

INSIDE QUEEN'S PARK

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GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS

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“THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T DO THAT SORT OF THING”

Graham Murray

When Queen's Park began to figure out how best to deliver help to the neediest citizens affected by the pre-Christmas ice storm and power cuts, they quickly targeted the grocery industry to join in rescuing those who'd dumped the contents of their fridges and freezers. But while lists of social welfare recipients and food vouchers were readied for distribution, Premier Wynne herself went door-to-door delivering baskets of foodstuffs. The premier's brain-trust must have been pleased at the tone and scale of TV coverage – though to this writer, the clips conveyed an unpalatably condescending impression of charity being doled out by Lady Bountiful. Not the most fitting match for the **Kathleen Wynne** image, we should have thought.

Yet a very much worse government communications blunder was on the way when the supply of promised food vouchers quickly ran out, creating unedifying queues in freezing weather and the sort of rough and tumble that arises when you mix several parts of privation with a couple of parts of greed. So it was within just one news cycle that the media started to stint on the credit initially given Wynne, discount the benefits of the scheme and report it as a PR nightmare. The premier was forced personally to defend the handout scheme and its deficiencies, acknowledging that it fell short of perfect.

That the voucher scheme would become a debacle should have come as no surprise, because in fact the Liberals went out of their way to highlight the resistance from the public service, apparently divulging to reporters that the civil servants had advised that the government “doesn't do that sort of thing”. Well, yes, and now we all know why. It's highly inappropriate for the political branch of government to boast of brushing aside recommendations from the bureaucratic branch in that contrived manner. And of course it does no good at all if the bureaucrats turn out to have been correct, making the politicians look silly and strengthening the hand of the unelected government in some such future conflict, quite likely one with far more at stake.

That is not to suggest that the relationship between the elected and the unelected exhibits constant strife. The effectiveness of our form of parliamentary government depends crucially on constructive interaction between the Minister of This, That & the Other Thing and the Deputy Minister of that same component of the government, as well of course at the governmental level on the trusted collaboration between the Premier and the Secretary of Cabinet. They will likely get past this tussle.

It is striking that all but two of the current roster of line deputy ministers were first named to that rank by the LIBs in the ten years since **Dalton McGuinty** secured a majority government in October 2003. One exception is veteran DM **Kevin Costante**, promoted to that rank during **Mike Harris's** 1995-2002 term; the other is **Carol Layton**, named a DM between the April 2002 formation and the October 2003 electoral defeat of the Ernie Eves government. (There were also several DMs appointed by the 1985-1990 **David Peterson** government and the 1990-95 **Bob Rae** administration but none of them currently hold those positions.) It is important to understand that an initial appointment to the DM rank necessarily implies that the public servants in question have any strong tie to the governing party of the day – or indeed a partisan stripe of any nature.

There are a few DMs who can fairly be considered to have party leanings or even to have previously held partisan roles, such as current Attorney General **Patrick Monahan**. He worked as a policy advisor to **Ian Scott**, Q.C., the distinguished AG who ran that ministry from start to finish of the LIBs' 1985-90 government, and went on to write a lively but highly critical book on the Rae NDP government: *Storming the Pink Palace: The NDP in Power: A Cautionary Tale* (Lester Publishing, 1995). But Monahan's later career as a legal writer and academic, as Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School and Provost of York University, cannot properly be dismissed as the work of a party hack. Nor is it appropriate to consider that the political aides who migrate into the bureaucratic stream are in a partisan sense at all suspect. The perspectives of those who formerly worked in ministerial offices are enormously helpful to ministers in subsequent governments, though some of us would quite correctly be seen as irredeemably partisan.

Indeed, in this writer's view, whether they are brought in from outside or promoted from within, Queen's Park is blessed to have so impressive a cadre of DMs who are strongly committed to delivery of non-partisan public service.

