

## Tilson misleading the public

In the March 13 issue of the Citizen, an article's headline exclaims "Supporting long-term economic growth with historic \$53B New Building Canada Plan."

If you no longer have this edition, you can find it in the online version of the Citizen or as a press release from David Tilson.

On first read, the article seems a governing party puff piece congratulating itself on the marvelous job it is doing managing the country's infrastructure. Author David Tilson extols all the virtues of the past program and how it has created jobs and supported provincial, territorial and municipal infrastructure projects across Canada. He then states, "Over the next 10 years, the \$53B New Building Canada Plan will continue to focus on economic growth, job creation and productivity."

To use the word "continue" is at best a cynical ploy to mislead the public.

The fact of the matter is that the current budget slashes spending on the Building Canada Plan by almost 90 per cent, going from \$1.7 billion per year down to \$210 million beginning April 1, 2014. The Plan continues as a shell of its former self into the 2015-16 fiscal year. This is conveniently coincidental with the Harper government's plan to have a balanced budget for the next election. In fact, the new budget does not envision the Building Canada Plan returning to its most recent levels until the 2019-20 fiscal year, the election year after the next election and five budgets down the road. The bulk of the "\$53B New Building Canada Plan" then, envisions not the next government delivering on this plan, but the government after that. Finance ministers don new shoes with every annual budget to symbolize a fresh beginning on a new fiscal path. Budgets from 2019 to 2024 means a lot of new shoes indeed before we see the bulk of Tilson's "new" plan delivered.

The article starts off by saying "Our government understands that Canada's economy relies on efficient and effective public infrastructure," but at the same time they sacrifice this understanding for crass political purpose. This is a cynical attempt by Tilson to mislead the reader into thinking one thing is happening when the opposite is true. Voters deserve better treatment and more respect than this.

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Editor's note "The article referred to in the March 13 issue of the Citizen was actually MPP David Tilson's weekly column. It is usually accompanied by a standing graphic, containing Tilson's photograph, but owing to an error during the production of the paper, it was left out. The fault is ours and we apologize for it."