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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)**

Thursday 28 October 1999

Jeudi 28 octobre 1999

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

Thursday 28 October 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 octobre 1999

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

ESTIMATES

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I have a message from the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor signed by her own hand.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending 31 March 2000 and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ARMENIAN PARLIAMENT TRAGEDY

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Yesterday, the world was horrified to learn that gunmen had stormed the Armenian Parliament in Yerevan. Eight prominent Armenian leaders were brutally murdered, including Prime Minister Sarkissian. In addition, the former ambassador to Canada and current finance minister was among 50 people held hostage.

Arising out of the ashes of the former Soviet Union, Armenia is well on the way to becoming a free-market democracy. Trade and relations between Canada and Armenia are continuing to improve. In fact, just last month the Armenian foreign minister was warmly received here in Toronto.

Yesterday's tragic events are a blow to the entire region. The Armenian people, however, are remarkably resilient, having lived through a genocide and later brutal repression.

We should all be reminded of the often terrible price paid for freedom and democracy. I am encouraged that President Kocharyan has been able to defuse the situation and prevent further bloodshed.

On behalf of all of the residents of Don Valley East, I'd like to take this opportunity to express our shock and sadness. Our condolences and prayers go out to the families of the victims. I have spoken with members of the Armenian community in my riding, who've expressed a sense of loss but also optimism that Armenia will continue to rise above this tragedy and forge a bright future.

ANNIVERSARY OF HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): First, welcome to the grade 10 students from E. L. Crossley Secondary School in Pelham.

Earlier this week, I brought to the House's attention that this was the 43rd anniversary of the Hungarian revolution. I'm sure all of us have read and others of us can recall that beginning October 20, 1956, on university campuses across Hungary, students began to gather and develop petitions and a program to achieve freedom in Hungary.

These students were joined by workers as they commenced their movement across Hungary, and the Hungarian people joined with them in their cry for a free press, for individual rights, for a democracy, for a multi-party system and the right to choose a government of their own choice.

Indeed, their success climaxed with the declaration of a reformed government, led by a converted Imre Nagy. Well, it didn't last long, because soon Russian tanks rumbled into Budapest and other parts of Hungary, and notwithstanding the incredible courage and idealism and sense of sacrifice of those—essentially it was young people and workers—notwithstanding that they were able to cheer Caszlo Bessenyi as he was escorted back to the palace; notwithstanding that and because of, in no small part, the silence and the refusal of western powers to lend support when support could have made a significant difference, that spirited, courageous revolution, that blow for freedom was snuffed out by the brutal force of Soviet tanks, and western powers turned away.

So let us today, on this 43rd anniversary, praise the courage and idealism of those Hungarian people and condemn the western powers' refusal to lend aid.

Last Saturday, I was proud to join Hungarian Canadians and Hungarians at Toronto's City Hall at a flag raising: Bishop Attila Mikloshazy, a bishop of Roman Catholic Hungarians living abroad; Maria Wittner, a freedom fighter with many decades of imprisonment; along with Agnes Somorjai.

I was proud to join them, and I'm sure we all will be proud to join with Hungarians and Hungarian Canadians in this commemoration of the 43rd anniversary.

WILLIAM OSLER HEALTH CENTRE

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): On October 26, I had the distinct pleasure of attending the launch of the new corporate identity of the Etobicoke General

Hospital, renamed the William Osler Health Centre. In attendance was William Osler's great-grandnephew Daniel, who resides in Etobicoke.

The William Osler Health Centre is home to 663 patient beds, serving some 15,000 patients in ambulatory care and assisting in over 160,000 emergency visits annually. Inspired by the spirit of its legendary namesake, the centre seeks to carry on in his tradition as a medical visionary, educator, researcher and compassionate provider of health care.

William Osler is a significant figure in the medical history and tradition of Ontario and Canada. During the second half of the 19th century and into the early part of the 20th century, Osler was the most renowned physician in the world and is still one of the most respected figures in the history of medicine.

Osler was born at Bond Head and rose from obscurity to become a great medical teacher and writer in three countries. At McGill, America's Johns Hopkins University and as a regius professor at Oxford, Osler was deeply admired by two generations of medical students and practitioners, for whom he came to personify the ideal doctor. He believed that medicine was learned at the bedside, not in the classroom. He was the first educator to bring medical students into a hospital environment.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The members will know I am going to give a little bit, particularly for new members, on statements. But I will say that once the new members have all been through, we will try to stick as best we can to the time for members' statements. I do understand, though, there will be a little bit of leeway in the early going for new members, who may not quite be able to judge the time appropriately.

PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): The good people of Sudbury are gearing up for another round of the cotton candy express. That's right, there will be a lot of hot air but little substance when the Premier slithers into my riding tonight with his hands out, spewing fuzzy platitudes in his attempt to fill his pockets.

After being so resoundingly rejected in Sudbury in the last election, you must admit it takes a lot of nerve, or rather a lot of greed, for him to show his face in our area. With the heightened arrogance that Ontarians have witnessed from our Premier, it's no surprise he has the gall to ask Sudburians for money. But let's not ignore the facts: This Premier has repeatedly turned his back on our needs.

After pushing his hospital restructuring at us, my community is expected to foot a \$20-million bill for capital construction. The Premier refuses to address our hospital system's multi-million dollar deficit. He doesn't even speak the language when confronted with phrases like "adequate funding" and "reasonable levels of service." He turns a deaf ear when he's about to hear a hospital horror story—all because our Premier is out of touch with the health care needs of the people of Sudbury.

Enough needless deaths. Enough service cuts. Enough layoffs. Enough doctor shortages. Enough of an inferior provincial health care system. We want this Premier to commit tonight to funding Sudbury's health care system immediately.

1340

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't believe the word "slither" is a parliamentary term or that it should be used in this House to describe the movement of any member or any colleague of mine. I would ask that he withdraw that.

Mr Bartolucci: Mr Speaker, if you rule that "slither" is out of order, I would say "crawl" into Sudbury; I would say "sneak" into Sudbury. I'd say a lot of things if "slither" is out of order.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would echo my colleague from Perth-Middlesex. I consider that the terminology used by the member for Sudbury is certainly out of order. That member has been around this House long enough that he should know what is parliamentary language and what isn't parliamentary language. I would sure appreciate if you would rule, Mr Speaker.

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe it's only you who decides who is out of order in this House, not the members on the government side. We know they're out of order.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): In my rulings, I use a general rule of thumb. As you know, there are no specific words that are used. It was my feeling that words used out on the street—if you walk up to a person and say a particular word to them, if that's offensive to them, it will be the same in this House. There are some other words, as you know, that we do not use in here, such as "liar" and so on.

That is the general guideline I will use. I would expect all members to try to be as polite as possible in here. I will not rule against that particular word.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I rise today to thank the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for coming to Barrie on Monday to open a brand new 120-bed long-term-care facility. Woods Park Care Centre is one of the first centres built to the province's new design criteria and to use new design and program features to meet the special needs of Alzheimer patients. Woods Park is identified as one of the six centres that will use new innovative approaches to caring for people with this devastating affliction.

Simcoe county will see another new 150-bed facility opening soon and another 224 long-term-care beds awarded in the near future. These beds are long overdue because neither of the two prior governments opened one single long-term-care bed in the 10 years they governed, a most shameful legacy.

Our government will invest \$1.2 billion for long-term care, the largest investment for long-term care in the

history of the province. This major commitment to our ever-growing seniors population will see more than 20,000 new long-term-care beds in the province and more than 13,000 beds rebuilt and refurbished. Our government inherited this shameful legacy of zero long-term-care beds in 10 years, but did something about it.

The first results of our long-term-care strategy are there for all to see in Barrie at Woods Park Care Centre. This facility shows that our government cares.

NATURAL GAS SUPPLIERS

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I rise today to talk about the plight of thousands of Ontario homeowners who've been literally left out in the cold by unreliable natural gas dealers and their broken contracts and why this government is doing nothing to protect homeowners from these gas dealers that slither door to door.

As you know, with the deregulation of the natural gas industry, homeowners have been aggressively marketed to switch to other companies. Some of these companies have been unscrupulous, duping seniors and others with deceptive methods like getting them to sign their names to contracts disguised as rebates. The main benefit of signing with these new providers, they were told, is to lock into current prices for the next five years. If natural gas prices go up, then the homeowners can save.

But you know what's happened? Now the natural gas prices have soared, we find out some of these contracts are worthless. Two dealers in particular, Priority Gas Marketing and Ontario Natural Gas Savings, are not honouring contracts to 20,000 Ontarians. This is shameful. These homeowners now have no choice but to pay a premium to continue to get natural gas to heat their homes.

What is the government doing? You know what they are doing? Zero. This government pretends that this is not happening. Meanwhile, people are paying higher premiums and contracts are not being honoured. Where is the government?

HOMELESS SHELTER

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Southwest): I am here to tell you about an injustice in my riding of Scarborough Southwest. Last night, the city of Toronto decided to override the wishes of an entire community. The city has told the community of Birchcliff that they will move 70 residents from Seaton House into a former nursing home directly across the street from Birch Cliff Public School.

The city has blindsided my community. Not once has the city approached the neighbourhood to consult with them about this project. In the words of one local councillor, "If you want a model of how not to place shelter accommodation across the city, this is the model." The city is not seeking the input of the very people this most directly affects. The city has just hosted one meeting regarding this issue, attended by over 1,000 people.

In the words of city staff, they said they were there to "clear up any misunderstandings."

I believe it is the city that has misunderstood. They should have had a full round of community consultations. Instead, the city is having a community lecture series and so far there has only been one lecture.

I call on the city to respect the wishes of my constituents in the neighbourhood of Birchcliff, and the only way to do this is to have full and open dialogue with the residents of the Birchcliff community. I ask the city of Toronto to take your earplugs out and your blinders off. I ask you to have real, meaningful, open and public dialogue. I ask the city, what are they afraid of?

ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): As winter approaches all across the province, I want to put the Minister of Transportation on notice today that we are very concerned about further anticipated cuts to winter road maintenance operations on the province's roads and highways.

As you'll know, four years ago this government changed the rules on when the work crews were to be sent out to clear our roads. Since then we've seen a frightening decline in winter road maintenance, resulting in hazardous driving conditions far too often and a sharp increase in the frequency of highway closures. As bad as that is, we have now learned that there may be a further decline in service for the winter of 1999-2000, something we can simply not afford.

As a result of this government's relentless desire to privatize this vital public service, the ministry has sold off much of its snow removal equipment—at fire sale prices, I might add—that will mean it may be unprepared for a severe winter.

In this drive to privatize, the ministry has laid off hundreds of employees only to be forced to hire many of them back on contract when the new system didn't work; all this in the name of cost-cutting, not public safety—cuts in cost that nobody in the ministry can confirm despite insisting the savings are there.

In the Thunder Bay district, this commitment to privatize road maintenance continues despite the fact that tenders to private contractors have come back at three to four times the ministry's own cost.

The people of this province deserve safe roads on which to drive, particularly in the winter. Public safety should be the priority, not privatization or phantom savings.

HALLOWEEN

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): As we all know, this coming Sunday is Halloween. Many young ghosts, goblins and ghouls will be coming to our doors seeking treats. While Halloween is one of the most anticipated nights on our children's calendars, we should all work to ensure that it is a safe occasion for everyone in the province.

In my riding and all across Brampton, Block Parents and the Rogers Pumpkin Patrol will be keeping a vigilant eye on our young trick-or-treaters to ensure that in spite of all the ghosts and goblins, this evening remains fun for all.

In order to improve safety on this ghostly night, I would like to offer just a few reminders to parents. Please ensure that children wear non-flammable, bright-coloured with reflective tape. For better vision, children should wear face paint instead of masks.

1350

Secondly, we should also remind our children that under no circumstances should they enter a stranger's home. As drivers, we should take the extra time to slow down and be extra cautious when we're returning to our homes. It is very important that we also keep a lookout for any suspicious behaviour in our neighbourhoods, immediately reporting it to police.

Finally, we should clearly explain to all our children that before they consume any of the goodies they receive, they should have it thoroughly inspected by an adult.

By taking a few simple precautions, we can help to ensure that all our children have a truly safe and happy Halloween.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise pursuant to standing order 36(a) and a ruling by Mr Speaker Turner some time ago. I noted yesterday the Premier's schedule indicated he was in Queen's Park while question period was going on. I note today he's got time for developers in Sudbury but not time to answer questions in the Legislature. If we're going to be able to fulfill our obligations—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member will know that is not a point of order.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Member for Sudbury, come to order, please.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday, Premier Harris referred to his Minister of the Environment in these terms: "It would be inappropriate to intervene in any quasi-judicial body, and I would insist that members of the executive council not do that." Clearly, the Premier is expressing no confidence in his minister, and I have to say neither do we have confidence. Therefore, before we proceed with question period, it would be imperative that the Premier come in and answer these questions and that they not be left to a minister in whom even the Premier doesn't have any confidence.

The Speaker: The member will know that's not a point of order.

Mr Duncan: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition asked those questions yesterday.

The Speaker: That was not a point of order.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The leader for the third party should know not to take the Premier so far out of context

as to make conclusions that are totally false and misleading, and I withdraw that last comment.

ORAL QUESTIONS

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday, Minister, you stood in your place, mustering as much indignation as you possibly could, and told this House that you did not interfere in a matter before the OMB. You said the matter wasn't even before the OMB at the time of your letter. Well, here are the facts:

The OMB file regarding a development on the Oak Ridges moraine was opened on June 22 under file number 0990092. On August 26, you sent your letter siding with developers who want to build on the moraine to Durham region. On September 7, in their letter of reply, the region said, "Thank you for your letter regarding OMB file number 0990092."

Minister, those are the facts. Will you please stand in this House and apologize now for allowing your arrogance to get in the way of the facts.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I certainly stand by my comments yesterday. I believe the honourable member has Hansard as well available to him, where I stated quite categorically that the matter that I was concerned about was not subject to the Ontario Municipal Board, was not a component of the OMB hearing. I stand by that, and I defy the honourable Leader of the Opposition to stand in his place today and say that the class environmental assessment issue which was the subject of my letter was before the OMB.

Mr McGuinty: Let me recite the facts again: You sent a letter to Durham region. It was regarding a matter before the OMB. You're not allowed to do that. Now you claim that it had nothing to do with the matter before the OMB. This is what the recipient of your letter writes back to you. They say: "Thank you for your letter regarding the above-noted application, OMB file number 0990092." You know that this was about this matter; the Durham region knows that this was about the very same matter before the OMB; the people of this province know it was about a matter before the OMB. Don't wait for the weekend. Give us all a break. Resign right now.

Hon Mr Clement: Let me again correct the record. I find that the honourable member and I have a symbiotic relationship: He muddies up the record and I have to correct it. I did not write my letter to the OMB. I did not write any letter on any issue before the OMB. I did not write to the OMB.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I caution the members that I cannot hear the minister's reply. I know

that occasionally there will be questions that get emotions up on all sides. But as I have said on many occasions, if I cannot hear the minister reply or the question asked, I will stand until order comes.

Hon Mr Clement: Once again, I did not write a letter to the OMB. I did not write a letter on any issue before the OMB. I did not write a letter in any way which interfered with the OMB. Perhaps I can further help the honourable member. He is obviously one letter behind in correspondence. I have a letter that was written by Roger Anderson, the regional chair, dated yesterday and I want to read it into the record.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable members are laughing about this but they're the ones who raised the issue of what Roger Anderson thinks or felt or heard. He says: "I have discussed questions raised to me by the media with my commissioner of planning, Alex Georgieff, and I asked Mr Georgieff directly if he felt influenced by this letter. Mr Georgieff's opinion was similar to mine in that there was no direction implied or perceived by us in regard to this letter." I read that into the record. It speaks for itself.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you are not allowed to go anywhere near a matter that's before the OMB. You know what the mayor of Uxbridge said? She said, "I was flabbergasted when I saw a copy of that letter. I think it's highly unethical." There is no doubt whatsoever that what you did here, you are not allowed to do.

1400

There was a matter before the Ontario Municipal Board. There was an appeal launched by a developer. It had to do with your ministry. You intervened. You sent a letter on behalf of the developer. The recipient of the letter said: "Yeah, I know what the hell you're talking about. You're talking about that file that's before the OMB." You're not allowed to do that. Give us all a break, Minister. The fix is in; it's over for you; it's done. Don't wait for the weekend. Resign.

Hon Mr Clement: Fortunately for the people of Ontario, he doesn't get to decide who is a member of the executive council. The voters made that decision on June 3.

I will further correct the record on behalf of the honourable member, who has difficulty getting it right. I did not write a letter to the OMB. I did not write a letter on any topic before the OMB. I wrote about the class environmental assessment. I wrote a letter which in no way interfered with the matter at hand with the OMB.

May I say this for the record? This is the opening week of the 37th Parliament. The honourable Leader of the Opposition is spending his time on baseless allegations and innuendo. I believe the people of Ontario deserve better, this chamber deserves better, and I encourage him to stick to the issues that are important to the people of Ontario. That is the agenda of this government.

The Speaker: New question; the member for Eglinton-Lawrence.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I think the public has a right to know why you, as the Minister of the Environment, would interfere on the side of a developer, basically to support an application that was totally opposed by all the local residents, by Uxbridge town council, by Durham and region planning committee; why you, as the Minister of the Environment, who is supposed to protect the environment, would come in and suggest a loophole of how to get around the environmental assessment. What were your motives for getting into this application?

Hon Mr Clement: I thank the honourable member for his consideration of this issue. Perhaps he didn't hear what I said to the honourable Leader of the Opposition. Let me repeat to him: The letter in no way dealt with any topic before the OMB. It dealt with a class EA and my protection of the law on behalf of the people of Ontario and my ministry.

