

Breaking Spin-Watch: Rat(s) Off A Ship? John van Dongen Crosses The Floor

by kevin harding - Monday, March 26, 2012

<http://politicsrespun.org/2012/03/rats-off-a-ship-john-van-dongen-crosses-the-floor/>

In a somewhat surprising move, Abbotsford-South MLA John van Dongen rose in the Legislature in BC today and delivered a blistering critique of Christy Clark's BC Liberal government, and then announced that he would cross the floor to join the fledgling BC Conservative Part..

van Dongen's speech included an indictment of the government's write-off of six million dollars to pay the Basi-Virk BC Rail Trial legal fees, and the disastrous handling of the Telus naming rights.

Spinners were already in action, with Shachi Kurl saying "who didn't see that coming?"

Keep your eyes open for more - van Dongen says more is coming, and blogger Alex Tsakumis, who while I'm not the biggest fan, has said more MLAs are thinking of crossing.

This is particularly interesting given two byelections in full force; what effect will a wounded BC Liberal Party have in Chilliwack-Hope, already expected to be a battle between the BC Conservatives and the NDP, despite being a steady BC Liberal riding for some time?

Update: van Dongen's speech in the House can be read at the following link: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/86815015/Van-Dongen-Speech>

Second Update: CKNW's Sean Leslie is reporting via Twitter that van Dongen has hired a lawyer to examine "inconsistencies" in Christy Clark's statements regarding her role in the BC Rail controversy. A quick recap: Clark claims she was not involved with BC Rail in the slightest, whilst blogger Alex Tsakumis has published what calls verifiable documentation that alleges that Clark was directly involved in passing information regarding the sale to proponents.

van Dongen has hired lawyer (on his dime) to probe "inconsistencies" in @[christyclarkbc](#)'s statements re:BC Rail during ldrship bid. [#bcpoli](#)

— Sean Leslie (@seanleslie980) [March 26, 2012](#)

Even more updatier: BC Local News' Tom Fletcher is reporting:

At a news conference with B.C. Conservative leader John Cummins, van Dongen said he has hired a lawyer at his own expense to investigate the BC Rail legal fees arrangement, and also Premier Christy Clark's involvement with the sale in 2002-03. He said Clark made "inconsistent" statements when she ran for the B.C. Liberal leadership about what she knew of the sale and the involvement of lobbyists.

Now *that's* interesting. [See this for example](#). Note: a link here is most decidedly not an endorsement of the author.

Another update: Gary Mason of the *Globe and Mail* is reporting that Ken Bossenkool, Christy Clark's new Chief of Staff, directed that the BC Liberal's response was to be to attack van Dongen. Mason reports that some MLAs took issue with this approach.

Now, the smear has emerged: van Dongen is apparently engaged to his Constituency Assistant, who he employs and pays. van Dongen obtained a legal opinion and says he sees no issue (I do, certainly), but this is the chosen smear for the BC Liberals today - which raises a question: *why weren't the BC Liberal upset and saying anything about this until van Dongen crossed the floor? Is getting engaged to your CA whilst a BC Liberal okay, but when you cross the floor, it isn't?*

...more to come.