There is some sensitivity on this score, with DMs bristling when described as partisan. Shortly after holding his Progressive Conservative opponents to their third minority outcome in the nine Ontario provincial elections contested from 1943 to 1985, Premier-elect David Peterson spoke disparagingly of a “blue fuzz” on the Tory bureaucratic machine which his government was about to inherit. Key bureaucrats pushed back strongly against that slap by Peterson, who quickly retracted the slur and signalled his government's willingness to work with the managerial team he had inherited from **Bill Davis** via his successor **Frank Miller**.

ONTARIO'S NEXT LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR TO BE NAMED IN EARLY 2014

Ashley Csanady

Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** is expected to reveal Ontario's next lieutenant-governor in about a month, provincial sources say.

Little is known about the province's next regal representative – except that it won't be New Democratic Party MP **Olivia Chow**. The Canadian political universe was atwitter Monday about a blog post from Steve Paikin, host of TVO's *The Agenda*, who suggested Harper might appoint Chow to keep her out of the Toronto mayoral race. But Chow quickly tweeted that it's not true and the Prime Minister's Office told various media outlets the same thing.

The appointment will likely be made in late January or early February, with some provincial sources expecting a March installation ceremony.

The appointment is wholly the purview of the prime minister, who will then pass an order-in-council to ask Governor General David Johnston to appoint his new provincial counterpart. The installation ceremony takes place at Queen's Park with representatives from both levels of government.

ENERGY MINISTER SLAMMED FOR INACTION DURING ICE STORM

Andrew Reeves

While hundreds of thousands of Ontarians went without heat or power over the holidays, Energy Minister **Bob Chiarelli** was missing in action, the Progressive Conservatives charged Monday.

Tory energy critic **Lisa MacLeod** told reporters at Queen's Park that both Chiarelli and Premier **Kathleen Wynne** had "played politics" in their response to the Dec. 21 ice storm that knocked out power to more than 600,000 Ontario households and caused tens of millions of dollars in damages.

But MacLeod saved her harshest criticism for the energy minister whom she claimed was "withholding crisis information" from opposition MPPs.

"He didn't contact [opposition MPPs] with daily updates, he didn't provide them with information on how they could best communicate with Hydro One or provide any information on how my colleagues in the official Opposition could work within the system to get the responses they needed for their constituents who were going without power for days," MacLeod said.

In response to her requests for updated information, MacLeod said she was "disappointed" that all she received from the minister's officer were news releases.

But those releases contained the most up-to-date information available at the time, said **Beckie Codd-Downey**, spokeswoman for the energy minister. That is why they were sent to MPPs - including MacLeod and NDP energy critic **Peter Tabuns** - to help guide their efforts to help constituents in need, she said.

Chiarelli was also in constant contact with hydro and energy officials regarding the power outages, Codd-Downey said. He was also active in the media, she said, conducting interviews with Canada AM, CTV, 680 News and CP24. The minister also appeared over the break with Wynne and Community Safety Minister **Madeleine Meilleur** to provide updates on the storm cleanup and safety concerns over downed power lines.

ONTARIO GAINING ECONOMIC STEAM AS U.S. RECOVERS

Ashley Csanady

The balance of economic power in Canada has shifted westward for about a decade now, but some economists believe Ontario and the rest of central Canada could start to slow that trend this year.

Ontario has the most to gain from a rebounding U.S. economy and greater certainty in Europe, **Douglas Porter**, Bank of Montreal's chief economist, said Tuesday. Energy-rich Alberta will continue to lead the country in growth, and other prairie provinces will continue to enjoy a resource boom. But the American economic recovery means Ontario is once again primed to catch up.

"We think that one of the themes over the next couple of years is that huge growth gap will tend to narrow," Porter said.

Ontario will likely match national GDP growth for the first time since 2010, Porter said, speaking at the Economic Club of Canada's annual forecast breakfast. That means both the provincial and the national GDP should grow 2.3 per cent in 2014.

