

## **Chudleigh column – August 2007**

### **Dalton thumbs his nose at taxpayers**

Dalton has done it again.

In 2003, just before an election, Dalton McGuinty sought to reassure voters when he promised not to raise taxes. A few months later he raised taxes.

A few days ago, as we near an election, Dalton McGuinty promised not to raise taxes. On October 10<sup>th</sup> voters get to tell our current Premier what they think of his promise.

The spring session of the legislature was indicative of the growing distance of the Liberal government from the people they serve.

The government refused to address concerns about disappearing manufacturing jobs. Higher taxes, higher energy costs, creeping inflation and a strong Canadian dollar have all contributed to the decision of some companies to flee Ontario, and caused the loss of 160,000 manufacturing jobs since the beginning of 2005. More than 30,000 Ontario families have fled this province for jobs in other places. Ontario is last among provinces in economic growth.

Perhaps the most telling moment of the session was a Dalton McGuinty answer to a direct question about calling in the Ontario Auditor General to investigate damning evidence that taxpayer dollars were diverted to Liberal friendly community groups. Mr. McGuinty not only ignored the substance of the question, but mocked it, by answering with details of an entirely unrelated health care initiative.

His actions were the equivalent of sticking his hands in his ears and going ‘La la la la la.’ In the end, the Ontario Auditor was called in to investigate. His report, released recently, caused the Minister in charge to immediately resign, and has called up a cloud of other issues.

At issue are millions of dollars that were shovelled out the door...quickly, with no public notice. There were no formal criteria. There were no written applications. There was no provision for a review of the results.

During the debate in the Legislature on this issue the Liberal government made a mockery of the process and thumbed their noses at legitimate concerns by ignoring the questions outright or hideously trying to paint the questioners as racist and bigoted. Words they later had to apologize for.

The Premier and the Finance Minister both denied any problem existed. Now that big problems have been detailed by the auditor, it appears these people were either incompetent with regards to their duties or lying outright.

While surprising at first blush perhaps, given their previous conduct on the Ontario Lottery scandal, we shouldn't be too shocked. When the McGuinty government became aware of problems with lottery prizes they put no controls in place to prevent abuse. And until the story went public they made no attempt to solve the problem. They accepted no responsibility, as the Minister in charge of the Lottery still sits in that role today.

While all this is going on violent crime has become accepted in our cities. The Premier accepts photo ops in the wake of the carnage but refuses to take action on bail conditions, longer sentences and dangerous offender status for repeat offenders. And we are left with the very real sense that Ontario is slipping.