

Editorial ? Can Brown do it?

There was some interesting news coming out of last week from Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown. He was quoted last week as saying that if he gets elected to form the next government in this province, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) will be history. That means it will be repealed, and the money already collected will be refunded. Actually, Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones said this is nothing new. Getting rid of ORPP has been in the works for some time. Granted, there's some question as to whether or not Premier Kathleen and her government are actually planning to go ahead with the idea. The talk is if the federal government comes up with enhancements to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Wynne and company might back off. Assuming the feds are planning such enhancements, one would suppose they will announce them in the coming days.

The federal budget is due to be brought down this coming Tuesday. Anyone feel like doing any predicting?

All Brown has to do is form the next government, and all we have to do is wait.

We have lots of problems with the Wynne government's idea for the ORPP.

We already have the CPP. Another plan might increase the amount that people would be able to collect after retirement. But is it affordable?

People who are currently in the work force should be thinking ahead to the time when they hope to quit work, and setting some money aside. A lot of them do, but alas, there are also a lot of short-sighted people who don't think that way.

A bigger problem is many people can't put much money ahead, simply because they haven't got it. But the Wynne government would address that situation by docking these people's paycheques. We're having trouble understanding how that's going to be a benefit.

And employers are going to be expected to come up with the bucks to cover their share. That's money that's not going to be used to hire more employees, or award raises to well-deserving staffers who could use the money.

Whether we like to admit it or not, our economy depends on these businesses, and yet the government proposes to make things tougher on them. Go figure.

We have to be mindful of the fact that ORPP didn't just pop out of thin air. It's been in the works for at least two years. It was mentioned in the budget that the Wynne minority government brought down in the spring of 2014. Nothing much came of it because NDP Leader Andrea Horwath announced her party would no longer prop up the government. The whole idea became academic, as we all headed into the election.

Now it is true that there were a lot of issues discussed during that campaign, and the proposed ORPP didn't draw a lot of attention. Nevertheless, Wynne was elected to lead a majority government, and ORPP was part of her successful platform.

Yet there remains some question as to whether she plans to go ahead with it.

Assuming they do go ahead with ORPP, what's going to happen with the money. Ideally, we would hope that it will be left there for the people it's intended to benefit. But can we be confident about that, considering the financial track record we've been treated to over the last several years? We've had Health Care Premiums and gas plants that cost us millions. The government has been selling off chunks of Hydro One, without any consultation with the people who own it (meaning us).

The government came down with a budget a couple of weeks ago, and it called for more deficits. True, the government is indicating the budget will be balanced next year. Assuming they can do it, there will still be a provincial debt of some \$300 billion. Yet people holding jobs in this province will be expected to watch their paycheques eaten into, with the money being managed by those who dug that financial pit.

We think people can be excused for being a little cynical.

So all we have to do is wait for Brown to be called upon to form the next government. One general election is all he's got to win.

But that was all John Tory had to do, and later it was all Tim Hudak had to do.

Alas, that is something we have to think about.

And at the end of the day, this is all up to us.