

INSIDE QUEEN'S PARK

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GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS

September 11, 2013

AT THE CUTTING EDGE: BREAKING FREE OF BOREDOM

The Queen's Park media have begun to lament the staleness of the current provincial agenda, with the gas-plants issue and deadlock over contempt motions and other procedural measures attracting the most criticism. (Not for the first time, the QP press gallery exhibits zero tolerance for parliamentary procedure.) A solution for that problem might be to call an election, as Premier Wynne seemed to threaten willingness to do in the initial leaders' exchanges when the Leg. re-opened Monday. The provocative tone was gone on Tuesday, however, which suggests that marching to the brink and back again will be frequent but IQP strongly doubts that the minority government really wants to make things that interesting that quickly. In any event, everybody would get bored quite fast after a few cycles of electoral sabre-rattling.

One area of difficulty arises from the colossal scale of documents forthcoming – whatever the schedule on which they are divulged. The thousands of emails alone are an immense burden. Most of them will not repay reading but the committee members, and their staff, have no choice but to slog on.

There will be lots of give and take over which bills get called in what order, and which get sidelined altogether. Consider the recent spat among house leaders over so-called 'programming' motions, e.g., that presented by LIB house leader **John Milloy** to mandate quick passage of the tanning beds bill, to recur respecting disputed ownership of many hot issues. Credit for a particular budget bill is more important than the issue-ownership skirmishes that play themselves out in a majority situation.

Those exchanges are at their fiercest when an opposition initiative is advanced to lever minority government action. Just the sort of action which **Andrea Horwath** was yesterday demanding to deliver the budgetary items negotiated between the LIBs and NDP in Budget 2013. Wynne and her minority government can't renege on the 15% auto insurance premium cut and other concessions to secure a vote of confidence on the previous budget without hugely damaged credibility. And the Third Party is set on a collaborative course which we would be surprised to see them abandon prior to Budget 2014.

The *Toronto Star* editorial board gave Wynne a serious telling-off yesterday, dismissing "small-bore measures that represent a piecemeal approach to governing". Emphasizing that Wynne has had seven months at the wheel, they called for "a plan", much harder to compile than to conduct many conversations.

NO RUSH TO UNWRAP PORTFOLIOS

Only two of the five by-election winners had been assigned caucus responsibilities when the pink palace opened again. The other three had waited six weeks since their election to plunge into the fray. For once, the NDP put its newcomers to work ahead of the pack, back in August, with Windsor-Tecumseh's **Percy Hatfield** given charge of Infrastructure (allowing **Catherine Fife** to focus on Economic Development, one of the two economic portfolios she was assigned after her September 2012 by-election win) while London West's **Peggy Sattler** is critic for Community Safety & Correctional Services (leaving **Taras Natyshak** to handle Labour, an important planet in the NDP constellation).

The two new LIB MPPs, Ottawa South's **John Fraser** and **Mitzie Hunter** from Scarborough-Guildwood, were kitted out yesterday as Parliamentary Assistants. Fraser has been made PA at MNR as well as at MNDM; Hunter is PA at Comsoc; and **Joe Dickson** who had been PA at MNR is switched to be PA at Citizenship & Immigration. Fraser and Hunter finally got their QP office locations yesterday but telephones and email addresses are apparently still too much to ask, as are photographs, missing from the listings of them in the OPO Team web-site for PAs.

TIM PULLS THE TRIGGER

The sole Tory newbie, **Doug Holyday**, has been installed in a Leg. office for a couple of weeks and might well have been given a portfolio much earlier except for the ghastly wrangle over **Peter Shurman**'s housing allowance. **Tim Hudak**'s news release late last week, pledging that his Finance critic would claim nothing more under that program, evidently did not stop the rot, so Hudak and Shurman reportedly had a shouting match on Sunday in which the Thornhill MPP was asked to pay the money back, refused to do so and was stripped of his portfolio on the spot.

Spoil back a few months and the LIBs would have been hyperventilating at the prospect of picking up another seat. Of course, they would have to overlook the very harsh criticisms the sharp-tongued Shurman had lavished on them since he arrived in 2007. But the accommodation allowance troughing by **Mike Duffy** and other rogue Senators has given off such a stench that no-one impugned for making claims in that very area can expect an invitation to cross the floor any time soon.

That's not to say that Shurman would seek such an out. *IQP* can't find a Tory who has a cross word to say about him, embarrassing as the business has been. But there's no great reluctance to slag **Randy Hillier** over

the leak of his email on the Ellis-Don request to be freed of a labour agreement.) It's striking, too, that Shurman's new back-bench berth positions him right behind the leader's chair where this department has seen no unhelpful grimaces or obvious body English.

We learned from Hudak in yesterday's question period that the key Finance portfolio has gone to **Vic Fedeli**, who will, at least for the time being, also continue to carry the heavy Energy dossier. The MPP for Nipissing is very able but he can't be made to do double duty for long. The Leader also announced that Holyday would be critic for Accountability – and, inescapably, for Toronto. The sole 416-er in the PC caucus is also handling gridlock and "GTA subways". Brace yourselves for some overall homilies about how they do things better, or at least more cheaply, at Toronto city hall. We have no idea what lessons Holyday will derive from the city hall transit snake pit.

