The **Armet** REPORT

On The Move

Premier **Ralph Klein** no sooner left the province this week on a mission to France and Ukraine than nearly half of his caucus was lined up at the so-called "official launch" of the campaign by a former cabinet minister to replace him.

Coincidence?

At least 27 Tory MLAs paraded themselves around leadership hopeful **Jim Dinning,** with likely another dozen waiting in the wings for Klein to officially pen the letter that will call upon his party to conduct a vote this fall to name his successor.

The impressive showing of government caucus support for Dinning featured cabinet ministers **Mike Cardinal, Harvey Cenaiko, Dave Coutts, Heather Forsyth, Yvonne Fritz, Gordon Graydon, Denis Herard, Gary Mar, Barry McFarland, Rob Renner** and **Gene Zwozdesky.**

As well, there were 16 backbenchers publicly throwing their support to the former provincial treasurer, including **Cindy Ady, Moe Amery, Neil Brown, Mary Ann Jablonski, Art Johnston, Ron Liepert, Thomas Lukaszuk, Richard Magnus, Richard Marz, Len Mitzel, Frank Oberle, Ray Prins, Dave Rodney, George Rogers, Shiraz Shariff** and **Len Webber.**

A great deal of the credit for the recruitment of the government members should go to rookie MLA Ron Liepert, who has been sizing up and assessing the ability of each of his colleagues since his election in 2004.

In fact, if Dinning wins the leadership contest, it's expected that Liepert will give up his seat (Calgary-West) for his long-time friend—the riding also once held by former premier **Peter Lougheed.**

Liepert would likely become the new leader's chief of staff. He is a keen political strategist with lots of media savvy. His often hard-nosed personality is perhaps more suited to being the power behind the throne than in the spotlight of being an MLA.

Calgary Herald

First, an installment in the steady stream of gossip and rumour. "Have you heard this one? Ron Leipert stepping down for Dinning in Calgary-West." According to this theory, Dinning would ignore Ralph Klein's soon-to-be vacant riding of Calgary-Elbow, to slide into a seat once held by former Premier Peter Lougheed. There would be two reasons — Jim wouldn't have to live up to Klein's accomplishments as the Elbow MLA, and he'd also be taking over a seat once held by his political hero. To some in the Dinning camp, there's a sense of historical continuity or destiny between Lougheed and Jim's run for the Tory leader's job.

Tom Olsen blog

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