

## Law Society and members lock horns in Ontario

**The Globe and Mail from Canada of Tuesday 20 August reports on a class-action suit which has been filed against the Law Society of Upper Canada by 45 Manitoba lawyers.**

The lawyers are of the opinion that the Law Society of Upper Canada is forcing them to buy redundant malpractice insurance following an amendment to its rules.

The Manitoban lawyers claim that this is a violation of Section 6 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which guarantees Canadians the right to work anywhere in the country without discrimination. They also suggest that the insistence on taking out the insurance is a move by the Law Society to finance its insurance plan which had run into finan-

cial difficulties.

Manitoban lawyers carry their own mandatory errors-and-omissions insurance which provides cover for them wherever in Canada they practice.

Ontario lawyers pay an average of \$6,900 in insurance and \$2,000 in licensing fees to the Law Society.

There is some anecdotal evidence that the legal profession in Ontario has fallen on hard times with some 1,000 having either received emergency aid from the Law Society of Upper Canada or having been suspended due to inability to pay annual fees and insurance.

Errors-and-omissions insurance had risen steeply in Ontario to cover a financial deficit.

The class action participants also

claim that the change in Law Society rules to include mandatory local insurance had been made at the insistence of a local group of Ontario lawyers who resented losing business, in particular conveyancing transactions, to the Manitoban lawyers.

The Law Society at the time of the report had declined to make a statement on the matter until it had received a copy of the statement of claim and had filed its statement of defence.

Lawyers in Canada can practise in other jurisdictions provided they have passed the local bar examination and paid the annual provincial licensing fee. Ontario lawyers who work in Manitoba are not required to take out local insurance.

## The Last Days of *Chez Nous*

For those of us not long resident in the Territory, the Society's premises in the Chin Building had a certain Conradian eloquence which belied the efforts of longer standing staff of the secretariat and several councils to convince the world that the Law Society of the Northern Territory had, physical appearance of its offices notwithstanding, joined the 20th century some time ago.

The importance of the work done beneath the peeling paint and atop the much stained Berber was evidently not reflected in the appearance of the premises and a move to more appropriate surroundings was long overdue.

Although considerable leg-work and a good deal of lateral thinking had already gone into the finding of a suitable home for the Society, it was actually at the Law Week lunch that the first formal whiff of a move to NT House was detected. An appropriate amount of fine tuning has since taken place and the Society will close shortly close its somewhat rickety doors at Chin Towers for good.

It will be with a sense of history in the making and having been made that we quit the Chin Building, where the Law Society has been housed since 1984.

There will be some regret at leaving the wealth of entertainment to be had from the windows overlooking Raintree Park. *Days of Our Lives* holds no candle

House has a hard act to follow.

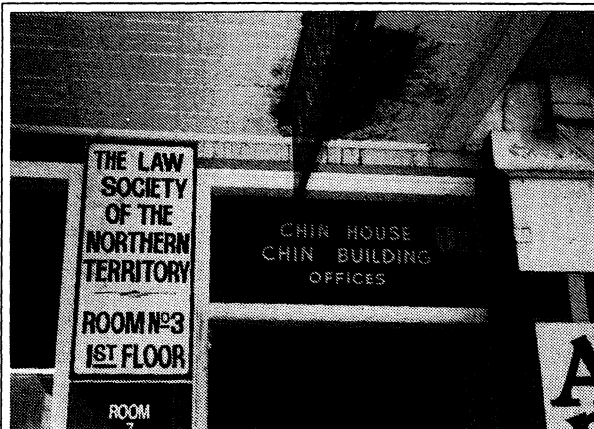
Your humble scribe had a distance introduction to some of the leading lights of the profession from these windows, though from that angle more familiarity was gained with bald spots than faces.

Chin Towers will be replaced by Law Floor and we feel it appropriate to be sharing the same level of NT House as LAWASIA and the Solicitor-General.

All members are most welcome to visit and view the at last fitting surroundings of their Society on the 11th floor of NT House.

It is to be hoped that Law Society members will share the pride of the Council and Secretariat in the achievement of this move.

The formal opening of the Law Society's new premises will be held in late November and details will be provided shortly. We trust the joyousness of this celebration will provide more than adequate compensation for any hiccups in service during the move.



Chin Towers "front" entrance

to a continued observance of the fights, arrests, parties, concerts both promptu and impromptu and moments of passion and compassion to be seen from behind the tinting. The seagull population of NT