

COMMENT

The way we were



Parade day

The Orange Parade on Main Street in front of Cotton Brothers and Hotel McGibbon in Georgetown on July 13, 1961.

Text courtesy of the Heritage Halton Hills; Photo courtesy of Esquesing Historical Society



From our readers

FAREWELL COOP

Photographer Rein Pater captured this photo of "Coop," a Coopers Hawk. "For years, he was a regular visitor to our garden," says Pater. "No longer. We found him dead last week in a park near us. I am sure we will miss him even though the mourning doves will not. They were the only birds he ever caught."

Got a photo you want to share?
Email cgamble@theifp.ca

MPP has no confidence in Liberal govt. budget

On April 23, Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa presented his 2015-16 provincial budget.

The Minister's speech was longer than normal: almost 45 minutes in its presentation.

Mr. Sousa speaks well and it was a masterful performance. That's assuming we want to give the Minister high marks for distraction and diversion.

These days it seems that Liberal strategists focus mainly on the politics of distraction. They take us for fools.

Concerned about skyrocketing hydro bills? Don't worry, they say...we're going to sell off most of Hydro One!

Worried about teachers' strikes? It's all good, they say...we're going to put beer in the grocery stores!

Wondering how your children and grandchildren will be able to service the debt run up by the Liberals? No problem, they say...we're going to bring in "cap and trade" and save the planet!

Just before the Minister begins his remarks on Budget Day, MPPs are given a copy of the speech and the accompanying "Budget Papers" document.

This year's Budget Papers contains 372 pages of details, graphs and spreadsheets of how they propose to spend almost \$132 billion of taxpayers' money, while at the same time adding \$14.7 billion to the provincial debt.

The numbers don't lie.

Spending is still going up, year over year, by \$2.4 billion.

When the Liberal government took office in 2003, the provincial debt stood at \$139 billion. A dozen years later, it now stands at \$299 billion.

The net debt per capita (in effect the

amount owed by every Ontarian because of years of government overspending) is \$21,642, up \$870 from last year.

The debt to GDP ratio (the size of our debt compared to the value of all that we produce) continues to rise, and now sits at 39.8 per cent. To compare, it was 26.2 per cent before the 2008-09 recession.

Interest costs to service that debt continue to be the third largest line item in the budget, behind only health and education.

Interest payments on the debt are also the fastest growing line item, and are expected to grow by an average of 5.7 per cent a year for the foreseeable future.

And higher interest rates in the future present a growing problem, because every one percentage point increase in interest rates costs the treasury an additional \$400 million.

Federal transfers to the province for health care are expected to go up by \$652 million, yet the Liberals are only

planning to increase the overall health budget by \$598 million.

In effect, they are taking money from health care to pay the interest on the debt. That's how bad it's become under their stewardship.

This year, we needed a budget that makes a serious effort to rein in spending, while investing in sensible priorities. We needed a budget that presents a clear and honest plan to balance the budget. And we needed a budget that encourages job creation.

We didn't get it, and therefore I don't have confidence in the budgetary policy of this government.

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.



MPP TED ARNOTT

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