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of Ontario

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de l'Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 5 April 2000

Mercredi 5 avril 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 April 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 5 avril 2000

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOMEcoming 2000

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Today I rise in the House to bring to the attention of the members present and the citizens of Ontario that a special event is being held in Brantford, one of the two municipalities in the riding of Brant that I have the honour of serving.

Homecoming 2000 is an opportunity for all former, present and wannabe Brantfordians to come home. The organizing committee has put together a spring- and summer-long millennium celebration that promises to be nothing less than fun, exciting, friendly, and the creator of loving memories. Coming home is grand.

Here are just a few of the participants you can visit while coming home: The St John's College Reunion 2000 is on May 12 to 14; the Glenhyrst Art Gallery Family Fun Day is on June 2 to 4; the Cockshutt Homecoming Festival and Exhibition is June 2 to 4.

The event that has my face looking somewhat different today sees a beard-growing contest to raise money for the food bank. I'm told that I'm looking somewhat unkempt. It's for a good cause, and I beg the indulgence and patience of the House.

Interjection: You look like Gilchrist.

Mr Levac: Steve, to your credit.

The food bank's Empty Bowls Gala is on June 10.

Finally, on July 1, homecoming weekend, we have—a chance to rid myself of this salt-and-pepper facial hair—our Cockshutt Park Homecoming Day, and on July 2, our gala homecoming parade and picnic.

For more information, call (519)751-9900.

CARDIAC CARE

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I rise today to again add my voice of support for the establishment of full cardiac care in the eastern GTA. In its report released March 10, 2000, the Cardiac Care Network of Ontario estimated that cardiac surgery in the eastern GTA can be expected to grow by 36% by the year 2006, a rate which is more than double the estimated population growth of 14% during that period.

The establishment of full cardiac surgery at the Centenary hospital site of the Rouge Valley Health System would allow close to one million residents access to a full range of cardiac services closer to their home.

Our community has worked hard to show support for the establishment of cardiac surgery in our area. Led by the Cardiac Care Community Advisory Group under the volunteer leadership of Mr Phil Diamond, close to 200 volunteers have been supported by 125 schools, 165 churches, 25 service clubs and some 225 local businesses to gather more than 18,000 signatures supporting advanced cardiac services.

The Rouge Valley system is already known for its extensive roster of cardiac services, including a cardiac catheterization lab, rapid evaluation and treatment for heart attacks, stress testing, nuclear function studies, a permanent pacemaker clinic and a full cardiac rehabilitation clinic. Cardiac surgery is the only service not currently being offered at Centenary hospital, and its addition is essential.

I applaud the work of the CCN and I urge the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to commit to funding cardiac surgery at the Centenary site of the Rouge Valley Health System, so that the residents of Durham region and eastern Toronto finally have full access to all these essential services.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Today I am joined in the gallery by a group of people from the riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, and in particular the St Lawrence neighbourhood. The St Lawrence neighbourhood and the constituents in my riding deserve adequate protection from crime. Regrettably, this government's motto on so many things is, "Doing more with less," and in the city of Toronto that means we have to cope with fewer police officers. Yes, fewer. There are 90 fewer police officers in the city of Toronto since when this government was elected, and that number is in decline. The municipality of the city of Toronto is dealing with rising debt from downloading, because this government doesn't believe in standing up for the words it speaks too often.

In the last little while, the government has been muted in response to a series of murders in my riding. Where actions speak, this government offers only words, tough talk. With respect to the issue of crime, Mike Harris's government is all loud talk. The Solicitor General and the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, in

response to murders in my riding, had a press conference. Yes, in response to the problem of murder in the constituency of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, this government did nothing to put more police on the streets. Instead, they ordered up another backdrop. They had another press conference. They called one more conference for London this fall.

I challenge the government opposite—the member for Willowdale was on his feet on this subject the other day—to do something to put more police on the streets of Toronto, not fewer.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr David Young (Willowdale): During the winter break I had the opportunity to meet and consult with business leaders from throughout my community of Willowdale. We spoke about the upcoming budget. They told me that we need to continue to cut taxes, balance budgets and spend within our means. We need to continue to cut property taxes, payroll taxes and corporate taxes, and we need to keep on pressuring the federal government to cut their excessively, high EI premiums. They also told me that we need to invest in our infrastructure. We need that investment to ensure that our highways and transportation network can meet the expectations of economic growth. Over \$1 billion in goods and services cross the Canadian border each and every day, most of it here in Ontario. Our infrastructure must be strong if our province is to compete and succeed in the 21st century.

I am proud to say that Willowdale continues to grow. New businesses are coming to our community all the time. You only have to travel up and down Yonge Street to appreciate the pace of this exponential growth. The cranes that exist are testament to how well we are doing. However, we still have much to do. Keeping Ontario prosperous and growing is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week, 365-day-a-year job.

DRIVER EXAMINATIONS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): My statement today is to the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday, Minister, you told this Legislature that the waiting time for a G1 licence test was seven weeks and for a G2 test was 12 weeks. The people of the riding of Essex beg to differ. My constituency office called the Windsor test centre this morning and the earliest appointment for a G1 licence is June 27, a 12-week wait. The earliest appointment for a G2 test is February 23, 2001, a wait of 47 weeks.

Minister, you claim to have fixed the problem. What you don't point out is that your government is to blame for the backlog in my riding. It was your government that closed the test centre in Essex county. It was your government that failed to listen when I came to the House to warn you of this problem.

My constituents don't have the option of jumping on the subway to go and get groceries. They don't have a GO train to take them to work in the morning. The

ministry hotline for the closest test date may work in the greater Toronto area, but it's not an option in Essex. People can go to Windsor or Chatham, both with similar wait times. In fact, one person was advised that a test could be obtained more quickly if they went to St Catharines. If your solution is for someone to drive to St Catharines for a test, perhaps you should invest in a road map. You know, they would have to navigate Carnage Alley to get there.

Minister, stop your game of phony questions and hollow announcements and address the problem. The testing centre in the county must be reopened in order to provide service and eliminate the backlog.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): If the members would kindly appreciate other members—I know that in some cases they're not even heckling, but there is some talking—to be polite, if we could.

1340

CHURCH FIRE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the New Democratic Party to express our sympathy to the Greek community of Toronto over the fire which destroyed the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church two days ago.

I have, on occasion, visited this beautiful church and participated in Easter services in the church with friends from the Greek community from my riding of Broadview-Greenwood, and I'm deeply saddened by the loss of that church.

I want to tell His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios, the president of the Greek community of Metropolitan Toronto, Mr Costas Menegakis, and Father Peter, the cathedral priest, that we are deeply saddened by the loss of the church. Our hearts go out to those who are most directly hurt and affected by the loss of this place of worship. I saw some of the parishioners being interviewed outside the church, and their shock and pain was evident and very moving.

But this I know: that the Greek community is very strong, generous and community-minded. The Greek Orthodox church is extremely important to the religious and cultural life of the Greek Canadians, and I was not at all surprised to see the community rally and come together immediately to start making plans to rebuild the church. I have no doubt that this will happen. The magnificent building which was destroyed cannot of course be replaced, but I know the community will be able to replace it with a new church, which will be the pride of the community one day.

Once again, I would like to relay our sorrow for this incredible loss to the Greek community.

FLOAT YOUR FANNY DOWN THE GANNY

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): If you like to have some fun and don't mind getting a little wet, I

suggest you come to Northumberland county this weekend and float your fanny down the Ganny.

I'm sorry if this happens to sound a bit odd, but we're very proud of a festival held each year in the town of Port Hope, called Float Your Fanny Down the Ganny. It's an appropriate name for the event because hundreds of people will be floating their fannies some 10 kilometres down the Ganaraska River. Many will choose conventional methods of aquatic travel, such as canoes and kayaks—and I'll be in a kayak. But others bring their own homemade creations that often sink and attract the most attention, something like a Liberal election campaign.

What is the purpose of this event? It's all meant to mark the anniversary of a devastating flood that struck downtown Port Hope some 20 years ago. Instead of reflecting on the negative aspects of a huge flood, the people of Port Hope have given their remembrance a positive twist. Hundreds of people will be floating their fanny down the Ganny in hopes that they might win a prize for best theme, best costume and even for the most crew members on a craft. If you prefer to stay away from water, there's also lots to do on dry land.

I certainly applaud my constituents and friends in Port Hope for organizing this festival. I hope many of you will take part and make your way to the historic town to take part in this year's festivities.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to ask for unanimous consent to allow us to wear the "Save the Henderson" buttons in support of the people who are here from the Henderson hospital.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member has asked for unanimous consent to wear buttons. Is there unanimous consent? Unfortunately, I heard some noes.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): It's an impossible task to express to this House the depth of anger, frustration and concern I share with the many visitors in the gallery from my riding of Hamilton Mountain who have come here because of the imminent threat to the Henderson hospital and the resulting impact of a change in its acute care status and, therefore, on the safety of 200,000 people.

The Hamilton Health Services Corp announced on March 2 that the Henderson's emergency room should close and other services be removed, resulting in the loss of its role as an acute care facility and host hospital for the only cancer centre in the region. This cancer centre was built seven years ago at a cost of \$41 million; it will need to move at a cost of over \$70 million.

This recommendation has been put forward without public consultation, without comparative cost and impact analyses and prior to the publication of the results of the ministry's operational review. Furthermore, it contradicts the 1996 Health Services Restructuring Commission's recommendations. It also contradicts the public statement

made by the Premier in Hamilton on February 10 that the Henderson would retain its active and special focus around cancer care.

I call on the Premier to keep his promise, stop the nonsense around the Henderson and take the necessary action to keep the Henderson acute care facility intact and give the people of Hamilton-Wentworth the health care they deserve.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): Recently the Liberals have become increasingly interested in how our Premier is spending his time; in fact, they have complained about it. The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale tried to introduce a bill yesterday. Did he do so on his own or did he do it with the permission of his leader?

I find it laughable for the member for Ottawa South—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the member take his seat. Stop the clock, please.

All members have an opportunity to make statements. I think it's fair that we get to hear each of the members. Also, I know there's some inadvertent talking that's not heckling going on as well. Could we keep that to a minimum as well. It's tough enough with the yelling that goes on with the heckling without other conversations. If we could just remember and try to be a little bit more polite, it would be helpful.

I'm sorry to interrupt the member. Would you continue.

Mr Johnson: I may need a little more time.

The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale tried to introduce a bill in the House yesterday, and I wonder if he did so with the permission of his caucus and his leader or if he did so on his —

The Speaker: Stop the clock, please. A point of order.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: In the past you have found that references to the Premier's absence ought not to be raised in the House, and the member is continually referring to the absence of the Premier from this House.

The Speaker: I thank the member. All members will know that references to attendance on all sides—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Just a second while I finish here. One of the problems we have is that when this begins—you saw what happened later. When people even go out to the washroom, the yelling and screaming starts, "Where are they?" This takes us down a slippery slope. The standing orders for all members, you should be aware, are very clear. You cannot refer to when a member is here or not here. Quite frankly, some of the games being played are very childish and I wish all members would stop it and get on with the business of the day.

The government House leader has a point of order as well.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): Mr

Speaker, this time of the day is the only time when private members have an opportunity to make a statement. On two occasions the present private member has been interrupted by the opposition benches, once in terms of an uproar that interrupted his statement and, second, on another point of order by the Liberal House leader. I would ask you to restore the clock and give this member a full minute and 30 seconds to put his statement forward.

The Speaker: The member did not lose any time. When I stood up, I stopped it right away. Having said that, it also interrupts the flow, because people are on a flow, and to start all over again—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. As you know, it is nice to have a flow, as I'm finding out. When you get interrupted, it's very difficult. What I will do in this case is give the member a little bit of lenience. Again, what happens in situations like this, when one side disrupts members' statements, the other side does it back, and then we end up with chaos and we can't hear anything.

Will the member please continue, and I apologize for the interruption.

Mr Johnson: I find it laughable for the member for Ottawa South to accuse Premier Mike Harris of not being on the job. The member is one to talk the talk but not walk the walk. When the federal Liberals recently held their policy convention in Ottawa, the Ontario Liberal leader was nowhere to be found, even though it was in his own backyard. With the entire Ontario caucus and the federal cabinet there, he could have used that opportunity to make the case that his province needs more support and investment from the federal government for health care.

In the weeks before the convention, the Premier—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Would the member take his seat. This is an instance where it's difficult to hear. I couldn't even hear whether you were talking about the member's attendance in this House or at a convention, I thought. In situations like this, first of all—

Interjections.

1350

The Speaker: Order. We'll just sit and wait then until you're quiet. As I've said before, the only person who's happy when I'm standing here is my mother, who gets to watch me all afternoon if you have to sit here for two or three hours and watch me. I was going to say my kids as well, but hopefully they're in school.

The point of the matter is that I cannot hear whether the member is even out of order because I couldn't understand when he was speaking about attendance in the House. Having said that about the attendance, I would remind the member that you cannot refer to attendance in this House, and if in fact he has referred to it, I would appreciate the member withdrawing that. As I said, I was not able to hear that, but I'm sure the member will heed the recommendation. Continue.

Mr Johnson: Both your mother and you will be pleased to learn that I didn't refer to absences at all. I may not have had an opportunity to put it all in the oral part of this, but I'll send each member of a copy of it so that they can have it.

In the weeks before that convention, the Premier and the leader of the third party signed a joint letter calling on the federal Liberals to increase health care spending. What did Mr McGuinty, the Leader of the Opposition, do? He refused to stand up for Ontarians.

The Speaker: Order. I was waiting for the member and let him go a little bit longer, but he was well over the 90 seconds. I gave an extra 15, even with the interruptions. I apologize to the member. Again, this is what happens when we begin that process.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): On a different subject, I am pleased to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have three visitors from the city of Hamilton today in the members' west gallery. We have three elected officials: Terry Anderson, an alderman from ward 7; Bill Kelly, an alderman from ward 7 as well; and Tom Jackson, an alderman from ward 6. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (STUDED TIRES), 2000

LOI DE 2000 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (PNEUS CLOUTÉS)

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of studded tires / Projet de loi 57, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les pneus cloutés.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): A very short statement. This bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. The use of studded tires will generally be prohibited, with two exceptions. A motor vehicle with studded tires that conform to the prescribed standards and specifications may be operated on a highway in the part of Ontario prescribed by regulations as being northern Ontario. It may also be operated on a highway anywhere in Ontario if the address of the owner of the vehicle is in northern Ontario.

Tests by experts have indicated that studded tires have minimal effect on asphalt, and studies conclude categorically that studded tires save lives. While northerners

continue to experience more dangerous highways than ever before, Ontario remains the only province to ban the use of studded tires. This would change that. We would ask Mike Harris to get a grip.

YOUTH NEWS NETWORK-STYLE
MARKETING PROHIBITION ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 INTERDISANT
LA PROMOTION FAITE NOTAMMENT
PAR LE YOUTH NEWS NETWORK

Mr Marchese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 58, An Act to amend the Education Act regarding Youth News Network-style contracts to expose students to advertising and other content / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation à l'égard des contrats passés notamment avec le Youth News Network visant à exposer des élèves à des publicités et à d'autres types de contenu publicitaire.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): This bill would ban the Youth News Network and any similar company from classrooms in Ontario that would require the enforced viewing of news and commercial programming. We join with the Ontario Education Alliance and many other parent, community, labour, media and church groups in affirming that education is for learning and not for business.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AMENDMENT ACT
(RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE), 2000

LOI DE 2000 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI
(AUGMENTATION DU SALAIRE
MINIMUM)

Mr Hampton moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 59, An Act to raise the minimum wage to ensure that everyone shares in Ontario's prosperity / Projet de loi 59, Loi augmentant le salaire minimum pour que toute la population puisse bénéficier de la prospérité de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): This bill will benefit hundreds of thousands of Ontarians by raising the minimum wage for the first time in over five years. It will increase the minimum wage by 65 cents per hour, up to \$7.50 an hour, a level that is equal to that of Ontario's major trading partner, the United States.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): I move that the following amendments be made to the membership of certain committees: Ms Mushinski replaces Mr Tascona on the standing committee on justice and social policy; Mr Gilchrist replaces Ms Mushinski on the standing committee on general government; Mr Young is added to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs; and Mr Murdoch replaces Mr Young on the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday, in response to a question that I had for the Chair of Management Board in regard to the dates that he or his staff were made aware as to irregularities at the Ontario Realty Corp, the minister said he did not know the exact dates, and in Hansard he's quoted as saying, "I'll get that for you." Can I ask, through you, if the minister does have that information, if he can now provide that to the House.

The Speaker: It might be more appropriate to wait for question period for that, if we could.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe there's a mistake in the orders and notices today. For some reason, the government doesn't want to discuss the Premier's health care resolution today.

The Speaker: It's not a point of order.

1400

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My first question today is for the Minister of Health. Minister, we believe the people of Ontario want real solutions to health care, like the proposal that I put forward to provide Ontarians with 24-7 health care.

Minister, you have been spending a lot of time and a lot of money engaging in a propaganda war and attacks on other levels of government. I have a copy of a pamphlet that you've been issuing to people in Ontario, together with TV ads you've been running nightly at prime time—a very expensive \$6-million advertising campaign.

Your ads reveal, "The Ontario government has a plan to improve health care." That's a direct quote. Duncan Sinclair, your own commissioner for the Health Services Restructuring Commission, criticized the government for not having any vision. Your pamphlet says that you have a plan. We have contacted the number that's available on

this brochure and the one that's advertised on television and have been informed that there is no such plan.

Minister, would you please give up the charade and get down to work and produce a real plan that Ontarians can have some faith in.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Let me first of all set the record straight, since there was some inaccurate information once again put on the table. The amount of money that is being spent on the advertising campaign is almost \$3 million. However, as the people in the province know—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I can't hear the reply.

Hon Mrs Witmer: It's very unfortunate that the opposition is not aware of the tremendous reforms that have been undertaken in this province. In fact, we are the province—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Would the member for Windsor-St Clair please come to order.

Hon Mrs Witmer: It was our government that, after 10 years of neglect by both the Liberal government and the other government in building absolutely no long-term-care beds, has put in place a plan for 20,000 new beds. It is our government that has increased the support for home care services by—

The Speaker: I'm sorry, the minister's time is up. Supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, let me tell you what happens when you in fact don't have a plan. The Henderson hospital is the only acute care hospital in Hamilton Mountain, and it serves over 200,000 Ontarians from the Mountain and surrounding municipalities. The Henderson hospital is about to lose its emergency room, and closing this emergency care is going to put lives at risk. Even your own Health Services Restructuring Commission has indicated that it would be a terrible mistake to close this emergency room.

There is a delegation of representatives here, a group of people, residents from the community on Hamilton Mountain. They are waiting anxiously for you to speak to this issue in this Legislature here today. They want your every assurance that their emergency room in their hospital will not close. I now give you the floor, Minister, for you to provide them with that assurance.

Hon Mrs Witmer: We are quite aware of what happens when you have no plan. We had a plan for priority primary care reform, and just recently the opposition has also—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Would the minister take her seat.

People are here to hear the answer. I don't think they're here to hear people shout at the minister when she's trying to answer. I'd appreciate it if all members would give the minister the courtesy of being heard. We've had some people who have travelled a long distance and would like to hear the minister's reply. I

would appreciate it if they could hear the answer and not hear this massive confusion that's going on.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I fully understand the concerns of the people who have travelled to Toronto today in support of the Henderson hospital. In fact, I think it's important to recognize that any decisions regarding Henderson hospital have been made by the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp.

