

FRANKLY SPEAKING: Confidence Motion

Why a Confidence Motion Before the Budget?

By MPP Frank Klees, Newmarket-Aurora

By the time you read this, a Want of Confidence Motion will have been tabled in the legislature by the Official Opposition. Why was it brought forward at this time and why is the government refusing to allow it to come to a vote?

Confidence Motion: The cornerstone of responsible government

A Want of Confidence Motion is an important parliamentary tool by which the legislature can set out the reasons why it has lost confidence in the government's ability to spend public money and to carry out the business of government. It is different from a confidence vote on a budget bill, in that it does not trigger an immediate fall of the government, but it is a strong message to the government that it no longer enjoys the confidence of the legislature. Donald A. Desserud, a professor of history and politics at the University of New Brunswick, refers to the convention of confidence as "the cornerstone of responsible government".

Any observer of parliamentary procedure will know that for the most part, the efforts of Opposition parties to hold government accountable for its actions are largely ignored by the government of the day. The daily ritual of Question Period is a glaring example of how an important proceeding of parliamentary accountability has devolved into a sham and is often nothing more than a disrespectful display of partisan banter.

So when the Opposition gives notice that it will bring forward a confidence motion, one would expect that at the very least, this procedural measure would be respected by the government. Not so with the current Premier. When asked if she would agree to a vote on confidence motion, her response was that there is no need for a separate confidence vote. Wait for the budget.

So, because the Premier will not allow it to be considered on the floor of the legislature, I'm sharing the Motion with you here.

The Want of Confidence Motion the Premier doesn't want you to see:

"Whereas, the McGuinty-Wynne Governments have repeatedly put the political fortunes of the Liberal Party ahead of both the people and the Province of Ontario, abused their power and wasted hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to cancel gas plants in both Oakville and Mississauga so as to retain Liberal seats and save their own political skins in a desperate attempt to cling to power;

Whereas, the Speaker of the Legislature made a finding of prima-facie breach of privilege for nonproduction of documents requested by the Standing Committee on Estimates, which when finally provided, revealed that the Liberal Government had failed to report the true costs of the cancelled gas plants and also exposed inappropriate political interference at the highest levels of the Liberal Government;

Whereas, the Auditor General, in the wake of the growing scandal, sought to expose the true costs of the cancelled gas plants after numerous Liberal Ministers, including then Premier McGuinty and Premier Wynne in her previous Ministerial role, made public pronouncements, both in the House and to the media that were suspiciously low. The Auditor General confirmed on April 15th, 2013 that the true cost of cancelling the Mississauga Gas Plant was \$275 million dollars, or 45% higher than what the Liberal Government had repeatedly told the people of Ontario;

Whereas, Premier Wynne, in her former Ministerial role personally Chaired the meeting and signed off on the process that cancelled the Oakville Gas Plant, yet never disclosed her role in this decision until evidence surfaced that showed Premier Wynne, in fact had known intimate details about the true costs associated with the Liberal Government's decision to cancel the Oakville gas plant;

Whereas, conflicting testimony before the Standing Committee on Justice has hindered the Committee's ability to get to the bottom

of the gas plant scandal;

Whereas, the gas plant scandals, combined with those at eHealth and ORNGE amount to literally billions of taxpayer dollars being wasted on scandals and expose the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal Government's utter lack of competence and its failure to get the basics right so as to get results for Ontarians; and, these scandals prove that the Liberals will put selfish interests of their Party ahead of the people and Province of Ontario;

Therefore, the Government has lost the confidence of this House."

Of course the Premier would rather change the channel to the budget. On May 2, we'll see what is in that budget, but we have no reason to believe that this one will be any different from the previous budgets from this government. Promises that were scripted to buy votes, but were never meant to be kept. We really don't need to see the next one. We know the authors.

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