

Arnott says voters won't have a full picture of the numbers till after the election

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taxes and other revenues for the coming fiscal year."

"At the end of the current fiscal year, sometime after March 31, 2018, the government will begin to prepare the public accounts, to determine what was actually spent, and what actually came into the government's coffers in the form of revenue. Usually we learn the results of that exercise in the summer time, when the public accounts are released. This year, the release of the public accounts for the 2016-17 budget year were late, and were not released until Sept. 7, 2017."

"Of course, the election is scheduled for June 7, 2018, which is before we expect the public accounts for the 2017-2018 budget to be released," added Arnott.

While not detailing numbers or identifying specific revenue sources when asked, the Ministry of Finance is pointing to strong economic growth outpacing the economies of all G7 nations for its ability a balanced ledger. It also claims the investment

in infrastructure will help pay for itself in the long run.

"A recent report by the Centre of Spatial Economics stated that for every \$1 investment in infrastructure, GDP increases by \$6 in the long term," said Blodgett.

However, the opposition points to other reasons for skepticism of the government's ability to deliver on a second straight balanced budget. Since announcing its last budget projections, the Wynne government has made a series of spending promises including a 25 per cent subsidy for Hydro One residential customers, free tuition for low-income students and free pharmaceutical drugs for everyone under 25.

The government is also going to have to make up for the one-time partial sale of Hydro One to private interests, which according to the government, added \$3.7 billion to the balance sheet in 2015 and 2016.

"No wonder people are skeptical," he said.

A request for comment from Andrea Horwath and the NDP Party was not answered.



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Right: Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa delivers the 2016 provincial budget with Premier Kathleen Wynne. Left: Ted Arnott.

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