

Evaluating Premier Ford's work in the province

BY MARK HAUCK

The Doug Ford government has been in power for almost nine months, and already many people are very unhappy. In their own words, Mr. Ford and his local representative, Sylvia Jones were elected to bring to Ontario a focus on the middle class, or as Ford called them, 'the people'. Perhaps we should have been wary that, in spite of their rhetoric, they never committed themselves to an actual platform document. Still people held out hope.

How things have gone so wrong. Put simply, the Ford government has not focused on helping the middle class but instead has passed policies that actually hurt them. By way of evidence:

? He cancelled OHIP+ and the programs to offer reduced or free post-secondary tuition for low- and modest-income Ontarians. These were previous Liberal government programs that were very popular.

? After cancelling the cap and trade program, which has cost the Ontario taxpayer millions and counting, Ford declared that polluters could face a carbon tax.

? He said with little evidence that the previous government was rife with patronage appointments. Yet he has happily filled many positions with people who are his friends such as the new head of the EQAO. Under the Liberals, this job paid a per diem of roughly \$4,000 per year. Ford's friend now gets a full time job at \$150,000 a year.

? Even though he promised to keep the program in place for another year, he cancelled the minimum income pilot program that helped thousands of people break the cycle of poverty.

? He did not move forward with the minimum wage increase to \$15 an hour that would provide a living wage for millions of people.

? He did not fire his Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, Lisa MacLeod for threatening the Ontario Association of Behavioural Analysis unless they supported her changes to the way the government supports families that have children with autism. One of her colleagues, Randy Hillier actually mocked the parents of autistic children.

Clearly Doug Ford has not placed the middle class as the focus of his priorities. As you can plainly see on TV, Sylvia Jones is an enthusiastic booster of Ford and his tactics, always nodding her head in agreement to his rants at Queens Park.

We must all remind Mr. Ford of who he proposed to help during the last election. So far, he has done little 'for the people'.

Unless you like a buck a beer.