I will be meeting today with representatives of the delegation. I am very interested in hearing at first hand their concerns. I also will be receiving the operational review this week and I will be releasing it as well. Then we will move forward from there.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I'd like to thank you for the meeting, Minister, and it can't come too soon. As we speak, medical units are being prepared for removal, staff are being told they will move to another site, all this while the corporation is saying they're consulting. The corporation is not consulting. Minister, don't tell us in a few weeks that you weren't warned.

They have planned for months to downgrade the Henderson, to close the only emergency room on the Mountain and that would cause the removal of the \$41-million cancer clinic built just seven years ago. The move is estimated to cost an additional \$50 million to \$80 million. Does this make any sense? I have 75,000 signatures that say no. I have medical specialists, ambulance drivers, nurses and people of Hamilton Mountain who have also said no.

Minister, only you and your government can change this. We know the corporation did this, but you have the authority to do the right thing. I ask you: Will you and the Premier do what you have to do so that the hospital restructuring commission's recommendations are followed and the Henderson hospital remains an acute care hospital and the host hospital to the cancer care centre in the region?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I am looking forward to the meeting I will have later today with the representatives of the people who have travelled here in support of Henderson hospital. Again I want to emphasize that the recovery plan that has been put forward belongs to the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp.

We will continue to support the health system in the Hamilton community. Each year we are supporting health care in the Hamilton community with more than \$1 billion in funding for health services. That amounts to about \$1,600 for every person in the region. We have been increasing health spending each and every year. It has increased by about \$230 million since 1995.

ONTARIO REALTY CORP

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Chair of Management Board. Yesterday we raised the issue in this Legislature of three land deals in particular for which you have ultimate

responsibility. Those land deals resulted in the loss of over \$10 million in taxpayer dollars because of your failure to protect their interests. None of these land deals can proceed without your approval. I obtained a copy of the order in council wherein you made the specific recommendation that one of these deals be proceeded with. That one cost Ontario taxpayers \$5 million. There are two other deals each costing Ontario taxpayers \$2.5 million. The problem is, for the past week officials in the Cabinet Office have been either unwilling or unable to locate and release the corresponding cabinet documents signed by you which recommended the sale of these lands.

Minister, maybe you can give us a hand with this. These are public documents. If they exist, will you make them public now? If they don't exist at this point in time, can you please explain why?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): If the Leader of the Opposition would be so kind as to send over the OIC that he has, maybe I could comment more intelligently on some of his premises.

I can assure this House that this government is taking action on these questions and that the allegations are being looked into in the proper manner through the proper process. I'll wait to see what he's got.

Mr McGuinty: What I'm providing you with now is a copy of the OIC, signed by you, making a recommendation to cabinet to approve the sale of particular land. In that one you recommend the sale of a property for \$5 million, which in truth was valued at \$10 million.

Now I'm talking about two other pieces of property. Each one was sold for \$2.5 million less than the price they would have obtained in the open market, based on flips which were made shortly after their purchase. You would have had to approve those two land sales as well, Minister. We are unable to locate the orders in council, the documents signed by you approving those deals. Those deals can't go ahead without your approval. Minister, where are those documents?

1410

Hon Mr Hodgson: I think everyone in this House knows that the Cabinet Office will release any OICs that exist. They are all public documents.

The OIC that he refers to here involves All City Storage, I believe, a property at 145 Eastern Avenue. I think that was discussed in the fall. You will see that Mr J.J. Barnicke's firm actually handled that transaction, and those details were public in the fall. You can ask for the details on your assumptions about the values as well.

I can tell you that this government is taking action. There are important questions being asked. The board of directors of the ORC asked for an audit of past sales that had irregularities. That audit has led to a process where the police are reviewing those files, and you know that it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the specifics.

Mr McGuinty: Orders in council are public documents. They should be made available to us. We sent

somebody over to that office on March 27. We were informed that the documents were not available. We phoned them a few times, including as late as April 3, and we were informed, "We will send them as soon as we can explain why the orders in council are not there." They don't understand why the documentation is not available, the documentation that contains your specific recommendation, your specific signature. Those documents are missing. Eighteen minutes were missing from Richard Nixon's tape; two minutes are missing now, two cabinet minutes are missing. Your signature, your documentation is missing.

Minister, it's a very simple question: Where are these documents? You should provide that explanation to the people of Ontario now, and here is your opportunity.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the member take his seat. Order. I apologize to the member; I didn't hear the end. Was he finished?

Chair of Management Board.

Hon Mr Hodgson: As I explained before, and I know he's aware of it because he repeated it, cabinet documents on the OICs are public documents. If they exist, they would be released.

I just want to remind the member that he should know, or he ought to know, that not all land sales require an OIC. Some require an OIC when we change the process at the front of the process, some at the back end. Management Board properties under the NDP didn't require an OIC. We changed that in 1998. MTO properties don't require an OIC.

I'm sure that those are public documents. If they're available, they will be made available.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Chair of Management Board. You keep saying that all your shady land deals, all the taxpayer rip-offs at the Ontario Realty Corp, occurred under an old board, an old team that somehow didn't know what it was doing. You portray yourself and the so-called new board and the so-called new team as cleaning up what happened.

This is the annual report of the Ontario Realty Corp for the 1997-98 annual year. What's interesting is that the members of the board then, with the exception of only three people, are the same members of the board now: the same chair, the same vice-chair, the same old team, the same people, the same minister who approved three land deals that gave away Ontario taxpayers' land at prices that were far too low. Minister, you keep telling people that you're the minister who is going to clean it up, that this new team is going to clean it up. It's the same minister, the same old team.

I think what needs to happen is that you and Mr Miele, the president who's presided over this, have to go. In all decency, in all integrity, you have to resign. Will you do that?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I think the leader of the third party is aware that this government and this ministry and this board of directors of the ORC are taking action. We want

to get to the bottom of these questions. We're following the proper process and the police have been asked to review these files. We're as anxious as you are to get to the bottom of this.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you may try to miss the point. You're the minister that presided over this. Tony Miele, the head of the ORC, presided over this. It's the same board members who presided over this. Are you going to tell the people of Ontario that you, the same people who presided over these land swindles, the same people who recommended it to cabinet, are now somehow magically going to clean it up? You have some responsibility here. Mr Miele has some responsibility here. You need to step aside so that a true police investigation, a true auditor's investigation can question the staff about your role, about Mr Miele's role. Show some integrity. Step aside so the police and auditors can really ask the tough questions.

Hon Mr Hodgson: As he knows full well, I don't have the luxury that he has to make allegations or to draw conclusions or to speculate on what is or isn't under review. I have been following the proper process in terms of the advice from the assistant deputy minister of the Attorney General's office not to comment on the specifics. The police are reviewing the files. This is the proper process to get to the bottom of this. This government and this ministry are taking action that is appropriate and recommended.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you can't escape that you are responsible. Ten months after Tony Miele became the de facto head of the Ontario Realty Corp and seven months after he formally took over, you're the one who said that your guy hadn't told you about allegations of wrongdoing. Your board members are still there—the same board members who presided over this, the same board members who agreed to these swindles. You can't stay and claim now that you're going to clean up a mess that you were responsible for. A cabinet minister who presides over wrongdoing in his own cabinet ministry can't then turn around and say: "Well, I didn't know anything. I didn't see anything. I wasn't aware of anything." You should have known. These allegations were raised. Mr Miele should have known. You have to step aside. Getting to the bottom of this means that you have to go. Will you show some integrity and do that now?

Hon Mr Hodgson: Despite the opposition's attempt to cloud the facts and blame the whistle-blowers, we are following the proper process. The auditor has been called in. There's a forensic audit underway in review of past files where there are irregularities. The police have been called in to review it. We are taking action to get the truth of these matters out.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, two days ago I raised with you the fact that with Henderson Hospital and the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp you had

cut \$40 million out of that budget, which just coincidentally happens to be the same amount of money that the corporation has a deficit for in the current fiscal year. Your response to me, and I'm quoting from Hansard, was, "There have been no cuts." Minister, I have since been in touch with officials at the Hamilton Health Science Corp and not only have there been cuts, the total gross amount of the cuts, and gross they are, is \$140 million if you include all the money that's been added—including things that really shouldn't be included like one-time funding, Y2K money and money to pay for the nurses that you fired—you're still left \$35 million in the hole. Minister, in light of that, I call on you today to (1) reinstate the money that you took out of the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp budget and (2) use your authority and announce that the Henderson will remain open.

1420

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I have already indicated that I am anxious and looking forward to meeting today with those people who are concerned about the plan that has been proposed by the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre. There will be a dialogue later in the day.

As the member full well knows, we have had an operational review ongoing to take a look at the situation at the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre in order to ensure that we can deliver the best services. But I would again remind the member that to support the people in his community, we are presently spending more than \$1 billion per year. We have been increasing funding for health care in that community and we will continue to do everything we can in order to meet the health needs of those individuals.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Sorry to interrupt. Before the member begins, I just wanted to remind all of the members of the gallery that we are very pleased to have you here today, but clapping, unfortunately, isn't allowed. But we do appreciate having you here today and I know everyone will adhere to the rules.

The member for Hamilton West.

Mr Christopherson: Minister, I'm disappointed you didn't at least acknowledge that your statement on Monday was incorrect. The fact is that you have removed tens of millions of dollars of funding.

I want also to point out to you that when you talk about ensuring that the needs of our community are met in terms of our health care system—and you certainly give the impression to the people who are here from Hamilton today that you care so much about Hamilton and about our health care system and about Henderson in particular—in response to the question from my colleague from Hamilton Mountain, you said that the decisions are being made by the board of the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp. I remind you, Minister, that under your own Bill 23, sections 6.6 and 6.7 of the Public Hospitals Act allow you to override the decisions of local hospital boards.

Minister, on every front—fiscal, health care or authority—you have the opportunity to step in and do the right thing. I call on you again: Use your authority, reinstate the money you cut from our health care system, and order that the Henderson hospital remain open.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Let me again preface my remarks by indicating the fact that we have invested more into the Hamilton community for health care than at any other time. In fact, let's take a look at the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre. There was \$46 million in additional funding provided in 1999, and there was \$3.5 million to support the emergency rooms, \$16 million to address the working capital pressures, a base increase of over \$3 million in March—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. Would the minister take her seat. I know it's an emotional issue, but I would appreciate it if the member would let the Minister of Health finish.

Minister of Health.

Hon Mrs Witmer: If we take a further look at the \$370 million that is going to be provided to the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp this year, in the past year the hospital has continued to receive millions of dollars from the province, including \$13 million to address the restructuring issue, \$3.5 million for nursing, \$3.1 million for its trauma program, \$3.5 million for its cardiovascular program and, as I pointed out, \$3.5 million for its emergency services.

I think we also need to recognize that as a result of the restructuring initiative, we have brought together several hospitals that today form the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre.

ONTARIO REALTY CORP

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Chair of Management Board. I want to follow up on the question of my leader in regard to the two missing documents. Let's get some facts on the record here. We are talking about two properties, Tomken Road and Brampton Road, both the subject of OPP investigations into the land flipping that has occurred on those properties.

We have also checked the regulations. Those two properties would have had to have cabinet approval with your signature on those properties. We have tried for six days now to get those orders in council. We were told: "We can't find them. We can't explain why they are not there."

Clearly this is starting to smell of a political cover-up. It is related to the fact that it took so long for the OPP to be called in, and now is it a mere coincidence that the two documents that bear your signature, that are part of the public record, cannot be found by the Cabinet Office? Minister, it is either clearly incompetence or cover-up. Can you explain clearly why those two documents are not available and why in six days the Cabinet Office

could not find them or find the reason why they're not there?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): First of all, I don't know what is under review by the auditor or the OPP. I don't know how you know what is under what you call investigation. I'm not aware of it and I'm distressed to learn that you know for sure what's under review in, as you say, an OPP investigation. Those are not the facts I have.

OICs from Cabinet Office, as I mentioned to your leader, are public documents that are available, if they exist. As I explained to your leader, some properties require orders in council to be sold and some do not. If they're MTO properties, for example, or if they were Management Board properties under the NDP rules, they didn't. We changed those rules for Management Board in 1998.

Mr Agostino: Let me again remind the minister, we have checked the regulations. These two properties would have needed cabinet approval to be sold. Your signature is on these properties in order for this deal to go through cabinet. Minister, you can't explain. It's astonishing. We're sitting here and we have a Chair of Management Board who cannot explain why these two documents that are public information relating to a police investigation, relating to an investigation by the auditors, are not available through the Cabinet Office, where every other document that we need in relation to ORC deals has been available. I don't think it's a coincidence. It took way too long for you to call in the OPP; it took way too long for you to call in the forensic auditors.

One clearly has to raise the spectre here of what is happening at the Cabinet Office and why these two documents are missing. It smells of a cover-up here, Minister. You don't seem to have any better explanation. We can tell you that you have signed those documents. It is part of the regulations that you must have signed those two documents, or the deal would not have gone through cabinet.

Minister, will you release those two documents today? Your failure to do so will clearly continue to raise the spectre of a political cover-up of the goings-on at the Ontario Realty Corp.

Hon Mr Hodgson: Cabinet documents, OICs, are public documents. He can ask for that. I've explained before the answer on the OIC process, if it's required under law, on what happens to properties. I think the bottom line here is that this government is acting; we are taking the proper steps to get the answer to any irregularities that may or may not have happened. I'm not at liberty to speculate, like you are. I've been under instructions from the auditor and the assistant Attorney General of criminal law not to comment on the specifics, not to prejudice the review that's taking place. Surely you wouldn't expect me to comment and jeopardize an independent review.

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE POLICY

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I recently became aware, on the federal government's citizenship and immigration Web page, of something truly obscene. About halfway down that immigrant services page, which is, by the way, an official, fully authorized and approved federal government Web page, there are clear directions on how a new immigrant can apply for welfare. Correct me if I'm wrong, Minister, but isn't it the federal government that sets the sponsored immigration policy but the province that pays for the welfare costs for failed sponsorship arrangements? Minister, are you aware of this advertising that's going on about Ontario's welfare system around the world?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): In response to my colleague the member for Brampton Centre, I would want to preface my remarks by saying that our government and, I believe, the people of Ontario strongly support immigration. It has benefited our society, our community and our economy tremendously, now and in the past.

I too was startled to learn that the Chrétien government believes that WWW stands for "worldwide welfare." I know, the member knows and Ontario taxpayers know that this is wrong, wrong, wrong. By advertising our welfare system around the world to prospective sponsored immigrants, we're not just advertising and promoting but enabling high sponsorship defaults.

1430

As the member from Brampton Centre will know, there are huge costs for regions like Peel, the city of Toronto, my home community of Ottawa-Carleton and the province of Ontario and they have to pay for the sponsorship defaults allowed by the federal government. If the federal government would stop promoting—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Mr Spina: When the sponsorship agreement between the sponsor and the immigrant breaks down, the person winds up on the welfare rolls and the provinces end up paying. Please help me understand this: The government has no responsibility in this? Minister, you mentioned the region of Peel. The reality is that I have in my hand a copy of invoices from the region of Peel to the federal Liberal immigration minister Elinor Caplan, who should understand this situation because she was a sitting member and minister in this province before she went federal. That bill is now \$22 million in Peel alone. How much is this costing the entire province and what are you going to do about it?

Hon Mr Baird: This is yet another example of a boondoggle being run by the federal Liberals in Ottawa. This is costing the taxpayers of Ontario more than \$125 million a year, and that money could be better spent on health care, social services and educating young people in Ontario. The simple answer to the problem is that Jean

Chrétien and the Liberal government in Ottawa have lax criteria for sponsorship immigration, and indeed they're not enforcing those sponsorship obligations.

We have some advice: (1) They must stop advertising our welfare system around the world. (2) They must stop allowing people on welfare to become sponsors themselves. (3) They must stop allowing people who have been failed sponsors in the past to sponsor again. Finally, the federal Liberal government needs to pay for the cost of their failed policies and take some responsibility and not leave it on the hard-working taxpayers of Ontario.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As you know, I've put a private member's bill forward to protect and preserve the Oak Ridges moraine. This protection is urgently needed because this precious natural resource is being destroyed by uncontrolled development. The moraine is being ravaged by bulldozers, aggregate extraction, road building and clear-cutting of its forest as we speak.

Your own colleague the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr Steven Gilchrist, stated publicly on February 23 in Richmond Hill that everyone should stand up to developers. He claimed that one of the reasons why he was ousted as Minister of Municipal Affairs was because he stood up to the developers on the Oak Ridges moraine. He said that night, "Don't let the developers bully you."

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. On the point of order, the member might not have been here when I talked. You need to get very quickly to the point of order or I'll cut you off.

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Speaker, the member has made a characterization of a comment I made that is patently untrue. I suggest that he withdraw those comments.

The Speaker: It's not a point of order, and the member will continue, please.

Mr Colle: I'll withdraw whatever he wants me to withdraw.

Mr Gilchrist said that night: "Don't let the developers bully you. Don't be frightened by the developers. Don't let them cajole you." That's what he said in Richmond Hill.

Minister, why are you going to wine and dine tomorrow night with hundreds of developers at another fundraiser for you and your party when your own former minister said, "Don't hang around with the developers"?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I want to assure the honourable member and this House how important this government feels about the proper environmental protections indeed of all areas of the province, not only the Oak Ridges moraine. That is why we want to see the protections in hydrogeology. That's why we want to see the protections of

terrestrial features. That's why all of those and the linkage of the moraine are so important. That's why in the 1991 guidelines, which this government has accepted, there are eight key principles for determining if a proposed development may be allowed. You have to protect significant natural areas. You have to restrict scattered development. You have to encourage or maintain ecological integrity. You have to encourage the protection and management of woodlands. You have to prohibit unacceptable development when it impacts on watercourses and lakes. Those are the kinds of protections this government is already on record for, and I would appreciate the honourable member's help in ensuring that these protections are part of our natural heritage for present and future generations.

Mr Colle: I think actions speak louder than words. Tomorrow night, as Richmond Hill council has a special meeting in regard to an amendment to their official plan, where developers want to pave more of the moraine, want to build on the moraine, where are you going to be? You're not going to be at the public meeting. You are going to be with your friends, the developers, at another fundraising. These same developers are contributing to your campaign and to your party.

When are you going to come clean and stop listening to the developers, who are saying, "Build, build, build," and start listening to the ordinary people in King City and in Richmond Hill, who are telling you to do your job and protect the moraine? When are you going to start listening to the people and not the developers like Mr Gilchrist said publicly on February 23? Let him deny that.

Hon Mr Clement: I would say three things. In the first place, I hope the honourable member knows that I am not going to comment on anything to do with the Richmond Hill issue, because it is before the board, and I hope he respects that. The second thing I have to say is that if he wants to go through the list of who has given to whom on their side of the House, we'd be happy to do that. So just keep asking me the question, and we'll talk about that.

I think the people of Ontario want to know about the issues, and I refer the honourable member to the provincial policy statement that this government passed. This government passed this policy statement.

There is a policy statement for development. It says the development and site alteration—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member has asked the question. I would appreciate it if he would let an answer come. We can't have questions asked and then shout at the minister as he is trying to answer. Minister.

Hon Mr Clement: The provincial policy statement adopted by this government indicates that development and site alteration will not be permitted in significant wetlands, in significant portions of habitat where there are endangered or threatened species. Site alteration and development can only be done in a way that makes sure that the density is as high as possible, so that we don't

have the urban sprawl the member is concerned about. So we have put it on the record—

The Speaker: Order. The minister's time is up.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Attorney General. Rotary Park, in my riding, is home to the Colville Memorial Clock Tower, which was erected in remembrance of three brothers who were killed in action while serving as pilots overseas during the Second World War. Because of its location, Rotary Park has been the target of youth vandalism. Ron Hooper, of the downtown business improvement association, has told me that his organization is taking steps, such as increasing the lighting in the park, in order to decrease the incidence of vandalism.

