

Arnott calls Liberals 2017 provincial budget a shell game

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IFP file photo

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott is not impressed with the Wynne government's 2017 budget.

In a release sent April 28 a day after finance minister Charles Souza's budget speech at Queen's Park, Arnott called the budget a shell game, which was vainly designed to restore the Ontario Liberals' sagging popularity.

With an election expected next year and the Premier's approval rating at an historic low, the Liberals are desperately trying to divert attention away from their record of waste, debt, mismanagement and scandal, said Arnott.

Arnott highlighted a proposal for free drug coverage for young people in the budget as an example of this behaviour in the release.

Since they're rushing the new drug program to meet a political timetable, consultation will likely be minimal, and there are bound to be huge problems as it's implemented, he said.

Arnott said the PC caucus is also taking is-

sue with the Grits' claims of finally balancing the budget after several consecutive years of running deficits, pointing out the provincial debt has ballooned from \$139 billion to \$312 billion during the McGuinty/Wynne Liberal tenure beginning in 2003.

What Mr. Souza neglected to explain is that about \$5 billion of the revenue he's counting on this year, including proceeds from the sale of Hydro One, can't be counted on in the coming years, said Arnott. It's like a shell game.

The growing debt must be serviced, and paying the interest on the debt limits the Government's ability to fund priority programs like health and education, he added.

What's worse, they've articulated no plan whatsoever to even begin paying down the principal of the debt.

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