I would say to the honourable member, if he or any other member of his caucus has such a concern about the integrity of myself or my government or any other member on this side of the House, there was a simple thing they could have done: reported it to the Integrity Commissioner, and then the Integrity Commissioner could have a say.

I find it quite interesting that the honourable members opposite spend more time worrying about this in this chamber. If they have a concern about integrity, there is a process. I dare you to take advantage of that process.

Mr Colle: The good people of Uxbridge and Durham region know that this letter talked about sewer capacity. The minister was suggesting how to get around the sewer capacity problem with the EA. That is why the minister's letter is referred to over and over again in a planning report from Durham region planning committee that was filed the other night. His letter is an integral part of their planning report. Basically, they say you can't reopen the environmental assessment process, because if you allow that hookup to the big pipe, you're going to destroy the Oak Ridges moraine. For him to stand there and say there's no connection between his letter on the EA loophole and the letter to Roger Anderson is a complete untruth.

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member used to be a municipal politician. He realizes that in fact the decision of whether this is within or without the class EA resides with the municipality. If they considered my letter, bully for them. They made a decision. I'm quite willing to accept that decision. It is part of the public record, always has been—for at least the last month and a half—and they considered it. That's all they had to do, and the issue is now closed.

Mr Colle: I, like many members in this Legislature, have been on local council. To my recollection or my colleagues', we can never remember a minister sending a letter to a chairman of a municipal body when an item was before the OMB—unheard of, unprecedented.

If you look at it, do you know what your motives probably are? From 1995 to 1998 Jay-M Holdings gave

15,000 bucks to your party. That's what your motives are. I wonder, how many thousands did they give to your party in 1999? Would you put that on the record? How many more thousands did they give to your party in 1999? We've got the record: From 1995 to 1998, they gave \$15,000. How many more thousands did they give in 1999? Would you place it on the record for us to see?

Hon Mr Clement: This is the first occasion that I've had knowledge of that figure, and I thank him for that information. It certainly is news to me. I'd invite the honourable member to put his party's finances in front of the public record. I think there are a few developers who might have written a few cheques for the Ontario Liberal Party, if he wants to lower himself to that kind of public debate.

I would say to the honourable member that he perhaps misspoke himself in one capacity. He said the matter was before the OMB. The matter to which I wrote was not before the OMB. I encourage the honourable member to read my letter closely, and then he can learn that in fact it had to do with a class environmental assessment, which is within my purview as the Minister of the Environment. I encourage the honourable member, if he has a problem with that, there is an Integrity Commissioner and we can all learn together.

The Speaker: New question. Leader of the third party.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): It would come as no surprise that my question is also for the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday the Premier said, "It would be inappropriate to intervene in any quasi-judicial body, and I would insist that members of the executive council not do that."

You can quibble here about this part of the issue was before the OMB and that part wasn't yet before the OMB. The fact of the matter is, we know the issue. The issue is: Your developer friend wants to move ahead with development on the Oak Ridges moraine. The municipal council in that region doesn't want it. They want to protect the groundwater and the water supply.

It's also pretty clear what your letter was intended to do. Your letter was intended to send a signal to Durham council: "Give the developer what he wants. Give my developer friend what he wants." Your own Premier says that's inappropriate. Will you do the proper thing now and resign?

Hon Mr Clement: The answer to the question of course is no. But I am interested to know that the honourable leader of the third party has changed his tune from October 26, when he told a reporter that he agrees that the letter is not proof of anything illegal, so clearly the honourable member has changed his mind.

Perhaps I can help the honourable member in understanding the facts here. The Premier is quite right: If there was any interference with a tribunal, that is an obvious case for any member of the executive council to resign. The good news that I would like to share with him is the fact that in no way was my letter part of the issue before the board. It was in no way to do with an item

before that board; it had to do with a class environmental assessment. It was a letter from one politician to another politician saying: "Here's the law. I expect that you will abide by it in the way that you see fit. Let me know how you intend to do so." I see nothing wrong with that. If the honourable member has a problem with that, there is a process through the Integrity Commissioner by which he can seek further advice.

Mr Hampton: You want to confuse the issue. If I thought you had done something illegal, I would say the police should simply come in and arrest you. The problem is that what you have done is improper for a cabinet minister. For you to say, "Well, it was just one letter from one politician to another," again misses the point.

You are a minister of the crown. It is inappropriate for a minister of the crown, when this issue, this file, the concerns of Jay-M Holdings and the region of Durham, is before the Ontario Municipal Board, to send a signal to the council that they should change their position, that they should get in line with the developer. Look, you were only cc'd on the letter from the developer; it wasn't even a direct letter to you. But you went out of your way to send a signal to Durham council, to send a signal to those municipal officials, that they should change their position and get in line with your political friend, your contributor. Cabinet ministers aren't allowed to do that. Recognize that you've broken the rules. Resign.

Hon Mr Clement: I again suggest to the honourable member that he stick to the facts in the letter and the circumstances of the letter, which have been factually explained in this House already. The letter in no way deals with a matter before the board. It's absolutely explicitly dealing with the class EA, which is under my purview. It in no way suggests, "Follow a certain course of action." It says: "Here's the law. I expect you to apply the law." I make no apologies for that.

If the honourable member sees a problem there that perhaps we cannot see on this side, there is a process. But the very recipient of the letter has now said, in writing, that it in no way was seen as undue influence, it in no way affected their judgment and it in no way affected the course of their deliberations even outside of the OMB. So I encourage the honourable member to come straight with this House. If he has a new piece of information, please share it with us, because this piece of information has already been discussed and the issue now is before us. I would hazard a guess to say that there are other public policy issues that we should probably turn our minds to in this chamber.

1410

Mr Hampton: What we know now and what you are struggling so hard to avoid is the fact that this whole matter is before the OMB. You can say, "This part of the issue isn't now before the OMB, and the other part of the issue is before the OMB, and I was writing about the other part that isn't before the OMB." Look, that's strictly avoidance.

You know that the regional council of Durham is a sophisticated and knowledgeable council. They know the

rules. What you were trying to do in sending them a letter was to say, "Get in line with the developer." The municipality understood that. That's why they wrote back to you and said to you that this matter is before the OMB. That's why they were so outraged. For you to get a letter now from someone at the municipal council after you're in hot water over this simply falls more in line with your whole course of conduct.

Minister, you intended to send a signal to the municipal council in Durham region. The signal was, "Get in line with my developer friend"—

The Speaker: Order.

Minister of the Environment.

Hon Mr Clement: Again, I did not write a letter to the OMB. I did not write any letter on any issue before the OMB. I did not write a letter which in any way interfered with the OMB. If those facts were different, perhaps he and I would agree, but they're not different. I encourage the honourable member to look at the facts and not pursue this line of questioning any further.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Yesterday we asked if you were aware that disabled people receiving ODSP benefits had received a letter telling them that their benefits had been cut, but in fact it was a mistake as a result of your botched implementation of the transition to ODSP. You know the story now. People were being told that they might have to go and pick up their own cheques.

Today we find out that the understaffed ODSP office has been working hard on this and is trying to find a solution and perhaps courier some of those cheques out. Hopefully this will work. But yesterday, when I asked you this question, we were astounded by your lack of understanding, your lack of listening and your unwillingness to even admit there might be a problem.

My question to you today is, are you willing to admit that there is a problem, and what are you going to do about it?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Meeting the needs of people with disabilities is a priority for this government and certainly a priority of mine as minister. Client service is also important.

When I was first elected four years ago, people were having to wait up to two years to get their case adjudicated. For our government, that was, simply put, unacceptable.

We are in the process of establishing the ODSP and establishing minimal, equitable transportation expenses. This will mean that thousands of people who didn't have access will now have access to services.

In dealing with this issue, approximately 100 people of the more than 200,000 clients of the Ontario disability support program had a potential problem. We were

concerned that these people should be made aware of the situation immediately, so we informed them. Working with our officials, I have been assured that they will be releasing all ODSP cheques on time.

Ms Churley: Minister, you've more than astounded me today. You seem to be saying even if it's only 100 disabled people cut off, who cares, it's OK. But we were made to understand yesterday it could be thousands. One is too many.

You get up and give a history of what you're trying to do with ODSP. The reality is that you botched the implementation of this. There are going to be more and more of these problems down the road. Your government found millions of dollars to pay Andersen Consulting to cut people off benefits, and you can't find the money to invest properly in this transition.

The issue today is that we want a guarantee that every one of those people, whether it be 100 or 1,000 or 3,000, will get their cheques on time tomorrow and that you will fix the implementation and invest the money and the resources that you need to address these problems. Will you guarantee today—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister.

Hon Mr Baird: I can guarantee today that people in Ontario who are recipients of the Ontario disability support program will get a much better program than they were getting when the member was in government. When the NDP ran the show, there were people having to wait up to two years for adjudication. Simply put, that was unacceptable. That's why we established the Ontario disability support program, a support program about which even the member opposite said, and I quote: "The minister and members of the government caucus will know that I and my caucus have supported the implementation of this plan." That was her colleague the member for Beaches-East York.

AIR QUALITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): A question for the Minister of the Environment—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member for Beaches-East York, come to order, please.

Mr Bradley: We have had an alarming revelation from a report released today by the Ontario Clean Air Alliance that Ontario Power Generation, previously known as Ontario Hydro, intends to violate its commitment to cap its nitrogen oxide emissions next year at 38 kilotons. If the utility's plan to thumb its nose at this commitment is allowed by the Harris government, its coal-fired generating stations will spew into the Ontario air shed 5% to 13% more smog and acid-rain-producing nitrogen oxide as well as toxic air pollution, including the nerve toxin mercury and six cancer-causing substances such as arsenic and lead.

Minister, will you give a clear and specific commitment that you will not allow Ontario Power Generation to

weasel out of its obligations to cap its smog-producing emissions, as it promised just eight short years ago?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the honourable member for the question. One of the issues we're grappling with is that when that voluntary commitment had been made by Ontario Hydro, as it then was, in 1991, the nuclear stations, as the honourable member well knows, were on-line. We've had a situation where for safety reasons and management reasons the nuclear stations are now off-line. I think the member is aware of the fact that as a result of that, in order to meet the power needs of the province, both industrial and for our homes, there was a need to fire up the coal-fired generators to an extent that none of us are happy with. It's something we have to live with in the short term, but we want to migrate away from the dirty coal-fired plants as soon as possible.

This is a transboundary issue as well, as the honourable member knows, that cannot be solved just within Ontario's borders. Some 50% of our smog comes from across the border, from the United States plants and power generators.

Certainly his advice and the Ontario Clean Air Alliance's advice on how to proceed to get to a true solution are very much appreciated.

Mr Bradley: If the minister intends to bless any manoeuvre by Ontario Power Generation to weasel out of this pollution-reducing commitment, he'll be responsible for permitting an already critical smog situation in Ontario to get worse.

Rather than engaging in his now famous word games to protect the major polluter in the province, and that's what Ontario Power Generation is, the minister should give the people of Ontario a solemn, specific and unequivocal assurance that he will not allow Ontario Power Generation to dodge its obligation to cap nitrogen oxide pollution levels. The minister must not give a green light to the utility to contribute to any increase in the already unacceptable number of premature deaths a year in Ontario, 1,800, caused by air pollution by hiding behind the excuses they have, or a discredited emission trading scheme that will result in more smog, more pollution, more respiratory problems and more deaths.

Instead of apologizing and making excuses for the company, will you require them to meet that obligation unequivocally?

Hon Mr Clement: I think we are working with the generators, and the expectation is that they will meet the 38,000-kiloton cap. The issue, though, is that we have a pilot trading program in place.

Mr Bradley: It's discredited.

Hon Mr Clement: You know, the thing about this program, if I may say so, is that as a result of the trading, they can reduce emissions that would alternatively blow over into Ontario. If you're trading with a partner that is in Ohio or Michigan or New Jersey or New York, the impact is that if you reduce those emissions, they reduce

the amount of smog that does blow into Ontario. So I wouldn't write it off yet.

But we are committed, as part of our anti-smog action plan to reduce the amount of smog by 25% in the first instance, and that's five years, and by 45% over the next 15 years. That is a commitment of the government of Ontario, I can assure the honourable member.

1420

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

You recently were in southwestern Ontario, I think it was about two weeks ago, and you were saluting small businesses, which are, as a matter of fact, Ontario's number one job creators. You are aware, I'm sure, of the tremendous success of small businesses in my riding. They are creating jobs by the thousands, contributing to an unemployment rate of 4.9%, one of the best in Canada.

I have watched many of these small businesses become large businesses through perseverance and hard work, often overcoming many obstacles over the past 20 years; businesses like M & M Meat Shops, Automated Tooling Systems, Kuntz Electroplating and many others. However, in speaking to a number of small business owners and budding entrepreneurs, I find that in the face of mounting pressures and global competition, they need to know more information on what services your ministry offers to help small businesses expand and succeed.

Could you please give me some information that I can pass on to small business owners in my riding?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): I certainly want to thank the honourable member from Kitchener Centre for the question.

Small businesses do play a vital role in marketing Ontario and making it competitive in the global marketplace. Our mission is to continue to help Ontario small businesses grow. Our ministry has established a number of programs and services to help small businesses grow, including help offices, small business enterprise centres, international market development and also the Young Entrepreneurs Program.

Mr Speaker, if you would indulge me with about five more minutes, I could probably tell you a whole bunch more.

Our ministry also wants to help Ontario small businesses export. International trade is vital to Ontario's economic health and that's why our Ontario Exports Inc has adopted a more aggressive focus on enhancing and taking advantage of export opportunities. We have a dedicated team of market specialists, working directly with companies to help them get ready to export. They can do everything from identifying capital projects and exporting opportunities, to organizing in-country initiatives.

I would encourage all small business owners interested in exporting to call Ontario Exports Inc, 1-877-468-7233.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Wettlaufer: Thank you, Minister. Ontario is obviously doing our part in helping small businesses to expand. Expansion of export opportunities seems to be one of the successful message being employed.

As you are aware, there was a federal Liberal throne speech a few weeks ago. While there was much in it about increased spending, there was precious little about tax decreases or assistance to small business owners. Nor has the Ontario Liberal Party made any suggestions to their federal cousins about helping small business owners. In fact, the small business contacts in my riding advise me that the provincial Liberals have been very quiet on any matter of importance to small business owners and their employees.

Please, Minister, could you share with the members of this House what we as a government are doing to ensure that Ontario's number one job creators have the tools they need to succeed?

Hon Mr Palladini: Certainly I would like to mention to my colleague that I could probably take the rest of question period to share with you all the things that we have done.

Our plan to help small businesses grow include cutting taxes, eliminating red tape and removing barriers to growth. We have cut taxes 69 times in the last four years. We will continue to cut taxes 30 additional times to keep Ontario growing.

Our 30% personal income tax cut has certainly helped to fuel the economic growth that we are experiencing in the province of Ontario. Our last budget proposed a further 20% cut in the personal income tax.

We're also cutting small business corporate rate taxes in half. We've removed barriers in thousands of pieces of legislation so that business can grow. These initiatives will directly boost hiring and expansion.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Palladini: We've challenged the federal government, your buddies, to follow our example. If I had one wish—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. New question.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

A question for the Minister of the Environment: Minister, when you sent your letter to Durham region, they replied on September 7, and in their re line they said, "Re OMB file number 099092." They put you on notice that it was their very clear understanding that you were writing to them about a matter that was before the OMB. That was about a month and a half ago.

Now tell us, did you upon receiving this letter, immediately and without hesitation, contact Durham region and

make it perfectly clear to them that this had nothing to do with the OMB, notwithstanding their understanding that it had everything to do with the OMB?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Let me again state for the record that the letter pertained to the class environmental assessment. If the honourable member has evidence or has an assertion that can be based in fact that the class EA was part of the OMB hearing, I'm willing to stand in this place here and be corrected on that fact. But I think the honourable member knows that it was not part of the OMB hearing; in fact, it was excluded from the OMB hearing.

If the honourable member has any new evidence I encourage him to either place it before us in the House or place it before the Integrity Commissioner, and we can continue this discussion there so that we can use the time in this House to talk about the issues that Ontarians care about: how to advance growth and prosperity; how to advance tax cuts; how to ensure our health care and education are there for future generations. That is the discussion that we're quite willing to proceed upon.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, the planning department for Durham recently submitted a commissioner's report to the planning committee, and in that report that they sent to the OMB they make specific reference to your letter. Your letter is now a part of the OMB record. It's part of the documentation being considered by the OMB. When you sent the letter to Durham region they specifically acknowledged that it was in connection with an OMB hearing. Your letter now forms part of the OMB record.

It seems to me that this matter is very straightforward: You've interfered with the OMB—strike one; you haven't stood up for the environment—strike two; and you've ignored the facts in this Legislature—strike three. Even in Mike Harris's government, three strikes and you're out. Minister, do the right thing and resign.

Hon Mr Clement: I think the honourable member is learning from the Atlanta Braves rather than the New York Yankees, I dare say, on the issue of baseball.

I say to him that the issue before the OMB was not the issue that I wrote about. In fact, I know of cases in my constituency work—I'm sure we all know cases—where we write a letter to a concerned citizen group or to a municipal politician about a particular issue and it ends up being part of a file that eventually goes either to litigation or goes before a quasi-judicial—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Will the member take his seat. Order. Minister of the Environment.

Hon Mr Clement: This is a common occurrence. As elected representatives, people use our letters in ways that—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister of the Environment.