Minister, I would like you to explain to me what capacity of property crime could be taken with the actions in your legislation.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): The member's concern about safety in his communities in Durham, part of the great region of Durham, is well known, including Rotary Park in Bowmanville. In 1999, after consulting with more than 70 town hall meetings by the Crime Control Commission around the province, we promised, in our Blueprint, to introduce parental responsibility legislation, which was introduced in this House yesterday, that would make parents financially responsible for property damage committed by their children breaking the law. I am proud to say we are keeping this commitment to the people of Ontario.

In Ontario, 47% of all cases heard under the Young Offenders Act relate to youth property crimes. This is equivalent to almost 20,000 cases each year. The majority of these victims are usually stuck with the bill, because the law to date has not provided effective recourse to victims. With our parental responsibility legislation, victims whose property was intentionally destroyed by a minor will be able to recover up to \$6,000 from parents through using the Small Claims Court procedure.

Of course, we recognize that the vast majority of parents do their best to teach their children respect for the law. That is why parents who—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I'm sorry, the Attorney General's time is up.

1440

Mr O'Toole: Before I move to my supplementary, I would like to note that we all recognize that the vast majority of young people are excellent examples of good citizens. That being said, the very few need to understand that there are consequences for our actions that require a sense of responsibility, remembering again that the vast majority play a positive role in my riding. Just recently, Gerry Martiniuk and I presented an Ontario Crime Control Commission award to the first Port Perry Venturers, who have assisted the Durham regional police in a number of community activities.

Understanding that victims of youth-related property crime in Ontario can already sue parents for property damage, Minister, can you explain why it is necessary for Ontario to take the steps that you're explaining in your proposed legislation?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I thank the member for bringing up the question relating to the efficacy of the law in Ontario. Quite frankly, the law is not used frequently and there's a reason for that. It is not easy to use and it's expensive and cumbersome and would normally involve retaining lawyers. The Small Claims Court procedure, on the other hand, with the onus provisions that are built into the bill, will make it available in an effective way for victims of property crime in Ontario. The victim ought not to bear the responsibility of having to prove items such as an intentional act. It is very difficult to prove and it makes for an ineffective law. In this bill we have provided that the onus will be on the parents to show that the act was not intentional, which is not the law as it is in Ontario today, despite the misleading comments that have been made to the contrary by some.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. If you would just withdraw the "misleading comments," please.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I withdraw it.

The other important aspect which I draw to the attention of members is the availability of the use of an order of disposition under the Young Offenders Act. This is again an important tool to assist—

The Speaker: The minister's time is also up.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the chief government whip. Yesterday, we were shocked to learn that an unnamed financial contributor tried to buy your support. Equally shocking, Ontario and federal election laws do nothing to prevent a rich contributor from such a subversion of democracy. You're a member of this Legislature, and as I see it you have essentially been asked to provide your support for money. In the interest of the principles of democracy, are you prepared to identify the person or persons who tried to subvert democracy? Secondly, would you agree to ask the Premier to change the Ontario Election Finances Act to prevent this abuse of democracy?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member should know that the chief whip is not able to answer questions. Any of the members of the government who would like to answer the question may do so. Unfortunately, the chief whip—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

It's very clear: The chief whip cannot answer questions. Would the member like to direct that to anyone else?

Mr Hampton: I'd ask to address the question to the Deputy Premier. I think this is a very serious issue. A member of this Legislature—

The Speaker: For a quick second. The reason I'm going to allow this is that I know the Deputy Premier, not seeing the question, may not have been here. I think he may have been talking to someone else. For his benefit, I'm going to allow it again, unless he heard it the first time and wants to answer it.

Mr Hampton: A member of this Legislature, a member of your government was essentially offered a bribe yesterday. He was told—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member should know that questions need to be related to provincial issues. What may happen in a federal leadership campaign does not relate to provincial issues.

Interjections.

The Speaker: We'll just wait, then.

In question period, it needs to relate to provincial issues. If the member can try to frame it another way, I will give him one more chance, but if not, we will move on. I want to be very clear: If the member doesn't frame it this time, we will move on in the rotation and he'll miss his question.

Mr Hampton: Speaker, at least allow me to put the question and then you can rule if it's in order.

As I started to say, this is about a member of the government. This is a minister without portfolio in the government who was essentially told yesterday that he would receive money for a political campaign if he agreed to support candidate X. I think the citizens of Ontario would be shocked to know, and the citizens of Canada would probably be shocked to know, that this is not against the current election finances laws in Ontario. I thought democracy was supposed to be about one person, one vote, not about who has the most money.

Deputy Premier, would you be prepared to support an amendment to Ontario's Election Finances Act which would prohibit what I think is an open bribe, what I think is the most reprehensible behaviour in a democracy? Would you be prepared to support an amendment to ensure that this can't happen in Ontario?

The Speaker: Just very quickly, that question is in order and I apologize for the delay in getting that through.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): The subject matter of the question that the leader of the third party is asking, I believe, has nothing to do with the Ontario Legislature. However, if indeed the third party and the opposition party think there should be changes made to the Ontario Election Finances Act, I'd be quite happy to take the matter up with our House leader and perhaps we can pursue the matter.

Mr Hampton: With due respect to the Deputy Premier, I think this goes to the essence of democracy. Democracy is supposed to be about one person, one vote, not who has the money to go out there and essentially offer a bribe. Not only that, but I think this is a matter for your government. One of your members, one of your cabinet colleagues, was essentially offered a bribe. He

was told, "If you agree to do such and such, we will provide you with money."

I want to ask you, Deputy Premier, have you conducted any inquiry to find out who tried to bribe a member of your government, who tried to bribe a cabinet minister in your government, who in a very outrageous way tried to subvert the very principles of democracy? Have you done that, and if you haven't done it, when are you going to do it?

Hon Mr Eves: No, I have not. You're the one who is suggesting a bribe has been made. I certainly never heard the honourable member say such a thing.

Talking about one person, one vote, it might do your party very well to adopt one person, one vote, which our party has had for many years.

ONTARIO REALTY CORP

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

To the Chairman of Management Board: Minister, a few moments ago you mentioned it was your understanding that it was not necessary in all cases that an order in council be issued in connection with the sale of land.

I have a copy of the guidelines and procedures put forward by the Ontario Realty Corp. We received these about a week ago, so they are new, and they have been in force, as I understand, for quite some time.

Here's what it says with respect to the disposition of real estate. Section (e) is labelled "Order in Council." It says, "The disposition of all real estate assets owned by the government of Ontario require the approval of an order in council prior to the closing of any sale transaction." There are no exceptions. "The disposition of all real estate assets owned by the government of Ontario require the approval of an order in council." That means that you, Minister, must have approved these sales prior to their disposition.

Now unless I'm mistaken—you are aware of some other rule—would you please stand up in this Legislature and admit that you in fact disregarded the interests of Ontario taxpayers and approved two land sales which cost taxpayers \$5 million?

1450

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): First of all, on the question of whether or not the taxpayers received their best value, we're trying to improve the process. We're taking action to make it so it's better and it gets better value. That's why all our activities have been done in that regard. The statements you talk about are new procedures, new policies, to do that.

In general, the process on an OIC is that the recommendations come up through staff, right up to the deputy minister, and the minister signs and takes that to cabinet. That's in the case of properties owned by the Ontario government under Management Board.

Prior to 1998, when they set up the ORC, Management Board properties didn't require an order in council. I changed that. This House approved it. Now properties

owned by Management Board and the government need to do that. Properties owned by MTO do not. I believe Natural Resources has their own act as well.

The bottom line here is that we are taking action to answer these important questions and concerns. We've called in the auditor. The auditor noticed some irregularities as well and asked the police to review these files. We are trying to get to the bottom of it.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I'm afraid the member's time is up. Supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, this is the way it works. It's really not a complicated matter. The Ontario Realty Corp is responsible for the sale of land, but the realty corporation is accountable to you. No land can be sold without your specific approval. The regulations put forward by the Ontario Realty Corp specifically say that there are no exceptions. It says the disposition of all real estate assets owned by the government of Ontario require the approval of an order in council. That's your recommendation. That is your approval, Minister.

It seems to me again you only have two options here: Either resign or defend the loss of \$10 million to Ontario taxpayers when it comes to land sales, which happened on your watch, clearly with your approval.

Hon Mr Hodgson: Again the Leader of the Opposition makes allegations. I'm not aware if they're public or not. I don't know how he knows what's under review. As far as the specifics are concerned, we are taking action. I've been told, as I've told this House numerous times, on the advice of the assistant Deputy Attorney General of criminal law not to comment on the specifics of any transactions.

I can tell you in answer to your question, though, that the Ontario Realty Corp requires an order in council to sell property. MTO does not require an OIC for property disposal, but they have a memorandum of understanding that MTO does the legal processing and the ORC makes the deal, signs the purchase agreement and hands the consummated deal to MTO. But they do not require an order in council and it doesn't come to the level that it does through the Ontario Realty Corp.

LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, some students in my riding have been listening to some of the reports in the media as well as from the opposition that claim that our government is essentially against some of the liberal arts. This claim has concerned both myself and constituents in my riding.

Students with a liberal arts education—as a matter of fact I have two daughters with liberal arts degrees—are valuable not only in our workplace, but also in our society as a whole. Can the minister reassure those who are pursuing a liberal arts education that these reports are in fact untrue?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I thank the member for

Northumberland for his question. Actually, everyone in this House should know that students are choosing their curriculum. The students not only in your riding but right across Ontario have also been reading these press clippings. We want to reassure those students who are studying in the humanities and in the arts that those programs will in fact be open to them.

I think it's interesting to know that 52% of students occupy humanities and arts programs in Ontario right now. So more than half of the students are in liberal arts and humanities. What does that look like? Forty-seven per cent of the liberal arts programs—humanities programs—in Canada are right here in Ontario, when only 38% of these undergraduate students are in Ontario. What we're really saying is that we're great in Ontario, but we're really great across the country when it gets to providing courses in liberal arts and humanities, and we hope to keep it that way when the students choose to choose those courses, is the answer to the question.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Members, I am watching the clock. Not only am I watching the clock, but the clerks at the table are. I'd appreciate if members wouldn't yell the time. We may make mistakes, but most of the time we are right. It's not only me, or we might be wrong most of the time. The table is watching it, so we will stick to the minute. Supplementary.

Mr Galt: Thank you, Minister, for addressing some of those concerns. However, the students and parents in my riding—and in the west gallery are several students from the Trenton High School—need some assurance that the new, performance-based funding will not force institutions to redirect funding from arts and humanities to high-tech programs. The current demand for technology graduates might inflate the institution's graduate employment rate, thereby giving institutions an incentive to fund those programs over the liberal arts.

Minister, can you reassure Ontario students, particularly the ones from Trenton, that this indeed is not the case?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: In response to the question, and for those students here this afternoon and across Ontario, the good news, the great news, is that students across all disciplines are getting jobs when they graduate. Ninety-one per cent of university graduates have jobs after six months no matter what they graduate from, and 89% of college students have jobs no matter what they graduate from. The future is great, students are getting jobs and graduates from most programs, of course, are performing very well in the job market. This is proof, as always, that a good education gets you a good job.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, I think that students and their parents want to know what the graduation rates are and what the success rates are in getting jobs. That is why we have performance indicators, so those students can find out today—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member's time is up.

New question, the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

HOME CARE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, Lisa Ann Brady is 20 years old. She has Preador-Willi Syndrome and requires 24-hour care to be able to live in the community. The Durham community care access centre says they can only offer Lisa the maximum number of hours that you have set out in regulations. Last month, the Health Services Appeal Board decided to hear Lisa's case, and the hearing begins on Friday morning. But you are so determined, Minister, to prevent to Lisa Brady from getting any additional support that you have hired private lawyers to fight the appeal and, unbelievably, you have already served notice that you will commence court proceedings, that if the appeal board grants Lisa additional support you are going to fight the Brady family in court.

Minister, why is your government trying to influence the appeal board's decision by starting court action before the hearings even begin, and why are you so determined to see Lisa Brady in an institution instead of giving her the support she needs to live in the community?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Mr Speaker, as the member knows, our government has made a very strong commitment to do everything we can to ensure that we expand home care opportunities throughout Ontario and that we continue to provide community care services throughout Ontario. As you know, we set up 43 community care access centres in order that people would have one-stop shopping and would have an opportunity to get the answers that obviously were going to be needed to respond to the concerns of citizens. I can assure you—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Sorry, the member's time is up. Supplementary.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, I say to you this afternoon that your government and your ministry have done everything possible to prevent Lisa Brady from being given the support her family is seeking from the community care access centre in Durham. You first denied that a case like Lisa's could even go to the appeal board. You lost that line of attack last spring with the Ian Strathern case. So you quietly filed regulations last summer legally limiting the maximum number of hours of personal support the CCAC can provide. You expected the Health Services Appeal Board would be bound by your regulations. Now you're ready to take this family to court to prevent Lisa from getting any extra support that the appeal board might grant.

Minister, speak to the question of Lisa Brady. Don't you think you have been fighting this disabled individual long enough? Will you clearly state your intention this afternoon to withdraw from court proceedings and let the appeal board decide what is fair and right for Lisa Brady?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Mr Speaker, as the member knows, when the regulation was introduced, it actually increased the maximum levels for the majority of CCAC's

throughout Ontario. Also, the issue to which the member refers is an individual case. It is currently going to the appeal board, and no decision had been made at the present time.

1500

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): It is with great pleasure that I bring a petition. This is only a sample. There are actually 75,000 signatures gathered through my office, through the alderman of Hamilton Mountain as well as the hospital workers at the Henderson.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Henderson hospital is the only acute care hospital located on Hamilton Mountain and serves over 200,000 mountain residents and thousands more from surrounding municipalities; and

“Whereas the recommendations of the hospital restructuring commission clearly call for the Henderson to remain open as an acute care facility; and

“Whereas removal of services from the Henderson hospital would create a situation detrimental to the health and safety of the aforementioned residents of Hamilton Mountain; and

“Whereas there’s no conclusive evidence that the removal of services from the Henderson hospital will create long-term net savings for the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario, through the Minister of Health, to direct the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp to abide by the recommendations of the hospital restructuring commission and take the necessary steps to maintain the Henderson hospital as an acute care facility with the necessary services available to ensure the health, safety and care of Hamilton and area residents.”

I proudly put my name and signature on this.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. It is very hard to hear the petitions. If the members wish to talk, would they move out of the chamber. That would be helpful.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): In addition to the petitions from my colleague from Hamilton Mountain, I also have the following petition to present:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Harris government has cut \$40 million from the budget of the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp, which has resulted in a health care crisis in Hamilton-Wentworth and left the HHSC with a \$40-million deficit; and

“Whereas the HHSC is now planning to downsize and cut back services at the Henderson hospital by converting the hospital to a daycare hospital with urgent care, rather than an emergency department; and

“Whereas this will have a serious impact on emergency services for the 200,000 residents of Hamilton Mountain, upper Stoney Creek, Glanbrook, Ancaster and other communities above the escarpment; and

“Whereas the mountain population is a rapidly growing community and deserves and needs a full-service hospital; and

“Whereas an ambulatory care centre is not an acceptable replacement for a 24-hour emergency ward; and

“Whereas it does not make sense to spend \$100 million for a new cancer centre rather than half that amount to expand existing facilities at the Henderson; and

“Whereas Mike Harris said in February that the Henderson hospital would remain open for acute and cancer care;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario direct the Harris government to restore the funding cuts to the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp and develop long-term solutions for the maintenance of appropriate acute care services at the Henderson hospital to serve the needs of the growing population of Hamilton-Wentworth and central south Ontario.”

In support of these petitioners, I add my name to theirs.

DURHAM COLLEGE

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): It is my pleasure to present a petition to the Parliament of Ontario on behalf of the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce. They presented me with these documents last night at a dinner where the Minister of Transportation spoke, and they wanted me to pass this on to the Premier as well as the Minister of Colleges and Universities, the Honourable Dianne Cunningham.

“To the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas the region of Durham has grown to a population of over 500,000 people; and

“Whereas the time has come to have the infrastructure in a knowledge-based economy;

“The citizens of the region of Durham strongly urge that the Minister of Education and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities immediately recognize Durham College and fund it appropriately as a Durham College and University Centre.”

I’m very pleased to submit this and also to affix my name to it.

COUNTY RESTRUCTURING

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the restructuring recommendations of the appointed commissioner, Harry Kitchen, will be binding for the county of Victoria, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to halt the forced restructuring

process for many reasons, including but not limited to the following:

“Democratic process has been thwarted in the appointment of the commissioner—87% of the municipalities of Victoria voted against the appointment. Municipalities of Victoria county are already in the process of reducing local government and implementing cost-effective measures to administer services. Their solutions for effective amalgamation have not been addressed by Mr Kitchen’s report to the public. Recently instituted market value assessment makes the 1998 information obsolete for the purpose of reliable and accurate cost analysis.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows: Please halt the forced restructuring of Victoria county and allow us, the voters, taxpayers, and residents of Victoria county, to work with our elected municipal officials to determine our own future in a fair and democratic manner, at our own level.”

That’s signed by 848 residents, and I have also signed the petition.

ABORTION

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): I’m pleased to present a petition from Pat Wilson, Mary McAuley and a number of other constituents in my riding of Durham.

“To the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas we have recently learned that our tax money is being used to pay the rent on the Morgentaler abortuary; and

“Whereas by the end of his lease this amount will be in excess of \$5 million;

“Whereas we strongly object to this use of our tax dollars;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately cease these payments.”

I am pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

MANDATORY INFLUENZA VACCINATION

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I have a rather lengthy petition. I’ll read it in part.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Karl G. Nicholson, MD, who is a senior lecturer on infectious diseases at Leicester Royal Infirmary in England, states, ‘The studies to date haven’t convincingly shown that flu immunization reduces the spread of influenza’; and

“Whereas according to Hugh Fundenberg, MD, the world’s leading immunogeneticist: ‘If an individual has had five consecutive flu shots’ in a 10-year period, his study years, ‘his/her chances of getting Alzheimer’s disease is 10 times higher than if they had one, two or no shots. This is due to the mercury and aluminum in every flu shot. The gradual mercury and aluminum buildup in the brain causes cognitive dysfunction’ ...

“Whereas our research has uncovered information that flu vaccinations have many negative implications to health;

“Whereas we have learned that the Ontario Ministry of Health is strongly encouraging facilities to require the mandatory immunization of all employees;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Reconsider the encouragement of mandatory influenza shots or any legislation that might require such shots, and that employees be allowed an exemption from such shots, the same as Ontario students are provided through the Form 2 Immunization of School Pupils Act, without exclusion from the workplace.”

I affix my signature to this.

1510

SENIOR CITIZENS’ HOUSING

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I’d like to read another petition which has been delivered to my office. It speaks of the plight of seniors having difficulties with their property taxes. It is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the seniors in Ontario are largely being forgotten by this government, with the vast majority of tax cuts benefiting large corporations and the most wealthy in our society; and

“Whereas due to the government’s downloading of responsibility for property taxes to the municipalities, a heavier burden is being placed on seniors living in their own homes; and

“Whereas many seniors, because of their low pension income, are increasingly unable to afford the high cost of upkeep of their homes, prescription drugs and other user fees, and higher property taxes, and are being forced to sell and move into high-priced rental accommodation; and

“Whereas the availability of affordable rental accommodation is becoming a serious problem for seniors since the elimination of rent controls and the provincial government’s decision to stop building affordable housing for seniors; and

“Whereas the increasing burden on vulnerable seniors is unfair and unjust to seniors who sacrificed and paid taxes all their lives; and

“Whereas the provincial government has shown little interest in helping seniors remain in their homes in honour and dignity;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The time has come to remove education levies from the property taxes of low-income seniors.”

