

# 32nd Parliament closing sees 30 bills passed

by Allan McLean  
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Friday, July 3rd marked the close of a productive 10-week spring sitting of the first session of the thirty-second Parliament.

In total, thirty bills were given royal assent by Lieutenant Governor John Aird. I think a number of these will be of interest to you.

Two bills introduced important changes in the labour area. The Employment Standards Act was amended introducing mandatory severance pay in cases of partial or complete business closures. Balancing the interests of management and labour, the layoff must involve fifty or more employees over a six-month period.

A worker qualifies for severance pay after five years service with the employer and is entitled to one week's pay for each year of service to a

maximum of twenty-six weeks' pay.

The bill also empowers the Ministry of Labour to require all employers to participate in manpower adjustment committees or undertake any other actions to help former employees find new jobs.

The Government of Ontario also increased compensation paid to injured workers. An additional \$335 million has been budgeted from the W.C.B. Accident Fund to accommodate 10 percent and nine percent increases over the next two years.

These amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act reflect increases in the cost of living since the most recent benefit review two years ago.

In the energy field, amendments to the Power Corporation Act create a new mandate for Ontario Hydro.

Hydro personnel will conduct home energy audits to their customers at no extra charge through the new Residential Energy Advisory Program.

If the homeowner decides to act on the recommendations, the program will make loans available to help install the necessary equipment available to a maximum of \$2,000 repayable over five years at a low interest rate.

The new Act also gives Ontario Hydro the authority to supply steam and hot water to the Ontario Energy Corporation as part of the exciting plan to develop industries, greenhouses and fish farms at the Bruce Energy Centre.

A new ministry was created amalgamating the municipal law area with the Ministry of Housing. The new Ministry of Municipal

Affairs and Housing will be responsible for the policies and programs of the Government in relation to municipal affairs, including financial assistance, planning, housing and community land development.

The fact that the house is not sitting does not mean that members can take a break from their legislative responsibilities. Over the summer months, seven committees will

sit. Highlights of the agendas include thorough examinations of the proposed Human Rights Code and the Royal Commission on Pensions Report. I will be involved in the Standing Procedural Affairs Committee and the Standing Members Services Committee.

I would like to extend my congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. James MacKenzie and Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Bates of Midland and Mr. and

Mrs. Ainsely J. Fox of Orillia who have all just celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversaries, as well as Mrs. Florence Sharples of Hawkestone on the occasion of her 92nd birthday.

A number of distinguished guests will be paying visits to our riding. The Honourable James Snow, Minister of Transportation and Communications will be visiting our area on July 28th, the honourable

Alan Pope, Minister of Natural Resources on July 28th, and the Honourable Larry Grossman, Minister of Industry and Tourism on July 30th, 1981.

Through the combined efforts of the federal and provincial P.C. Associations for our area, a beef barbeque and dance is planned for August 8th at the Orillia Fairgrounds. You will be hearing more about this event at a later date.

## Students' applications go through

The mail strike by inside postal workers is definitely causing problems for a lot of people but Grade 13 students at local high schools seem to have been lucky in that regard.

Applications to colleges and universities by graduating students at Midland Secondary School, Ecole Secondaire Penetanguishene Secondary School, Elmvale District High School and St. Theresa's High School in Midland were mostly sent out by registered mail before the strike got under way.

Any further applications or registration fees are being sent to the colleges and universities by courier service or PMCL delivery with some of the students electing to deliver them in person.

The only students that would have problems with the mail strike with their applications would be those students who filed late, a small number compared to the total number of graduating students.

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