

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? ?Fixing? a problem they created

African writer Israelmore Ayivor wrote: ?If the problems you have this year are the same problems you had last year, then you are not a leader. You are rather a problem on your own that must be solved.?

He wasn't writing about Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne at the time, but he could have been.

Obviously, given the latest Angus Reid Institute poll showing her approval rate at a miniscule 12 per cent, she indeed is the problem. Unfortunately, we're all paying for it.

Things have become so grim for Wynne that there are growing rumbles around Queen's Park about who can replace her ? she insists she's staying ? and some prominent Liberals have even gone public expressing their dismay at her performance.

For example, former finance minister Greg Sorbora, a long-time Ontario Liberal heavyweight, was quoted in the rabidly pro-Liberal Toronto Star last week saying the party is in ?grave danger? of losing next year's election.

?Energy rates became a lightning rod for all the discontent in the province, and when you're premier of a province and that's happening, you become part of that lightning rod,? he said.

As for Wynne, who downplayed the latest in an ongoing series of poll disasters, she insists she's hanging around for the next election and that things will get better for the Liberals.

As for the critics within her own party, Wynne says, ?There's no secret there have always been people in the Liberal party who weren't keen on me.?

If only she had to worry about loyal party members turning against her that would be bad enough. But among the general public, her ?popularity? ? if we may use the term ? has plummeted from 36 per cent in March of 2016 to the current record low of 12 per cent. It's not just Liberals who don't like her.

Wynne said, ?I know that the issue around electricity prices has been very, very hard for people. I made a commitment to the people of Ontario in 2014. I'm doing that job and I'm going to continue to do that job.?

That, of course, is not good news for Liberals, but it must warm the hearts of every Tory and New Democrat in the province. They know that as long as she stays where she is, their chances continue to increase dramatically.

Wynne, as you likely know ? with the inept assistance of her predecessor Dalton McGuinty ? went full bore into so-called alternative energy, doling out absurdly high contracts for wind and other inefficient forms of the stuff, and jacking prices to the point where not only business is heading out of the province but homeowners are finding themselves literally choosing between heating their homes and properly feeding their kids.

In an extraordinarily feeble attempt to rescue herself from her own disaster, Wynne recently announced a 25 per cent cut in electricity rates. To finance this, she's mortgaged the Province for the next 30 years and, assuming prices don't continue to rise (a most unlikely assumption) her grand scheme will set taxpayers back \$25 billion.

Now that, dear hearts, is Olympic-calibre incompetence.

Wynne hopes her popularity may sneak up a bit when people start enjoying the cut in their bills. Problem is, the aforementioned poll was taken after Wynne had made this phony announcement. People will take the lower rates, but they're not stupid enough not to realize that it was Wynne who caused the problem and obviously isn't up to the task of fixing it.

Yet, in an example of shameless chutzpah, the Liberals are running ads ? paid by you, the taxpayer ? touting their rate cuts and saying, ?We've heard you.?

A little late for that. Even Liberals should understand you can't take credit for ?fixing? a problem that you caused. And, by the way, simply cutting rates doesn't fix the basic problem of paying for the Liberal mistakes. All it does is make you pay considerably more spread out over a longer period.

Reid pollster Shachi Kurl said there is ?no way to sugar-coat this, it's just not a good situation for the premier . . . You can reach a point with the electorate where a level of cynicism or a level of hardening sets in and no matter what is done, there's no turning things around.?

They made their bed. It's too late now to change the sheets and hope their party will go on living happily ever after.