I concur with the contents of the petition and I will affix my signature to it.

ILLEGAL TIMBER CUTTING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas timber cutters are trespassing on private and crown land, cutting, removing and selling trees, leaving a

financial, environmental, aesthetic and emotional devastation in their wake; and

“Whereas the OPP have no authority to stop a cutter from cutting in the event of a boundary dispute, but may only inform the cutter that a complaint has been lodged; and

“Whereas the mills accept all timber from their contractors whether it is stolen or not; and

“Whereas the practice of the crown attorney’s office to delegate these obvious theft issues to civil court places an unreasonable and prohibitive financial burden on the landowner-victim; and

“Whereas the offending cutters are protected by their numbered companies, lease their equipment and declare bankruptcy rather than pay fines and restitution, and immediately register a new numbered company, the landowner-victim must then pay:

“(1) All court costs and legal fees incurred by the offender as well as their own legal fees;

“(2) The cost of the survey;

“(3) The cost of hiring and posting bond for a bailiff, an appraiser, a salesman and bond for each piece of property and for equipment seized from the convicted cutter at the rate of at least \$2,000 for each of the above-listed;

“(4) The cost of cleanup and reforestation; and

“Whereas traditionally settlements to landowners-victims have amounted to the price of stumpage fees for the stripped area, while the cutter profits from the full price of the timber from the mill; and

“Whereas, because the offending cutter must work quickly to avoid detection, he/she leaves the land devastated, with little or no thought to environmental areas of concern, eg, wetlands, reforestation;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness to landowners-victims in the overwhelming support of illegal cutting of private and crown lands.

“We advocate:

“(1) That the cases be tried as grand theft in a criminal court;

“(2) That in the event of a boundary dispute the party who is to benefit financially (ie, the cutter) be responsible for the cost of a survey by a registered surveyor and not a forester;

“(3) Final judgments should not only include fines, all costs incurred for pursuit of justice and stumpage fees, but the full price of the timber, the cost of cleaning up the clear-cut area and the cost of reforestation and maintenance of the cut area, thus making theft of timber from private and crown lands potentially non-profitable;

“(4) Contracts of convicted cutters should be subject to suspension or termination, just as drunk drivers lose licences.”

In agreement with this sentiment, I’ve affixed my signature.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):

“Whereas the carnage and the tragedy continues on Highway 401 between London and Windsor; and

“Whereas traffic levels on all sections of Highway 401 continue to increase; and

“Whereas Canada’s number one trade and travel route was designed in the 1950s for fewer vehicles and lighter trucks; and

“Whereas road funding is almost completely paid through vehicle permit and driver licensing fees;

“We, the undersigned members of the Canadian Automobile Association and other residents of Ontario, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately upgrade Highway 401 to at least a six-lane highway, with full paved shoulders, rumble strips and centre median barriers.”

I respectfully present this petition on their behalf.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have another petition with respect to health care privatization in Ontario which I’d like to read to you. It says no to the privatization of health care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we are concerned about the quality of health care in Ontario; and

“Whereas we do not believe health care should be for sale; and

“Whereas the Mike Harris government is taking steps to allow profit-driven companies to provide health care services in Ontario; and

“Whereas we won’t stand for profits over people;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Do not privatize our health care services.”

The petition is quite explicit. I concur with the intent, and I will affix my signature to it.

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas cultural organizations make an outstanding contribution to our province by sharing their customs, traditions, language and arts;

“Whereas our cultural organizations are generous in their benevolent contribution to the people of their communities;

“Whereas dramatic and unjustified increases in assessment for our cultural halls have created an extreme hardship for their membership;

“Be it resolved that the provincial government reinstate the previous assessment treatment for such facilities and abandon the assessment change that is so detrimental to our cultural organizations.”

I affix my signature, as I am in complete agreement with this, and I'm glad that the provincial Treasurer and Minister of Revenue was able to hear this petition this afternoon.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): In the absence of Mr Sterling, I move that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing May 1, 2000, and ending October 31, 2000, such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation following the voting of supply.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Mr Eves has moved government notice of motion number 33. The time is split evenly, and that means it will be rotated after each speaker. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon Mr Eves: I am just going to make a few very brief comments. As members are aware, obviously the motion for interim supply provides the government with the authority to make payments to hospitals, boards of education, civil servants, suppliers and others. Payments are currently being made under a motion of interim supply that was introduced on October 21, 1999, and that will expire on April 30 of this year.

I note that my friend the honourable member for St Catharines is sitting in the Legislature. I've heard him comment from time to time over the years that I've had the pleasure of listening to him, which is over 19 years now—my, how time flies when you're having fun—that he wished governments would put these motions earlier on in the session and not leave them until the last few days. Well, here we are, taking the honourable member's advice and moving the motion earlier on.

To ensure that payments scheduled on or shortly after May 1 are indeed made on time and received in all parts of the province, including the north and rural and more remote areas of the province, it's necessary to provide the banking system and the mail system with some lead time. That practice has been given to give them time to ensure that payments are received on time. Payments early in May include, among others, payments for general welfare, transfers to hospitals, boards of education and children's aid societies.

To ensure the province meets its obligations in an orderly fashion, I hope members will be supportive in ensuring that this motion is passed today.

1520

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I want to compliment the Minister of Finance on taking this early initiative. I know he is as disappointed as I that the House sat only 40 days all last year and we were so long in

coming back, because I know he enjoys the exchanges that take place in the House and he loves to be here with his fellow colleagues.

Many people were asking me over the last several months what I was doing in St Catharines. I had to explain that the House hadn't sat since December because the Premier did not want to bring it back. I know that would disappoint the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka as much as I, but I'm glad he's here because I have a few things that are of specific interest to him.

He heard the petition I read. One of the problems we are encountering is a change in the assessment which has adversely impacted various cultural halls. In my own city, those who have contacted me have been Club Roma, the Ukrainian Black Sea Hall, Canadian Polish Society and Club Heidelberg. Halls of this kind are adversely impacted by this, and I find it unfortunate, because we have seen sometimes doubling, sometimes tripling, sometimes quadrupling of the assessment for these halls. I think virtually all of them are appealing those assessments, but I think it's important that the provincial government take action.

We had a meeting the other day with a committee of mostly business people who deal with various classes of assessment, which meets with the regional council. Four members from the Niagara region were there. It was stated by the government members that the initiative could go back to the municipality. I think the people there—I detected a consensus—would like to see the province take that initiative, and I'd be pleased to see that happen.

The second issue I would like to deal with is Brock University and Niagara College and the allocation of SuperBuild funding. Needless to say, the four members from Niagara—again, I think I speak on their behalf, although the government members have to be more cautious in their remarks—were disappointed in the first round of funding. Neither Niagara College nor Brock University received the kind of capital funding we would like to have seen. In other words, their applications were not accepted.

But we do know that a second round of funding is upcoming, and the criteria may be modified or different for that round. I think both those educational institutions have indeed made a compelling case for the kind of funding that we feel is necessary to carry out their responsibilities.

I read in the St Catharines Standard that the Conservative members Tim Hudak of Erie-Lincoln and Bart Maves of Niagara Falls have joined me in writing a letter to the minister about it. I did not phone the newspaper to say I had done so, and I was taken aback when I saw them criticizing their own government, calling for funding for these projects from their own government. But let me assure that this is not as partisan an issue as people think—we have some fun saying that. I'm sure all four of us, including Mr Kormos from Niagara Centre, are determined to see good applications accepted, not just because they were made but because all of us think those

applications have a lot of merit, would assist those institutions in meeting the increased capacity they will need and the new programs that are there.

So I urge the government, in the second round, to give serious and favourable consideration to those applications, and my colleagues from Niagara in this House would know that there is full support from the municipal councils and others in the Niagara region. When the announcement is made, as I suspect it may be, in the near future—I have no inside dope on that, as they say, but when the two Conservative members are writing an open letter, you have to be sure they know that something is coming. Otherwise, they wouldn't write a letter, because it wouldn't look good if the money didn't come.

I am confident that people will understand the merit of the applications and will support them. Both Brock University and Niagara College have been highly successful destination places for many students around the province. They provide outstanding service to the people of Ontario, and I certainly urge the government to move forward with capital funding for them.

I also want to mention that there's a new book out, and particularly those people who live in smaller town areas should know about this. It's called *Merger Mania: The Assault on Local Government*, by Professor Andrew Sancton. I know people in such places as Lincoln, Wainfleet, Fort Erie, Port Colborne and West Lincoln, among others, will be very interested in the arguments put forward by Dr Sancton about the lack of advisability of these mega-mergers. In his heart of hearts, the member for Nepean probably agrees with this. But he is a member of the cabinet, and I don't expect that he is going to break ranks on this.

But, for instance, I urge the editorial board of the *St Catharines Standard*, and all others who are interested in the mania towards mega-cities, to read the book called *Merger Mania: The Assault on Local Government*. He shoots down the arguments in favour of them, and I understand that people have to read other arguments as well. But there seems to be a fad out there that people want to get rid of small communities such as the ones you represent, Mr Speaker, in your part of the province. So *Merger Mania* is the name of the book, Dr Andrew Sancton is the author, and you can get it from Price-Patterson Ltd of Westmount, Quebec.

Now I want to as well mention the issue of health care. I've got a good plan for the government, one that I think you can agree with. You have spent, what, \$3 million now on more advertising? Even Conservatives are phoning me now. Reform Conservatives even are phoning me saying: "Why are they wasting money on these ads? Because the federal government's going to waste money on ads to counter those ads. Why not put the money into health care?" Well, I contend that this government has the money for health care: It's the money they're going to give away in more tax cuts.

So here's my plan for the government, and I want the ministers who are here and others to hear. I think I can sell it to you because it involves bashing the feds. All you have-

Interjections.

Mr Bradley: See, I've got their attention now. All you have to do is abandon your tax cuts and blame Ottawa. I'll be with you there. I'll say that they had to abandon them because they need the money for health care and they're not just going to give them away in more tax cuts for rich people. What I'm saying is that you have an excuse. You can blame the feds, and isn't that what you like to do?

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I blame the feds all the time.

Mr Bradley: There you go, blame the feds. Here it is: Forget the tax cuts. People I talk to say: "Take that money you're throwing away on self-serving ads, take the money you're throwing away on those tax cuts for the rich and put it into health care. Invest it in health care and then blame the feds." You can say, "I didn't want to do it, but Ottawa made us do it," and I'll be up in the House applauding you when you do that. I suspect, however, that the extreme right wing which runs this party will say: "No, we must have these tax cuts; they're most important. We'll just keep spending all kinds of money on advertising against the feds and asking questions against the feds."

I gave you an out. I gave you a solution, and a solution that allows you to bash the feds and put money into health care at the same time, and not have to get into more squabbles with them. I don't know if you'll take it. Take it back to the Premier and see what he says at the next caucus meeting. He might well agree with this.

Another issue that came up that I want to touch on briefly was raised in the House today. The member for Oak Ridges is here, so I want to mention it because of circumstances he was involved in, contemplating running for the Canadian Alliance, and the role of money in politics. I think what it did, the circumstances—and I'm not going to get into the details of it, because that's his business and what he wishes to do, but I want to say that I think a plus came out of this. It was exposing the role of money in politics. I want to tell you that the role of money in politics is major, and we do have to go back and look at the amount of money that we allow parties to spend, the amount of money we allow them to raise and take in, and the exemptions, and tighten that up considerably.

I've seen that I have only one minute left, so the last thing I'm going to say to you is that we should be preserving agricultural land; 125,000 acres of agricultural land are disappearing a year. We just had a—

Applause.

Mr Bradley: I think that applause means it's the end of my speech. I do want to tell you it's important that we address that issue, and as soon as the clock hits 40 I'm going to sit down. There's an Ontario Municipal Board hearing on in Pelham where again there's some agricultural land in question. The question is going to be asked, do we really have to continue to gobble up good agricultural land for development purposes when there's other land available?

Now I will yield the floor to one of my colleagues.

Mr David Young (Willowdale): I have the privilege of addressing this chamber this afternoon about the interim supply bill that is before us. It's one of the most important motions that this Legislature sees and I'm certainly hopeful that it will be passed this afternoon. It's the motion that gives the government the authority to continue its programs and to operate its daily business: to send money to municipalities, to send money to hospitals, to pay social assistance benefits for those who require them and to appropriate the payment of the salaries of the dedicated members of the public service.

1530

The motion for interim supply does not specify a dollar amount, as you well know, but does provide spending authority for a specified period of time. This proposed motion will cover the period commencing May 1, 2000, and will run until October 31, 2000.

To continue the job we have been elected to do and to ensure that all scheduled payment obligations are met, this motion for interim supply must be passed. It is extremely important that we move forward with our vision for this province, for a renewed Ontario. This motion will allow us to do so.

Our vision is one of a province that encourages its people to innovate and to create, a province that has a strong social safety net to ensure that those who require assistance, who truly require assistance, will get that assistance so they can get back on their feet.

We have a plan to support that vision. It's a plan to cut taxes. It's a plan to modernize our health care system and to provide it with the financial resources it needs. It's a plan to move more people from welfare to work. It's a plan to improve the quality of education by introducing higher, more rigorous standards and to guarantee that funding will be there to match increasing enrolment. It's a plan we started in 1995, and we are committed to continue that plan.

We have entered a new century, a new millennium, and the new challenges and opportunities that Ontarians will face are exciting and a little daring. Five short years ago, our ability to compete and to meet these new challenges, the challenges of this new era, was questionable. Our province has come a long way over the last five years. It's hard to believe that just five years ago we had an \$11-billion deficit, hard to believe that just five years ago we were among the highest-taxed jurisdictions in North America. We were losing jobs.

A great deal has changed. This spring, it is likely that Ontario will balance its books for the first time in 30 years. Our economy continues to grow.

Mr Speaker, you'll recall that a moment ago I mentioned the fact that five short years ago we were losing jobs. Well, our economy continues to grow, and with the approximately 700,000 net new jobs created since the throne speech in 1995, we've come a long way.

As well, our government has had the courage to cut taxes, both personal taxes and otherwise, 99 times. All

this has fuelled renewed hope, all this has fuelled growth, and in fact it has fuelled prosperity.

What I'd like to do in my time remaining is look for and describe some of the indicators that demonstrate, without exception, that there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that we have achieved remarkable growth.

In the third quarter of 1999, Ontario's real output was up 7.1% compared to the same period a year earlier. That is the fastest gain in 11 years. Real GDP rose by 1.7% in the third quarter of 1999; that's between July and September. If you compare that to the previous year, you see yet another healthy gain. The rise in real GDP, perhaps most importantly, was broadly based, supported by both strong domestic spending and exports. For instance, non-residential investment spending rose 7.9%, residential construction registered a gain of 1.8%, and consumer spending remained robust, rising 1.8%.

There are numerous additional examples of our continued economic growth as a province. Let's look to the fourth quarter of 1999. In the fourth quarter of that year, Ontario gained 46,000 new jobs. In that same period of time, the fourth quarter of the last calendar year, wholesale trade sales advanced 2.9%. Labour income jumped 1.4%.

Private sector economists are optimistic that Ontario's economy will remain strong. The forecast that we have today suggests that we're going to continue to see a 3.7% to 4.2% range of growth. Recently, in fact, forecasters have suggested that even higher numbers will likely be realized. The average private sector forecast for real GDP growth in 2000 is about 4%.

I touched earlier upon the fact that Ontario continues to create jobs. Let me elaborate on that. Employment in Ontario rose by 8,900 in February, following a 21,000-plus advance in the preceding month of January. Since September 1995, Ontario has created in excess of 665,000 net new private sector jobs. This strong growth accounts for close to half of the national private sector job growth.

The unemployment rate was 5.7% in February and the help wanted index rose to 1.1% in February. That's the highest level that we have seen in a considerable period of time.

I'm very proud of this economic growth. I'm especially proud of the growth that is happening in the riding that I have the privilege of representing, Willowdale, and in the greater Toronto area. Since September 1995, the GTA economy has increased and has grown to a point where it has created 336,000—I'll repeat that, 336,000—net new jobs. As of February, the unemployment rate in the GTA stood at an impressive 5.4%, one full percentage point lower than it was in February 1999. I know that's something that all the members of the House will take delight in. This means that in the area immediately surrounding this Legislative Assembly, there are 336,000 individuals who have the dignity of a job, 336,000 families who have benefited by reason of this growth in a very direct and immediate manner.

Over the past year, the GTA's economy created close to 108,000 jobs—that's 108,000; 21,500 in the month of

February alone. That is more people working. That is more people paying taxes. That is more people spending and investing in our economy. All this adds up to more government revenues—revenues we can use, revenues we can invest in priority areas like health care, education and safe communities.

Our young people have also benefited from this growth. The strong economic performance of this province has yielded 37,300 net new jobs. Since May 1997, Ontario's youth have gained 108,000 net new jobs, 46% of the youth jobs created nationally. In 1999, youth gained almost 50,000 jobs—49,100 new jobs. That's the greatest growth in the history of this province for that category.

Let's recall, and it's not an insignificant fact, most importantly, 90% of those new jobs were full-time jobs. Young people once again have reason to be optimistic about their future, to be optimistic about the province.

I hearken back to the days of May 1999 when I was walking along the streets of Willowdale talking to the residents of Willowdale, and I recall very vividly meeting with a group of young men who sat on their front porch on a Saturday morning and assured me they would be voting for me, they would be supporting Mike Harris, and the reason very succinctly was because Mike Harris got them jobs.

I'm proud to say the youth unemployment rate stands at its lowest rate in the past decade, and if the last few months are any indication, it will continue to decline.

Remarkable growth is being experienced in many other sectors as well. Let's talk about a few of them. For instance, Ontario department store sales were up 3.2% over the previous year in January 2000. In 1999, Ontario department store sales jumped 7.5%. As well, retail sales across the province last year gained by 7.8%.

The auto sector is one of the greatest indicators of economic performance and strength in this province, and there is good news to report in this sector as well. Ontarians bought a record 645,472 new cars and trucks. That surpasses the record that was previously set in 1988. More people buying cars means that more people need those cars. That means more people are finding meaningful, well-paying jobs.

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The future is only getting brighter. It was reported in the papers today that Toyota is set to invest a significant amount of money to build and expand their Cambridge plant. This will almost certainly result in additional employment for many thousands of people. This is great news for the province, it's great news for the region that Cambridge is situated in and it's good news for the country. This investment will have a tremendous spinoff effect both for the immediate area and beyond.

More Ontarians are working and know about having the dignity of a job, and we are very proud of what this has meant, the tangible results to those individuals. The housing market is perhaps the most telling barometer of economic success and stability. In February 2000, I know you'll be interested to note, urban area housing starts

were up 24.2%, almost 25%, and that is compared to the previous year. In 1999, all area housing starts across this province were at 24.9%; that's almost 25%. In January of this year Ontario home resales were 17.6% above sales in the same month in 1999. As well, the value of residential building permits—a very significant figure that I'm about to give you, significant not only to those who will occupy these homes but to those who will be involved in the construction of these premises—issued in Ontario last year climbed 22.6%, their highest total since 1989.

In 1999 in the Toronto area, new home sales soared 33.1%, hitting a level of 37,304. That's the best since 1986. This means that more and more Ontario families will be realizing their dream of owning a home. They have a renewed confidence in their own future and a renewed confidence in the future of this province.

