

Why Hasn't Mahoney Been Fired Yet?

NDP MPP Paul Miller, the Party's Critic for the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), has a simple question: Why hasn't WSIB Chair, Steve Mahoney, lost his job yet?

"This Liberal appointee spends so much time living the good life while the organization he is charged with guiding sits rife with mismanagement," said Miller.

"While injured workers struggle with physical constraints, with financial constraints and with the WSIB itself and while they try to get fair retraining and labour market re-entry, Mr. Mahoney bills a lavish per diem that would feed an injured worker's family for an entire month," said Miller.

"This is unconscionable and the best the Minister can say in response is that the Integrity Commissioner will deal with this in the future? Something can be done in the here

and now – the Premier and Minister can remove Mr. Mahoney from his position."

Earlier, during Question Period, Labour Minister Fonseca weaved, dodged and avoided responding to Miller's question in the Legislature: "This government was quick to fire a woman whose expenses were questioned, but why won't they fire their WSIB good old boy?"

"This Liberal government should have adopted my amendment to its Bill on public sector expenses and included a review of every public agency, board and commission," Miller said. "The response to Mahoney's lavish expenses is half-baked and does nothing to address such a serious breach of public trust."

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Liberals and Tories Defeat Anti-Scab Bill

On October 8, Bill 86, *Labour Relations Amendment Act (Replacement Workers)*, received second reading at Queen's Park. Introduced by NDP Labour Critic Peter Kormos, the Bill would have banned replacement workers during strikes. A rally in support of the Bill on the front lawn of the Legislature just prior to debate on the Bill, was attended by striking workers from Vale Inco in Sudbury and Port Colborne, as well as trade unionists from many other unions.

OFL President Wayne Samuelson, speaking at the rally, said the government cannot sit on the fence when it comes to the issue of using scab labour. "They either stand with the striking workers and their families, or they take the side of foreign-owned multinationals like Vale Inco," said Samuelson.

Following the rally, the striking workers packed the public galleries of the Legislature to listen to the debate, but were evicted when they began booing Liberal and Conservative MPPs speaking in opposition to the Bill. The Bill was defeated by a vote of 25 against to 10 in favour. One Liberal MPP voted with the NDP to support the legislation.

Horwath Demands Action on Northern Jobs

In the wake of a report showing a huge spike in the number of employment insurance (EI) claims filed across Northern Ontario, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath demanded the McGuinty government deliver a jobs plan and oppose trade measures that might hurt the battered region.

A Statistics Canada report released this month showed that EI claims have jumped a whopping 152 per cent in

greater Sudbury and 80 per cent in Sault Ste. Marie during the past year.

“There is a growing jobs crisis throughout Northern Ontario and the McGuinty government doesn’t have the slightest idea what to do about it,” said Horwath as she pressed the Liberals to admit they have no jobs plan for Northern Ontario.

“How many more jobs need to be lost before this government finally comes up with a jobs plan for Northern Ontario?” she asked.

Horwath noted that even in Thunder Bay, a city benefiting from recent Toronto public transit contracts awarded to the Bombardier plant, EI claims are up 42 per cent.

She warned that contracts like those might be a thing of the past if the Federal government agrees to American trade measures that would effectively forbid Buy Ontario policies meant to ensure Ontario tax dollars are used to create jobs here. “With these trade measures, the North – and in fact, all of Ontario –

is going to suffer. With so much at stake, why isn’t the McGuinty government opposing any trade deal that prevents local tax dollars from being used to create good-paying jobs here in Ontario?” asked Horwath.



First Nations Children “Abandoned”

Ontario’s NDP Leader Andrea Horwath says the McGuinty government’s \$4.2 million in funding cuts to First Nations child welfare agencies must be reversed.

Horwath called on Premier Dalton McGuinty to place a moratorium on any

further cuts. Ontario’s native leaders have expressed alarm, saying the cuts are creating a crisis in the ability of agencies to serve the influx of children in their care.

“While squandering a billion health dollars, the McGuinty government has cut \$4.2 million in funding from First Nations child welfare agencies. There is a real crisis facing Ontario’s Native children and youth, but this government is shamefully reducing the resources that serve these vulnerable and disadvantaged young people,” said Horwath.

Horwath listed the cuts the McGuinty government has made to agencies like Tikinagan Child and Family Services (\$2.1 million), Paayukotayno James & Hudson Bay Family Services (\$1 million) and Weechiittewin Services (\$941,522). She also slammed the government’s failure to support a key umbrella group for aboriginal children’s services, the Association of Native Child and Family Service Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) which is on the brink of closing.

“New Democrats are not prepared to stand by while vulnerable First Nations

communities and children are abandoned by this government,” Horwath said.

“Adequately funding First Nations child welfare services is an obligation that must transcend jurisdictional squabbles between the provincial Liberals and federal Conservatives.”

Horwath said social problems such as substance abuse, family violence, sexual abuse and youth suicide are much more prevalent among First Nations, and as such, more resources, not fewer, need to be devoted to child welfare.

For example, the youth suicide rate in northwestern Ontario is 398 young people out of every 100,000, while the national average is 12.9, according to a 2006 report from the Kenora Crown Attorney’s Office.

“It is reprehensible that the Premier refuses to address the child welfare funding shortfall to ensure resources serving some of Ontario’s most vulnerable children are fully restored. We will continue to advocate on their behalf,” said Horwath.