Hon Mr Clement: Mr Speaker, if he has a problem with that, how other people use my letter as part of the public record, that's a situation that he can bring up with the Integrity Commissioner.

This House has debated very important issues over time. It has debated issues relating to the Great Depression. It has debated issues relating to war. I encourage the honourable member, if he has a problem, to take it to the Integrity Commissioner, and we can get this issue off the plate so we can discuss the issues that both he and this government were elected to discuss. I'd be happy to venture into that discussion on environmental issues or municipal issues.

1430

ONTARIO LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD

Mr Bob Wood (London West): My question is to the Minister of Labour. As he knows, the Occupational Health and Safety Act gives workers the right to refuse or stop work which they believe is unsafe. This is a very important part of our employment law, yet some think it is being undermined by abuse in the form of the occasional frivolous and vexatious complaint.

Will the minister consider changing the Labour Relations Act to permit the Labour Relations Board and arbitrators appointed under the act to impose sanctions where they find abuse of these provisions?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): I myself haven't heard about this specific complaint from employers. Employers have not come to me and complained specifically about this particular practice. Obviously, if it's an issue out there and you're hearing complaints about it, I have no difficulty in looking into the issue and determining whether it is an issue that I think would cause problems within the workplace in Ontario.

Having said that, it's not something that I've heard about. I'm interested in hearing from you further about this. If there's a problem with respect to this specific issue, I'll be happy to deal with it.

Mr Wood: I can give the minister the assurance that there are some out there who do feel this is a problem. I wonder when the minister might have the opportunity to consider this matter and tell us whether action may be taken.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Obviously this is an issue that is very close to your position. At this point in time, we're reviewing the particular piece of legislation. I expect there will be some modifications and changes to it within the next year. I'll be happy to get back to you and look into this issue and deal with it and maybe amend certain parts of the legislation if we deem it to be acceptable, but I can't believe that we'll be back before this House within 12 months. It's going to take at least that long to consult and report back.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question, the member for Parkdale-High Park.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): On a point of order: It's the NDP.

The Speaker: I missed the rotation. The member for Hamilton West, I apologize.

Mr Christopherson: We tend to watch those things. Thank you, Speaker.

PARAMEDICS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): My question is to the Minister of Health. You must be aware of the growing crisis surrounding your continuing refusal to remove nine words from your ministry's Ambulance Act that have the effect of treating paramedics differently than other emergency response workers like police and firefighters and in fact has resulted in the firing of six highly skilled, extensively trained, experienced paramedics, two of them from my hometown of Hamilton.

You will also know that these paramedics are being put in a position where if you do nothing, they will have no choice but to follow the very letter of the traffic laws as they exist. If that happens, you will be directly responsible for putting the lives of Ontarians at risk.

Will you commit today to removing these nine unjust, offensive words from this legislation?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): First of all, the individuals concerned, as you know, did have an opportunity this past week to meet with the Ministry of Health staff and some of my own staff regarding this issue. Also, we have accepted the recommendations of the land ambulance task force. I can assure you we are quite prepared to carefully look at their concerns and I hope we can arrive at a solution that will be satisfactory to everybody.

Mr Christopherson: Minister, that does nothing. The reality is that you've already had this kind of review done. In fact, in August 1998 you received the review of the ambulance regulation report by the Land Ambulance Transition Task Force, and in that report they make a specific recommendation that those nine words be removed.

I would remind you that that task force comprised, yes, OPSEU representing the workers there, but also the employers through the Ambulance Service Alliance of Ontario, as well as municipal politicians, as well as your own ministry officials. They all agree. We all agree. Certainly the workers and their families agree. You're the only one who disagrees. Saying that you're going to put this off to a review is tantamount to saying no, and it's unacceptable.

Minister, stand in your place and say today that you will remove these unjust, offensive words that are costing paramedics their jobs.

Hon Mrs Witmer: To the member opposite, I already have accepted all of those recommendations.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): My question is to the Minister of Education. Today, I rise to ask you about your promotion of commercialism in the province's schools, in the classrooms. Your funding formula has reduced support to school programs. We saw that earlier this week in terms of special education. Parents everywhere are being forced to fundraise to a frazzle to get books and computers, and as a result,

Ontario school boards are entering into arrangements with Wal-Mart at 53 different schools, with Pepsi. One of the worst of these is the Youth News Network, a private company that is proposing for boards that they sell students time as a captive audience during the school day in return for equipment that the boards can't afford on their own. Meadowvale school has already signed up. There are other schools who are considering this.

Minister, so far, all you've done is shrug. Do you agree that Ontario students should be exploited for commercial gain and that their education should depend on schools being treated like charities, or are you going to do something about this?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): I find it passing strange that the criticism from the opposition over there has been that somehow or other trustees don't have authority. In this case, trustees have clear authority. They're elected by the community to make decisions about whether they think this kind of partnership with the private sector is appropriate or not, and I respect their right to make that decision. I will support those trustees in whatever decision they decide to make.

Mr Kennedy: You took away the authority of trustees to raise money, and now they're being forced, by you and you alone, Minister, to turn to private commercial enterprises to fund themselves.

The board chair at Thames Valley, Pat Smith, said it's because of government cuts. The board chair in Toronto, Gail Nyberg, said it's because of the \$360 million that you're taking away. They're selling opportunities to the private sector as a direct result of your lack of commitment to public education.

You're setting a dangerous precedent by sitting glued to your chair and not being concerned with what's happening in Ontario schools. The Youth News Network has been turned down by four provincial education ministers who understand that it's not right to abuse the public trust, to do what parents don't want us to do in terms of taking away some of the school day and renting it to a private company.

Minister, are you going to continue to foster this climate of being dependent on corporate charity and on corporate exploitation, or are you going to bring in a policy to make sure that education can be paid for without the boards having to go begging or the kids being exploited?

Hon Mrs Ecker: As the honourable member well knows, the authority to make such decisions is with the trustees and the boards. As a matter of fact, the Toronto board has just established a very good policy in terms of giving guidance to their schools and their members about whether or not private sector partnerships, of whatever kind, are appropriate.

I'd also like to remind the honourable member that fundraising in schools is not new. This has gone under their administration, under the previous government's jurisdiction.

The other thing I should point out to the honourable member is that fundraising is something the parents can choose to do—

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I know they don't want to hear this, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member for Sudbury, come to order, please.

Hon Mrs Ecker: It's something that schools and parents can choose to do. People can choose to participate. I'm prepared to trust trustees in making this decision. I'd like to ask the honourable member, why doesn't he trust trustees to make this decision?

1440

LANDS FOR LIFE

Mrs Tina Molinari (Thornhill): Mr Speaker, as this is my first question in the Legislature, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Speaker and also to thank and congratulate the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey for the wonderful competition that he provided for this Legislature.

My question today is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Last March in Sudbury, after an unprecedented two years of extensive public consultation, the Premier made a historic announcement regarding the protection of crown lands. This historic Living Legacy strategy promised to protect 378 new parks and protected areas—the biggest expansion of parks and protected areas in the history of Ontario.

Minister, my question to you is, what measures has the government undertaken to implement the Living Legacy strategy to make these parks part of our heritage forever?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): It's indeed a pleasure to address the first question of the member for Thornhill, one that was put so well.

I was proud to join the Premier in Sudbury in March of this year, but no prouder than the thousands and thousands of Ontarians who participated in a historic public consultation for two years with Lands for Life and had a very real participation in the announcement of 378 new parks and protected areas for this province, almost six million acres protected for future generations.

I'm pleased to inform the member that my ministry takes very seriously the challenge of making this historic agreement a reality, and we are doing so with good speed. This week we announced a public consultation for 64 of the new park areas, and we'll work hard to adopt over 200 recommendations of the Lands for Life process.

Mrs Molinari: That's great news, and I'm glad to see that the government is keeping up its promise to protect these areas and continues to consult with the public.

In order to accomplish the protection of these 378 new parks, an agreement between the Ministry of Natural Resources, environmental groups and the forestry industry produced a historic partnership: the 1999 Ontario Forest Accord. The government has promised to establish a board to oversee and provide advice to this accord. Is

the Forest Accord Board implemented yet, and what will its role be?

Hon Mr Snobelen: Yes. As a matter of fact, a number of weeks ago I was in Quebec City to meet with the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. I can tell you that on our coffee breaks and lunch breaks, the people who represent the forest industry and the governments across Canada were very interested in just how we brought about this unique accord in Ontario, the first time ever in Canada.

I was proud to tell them that in Ontario, under the strong leadership of Premier Mike Harris, we were able to find a common agreement between the Partnership for Public Lands, the forest industry and the Ministry of Natural Resources. We did that because the leaders of those organizations—leaders like Frank Dottori, Raymond Royer, John Riley and Monte Hummel, leaders of that magnitude—came together and found common ground in their concerns for people who depend on our resources and common ground in our mutual concern for future generations.

The accord is there; it's built. The Living Legacy trust board is up and running, and the Ontario forest accord, a very unique accord—the advisory board has been prepared and are working now.

BRONTE CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, you now have an opportunity to save some valuable parkland in this province, and I look forward to you doing that.

Today we're aware of the fact that the Royal Canadian Golf Association is negotiating with this government to purchase 240 hectares of land in Bronte Creek Provincial Park to turn this into two 18-hole golf courses, a golf hall of fame, a hotel, a conference centre and commercial and residential development on Bronte Creek Provincial Park. They have discussed it publicly, and your government discussed this publicly.

This is an ecologically sensitive area. It is the only provincial park in an urban area in Ontario, and it's one of the largest green spaces in the greater Toronto area. Your government is considering selling off one third of Bronte Creek Provincial Park to the private sector for golf courses, hotels, residences and commercial developments.

Minister, you are responsible for protecting parkland and protecting the environment. Will you today stand up in the House and guarantee that you will stop any sale of Bronte Creek Provincial Park to anyone in the private sector?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Mr Speaker, I believe the protection of parklands is actually under the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to address the question of the member opposite. In fact, I understand that the RCGA did meet with Frank Miller, who's the chair of the Ontario Parks Board of Directors, in April of this year and that Mr Miller, someone who has great experience with the parks in the province, suggested that their proposal be explored. After that date, I did meet with some of the members of the RCGA and explained to them the process in the province, which is a very lengthy process, I might add, to have park amendments that would be required for this sort of thing. It's in their ballpark, and I'm not sure what they're doing with their proposal.

Mr Agostino: It's obvious that your government is negotiating and considering the possibility of selling one third of Bronte Creek Provincial Park to the private sector for development. There's nothing sacred with your government.

This is almost a done deal. Your Minister of Tourism said: "This is a premier site. It's exactly what we need right here." That came from your Minister of Tourism. So your cabinet minister, on behalf of your government, already has committed to this site.

Stephen Ross, the executive director of the Royal Canadian Golf Association, said: "The Ontario government's long-term plan is to use this for something more than a park. We think it would be perfect for a golf course."

It is obvious you're negotiating. It is obvious you're willing to sell this park to the private sector. I cannot believe the arrogance of your government that thinks you can simply give away parkland to build golf courses, to build buildings, residential properties, commercial properties and hotels.

Minister, will you stand up today on behalf of parklands in this province and commit that you will cease all negotiations and guarantee you will not be selling any part of Bronte Creek Provincial Park to the private sector?

Hon Mr Snobelen: It must be Thursday, because obviously the member wasn't listening to my earlier comments. We are not in negotiation with the RCGA. I have told them what would be required, and what's required in Ontario is a very extensive public consultation on how a park is used that meets local needs.

Mr Agostino: Just say you're not going to do it. Just say no.

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton-East has asked his question. Allow the minister to reply, please. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon Mr Snobelen: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'm pleased again to have the opportunity to do that.

Here is what we will do: We will not change a policy, we will not alter from a policy. We will make sure this is in the public domain. That's our job.

I remind the member opposite that this is a government that's known for adding parkland, not selling parkland.

1450

OTTAWA SENATORS

Mr Brian Coburn (Carleton-Gloucester): This is my first time commenting in the House, Mr Speaker, and I offer my congratulations on your recent election. Over the last couple of days, I think you're more than up to the job.

My question is to the Minister of Finance. A growing number of my constituents in Carleton-Gloucester have contacted my office with respect to the fate of the Ottawa Senators. We have a great number of hockey fans in the Ottawa area. The Ottawa Senators have generated a huge following. One of the problems facing the senators is property taxes paid by the Corel Centre in Ottawa. Some of those taxes are paid to the city of Kanata, some to the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton and some are paid to the province. Minister, can you help the Ottawa Senators stay in Ottawa?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): We have today corresponded with the regional chair of Ottawa-Carleton, with the mayor of Toronto, with the NHL, with Mr Manley, the federal minister of industry, and with the National Hockey League as well as the National Hockey League Players Association.

We have indicated that the government will be establishing a new professional sporting facility class, that municipalities will have the option of establishing a tax range of fairness from virtually zero all the way up to the current commercial rate.

We have indicated that the province is more than willing to be an absolute partner with those municipalities that choose to do that, and we will match them with a corresponding proportional tax exemption.

Mr Coburn: The Ottawa Senators are not only important to their sport and their fans; today in the Ottawa newspapers many presidents and CEOs of our high-tech industries have stressed how important the Ottawa Senators are to the business community. The Ottawa Senators bring recognition to our area of the province that helps our companies sell their products. The Ottawa Senators help our high-tech companies attract highly-skilled workers to their plants.

I am very happy with our government leading the fight to help the Senators stay in Ottawa. Do you know if our federal government or the municipal government or the NHL have stepped forward with anything other than talk to keep the Ottawa Senators in Ottawa?

Hon Mr Eves: The province's primary reason for doing this, of course, is that there are many other municipally-owned facilities that are exempt from tax because they are municipally-owned. We're trying to put all sporting facilities on a level playing field. Quite honestly, I think they now will be on a level playing field if the municipalities choose to opt in, and I certainly hope they will.

We have written Mr Manley asking him, now that the provinces and, hopefully, the municipalities have taken

this step—hopefully, the federal government will see fit to take a step as well. Perhaps if we all get together and try to resolve this issue, it can be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone and to the benefit of everyone. I would also hope, and I say this quite sincerely, that the NHL and the players' association will take a serious look at resolving some of their very real structural problems to address the problems of Ottawa and other NHL franchises.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Health, and it concerns the northern health travel grant. The minister will know that many people who reside in northwestern Ontario, many patients, are often referred to specialist physicians in Winnipeg. It's far better to travel three or four hours into Winnipeg than to travel 24 hours to Toronto to see a specialist physician.

Recently, your ministry has started to disallow northern health travel grants where the specialist physician, though recognized as a specialist in Manitoba, is not recognized in Ontario. In other words, in Manitoba he is clearly recognized as a specialist, physicians who practise in northwestern Ontario recognize him or her as a specialist, but because he isn't recognized in Ontario, you are no longer allowing the northern health travel grant.

Minister, why are you doing this? Why are you forcing people to endure a 24-hour or longer trip to Toronto and very expensive hotel bills and other bills? Why won't you recognize the specialist physicians of Manitoba who are in fact very closely related to the patients?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The process that is presently in place and the mechanism is the same as when you were in government. In fact, this was introduced by the Liberals. The only change that has occurred was a change that your government made in 1994; that was to tighten the criteria and require patients to access the specialist nearest to them. We have not made any changes to the process. As I say, they are the same as when they were introduced by the Liberals in 1985.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): Mr Speaker, I would like to rise to give the order of business for next week.

On Monday, November 1, we will be dealing with Bill 7, the taxpayer protection act, in the afternoon. In the evening there will be further debate on the throne speech.

On Tuesday, November 2, Bill 7, the taxpayer protection act, will be debated in the afternoon. Again in the evening there will be the throne speech debate.

On Wednesday, November 3, in the afternoon there will be a Liberal opposition day. We will not be sitting on Wednesday evening.

On Thursday, November 4, will be the first two private members' public business items. Those are yet to be determined. In the afternoon we will be debating the taxpayer protection act, Bill 7, and not sitting on Thursday evening.

STANDING ORDERS REFORM

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we get into petitions, I want to make the members aware of the changes as a result of the standing orders.

As you know, there will be some new procedures in place for petitions. Any member wishing to present a petition during routine proceedings must deliver the petition to the Clerk's office in room 104. Petitions may also be left at the table when the House is meeting. In either case, they will be examined by the Clerk and be returned to the member the next sitting day.

If the petition meets the requirements of the standing orders, the Clerk will attach a certificate to it with his signature and the petition may then be presented in the House. When it is presented, the certificate must be attached to the petition. If the petition does not meet the requirement of the standing orders, it will be returned with a notation explaining why it was not certified.

I will be vigilant in enforcing the new practice and will call to order any member attempting to present a petition that does not have the certificate attached to it. That will be beginning after today, on Monday.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In reference to the directions you just gave for the presentation of petitions, we get many petitions on exactly the same subject. Can we assume that once a petition has been approved and received its certificate, we can essentially keep the certificate to use for future petitions that are identical?

The Speaker: Under the rules, each of the petitions needs to be certified even though I understand there are occasions when some would be similar.

Mrs McLeod: If I may, it's not just occasions, Mr Speaker. I think the Clerk's table is about to be overwhelmed by having to provide certificates on each separate petition. I can present my petitions page by page. Sometimes they come in that way.

I just feel that we have perhaps inadvertently created a clerical burden that is really unnecessary. We're trying to meet the concern that these be valid signed petitions, but if it's the same petition, I hope there is not a lot of added work.