I've talked, by and large, about what is going on throughout this province. I should make a few comments about what's going on in the riding of Willowdale. During the winter recess, I had the opportunity to meet and consult with business leaders from my community to discuss the upcoming budget. The remarkable success of this provincial economy is due to the hard work and sacrifice of all Ontarians, including the innovation of small and medium-sized business owners. The discussions I had with these business leaders taught me a great deal about what we need to do as a government to ensure that this economic growth continues.

They told me we need to continue to cut taxes. They told me we need to balance budgets and continue to do that. They told me we need to spend within our means.

We need to invest in our infrastructure to ensure that our highways and our transportation system can meet the enormous expectations that exist. We need to continue to invest in priority areas such as education and health care so that we can be sure we have a healthy, well-educated workforce that can compete in this worldwide economy that we now find ourselves in.

They also told me very clearly that we need to continue to cut taxes and we need to continue to cut red tape.

By the way, they also asked me if there was anything I could do about the punishing EI premiums they were forced to pay, that job-killing tax that the federal government continues to impose and increase. I referred them to the federal member and I am hopeful that he will hear their pleas.

All these taxes, particularly the EI tax, I was told are stifling to small businesses.

Tax cuts, I was told very clearly, are an integral part of what is necessary to continue to improve the economy of this province. Our plan includes tax cuts. It includes the elimination of red tape. It includes the elimination of the deficit.

Numerous studies from around the world have found that tax rates are one of the most important factors determining economic growth and productivity. The proof is in the pudding. From the second quarter of 1995 to the third quarter of 1999, both exports and imports have rapidly grown. Tax cuts are fast becoming the competitive edge of this province.

I know that some opposite credit the growth in the US economy, and there's no question that the success of the economy to the south is of some assistance. But the great thing about our economic growth has been that it is primarily driven by what we are doing right here in Ontario. The main source of economic growth, accounting for 80%, has been domestic spending, and that has been very much stimulated by our tax cuts. We are growing more quickly than our neighbouring US states. I'll repeat that again: The growth in this province is much faster than that in the states immediately to the south. In fact, the economy in this province is growing faster than most G7 nations. The opposition takes every opportunity to say that our success is not our own, but unlike them, unlike the Liberals and New Democrats, I have faith in the ability and the capabilities of Ontarians. Our government knows that we cannot depend on anyone else for our prosperity. It is up to us to build a better future for our children.

Willowdale continues to grow. As I mentioned in this Legislature earlier this day, new businesses are settling in my community all the time. You only have to travel up and down the north part of Yonge Street in Toronto to see all the growth. The amount of construction confirms just how well we are doing as a community and just how well we are doing as a province.

However, we still have much to do. As I said earlier today, keeping Ontario prosperous and growing is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week, 365-day-a-year job. We cannot, we must not, become complacent with our recent success. I look forward to working with Mr Eves as his parliamentary assistant and with the rest of our caucus to ensure that Ontario continues to be a place that is attractive to investment, a place where people have hope and access to opportunities, a place where our children have access to a top-quality education, a place where everyone has access to top-quality, publicly funded, universally accessible health care, and a place where the people of this province have the dignity of a job.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity of addressing this interim supply motion. I know some of my friends on this side of the floor will have some comments when we have an opportunity to speak again later this afternoon.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I am pleased to speak to the interim supply motion. This debate, as we all know, is tied to the government's fiscal situation. Now we all have heard again the Harris Tory mantra of tax cuts and more tax cuts, yet the fiscal decisions of this government directly affect the sustainable development of this province's people. I want to bring to this discussion the aspect of the devastation to the cultural and heritage community because of continued rounds of cuts. I would just like to know when the cuts stop and when stability and rebuilding begin.

The Ministry of Culture's track record and its effect in recent months on this province's heritage can be described as devastating. The attack on heritage may not get the same media attention as the crisis in health care,

but it's just as devastating to the spirit and the soul of this province. The Liberal caucus and I believe that a strong sense of identity determines who we are as a people, and this identity can only be developed by the legacy we pass on to the next generation. And this can be developed only if we preserve, we protect and we showcase our heritage in this province.

The heritage legacy of the Harris government over the last six months has been one of cuts and For Sale signs. Twenty-seven community museums' operating funds have been cut up to 30%. The rules were changed without notice or explanation. Further, the government notified the museums just before Christmas Eve last year, and these small community museums are now in dire circumstances. Yet they provide an invaluable service in preserving our legacy and passing on our culture and heritage to future generations. One curator said to me, "The Harris government and the Ministry of Culture seem to be bleeding us to death slowly."

1550

What is of concern to me is the Harris Conservatives' simplistically and poorly managed yet arrogant approach to cutting every sector across the board. They do this without proper evaluation or even a thoughtful approach. The zealot approach to tax cuts has undermined and is unravelling our social fabric. You know, \$4.3 billion of tax cuts have been announced, yet Harris is now saying the province doesn't have enough money to sustain health care or to sustain education.

We already know that there's a lack of social conscience, and part of that is a lack of understanding of the economic value that culture and heritage provide. Sustainable economic development's underpinning is diversity, creativity, innovation and thinkers of a well-educated society, but we already know the philosophy of Harris. Premier Harris suggests that workers are what we need in this province, that we don't need any thinkers. I would suggest to him that we want workers who are thinkers.

Recent funding to universities almost marginalizes liberal arts faculties at universities. Within the sectors of the arts, culture and heritage community, I have seen and heard the obstacles and hardships felt by the creators and organizations. The Ontario Arts Council, we know, has been slashed by 40%. Here is another example of cutting for the sake of cutting, because funding to culture and heritage is minuscule in the context of the overall budget. I dare say it's a small investment to the great return that this sector provides. We have 670,000 people working in the arts and culture nationwide. In this sector, \$24 billion goes to the GNP annually, and we've already heard that Ontario has a huge chunk of this.

I want to add to this that Alberta, under Klein, has not cut support for the arts. Not a penny has been reduced to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, which is a counterpart to the Ontario Arts Council. Even Nova Scotia established a new arts council and is undertaking a new comprehensive cultural sector strategy. And we know that Quebec has increased its funding for culture and the arts.

People like Graham Donald, who is executive director of the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers, speak to the lack of interest shown by Premier Mike Harris and his government in funding and promoting arts and cultural education. The Harris government's fiscal agenda is the best indicator of what this government is about and what it's not about. Let's remember his priority: It's all about tax cuts. It's not about better service delivery. It's not about open and honest government, as we are seeing in the sale of Ontario-owned land. We have all watched cutting and creating crises. We've all seen confrontation. We haven't seen repairing, or creating something new.

The Liberal caucus believes that good government takes responsibility and provides leadership. It doesn't point fingers and blame others, as has been the style lately of the Harris government.

By the way, we know that the current market is hot for high-tech jobs. We live in a high-tech world, and this high-tech world needs high-tech people. High-tech companies are finding it increasingly difficult to hire graduates proficient in the field but who are also excellent in writing and oral communication skills.

A recent employer recruitment survey demonstrated that skills valued most highly by employers are those fostered in liberal arts and social sciences. Interpersonal, analytical writing, and oral communication skills are most important across the board. Where do students gain these skills? In liberal arts and humanities. They teach the fundamentals of being cognizant individuals in interpretation, analysis, theorization and argument. However, these skills are in danger because of the lack of interest and money in the arts.

It makes it almost impossible for students to continue in their chosen venues, yet there's a call for them. Groups such as the Cultural Human Resources Council and the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers are desperately trying to fill the gap left by government. Arts students are the most underserved part of the student population, yet they are the most versatile. They restore the balance of society with human creativity since it has been tipped so heavily in favour of mechanization. That's not to say that there should be cuts to the high-tech realm either, but at the cost of the arts it is simply a bad idea.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): It's a pleasure for me to participate in the debate on supply this afternoon. I want to deal with two areas in particular, those involving cancer care and, second, the Family Responsibility Office. Both of these issues were dealt with by the public accounts committee during the recess and they are issues that I am very concerned about. They are issues, particularly with respect to the Family Responsibility Office, that we see a lot of in our constituency office, and they are issues which I don't feel this government has provided any kind of adequate reply to, despite what went on in public accounts.

Let me deal first with cancer care. This has to do particularly with the discrimination this government is exer-

cising right now as we speak with respect to cancer patients who have to travel away from their home community for cancer care, and the travel, accommodation and costs that northern patients are not allowed to receive when they have to travel to either Sudbury or Thunder Bay for cancer care.

By way of history, when this government was elected in 1995, they made some serious mistakes with respect to cancer care. They cancelled some of the expansion projects for cancer care centres that were targeted for Durham and Oshawa, for example, so that those cancer treatment centres will now come on stream at least two, three or, in one case, four years later than was actually targeted, making it much more difficult for the province to deal with its cancer care waiting list.

1600

The government made a second very serious error with respect to the training of radiation therapy students. This training now is all centred at the Michener Institute. Previously it was provided at a number of cancer treatment centres, my own in Sudbury included. In 1997, the government made a very serious error and cancelled all training for radiation therapists in the province for that academic year. So a whole range of students, potentially 60, the number who would have been trained there at that time, lost a whole year of academic training. So we in Ontario find ourselves, in the last number of months—and this has certainly been a media issue in the last number of months—with a shortage of radiation therapists.

We would have had some 60 graduate this year if the Conservative government had not cancelled training in that year; we have none who are graduating in the province this year. And so, of course, there is a massive recruitment internationally now underway to try to deal with our problem. So we have a situation where a number of cancer patients cannot receive radiation therapy in their own communities, or as close to home as possible, because we do not have the specialists there to actually provide the treatment.

Last April the government, in response to the horrible mess they created in cancer, decided they would have a re-referral list and would start to send women who were receiving treatment for breast cancer and males who were receiving treatment for prostate cancer out of their communities to Buffalo, Detroit, Kingston, Thunder Bay and Sudbury, because the cancer care centres in those communities did have enough specialists available and did have the room to provide cancer care. What the government did last April was to say to those cancer patients: "In return for your travelling to these centres for cancer treatment, we will fund 100% of your travel costs, no matter where you have to go. We will fund 100% of your accommodation costs if you have to stay outside of a cancer lodge in any of those communities. We will fund 100% of your food costs and any transportation you might have to pay from the airport to the cancer treatment centre—we'll pay the cab fare as well."

The government began paying those costs, and they have flowed the money through from the Ministry of

Health to Cancer Care Ontario to pay for those costs. When Cancer Care Ontario came before our committee, they made it absolutely clear that this was a special allocation that the Ministry of Health had made to Cancer Care Ontario. It was not funding coming out of the base budget of Cancer Care Ontario; it was a special allocation that had been made by the Ministry of Health specifically to accommodate these cancer patients.

I can't imagine what it must be like to deal with the trauma of cancer treatment. I've never had anyone in my family who has had to go through that. I can't imagine the emotional stress attached to that. But I asked the committee members and Cancer Care Ontario when they were before us in public accounts, and I ask the government members who are here today, to consider what it must be like, over and above the emotional stress of having to be treated for cancer, the financial burden and the financial stress that come when you have to travel out of your community four and five hours away, stay somewhere else for a week for cancer care and pay for those costs. That is what's happening to northern Ontario cancer patients every day as they travel, in northeastern Ontario, to Sudbury for cancer care and as they travel, in northwestern Ontario, to Thunder Bay for cancer care.

Cancer patients in northern Ontario cannot get 100% of their accommodation costs covered. None of their accommodation costs are covered when they go for cancer care. Cancer patients can't get any money covered for food when they have to go for cancer treatment in Sudbury or Thunder Bay. If they do have to travel—and they do, for long distances—they can't afford to fly to Thunder Bay or Sudbury for cancer care, because the most they can get covered of their cost is 30 cents one way from the point of origin to the cancer centre itself. For example, if you live in Fort Frances and have to travel to Thunder Bay for cancer treatment, the most you can get to cover your travel costs is \$102.

I want to raise three specific cases with you. We have the permission of these constituents, and I raised them in the public accounts committee with Cancer Care Ontario and the Ministry of Health, because the deputy was there. Here's the case of Gladys Whelan. She is a senior on a fixed income. Her husband has been deceased for just a little while. Her daughter has to take time off work to drive her from Fort Frances to Thunder Bay for cancer treatment. It's a four-hour drive one way. In the fall, Gladys Whelan drove three times with her daughter. She couldn't stay at the cancer lodge one of those times for her week of treatments because the lodge was full, so she had to stay in a hotel room in Thunder Bay. The whole time she was there, she had to pay the hospital for the meal plan. She had to pay that out of her own pocket, and the gas included. After three trips, she had accumulated costs of over \$1,000 for travel, accommodation and food. The most she got back for each of those trips was \$102.

Gladys Whelan's cancer specialist asked her to come for an additional treatment in December. She refused. She told him no. She said she couldn't afford to go for

cancer treatment any more because not all of her costs are covered, and by the time her costs are covered from the northern health travel grant, it takes up to eight to 12 weeks to actually get any reimbursement. She could not afford to go for another cancer treatment in Ontario in the year 2000.

She's not the only one. Anna Watson is also from Fort Frances. The same situation: Anna had to have someone drive her to Thunder Bay, stay with her in Thunder Bay and drive her back. Again, she had the cost of the hotel, because again she couldn't stay at the lodge because it was full. She had to pay for a hotel room every night, and the cheapest she could find was \$50 per night. She had to pay as well for all the food from the hospital that is attached to the cancer treatment centre. Again, she had to pay for her gas and, again, all she got for her trip was \$102. Her out-of-pocket expenses, by the time she finished, were well over \$800.

The third constituent is a woman by the name of Donna Graham. She lives in Pickle Lake. Mr Speaker, you should know that Pickle Lake is a six-hour drive, one way, to Thunder Bay. She could fly, and she'd probably prefer to do so, because after you have cancer treatment it's pretty hard to get into a car and drive six hours to Pickle Lake. And I can assure you it's not the best paved highway in Ontario—far from it. Donna Graham's return airfare, the cheapest she could ever get, was \$570.31. But because Donna Graham could only get a little over \$200 to cover the cost through the northern health travel grant, she of course had to drive, because again there was no room for her at the inn, so to speak. She and her husband, who drove her a couple of times, and then her son, who drove her a number of other times for her treatment, had to stay in a hotel. Again, they had to pay for their full meal costs at the hospital.

I raise this issue because I asked Cancer Care Ontario very specifically if they did not think this was exceptional. They came to the committee and said that the reason the Ministry of Health was covering 100% of costs for southern Ontario patients to receive cancer care was because we were facing an exceptional situation in the province.

I don't doubt we have an exceptional situation because of the very bad policy decisions that were made by this government with respect to cancer care when they were first elected. But having said that, northern cancer patients face these situations every day. Most people who travel to those treatment centres have to stay overnight and have to pay for their own food. It's a long distance for them to travel. They can't go home at night after their treatment. I asked Cancer Care Ontario if it wasn't exceptional for these people too, what they had to do to get cancer treatment in Ontario in the year 2000.

Cancer Care Ontario hasn't done very much about this, but the Ministry of Health has done absolutely nothing in the face of these very glaring, very obvious discrepancies, this very obvious discrimination against northern Ontario cancer patients. With respect to the ministry's response, the first thing the ministry did—

because one of these constituents, Gladys Whelan, wrote to the Minister of Health and said: "You know, I was at the cancer treatment centre talking to someone from southern Ontario. I found out that 100% of all their costs were covered. Why can't I have my costs covered too?" The minister's signature is on this letter. She wrote back and said that Cancer Care Ontario and the Canadian Cancer Society were paying these costs. How deceitful, how dishonest to tell people from northern Ontario that it's the Canadian Cancer Society paying for 100% of the costs, or Cancer Care Ontario. We discovered at the committee's request that 100% of these costs come directly from the Ministry of Health through a special allocation to Cancer Care Ontario. The Canadian Cancer Society doesn't pay for this at all, so the letter was totally false. Now we see the ministry has revised their letter. Their most recent one still says Cancer Care Ontario is paying these costs but advises people they can apply to the northern health travel grant and get about a quarter of the costs paid for, where other cancer patients from southern Ontario would get 100% of the costs paid for.

1610

The Cancer Care Ontario advisory committee in north-eastern Ontario went to the Ministry of Health's regional office in Sudbury in December and said, "We think we should cover the costs of northern Ontario patients too." They were assured by the Ministry of Health that there would be a proposal ready by Christmas 1999, a proposal that would look at paying 100% of the costs for northern cancer patients to travel for treatment too. Do you know what? As of last Friday the Ministry of Health hasn't developed anything in response to this very serious situation. Clearly the Minister of Health thinks it's OK that we discriminate against cancer patients who live in northeastern or northwestern Ontario. Clearly she thinks it's OK that this government will pay 100% of the costs of accommodation, hotels, meals, receipts to airports, cabs, trains, buses and carfare for people who have to travel for cancer treatment in southern Ontario, but that's not good enough for people in the north.

I think this minister has to absolutely change her position on this. It's a blatant case of discrimination. As I said earlier, I can't imagine the emotional stress that people have to undergo when they're having to deal with cancer treatment. Imagine the added stress that comes when you have a financial burden attached to that treatment as well. In one case, as I said, one of those women actually had to stop her cancer treatment because she couldn't afford to travel any more to Thunder Bay, she couldn't afford the cost to do that. That is wrong, and this Minister of Health ought to do something about that now so that no matter where you live in this province you can be assured of access to cancer services.

The second item that was raised in public accounts over a number of days and one that I feel very strongly about had to do with the Family Responsibility Office. I've got to tell you that cases regarding the FRO are the single-highest number of cases that we continue to receive in our office. This has gone on from the time that

this government shut down the regional offices of the family support plan and laid off 290 staff, 85% of the staff, overnight. It continues to be the area where we have the highest number of cases, the highest number of concerns, the highest number of inquiries and the highest number of walk-in traffic. So nothing has changed at the FRO.

There are two things that I want to focus on. The first, which came to light during the course of the debate at public accounts, has to do with private collection agencies. This minister has gotten up in this House and tried to tell us how wonderful a job the private collection agencies did to find money that was owing to women and children. They did just a wonderful job tracking down money for people who might otherwise not have gotten any money.

The collection agency project was where the ministry handed over all their cases that were older than three years to private collection agencies to track down payers who weren't paying, something that the Family Responsibility Office itself should be doing because government has an obligation to make sure support payments get to women and children. But the government handed it off, which just shows how incompetent they are and how much damage they've done since they destroyed that office in 1997. The government handed over \$450 million worth of arrears to the private collection agencies.

One ministry bureaucrat at Thanksgiving last year said they collected about \$4.5 million, a little under 1% of the amount that was owing. The minister came to this House and tried to tell us, "No, actually it was \$8.7 million." Isn't that a sign of a raving success, \$8.7 million collected out of a total owing of \$450 million. That's a booming success in Conservative terms. It can't be a booming success in anyone else's terms, but I guess according to the minister that was just the highlight of his life, to know that they collected \$8.7 million out of a possible \$450 million. Actually, they didn't even collect a full \$8.7 million, and that came to light during the committee hearings. What we discovered was that about \$7.1 million was what the collection agencies, according to the ministry, actually did collect. The balance of that money, another \$1.6 million, is promised to come in but hasn't yet, and the minister includes that in the amount of money that the collection agencies collected, even though it hasn't come in the door yet.