Ontario has lost hundreds of thousands of jobs in the past decade, primarily from the restructuring of the North American auto sector and shutdowns in the steel, food processing and forestry industries - tied to a weak U.S. economy and the impact of a high Canadian dollar.

FARMERS' 2014 POLICY RESOLUTIONS

Ashley Csanady

Ontario farmers are looking to break new political ground in 2014.

Increased access to natural gas throughout rural areas tops the Ontario Federation of Agriculture's list of priorities for 2014. The organization representing more than 37,000 growers has promoted the idea for a number of years, arguing that natural gas is about half the cost of electricity and a third of the cost of propane. Access to natural gas could save farmers across the province a total of \$800 million a year, OFA President **Mark Wales** wrote in a New Year's commentary released Friday.

The OFA will continue to work to reduce red tape for growers through the government's Open for Business initiative and advocate for "upfront consultations" before any new farming-related rules are enacted.

Perhaps most interestingly, the OFA will focus some of its efforts in 2014 on a bill almost entirely unrelated to the good things that grow in Ontario. Bill 85, *Companies Statute Law Amendment Act*, seeks to clean up various laws governing not-for-profit organizations in Ontario, but the OFA worries it may have unintended consequences.

"Specifically, the OFA is concerned with the proposed elimination of geographic-based elections," Wales writes. "If directors were elected by all voting members at an annual meeting, as the act proposes, we would lose geographic representation and the ability of members to vote for a director in their area."

BOARD OF TRADE URGES VOTERS TO 'THINK TWICE' AT BALLOT BOXES

Staff

Calling 2013 "a year when our collective frustrations with political leadership boiled over," Toronto Region Board of Trade president **Carol Wilding** wants Toronto residents to think hard about their choices in 2014's municipal and (likely) provincial elections.

The Board of Trade's latest civic action campaign unveiled Tuesday is called "Think Twice, Vote Once."

Wilding specifically called out some provincial decision-making as reason for voters to be cynical about politics, naming the Liberal government's cancellation of gas-fired power plants in Oakville and Mississauga and the more than \$1 billion spent to do so. She also cited "flip-flopping" on the Scarborough subway.

The business lobby is a non-partisan group with 12,000 members and has pressed all levels of government for policies that will help boost the Toronto area economy. The board has come out in support of everything from expanding Toronto Island Airport for commercial jets to paying for new subways and rapid transit growth with fuel taxes and other "revenue tools."

The Board of Trade has a website, ThinkTwiceVoteOnce.com, encouraging voters to vote with four key priorities in mind:

- Building regional transportation;
- Increasing fiscal capacity to upgrade civic infrastructure;
- Promoting job creation;
- Closing the gap between rich and poor.

PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL LEADERS REMEMBER CHRIS PELOSO

John Michael McGrath

It was perhaps inevitable that the funeral for **George Smitherman's** husband would end up a political event, at least a little. After all, **Chris Peloso** always said his partner was a political animal.

Smitherman told an overflow crowd at a memorial service in Toronto on Friday that, as he considered re-entering electoral politics last year, it was his late husband Peloso who was pushing him.

"He said to me: 'This is what you do,'" Smitherman said. "But it's not what I will do."

That sentiment was echoed by the former mayor of pre-amalgamation City of Toronto, **Barbara Hall**, who acknowledged that the "glass walls" of a public life can be difficult for many families — but that Peloso was ready for Smitherman's 2010 run for mayor even before the former health minister was. (Smitherman was also Hall's chief of staff during her term as mayor.)

The memorial also frankly acknowledged Peloso's battle with depression, which led to him ending his life.

"Chris suffered from depression, and committed suicide," said **Reno Peloso**, Chris's father. "There's no shame in that."

Hall added that stigmas and attitudes toward mental illness are changing, "but not fast enough."