CAMPAIGN CASH-BOX :

(1) TRACKING REAL-TIME DONATIONS ...

IQP reported July 31 and August 15 on the donations reported by the three political parties in 'real-time' contributions to the 2013 by-elections. Here's a third bulletin compiled September 9.

The NDP now lists \$306K in by-election period donations; the PCs have taken in \$976K; and the LIBs collected \$997K. The three parties together have banked \$2,779K for the five 2013 by-elections but that is only 60% of the \$4,580K raked in over the two 2012 contests.

... (2): HIKING FUNDRAISER TICKETS ...

IQP has not yet started to properly analyze the higher ticket prices being charged for cocktail receptions, dinners, golf tournaments and the like. But there's strong anecdotal evidence that provincial party funders are now much more expensive. Too bad this is not one of the areas in which consumers are safeguarded by *Bill 55*, the consumer protection bill which yesterday received second reading approval.

... & (3): ENDING UNION AND CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS

The NDP leader has told reporters that she supports prohibiting trade unions and business corporations from donating to provincial political parties. This change, which was made at the federal

level by the departing Prime Minister **Jean Chrétien**, had been considered at Queen's Park by the McGuinty government but not implemented.

STILL A SORBARA IN THE CAMPAIGN TEAM

The old guard had been summoned to run the snap provincial election which the LIBs were anticipating earlier this year but a new team has now been installed to handle the next round of election speculation and to prepare in earnest for the next actual election.

Campaign director **Don Guy** has been replaced by **Pat Sorbara**. An experienced party organizer though not previously given anything like so significant a provincial campaign responsibility, she is cousin to former campaign co-chair **Greg Sorbara**. Strategic advice will be furnished by **David Herle**, who will be co-campaign chair with deputy premier **Deb Matthews**, and ex-Paul Martin CoS **Tim Murphy**. Wynne's own key political staffers, including highly regarded leadership campaign organizer **Tom Allison**, will have roles at the centre of the campaign.

TWEAKING THE PERMANENT GOVERNMENT

Premier Wynne shows no great interest in shuffling her line-up of cabinet ministers but Cabinet Secretary **Peter Wallace** has announced a couple of changes to the list of deputy ministers.

Named as Acting DM of Aboriginal Affairs is **David de Launay**. He most recently was ADM for the Ring of Fire Secretariat, rejoicing in the full title of Trilateral Process, Infrastructure and Community Readiness. He has held a number of senior positions in MNR and Aboriginal Affairs. At AA, de Launay replaces **Lorie LeBlanc**, who moves to be DM of Municipal Affairs and Housing, a ministry in which she has had wide experience. LeBlanc replaces **Bill Forward** who will seemingly bring his OPS career to a close by serving as the Ontario Visiting Fellow at the U. of T.'s School of Public Policy and Governance.

THIS DAY IN ONTARIO ELECTORAL HISTORY

September 14, 2006 – In the Parkdale-High Park by-election occasioned by the resignation of LIB Education minister Gerard Kennedy to seek his party's federal leadership, the seat is taken by NDPer Cheri DiNovo, a local United Church minister.

MITZIE HUNTER

Elected MPP for Scarborough-Guildwood in the August 2013 by-election, Hunter holds two U. of T degrees.

PROVINCIAL PROFILE

IQP: How did you get here from there?

Hunter: My family immigrated from Jamaica when I was just four years old. Though both my parents worked, education was a central focus for our family. I went to Winston Churchill Collegiate at Kennedy and Lawrence in Scarborough and then to the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus. I needed to work to put myself through university during the recession of the early 1990s when student unemployment was very high. With help from a program that encouraged students to start their own businesses, I was able to use my creativity and talent and create my own employment. After graduation I entered the corporate world, moving up through the ranks at Bell Canada and becoming a regional director responsible for government relations activities in the Greater Toronto Area. I was very interested in information technology and communications so I ended up at SMART Toronto, an association of technology companies which worked closely with startup organizations and digital media companies as well as established hardware and software companies in the region and helped to foster the growth of these companies. I then took a totally different direction, going into the charitable sector to work for Goodwill Industries. It helps people facing who faced multiple barriers to employment. Goodwill is also known for its recycling and retailing activities. While there, I did my MBA at the Rotman School of Management. That was a wonderful experience which really helped to further my career. I went on to be the Chief Administrative Officer at Toronto Community Housing which works to ensure affordable housing is available to low-income people. I had one more stop along the way, becoming CEO of a wonderful organization called CivicAction. It's a non-partisan organization that brings together leaders from business, community organizations, non-profits and academia to solve problems in collaboration with government.

IQP: A candidate's ties to the riding for which they are seeking election tend to be more hotly disputed in by-elections than in general elections. You were able to advance significant Scarborough connections.

Hunter: Yes, Scarborough is where I lived, went to high school and university and started work. It is a community that I understand. For example, when I was at UTS, I started Mosaic, a celebration of Scarborough's rich diversity and cultures. Twelve years later, the student council still hosted Mosaic. I very much connected with the community because I'd spent so much of my life there. Because of all the time I had spent in Scarborough, whenever I was out canvassing in the by-election, I encountered people I had worked with, people I had gone to school with.

