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Our MPP Reports
 by Ted Arnott
 MPP Wellington - Halton Hills



On May 29, the Ontario Legislature voted on the Wynne Government's budget motion. With its passage, the possibility of a spring provincial election evaporated.

The decision each MPP faced that day was relatively straightforward, if not necessarily simple or without potential consequences.

The fundamental question each of us had to ask ourselves was this: Do I support the overall budgetary policy of the Provincial Government?

Provincial government spending is budgeted to go up this year, in spite of the Liberals' rhetoric about holding the line. The deficit projection is up. The provincial debt is going way up.

The latest budget builds on an irresponsible pattern of waste of taxpayers' money during the past 10 years.

Scandals like eHealth were followed by the Liberals' cynical decisions to cancel the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants, and then deliberately understate the costs, in order to save Liberal seats.

Since I do not support the overall budgetary policy of the current Government, I voted against it.

The budget motion carried by a vote of 65-36.

Every Liberal MPP present voted for the motion. They had made up

their minds to vote for it before they had heard or read the budget speech.

Every New Democrat MPP present voted for it. They had announced their decision to support the budget motion the previous week.

Every Progressive Conservative MPP voted against it. Tim Hudak had previously signalled that unless the budget represented dramatic change from the McGuinty legacy, it was unlikely that we would vote for it.

We knew that our opposition to the budget motion might potentially lead to a spring election.

But we also know the Province is on the wrong track. Ontario needs to take a new direction, encouraging job creation, eliminating wasteful spending, and paying down the debt.

It appears this can only happen after an election, under new leadership, with a new agenda.

Last week in the Legislature was a particularly busy one.

We responded to the Metrolinx recommendations of higher taxes and fees to pay for Toronto's transit needs, saying they should look for savings first.

Last Monday we welcomed the Ontario Cattlemen's Association to Queen's Park. Later on in the week, on Thursday, the annual Queen's Park Farmers' Market was held on the south lawn.

As one of the assistant Speakers, I presided over debates in the Legislature on Monday, Tuesday, and briefly on Thursday.

I also spoke in the House, raising a number of local and provincial issues:

- asking for approval for a new Holy Cross School in Georgetown;

- congratulating The Oppose Belwood Wind Farm Association upon receiving the Environmental Excellence Award from the Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce, and again, urging the Government to place a moratorium on new wind farms until ongoing health studies are concluded;

- complaining about the Government's cancellation of the Connecting Link program, which for years helped municipalities with the cost of maintaining provincial highways through built-up communities;

- demanding a review of the Government's planned cuts to physiotherapy services for seniors in our nursing homes;

- inquiring about coverage for Esbriet during Question Period, a new medication that shows promise for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

As always, I appreciate your ideas and advice.

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott welcomes your comments. He can be reached at 1-800-265-2366. His website address is www.tedarnottmpp.com

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