Between Smitherman's careers in provincial and municipal politics, much of Toronto's political leadership attended the memorial service, at the Sherbourne Community Centre, near Toronto's traditional gay village. Premier **Kathleen Wynne**, former premier **Dalton McGuinty**, Deputy Mayor of Toronto **Norm Kelly** were all in attendance, as well as councillors **Karen Stintz**, **Pam McConnell** and members of cabinet, such as **Glen Murray** (who succeeded Smitherman in the Toronto-Centre riding) and **Michael Coteau**.

PEOPLE

Graeme Mew, formerly a lawyer with Clyde & Co., Canada LLP, has been appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Mew is a member of the Court of Arbitration for Sport and a judicial and appeals officer for the International Rugby Board. Mew was called to the bar in 1982 in England and in 1987 in Ontario.

Jeffrey Hewitt has been named to the Board of Negotiation and appointed vice-chair of the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs appeal tribunal. Hewitt is a Deputy Judge with the Superior Court of Justice, Small Claims Court in the Southwest Region. He is a lawyer who also teaches at the Faculty of Law, University of Windsor, where he received his Bachelor of Laws degree. He later got a Masters of Laws degree from Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto.

Appointed vice-chair of the Assessment Review board is **Dirk Vanderbent**, a lawyer, mediator, arbitrator and adjudicator who began practising law in 1982 and has mediation experience in family law, auto insurance claims and environmental matters. He spent seven years as a mediator/arbitrator at the Financial Services Commission of Ontario and since 2000 has been a Vice-Chair of ERT, a unit of Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario.

Marilyn Spink has been named to the council of the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario.

Jill Wagman and **Bethune Whiston** have been named to the Financial Services Tribunal.

Named to the council of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario is **Ruth Ann Penny**.

Gerald Richer has been named to the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission.

Valerie Hobbs has been named to the board of the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission.

Named to the Pharmacy Council is **Michael Malek**.

Appointed to the board of the Independent Electricity System Operator is **Margaret Kelch**.

Donald Obonsawin has been appointed to the board of the Ontario French-Language Educational Communications authority.

Named to the board of the Ontario Trillium Foundation is **Timothy Jackson**.

Appointed chair of the Walkerton Clean Water centre is **John Stager**.

Urban Joseph and **Orlando Rosa** have been named to the board of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation.

Appointed to the Retirement Home Regulatory Authority is **Barbara Sullivan**.

Named to the Ontario Review board are: **Robert Richardson, Jennifer Trehearne, James Hodgson, Janette Mills and Lorne Morphy**.

Paul di Simoni has been appointed to the Ontario Policy Arbitration commission.

Appointed to the Investment Advisory committee of the Public Guardian and Trustee is **Louise Stratford**.

FOR YOUR DIARY

- Jan. 10 Join the Friends of Sir John A. Macdonald to mark his 199th birthday; The Great Hall, Hart House, Toronto; 6:30 p.m. (Period costumes encouraged)
- Jan. 15 "An Evening with Michael Prue, MPP; Labatt Pub, 207 Queen's Quay West, Suite 299; Toronto; 6 p.m.
- Jan. 21 An Evening with Hon. Tracy MacCharles, MPP with special guest Hon. David Peterson; Oliver & Bocacini Café Grill, 33 Yonge Street, Toronto
- Jan. 28 2014 International Privacy Day Event – Big Surveillance Demands Big Privacy; MaRS Discovery District, 101 College Street, Toronto; Registration 8:30 a.m.; 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Feb 14 Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) presentation and panel discussion on pension security; MaRS Discovery District, Auditorium, 101 College St. Toronto; 3:00-4:30 p.m.; Reception to follow.
- Feb.19 Michael Mantha's second annual "Taste of Algoma-Manitoulin" with special guest speaker Gilles Bisson, MPP, Timmins-James Bay; The University Club, 380 University Avenue, Toronto; 6-8 p.m.
- Mar 21-23 Ontario Liberal Party Annual General Meeting; Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Building, 255 Front Street West, Toronto

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