

?We can?t accept Liberal scandals as the status quo,? Wilson

It always frustrates me to hear from Ontarians who paint all politicians with the same brush; but, with the current government at the helm I can understand their frustration. It is disheartening to watch a government that is currently the subject of not one, but four police (OPP) investigations continue to deflect and distract from their reckless 12 year track record. But, we can't accept the Liberal's scandals as the status quo. They're not.

The mismanagement and waste under this government is unprecedented in Ontario history. In just over a decade in government, the Liberals have left the province spiraling downward into an avalanche of debt. The troubling part is that they seem unfazed by the situation, allowing further scandals to flourish and spending to go up.

The latest boondoggle is the Sudbury by-election. Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer has concluded that the actions of two of the Liberal Premier's operatives with respect to the by-election amount to an apparent contravention of the bribery provisions in the Election Act. As a result, the OPP found it appropriate to begin two separate investigations.

Another recent government failure has been the implementation of the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS). After being warned by PC members and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) workers about the potential problems associated with the system, the government rolled it out anyway. It has since been an unmitigated disaster, sending incorrect payments to recipients and often no payments at all. The program has cost the government over \$260 million, with workers calling for a return to the old system.

Increases to hydro bills continue to be the largest issue I hear about from constituents. With the creation of the contentious Green Energy Act, the Liberals committed this province to a legacy of overpriced hydro rates, while the surplus created by solar and wind sources is sold to neighbouring jurisdictions at a considerable loss. Ontarians have been bullied into accepting unwanted turbines, including those proposed near the Collingwood Airport, and time of use pricing that even the Auditor General has reported as ineffective and failing to achieve any meaningful conservation. The smart meter program has cost taxpayers \$2 billion and businesses and consumers an extra \$50 billion since 2006, primarily to pay for high priced wind and solar projects.

We also must not forget the \$1 billion the Liberals wasted at eHealth, the \$1 billion at Ornge or the \$1.1 billion with the gas plant scandal. We can't ignore that the list of public servants making over \$100,000 in Ontario has increased 801% since 2003; or, that Liberal bureaucrats, like Ontario's Fairness Commissioner, who makes \$1,700 a week working part-time, is charging tax payers \$3,400 in limousine rides and \$6,300 trips to Finland.

To pay for their incompetence, the Liberals have increased revenues by \$30 billion. We all remember health premiums, the HST and increases to the price of hydro to name a few. Under their leadership, Ontario has become a have not province. Since 2003, the provincial debt has doubled due to poor Liberal policies, waste and a failure to set priorities.

Their scandals are countless and it's costing us jobs and crucial frontline care. If we ever want to get out of the fiscal mess this government has created, the Liberals must be held accountable to the people that elected them. I am committed to ensuring this happens.

(Jim Wilson is the Progressive Conservative MPP for Simcoe-Grey)