

HAS DALTON McGUINTY LOST HIS WAY?



Dear OPSEU member,
Our Premier seems utterly lost.

Not long ago, Dalton McGuinty was passionate about public services. When the Tories pushed for privately-run hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa, McGuinty promised to “take these hospitals and bring them inside the public sector.”

On election night, he told public employees that “I value your work and look forward to working with you so we can provide still better public services.”

Three years later, McGuinty is heading the wrong way.

In health care, Ontario now has not two, but 31, private hospitals in the works. McGuinty’s new health networks are poised to use privatization to slash the wages of health care workers.

In education, the Premier stood silently by as Ontario colleges fought against quality education during a three-week faculty strike. And he is still barring 16,000 college part-timers from the legal right to join a union.

Human rights are not his thing, of course. If Bill 107 passes, people who seek help from the Human Rights Commission will have no guaranteed investigation of their complaint, no guaranteed legal support, and no right to appeal. Justice will be denied.

Government work of every kind is strapped for cash. Many social services, for example, only survive because workers subsidize them with their low wages.

The Ministry of Natural Resources is another example. Already left for dead by Harris, MNR has been squashed flat under McGuinty. Conservation Officers can’t even afford gas for their trucks. Even \$7.75-an-hour student jobs didn’t survive the recent round of park cuts.

There is a better way. When Alberta Premier Ralph Klein found out a privately-run courthouse would cost more, he killed the deal. Klein also killed a privately-run hospital when he saw that nobody knew more about building it than the Calgary Health Region.

It’s a fact: No one is better qualified to deliver public services than public sector workers. Dalton McGuinty used to know that.

Between now and the next election, it is our job to carry the flag for publicly-run, well-funded public services. It is our job to set the agenda. Because while our premier may be lost, we’re not. Our Ontario belongs to the people of this province, not the corporate fat cats who see public services as just another profit centre.

In Solidarity,

Leah Casselman, *President, OPSEU*

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