The Speaker: I respect the member's thoughts on this issue. Obviously, over the next little while we will monitor the situation and see what evolves. But I thank the member for her point of order.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Sometimes petitions are very urgent and, consequently, if the petitions have to be handed to the Clerk at least 24 hours before, it might take away the urgency of the petition. Can we get a ruling on that, that

it may not be essential that the petition be submitted to the Clerk 24 hours before?

1500

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: You will know that this change is a result of the negotiations that took place between the three House leaders. While I am not opposing directly or strongly at this point the details of what's being suggested by you and the Clerk's table, I would just like to point out that the agreement at the negotiating table was the principle that there would be this vetting to ensure that only petitions that are appropriate and fit the criteria would come before the House. But I'm not aware, and I've just checked with my Liberal counterpart, that there's been any further discussion with the House leaders about this, given the fact that this is where it stems from.

I would ask, Speaker, before you rule today, if you would allow us to follow the usual rules and give the House leaders an opportunity to review the process. I would just suggest to you respectfully that in making this ruling it certainly would be much easier for you if we sort of slugged out the details and agreed on something that certainly the Clerk would be comfortable with, rather than leave us in a position of having to oppose this because we weren't given the opportunity to have some input.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I notice the government whip is nodding yes. It was the agreement of the House leaders that we would discuss and negotiate this new process. The Clerk's office has not consulted us about this process and has put you, Mr Speaker, I think in an untenable position. This does not reflect the tenor of the discussions that were held at the House leaders' meeting. It was our very clear and unequivocal understanding that we would have a chance to negotiate that, and until such time—Mr Speaker, I am an elected member. I would like to be able to address the Chair without the Clerk's table interrupting.

The point is that we would like to have the opportunity, if the government is in concurrence, and I believe we had that agreement, that we would discuss this. I would hope in the future that these types of changes would be shared equally with all three parties before something like this is announced.

Hon Mr Klees: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Certainly that is my recollection of the arrangements, and I think it is appropriate that we have an opportunity to follow through on those arrangements before you are called upon to make a ruling on this matter.

The Speaker: I thank all the member for the points of order. As you know, if there is agreement by all House leaders on any issue, the members of this House will be able to proceed.

What I would suggest we do in light of the circumstances is that you will continue to have your meetings and discussions and advise me of any changes that you're able to agree upon. I wish you the best of luck in your

endeavours, similar to the other issues. If we can do that—and keep me posted of the results of those discussions—then obviously I will look to it at that time.

Mr Duncan: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We will continue to use the process that was in place until then?

The Speaker: What I would suggest to the member—

Mr Christopherson: We can't have a petition period today.

The Speaker: No. I don't know how long the process will take. What I suggest is that we continue with that process. It was my suggestion originally that we begin this process on Monday. What I'm going to suggest is that we continue for today and maybe you could advise me if there are any changes or any agreement by next week.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and therefore that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

“Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

“Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographic locations;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in our communities.”

I have petitions that have been signed by another 153 concerned constituents in my riding, and I have affixed my signature in full agreement with their concerns.

SCHOOL BOARD REVIEW

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned parents and ratepayers, request a financial review of the Avon maitland District School Board's financial affairs.”

I'll sign this so that it can be entered into the record.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which I'd like to read to the House:

“Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 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 driving licence fees; and

“Whereas Ontario road users pay 28 cents per litre of tax on gasoline, adding up to \$2.7 billion in provincial gas taxes and over \$2.3 billion in federal gas taxes;

“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 and rumble strips; and

“We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenue in road safety improvements in Ontario.”

I concur and I will affix my signature to it.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario requesting the Legislative Assembly to upgrade Highway 401 to at least a six-lane highway with full paved shoulders and respectfully requesting that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenue in road safety improvements in Ontario.

I will add my signature.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I too would like to present a petition, on behalf of the people in the Woodstock area, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It is very much the same nature and in the same vein as the other petitions signed, that whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 on Highway 401 and whereas the traffic levels on Canada's number one trade and travel route—and the fund—we need to improve the situation.

I submit my signature to this petition as well, with respect.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I have a petition I wish to present to the Legislative

Assembly of Ontario. It has in excess of 40 signatures, and I'll read it:

"Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 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 driving licence fees; and

"Whereas Ontario road users pay 28 cents per litre of tax on gasoline, adding up to \$2.7 billion in provincial gas taxes and over \$2.3 billion in federal gas taxes;

"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 and rumble strips; and

"We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenue in road safety improvements in Ontario."

I affix my signature.

1510

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition addressed to this assembly, signed not only by residents from my riding, Davenport, but also from the west end of Toronto. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the residents in the west end of Toronto no longer have emergency room service at the Humber River Regional Hospital, formerly known as North-western Hospital, the Keele Street site; and

"Whereas the west end of Toronto is the hardest-hit area for emergency restrictions in all of Toronto; and

"Whereas Premier Mike Harris and Minister of Health Elizabeth Witmer have promised changes to deliver a solution to the mess they initially created by closing hospitals; and

"Whereas it is not acceptable to Toronto residents that every one of the eight emergency room departments in the city's west end were closed on Monday, January 22, 1999;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call on Premier Mike Harris and his government to immediately address the health care problems in the west end of Toronto by re-opening the emergency room at the Northwestern hospital, now known as the Humber River Regional Hospital's Keele Street site, and increase the number of in-patient hospital beds and keep its promise for interim long-term-care beds."

I am delighted to sign this document with my signature.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I too have a petition from the Canadian Automobile Association. I'll read part of it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 on Highway 401 between London and Windsor; and

"Whereas traffic levels on all sections of Highway 401 continue to increase....

"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 and rumble strips; and

"We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenue in road safety improvements in Ontario."

I too will sign my name to that petition.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris is cutting the heart out of many communities by closing hundreds of neighbourhood and community schools across Ontario; and

"Whereas this massive number of school closings all at once will displace many children and put others on longer bus routes; and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised in 1995 not to cut classroom spending but has already cut at least \$1 billion from our schools and is now closing many classrooms completely; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is pitting parent against parent and community against community in the fight to save local schools; and

"Whereas parents and students in the city of Toronto and many other communities across Ontario are calling on the government to stop closing so many of their schools;

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

"We demand that the government of Ontario stop closing local schools."

Since I am in total agreement with this petition, I'm signing it as well.

PARAMEDICS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have a petition to the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health this past spring amended O. Reg. 501/97 under the Ambulance

Act so that paramedics are considered no longer qualified to do their job if they accumulate a minimum of six demerit points on their driving record; and

“Whereas this amended regulation has resulted in at least one paramedic being fired from employment; and”—as I pointed out, that number is now six, two of them from Hamilton;

“Whereas the Ministry of Health’s regulation is far more punitive and harsh than the Ministry of Transportation’s, which monitors and enforces traffic safety through the Highway Traffic Act; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation mails out a notice to drivers at six to nine demerit points and suspends a person’s driver’s licence at 15 points for a 30-day period; and

“Whereas none of the other emergency services in Ontario, for instance, fire and police services, are held to the same standard or punished so harshly; and

“Whereas this amended regulation is not needed since other sections of the Ambulance Act protect the public against unsafe driving and/or criminal behaviour by paramedics, specifically O. Reg. 501/97, part III, section 6, subsections 8, 9 and 10; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Health actions are blatantly unjust and punitive, and they discriminate against paramedics;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, beg leave to petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately eliminate any references to the accumulation of demerit points during employment from O. Reg. 501/97 under the Ambulance Act, specifically, part III, section 6, subsection 7, thereby allowing the Highway Traffic Act to apply to paramedics; and

“To order the immediate reinstatement of paramedics who have been unjustly fired under this regulation.”

I continue to offer my support to these paramedics, as do all my caucus colleagues, and I sign my name to it.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I’m presenting a petition on behalf on my colleague the member for Haliburton-Victoria-Brock:

“Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education funding to ensure fair funding for Ontario’s children; and

“Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has stated that the province could, if it so chose, pass legislation extending funding to denominational schools other than Roman Catholic schools without infringing the rights guaranteed Roman Catholic separate schools; and

“Whereas providing our children with an excellent education consistent with our culture and religious beliefs is a necessity and not a matter of preference; and

“Whereas independent schools successfully educate children across the entire spectrum of learning abilities and special needs; and

“Whereas all children of taxpaying Ontario parents deserve to have funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those not using the public Catholic systems;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the government take immediate steps to extend fair funding to all students of the province.”

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I also have a petition similar to some others expressing concern over the carnage that’s taking place on Highway 401 and reflecting on the inadequate design and maintenance and requesting that tax dollars be used to remedy this. This petition has been signed by my constituents from Belleville, Frankford and Quinte West. Being in complete agreement, I’m pleased to affix my signature to this.

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 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 driving licence fees; and

“Whereas Ontario road users pay 28 cents per litre of tax on gasoline, adding up to \$2.7 billion in provincial gas taxes and over \$2.3 billion in federal gas taxes;

“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 and rumble strips; and

“We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenue in road safety improvements in Ontario.”

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 1999, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

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

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I rise today to speak to the throne speech. I hope it's not unparliamentary to introduce the House to Ms Susan Abramovitch, my wife, who's in the gallery over there—

Interjection: Much better half.

Mr Bryant: Much better half, and has as much to do with me being here as anybody else.

Like many of us in this chamber, I am the first member of a newly named, newly aligned riding, St Paul's. The name is based on the old parish name, as has become increasingly out of fashion. I can assure you that St Paul's is no homogeneous parish, notwithstanding that its name, perhaps ironically, is that of an apostle.

1520

St Paul's is a riding encompassing a number of ridings that we're all familiar with: St Andrew-St Patrick, Eglinton, Oakwood, Vaughan, a bit of Dovercourt. Past members have included Larry Grossman, Dianne Poole, Bill Saunderson, Ron Kanter, and of course Isabel Bassett is my direct predecessor. Ms Bassett brought a dignity to this office and to this chamber, as did all of my predecessors and I hope I will follow in the tradition that has been set by my most worthy predecessors, including the sitting member for Eglinton-Lawrence, Mike Colle, who set the standard for service while he was the MPP for Oakwood.

The riding itself includes some of Toronto's finest neighbourhoods: Forest Hill, Chaplin Estates, South Hill, Rathnelly, Moore Park—a bit of it—Briar Hill, Belgravia, Oakwood, Cedarvale, Humewood, south Broadway, south Eglinton, Hillcrest, Wychwood Park and Casa Loma. Its diversity, like all Toronto ridings, is extraordinary. As I said, St Paul's is no homogeneous parish; rather, it is home to some of Canada's largest and most famous synagogues, churches and temples. There are over a dozen languages spoken in the riding. It has the highest number of post-secondary degrees in the province, the most educated riding in Ontario. It has the second-highest number of tenants; 68% of the riding are renters, and they will expect me to continue as an uncompromising advocate of their rights, particularly at this time when there is really no rental market whatsoever in Toronto, thanks to the black hole that is the Tenant Protection Act.

That lament aside, this riding houses a who's who of Ontario's political, religious, social and community leaders. I can't name them all because I'll offend some, but I'll just name a few: Albert Wiggan, the proprietor of Albert's Real Jamaican, the best takeout maybe in Ontario and the winner of the Harry Jerome award for excellence. That's in the west end of the riding. In the east end are the likes of Robert Lantos and Brent Belzberg. The riding is home to the eminent Rabbi Gunther Plaut and political notables, the Right Honourable John Turner, senators Keith Davey and Jerry Grafstein and the Honourable David Smith. It is excellently represented by the member of Parliament, Carolyn Bennett and, I'm happy to say, home to Her Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable

Hilary Weston. All this and more is the great riding of St Paul's, who have honoured me with their electoral choice, and I will endeavour over the next four years to fulfill that confidence that they have put in me.

Now I get to turn to the occasion at hand, the throne speech. Let me start with a parable. I'm stealing it from Chesterton and Forrester and I'm trying to update it. It's a parable about a lamppost in a public square. Some people in the public square want to tear it down and they turn to a rabbi who's personifying conviction and reason. They ask the rabbi about the means and the ends of taking it down and he starts in a very dry, scholastic style and begins by talking about the fundamentals. He says, "The lamppost has a light and if light is important"—the next thing you know, the rabbi is knocked down, the lamppost is knocked down in a rush, and everybody around the public square starts congratulating themselves for their most unmedieval, common sense practicality. But that's just the start of the trouble because some of those who tore down the lamppost did so because they wanted better light, some because they wanted new iron, some because they wanted darkness to hide their misdeeds. Some tore it down because they just wanted to smash public property. After a while it became clear to everyone that they ought to have listened to the rabbi in the first place, but now that which might have been debated by gaslight must be discussed in the dark.

The parable points to our present situation in Ontario. In this province there is a plurality of goals, a wide, divergent set of commitments and assumptions and no agreed set of criteria as to what government ends ought to be, let alone government means. This is obviously a very different situation than we had with the previous Tory government, the Bill Davis government. The debate was about means not about ends.

But now we wonder in this House whether or not we have any shared assumptions about what government ought to do. As Alistair MacIntyre has put it, "Modern politics has become civil war by another means." We just have very few shared assumptions in this House, if any.

I believe that Ontarians have a certain set of assumptions as to the way government ought to be run. But those assumptions, I'm afraid, are not shared by the writers of the throne speech. On the one hand, the throne speech contains a moment of epic artifice and contempt when it denies that the government is the government. It reads that those elected in 1995 and re-elected in 1999 to continue the revolution do not view themselves as government, but rather those who came to fix the government, hence the anti-government of Ontario.

On the other hand, notwithstanding this claim to be an anti-government, there are words in this throne speech which resemble less Ronald Reagan than Roy Romanow. The throne speech says that the government is there to afford important services to people, including accessible health care and quality education. The government of Ontario, the throne speech reads, has worked actively to make social programs more effective. The government's agenda is large and ambitious, says the throne speech.

Which is it to be? Is it Roy Romanow or is it Ronald Reagan? How does one square a Thatcherite philosophy with these words of hope? The answer, I fear, is that a Trojan horse has entered this House. It is a Trojan horse that speaks words of hope for those still believing in a just society and a good government, yet that government is being dismantled by the self-acclaimed anti-government. Thus will the neo-conservative Trojan horse succeed in its clandestine revolution. Some revolution. More like a coup d'état. Some Blueprint. True blue, yes, but don't bother reading the print.

Is this what the people of Ontario want from their lawmakers? Do they really want to permanently knock down the lamppost and knock out the light of the state? I don't think so. I believe that most Ontarians are beginning to see that there is a growing gap between the rich and the poor and that the middle class are stalled at best. I think that most Ontarians reject a revolution of benign neglect that gives us the working families without homes, the mentally ill without shelters, communities and hospitals without doctors and nurses, gridlocked traffic, death-trap highways, yet nothing about those matters in the throne speech, nothing at all.

There is, with all due respect, a paranoia within the anti-government. James Hillman talks about a paranoia within neo-conservative governments toward their very foundations. It leads to a paranoia that plagues the calling of politics and the health of a city. I don't share that paranoia in our foundations.

Let me return to Mr Chesterton's parable. The lamppost has been torn down and our state institutions today operate with little to no light. The anti-government would say it was torn down as a result of a common-sense mandate. Others would say it was torn down for a variety of impulses ranging from impatience to rejection.

1530

But as with the parable, there is no clear answer and as with the parable, here in Ontario we are debating our assumptions about government, about legislative means and ends. We are having this debate in the dark. The lamppost has been torn down without considering whether there was worth in the light of the state in the first place.

We in the Liberal opposition believe, and I will always trumpet this conviction, that we need the light of the state, that that light begets a more just society and that the light should never be torn down. Martin Luther King said, "It need not be ideological. The good and just society is neither the basis of capitalism nor the antithesis of socialism, but a socially conscious democracy that reconciles the truths of individualism and collectivism."

As with Thatcher's Britain in the late 1980s and early 1990s, we have a situation in Ontario today where we have to look closely at the effects of the Conservative experiment. The Thatcher experiment, of course, was to sell off 48 publicly owned agencies and departments, drastically scale down spending and play a game of politics of friends and enemies. Sound familiar? Well, it is familiar. The politics of friends and enemies has

infected the politics of Ontario and so now we have "real Ontarians," as was cited in the throne speech, and, I guess, the rest, which is a remarkable, Orwellian moment in the history of this province. All Ontarians are real, I suppose, but now some are more real than others.

The people of St Paul's will expect me to watch this government closely. That's my job. I stand here as a rookie member, of course, and a young one at that, I think maybe the youngest on this side of the House, but I stand with an unwavering conviction: my faith in the province, in the light of the state, not only to help the prosperous in their pursuit of success but also to shine a light on those in need. This conviction requires much labour and listening and learning, and I am aware of the limits of the efforts of the elected. But I stand here, dedicated to keeping this anti-government restless, dedicated to those who insist that we create disincentives for harmful and frivolous expenditures, yes, but above all, dedicated to those in my party and in my caucus who believe that the province is there to shed light on those in need of the light, and know that the only light can be shone from democratically accountable public institutions. I will not serve here simply to achieve market efficiency and give the last word to the bottom line. I will not do that. I will serve here as long as the people of St Paul's will let me, to ensure, again to use the words of Forrester, that "mercy and justice and grace have the last word and that truth triumph over falsehood."

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): First, I would like to congratulate the member from St Paul's and all other new members of this Legislature, congratulate him on his first remarks here in this Legislature. To all of those who have yet to speak, good luck in the coming days and months in this Legislature.

