

Liberal debt will be our ruin

The Kathleen Wynne government turned the fiscal page Thursday and introduced a balanced budget, and if you listened carefully you could hear the congratulatory backslapping from Toronto all the way to Port Severn.

It was 10 years ago when Ontario ran balanced budgets in 2006 and 2007, but that gave way to \$20-billion-a-year deficits in 2008 and 2009 when the economy tanked and the Grits had no choice but to hand the auto industry a \$3.3 billion lifeline, or face the collapse of auto manufacturing in Ontario.

At the time, then premier Dalton McGuinty made a promise to balance the budget by 2017, and while the Liberals should be commended for getting their budget in order, there's a bogeyman lurking in the province's balance sheet. The provincial debt for this fiscal year is expected to hit \$312 billion, and in a recent meeting with Metroland Media editors, Senior Economist with RBC Robert Hogue said tough medicine is needed to tackle the debt.

Debt has increased quite significantly and debt to GDP is running at 40 per cent, he said.

In 2016/17, the province expects to spend \$11.4 billion on interest payments on that debt. That's nearly \$1 billion a month just to service existing debt, and in case you need to be reminded, that coin comes from your pocket.

To put it in terms we can all relate to, every person in Ontario would need to pony up \$22,000 to pay off the debt. Hogue said this massive debt leaves the province without a rainy day fund in the event the economy slows to a point requiring stimulus spending, and if interest rates rise, as expected they will, the interest payments on the debt would skyrocket.

We agree with Hogue when he says it's time the province create a plan to tackle the debt by creating a hard target for debt to GDP ratio that sits much lower than where we are now. However, we didn't get that last Thursday. What we did get was a desperate Liberal government waving costly carrots in voters' faces. The Wynne government's shopping list includes a drug plan for those under 24 costing \$465 million a year and \$200 million next year to increase affordable licensed child care spaces.

Noble programs for sure, but not at a time when the province continues to add about \$10 billion a year in new debt as long as they hold power, and if the Wynne government continues to spend like drunken sailors on shore leave generations of Ontario residents will be buried under a mountain of debt from which they may never escape.

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Letters to the editor

Town acted on concern

Re: Letter on McNabb/John Street Underpass, April 27.

The Town of Halton Hills often receives questions and comments from residents about construction projects.

Sometimes the Town is in charge of the project but often times, another proponent is responsible for the work.

Residents input and queries are always welcome and it is the practice of staff to respond to all questions including following up with project proponents as applicable.

The construction occurring at the McNabb/John Underpass is being performed by Metrolinx.

In regards to the query received about this project, staff investigated the concerns, communicated them to the proponent and committed to following up with the resident.

Don Kudo, P. Eng.,
Director of Engineering
Town of Halton Hills

Cremation is the way to go

CTV News is saying that Canada is running out of burial plots.

That cannot be true. Canada must be the most underpopulated country in the world, with vast lands not even touched.

If it were a problem, it can be rectified by simply allowing more cremations to be placed in our existing plots. I say this because our plot in the Brampton cemetery only allows for two full burials and four cremations.

Cremations for our family is the way to go and only allowing four takes up a small portion of the grave site. Why can't it be used for more cremations, thus allowing for our grandchildren and their family members? The remaining area of the plot will never be used.

Brian Johnson

Mothers Day more than flowers

Time again to celebrate those who gave us life and nurtured it for years.

It's time to think flowers, chocolates, phone calls and visits.

Time for mothers in war-torn countries to pray that their children make it through the day. Time for mothers in refugee camps to keep alive the tiny flicker of hope that somehow life will improve for their children.

Time for mothers in the famine ravaged countries of Africa to scavenge enough food to sustain their children for another day.

Time for all of us to remember that this celebration of motherhood was started in 1870 by Julia Ward Howe in reaction to the carnage of the American Civil War as a Mother's Peace Day.

(Howe's) words may sound archaic, but the message resonates today when world leaders are sabre-rattling and rebuilding their nuclear arsenals:

Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience. We, women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country, to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs. From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says: Disarm, disarm!

Elizabeth O Connor

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