IQP: By-elections are also often more toughly contested.

There was a wrangle over the NDP nomination and the PCs charged that you misrepresented John Tory as supporting you in the by-election.

Hunter: John Tory is someone I've known for many, many years. We first served together on the board of the United Way of Toronto over 15 years ago now. He's always been supportive of me. We have a great relationship and a great friendship. His endorsement of me, I think, occurred not while I was running for MPP but when he hired me as CEO of CivicAction. He and I have a long-standing friendship and professional relationship. I take John Tory's comments at face value. The words used were his words; there was no misrepresentation. The things he said about me are on the public record, in news releases and interviews.

IQP: Leaving transit aside for a moment, what are your priority Scarborough issues?

Hunter: Youth employment is very important, it came up all across the riding when I was talking to people. We have a lot of young people in our riding and we need to ensure there are opportunities for them. So that's a key focus on my work with community organizations and young people themselves to ensure they participate in the youth job strategy. There's an investment our government is making of \$295M over 2 years to create 30,000 jobs for young people. The youth in Scarborough-Guildwood need to be involved directly. I've already convened a roundtable of key youth organizations around that issue. We invited Brad Duguid, the Training, Colleges & Universities minister, to dialogue with those leaders and some front-line workers on how to meet the needs of young people. Another issue is care for our seniors. My riding has a very high concentration of seniors and I will be a strong voice at Queen's Park on issues such like community care or home care.

IQP: On the vexed question of where to put which kind of transit, you were criticized for switching tracks from LRT to subways. How will this whole transit scheme get sorted out and built?

Hunter: There was an announcement last week by the Minister of Transportation on building a subway extension to Scarborough using the province's \$1.4B commitment. We will extend the Bloor-Danforth subway 6.4km, making Scarborough Town Centre a significant mobility hub servicing the community. There needs to be a combination of transit improvements but those decisions have not yet been finalized by Metrolinx. I am definitely for subway expansion into Scarborough and that's what I was hearing from residents. To say I changed from LRT to subway is absolutely not correct. The comprehensive transit plan incorporates both. I supported the subway extension into Scarborough because we need more access to rapid transit.

PEOPLE

David de Launay has been appointed Acting Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, effective September 3. Named to a sixth term as President of Ontario Nurses' Association is **Linda Haslam-Stroud**.

Christopher May has been named to the Justices of the Peace appointments advisory committee. Named to the Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology board of Governors is **Peter Chang**.

Mark Bonokoski is named Director of Communications for Tim Hudak. The former *Toronto Sun* columnist and editor sought a CA nomination in the 2000 federal election in the Ottawa West-Nepean.

Vicky Trépanier has been appointed Chief Representative of the Bureau du Québec à Toronto

Mayo Moran has been appointed to review the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Martin Lambert has been appointed to the board of the Ontario Judicial Council.

Named to the board of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario is **Mark Stabile**.

Doug Brooks has been named to the Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology board of governors.

Appointed Auditor-General for Ontario is **Bonnie Lysyk**.

FOR YOUR DIARY

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| Sept 11 | Reception for David Zimmer with Hon. Mike Gravelle; Gardiner Museum, 111 Queen's Park; 6-8 p.m. |
| Sept 18 | BOT Distinguished Speaker Series with Dr. Ann Cavoukian, Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner "Open Data Movement"; Downtown Centre, 77 Adelaide St. W.; 9-11:30 a.m. |
| Sept 22 | Annual Don Valley West PLA Garden Party with Hon. Kathleen Wynne, MPP, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party; home of Pat Carew and Tineke Vermaat, 122 Buckingham Avenue, North York; 2-4 p.m. |
| Sept 23 | Equal Voice's 8 th annual 'Women in Public Life' luncheon with the Hon. Kathleen Wynne as the 2013 recipient; Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre Hotel; 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. |
| Sept 25 | "Jeff Leal's Home Fundraiser in Peterborough" with special guest Charles Sousa, MPP. 6 p.m. |
| Oct 7 | An evening with Jack MacLaren, PC MPP Carlton-Mississippi Mills with guest speaker Doug Ford, City Councillor; Labatt House, Queens Quay Terminal, 207 Queens Quay W., Suite 299; 6-8 p.m. |
| Nov 6 | TVO's 40 th Anniversary Gala honouring founder Premier Bill Davis hosted by Steve Paikin; Fermenting Cellar, Distillery District; Reception 5:30 p.m.; Dinner 7:30 p.m. |
| Nov 19-20 | APPrO 2013 - 25 th Anniversary Canadian Power Conference & Networking Centre; Metro Toronto Convention Centre |

TRIVIA # #440: What is the total cost in the current financial year of the housing allowance for MPPs?

TRIVIA # 439: How many of the 107 Ontario provincial ridings have hyphenated names?

ANSWER TO TRIVIA # 439: Of the 107 Ontario provincial ridings, just over half (61 or 57%) carry hyphenated names.

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