There's one point I want to pick up from the speech from the member from St Paul's. He talked about the growing gap between the rich and poor and about how the middle class was being squeezed. There was some very good work done last year by the Centre for Social Justice and the Ontario Federation of Labour that looked exactly at that issue. The two groups looked, specifically, at any number of indicators of wealth and used that in the Ontario context. They looked at what is the compensation for CEOs, particularly in 1996-97; what is the freeze that's been on for those at the minimum wage for the last four years under this government; what is family income now and what is middle-class income considered to be and how are people being pushed down? And they looked at a number of indicators that showed very clearly that under the policies of this government, there truly is a much broader gap between the rich and poor, with the middle class being squeezed down.

What is in the throne speech that will make it worse is the further 20% income tax reduction proposed by this government. Clearly, under the Harris income tax scheme, those at the top benefit even more and those at the bottom are getting clobbered because of all the new user fees that they must pay.

What is so interesting about the Liberal position is that this is the same group that supports the Mike Harris 30% tax cut and, I would assume, supports the Mike Harris further 20% tax cut. The same Liberal Party is frankly in bed with these folks over here when it comes to this issue. So when Liberals talk about the growing gap, I've got to say the Liberals are just as responsible for that growing gap because they agree with the tax cut that exacerbates that growing gap.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): I'd like to congratulate the member for St Paul's on his presentation to the House. As far as the presentation was concerned, it was excellent. As far as content was concerned, I think it left much to be desired.

I listened very carefully to what he had to say. It was very similar to the leader of the third party when his presentation was made yesterday or a couple of days ago, a very similar sort of content. I guess he's free to do that. But he forgets one thing: There was an election that took place. I don't want to be so glib as to say we won and you lost—I'm not saying that—but I'm saying that our policies were very clear in that election, as they were in 1995, very clear as to where we stood. In 1995, every one of those promises we made, that were committed to, were followed by our party and this government, every last one of them. That's the reason, in my humble estimation, we were elected again. For one thing, we're the first government in eons that did exactly as they said they were going to do. Not only that; they liked it.

I would like to hear more from my friend from St Paul's as to the topic of tax cuts. It is difficult to tie his leader down as to where he stands; one day he says one thing and another day he says something else.

With respect to his friends in Ottawa—and that's most crucial, his cousins in Ottawa—we've been trying to get a commitment out of them with this surplus that they have to cut taxes. For some reason we're not able to persuade them to come to a commitment on that. Philosophically, the Liberal Party in Ontario is closer to them, certainly much closer than we are. I hope the member for St Paul's will be able to persuade his colleagues in the Liberal caucus to do just that: persuade the people in Ottawa to cut taxes.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): It is with great pleasure that I rise to compliment my colleague the member for St Paul's on his presentation on the speech from the throne. I would say he has given us quite a wonderful lecture on the content of the speech from the throne. I have enjoyed especially his remarks to his own riding that he represents, and I'm sure that the people of St Paul's, recognizing his quality and his desire to represent them, have sent him to Queen's Park to do exactly that. I'm sure he will be doing that with zeal and with honour in representing those people, and I hope they will keep him here for many years to come.

In addressing the speech from the throne, he has touched perhaps on the heart of the issue. The speech from the throne was very long, with Her Honour reading for about an hour or so nothing more than the passé

rhetoric we have seen since 1995, in other documents in the last four years, but nothing is implemented from what's in that speech from the throne. Every day we have issues brought into this House by members on both sides, where the government keeps on saying: "We have done so much. We have set aside so many millions of dollars for this and for that." If that is indeed the case, where is the benefit of those millions when we have shortages all over the place and we have seen in the last couple of days the tremendous report on retirement homes?

I congratulate the member for St Paul's again on his presentation.

1540

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Southwest): It's my pleasure to comment on the maiden speech put forward by the member for St Paul's. I want to congratulate him on his speech. I think we all remember our first time that we spoke in the House, and it's always a good memory.

I concur with the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey on the issue of tax cuts and where the Liberal Party and the Liberal members stand on the issue of tax cuts, because I listened very attentively to what he said today in the House and there was no mention of being in favour of tax cuts or being against tax cuts. We know that in the last Parliament, the 36th Parliament of Ontario, we saw the Liberal Party vote against each and every tax cut brought forward by our government. In fact, the NDP did that as well.

We've introduced 99 tax cuts since 1995. I think it's important to contrast that with what we saw from the Liberals and NDP during their 10 years in office. We saw a total of 65 tax increases on the part of those two parties, and during the five years from 1990 to 1995 we saw a net job loss in this province of 10,000 jobs. Since 1995, since our party was elected by the people of Ontario, we have seen 572,000 net new jobs in our province, and I think that's directly a result of tax cuts. We have seen the benefits that tax cuts have had.

In the throne speech it talked about further income tax reductions of 20%. We know that income tax rates have dropped 30% in this province. We're now paying approximately 38.5% of the federal rate in provincial income tax, which is down from 58%. We're also going to see further reductions in the provincial portion of residential property tax.

I look forward to hearing where the member for St Paul's stands on tax cuts and where his leader, the leader of the Liberal Party, stands on tax cuts.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Bryant: Thank you for those comments, all of you.

The member for Nickel Belt reminds us all why the NDP are forever doomed to be the perennial opposition, wanting to turn back the clock to a time when things were better, but unwilling to deal with the realities of our marketplace, of our society and of the changes to our province. So what we heard from the NDP, what we heard from the member for Nickel Belt was more of the same. I hope we continue to hear more of the same and

we'll continue to see them as the perennial opposition party; they're very good at that.

As for the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, I'm glad to hear that you listened to my speech, but I don't think you did. I think it's representative of the government, the smug arrogance that goes with, "Look, we won and you lost." I am very aware of the direction in which the crown of the mace points. What I was talking about for 15 minutes, and maybe I should have made it shorter or maybe I should have said it over and over again, was that I do not believe that most Ontarians—not even the 45% that voted for the Tories—in fact voted for the tearing down of the lamppost, voted for the end of government as we know it, voted for a society where you take your tax cut and run and there is no role for the state any more.

We believe that there should be tax cuts in due course, and we've said it before and again, but I'm not going to stand here and say that my legacy as a member of provincial Parliament or the legacy of my party is going to be simply about tearing down. Congratulations to the Tories. Their legacy is tearing down hospitals, closing schools and widening the gap between the rich and poor. You can have it.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member for Brant.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): Halton, the great county of Halton, the great riding of Halton.

It's a pleasure to stand here today, particularly in the new Legislature as it's been renovated. It's a marvellous feeling to stand here on the floor of the House. We call it the "new" Legislature but it has really been returned to the way it was in its original condition back in 1893, I believe, when the Legislature first opened. It's a particular pleasure to be back and to address the House on the speech from the throne.

I would also like to thank the people of Halton who showed such great faith and confidence in our government and in me personally. It is quite a humbling experience, I can tell you, to have 35,000 people place their faith and expectations on your shoulders. I can say to those people in Halton that I will try to fulfill my duties as best I can and to represent their views in this House and to fulfill the promises that this government made in the Blueprint document over the course of the election campaign.

Last week's speech from the throne addressed those expectations that the people of Ontario have placed in this government. Perhaps the most important aspect of that speech from the throne was that Ontarians can begin to count on an agenda that we have laid out, an agenda first unveiled during the election campaign last spring. The people of Ontario are beginning to believe in a government that will do what it says it is going to do.

It's interesting to look at the throne speeches from bygone eras, from governments that sat during the lost decade of 1985-95, and to compare the throne speeches they made with the promises they made in their election. There's a large gap. Even though that time frame is quite

short between the end of the election and the throne speech, quite often the campaign document does not reflect the throne speech. When you look at the term of office they served, and how they fulfilled the promises made during those election years, the gap is amazing. They had unfulfilled promises and the people of Ontario—not just Ontario but all of Canada, perhaps North America—had stopped believing in politicians.

It was an interesting experience: One of the first jobs I had on graduating university was to work down at the Ontario Food Terminal. Things down at the Ontario Food Terminal moved very quickly. You're dealing with fresh produce, fresh fruits and vegetables. When you're dealing with the freshness of that product, that freshness represents money. The faster that product moves, the more valuable it becomes. So you didn't have time, in those days, in the mid-1960s, to write out contracts. You did business on word of mouth. It became evident very early to me, when I was working down there, that your word was your bond. If you promised to deliver something at a given price, even though 10 minutes later that price might change, you'd better deliver, because if you didn't have your word, if you didn't have your bond, you were out of business, no one would deal with you. The only product that you could possibly purchase was the stuff that nobody else wanted and that product had very little value.

So having confidence in what you say and what you do very early on in my work experience became a very important aspect of my philosophy in dealing with life.

The government of Mike Harris elected in 1995 began to change that. People in Ontario are again believing that politicians will do what they said they were going to do. They're beginning to believe that because we have delivered on our promises.

We promised tax cuts in 1995. In the throne speech and in our election document, the Common Sense Revolution, we promised tax cuts. We promised 99 tax cuts. We promised tax cuts and we delivered 99 of those tax cuts. The vast majority of the people of Ontario appreciated that, but 99 times the opposition in this place voted against those tax cuts. They don't believe in tax cuts. They don't believe the people of Ontario can spend that money more wisely and with greater results than they can as a government. They voted against tax cuts every time we brought in one of our 99 tax cuts.

In 1995 the people of Ontario were crying for educational reform of a system that was broken, a system that had spiralling costs ever upwards, higher and higher. Yet the opposition voted against every educational reform that we brought in.

We promised to bring in welfare reform. The years 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990 were good years in the Ontario economy, very good years, and yet in every one of those years the welfare rolls increased in Ontario. We promised to fix that. We promised to change that. Every time we brought in a change to reform the welfare system, to give those people some hope and opportunity for the future instead of leaving them on the

rolls to lose their self-respect, every one of those reforms we brought in the opposition voted against.

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They're against tax cuts, they're against educational reform, they're against welfare reform, they're against smaller government. When we brought in the bill to reduce the size of government, the opposition voted against it.

We delivered the planks of a platform and the plan that it supported, and the plan we delivered is working. Ontario is booming again. Ontario's gross domestic product is running at an annualized rate of 5.4% growth, well ahead of the US rate, which was announced yesterday at 4.8% on an annualized basis. We're higher than any other country in the G7. Our plan for a recovered economy is working.

We're carrying the ball on Canadian growth and outpacing US growth, and we are doing it on increased retail sales. Increased retail sales is a very important number. It shows the confidence that the people of this country and the people of this province have in their economic future that is laid out by a government in power in Queen's Park in Toronto. The people of Ontario have great confidence that this economy is going to continue to grow and continue to improve, and they're showing that by buying products at retail, because retail sales are up.

New residential construction, another very important figure in our economy, continues to increase. And there's increased demand. There's increased demand for automobiles, there's increased electronic demand. Agri-food continues to experience increased activity, especially in the export market. The beginnings of a recovery in the commodity markets are beginning to affect the Ontario economy, and that will carry us forward well on into the future.

Those economic recoveries are creating new jobs. In September, we saw 28,800 new jobs created and a total of 571,000, almost 600,000, new jobs created since 1995 and the election of the Mike Harris government. That's the fastest job creation in Ontario's history.

When we first got to this place in 1995 and early in 1996, we used to hear the cries from the opposition benches. Their cry was, "Where are the jobs?" The jobs are here. They're right here in Ontario. They're coming from all over the world to Ontario to get a job. For two years, I haven't heard the opposition say, "Where are the jobs?" because the jobs are here, the fastest job growth in Ontario's history.

Perhaps as an aside, I should remind the opposition, particularly the official opposition, that the job growth has been caused, has been initiated, by tax cuts, because the tax cuts give people more money to spend; that spending creates economic activity.

Obviously, the Liberals here in Ontario and the Liberals in Ottawa don't understand this. They don't understand that tax cuts and payroll deductions count when it comes to creating jobs. That's their philosophy. We've proven that this is part of the Ontario economy. We've proven that it works. Tax cuts create jobs.

For the federal government not to reduce the employment insurance program when they've got \$21 billion in surplus, most of it coming from Ontario, is sinful; it's disgraceful that this amount of money can't be reduced and paid back into the pockets of employers to hire further employees, back into the pockets of employees to buy more product in retail, to spend that money as they see fit, to create a bigger boom in the economy. It's disgusting that the federal government remains committed to keeping that money in their own pot. They believe in tax and spend; they don't believe tax cuts create jobs. You chaps over there should phone your federal cousins and let them know that—

Interjections.

Mr Chudleigh: Another thing about the federal government, they're taking credit for this big boom in Canada; all the growth in jobs and everything, the feds are taking credit. It's amazing that they have the unmitigated gall to take credit for the boom that's going on. If you look at it carefully, there are only two provinces that are booming in Canada, Ontario and Alberta. Both of those provinces have tax-cutting policies from their provincial governments.

Unfortunately, the feds don't have the vision to understand the power of tax cuts. And, of course, they don't have a plan to implement them.

We've unleashed the economy of Ontario, and we've done that through empowering small business. Small business is where 82% of the jobs are in Ontario. Empowering small business, unleashing the economy, giving them their head, letting them operate, that's where the real economic power of Ontario is. We call on the feds to bring those tax cuts to all of Canada so that economic prosperity can be transcended across the province. Who knows? Even BC may pick it up. Who knows?

I'll quote John McCallum, who's the chief economist of the Royal Bank. "There is a pretty strong economic case to give the lion's share of the fiscal dividend to lowering income taxes." He's talking about the fiscal dividend of the federal government and their huge surplus.

Mr Brad Clark (Stoney Creek): Smart man.

Mr Chudleigh: He's a smart man. You're right, he is. The Ontario experience would prove that case to be true. John McCallum believes in tax cuts. The Canadian Bankers Association said job creation, business and consumer confidence are all at record levels. The association further goes on to say that Ontario's fiscal and tax policies could take much of the credit.

The throne speech has laid out an ambitious plan to build on our success. The throne speech talks about a further 20% cut to income tax rates, which will mean further expansion and further growth in Ontario. We talk about a 20% cut to the provincial portion of property taxes, property taxes that are high in Ontario. That payment that people make on a monthly or quarterly basis under their property taxes will go back into their pocket. That will give them a better quality of life. That reduction

in property taxes is a very important part of the throne speech.

That booming economy and growth creates a situation where more people have jobs, more people are working and more people are purchasing, and that puts more money in government coffers. Every year we've been elected, with every tax cut, we've increased our revenue from taxes in this province. Even though we're taxed at a lower level, we get more money in, more revenue. That money goes to additional health care spending and guaranteed funding for education; it goes to further welfare reforms, welfare reforms that are going to extend to the causes of welfare.

When you get an individual who is permanently on welfare because he's illiterate and can't read, he's not going to get a job as long as he's functionally illiterate. He can only get a job after you've removed that impediment to his employment. That is why our new program, as pointed out in the throne speech, is going to encourage those people to take remedial training, to take educational courses, to learn to read and write so that they can become a functional part of our society and develop their hopes and dreams that one day they too will have a house, drive a car, be in a situation where they have pride in themselves again.

Those conditions will also bring about the situation where we believe there will be 825,000 new jobs in the five years following our first completed job program. Small business will be the basis of that growth; it will be the basis in Halton, and it'll be the basis in each of the communities of Halton. That's why, perhaps, I'm known as a friend of business. It's always surprising to me that every Ontarian and every member of this House shouldn't see themselves as a friend of business. Until a business or an industry hires an individual, nothing happens; no job is created, no opportunity for that individual exists. Once you get a job, your life opens up, your opportunities open up. That job is only going to come from business and industry.

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I would remind the opposition that it's through those jobs that paycheques arrive and taxes are derived out of those paycheques, and the more tax cuts we get the more revenue this government will receive.

Businesses create those jobs and they maintain successful jobs. Lower taxes spur business with more people working and fewer people on welfare. It has continued to give us higher tax revenues. I remind you again that taxes pay for the services that all Ontarians and all members on either side of this House believe are important to Ontarians: health care, education, safe communities and looking after those people who are unable to look after themselves.

Derek Burleton, an economist with the TD Bank, says, "The Ontario government's drive to lower the personal tax burden has paid off handsomely—by putting money back in people's pockets, raising consumer confidence and contributing to a healthier economic environment." We're seeing more and more in all aspects of Canada that the Ontario experience is working; it's paying off.

Lower- and middle-income Ontarians now are beginning to receive hope. They used to be on welfare rolls that increased even during the good times: 1985 through 1990, through 1994. Every year those welfare rolls went up. It got to a point where an observer might suggest that the success of the welfare system was being judged on the number of people who used the system, not the number of people who were off the system in a working environment and creating something in this province.

People were robbed of self-esteem and confidence and robbed of their futures by a system that was purportedly trying to help them. This spiral of hopelessness and despair had to stop. Our program has reduced the welfare rolls by 437,000 people, and improvements announced in the throne speech will continue this progress. We fought hard each step of the way and the opposition voted against us on every one of our changes, the 99 tax decreases.

In education, 37% of the grade 9s in 1995 did not graduate from high school; 20% of the grads in 1995 were functionally illiterate. I don't know how that happens after 13 years of school, but in 1995 that was the case. The school system was failing over 50% of the people who went there for an education. Did this situation cry out for reform? I would think so. In the throne speech it was mentioned that we were the people who came to fix government. Clearly, without new direction, government would have gone on and continued in this unsustainable course.

We are the government of the day and we've come to fix government. We are the people who came to fix government and the rest is semantics. We'll continue to fix government as long as the people of this great province of Ontario give us that opportunity.

The throne speech also mentioned the taxpayers' protection act. With the passing of this act there will be no backsliding on taxes. Taxes spiralled up over a long period of time, and over a shorter period of time they will now spiral down.

We will continue with municipal reform, as pointed out in the throne speech, to bring the benefits of well-run towns and cities to all Ontarians and hopefully to reduce property taxes to a level where people can live in better houses and in better situations in the future.

