



Status of Bills

The legislature resumed sitting on March 29th. Status of bills to May 13th:

One Government Bill received Royal Assent: Bill 60, **Ontario Heritage**; and two Government Bills passed Third Reading: Bill 92, **Municipal**; and Bill 118, **Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities**.

One Government Bill passed Second Reading: Bill 110, **Mandatory Gunshot Wounds Reporting**. Also two Private Member's Bills: Bill 142, **Highway Traffic** (Lib), and Bill 187, **Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund** (PC).

Nine Government Bills passed Second Reading and went to Committee: Bill 128, **Law Enforcement and Forfeited Property**; Bill 136, **Places to Grow**; Bill 144, **Labour Relations**; Bill 155, **Family Responsibility and Support Arrears**; Bill 158, **Film Classification**; Bill 159, **Private Security and Investigative Services**; Bill 164, **Tobacco Control**; Bill 183,

Adoption Information Disclosure; Bill 186, **Regional Municipality of Peel**.

Seven Private Member's Bills passed Second Reading and went to Committee: Bill 174, **Consumer Reporting** (Lib); Bill 179, **Safe Needles** (NDP); Bill 182, **Gender-Based Price Discrimination** (Lib); Bill 184, **Fire Protection** (NDP); Bill 189, **Khalsa Day** (Lib); Bill 191, **Apprenticeship and Certification** (PC); Bill 192, **Breast Implant Registry** (NDP).

Three Government Bills passed First Reading: Bill 190, **Good Government**; Bill 194, **Education Amendment**; and Bill 197, **Budget Measures**. Also five Private Member's Bills: Bill 185, **Sexual Abuse-Minors in Cornwall** (PC), Bill 188, **Children** (Lib), Bill 193, **Payday Loans** (NDP), Bill 195, **Environmental Protection** (PC), and Bill 196 **Severance Allowance** (PC).

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Publication of
The Political and Legislative Department
Ontario Federation of Labour
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www.ofl.ca
cope343

Keep Inco Refinery Open

"Premier Dalton McGuinty must personally intervene to prevent the closure of the Copper Cliff Refinery, near Sudbury, because it is clear that Inco Limited is poised to close the facility," said Nickel Belt MPP Shelley Martel.

In a meeting with workers, the company revealed that it plans to finalize a deal in 4-6 weeks with Noranda Inc. to ship raw copper to Quebec for refining. Once the deal is signed, the Copper Cliff Refinery would close in seven months.

"This closure would be devastating for the local community," said Martel. "We're talking about the potential loss of 140 well-paying union, management, and support staff jobs as well as dozens and dozens of related spin-off jobs in different sectors. This would be an enormous blow to the local economy that we just can't accept."

During Question Period, Martel asked McGuinty if he was prepared to tell Inco that they would have to keep these resources and jobs in the community. The Premier refused to answer the question. Now that it is very clear that Inco is ready to process its copper in Quebec, Martel is renewing her call on McGuinty to become personally involved with this matter.

"Inco has been refining copper for over 60 years in this community and workers need the Premier's assurance that this isn't going to change," said Martel. "McGuinty must resolve this issue now because it's apparent that the Minister of Northern Development and Mines isn't willing to stand up for the local community and maintain these jobs."

Since Friday, May 6, Martel and District 6 Steelworkers have tried to arrange a meeting with McGuinty to discuss this critical situation. To date, the Premier's Office has not responded to their request.

NDP Says Budget Is Privatization By Stealth

The Liberal Government's second budget is privatization by stealth, says NDP Leader Howard Hampton. "Last year, the May Follies featured regressive health tax and broken promises; this year's surprises are private profit and broken promises – I see a trend forming," said Hampton.

"The government has promised a \$30 billion, five year capital investment, but the budget only adequately explains about half that amount," Hampton noted. "The Infrastructure Minister has already said the government will be looking at private sector funding. The Finance Minister won't admit the government's secret plan today, but this document suggests the government might be going to the private sector for as much as half the total investment amount."

Hampton pointed out that the province, by borrowing \$12 billion from the private sector, would incur an additional cost of \$5 billion – or the cost of ten new hospitals.

"This budget shows just how dependent the McGuinty Liberals remain upon the federal government. If the federal budget does not pass,

there will be no new money for childcare," Hampton noted. "Indeed, the most notable feature of this budget is the extent to which the province is relying on growing federal transfers and a healthy economy to keep it afloat."

Hampton also slammed the McGuinty Liberals for a budget that offered little to Northerners. "Despite 6,000 jobs lost on its watch, this government has no plan for the forestry industry or the northern communities dependent upon it."



Budget Leaves Most Vulnerable Empty-handed

"The McGuinty Liberal government's 2005 provincial budget broke more promises by abandoning children, poor families, and people on disability, while supporting privatization," said NDP Finance Critic Michael Prue.

"The McGuinty government's second budget failed to provide badly needed funding for social services and assistance. Yesterday, we heard more empty rhetoric from this government. They're claiming to be investing in people, but they're ignoring the most vulnerable," said Prue. "After last year's budget, the Minister of Community and Social Services said, 'Our government refuses to balance its books on the backs of the poor.' But, this is precisely what they've done. The government is not just balancing the books on the backs of the poor – they're breaking it."

"The McGuinty government promised an annual increase for disabled people and for families on social assistance. There's nothing in the budget for them. This government promised to end the clawback of the Baby Bonus. But it's not in this budget either. The McGuinty government promised money for social housing, but it's spending only 10 percent of what was promised. This is a disgrace to community services and families as we celebrate 75 years of social services in Ontario," Prue noted.

"Yesterday the government not only broke more promises, but they also announced that they're entering into more public-private partnerships in the near future."

KORMOS' KORNER

"Earlier this month, the United Food and Commercial Workers revealed overwhelming evidence of an ongoing campaign by Wal-Mart to violate and subvert Ontario's labour laws.



NDP Labour Critic
Peter Kormos

Evidence now before the Ontario Labour Relations Board details how an undercover operative supplied money, equipment and strategic union-busting directives to some Windsor Wal-Mart workers in the wake of the union certification of the store's employees in 1997. This evidence comes in the wake of explosive allegations that Tom Coughlin, the former long-time vice-chairman of Wal-Mart, condoned a slush fund to finance anti-union activities.

The people of Ontario need to know whether Wal-Mart blatantly subverted the constitutional right of workers to form a union. The McGuinty Liberals must stop stalling and call for an immediate public inquiry."

- Peter Kormos

