

Liberals' broken promises prompt call to resign

BY ROGER VARLEY
Staff Writer

It has only been two weeks since the Liberals took office, but the politicking has already begun.

Liberal Mario Racco of Thornhill and Conservative Frank Klees of Oak Ridges are already calling on each other to resign their seats.

Since being sworn in, the Liberals have reneged on promises to keep the cap on hydro rates and stop home construction on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

A third promise now appears likely to fall by the wayside. The Standard & Poor's financial agency says it sees no way for the Liberals to roll back tolls on Hwy. 407 without facing millions or even billions of dollars in compensation payments for breaking the agreement between the former Conservative government and 407 International.

When Ernie Eves' Tories sold Hwy. 407 to an international consortium in 1999, it promised toll hikes would be capped at 2 per cent per year, plus inflation, for the first 15 years. But tolls have risen from 30 to 203 per cent since then, depending on the time of day drivers use the highway.

It was on the issue of Hwy. 407 tolls that Mr. Klees called for Mr. Racco's res-

ignation. "He made tolls the central plank of his campaign and he should resign if tolls can't be rolled back," he said Thursday.

"I think (Mr. Klees) and all his cronies should resign and not run again after signing such a lousy, one-sided deal where Ontarians are paying the price," he said.

Mr. Racco insisted he had not broken any campaign promises.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ 'ACE CARD'

On the Oak Ridges Moraine housing freeze, in which the premier has admitted he can't stop the construction of 6,600 homes, Mr. Klees said the Liberals have handed the development industry "an ace card."

Markham Liberal MPP Tony Wong is asking for patience.

"I don't think it's fair to call them broken promises. Our party intends to do as much as possible, but some items will take longer than others because of the size of the deficit," he said.

The Oak Ridges Moraine freeze "is a responsible and necessary process to negotiate with the developers. I expect them to produce results, but they might not be perfect or (results) that everyone agrees with," he said.



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