The throne speech also mentioned bringing in a smart card—already?

The Acting Speaker: Already. Questions and comments?

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I address my comments to the member for Halton and congratulate him on his remarks. Though I find some disagreement with almost all of them, I would like to comment on the eloquence with which he presented his case.

I take exception with a couple of points, and I raise them to the member and for the House's consideration. He mentioned his early experiences at the food terminal and the need to ensure that produce moved quickly—fruits and produce, I suppose—so that they were freshest

and had the most value. But it's interesting that this member represents a riding on the edge of the greater Toronto area where gridlock is increasingly imperilling our businesses. General Motors in Oshawa has had to, because of gridlock through the Toronto area, suggest to its suppliers that they locate only to the east so as not to have to come through Toronto. The residents of his riding in the town of Milton have challenges around GO train services and we find increasingly large numbers of people forced to sit on stairs in GO trains.

The member talked about unprecedented numbers in residential construction. Housing starts are an important figure, and that's to be applauded, but there is no integrated transit system, there is no sense of infrastructure development that accompanies this slipshod development that's going on throughout the greater Toronto area.

I found it particularly interesting that this member mentioned bankers repeatedly.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Banks?

Mr Smitherman: Banks. The member from Halton supports banks, but he talks nothing about the increased use of food banks, the increased need for schools to feed kids at lunch, and the increase in homelessness in our city.

Ms Martel: I appreciated the comments made by the member from Halton. I'd like to respond in this way: I wondered if he and I had been in the same chamber for the last two years when we were talking about jobs, because I come from a part of the world that has seen no benefit whatsoever from your tax reductions. Your Conservative candidate in Nickel Belt fell right into the trap during the election campaign. He was out there at an all-candidates' debate talking about how the government's 30% income tax cut had created so many jobs in the province of Ontario. I asked him, if that was the case, then why was it that the city of Sudbury, which is the largest regional centre in northern Ontario, had had, according to Statistics Canada, the highest unemployment rate in the country for over 14 months running in the ramp-up to the election. For over 14 months the regional centre in northern Ontario, the city of Sudbury, had the highest unemployment rate.

One would think that if the tax cut was the be-all and the end-all and responsible for job creation, this major centre in northern Ontario would benefit; indeed that the city of Sault Ste Marie that you represent, Mr Speaker, would benefit; or that the city of Thunder Bay would benefit. What has happened, according to Stats Canada is that all those communities continue to have the highest unemployment rate in the country.

The job creation that we see in southern Ontario has nothing to do with the tax cut. It probably has a lot to do with how well the American economy is doing and how the exports in this country have increased to the US. But wake up and smell the coffee, because if tax cuts were creating jobs, my community, the community of Sault Ste Marie, the Speaker's home community and many others in northern Ontario would have seen the benefit—and we haven't.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I would like to join with the member for Halton to make the case that tax reductions do have a stimulative impact on growth and jobs. If it's not true, then let's look at the logical reverse. If the logical reverse were true, we shouldn't have had any mess when we arrived here in 1995.

I can recall back in the days of the great tax addicts one Bob Nixon. It's about 10 years ago to this month, before he introduced his budget of 1990, which the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington mentioned the other day was used to balance the budget—one of the few times we had a balanced budget, for about three nanoseconds. But do you know how they did it? They raised taxes in one of the most injurious areas across Ontario, and that is in the sensitive hospital-ity industry, with that glorified commercial concentration tax. I was on a local council back in those days. I can tell you, that was the beginning of the severe recession we had in this province back in 1990-91. It was that tax that introduced the job-killer index on the hospitality industry in the city of Toronto and in a lot of other areas across this province.

Another factor that brought about high assessment problems and unemployment was the high assessment on our education taxes across Ontario, particularly in the city of Toronto. We're just now starting to get out of that.

With respect to the member for Sudbury, obviously there is a problem in the north and part of that is that it deals with a commodity-based problem. That is part of the problem why that area.

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Mr Bradley: The member mentioned banks in his speech. I find it interesting what the banks get away with these days in terms of what they do to their employees. The Bank of Montreal made an announcement that it was going to lay off a number of people, and other banks have done the same thing. They keep laying these people off so they get a blip in the stock market. It looks good for a little while and then all these people lose their jobs. More and more, they try to automate. If you don't follow their prescription, of course, they say you're a Luddite, a person who doesn't want to deal with the various machines they have at the bank.

At the Royal Bank in St Catharines, I know they're cutting back on hours again. At one time not that long ago they had hours which were 8 am to 8 pm every day, except Sunday of course, and Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm. They keep shrinking that down. It's now down to 5 o'clock. You have to be there before 5 o'clock on Monday to Wednesday. Then Thursday and Friday they give you a little bit of leeway. Now on Saturday it's 9 to 1. Meanwhile, of course, there are people who don't have jobs or whose hours are cut back because the bankers want to make even more profit.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: I say to my friend from Etobicoke North, if the banks were losing money, I'd understand that. I'd say they're trying to trim their costs.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: I know, but he was interjecting, though.

I would understand it, but here these people are, they make these huge profits and then they just boot the people out on the streets. Where are these people going to be able to work? You people seem to support them. You and Conrad Black support them.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Chudleigh: To the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, thank you very much for your comments. Yes, we are concerned about gridlock. Obviously it slows down business. That's what prosperity does; it creates gridlock. Prosperity, jobs creation, more cars. That's why the speech from the throne, which was a good speech—you should give it a read someday—talked about the SuperBuild program. The SuperBuild program is brought in to address those problems.

To the member for Nickel Belt, yes, the north, with the commodity prices worldwide, hasn't experienced the kind of growth that we have in the rest of the province, but we are putting more road structure in there. We're increasing Highway 69 to four lanes all the way up. We're repairing the roads in the north so that prosperity will come. We're building the infrastructure that will give them that growth.

I thank the member from Etobicoke North for his kind remarks about my speech. He talked about the budget of 1989, I believe, the last balanced budget and the taxes that were brought in in order to balance that budget. He did not mention, however, that the employer health tax came in that year and generated \$800 million out of the pockets of employers. They're proud of that. You balanced the budget on the backs of businessmen and on the backs of employees.

To the member for St Catharines: I would point out to him that in the throne speech there was a part about taking the hackles off the credit unions and allowing them to get more involved in the financing.

He also mentioned something about "not long ago." My recollection was that it was quite some time ago. But I understand that as we progress in age, things seem like they were—

Interjection.

Mr Chudleigh: I know that on all sides of this House we really want the same thing: We want the very best for Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to add nine minutes from our previous rotation to this rotation and that will be split among the members for Prince Edward-Hastings, Brant and York West.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? OK.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I would like to begin my remarks by congratulating Speaker Carr on his election. If it couldn't be me, I'm pleased that it's him.

I would also like to pay tribute to the predecessors of the Speaker for the restoration of this beautiful room. It is truly awesome to come into it for the first time, and in fact each and every time.

I'm sure that I can speak on behalf of all the newly elected members when I also thank all of the staff here at the Legislature that made the transition so easy, were so helpful in guiding us through the rather complex process. It's very much appreciated.

By nature, I believe I'm an optimist. It is my hope that those who have the privilege to sit here together will do it in the spirit of co-operation. I truly believe that, despite our ideological differences, all of us are here to find a way to better serve the people of Ontario. I appreciate the opportunity to be part of that spirit.

To the people of Prince Edward-Hastings, I express my sincere thanks for their support and the trust and the faith that they've placed in me. In what was a very difficult and remarkably long campaign, the voters of my riding opened their doors to my wife, Linda, and myself time and time again, were truly interested in speaking to us and were truly pleased to have the opportunity to share their concerns. I thank my wife for being with me each and every day of the campaign, and for my children putting up with a lot of pre-cooked meals for a five- or six-week period.

I also need to express my appreciation to a huge group of old and new friends who worked tirelessly through the campaign. After long and hard days on the campaign, it was absolutely uplifting to come into the office and see the numbers working and the encouragement from them. All too seldom, I believe, we fail to recognize the people who work in the trenches each and every election to be part of the democratic process. I want to take the opportunity to thank them once again from the floor of the Legislature.

I also want to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to our leader, Dalton McGuinty. It was an honour to run through the election with him, and I'm honoured to sit with him in caucus.

I want to assure the voters of Prince Edward-Hastings that I will do my very best to live up to their expectations here at Queen's Park. The people in my riding are very hard-working and they expect the same of their MPP.

The riding that I represent is diverse and I believe it is diverse in a manner that captures the best of what is our Ontario.

Although much of my career has been dedicated to education, those who know me will confirm that one of my real passions is farming. We have an agricultural industry in our community that is the pillar of our region. I want to assure the men and women who are on the farms in my riding that I will be the voice for them.

I also pay tribute to and pledge to be the voice of small business. Small businesses repeatedly during the election told me that they felt they were neglected. The focus was on large industry. The tax cuts have not benefited them and they believe that they merit attention. These small businesses are truly the heroes of our economy. As one who understands the value and the contributions of the corner store, the small video outlet and the tourist operator, I will do my best to represent them here.

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It was very clear to me during the election as I talked to constituents that they're tired of confrontation, they're tired of chaos and the government's relentless assault on anyone who dares to differ with their viewpoint. They told me that they want their voices to be heard at Queen's Park and they want their MPP to put their interests ahead of politics.

My voters are tired of how much time was spent on fighting the teachers rather than on reforming the system. They were not impressed with the time that was spent on cutting health care and the small amount of time that was spent on such issues as doctor shortages and the long waits for medical services.

They felt that far too much time was spent by the government patting themselves on the back for the economy of the greater Toronto area and very little time on the economy of places like Frankford and Belleville and Picton and Quinte West. As I stated yesterday in my statement, for more than 200 Bata workers and 700 Nortel workers who will receive their layoff notices in the next few weeks, they saw nothing in the throne speech, nothing that will help to address the concerns they have for next week, next month and next year. I want the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development to know that these workers are looking for help, but instead, in the throne speech they heard rhetoric.

I want to make it clear to the Premier that no one in Prince Edward-Hastings is unhappy that the greater Toronto area is doing well, but there's more to Ontario than the 905 area code. The message they want me to convey to the Premier and to this government is that they are not sharing in that strong and healthy economy. For far too many in Ontario, the Mike Harris revolution has turned their dreams and their hopes for the future into a nightmare.

As a professional engineer, my professional and personal philosophy has always been: If it's not broken, don't fix it. Over the last four years, I'm becoming rather convinced that the current government's philosophy is: If it isn't broke, break it.

Nowhere have we seen this attitude more than in the changes in education. For 17 years I had the pleasure of sitting on a public school board, the last six years as chair, and worked without exception with extremely dedicated, committed people. In spite of the misconception that has been perpetuated through the province, never once did I have a sense that they would come to a meeting and say, "Let's get the taxes up tonight." Our concern was to provide the services at the lowest cost.

I know I discuss this at some risk, because this government has tried—and I stress "tried"—to create an atmosphere in this province which makes it politically unwise for anyone to associate themselves with the education system. But can you imagine anywhere else in the world where a government diverted large numbers of dollars to create a poisoned atmosphere against their educators? As a former trustee, I can assure you that the tens of millions of taxpayer money that was spent on

advertising could have been better spent on special education. I'm proud to stand here today and give praise to those who work in education. They're unsung heroes and I salute them for their successes.

I hope, in concluding my remarks on the education sector, that the government will take a lesson from private industry. I would suggest an example that's very close to the minister's home. Some three years ago, General Motors went on strike. During that entire strike, never once did the president of General Motors stand up and say that her employees aren't working hard enough or that they're overpaid or they don't make a good product. I look to private industry for that example because our employees deserve that same dignity. It's my hope that the education minister will take the next four years and focus on the classroom instead of creating targets to deflect criticism.

Along with my interest in education, I have a keen interest in children's issues. My family and I foster and I have served on the children's aid board of directors for 24 years, the longest service in Ontario. I have a deep respect for those who work on the front line to protect our most vulnerable citizens. Unfortunately, over the years I've seen the type and quantity of abuse of our children increase dramatically. You would not want me to describe the things that are done to some children in our province. So it has been personally distressing to see the cuts that have been made in that area in seeing front-line workers laid off while I know that there are children in abusive situations unable to have a response to their concern.

My family and I live in a rural area. We have a great appreciation of nature in our home, and I would suggest that we could look to Canada geese for an example of how we should be treating our fellow citizens. When a Canada goose is injured and drops out, two stop to stay with that one to help. In Mike Harris's Ontario, that's not a model we use.

Someone once wrote that as legislators we're not expected to complete our work in our lifetime, but neither must we fail to try. We must try. If we do nothing else, we demonstrate to our children that we have the courage to accept responsibility, we have compassion and we're prepared to take a risk for a better community. If we do this, we'll have left our children with the proper tools to prepare for their future.

In closing, we're obligated to find hope in this chamber for the future and to build our sense of community back in this province. This is something that's been missing for the last four years. We must find common ground not just for ourselves, but for our children.

I thank the House for providing me with this opportunity, and I pledge to the residents of Prince Edward-Hastings that I will work hard to ensure that their interests and concerns are fully represented here in the Ontario Legislature.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Before I move into the text of my comments, I was struck by my fellow member, my seatmate from Prince Edward-Hastings, and I must

announce to the House—I am sure he would allow me to do so—that today he was granted foster care of two young children. He fought for them dearly, and I appreciate your efforts, sir.

It is with a great sense of honour and respect for this House, its traditions, the people in it and the people of Ontario that I rise today. I offer my sincere congratulations to all of the new members who for the first time will engage in the business of this place. To the members who have previous experience, some more than others, I say thank you for sharing your wise counsel and your helpful hints. I will admit, Mr Speaker, that it has come from all sides of the House, which has made me very pleased and happy to say.

To the entire staff of the Legislature—the security guards, the housekeeping staff, the catering, the canteen staff, the groundskeepers, the librarians, the researchers, and of course the people who work in this very chamber—you are a credit to this place. You have given your heart and soul to ensure that the people of Ontario are provided with a democracy that is the envy of the world. You are not taken for granted. You are appreciated.

Personally, I want to make a special note to my campaign team in Brant that was directly responsible for putting me in this place. They worked tirelessly day and night, and I truly appreciate and thank them.

I want to take a moment to publicly thank the people of Brant for placing their trust in me: trusting me to represent them as their member of provincial Parliament; trusting me to represent them and bring their vision, their message, their needs, their desires and their dreams for their community to Queen's Park. The people of Brant don't want Queen's Park to do things to them; sometimes they feel that way. They don't want Queen's Park to impose a made-in-Toronto, cookie-cutter solution; sometimes they feel that way. They want true, honest, meaningful consultation that includes all citizens from all walks of life, not just a very special selected few, and sometimes after the fact. They want a Queen's Park that can help them bring their vision to life.

The people of Brant are employed and, unfortunately, unemployed; urban and rural; able-bodied and physically challenged; rich and poor. Collectively, whatever our status, we are the people of Brant. We are a microcosm of this great province. We all want and need respect and dignity.

This can be accomplished with the help of good government: not a government that does all things for all people, not a government that dictates, not a government that dominates, not a government that acts in haste, not a government that never admits its mistakes or even corrects them. We need a government that understands and respects people, a government that puts people first.

1630

Brant has been the home of outstanding citizens who have contributed to the well-being of not only Brant but also the province, the country, and indeed the world. Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, did so

right in Brant. Dr James Hillier, the holder of the patent for the electron microscope, was born and raised in Brantford. Emily Stowe, a pioneer in both medicine and education, left her mark originating from Brant. Poetess Pauline Johnson, Chief Joseph Brant, Thomas B. Costain, W. Ross Macdonald, the Massey family, the Cockshutt family, the Steadman family, the late Phil Hartman, and of course Wayne Gretzky have all hailed from the Brant area. These are just a few of the more familiar names that have made us very proud and who have hailed from Brant.

I now introduce to you one of our own hometown heroes, Jimmy "The Iceman" MacNeil. Jimmy is gaining celebrity status as the number one Zamboni driver in North America. Just to let you know, Speaker, the company, Zamboni, is from Brant. We need the vote of every Ontarian to ensure Jimmy maintains his vital lead in the tally against his nearest rival from Detroit. I respectfully ask that we log on to www.zamboni.com/newsBallot.html and vote for Jimmy "The Iceman" MacNeil.

Every single citizen of Brant is special. I dedicate my actions and I dedicate and swear by my word that I will treat each and every one of you with respect and dignity, as will Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Brant/Brantford has produced more than its fair share of distinguished citizens. There is no question that the people of Brant have garnered a well-earned reputation for caring and sharing whatever the political affiliation, if any at all.

I want to pay tribute to the good people who have entered these chambers before me. Again, to name but a few of the over 30 outstanding members who have come from the old ridings of Brant and now the new riding of Brant, I respectfully acknowledge Thomas Preston, George Martin, Morrison McBride, Henry Hagey, George Gordon, Mac Makarchuk, Dick Beckett, Phil Gillies, Dave Neumann, Brad Ward, Ron Eddy and, yes, Ron Johnson. Speaker, the last four members mentioned were personal acquaintances of mine and they represented all three parties.

Special mention is given to special individuals: Arthur Sturges Hardy, the fourth Premier of Ontario, a Liberal; Harry Nixon, the 13th Premier of Ontario, a Liberal; and finally Bob Nixon, a living treasure and cherished, respected gentleman, a Liberal. All came from Brant.

Today I have spoken mainly about people, not the accumulation of wealth. I have spoken of dignity and respect, not punishment and revolution. I have spoken about service and caring, not blaming and zero tolerance. My intention is to bring issues before the government that the people of Brant feel are needed to be better served and that apply to their vision.

