



## *Message from Queen's Park*



**Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski**

**December, 2008**

Stephane Dion was asked during the recent federal election campaign, if he would consider a coalition with the NDP to form a government if Stephen Harper and the Conservatives won a minority. His reply was swift and direct. No, absolutely not, the NDP's economic policies would be disastrous for Canada. Tempted with the possibility of getting the keys to 24 Sussex and becoming Prime Minister, he dismissed his own promise faster than you can say the Rt. Honourable. Dion saw this as a last chance to end a sad career on a positive note. It didn't matter to him that having to make a deal that included the buying of the Bloc Quebecois would be bad for Ontario and the rest of Canada. The prospect of power was proved to be irresistible.

While we can understand what motivated Stephane Dion, what of the other liberal MP's? Why were Bob Rae and David McGuinty, to name just two, willing to sell out Ontario. No matter how you look at this so called coalition deal, it would bring huge monetary benefits to Quebec at the expense of all other provinces. Ontario, being the most populous would suffer accordingly.

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty who has made a daily point of criticizing the Harper government for being unfair to Ontario, couldn't muster a single negative word about this deal. Yet on his website he likes to call himself "Mr. Ontario." RIGHT!

I believe that when all is said and done, the LIBERAL brand will be hurt by what Canadians will see as a power at any cost, roll of the dice that was unjustified.

Speaking of Ontario, while we lost 66,000 jobs in November, 42,000 in the key manufacturing sector, we have heard nothing from the provincial government in the way of a plan to help retain jobs in the economic crisis that seems to be getting deeper. Instead, the liberals feel it is a priority to bring in a very ill conceived new law further restricting young drivers. Bill 126 which was recently introduced and is currently being debated on second reading is a bill that cannot be supported in its current form. The graduated license system in effect today requires new drivers to gain full driving privileges by going through stages. This is something that is generally very much supported by most people including the new drivers to which the rules apply. The proposed new legislation would take a quantum leap in the restrictions that drivers under 22 years of age would be placed under. I specify 22 years because this new bill doesn't apply if you are older. By this I mean, if you were 24 years old

but had never driven you would not be subject to this new law. In short, it targets people based on their age not their lack of experience. One of the most contentious parts of this bill would prohibit a young driver from having anymore than one passenger, other than family with them. Here in rural Ontario that would spell the end of carpooling among youth. Just a couple of weeks ago, our son Lucas and a few friends went in my van to a movie in Pembroke. If the liberal government has it's way that won't be happening anymore. It would also mean a license suspension for a single speeding ticket of just 15 km over the speed limit. If that law was to apply to everyone, there wouldn't be many of us left driving, period. Of course, here in spacious Renfrew County, if you don't have a driver's license, you probably no longer have your job either. Hopefully we can make some sensible changes to this legislation when it gets to committee.

Since this will be my last column of 2008, let me take the opportunity to wish everyone a most blessed and Merry Christmas, full of joy, peace and love. Special wishes to all our Military families who will not be able to celebrate Christmas together. We greatly appreciate the sacrifices they make on behalf of all Canadians.

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