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An election already?

by BRIAN LOCKHART

I can't believe there is a provincial election coming up next month.

It feels like only a couple of years since Doug Ford was placed into the premier's office as the 26th person to hold that position.

The new campaigns have not really started yet, at least not in a full blown, get yourmessage out there, type of campaign, which I am sure is yet to come.

So far, I have seen only one campaign ad ? and I was not impressed. I'm not sure what it was really supposed to mean with regards to running for an election.

The ad was about his family struggles, and at the end he compares it to the struggles of Ontarians through the pandemic. The two are not related, and I thought the entire ad was a cheap, sentimental sympathy ad which I don't think will garner much sympathy at all considering the person is running for political office, not as spokesperson fora support group.

It doesn't matter though ? if that's what the campaign managers came up with, that's what they can go with.

I think overall, Doug Ford has done a decent job as premier. That's not an endorsement, just an opinion. We've had worstpremiers in office.

He's a bold figure, and a big personality.

I did notice that his way of speaking and phrasing changed dramatically once he was elected. I guess it was part of developing his image, and he is a decent public speaker.

Much of his tenure in office has revolved around the pandemic that we've have collectively suffered through over the pasttwo years.

It was just one of those things that was not predicted, but happened, and affected the entire province, and indeed most ofthe world.

Premier Ford took a lot of heat regarding his handling of the entire pandemic situation.

However, I don't think it would have mattered who, or which party was in power at the time, they would have all handled it the exact same way.

As a politician, and leader of the province,the Premier had no choice but to followthe direction and advice of the medicalcommunity and health units in the province.

Did you really want the premier to disregard the advice of the medical professionalsand come up with his own strategy to fight the pandemic based on the advice ofhis cabinet?

Would you have felt better if the Minister of Francophone Affairs (yes, that's an actual cabinet position) provided the information on vaccines, or the Minister of Finance explained what you should do to protect yourself during a pandemic?

I decided to go back over the Premier's time in office to see what he has accomplished. But I decided to come up with a list without researching notes or looking up news stories.

The truth is, I can't come up with much. He has skated along doing what premiers do. No big scandals that I recollect, although I'm sure many people will come up with ?well what about this?? type of thing that he has done that made people angry or outraged.

The one thing I do disagree with wasthe elimination of license plate sticker fees. Of course I enjoyed getting a cheque in the mail, but at the same time, I also like havingpotholes fixed and bridges that receive routine inspections and maintenance.

Those license plate sticker fees paid for the roads and maintenance of those roads to the tune of around $900 million each year. The typical $120 fee to renew your plates is not much in exchange forhaving decent highways.

The thing is, although you won't be paying the sticker fee each year, that $900 millionis still going to fix the roads ? it just means it will be coming from some other fund, that you will be paying for, so it's not like you're getting a deal or coming out ahead.

Ontario seems to be on the right track as far as attracting business and investment. For the most part we all live very well, although inflation is getting out of control,but that is really more of a federal issue.

The important thing this election, is togo out there and have your say in whomakes the decisions for the province forthe next few years.

Cast your vote.

It is your right, and I think, your responsibility as a citizen to make your voice known when determining who will represent you and your community for the coming years.