What's even more interesting is that when the pilot project closed down, as of November 12 last year, the files were returned to staff at the Family Responsibility Office. In fact, of that \$7.1 million that apparently the private collection agencies collected, about \$900,000 actually showed up because of work that FRO staff themselves were doing on those cases. It didn't have anything to do with the private collection agencies any more, because the files had been returned, the collection agencies were gone and the deal was done. As a matter of fact, it wasn't \$8.7 million; it was maybe a little under \$7 million of a potential \$450 million owed. Who can possibly say that's successful?

The worst part is that the government made it clear in the course of the public hearings that they're now going to send even more cases off to the collection agencies, about 20,000 cases from six months of arrears to three years, probably in the same order of magnitude, \$450 million. Again, how successful do you think it's going to be? About as successful as the first round: not very much at all. But the worst part was that it became clear during the course of the hearings that despite the government's rhetoric at the beginning of the pilot project when they said this project would not be funded on the backs of women and kids, in fact it was. We discovered through questioning that as money from payers began to come in and was supposed to go to recipients, 25% of that right off the top went back to pay the collection agencies. One hundred per cent of money legally owed to women and kids ordered by a judge didn't get to women and children as it came in. The collection agencies got 25% of it for every dollar that came through the door. Almost \$800,000 of the money that was collected that should have been going to women and kids went to pay the private collection agencies instead. I think that's disgusting. This is money that is legally owed by court order to women and kids. The government has no business whatsoever giving money owed to women and children to collection agencies. What's worse is that when we asked the deputy who was before us if she could guarantee that that wouldn't happen again with the second round of collection agencies, she couldn't tell us. She couldn't guarantee that. All she could say was that the mechanism of payment for the collection agencies hadn't been worked out yet.

I think it's disgusting that this government would take money that is legitimately legally owed to women and kids and divert a portion of that money to pay private collection agencies. That's why the government shouldn't use private collection agencies. That's why the government should staff the Family Responsibility Office and the way it should be so that its own staff can collect the money that's owing. That's the obligation the government has under this legislation. Then we could be sure that private collection agencies wouldn't be given money off the backs of women and kids, money legally owed to those families.

We're still waiting to see what's going to happen with their second round, but I have no doubt about it that the same thing is going to happen. The government will tender this. The money will go out and some money will start to come back in. On a sliding scale, be it 25%, 35%, 10%—it doesn't matter—some of that money that's supposed to go to women and kids will go right back to the government's friends in the private collection agencies. I think it's wrong. I think women and kids in this province deserve a whole lot more and a whole lot better from this government.

I just want to conclude by saying that the other thing we touched on during the course of the public hearings—and I will find another day to talk about it further—has to

do with the new administration fees that were introduced by this government on April Fool's Day. It is no joke to women and kids and payers who are actually making their payments out there that these new fees have been introduced. The government plans to get about \$1 million annually from new fees that it has introduced for payers and recipients at the Family Responsibility Office. All of that money is going back into general revenue. It's not going back into better enforcement. It's not going back into hiring more staff at the FRO so they could probably do the job and collect the arrears and we don't have to send this stuff to collection agencies. No, it's all going back into general revenue—\$1 million dollars annually.

The ministry in their release tried to say that this is all about going after deadbeat dads, that all of the fees had to do with deadbeat dads. We exposed that at the committee too, because we discovered the following. First of all, the government's going to charge \$10 on every postdated cheque that is used by a payer. Think about that: These are people who are doing what they're supposed to be doing. They're making their payments. But if they choose to use a post-dated cheque, and 8,000 people choose to do that every year, the government's going to charge them \$10 for every post-dated cheque that they send in to pay their ex-spouse and their family. That makes no sense at all.

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The government's going to charge every payer and recipient who wants a schedule A, which I have in my hand, \$25. Now, schedule A lists all of the transactions that occur in an account. We normally get requests for them because people have to file them as a payer to prove to Revenue Canada that they've made support payments or recipients have to file them with Revenue Canada to show that they indeed receive support and the amount of it. We get two and three requests for these every week. At the committee we were told that the FRO gets 200 to 300 requests for schedule As every week. The government's now going to charge payers and recipients, people who are doing what they're supposed to, \$25 to get a copy of one of these.

The government, in its release, falsely said, "Well, you can get this information on the automated line." It's completely false. The automated line only gives you the last transaction that has occurred in that account, be it yesterday or a month ago. It does not give you the entire schedule of all the transactions that have occurred. This schedule A is five pages long. The most that you can get off the automated line is the very last transaction that occurred, not the history of the account. The minister's comments in the press release are absolutely false.

The government's going to charge \$100 for each adjustment that it has to make when a payer gives a direct payment to his ex-spouse. You know when we see that happen? At Christmas. We see payers who have a good relationship with their families give their ex-spouse some extra money at Christmas to buy some extra things for the kids. So he makes a payment outside the plan; he gives her a cheque or he sends her some money outside

of the money that's regularly deducted. Now the government is going to charge him \$100, so when the next cheque comes out \$100 will be deducted in terms of the money that goes to the recipient. So, \$100 to make an adjustment when normally we see it because the payer is trying to do the right thing and give his family a little bit more money at Christmas. Where is the sense in this?

The fourth fee is \$150 for a confirmation-of-identify letter. This has nothing to do with anyone who uses the services of the FRO. A confirmation-of-identity letter occurs when the FRO puts a writ of seizure out against someone. We'll say John Doe in my riding—because we had one of these cases—came to see us because he was trying to buy a house and his lawyer discovered that he had a writ of seizure against his name. We had to call the FRO and discovered that no, it isn't actually that John Doe. We had to provide his SIN number, driver's licence, other information, and we got a confirmation letter from the FRO that he could take to his lawyer to say: "This is not me. Please remove the writ of seizure. Please allow the purchase of this house to take place."

Now the government is going to charge \$150 to people to prove that they're not the John Doe who owes money to FRO. These are people who aren't even part of the family responsibility system. They're neither payers nor recipients. Our constituent had nothing to do with the FRO. Now we're going to charge him \$150 so he can prove he's not the one who has the writ of seizure against him. That's stupid.

Finally, there's a \$400 fee for every enforcement action that the FRO takes against payers, people who don't want to pay up. You know what? If you don't want to pay your family support, you quit your job, you hide your assets with your family, you hide your assets with your new partner, you do all kinds of things. So when the government suspends your driver's licence, you just keep on driving. There are any number of mechanisms for people who don't want to pay use in order not to pay. These are the same people who when they get a notice from the FRO saying, "You owe money," toss it in the garbage.

Now the government's going to charge these people \$400 for enforcement action taken on their file. You know what they're going to do with that charge? They're going to throw it in the garbage, just like all of the other notices to pay that they receive from the government. They're going to throw them in the garbage. The government's never going to see this \$400 from anyone, because these are people who refuse to pay support and they're certainly not going to pay a \$400 fee to the government that's trying to get them to pay support. That was the one item that the government has been using to try and say that these new fees are all about getting people to make their payments.

The minister said in this House, "These fees are all about how we force people who aren't making payments to start to pay." Well, you know what? Four of the five fees have nothing to do with people who don't want to pay and the fifth one, the \$400 fee, isn't going to be paid

by anyone anyway because it's the same people who have done everything they can to avoid making payments. They're going to toss the government notice of a bill of \$400 right in the garbage.

This is nothing but a cash grab by the government on the backs of women and kids and payers who are doing what they're supposed to do, which is to make support payments. It's absolutely wrong. It just shows how bankrupt this government is with respect to how it deals with its operations. It clearly shows how destructive the tax cut has been, because this office saw a huge cut when the former Attorney General was there. That's what's led to the dismal situation we have before us. It's just wrong, wrong, wrong for the government to be applying user fees to people who legitimately use the FRO, have a need to use the FRO and are doing what they're supposed to do in terms of paying the FRO the support payments that they are legally supposed to.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): It certainly is a pleasure for me to rise in the House today and speak on behalf of the constituents of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex on the interim supply motion. I would like to direct my comments to two issues today, namely, health care and education. There's no doubt I'll be the first one to admit that since the riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex is very rural we have had some difficulties with regard to health care services in the past five years; but not only in the past five years—it goes back 10, 15 and as long as 20 years. It is a chronic problem.

There's no doubt we have problems with regard to attracting medical practitioners, but in some communities the serious problem is more with maintaining the people we attract to the communities. However, let me assure you that in the past five years we have made some inroads with regard to resolving the problem. First of all, I would like to point out, to name but three communities, that the Newbury hospital, the community of Grand Bend and the community of Wallaceburg were blessed with obtaining nurse practitioners in the past month. Furthermore, in my riding we received another four and a half nurse practitioners, for which we are very grateful.

Is it going to solve all our problems? No, it's not, but it certainly will go a long way towards helping. Furthermore, the Lambton hospitals recently received \$47 million in capital funding with regard to rebuilding the new St Joseph's Sarnia General Hospital site. The Chatham Kent Health Alliance also received \$39.8 million with regard to the new site in Chatham. Furthermore, the Sydenham campus in Wallaceburg received \$1.39 million with regard to upgrading and improving their emergency intensive care units in the community of Wallaceburg.

The issue I would like to spend a fair amount of time on is dealing with small rural schools. I will start with the premise that there's no doubt that the Lambton Kent District School Board—and I will address my comments to them—had a major difficulty, because after the new funding formula came into being the board was faced with having 7,368 redundant pupil places. It's a major

problem when you find that represents over 25% of all the pupil places within the school system.

I've heard the board say that there wasn't enough money to fund the school system, and I've heard the opposition talk about that for quite a period of time. However, it is a fact, and it has been acknowledged by the board, that during the year 1998-99 the board, when we're talking about student-focused funding, received \$6,030 per year per student. For this coming school year, 1999-2000, the board is receiving \$6,130 per student. That is a difference, an additional funding, of \$106 per student.

I would like to point out that in my riding six elementary schools along with one secondary school have been slated to be closed for this coming September. However, the question that I ask and many of the parents in the riding ask is, why is it that last year, when you had \$106 per student less in funding, you were able as a board to maintain all the schools within the system open? I think it's a reasonable question to ask.

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I attended a meeting where there were 1,000 concerned parents. They made 22 recommendations, 22 suggestions, with regard to the closing of schools. There is no doubt that yours truly, along with some of the parents, realized that some of the schools had to close. However, we are questioning the process that was used. The board tells us that 80% to 85% of their budget is consumed by salaries, wages and benefits. If we're going to close a small rural school, that means we're going to play with about 15% to 20% of the actual cost. I'm sure that if a young student uses the washroom, he or she will be using paper towels. So whether we move that student from a small rural school into a larger setting, that cost will be there. I don't know what the cost for supplies will be, but basically we're looking at a maximum saving of 20%.

However, we have to offset that with some of the additional transportation costs to take the displaced students and move them 20 or 30 kilometres away. So what are we really saving? Parents are asking that question: What is the board really saving when they close a small school? Is it because of a lack of dollars? I don't think so.

I would like to point out to you that prior to the amalgamation of the Lambton Kent school board, 63% of the redundant pupil places came from the county of Kent. Yet, of the seven schools that were closed, one was closed in the county of Kent, and that school happened to be in the portion of Kent that I represent.

I'll give you some examples, and these are board figures. This is the Lambton Kent District School Board. With regard to Alexander Mackenzie—and I don't like using it, because I like to fair. I don't like using this school, because this is a somewhat special school. This school is located in the city of Sarnia. It is 50.2% full. East Lambton, the high school that was closed in my riding, is 81.12% full. The Lambton Kent Composite School is 73.2% full. If we go to Ridgetown, the Ridgetown District High School is 60.38% full. We have another school in Sarnia, St Clair Secondary School,

that's 72.39% full. At the other end of the riding, Tilbury District High School is 55.76% full. Yet the board saw fit to close a school that was almost 82% full. Where is the rationale on this school closure?

No wonder parents are alarmed and frustrated. Some of the parents at W.T. Laing in Wallaceburg and East Lambton Secondary School in Watford are taking legal action against the board. Is it because there's a lack of funding? No.

Interjection.

Mr Beaubien: No, it's not. You discuss it with a lawyer.

The reason they are taking legal action is because there was not a fair process in place. Three years ago, prior to the whole process, schools were closed in the riding. The school board saw fit to put some of the stakeholders—namely, some of the parents—on the committee with regard to closing schools. In the last round of school closures, we went away from that. All we had were trustees and board representatives. No wonder the process is flawed. Like I said in my opening comments, many parents realize that some of the schools have to close, because we do have a decreasing enrolment: The board has lost over 2,000 students in the past three years, and is slated to lose another 710 students this coming year. Without the stakeholders at the table, no wonder the process is flawed.

But more interesting in this entire exercise is that the board saved \$1.7 million by closing the seven schools—\$1.7 million—but the board is going to spend \$1.4 million in capital costs with regard to accommodating the displaced students. Now, it really makes sense to you on the other side of the House, and you really support that. It really makes an awful lot of sense, doesn't it?

Furthermore, I also mentioned that we had 7,368 redundant pupil places. The net reduction in pupil places, in going through this entire process, is that at the elementary level we're going to save 1,049 pupil places and at the secondary level we're going to save 339 places. Does that make sense? That means we have another 5,900 redundant pupil places that we have to accommodate. My question to the board is, how many schools are you going to have left open by the time you get done?

You'll remember I mentioned that the board said there was not enough money. Well, two years ago I heard throughout the Bill 160 debate that there was no money for supplies and books in the schools, but the school board at the end of the school year saw fit to give the principal and the vice-principal a bonus. If there was not enough money in the system to provide books, why is it that at the end of the year there's enough money to provide a bonus to the principal and the vice-principal? The year before that we heard the same story, except that the vice-principals and principals did not get a bonus that time. Who got a bonus? The superintendent received a bonus again.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Like the Premier's staff.

Mr Beaubien: I'm glad to hear you acknowledge that.

In the presentations today I heard about cuts and things, but let me assure the people who are listening today that in 1995-96 the expenditures in this province were \$54,638,000,000. This past year, the expenditures were \$56,147,000,000. This is from the 1999 Ontario budget. I know you people have difficulty taking figures from the Ontario budget, but if we're not going to take them from there, I would ask you, where do you want pull them from? Any suggestions? Probably not.

In closing, as I'm running out of time, we keep hearing that there's not enough money in the system. I think, as I've pointed out, there is probably enough money in the system. If you can keep all the schools open with \$106 less per student, why is it that one year later, with fewer students in the system, you have to close seven schools?

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Let me first of all say how pleased I am to be back here. After all, we should have been back at least about two months earlier so that we could hold the government accountable and look at some of the issues that have just been uncovered in the last couple of days, dealing with some of these real estate deals they've been involved in, in which in effect \$10 million has been lost that could have gone to the health care system.

I listened with great interest to the last speaker. The politics of blame with this government is really on, isn't it? He's out there blaming the school boards. The government was blaming the federal government in its health care resolution yesterday. It's, "Just blame the other guy, because we are right." That has been their attitude for the last five and a half years and undoubtedly will continue for the next three years. I say that the people of Ontario are getting sick and tired of these blame-the-other-guy politics. They don't care, quite frankly, where the money comes from for our health care system, whether it comes from the federal government or from the provincial government. What they do care about is a quality health care system that they can depend on. Ontarians are rapidly losing their confidence in our system, and that, in my opinion, is what is feeding this whole privatization mode that we hear about in Alberta. Yes, I can well understand how some people don't want to wait in line if their loved ones or they themselves are affected with a disease that needs immediate attention. They don't want to wait for three months or six months for an operation. There would be an inclination on behalf of all of us to say, "Yes, let me get that treatment quickly, as quickly as possible."

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But that's not the way. The only way that we can effectively fight that kind of attitude and the privatization mode that some people seem to be in in this country when it comes to health care is to make sure that the publicly funded and accessible health care system is of the highest quality that it can possibly be. That's why, for example, our idea, Dalton McGuinty's idea, of making sure that there is 24-hour service seven days a week

available for each and every one in Ontario is the goal that we should be striving towards.

The only way we're going to do that is not by one level of government putting the blame on the other level of government, but by working at it collectively. We've already said in our resolution that more federal funding is required, but we also need more provincial funding. It's going to take a joint working together of the health ministries of the provinces and the federal government to come up with the ultimate model of health care and, really, well-being. We shouldn't always be talking about health care in the sense of dealing with disease or dealing with a particular illness; we should be talking about well-being.

I found it very interesting when I was watching something on television just recently. In this particular program they talked about how in Japan the vast majority of money that's being expended in the public health care system deals with the overall well-being of the individual and deals with prevention, rather than as in our system, in which the amount of money that we're spending on prevention is almost negligible. We're almost not spending any money at all in the prevention of illness. That's what we should be working towards. That's what the people of Ontario demand. That's what survey after survey has indicated: Health care is the number one issue.

We live in a country and a province that is great. But as there is a continual erosion of our publicly funded health care system, we are going to lose the quality of life which is held very dearly by all of us here in Ontario.

I want to talk very briefly about our situation in Kingston with respect to the health care system. We are very proud of our system there. We've got a medical health sciences complex that is anchored by the Kingston General Hospital, St Mary's of the Lake Hospital, the Hotel Dieu Hospital and Queen's University medical school, that indeed is the envy of an awful lot of people. It's the smallest one in Ontario, and it's one that we're extremely proud of. But during the term of this government, the amount of money—the amount of resources that have been allocated to that particular complex and centre, the medical care facilities in the Kingston area—has been reduced on an annual basis from \$250 million by \$25 million annually, to \$225 million.

We've already heard that the largest percentage of money that's being used in the health care system is for people services, whether we're talking about doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, health care professionals—that's where most of the money is expended. When you take \$25 million out of that system, you are talking about jobs that have been lost, which means that there are fewer nurses in hospitals, fewer doctors, waiting lists are longer and people can't find a doctor when they need one.

There has been a very ambitious program that the health care restructuring commission came up with under the leadership of Duncan Sinclair. Let me say that I've got the highest regard for Mr Sinclair. He's a former neighbour of mine, very highly regarded, from Queen's

University. But he was right in one thing, and that is, he said, "Before you start closing any hospitals in this province, make sure the community care programs and facilities are out there for people." He openly admits that isn't what this government did. They are just starting to close hospitals all over the province, and, in effect, the community care programs aren't available for people. That is a sad commentary.

As you know, the Hotel Dieu Hospital was recommended to be closed by the health care restructuring commission. Some 70,000 people signed a petition requesting that it remain open. Over the last two years this has been a situation in our community which has virtually divided the community. Many people cannot understand why a facility that has provided good medical services for 150 years is scheduled to be closed. Many people cannot understand why there are two floors in this hospital that were built in the last major reconstruction stage, probably about 10 or 15 years ago, that have never been opened. Two floors were built in this hospital that have never been utilized. There are floors that are sitting empty in the Kingston General Hospital. So the health care restructuring commission came up with this notion to close two hospitals and put them on another site at a cost of \$90 million. That has since been upgraded to about \$150 million, of which about 30% would have to come from the local community, which probably means the local taxpayer. Undoubtedly representations will be made to the individual councils, hoping that a lot of the 30% will be raised from the local property tax base.

Mr Caplan: Even the Provincial Auditor said so.

Mr Gerretsen: Even the Provincial Auditor, in his auditing report, said that the government has grossly underestimated the restructuring dollars required to build these hospitals.

What has happened? It has divided the community. What happened a month or so ago? The Premier comes to town to a Tory fundraiser and says, "I guess the hospital can stay open." I'm glad that the hospital is staying open, and I'm glad that the sisters are still going to run the hospital, until the new facility, he said, was built, but why did the people of Kingston have to go through the traumatic events that they've gone through over the last year?

You may recall we have some islands that were supplied with ferry services, and they went through exactly the same kind of dilemma. Their services were going to be cut off and then all of a sudden the minister said, "I guess we're not going to cut you off."

