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## News

Home Editorial Holiday is welcome

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## Holiday is welcome

Well of course creating a new statutory holiday in February is an attempt by the Liberals to sidle up to Ontario voters.

What else would the Grits be doing five weeks before a provincial election?

It's no different than what the Conservatives and New Democrats are up to, as politicians of every stripe prepare for the sprint to Oct. 10.

Because as everyone knows, this is the actual election campaign.

Most Ontario voters have spent the summer on vacation, trying to keep their kids busy, doing outdoor projects around the home and just trying to enjoy the warm, sunny weather.

Politicians banging on their front doors or stuffing their mailboxes with brochures and pamphlets have been given the cold shoulder, and rightfully so.

But now, almost grudgingly, the voters in this province will start paying attention.

And Premier Dalton McGuinty has drawn first blood, politically speaking, by promising a new stat holiday - provided, of course, the Grits are the government again after the election.

Which is by no means a sure thing, if recent polls are any indication.

A SES Research/Osprey Media poll released Aug. 30 showed 40 per cent of committed voters support the Liberals, 34 per cent favour the Tories, 19 per cent the NDP and eight per cent the Green Party.

So it could be a minority government, as opposed to the majority Liberal government which has been running Queen's Park for almost four years.

Who can blame McGuinty and company for pandering to the most basic instincts of Ontario voters? Supporting another stat holiday might get some argument from corporate Ontario, but not from the rank and file.

Who doesn't want a break between New Year's Day and Easter? Those are the dog days of winter, when the white stuff and the wind and the cold really socks people in. A long weekend in February would be much appreciated.

Of course, so would a genuine tax break. Or a pledge to keep gas prices at 80 cents a litre. Or a guarantee that everyone would have a family doctor.

In other words, it's one of those motherhood issues for which you'd be hard-pressed to find any opponents. Getting paid to stay home on a blustery February Monday is as good as it sounds.

McGuinty's opponents have argued - and with some merit - that his Grits have had four years to give Ontario residents another stat holiday, and that this is just another hollow election promise. And the premier hasn't always kept his election promises (the no new taxes pledge, followed by re-introducing OHIP fees comes to mind).

As people prepare to vote in the days before Oct. 10, they will - at least mentally - make note of exactly what the Grits, Tories, NDP and Greens can and will do for them.

They'll look at the local candidates and ask the same questions.

But people vote for a candidate, or for a party, on the basis of reasons which are much more basic than many political analysts are often prepared to admit.

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