

Peel County Reg. BR.

Oct 3/73 HT

OCT 3 1973

MISSISSAUGA TIMES

He's Ontario's busiest veterinarian

BY SANDY SOUTH

"The biggest thing I don't like about being a veterinarian is human beings," Dr. Kenneth Easton says bluntly.

And it's one of the reasons he gave up his 14-year private Clarkson practice and half his salary to work for the Ontario Humane Humane (Society) ever since.

Since June of this year, Dr. Easton, 39, has become widely known as "the largest practitioner in Ontario." He is the sole veterinarian with O.H.S.'s \$23,000 mobile clinic serving an area bounded on the west by Chatham, on the east by Brockville, and on the north by Moosenee.

"People just don't use plain ordinary common sense when they treat their dogs," he says emphatically, gesturing with his hands.

"There's two kinds of dog owners. Some think he'll heal by himself, and only when the dog is next to death, they'll bring him in. They think God gave them some power of self-healing," scoffs the veterinarian.

"Then, there's the other extreme. People call you in the middle of the night if their dog has cracked his toenails."

Dogowners should realize that they should treat their dogs like they treat their own kids, he says.

The clinic make rounds in

the Metro Toronto area once every two weeks. In the outlying areas, visits are made once a month.

Dr. Easton visits the Peel County Animal Shelter, 3490 Mavis Road, Cooksville, every other Wednesday.

The 39-year-old vet gave up his own practice for another reason.

"While I was in private practice, I was restricted to treating dogs who had owners. Being trained to help them all, I was limited in giving help to all dogs.

"But I had to have an income somehow. While in my practice, I still did a lot of gratis work for the Humane Society."

While the sedative is

taking effect on two dogs inside the 24 foot by 19 foot clinic, Dr. Easton takes a cigarette break.

In 1956, he started working at the Oakville Ontario Humane Society, for summer employment "just to get experience" while taking veterinary medicine at university.

"I had just about every position there," he laughs, "from a dog catcher to a kennel man to a warden. I found it very, very, interesting to the point where I've become rather pro-Human (Society ever since.)"

He set up his own business on Lakeshore Road in 1959, and found he was doing more gratis cases "than I should for my own good."

About five years ago, he and Tom Hughes, a fellow worker at the O.H.S., began discussing the possibility of a

mobile van.

At that time, the Society was split over the Animal Research Act, then nearly went bankrupt. "It wasn't until this year that the society was able to pick up where they left off in 1967. It took us six years to formulate the plan," Easton says.

"It was to be part of Canada's Centennial plans, but instead, it turned out to be a centennial project for the Humane Society.

"No animal in the history of the Ontario Humane Society has ever, and will never be released alive for research purposes."

Big Mac, a five-year-old, part German shepherd is flopped onto the table. His left front paw has a secondary infection.

His owner, Sandra Scott, of

Bramalea, had taken him to another veterinarian a few weeks before but the problem hadn't cleared up. She wanted a second opinion.

"It's what you'd call dogs' athlete foot," Easton chuckles, gently washing the paw with medicated soap.

The service is free, and the clinic operates on a complete donation basis. "We don't charge people for the service, but we encourage them to donate as they are able.

"In no way are we trying to compete with local private practitioners."

The clinic is meant to serve three groups: people who want a second opinion; old age people and children who can't afford vet bills; and those who can't reach a regular practitioner.

"As long as the clinic is in your area," Dr. Easton told one well-dressed woman, "you are eligible to use the service. But, if you can afford a routine service, please use it."