That is not the way you govern the people of Ontario, whether they're in Kingston, whether they're in Sudbury, whether they're in Toronto or anywhere else. You do not threaten people, in effect, and then say, "Well, maybe we didn't mean it after all." All you're doing by that is causing division within communities, you're causing strife and you're not building the kind of Ontario that each and every one of us want for ourselves, our families and our children.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Further debate?

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I look forward to the opportunity to debate this very important issue.

First of all, I should clear up a little bit of a concern that was brought forward by a member opposite when the official opposition discussed how the funding in the heritage ministry was extremely lax—the heritage challenge fund. The province is putting up \$10 million, matching funds between the private sector and the municipalities, for a \$20-million total expenditure in heritage. Some within the heritage sector are saying it's the best thing that has happened in heritage in 10 years. I would be remiss in not mentioning that fact.

As well, a member from the third party spoke about the cancer centre in Oshawa and what was happening, or lack thereof. I recall very clearly saying in 1996, when dealing with the health care issue when Cancer Care Ontario was making decisions, that Oshawa would be proceeding in the year 2001. I happened to say it in 1996 and—guess what?—the groundbreaking ceremonies took place and we should have everything up and running in 2001, just as I said in 1996.

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Not only that, but good things are happening in health care. We've got the Pinewood redevelopment in Oshawa, which is a significant redevelopment supported by many corporations such as General Motors—a very significant part of our community, and we're very appreciative to have them there—as well as the new emergency room funding taking place in Oshawa. As well, I think I'd be remiss in not mentioning that Oshawa last year happened to be the 1999 Communities in Bloom winner for its population class; it's a very significant event in Oshawa, and I know the community worked very hard at that.

As well, last night, I know the member from Durham was able to attend the greater Oshawa chamber dinner. He was there, and I thank the Minister of Transportation for attending. I know the chamber plays a very key role. In fact, I remember that a little over a month ago the chamber had all its affiliates from the region there—the boards of trade for Ajax-Pickering and Clarington—and all the members from Durham were in the same room. One of the key questions there was, when is this government going to push forward the amalgamation? We looked at each other, and I quickly responded. I said, "Well, as I'm sure you're well aware, amalgamation within the community is as easy as bringing all the boards of trade and chambers of commerce together." They didn't know what to say then, when they had so many boards of trade and so many chambers of commerce in the same region that they're asking for changes in government to. Their position very clearly was that more than one and less than eight is what the people pushed for.

As well, I have to congratulate the new president of the chamber, John Williams. I know he's a little busy at this time, being an accountant; coming up close to the end of April, it's a very busy time for that sector of our

community. He works very hard, as did Don Conaby. I must congratulate Don for his good work within the chamber in the past year as the president—actually for two years.

As well, I would be remiss in not mentioning the great happenings at Durham College. I was on the board of governors and am a graduate of Durham College, and I know that the \$28.75 million for the new IT centre has been greatly received and that the people at the college and the community are very thankful for new development such as this happening in Oshawa.

The new developments that we're talking about—in Oshawa, things are happening. We've got new buildings taking place, new construction; we have new peaks in building permits taking place. Things are happening in Oshawa, and not just on the line. When I refer to the line, I know the people in Oshawa know I'm speaking about General Motors. That has always been a mainstay in Oshawa, and with the Silverado winning awards as being a significant vehicle in the automotive industry, Oshawa is doing very well.

As a parliamentary assistant for northern development and mines, Speaker, we get opportunities to see many different aspects of the province. I've been in your riding on a number of occasions, and I'm very appreciative to get the opportunity to be there. Recently, we had a number of events, and one of them that took place was in Hearst. It was Challenge Canada, a snowmobiling race of 2,500 kilometres that started just north of Montreal. People in southern Ontario and my own riding don't really realize a lot of the significant impact that takes place in the north, how snowmobiling, for instance, was such a significant driver of the economy in the north. In Hearst, I spoke with the accountants in the chamber, about the fact that the snowmobiling time of the year was the busiest time for the hotel industry.

Another fact—I'm not sure whether you're aware of it, Speaker, but I would certainly hope so—is that the snowmobiling industry receives about 2,000 sleds annually from the Soo. I think it's the Algoma Central that takes them up to Hearst. On weekend trips, every weekend, they load up about 10 cars with machines and take them to Hearst, where they're unloaded. The hotel industry benefits, the restaurant industry benefits, and they use all the trails up there. It's a rather significant industry, and I was happy that the province was able not only to support it, but to give me the opportunity to find out that much more about that industry.

In Hearst as well, as I'm sure you know, Mr Speaker, they have some new developments. They have the new co-generation plant. Once upon a time they used to pay \$10 a tonne, I think it was, to take bark to the dumps, to the landfill sites, and now they're using that bark in a co-generation plant where they're burning it off with natural gas. It has been extremely successful and very beneficial to the community. I think new innovations like that in northern Ontario are leading the way.

For example, there's a new mill in Goganda, where the fibre industry is very well known. The rattail of a log,

considered to be the top end or the small end of a log—Goganda, for example, is using three inch at the stump, which essentially means that a stump three inches in diameter, which was normally left in the bush, is now being utilized for producing specific fibre, which is one by twos and that sort of thing. So we're seeing some significant changes in the way the forestry industry is acting, and I think the people of Ontario are very supportive of that.

I had the privilege of being in Fort Severn. For those who don't know, Fort Severn is where essentially Manitoba, Hudson's Bay and Ontario come together. While we were in Port Severn, I found some very interesting aspects there. I think people would be interested to know that the standard bag of milk in Fort Severn was \$15. They're very appreciative of having some form of subsidy in order to keep it down to \$15 a bag. Not only that, but gas was \$1.99 a litre.

A lot of my constituents say, "My God, why would you want to live in Fort Severn, then?" Well, you have to be there to understand it. I know that at 10:30 at night, after meeting with the council and the chief, heading back to the room I looked out and I saw the wabaque, or aurora borealis, as it's better known, and certainly appreciated some of the aspects of life in the north. I thank the Premier for giving me the opportunity to see some of the specific areas that one never gets to experience in southern Ontario. I do have a little bit of an advantage. I've owned a prospector's licence, and I had a cutter-skidder operation, as well as a number of relatives in the Soo and Hearst. My father was the chief of police in Thunder Bay. So you certainly get some exposure, but not quite to the extent of a lot of northerners.

With that, I know there's another speaker who is looking forward to spending the time. I thank you for the opportunity to debate today.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): It's indeed a pleasure to be back in the House, as we've missed so much time. But I had an opportunity to tour the province and I really enjoyed that, touring 15 cities and talking to persons with disabilities and the barriers that are in place across this province and the barriers that this very government is putting in place.

The first challenge I want to issue to the 102 other members in this House is: Is your constituency office accessible? If it's not, shame, and I'd say that to any member. It should be accessible, and the government should be investing the money to make those constituency offices accessible.

One of the other issues that I heard as I spoke with persons with disabilities is the fact that they've not seen any increase in their disabilities pension for a very, very long time, actually a period of time going back to 1992 and the social contract. I want to quote from a Hansard of 1992:

"I hope that 1993 is a much better year, particularly for the most vulnerable in our society. Many have lost hope, and I say to them that there is hope...."

“The most vulnerable in our society found out today for the first time in the 1½ years since I’ve been elected that they’ll get zero per cent next year. That really is a disgrace.”

That was from the Premier. It’s still a disgrace that these persons with disabilities, even though you’ve imposed user fees on them—we’ve seen utility fees rise, fuel prices rise. You’re not doing anything to axe the fuel prices. Persons with disabilities need some respect in this province, and respect is not something they’re getting from this government.

I think we need to listen to what persons with disabilities are saying. This is a letter that has just recently gone to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

“We’ve seen agencies having to cut back year after year because their base funding does not keep up with the cost of living. We have seen these cuts directly reduce the number of staff who are employed to do the work with our sons and daughters even as these programs take on more clients. We also see programs where the number of clients does not increase but the overall needs of the clients have become considerably greater, thus putting increased strain on staffing complements, which must still find ways to get the work done.

“We see cuts to recreation and leisure programs. We see homes and day programs doing without much-needed repairs and maintenance. We see furnishings in need of replacement. We see older vehicles used to transport clients to go to medical appointments and to get into our communities. We see staff who have not had raises in their salaries for 10 years. We see organizations like Ontario agencies supporting individuals with special needs saying there’s a staffing crisis province-wide and that something drastic has to be done to retain committed workers in this field.”

We need to listen to the 1.5 million persons with disabilities in this province, and the government needs to listen. We need to make sure there’s a voice around the cabinet table. We need to make sure that the minister responsible for disabilities issues is looking out for their interests.

1700

I want to talk about some other issues, too, that affect not only the province as a whole but that I see within the riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London. One thing that is very obvious is that rural Ontario is definitely under siege by this government. We need to see the Minister of Agriculture take real action and provide stability to the farm safety net programs in this province. The drainage program is of valuable importance to the farmers of this province. The drainage review that’s taking place right now could seriously harm that.

I think one of the things that scared me the most was when I had an opportunity to listen to the Middlesex Federation of Agriculture. There are three representatives who represent Middlesex county. I listened to one of the Conservative members who represented Middlesex county. This is a really scary message that rural Ontario had better take heed of. He talked about the Conserva-

tives’ rural caucus, that there are so few members within the caucus who are from rural Ontario, but around the caucus table and the cabinet table it’s all a numbers game; it’s all about percentages and looking at 416 and 905. They run; they rule. Then he goes on to say, “You may not like the answer I’m giving, but that’s reality.” That’s very scary, for rural Ontario to know that they really don’t have a voice around the table of the Conservative caucus.

Let’s talk about transportation. We should see a good portion of the fuel tax dedicated to the roads of this province. Instead, it goes into general revenues. Plus, you’ve downloaded roads to municipalities—roads that municipalities are going to have a really tough time dealing with in the future. You need to make a substantial investment in the infrastructure of this province, an investment that this government is not making because you’re so bent and determined on tax breaks. But you need to start looking at the crumbling infrastructure of this province. Look what has happened on the 401, the carnage that continues to happen on that highway. My riding has 82 kilometres of 401 in it. Over 50 kilometres of that in my riding do not have a centre-line barrier. That’s all part of what has become known as Carnage Alley. The government initiatives that were announced last September by the Minister of Transportation have not done what he has intended them to do. We still haven’t seen the 22 new police officers on the road. All we’re seeing is Band-Aid solutions to the problem. Again, you need to look at what you’re doing and make a long-term investment and do what’s right, because the 401 is a major artery and you’re neglecting it. You’re neglecting it and it’s costing people’s lives.

In my own riding we have a road called Highbury Avenue. It’s a two-lane road. The traffic on it has increased at a tremendous pace, but the local government, because of the downloading, doesn’t have the money to invest in that. The province should be working to help get Highbury Avenue four-laned from the 401 to St Thomas so it can do the job it’s supposed to do. Again, that’s not happening.

I want to talk a little bit about the Better Roads Coalition, which talks about, is there an advocate for transportation. The Better Roads Coalition of Ontario says there’s no single advocate to speak out for the needs of the total transportation system in our province. We need more money to be spent on transportation in this province. The transportation minister cannot speak about the needs of the citizens of Ontario who are faced with the collapse of a bridge in some remote area and the inability to rebuild it. Sadly, the current Minister of Transportation is no longer a Minister of Transportation. As a government, you need to reinvest in transportation and make sure those issues are looked after.

We’ve heard health care talked about over and over in the House today, about how important health care is to our communities. We need to look at what’s happening within rural Ontario. There’s a severe shortage of doctors—not just family practitioners, but specialists too.

The government needs to do more to ensure that persons in this province have access to a family practitioner. This \$3 million that the government quotes—and I'm sure once the figures are out it's going to be a lot higher—that they're spending on this advertising campaign to put down the federal government are dollars that would be better spent investing in health care in this province, instead of investing in slamming another level of government. Let's get both levels of government together and work together to fix health care and not just try to blame one another for the problems.

Our hospitals have seen severe financial cutbacks. I'm severely concerned about what's happening with the St Thomas Psychiatric Hospital. The governance of that hospital has just been transferred to the St Joseph's hospital in London. The past response from the government was that the hospital would remain open until 2003, and the key was the community supports need to be in place. There are indications coming right now as a result of this change of governance that this hospital process could be sped up and we could see either the London Psychiatric Hospital or the St Thomas Psychiatric Hospital closed sooner. What concerns me is that those community supports aren't in place.

Again, the government needs to be investing in those community supports before you close a single hospital bed. I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure that the government does not close a single bed.

Municipalities: The most mistreated entities by the provincial government are the municipalities. The government has never had respect for municipal governments in Ontario. The municipal government is the government that's closest to the people and there are a lot of you on the other side who were municipal politicians, and I don't know how you can sit there and smile and let your colleagues within the cabinet continue to download. Municipalities need to know that there's going to be long-term stability and predictability in the community reinvestment fund. They need to know that. But you need to work with municipalities, not work against municipalities. You need to seriously consider capital reinvestments. I've got the Aylmer Arena and the Rodney pool—very important to the recreation of the community. There are no capital dollars available. The government needs to start thinking about people and reinvesting in the local communities.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): It's an honour and a privilege to rise today and support the motion for interim supply.

I'm pleased to support the interim supply motion, which gives authority to the government to continue its programs, the daily business of government and pay the salaries of the men and women of the Ontario public service.

It's also a privilege to rise today in the 21st century and speak on behalf of the constituents of Perth-Middlesex. Because I hear the birds are chirping and I know that the sun is shining in the great riding of Perth-Middle-

sex—all thanks to the efforts of this government—I also want to say at the outset what a privilege and a pleasure it is to stand in the House today and represent constituents in county Middlesex, specifically that part comprising the six former townships of London, Lobo, East Williams, McGillivray, Biddulph and West Nissouri, along with all of county Perth, which make up the new riding of Perth-Middlesex.

There are a number of issues that I want to address today which demonstrate how this government's policies and programs are benefiting Ontarians and my riding of Perth-Middlesex specifically.

On the issue of health care our government continues to put emphasis on quality care and I want to take this opportunity to commend the hundreds of health care professionals in my riding who deliver front-line services to the constituents of Perth-Middlesex. Since this government was elected, Perth-Middlesex through good fiscal management and priority setting of this government has received new funding for health care. There have been health care reinvestments in the area of community-based, long-term-care services, community-based mental health services, Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, preschool speech and language, transitional funding for restructuring and funding for the year 2000 compliance. I might say that I personally have been compliant now with the year 2000 for well over a year. Just last spring the health minister provided more than \$1.1 million in new funding to hospitals in Perth to allow them to hire more nurses. Is it enough? No. Is it a help? Certainly.

These are just a few areas where the Harris government has provided the health care funding so that hospitals in my riding can focus on priority areas so that patients can get the kind of treatments they deserve. There's no question that there's more work to be done in terms of health care reform and identifying emerging trends and growth areas. But the fact is this government knows what the priorities of Ontarians are. Our government was not surprised by a recent public opinion survey that showed that health care is the number one priority for all Canadians. This government knows, and has known for many years, that health care is becoming more expensive. This is why our government has continued to increase health care spending since our election in 1995, despite massive cuts by the federal government to the federal health care transfers.

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In addition to the good news on health care in Perth-Middlesex, I want also to talk briefly about tourism in Perth-Middlesex and specifically the Stratford Festival. The Stratford Festival is something that I'm particularly proud of. The festival is a Canadian landmark that all members of this Legislature can be proud of. I'm looking forward to the festival's opening night scheduled for May 29. The festival will be opening with Hamlet, starring Paul Gross, the Mountie from the popular TV show *Due South*.

According to a recent report done by the Conference Board of Canada, the festival's economic impact on the

local economy is \$340 million each year. The festival also generates \$64 million in tax revenues each year. I think it's also significant that the festival receives only 4% of their revenues from governments. Last year, 590,000 people attended the Stratford Festival, and about 40% of the people who attended were from the United States. The festival has become a major tourist attraction not only in Canada but for all of North America.

I want to congratulate the festival for their accomplishments and I'd like to encourage my colleagues in the Legislature to make a visit to the festival this year.

As the member for Perth-Middlesex, I cannot give a speech in this Legislature without talking about the importance of agriculture and the hard-working farmers of Ontario and of Perth-Middlesex. Like governments, farmers have been faced with some difficult decisions over the past couple of years. The interim supply motion is relatively easier for the government, as it allows us to continue programs, pay bills and ensure that members of the Ontario public service are paid. This is fairly straightforward. Farmers don't get the chance to debate on an interim supply motion that allows them to continue to operate, pay their bills, feed their livestock and so on. They have to go hat in hand—maybe that's cheque in hand—to the seed dealer, the fertilizer dealer and the implement and fuel dealers before they can start their spring seeding. Thanks to the efforts of my colleague the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, farmers in Ontario and in my riding of Perth-Middlesex are starting to get their fair share of federal safety net dollars.

I also want to commend the members of the commodity groups in Ontario who have been working with the minister to secure additional money from the federal government, money that rightly belongs to Ontario farmers.

Agriculture is a big business in my riding, and it has links with almost every sector of our economy. In Perth country it's a billion-dollar business that employs nearly one third of Perth country's labour force. Those are some highlights from a recent study that was released by the Perth Country Federation of Agriculture on the impact that agriculture has on our local economy. The report also states that agriculture production in Perth county ranks ahead of New Brunswick, PEI, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. There are almost 700 businesses in Perth country that are related in some way to agriculture and are dependent on it.

There is more work that has to be done for Ontario farmers, and I'm listening to the concerns of the farmers in my riding. Two weeks ago I met with farm leaders of Middlesex county and next weekend I'm meeting with the farmers of Perth county. I'm listening to my constituents. I know that this government is listening and consulting with Ontarians. This is a government that listens, contrary to the popular mythology and folklore, most of which is repeated by those opposite. I'm pleased that my colleague on the Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal had the opportunity to visit St Marys a couple of weeks ago to listen to local residents and to hear ways to enhance the economic opportunities in rural Ontario.

I wanted to make a statement about the impact on the Ontario economy. It was stated a little earlier that cultural organizations are facing a crisis because of our government action. Indeed, local governments have the authority to waive those changes in assessment and taxes for the owners of those cultural facilities.

People in my riding are confident and are spending again because of the renewed sense of optimism. The debate is over. Tax cuts do create jobs. Tax cuts also increase government revenues, which allows us to increase funding in priority areas, such as health care, education and infrastructure.

I appreciate the opportunity to stand before you today.

Mr Caplan: It's indeed a pleasure to join the debate on the interim supply motion. It's been quite some time since this House has been in session. We sat for, I think, a grand total of about 40 days last year. This session is supposed to be about 43 days. It's amazing how this government would rather spend more time outside rather than doing the business that the people of Ontario fully expect them to do.

In the interim, I've had the opportunity to be able to speak to community residents. Back in the fall in fact I had community representatives from the Henry Farms neighbourhood come and talk to me about a concern they had. Their community is along the 401, right around Leslie Street. Surprisingly enough, when the highway noise barrier was constructed back in the 1970s, there was a stretch which was not built. These community residents have noticed that in the years since then, over about a 20-year period of time, there has steadily been an increase in the amount of noise. I don't think anyone would dispute that we've had a significant increase in the amount of traffic. The gridlock on our highways, on our streets is well documented and is not disputed by anyone in this House. We've in fact had a great deal of construction which has taken place along that particular stretch. These noise levels, in the opinion of the community residents, have changed the nature of the community, have made it quite less liveable than it once was.

