

Thursday, October 20, 2011

**Experience, experience and experience**

With the selection of his new cabinet Premier Dalton McGuinty underscored the fact that the economic and political stakes are higher than ever for his government and now is not the time for his cabinet to be receiving on-the-job training.

Every single member of the Executive Council has served previously as a Minister. With that experience, McGuinty also brings change, shuffling all but a handful of the ministerial responsibilities that existed prior to the election. That change is designed to help ensure the government not grow tired or appear complacent as it enters its third term in office.

He has certainly sent a “steady at the helm” message; whether he can also convey a sense of renewal and vigour when not appointing a single new Minister is much more open to question.

**Size Matters:**

By shrinking the Cabinet from 28 Members to 22, Premier McGuinty appears to be hoping to accomplish four things:

- Send an important symbolic message that this will be a smaller, less interventionist government;
- Ensure a tighter and more controlled grip on power;
- Avoid many of the jealousies and petty politics that would have resulted with the promotion of new MPPs or non-ministers ahead of their peers;
- Meet/beat Tim Hudak’s call for a 20 per cent reduction in the Cabinet size.

**You don’t have to be old to be experienced:**

Despite McGuinty’s emphasis on experience, several of the Cabinet’s more youthful Ministers were given key roles in the new minority government. As Government House Leader, John Milloy assumes responsibility for navigating the unpredictable realities of a minority Parliament. The fact Minister Milloy served as Prime Minister Chretien’s chief legislative advisor was no doubt on the Premier’s mind when he made the appointment.

Another experienced, but youthful Minister taking on significant new responsibilities is that of the new Education Minister Laurel Broten. By all accounts, Minister Broten was impressive on her return to Cabinet and repeatedly delivered for the central campaign team who called on her early and often for various media opportunities.

Add to the list of energetic and relatively fresh-faced Ministers Glen Murray and Charles Sousa who take on key political priorities in the vote-rich portfolios of Training, Colleges and Universities and Citizenship and Immigration.

**Loyalty and politics:**

Make no mistake, this is a minority government and politics will matter. There are no more political members of the Legislature than Dwight Duncan and Rick Bartolucci. The appointment of Dwight Duncan as Deputy Premier can be traced back to the 1999 election loss when Duncan immediately offered Dalton McGuinty his promise of unequivocal support and service and has delivered on that promise every day since.

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In naming Rick Bartolucci the Chair of Cabinet (in addition to his responsibility as Minister of Northern Development and Mines), McGuinty has ensured that the Cabinet not forget that the next election could come at anytime and that politics needs to be considered in every public policy debate.

On the subject of loyalty, let the appointments of Ted McMeekin, Laura Broten and John Gerretsen be a lesson for anyone in politics who finds their political careers set back temporarily. The grace with which these three accepted their situation is a very large part of why they have been given every reason to smile today.

### **Energy, Environment and Economic Development:**

In Dalton McGuinty's mind, the *Green Energy Act* was always about creating jobs and building a new industry that Ontario could sell to the world. With that in mind, Brad Duguid, the province's former Energy Minister, was the natural choice to lead the province's continuing efforts to secure those investments.

For many, the appointment of Jim Bradley as Minister of Environment will feel like a scene from *Back to the Future* as Minister Bradley held the same role throughout the Peterson government (1985 – 1990). Bradley's first 5 years in that office produced the Blue Box, internationally leadership on Acid Rain and a reputation for environmental protection all of his successors have had a difficult time matching. However, he also had a tendency to ignore the business side of the equation and put longer-term benefits ahead of immediate risk to jobs. Many people will be looking to see if the 2011 version of Environment Minister Jim Bradley will be "new and improved" or the "classic" model.

Chris Bentley is a marathon runner and all of his endurance and determination will be put to the test as he makes the transition from the Attorney General to Minister of Energy. While the day one briefings appear obvious – the Mississauga gas plant, the halted Oakville facility, the fate of Ontario's nuclear future and the *Green Energy Act* – the challenges on these files will not yield quick or easy solutions.

### **Health – no need for a second opinion:**

With the government's fiscal plan counting on the Ministry of Health to trim its growth rate in half (from an average of 6 to 8 per cent to just 3 per cent), Health Minister Deb Matthews has the unenviable job of implementing further significant cost reduction measures while trying to avoid creating major political problems with influential stakeholders. Given the size and complexity of the Ministry, the Premier is hoping Minister Matthews' head start will pay dividends in getting the job done.

### **The full cabinet is below:**

Dalton McGuinty:	Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Jim Bradley:	Minister of the Environment
Rick Bartolucci:	Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Chair of Cabinet
Dwight Duncan:	Minister of Finance, Deputy Premier

John Gerretsen:	Attorney General
Chris Bentley:	Minister of Energy
Madeleine Meilleur:	Minister of Community Safety & Correctional Services, Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs
Harinder Takhar:	Minister of Government Services
Kathleen Wynne:	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs
Michael Chan:	Minister of Tourism and Culture
Michael Gravelle:	Minister of Natural Resources
Brad Duguid:	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation
Deb Matthews:	Minister of Health and Long Term Care
John Milloy:	Minister of Community and Social Services, Government House Leader
Margarett Best:	Minister of Consumer Services
Laurel Broten:	Minister of Education, Minister of Women's Issues
Linda Jeffrey:	Minister of Labour, Minister Responsible for Seniors
Eric Hoskins:	Minister of Children and Youth Services
Glen Murray:	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities
Bob Chiarelli:	Minister of Transportation, Minister of Infrastructure
Charles Sousa:	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Ted McMeekin:	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs