floorspace used for sales or display of less than 2,400 square feet.

Educational, recreational and amusement operations will not be affected.

## SIMPSONS 'SURPRISED'

A spokesman for Simpsons said today he was a "little surprised" that the proposed legislation included Labor Day, Victoria Day and Thanksgiving.

"These are not really national holidays, and to us they are high-demand shopping days."

Barry Agnew, sales promotion manager for Hudson's Bay, which operates the Bay stores, said there was "no major desire for us" to be open any holiday. "But we're in a very competitive business and we're open when our major competitors are open."

Agnew, who said the legislation should cover all stores, said "we'll fully support the law. But this is such a big question I think it should be on a referendum so the people can decide."

MacBeth said the legislation will mean that automobile outlets and operations such as furniture and carpet

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stores that open on Sundays and holidays to allow customers to view merchandise will have to close.

But real estate offices may still deal with clients and show houses. They must not, however, close deals.

The legislation will allow the province to name additional holidays and will give municipalities the power to interpret the law as it applies to the tourist industry.

In unorganized areas, the province will have the right to rule on exemptions.

Sunday store hours have been under examination by the province for at least five years.

At present, federal and provincial Lord's Day Acts prohibit Sunday operations, but because maximum fines are only \$250, the prohibition carries little weight and prosecutions have been few.

In London, Ont., the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Co. (A and P) was fined \$75 in provincial court yesterday for opening a grocery store on Sunday, Aug. 24.

The store asked for two weeks to pay the fine.