The unique proposal to keep St Joseph's Hospital open that fulfills the mandate of this government, saves millions of dollars, helps with the recruitment of physicians to our underserved area and forges a broad health care delivery partnership is one such issue.

For the health and safety of the citizens of Brant and its visitors, a second issue is that we ask for a turnaround to be built on the new stretch of Highway 403 between Brant and Ancaster.

We ask for an improved funding formula to prevent one-high-school communities from losing their beloved places of learning. This also applies to some elementary schools which have been overlooked.

The made-in-Toronto, cookie-cutter formula doesn't work. We ask for serious and immediate changes to the special education funding formula to be inclusive, not exclusive. Don't design student profile schemes to eliminate children in order to save money. Design them to celebrate their differences and welcome them into the family of education with the help that they need to learn.

In closing, I want to publicly express my love, my dedication and my support to my entire family, especially my wife, Rosemarie; my children, Joe, Rachel and Nicole; my mother, Lucille; and my mother-in-law, Madge. Thank you for your patience, support, understanding, and most of all your love.

I'm ready to serve to the best of my ability.

Mr Sergio: Mr Speaker, first of all let me congratulate you on your excellent win as Speaker of the House. I can only promise that we'll try to do as well as in the past session and not have you on your feet as much as possible, even though sometimes you wish you could just to change posture, if you will. We'll try not to be as raucous, as you would want not to see.

Congratulations to my colleagues from Brant and Prince Edward-Hastings. I think this is the quality of people we have received from their citizens who have sent them to Queen's Park, and they have summed up so beautifully what's really missing in the speech from the throne.

The speech from the throne is a myth of all those wonderful things the members for Prince Edward-Hastings and for Brant have mentioned to us here. Government yes, but with compassion, with care, with fairness. There is absolutely none of that in the speech from the throne.

I have to say, without raising the ire of my colleagues on the government side, that when they keep on saying, "We are not the government; we are the ones sent here to fix the government," and we hear quotes like this, the message we send to the people out there is that they have been elected to form a government and now they are here and they can do whatever the heck they want, regardless of the other people out there who are looking at their government for help, for assistance, for compassion, for some caring.

We have heard many times, and even today, some of the members saying: "You know what? Our economy is booming. The welfare rolls are down." Oh yeah? First of all, I could give you a long list in my few minutes why the economy is doing well here in Ontario. I could also give you a list of what happened to some of those thousands of people who are off the welfare rolls.

The way we watch the news, we read the paper or we get reports, I'm sure so do our Premier, his staff and the members of the government as well. We read every day that homelessness is rampant. The number of people living out of reasonable accommodation is much higher. Do we see them putting in any money to solve the situation? Uh, uh. They say, "Where is Ottawa?" Look, it's our problem here. Let's not pass the buck to the city or whatever. I think they should assume responsibility for some of those people who cannot speak or act for themselves. That's what a government is for.

1640

Do you know how many thousands of children go hungry every morning? I'm sure they know. I'm sure our Premier knows very well why some of those 38,000 kids go hungry every morning. Is it because of that particular group that we have somehow closed an eye and said, "Among some of those 200,000 people, there really are people in need"? Let's find out how we can help those people.

It's one thing to say, "Look, the Liberals always say no to tax cuts and stuff like that." It's not quite so; it's not quite true. We have said that there are other areas to be taken into consideration first, prior to giving the richest people in our province a tax break. We have to take care of those young kids. We have to take care of the people who cannot take care of themselves, otherwise what is the purpose of forming a government, calling ourselves a government? I believe, as the members for Brant and Prince Edward-Hastings have said, we have to be compassionate. We can only do that by delivering good government to the people of Ontario. Unless we do exactly that, it's fine and dandy to have thousands of pages read in one hour's time, promising all kinds of things when we don't see any action.

Now we're going into the second term, fifth year, whatever, of this government and, God bless them, I won't take anything away, because they've been elected. All the members have been elected by their people in our democratic system to represent their constituents. I'm sure they are here because they have done well in their community and they are expected to continue to do so. But once we are in this House, dealing with all the people of our province, then we have to widen our views and look further, beyond the boundaries of our own particular riding.

We in Metropolitan Toronto have a problem that is more diverse than some of the other parts of Ontario, and we have to look at those problems on an individual basis. It is like telling a municipality, for example—and I don't want to touch the very sensitive issues of the moraine that are in front of us. It's like when a local municipality is dealing with a rezoning application or applications, and everyone is given their full view, assessed on individual merits. I believe that a good government should be doing exactly that, looking at the people beyond the boundaries of the city of Toronto and looking at the needs of those particular communities.

There are many areas and many reasons as to why we have said we have to provide a good health care system and education funding. We've got to try and assist our students if we want them to get a good education. There's none of that in the budget. There's nothing in the budget with respect to our seniors, and I don't have to tell you the big problem that exists not only with nursing homes but with retirement homes, and we will hear more about it.

That's where I compliment members in their presentations and maiden speeches in this House, because instead of saying to the government, or retorting to the government, what they have done and how they have done it in the past four years or so, it is how they see Parliament working on behalf of the people they represent. I completely share their views. I share the zeal with which they have expressed those views, how we should be serving the people of Ontario. I hope a little bit of what they have said can rest with us, with every member, and can be assimilated by the Premier, because he continues to say more of the same; I hope so, because the people of Ontario deserve a caring and compassionate government.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Questions and comments? The member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): That's it.

Mr Bradley: Did you get re-elected?

Mr Marchese: Yes, I did. I'm happy to be here, I say to the member from—what's the riding there—Niagara?

Mr Bradley: Still St Catharines.

Mr Marchese: Still St Catharines. It hasn't changed. That's why when he introduced me as the member for Trinity-Spadina you asked, "Did you still get elected?" Because it's a new riding, I imagine.

Speaker, I congratulate you, and like the member from Niagara Centre who yesterday appealed to you to be kind to him, I appeal to you in the same way, because notwithstanding my admiration for the previous speaker, he did from time to time restrain me from using strong words against the government, you will remember. He attempted on many occasions to sanitize my not-so-frequent abuse of language levied against that government, so I hope you will be a little bit more lenient with me from time to time. Thank you and congratulations.

I want to congratulate the member from Elgin-Middlesex and Brant for having been elected here in this House.

Ms Martel: Prince Edward-Hastings, sorry.

Mr Marchese: Prince Edward-Hastings. There you go. I thought I got it right. I'll get it right the next time. I want to tell you that I was happy you didn't say things that would make me attack Liberals, because I've done that from time to time. All I can say is that I wish you the best. Hopefully, you will not be divided among yourselves and disillusioned with those machinations within the Liberal caucus and you will still be happy enough at the end of your first term to run again. But I appreciate the sincerity with which both of you have presented your views and wish you both the best.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I will comment on the initial speeches from the members opposite. I'll leave the member from York West alone, since I've heard him for four years and I've got lots of time to respond to him in the future also.

To the members from Prince Edward-Hastings and Brant, I congratulate you on your opening speeches. I thought they were both excellent speeches. You took the time to talk about your communities, your families and the people who helped get you elected. The member for Prince Edward-Hastings talked about other people in his riding, about his desire to fight for the agricultural community, which I think is an excellent idea on his part, fighting for more jobs in his community.

He could start, I might add, by asking his federal cousins to reduce the EI premiums. The booming economy which we are experiencing, many of us in our ridings in southern Ontario like Niagara Falls, has spread throughout the province, but maybe in some places better than others, so there is more work to be done. That was, as you know, a theme of ours during the campaign. We will continue to do that, to make sure the booming economy in Ontario spreads to areas like Prince Edward-Hastings.

The member opposite, though, could help by getting on his federal Liberal cousins to reduce this offensive, extremely arrogant \$21-billion surplus they have in the EI fund. One editorial said today, "This massive, growing surplus is particularly galling for the jobless." That's because these types of taxes kill jobs. I hope the member will join us in that fight with his federal cousins.

The member for Brant—also an excellent speech—talked about former members. Jimmy MacNeil—I might mention to him that my brother Brad Maves in Chippawa, a suburb of Niagara Falls, is also on the list, www.zamboni.com. My brother Brad has gone on radio stations and in several newspapers and actually urged people to vote for Jimmy because he'd like to see an Ontarian and a Canadian person win the Zamboni Driver of the Year, so I would encourage others to do that around the province.

Mr Bradley: I want to compliment the member for Prince Edward-Hastings, the member for Brant, the member for York West and any others who have spoken today. I'd be interested in their views—perhaps the member for Brantford would be interested in this particularly—on the proliferation of gambling opportunities thrust on this province by this government.

I know many of the Family Coalition members from Scarborough and other places here who worry about family values while they join in opening casinos all over the province of Ontario so that people can squander their last penny at those casinos. I wonder at the morality of a government that portrays itself as very moral in opening these various casinos. I'm talking now about these so-called charity casinos across the province; I call them the new Mike Harris gambling halls.

1650

I thought we had stopped them in their tracks, and I hope that we have. A lot of us asked questions in this House, because we were afraid of course that there would be those awful video lottery terminals, the electronic slot machines, in every bar and every restaurant of every village, town and city of the province of Ontario, as the Ontario government, conservative in its name only, reached its large paws into the pockets of the most desperate people, the people who aren't born into privilege, the people who don't have the connections to get the great jobs or may not have had the educational opportunities, who look at this as a one chance perhaps to get some money. So you prey on the most desperate people in our society.

I know they tried to thrust one of these so-called charity casinos on Brantford, and I'd be very interested in knowing what the member for Brantford thinks of this effort to destabilize and tear at the very fabric of Ontario.

Ms Martel: I would like to respond specifically to some comments made by the member for York West. This has particularly to do with the lack of any reference at all to any initiatives on the part of the Harris government with respect to homelessness and child poverty.

We judge a society based on what we do for the most vulnerable in our society, and the government cannot continue to ignore the fact that we have a crisis in this province with respect to homelessness and a crisis in this province with respect to child poverty. You cannot continue with the contradiction of claiming every day in this House about how Ontario is booming when so many more thousands of the most vulnerable, our kids, are living in poverty in this province.

The government could do something with respect to homelessness, for example, instead of saying, as you did in the throne speech, that this is a very complex issue and we have to work with the federal government and municipal governments. You could follow up on an announcement that your own former minister Janet Ecker made with respect to this government setting aside surplus land for the development of affordable housing. She made that announcement in this House some months ago.

I looked in the announcement that was recently made by the Chair of Management Board when he talked about a committee that was going to be established to look at the disposal of public assets, and there was nothing, absolutely nothing, as a follow-up to the commitment that was made by that former minister in this House.

With respect to child poverty, I remind the government that we can continue to do nothing, but there will be an enormous cost to all of us in the future. The proposals that were made with respect to Fraser Mustard have effectively been shelved by your government. The demonstration projects that your minister announced several weeks ago were demonstration projects, four, that were already up and running before the recommendations came out. I urge you, take those recommendations off the shelf; do something about child poverty before it's too late.

The Speaker: Responses?

Mr Parsons: I would like to thank the member for Niagara Falls for some of his comments. I was intrigued about the philosophy of the federal government having responsibility for creating certain issues.

As I've talked to the people who are losing their jobs in my area, they have over and over discussed free trade and asked that I pass on their thanks to Brian Mulroney for sending their jobs south of the border. I don't plan to see him in the next little while, so perhaps a member of the government could do that for me.

What I do know is that in my riding four years ago there were three schools offering breakfast clubs. There are now over 30. We have hungry children in our community, and I would suggest that we consider the philosophy of the Salvation Army, which says, "We don't know how we got here and we don't know who's to blame, but we're here to fix it."

We have the opportunity to fix the problem of hungry children in Ontario. Let's forget the past; let's look to the future.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member—a quick moment.

I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her chambers.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour has assented:

Bill 4, An Act respecting the Legislative Assembly and its officers / *Projet de loi 4, Loi concernant l'Assemblée législative et ses fonctionnaires;*

Bill 5, An Act to amend certain statutes because of the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *M. v. H.* / *Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant certaines lois en raison de la décision de la Cour suprême du Canada dans l'arrêt M. c. H.*

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

(continued)

The Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Martel: I want to begin, Mr Speaker, because I haven't done this so far, even though I've been up asking questions, to congratulate you on your election as Speaker. I'd offer you my condolences on the job that you're about to undertake, but certainly the former Speaker did a very good job in his capacity, and I'm sure that you will continue to do the same. I wish you well in all of your endeavours.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the throne speech debate today. While there are a number of things that I could talk about, I want to focus on two items in particular. The first has to do with disabled

Ontarians, and the second has to do with physician shortages in this province. Let me begin first with disabled Ontarians.

The throne speech said "the desire to ensure opportunities for all members of society also underpins your government's ongoing effort to develop an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Consultations on this important initiative continue. The goal is to introduce a new action plan this session."

I wonder if this government really thinks disabled people don't have a clue about what went on in this House in the last four years. During the election in 1995, this government, like the other two opposition parties, made the commitment to Ontarians with disabilities that we would, in the first term of that government, enact a piece of legislation that would recognize and allow the disabled in this province to contribute in terms of the workforce, to contribute socially, to have government remove barriers that face people in order that they could make a contribution.

The Conservative Party signed on to that during the election in 1995 and so did we and so did the Liberal party at the time. What happened after that was disgraceful. For the first three years of its mandate the Conservative government did nothing with respect to any kind of enactment, to any kind of legislation that affected the disabled in this province.

It wasn't until the summer of 1998, three full years after having been elected, that the Harris government finally decided to have some consultations with respect to the development of the said act. I remember those consultations because they were so flawed as a consultation process. The parliamentary assistant, Mr Shea, went to seven or eight communities. He held private, invitation-only meetings with the disabled community to hear their views on what they thought would be needed in a piece of legislation that would guarantee them access to make a full contribution to Ontario society.

I remember the night before he was in Sudbury, members of the disabled community, to their credit, held a rally at the Canadian Hearing Society in order that they might have some kind of public expression of what they thought was needed, because they certainly knew that they weren't going to have any kind of open, public consultation the next day. So many people in the room, representing so many organizations who represent disabled people weren't even invited to that little private, backdoor meeting that was supposed to be to discuss so important a piece of legislation.

I remember the criticism that the government took with respect to the consultation, but I remember even more clearly the shameful piece of legislation that the government then introduced as their supposed response to that consultation. It was a three-page document that did nothing to address the real and serious barriers that disabled people in Ontario face. The only thing that shameful three-page document directed the government to do was to have all ministries do a review of their policies and their procedures and their legislation to

ensure that nothing that they were doing would cause a barrier to disabled people in the province.

Do you know what? That was a review that had already been underway, because when we formed the government in 1990, one of the first acts that was taken by the then Chair of Management Board, Frances Lankin, was to direct all ministries to do a systematic barriers review. We also provided funding to each of those ministries to make the changes that were going to be necessary to remove those barriers.

The first thing that this Conservative government did upon being elected was to stop, cancel, end that review. Three years later, in an effort to say they had done something for the disabled, they ordered that those reviews be reinstated, but they didn't even provide the funding that would have been necessary to do something about barriers which existed.

1700

We find today, in terms of responding to the throne speech, the government yet again coming forward and saying to the disabled community: "We intend to do something about your situation. We intend to develop an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. We're going to consult about some new initiatives that we can undertake."

It's like giving the disabled the back of the hand, because they have been there before with this government. They have heard it before from this government and they saw no concrete action under this government, despite the very clear commitment the then leader of the Conservative Party made during the 1995 election. I hope that this time the government truly wants to do something for the disabled, because thus far your responsibility to respond to their needs has been completely undermined by your lack of action with respect to these same people.

The one concrete thing the government has done with respect to the disabled is the second thing I want to comment on. We have been trying to raise a red flag with the minister, Mr Baird, in this House with respect to a serious and significant problem he now has with the ODSP. You will recall, Mr Speaker, that when this legislation was debated in this House, my colleague the member for Beaches-East York said very clearly that the proof of how well this would work would be in the details, and that is exactly the case.

We have a program, I regret to say, that is so much like the Family Responsibility Office that it scares me. I watched this government, when it downsized, when it closed the regional offices to put something new in place, completely destroy a system that was put in place to make sure that families across this province got their support payments. Now we have a second office, the responsibility of which it is to determine if disabled people get benefits and to make sure that those benefits flow. But what we have in reality is an office that is grossly understaffed. It's an office where the staff people have not had the training they need to do this new work. It's an officer where, if you call the 1-800 line, you cannot get through. And my office has tried. We know that in the middle of September all MPPs received a note

saying that if you wanted to try and access the adjudication unit you should look at this e-mail address on the Internet, and even today that site is still not up, over a month later. It is the same type of problems that we saw with the Family Responsibility Office being repeated and it's going to be repeated tenfold.

If I can say anything to this government as a warning, it is "Don't go down that road again." Remember the kind of financial hardship you put support recipients through in this province with the massive and very negative changes you made to the Family Responsibility Office. Do the work now to fix the problem that is staring you in the face. I know it is a problem because I have talked to members in this House who are getting calls from the disabled just like I am, to say, number one, their filing packages were sent to the adjudication unit in Toronto and they were lost; their filing packages have now been found, but it's going to take a number of months before a decision can be made; or, number three, they were on Canada pension and should have automatically been put on the ODSP and were not—any number of problems, the same kind of thing that I saw with the family responsibility office.

I would urge this government, and I would urge the minister in particular, who was too busy yesterday trying to give pat answers instead of dealing with the problems we brought forward, do yourself a big favour: Staff up this office to make it work, because what you are doing is putting the disabled, who are among the most vulnerable in this province, in an untenable situation.

