

McGuinty and McCallum don't get it

Dalton McGuinty and John McCallum just don't get it. Rather than dealing with the truth of the tough criticism of Ontario's economic decisions from federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, McGuinty, our premier, and McCallum, the federal Liberal's finance critic, are both sharing a political crying towel.

Referring to Flaherty's consistent - and deadly accurate - complaint that Ontario's high corporate taxes are discouraging new investment in the province, McCallum said, "He's (Flaherty) trashing Ontario. I just can't believe it."

As for McGuinty, who, like Toronto's Mayor David Miller has become a serial whiner - no amount of money from anywhere is ever enough for those two - has fired a letter off to Prime Minister Stephen Harper which, typically, doesn't address Flaherty's argu-



National Affairs

Claire Hoy

ment but instead cries about the fact that the federal finance minister, an Ontarian himself, is making it.

"The very last thing Ontario families and businesses need is for...(Flaherty) to actively seek to undermine confidence in the Ontario economy," wrote McGuinty, adding that Flaherty's "extraordinary attack on Ontario is a betrayal of the federal government's responsibility to champion the Canadian economy, both at home and abroad."

McGuinty and McCallum were upset that Flaherty, a former Ontario finance minister, in again repeating his argument that Ontario's exceptionally high corporate tax rates are scaring away business, said on the weekend that the fact McGuinty won't reduce taxes "discourages investment in ..Ontario... If you're going to make a new business investment in Canada, and you're concerned about taxes, the last place you will go is the province of Ontario."

Sadly, it's true. And as much as McGuinty, McCallum, and the Liberals in general don't want to hear it, if anybody is betraying Ontario, it's the McGuinty government's headhanded refusal to create a level playing field in Ontario when it comes to new business investment.

It's the old story. When somebody says something that is dead on but is something you don't want to hear - particularly when it's something you could fix if you wanted to - the natural instinct is to lash out at the messenger rather than acknowledge the validity of the message.

McGuinty can cry all he wants about Flaherty criticizing the province, but even Toronto Dominion Bank chief economist Don Drummond, a politically neutral source, was quoted last week in the Toronto Star (hardly a bastion of Conservative politics) as saying that Ontario's business tax rates "stick out like a sore thumb" compared to the rest of Canada. He added that if current trends continue then by 2012, Ontario's overall tax rate on new businesses will be 30.17 per cent, compared to 18.8 per cent in Quebec.

Indeed, in his remarks, Flaherty, who has challenged provinces to reduce their business tax rates to 10 per cent by 2012, the federal finance minister praised British Columbia, another Liberal government, for recently pledging to lower corporate taxes to 10 per cent. Also, Alberta is already at that level.

Unlike Alberta, say, which happily has oil, Ontario must rely on its manufacturing sector which, all by itself, accounts for about 20 per cent of Ontario's total economy. Yet Ontario has lost 200,000 manufacturing jobs under McGuinty's watch since 2004.

To be fair, it's not all McGuinty's fault, obviously. The U.S. slowdown and higher oil prices have certainly contributed.

But - and this is all Flaherty is saying - is you want to attract new manufacturing jobs - and presumably McGuinty does - you're not going to do it when you boast by far the highest tax rates in the country.

As yourself this question: if you were a manufacturer looking for a place to invest in new plants and equipment, wouldn't you look at the tax rates? Yes, taxes aren't the entire story when it comes to investment, but they're a major part of decision making, particularly since nearby provinces with much lower taxes can offer all the other advantages that Ontario offers, such as accessibility to markets and a constant supply of well-trained labor, etc.

Despite this obvious reality, however, McGuinty - who, as history shows, is quick to raise taxes (despite promises he wouldn't) - seems determined to keep Ontario's place as one of the most expensive jurisdictions to do business.

And for McGuinty to whine that Flaherty has no business criticizing Ontario - this from a premier who has not stopped criticizing Ottawa ever since the Tories took over - is the absolute height of egotistical folly to the detriment of Ontarians.

It's not Flaherty's legitimate criticisms which are "trashing" Ontario. It's McGuinty's stubborn refusal to act on what is a serious problem.

We are all due for a thaw, I think

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expense, as I headed inside. But I also had the good sense not to take it too far. My neighbour, after all, is bigger than me.

