

Editorial ? The ball is in Horwath?s court

We do not envy the position that Premier Kathleen Wynne finds herself in these days, although it is true that's one of the realities that goes with the job she sought.

The latest issues have come from the announcement of the OPP's investigation into hard drives on computers in the Premier's Office being wiped clean. Just exactly what activities went on are still not completely clear, and neither is the level of Wynne's involvement. Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak and his colleagues are making statements, and Wynne is denying them, and there has even been the suggestion that legal action could be coming.

And all that, and more, puts NDP's Leader Andrea Horwath in the proverbial hot seat. For it is she who has to decide whether to keep propping up Wynne's minority government.

Hudak seems ready for a fight, and we think he would be very glad to see an election called. So would members of his caucus, like Dufferin-Caledon MPP's Sylvia Jones, who released a statement earlier this week, calling on Wynne to call an election.

'It's time that people were given the chance to have their say,' Jones said in her statement.

But the person who's most likely gong to call this shot is Horwath. Wynne is not likely to call an election at this time on her own initiative, which means it's up to the NDP's leader.

She has seemed reluctant to pull the plug on this government. Is she hoping that by keeping Wynne in office her party gets more concessions, especially in a budget that's due to be introduced in a couple of weeks? Wynne is enjoying a considerable amount of personal popularity, despite the scandals that are impacting the government (and it is true that she inherited a lot of this mess from former premier Dalton McGuinty). Is Horwath afraid of that popularity? Is she concerned that this simply might not be the right time to send Ontario voters to the polls?

What ever goes through her mind, and the minds of party strategists, we believe observers detect unrest at Queen's Park.

Horwath made a major production Monday of leading her caucus in a symbolic march out of the legislative chambers, protesting the absence of the Premier. Some may have thought the gesture dramatic, but considering the rather little play it received in the media the following day, we would be inclined to think that it was ultimately pointless.

Or was Horwath maybe trying to get people ready for something a little more dramatic?

She has it within her power to bring down the government. Considering the weight of that reality, we're not very envious of her either.

But it's also part of the job she sought too.