

\$10 million west-end housing co-op to be Metro Tamils' community hub. (1988, July 15). *The Toronto Star*.

B6/THE TORONTO STAR, TUESDAY, JULY 5, 1988

\$10 million west-end housing co-op to be Metro Tamils' community hub

By Nami Morris Toronto Star

Metro Tamils are getting \$10 million in government grants to build a non-profit housing co-op that will be a focal point for the 12,000-strong community.

More than 100 people are already on a waiting list and 300 others have been promised space in the building which is to open Aug. 1, on Wade Ave. near Blower St. W. and Lansdowne Ave.

"We started planning it in 1983 when we had turmoil in Sri Lanka and realized that more refugees would be coming here," said Shabe Thural, of the Society for the Aid of Ceylon Minorities.

One furnished apartment in the 129-unit complex will be reserved as emergency short term accommodation for refugee claimants from any country who arrive in Metro with no place to go.

But 80 per cent of the building will be for Tamils already here, with priority given to seniors, widows, and needy applicants. A few of the Tamils who arrived on the coast of Newfoundland in 1986 have already been accepted.

"It will help the community with settlement, housing and education," said Thural, a teacher at Lakeview Secondary School.

In addition to English and French classes on site, the complex

will house a community hall for weddings and other cultural events, the first formal meeting place for Metro Tamils.

The \$10 million building cost, and rent subsidies that will total about \$200,000 a year, are to be split by Queen's Park and Ottawa.

"We're very happy to see this come to completion. It's a good model. We promote non-profit housing and encourage ethnic groups and other community based organizations to participate," said Ed Bissinger, programs manager for the Metro branch of the Ontario Housing Corporation.

The province has allocated an

additional 30,000 non-profit units to be developed over the next three to five years.

Bissinger said that only landed immigrants are eligible for the Wade Ave. apartment units that are subsidized.

And according to the agreement signed with the Tamils, half of the cut-rate units must be made available to help relieve the Metro Housing Authority's long waiting lists.

Those tenants will pay about 25 per cent of their income in rent. And the lone refugee family housed there will have to pay market price, since refugees already get a government stipend.