

Will debt be Liberals' legacy or epitaph?

In September, I wrote that the Dalton McGuinty government seemed stuck in neutral. I added that the government had demonstrated no coherent plan to address the major challenges facing Ontario.

Their Nov. 18 Fall Economic Statement confirms that they are out of ideas, even as they are running out of time.

The worst news coming from Queen's Park that day concerned the staggering growth in the provincial debt since Premier McGuinty came to office in 2003. If current trends hold, this government is on track to double the debt by 2012. We have not seen this kind of fiscal irresponsibility since the NDP government of the early 1990's.

In effect, today the Province is borrowing \$2 million an hour, 24/7, week after week, month after month.

This mountain of additional debt means our children and grandchildren will pay even higher taxes than we do, and likely receive less in government services.

This will be the main legacy of the McGuinty government, but some will see it as their political epitaph.

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The Georgetown Hospital, as well as the Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus, provide our communities with outstanding health care services.

My recent Private Member's Resolution, supporting our hospitals, was put forward in a spirit of non-partisan co-operation.

Even though Liberal MPPs spoke and voted against my resolution, I continue to push to get our local health needs addressed

Ted Arnott



by the provincial government.

During Question Period on Oct. 25, I called on Health Minister Deb Matthews to explain why the Liberals had voted against our hospital projects. The next day I pressed the premier on when he would be releasing the long-promised 10-year plan for hospital capital projects. I urged him to instruct the Minister of Health to meet with our local hospital representatives.

Afterwards the Premier and I had a very cordial private conversation, and I followed up with him once more the following day.

On Nov. 16, during a meeting of the all-party Standing Committee on Estimates, I again asked the Minister of Health to meet with our hospital officials.

The government continues to spend more than \$2 billion a year on hospital capital projects.

All we're asking for is our fair share.

...

Ted Arnott is the MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills.

He can be reached at 1-800-265-2366 or www.tedarnottmpp.com

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