

MPP reports

Ontario entitled to equalization payments

By JULIAN REED, M.P.P. (Halton-Burlington)

Is Ontario a Have-not Province?

The Provincial Treasurer has acknowledged that over the past three years Ontario has been entitled to almost \$500 million in equalization payments. However, the Province has no intention of taking the money, and it's not because the government is too proud.

Under the present equalization formula, Ontario is technically entitled to the money, but the Treasurer added: "According to the principle for which equalization payments were established, Ontario, in the philosophical sense, is not entitled to receive them, since our per capita incomes are well above the national average."

Liberal Finance Critic, David Peterson, M.P.P. (London Centre) said the philosophy underlying the equalization formula is not to equalize per capita income but to equalize provincial revenues. He demanded to know why Ontario has not taken the money and whether it was because of pride.

Teachers' right to strike

The Minister of Education has announced the appointment of a three-man commission to study the law giving teachers the right to strike. This commission will hold public hearings on the four-year-old School Boards and Teachers Collective Bargaining Act, more commonly known as Bill 100.

Opposition Members attacked the Minister for refusing to make public an internal ministry review of Bill 100 which led to creation of the commission. She stated that the review, completed last summer, would be given to the commission, which could make it public when their report was released.

Acid rain pollution

Premier Davis has enunciated a policy on acid rain which seems to promise - at best - slow action on pollution clean-up. The Premier's statement did not really answer Liberal Leader Stuart Smith's demand for a clarification of Government policy on the matter. Over a recent two week period the Minister of the Environment has stated: 1) that Ontario couldn't act alone on acid rain but must move on a cleanup in concert with the U.S.; 2) that Ontario was prepared to go it alone.

The Minister had also stated that he didn't think he would be issuing a control order against Inco Ltd., whose sulphur emissions were found in one study to be responsible for 20 per cent of the acid rain pollution. Later that same night he told a committee of MPPs that Inco would be his first target. If the Ontario Government doesn't start cracking down on Inco and other polluters, an estimated 40,000 lakes in this province are going to die. "What is going on?" asked Dr. Smith.

Sale of Eldorado

According to the Minister of Industry and Tourism, the Ontario Government will vehemently oppose the sale of Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. to foreign investors. However, the government will not consider bidding for the company itself. Essentially, the province will have no say if the federal government decides to deviate from its stated intentions and sell the uranium mining and refining company to foreign investors. While the Minister said it would be premature for the provincial government to consider buying Eldorado, he maintained that fears of drastic price increases are groundless.

Racial Slurs in the Legislature Ed Havrot, the Conservative member for Timiskaming, has had to be rebuked for making racist comments about Italian-born Members of the Legislature. Opposition MPPs have asked the Premier to take tough action in the matter. As Liberal Leader Stuart Smith pointed out the remarks were not only racist, but they were also highly contemptible, and constituted an insult to all members of the Legislature. He did not consider the rebuke administered by the Premier was strong enough, and called upon Mr. Davis to show moral leadership by removing this Member from his caucus.

This same member was once fired from a government job by the Premier for making slurs against Indians.

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