The community representatives from Henry Farms came to me and said, "Is there something we can do?" The first thing I did was I immediately sent a letter to the Minister of Transportation. To be fair, the minister responded very quickly and said, "Yes, we'll study the problem, find out if in fact the noise levels have gone up and do exceed what the ministry expects as their minimum standards." That study was carried out. The minister replied that they did an acoustical study. They confirmed that the noise levels—the maximum is about 55 decibels that they would consider acceptable. Over that, a noise barrier is supposed to be constructed. They had decibel levels of 68 and 69, which are significantly above the ministry-accepted standard.

Of course you would expect, Speaker—and I know that you've been around this place a great deal—that when governments realize their own standards are exceeded, action is taken. In this case, the minister said no. The minister said that the extension of a noise barrier

wouldn't reduce the noise significantly enough to suit him to be able to alleviate the concerns of the community residents. He said the barrier was, in his opinion, a waste of taxpayers' money. He estimated it was going to cost between \$350,000 and \$600,000.

I had a conversation with the minister following his letter and he confirmed the facts in his letter and he confirmed much that was in the technical report and that he was not willing to spend the dollars. He was not prepared to be flexible at all. He was not prepared to be sensitive to the community concerns and sensitive to the standards of his own ministry. Instead, I asked if there were other solutions that could be entertained. I asked what options the residents would have. Apparently they would just have to live with it. They would have to live with a noise level which exceeds the ministry's own standards. That is, to me, unacceptable. It's unacceptable to the community residents. It should be unacceptable to this government, but obviously it's not.

You see, today we're discussing a supply bill. A supply bill is about the spending of a government. This government would rather spend, so far, \$3 million on self-serving, partisan advertising that doesn't go to help anybody's health care.

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That money could be used to extend the noise barrier along the 401 and give the community residents peace of mind. You wouldn't be surprised that I had about half a dozen members of the Henry Farms community call me and ask why the Harris government would waste their money instead of putting it to useful purpose protecting their community, ensuring that they had a community which not only lived up to the standards that this government had but would be a very liveable community.

I suggest that this government has its spending priorities all wrong. As we've seen the scandal unfold at the Ontario Realty Corp—and I know my colleague from Perth shares these concerns—they would rather have fire sales of properties, rip off Ontario taxpayers, see them get burned and forgo all that revenue. The \$10 million that we've uncovered so far would go a long way to solving this kind of a problem. It is absolutely scandalous that not one member of the government would stand up and ask a substantial question to a cabinet member. All they want to do is stand up and say, "Gee, Minister, how great are you and how did you get to be that way?" It's absolutely shameless.

I want to talk to you about another community concern that we have in Don Valley East. St John Fisher school, which isn't in Don Valley East—it's just on the other side of Victoria Park—is closing. In September practically all of the kids who are currently attending St John Fisher will be going to Blessed Kateri, which is in Don Valley East. Blessed Kateri is not a large school by any means but their population will more than double.

In fact, I was at a meeting last week with the combined parent councils of both schools and I want to tell you that although this government, through their funding formula, through their dictates, through their

edicts, is causing the closure of this school, they're going to try and make it work, but there are significant problems. Three or four portables will be going up on the west side of the school. That's a given. There is no way around it. You can't fit almost 300 students into a school that has a program-rated capacity of about 200. I know there are former members of school boards who sit on both sides who would be able to tell you that. Of course, as you know, the funding formula does not provide any funding for the portables that will be going on to Blessed Kateri.

There is a school-age day care program. As well, the school-age day care is used by the parents in the particular school. Those children are now going to have to be displaced. In fact, many of them will be going into the portables that are going to be set up.

This is a K to H school and they need change and shower facilities. The showers are going to be closed. They will be converted to change rooms, and the change rooms are going to be refitted into specialized special ed and conference rooms. There are going to have to be significant changes to the school as well. The adjoining walls in the dental and French offices, which won't exist any more, are going to have to accommodate a multiple special needs program.

Extensive capital costs are going to have to be levied as a result of this government's funding formula and edicts, to the tune of about \$120,000. Some of it will go to make the school accessible, and I think that barrier-free access is certainly something we should all be supporting. Of course, there will be significant local traffic, busing and parking issues. But this school re-tooling and the closure of other schools needn't have happened except for the stubbornness, the wrong direction and the spending priorities, or the misguided spending priorities, of the Harris government.

I wanted to speak very quickly of one other issue. It's come to the attention of myself and the rest of the province that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing sent a letter to local housing authorities across the province to draw up plans to sell off scattered housing units; single and semi-detached homes that families are living in. In the midst of the worst affordable housing crisis we have ever seen, this government intends to liquidate those assets and displace those families. It is an entirely shameful act. It is amazing that in the midst of a scandal into the sale of government properties, into a rip-off of taxpayers being burned by selling government assets at fire sale prices, this minister would want to entertain such a notion. It is going to create untold hardship. Not only that, but what the Harris government is doing is really Machiavellian. They are taking the very best assets, they are directing the liquidation, but they are placing the burden on municipalities and municipal taxpayers to have to find housing and accommodation and support for the people who will be displaced. These are the kinds of priorities the Harris government has shown.

It is no wonder they have not wanted to be in the House, to be held accountable, to have hard questions

asked of them, to be shown for what they truly are. They wish to come here and try to paint a glossy picture and, if that doesn't work, they're going to mail it to your home or put it on the airwaves. But the people of Ontario aren't fooled, certainly the people of Don Valley East aren't, and I can tell you that the opposition is vigorous.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Let me say at the outset that I am fighting a cold, so I'll do my best not to cough and sneeze throughout, but if I need to make use of the tissue, you'll understand why. Although, when I look at what you're doing to Ontario, that brings tears to my eyes too and that could cause me to need a tissue.

The first thing I want to do is just follow up on a point that was made by my colleague Shelley Martel from Nickel Belt. She was talking about cancer centres and the real crisis that exists certainly all over Ontario and particularly in the north, and it was mentioned by the member for Oshawa that the cancer centre in Oshawa was due to open on schedule. He said that everything is on schedule now. It was cancelled once but it's on schedule. We just want to bring it to the attention of the member for Oshawa and all the members of the House that it's not on schedule.

The history of that cancer centre in Oshawa is that in October 1994, under the NDP government, we announced that that would be one of two new cancer centres that were to be opened, and they were to be opened by 1998. This government first cancelled that cancer centre in Oshawa. Then, I suppose under pressure, they announced that indeed the plans were back on. However, the people in Oshawa and the entire catchment area served by that cancer centre will have lost at least three years of the benefit of that cancer centre that should have been completed and open for public use in 1998. So in terms of keeping the record straight, there's the record on that issue.

I also want to begin my comments about the interim supply bill by just referencing a couple of the points that the member from Willowdale raised. I don't single him out for any particular reason other than that he was the first one I just jotted down who had raised these issues. I'm sure every Tory here does it often: That is, they say that Mike Harris's tax cuts are what are driving the booming economy that they seem to think we uniquely have here in Ontario.

As the finance critic for the NDP, I sat on the standing committee on finance and economic affairs which held hearings just a couple of months ago in terms of a pre-budget consultation process. During that pre-budget consultation, yes, we had the finance minister come forward, and he led the charge that it was their tax cuts that have caused the economy to be booming the way it is, and they brought in some of their friends who made the same argument. But, lo and behold, there were an awful lot of non-aligned, non-partisan economists who came in and said that it is the American economy that's driving ours, in particular the auto industry. For most people watching or thinking about this, that won't come

as a surprise, but that is the reality in the case of the nonsense that the government continues to spread around in terms of taking credit for what is a North American economic boom, the biggest ever in the history of North America, by the way. The reality is, it's being driven by the American economy and in particular the auto industry.

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Now, we should remember and not lose sight of the fact, as one of the ministers mumbles away under her breath over there in the front benches, that this government had to borrow all the money necessary to pay for that tax cut. That's billions of dollars that could have and should have gone into our education system, into our health care system, into protecting the environment, into ensuring that our streets are safe and that we have enough police officers. All those things come second to you. You made sure the tax cut was paid for even though you had to borrow every dime to do it. Who benefited most? The very wealthy. For the average Ontarian—

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): The unemployed.

Mr Christopherson: I would ask the minister of Comsoc, how does a tax cut help the unemployed? What are you talking about? You are so interested in spinning out the lines that you don't bother answering the obvious question. The question is, how can a tax cut benefit somebody who doesn't even have a job? That's how out of touch you are, Minister, and it's scary, given the portfolio you've got.

The fact of the matter is that this government, because they borrowed that money—when we had to borrow money as a province on the international bond market, the rate we had to pay internationally on the day that Harris took over from Bob Rae as Premier was exactly the same rate as the day that Harris called the election after being in office for four years. Every economist who looked at the economy of Ontario said that in spite of a booming economy, as part of the booming North American economy, in borrowing the money to pay for your tax cut you are not maximizing the performance of this economy, the exact opposite of what you say.

I want to quote and put on the record comments from some of the economists I have mentioned. The first one I want to comment on is from Doug Porter, who is the senior economist and vice-president at Nesbitt Burns. I'm reading from the NDP's dissenting report from the government majority report of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. Mr Porter, the senior economist and vice-president at Nesbitt Burns, pointed out that the booming auto exports to the US were playing a major role—I'm paraphrasing—in pushing the Ontario economy. But he goes on to say this, and this is interesting:

“Make no mistake, we are at the crest of an auto boom.... [It's] very hard to believe that the kind of auto sales we saw ... are sustainable going forward.”

John McCallum, who is the chief economist for the Royal Bank, was warning that if the US economy continues to grow, it could cause problems for Ontario; inflation could rise and Ontario's economy would therefore slow. He says, however, "But we'd land"—we, Ontario—"abruptly rather than softly, because Ontario, Canadian and US households have record levels of debt and there's nothing like a two-percentage-point hike in interest rates to bring considerable distress to North American households."

As was brought out at the hearings, we now have the lowest rate of personal savings that we've ever had in the history of Ontario and the highest level of personal debt. Ordinarily people would sort of glaze over and say, "Why would I need to worry about that?" The reason we need to worry about that is because both these economists are indicating and signalling to us that this booming economy will not last forever. Given how many people are now not receiving a defined pension but have their whole future staked in mutual funds and in the stock market, if this economy falls sharply, what's going to happen to the future retirement of all these people? What happens if the mutual funds that someone who is between 55 and 60 holds drop by 50% or 60%? Where are they?

The other thing I worry about is, if we take a look at the kind of cuts and damage this government has done to health care, education, social services and every area of government that they're responsible for, if we take a look at what they've done in the boom times, God help us with what they would do in tough times, because they have consistently made tax cuts and a balanced budget more important than anything else, including health, including education.

In fact, in the ramp-up to the federal budget, the Tories were taking out ads. What were they saying was the number one priority that Ontarians care about? Of course, as everyone knows, the number one issues in this province is health care. Is that what they were pushing the federal government to make their top priority? No, it was not. They spent money—I think it was party money, but nonetheless the most important message to them wasn't health care; it was tax cuts—tax cuts, by the way, that, had they been implemented the way this government wanted, would have resulted in about \$3.4 billion less revenue for Ontario unless they hiked Ontario taxes or completely revamped the system, and I understand that's being looked at. Funnily enough, they may find fellow travellers there that they weren't otherwise expecting. But as it stands now, we don't have that system, and had Chrétien done what Harris wanted, we would be out \$3.4 billion.

How on earth is that going to help the number one issue that people care about, which is health care? How does it do that? It doesn't. What it does, though, is take care of Mike Harris's friends—his rich friends, by the way.

Let's take a look at what has happened over time. Now that you've been in office long enough to have a track record, let's see what that track record says. One of

the people we had come forward was a woman named Armine Yalnizyan, who is an economist with the Centre for Social Justice. Ms Yalnizyan came forward and pointed out that if you look at the StatsCan figures—not hers, not ours; StatsCan figures—when you look at the gap between the lowest-income people in Ontario and the highest-income people—they did this by taking the average of the lowest 10% income earners in Ontario and the highest 10% income earners; they averaged those two categories and compared how they related to one another over time—what did we find? In 1990, when the NDP took power, it was about 7.3 times. The average of the lowest-paid 10% of income earners in Ontario received about 7.3 times less money than the average of the top 10%. In 1991, heading into the worst recession we've seen in the history of Ontario, of Canada and North America since the Dirty Thirties, it dropped to 6.8 times. That means the gap is getting closer, that there's not the discrepancy there was the year before between the very wealthy and the very poor. It's a good measurement of how we're doing as a community, defined as Ontario.

In 1992 it dropped to 6.7, in 1993 it was down to 6.2 and in 1994 it was even below that, marginally below 6.2. Then Mike Harris takes power. Health care is no longer the number one issue. Education is no longer the number one issue. Caring about the average Ontarian is no longer the number one issue. The only thing that matters to Tories is tax cuts for their wealthy friends. In 1995 we're on our way back up—we're back up to about 6.4 times; in 1996 we're up to 7.2; and now we're up to 7.8 times, right back where we were.

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What that shows is that economic growth alone isn't the answer. Is it an important part of the answer? Absolutely it's an important part. But is it the only thing that matters, economic growth? Is that the only thing we have to worry about, that if there's economic growth we can leave it over there and it's on autopilot, and collectively, as a society in Ontario, we can go about our other business because fairness and justice and equity and a sharing of the wealth that this great province creates is all being taken care of? No. If it were, you wouldn't see these kinds of numbers. What this shows is exactly what you were told was going to happen.

Further, Ms Yalnizyan's results showed that there are more people in poverty than ever before and the poor are poorer than they've ever been before. Yet the gap between those who have and those who don't have grows. Under the NDP, in the toughest economic times we faced, that gap was shrinking. Shouldn't that be the goal of everyone in this House, that yes, we have a thriving economy that's providing the jobs and the money we need, but that it's delivering the jobs and the money and the wealth in a way where everyone is at least in the game?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): That's called communism.

Mr Christopherson: Oh, listen to this. The member from Oshawa says, "That's called communism." Not

Oshawa—Durham. I should know it: John O'Toole. My God. "That's's called communism." You know, John, give your head a shake. If they give you a further-back bench, you'll disappear from this place.

Mr O'Toole: Come on, Dave, be nice.

Mr Christopherson: Oh, I see, John. I see. You can throw the shots, John, but you can't take them. Is that it? Is that what it is? You can't play grown-up here? Then you ought not to be flinging things across the floor, and then maybe you wouldn't get them back. Think about that, John.

Let me also point out what John McCallum said, who, I remind the member, is the chief economist for the Royal Bank. Do you want to call him a communist too, John? This would be John McCallum, the chief economist for the Royal Bank. After I read his quote, I suppose you're going to want to call him a communist too.

Mr McCallum said—you should listen because this is something to think about.

Hon Mrs Johns: I don't think so.

Mr Christopherson: You don't think so. One of the ministers of the crown doesn't think she needs to listen to anything the chief economist for the Royal Bank has to say. Talk about arrogance. That's just the kind of arrogance we get here every day.

Mr McCallum said, "You could argue ... that all these calls for tax cuts today, which will favour the baby boomers who are in their peak earning years, are kind of like pigs at a trough.... It's these people who have benefited from the deficits, and they will be saddling their children with a higher debt when it comes to their retirement."

That's the chief economist for the Royal Bank. And yet every one of you will still go out and spin the line that tax cuts mean everything, that economic growth means everything, and therefore you have the right to ignore all other matters in front of you. It is such a crying shame that this is what's happening during the biggest boom.

Speaker, you must be fearful too about what would happen to Sault Ste Marie if we went into a deep recession and this government maintained, which I suspect they would, that their tax cuts and their balanced budget are more important than the health care and education of people in Sault Ste Marie, Sudbury, Nickel Belt and Hamilton. It's shameful and it's terrifying.

I just want to touch a bit, in the few minutes I have left, on health care. This government talks about spending more and more money on health care. The reality is, when you look at per capita spending, between 1995 and fiscal 1998-99 there's \$93 less per Ontarian being spent on health care.

That means that for Ontarians there has effectively been a \$1.97-billion cut in health care, almost \$2 billion.

What does that mean on a personal and community level? Anybody who was in the House or watching

would know that there were hundreds of people from Hamilton, particularly Hamilton Mountain, here today in response to a coordinated effort by the member for Hamilton Mountain and the local Save the Henderson Committee, who came out calling on this government, and the Minister of Health in particular, to step in and save the Henderson hospital.

Why is the Henderson hospital on the chopping block? In large part because you cut \$40 million net out of the budget of the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp. But the stats are showing us your rich friends are getting richer, so everything is OK, right?

The federal Liberals are no help, because by the amount of money they have cut and by refusing to come to the table with enough health care money, they are giving Harris, as they gave Klein, a perfect opportunity to blame the federal government and use it as an excuse to create a privatized, two-tier health care system. That's what the federal Liberals are doing by refusing to give back the money. I have to say it is interesting that in the early 1990s, when these cuts first started under Mulroney and we were saying, "This is a serious challenge to our health care system," we were told by the then leader of the third party that we were whining; that we didn't have a revenue problem, we had a spending problem.

Now, of course, the shoe is on the other foot. We're running ads and putting resolutions on the floor of the Legislature, everything to pressure the federal government to do what we in the early 1990s were saying needed to be done, and that is to force the feds—whether they're Tories, Liberals or NDP doesn't matter. I don't care who is in power. The argument was that that money should not be taken out of the health care system, and that's why we had so many people here today from Hamilton protesting what is happening to Henderson hospital.

I have to say, in the final moments I have, that one of the major things that would make a huge difference to people is to raise the minimum wage in this province. The last time it was raised was under the NDP. The poor are further in debt and further in poverty than they've ever been, and that's the economic legacy that Mike Harris leaves.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Eves has moved government notice of motion number 33.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will be please say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

It being almost 6 of the clock, I declare the House adjourned until tomorrow at 10 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1748.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées et à la Condition féminine
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)		
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement		
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Broadview-Greenwood	Churley, Marilyn (ND)		
Bruce-Grey	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Carleton-Gloucester	Coburn, Brian (PC)		
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)		
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Consumer and Com- mercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tilson, David (PC)		
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Solicitor General / solliciteur général
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Children) / ministre sans portefeuille (Enfance)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Brenda (PC)		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion		
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Stoney Creek	Clark, Brad (PC)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thornhill	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Wentworth-Burlington	Vacant
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Willowdale	Young, David (PC)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Sean G. Conway, Alvin Curling,
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli, John R. O'Toole,
R. Gary Stewart, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Doug Galt
Ted Arnott, Marcel Beaubien, David Christopherson,
Doug Galt, Monte Kwinter, Tina R. Molinari,
Gerry Phillips, David Young
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Présidente: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Toby Barrett, Marie Bountrogianni, Ted Chudleigh,
Garfield Dunlop, Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac,
Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro
Clerk / Greffier: Viktor Kaczkowski

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier
James J. Bradley, Bruce Crozier, Leona Dombrowsky,
Bert Johnson, Morley Kells, Tony Martin,
Joseph Spina, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Carl DeFaria
Marcel Beaubien, Michael Bryant, Carl DeFaria,
Brenda Elliott, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos,
Lyn McLeod, Marilyn Mushinski
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: R. Gary Stewart
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Brad Clark
Marilyn Churley, Brad Clark, Caroline Di Cocco,
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Jerry J. Ouellette, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N.
Tasca, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John C. Cleary
John C. Cleary, John Gerretsen, John Hastings,
Shelley Martel, Bart Maves, Julia Munro,
Marilyn Mushinski, Richard Patten
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Présidente: Frances Lankin
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Brian Coburn,
Garfield Dunlop, Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy,
Frances Lankin, Bill Murdoch
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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