Now I have to point out in fairness that my wife has stepped up and pitched in a lot this year. Beth grew up on a farm, so before our marriage, the shoveling of her driveway consisted of someone attaching a plow to a tractor. Moving in with me entailed more of a lifestyle switch than just having to get

used to my housekeeping skills (or lack thereof). There is no plow to attach to the tractor at our house (and no tractor either). Working a snow shovel took a bit of getting used to for the poor girl. The first couple of times she tried it, I told her she was holding it like it was a hockey stick. But she has persevered, and there have been several evenings this winter when I've come home ready to grab the shovel, and found the job has already been done. The only reason I don't try to rent out her shoveling

services is she would probably put a shovel through my head if I tried it.

There are easier ways to make money, I guess.

I think we have all heard the news stories that the record for snow in February in the Toronto area has been surpassed this year. I have the sore muscles to know that is true. That's interesting, considering all we have been hearing about global warming and other sire environmental calamities.

But compared to the last couple of winters, this one

has been pretty heavy.

There was an item in last Wednesday's Toronto Star, pointing out that with the exception of the 2004-05 season, this one has seen the most snow in years. And 2005 was the year we received that big freak snow-fall April 3 (I got stuck twice that day).

So yes, in answer to my own question, I am tired of this winter.

A nice long thaw would really make my day. Actually, it would probably make my year.

Our Readers Write

Chief Bigrigg appeals to all to make sure they have smoke alarms

With the shocking rash of fatal fires that have occurred in Ontario this winter, I am appealing to every resident of the Town of Caledon to drop what they're doing and test every smoke alarm in their home.

Right now - Do it - Test them right now! If you don't have a working smoke alarm on every storey and outside all sleeping areas, put your coat on, go out and buy some and install them as soon as you get home. If ever there was a time to take immediate

action for the safety of your family, this is it.

Tragedies such as these are the reason the fire service takes smoke alarms so seriously and I cannot overstate their importance. The law requires a working smoke alarm on every storey and outside all sleeping areas, but that is just the minimum. The more smoke alarms you have, the sooner you will be alerted to fire and the greater your chances of survival. For added protection, install smoke alarms inside every

bedroom. You may also want to consider investing in inter-connected smoke alarms. This may seem a bit extreme, but believe me, if a fire were to occur in your home in the middle of the night and you had no way to reach your children through the wall of smoke and fire, no number of smoke alarms would seem too many. And don't forget to take a few minutes to plan and practise a home fire escape plan with your family. When the smoke alarm sounds, every-

one must know what to do.

It is so sad that it takes the senseless deaths of children to make people take notice, but you're listening now. So please, don't think about it. Just do it - do it right now! Every storey. Outside sleeping areas. Practise your escape plan. It's such a small cost and effort for a huge investment in your family's safety.

Brad Bigrigg,
Fire Chief,
Caledon Fire
and Emergency Services

Chez Thrift is not a dumping ground

To the person(s) that left this behind Chez Thrift Monday, Feb. 11:

These are not donations. These items are no longer useable, as they have been left out in the snow overnight and are damaged, torn, stained, broken and quite honestly, meant for the curb on waste day.

I suspect that the person(s) that dropped these goods in the dead of the night knew this. What concerns me is that they didn't care about the problems this garbage dump caused.

Did you know that it took

two people three hours and four truckloads to the Recycle Centre, all in -24 degree weather, to remove your mess from the back of our fund-raising store? Did you know that generous donations from our community paid for this removal? Did you know that you committed an illegal dumping with regard to the Town of Caledon Bylaw 87-100 that prohibits the placing of refuse or debris on private or municipal property and that you could be fined up to \$2,000 for this action?

I couldn't stop you from

this horrible act, but perhaps my letter to you will deter others who believe if there is no one around to see the deed, it somehow becomes OK to dump garbage behind Chez Thrift. It isn't OK, and this hinders the staff and volunteers from the worthwhile and amazing work that they do daily at our stores. Please help your Caledon Community Services fund-raising stores by bringing all large and bulky reusable and resalable goods to our ReUstore located at 109 Industrial Rd., Bolton, located at the same

address as your Community Recycling Centre.

And for all of you who are regular or occasional donors of gently-used clothing, furnishings, household supplies, etc. to Chez Thrift and the ReUstore, please keep it coming! I cannot tell you how much we appreciate your investment in Caledon Community Services and the good work that we do in our community every day.

Rose Berezowsky,
Stores Manager,
Caledon Community
Services