The government absolutely has to review again the policy that it's brought forward which results in the cancellation of a transportation allowance to those disabled individuals. You cannot expect the disabled, with the small pension they have, with the small disability benefit, to also on an ongoing basis be able to access transportation so that they can get to doctors' appointments, so that they can get to medical clinics, so that they can get to a whole host of other support networks that they have to get to just in order to make it from day to day.

This government has cut that transportation allowance, and it's the responsibility of this government to take a step back, to review that very negative policy and to reinstitute that travel allowance for those disabled people. Don't penalize them even more. Don't make the job they have to do that much more difficult. I encourage this government, and the minister in particular, who isn't here today, to get a grip on what is happening at the ODSP, because it is unravelling and going downhill really quickly.

With respect to physician shortages, I watched with interest as the government said they wanted to do something about the shortages in northern Ontario and rural Ontario. But I also watched with dismay that the government's response was that they would only provide free tuition for those medical students who after five years of medical school decided to relocate to an underserved area. That is the government's response to what

is a very serious and a very difficult problem, not only in my part of the world but in many rural communities and in many small cities across the province now.

Five years to do something concrete on physician maldistribution is five years too long for too many Ontarians to wait. I have too many communities in my riding that are still on the underserved area program and have been on the underserved area program for the entire time that this government has been in office. The government's response, which is to have nothing done for at least another five years, is just not adequate.

People in this province pay tax dollars to guarantee access to medical care, and it shouldn't matter where you live in this province; you should be able to access physician services. The government, at least, before making this announcement could have waited for the recommendations which are to come from the government's own appointed commissioner looking at physician distribution and physician maldistribution to see if he had anything concrete which could be implemented now, which could respond to the situation now. To say we're not going to do anything for another five years is just to leave thousands and thousands of Ontarians without any access to primary health care.

It's not as if the current programs that are in place are working, because I have watched what the government has tried to do over the last four years to respond to the physician maldistribution problem and even what the government has tried to do hasn't worked.

For example, the government has a bursary program so that if you are a physician who agrees to go and operate in an underserved area, you can get an additional grant over whatever you bill OHIP for your service in that underserved area. The problem continues to be that after the grant is over, in the majority of cases those physicians leave the community and they go and practise somewhere else. Outside of having recruited them and their getting that additional financial incentive, there has been nothing in place to try and retain them in those communities. In many cases they're just not interested when the grant money runs out, and that is most regrettable.

That is a program that is in place now, and despite it being in place, the numbers of communities in northern and rural Ontario that are awaiting physicians are as high as ever. Just in October, November and December, 32 communities in the north that are underserved need 96 physicians; in the south, 67 underserved communities need 326 physicians.

The government came forward with another program, ostensibly to help communities that didn't have enough physicians. It was called the northern group funding plan. It allowed a number of physicians to work together in a clinic setting on a global funding basis in order to operate and hopefully keep them in communities. The problem again was that the program discriminated in northern Ontario between big communities versus small. If you had a population over 10,000, you couldn't even apply. A number of communities in my riding that are under-

serviced do have a population of over 10,000, but that doesn't mean their needs for a physician, or two or three physicians, are any less.

I wrote to the minister, Mrs Witmer, at the time and said, "Why would you ever pit one small northern community against a larger northern community with a population of over 10,000? Why would you ever come forward with a program that discriminates so badly against communities, all of whom need physicians?" There was no reply. We have a program in place, even a second program, that tries to encourage a group practice that hasn't worked either. We continue to have so many communities sitting on an underserviced area list and people waiting for some kind of primary care.

1710

It's not enough for me to say that the government hasn't done anything and not offer a solution. I offer two:

Since this government has been in power, there has been a freeze on the CHC program, and I encourage this government to look at that program as a means to recruit and retain not only physicians but other health care professionals in northern and rural Ontario. We have a CHC in Sudbury. It also has a satellite in two of the communities that are in my riding. It has proven to be a most effective tool to bring and to keep primary care physicians, to bring and to keep nurse practitioners, physiotherapists, dieticians etc—a whole host of people involved in the provision of care in our community.

Since that CHC has been established, they have repeatedly tried in the last three years to get the government to lift the freeze on the funding cap so that they could staff up the two satellites they have so that in those other two communities, both of which are underserved, we could have centres where we would have physicians who would be retained, and other health care professionals as well providing care.

This minister and this government continue to maintain a freeze on that program despite the fact that it has been a proven model in terms of recruitment and retention, in terms of health promotion, in terms of health prevention, in terms of drawing any number of other stakeholders in, people dealing with mental health etc, to provide much broader care in the community. Not only could we use that in our community, but there are a number of other northern communities now and others in rural Ontario that have also sent proposals in for CHCs to this government. All of them remain on hold.

I think the government would be very wise to take some of that money that it would otherwise invest in free tuition and put some of that money into the CHC budget, because it is a model that works and it is a model that would be so very helpful in so very many northern communities.

The second thing I want to encourage the government to do is to increase the number of sites in the primary health care pilot project. I have a particular community in my riding that for the last 18 months has been trying to get this government to fund their model of health care under the primary health care project. It is the community

of Valley East and it is their health services pilot project. Again, the same concept as a CHC: primary care providers, nurse practitioners, physicians, physiotherapists etc working in a bilingual setting in a bilingual community to deliver care on a 24-hour basis to people who need it.

I was most distressed that when the government announced three more sites in September, the city of Valley East was not included, because they had been working with the Ministry of Health since January of this year to try and get this project funded. The only opportunity they really have to do so has to come from the primary care project, and it was most regrettable that the government didn't fund them at the time. I would encourage the government, now that it has seven sites up and running, to look to that model as well as one that could be very useful, very important, very effective in attracting and retaining physicians and other health care providers not only in northern Ontario but in so many other centres in rural Ontario as well where people don't have family physicians.

Finally with respect to health, I have to mention the serious crisis that is facing the Sudbury Hospital. The government said nothing with respect to hospital funding in its throne speech. I would expect, given there are at least 79 hospitals in the province now operating in a deficit position, that the government would have had some kind of response in its throne speech to that very serious matter.

I would remind the government that in my community we have had an order imposed by the Health Services Restructuring Commission. We are going from three hospitals to one, but this government has to recognize that there are serious costs associated with that kind of transition and with the magnitude of that transition. The Ministry of Health and the minister cannot expect that the community all on its own can fund the enormity of that transition. We now are looking at an \$8-million deficit, and I encourage the minister, because there was nothing in the throne speech about hospital financing, to look at Sudbury and all of those other hospitals and deal with those deficit situations.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I was certainly enjoying the presentation put forth by the member for Nickel Belt, who had an excellent presentation, but I couldn't agree with a lot of the comments she was making during the presentation.

She was making reference to the economy and some of the problems of employment in the Nickel Belt area, and I can understand there is concern, but there is some responsibility for the local members to help stimulate the economy in the respective ridings that you live in.

I was just sitting here thinking, what would it have been like in the Nickel Belt riding if the economy hadn't been stimulated in Ontario in general? It would have been really going downhill. I gather from what she's saying that it's at least holding its own. But just imagine, if the 572,000 net new jobs in the last four years hadn't

been created in this province, what would have happened in Sudbury. It would have been a real negative, something like during the term that the NDP had here in Ontario when we had a net increase of jobs of minus 20,000. That was the record they had.

Then she talked about the economy, and I thought that was kind of interesting because it's somebody from the NDP who was in cabinet during that term in the early 1990s when they kept two sets of books just to keep the public confused. I think that was very unfair to do that. And to talk about how we're riding on the American economy, yes, the American economy is doing quite well, and it was doing quite well in the early 1990s, thank you very much, but Ontario's economy wasn't doing very well.

Then I wonder, why is the economy in BC, out on the Canadian left coast, doing so poorly? Because there's an NDP government out there, and I think that's kind of unfortunate. It kind of explains—

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): The left coast?

Mr Galt: Out on the left coast—you picked up on that one. You're kind of slow; it only took 10 seconds to pick up on it. But I think that sums up the problem we've had with the economy, the NDP governments in Ontario and in BC.

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I just wanted to build on the comments made by the member for Nickel Belt when she talked about the crisis in hospital funding and health care. Members who were in the last Parliament will know that one of my pet peeves and one of my pet concerns was the hospital in my riding, Branson, on which I tried to get the government to change its mind, which it didn't. It is now part of North York General Hospital.

One of the problems that we had at Branson was that we could not get emergency room nurses or emergency room doctors in the evenings. Almost 10 months have gone by where the emergency department at Branson hospital has been closed from 10 o'clock at night until 8 in the morning. I have one of the largest concentrations of seniors in Ontario, and as you know if you're dealing with seniors, when things happen to them at night they get very frightened and that's when they need emergency care.

So what has happened? The government proposed that North York General Hospital take over Branson and all would be well. Well, all is not well. We have a situation where 10 months after that particular initiative was undertaken, the emergency department at Branson hospital is still closed. It's now called North York General but it's still closed, and the citizens of York Centre and the large catchment area, greater than York Centre, do not have a readily available emergency department during the hours between 10 o'clock at night and 8 o'clock in the morning.

I think this is absolutely criminal. It's an area that this government has got to address. One of the problems is that they made the initiative because they thought it

would play right, but they didn't prepare for the repercussions of what they did.

Mr Marchese: I want to thank my friend from Nickel Belt for her specific focus on two things—the introduction of an Ontarians with Disabilities Act and, the other, the Ontario disability support program, very much connected to that—and, thirdly, physician shortages in underserved areas. She was very specific.

This government too was very specific, and in its throne speech the Premier, through the Lieutenant Governor, mentioned that this government is here to serve real Canadians or real Ontarians, if I remember correctly. I was profoundly worried about the implications of who those real Canadians or Ontarians were and who the other unreal Ontarians were, and I hope to be able to speak to that point when I have my opportunity to do speak.

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I suspect that the people my friend from Nickel Belt spoke about may be those undeserving Canadians, those who are not real Canadians, I'm assuming, because this government has done very little to deal with issues of disability, to deal with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act that they have promised. These people represent 15% of the population. They haven't dealt with it. That must mean they're unreal. The member proposed modest ways to deal with physician shortages in those underserved areas, and this government is disregarding it completely.

The focus of this government appears to be its complete devotion to income tax cuts as a solution to our economic problems. I tell you, Speaker, your colleagues have never presented once any evidence to show that is the case. They are obsessed with income tax cuts and nothing else.

Mr Maves: I thank the member opposite for her comments. Just responding to one thing that I found a little curious, the complaint about difficulty getting through to the phone services that we now have for the Ontario disability support program, we had a little bit of concern about that, so we've made some calls. There's been an overwhelming volume of applications for the ODSP. I think we've been receiving about 300 calls per day.

We tried a little experiment and called the public line six times. The first call: one ring and there was a one-minute wait to talk to a person; the second call, it was busy; third call, three rings and it was answered; the fourth call, one ring and another minute-and-a-half to talk to a person; the fifth call, one ring and it was answered, another minute and a half to talk to a person; sixth call, one ring and again it was answered. That's the public line. Those are six calls. We thought that was pretty good.

Mr Bradley: You called the government MPP line.

Mr Maves: We called the government MPP line, the member from St Catharines shouts out, at the following times: 10:25, 11:10, 11:35 and 12:20. At no point in time did staff have to wait longer than five rings to get a response and at no time were they on hold for longer than 30 seconds. While the member opposite seems to be experiencing problems with both those lines, in the

experiments that we've conducted they've been quite effective.

The member did talk about the problems with shortages of doctors. It's a long-standing problem in Ontario. We've done a lot of things with incentives for doctors: actual money on the table to locate to underserved areas, disincentives, less money if you go to an over-served area like Toronto. We've given them pay raises—the first time since 1992. We're now offering to pay tuition for docs who go to underserved areas. That was my seatmate's idea—Gerry Martiniuk from Cambridge—which found its way into our platform and the Liberals' during the campaign. I hope that will go a long way to helping us with this problem.

The Speaker: Response?

Ms Martel: I'd like to thank the members from Northumberland, York Centre, Trinity-Spadina and Niagara Falls for their comments. I'd respond in this way: The member from Northumberland said imagine, if the 500,000-plus jobs had not been created, what the region of Sudbury would look like. I remind the member that in my remarks I made it a point to say for the last 14 months in the lead-up to the elections that we had the highest unemployment rate in the country. So I don't know how much worse it could have got, I say to the member from Northumberland.

How much worse can it get, when you're at the top of the unemployment list for some 14 months at a time when the government is trying to convince people that by the mere fact of having a tax cut, people have more money in their pockets, so they spend more and they create more jobs. That has been the premise of the government's argument on the tax cuts, that if people get money in their pocket, they're going to go and spend.

If that's the premise, I have to say to the government, it should have worked in Sudbury too then. It has nothing to do with whether or not we depend on nickel. If your theory is right, then people in Sudbury should have had more money and they should have gone out to spend. That's why I say it has nothing to do with the tax cuts because if it did, Sudbury wouldn't be an anomaly and other northern communities wouldn't be an anomaly. It has everything to do with the fact that in southern Ontario there has been a tremendous boom with respect to exports and that's why many companies are benefiting.

With respect to what's happening to physicians, I say to the honourable member from Niagara Falls, with all due respect, your initiatives haven't worked, my friend. If they had worked, we wouldn't be sitting in the position where we have 32 communities needing 96 doctors, and 67 in the south needing 326 physicians. I've tried to put forward to you today some proposals that I think would work, because they are models that have been tried and have been proven to be effective, and your government would've been in a better position following up on some of those rather than to leave the problem for another five years, which is what the net effect of your announcement in the throne speech really is.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Brian Coburn (Carleton-Gloucester): I'd like to share my time with the member from Guelph-Wellington. This is a little bit different than a council chamber, that I've been used to for the last 18 years; there are benefits, certainly, to being a mayor.

In my first opportunity to address the Legislature, I'd just like to say what an honour it is for me to be in this place and over the last few days to hear some of the members who've been here for a while and their oratorical skills and their knowledge of the issues and—

The Speaker: Sorry to interrupt the member's first speech, but we need unanimous consent to split the time. Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. I apologize, especially in the first speech, for doing that.

Mr Coburn: Thank you, Mr Speaker; just another rule I learned—to listen to some of the members who've been here for a number of years, certainly on either side of the House, and the experiences they've gained and the issues they've dealt with across this province.

I'd like to congratulate all the members on their recent successes in their democratic process, and I look forward to working with members on all sides over the next four years.

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to those back in Carleton-Gloucester who worked on the political process, who supported me; those who worked for the other candidates as well. That's what makes our democratic process work so well, those who do take time to get involved in the election of individuals to represent them.

I would also like to take an opportunity to recognize the individual who was there before me, Mr Gilles Morin, who was a member of the Liberal Party. He had served Carleton East and his constituents from 1985 to 1999. Mr Morin served the government of the day in many different capacities: as Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and minister for senior citizen's affairs. He has gone on to greener pastures, and I wish him well on his future endeavours.

The riding I represent—the boundaries have changed somewhat from what they were for Carleton East. With the boundary realignment, they now include the urban portion of the city of Cumberland and a good portion of the city of Gloucester outside the greenbelt in the nation's capital. For those of you who have maybe never been there, we have this real jewel, the greenbelt that goes around the inner core, and in some respects it is a real jewel. In some respects it is a real pain in the neck when you try to get services to cross those boundaries.

Within the riding of Carleton-Gloucester, it has been one of the fastest-growing communities, not only in this province but in the country, during the 1980s. I was very pleased to be part of that, as councillor with the city of Cumberland and then as mayor for the past nine years. Over the last nine years, in talking to residents and as our community grows, it seemed that the economic downturn we had experienced—there just seemed to be no end to it. When you talked to people with small businesses and residents, it seemed to be coupled with a tremendous

deluge of ever-increasing red tape and bureaucracy in all aspects of our lives. As mayor, I was very fortunate to have a council that was trying to cut through some of the red tape and some of the bureaucracy that prevented people from doing what they would like to do in their communities. That is certainly something that has carried on to this level, with this government.

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Going back to my riding for a moment, just to give you some sort of setting so you have an idea of the type of community that it is, it is a community that has a rich mixture of anglophone and francophone residents; a new, rapidly growing suburban area and a large rural area that has a rich heritage, which is not contained within the riding boundaries of Carleton-Gloucester but goes across this province, of our forefathers who cleared the land for those of us to enjoy in future years.

When you look back to some of your ancestors and some of the difficulties and challenges they had to make a better life that we enjoy today, despite the bumps and potholes that we hit in the road from time to time, it's incumbent upon us to ensure that we put in place a structure that has promise for the future, that has a vision for the future, that ensures there will be prosperity, that there is hope there will be a job for your children and they will be educated in a proper atmosphere, that will meet the challenges of our growth and development and new technologies as the human race keeps pushing the envelope on technology.

It's incumbent upon us to make sure that we have a health system that is going to look after those of us in my age group, which is the bulge in the population—as we get older, there are increased costs in health care—and that we're able to look after our seniors and our aging population so that it doesn't become a burden that takes away from some of the other things we have to do and we have to respond to in our community. That's something this government has addressed.

These are very similar issues that I heard as mayor in a community that is young, rapidly growing, grappling with changes in technology, grappling with high costs, rules, regulations, red tape. As I went around the municipality—and I was in small business myself at one point—it was getting to the point where you spent more time filling out papers and responding to some government agency than you spent doing the job where you made the money to pay the bills. It got a little top-heavy and it capsized.

We're just celebrating Small Business Week and we know that it's small business that creates most of the employment in this province and this country. We have to be able to facilitate the survival of small business so that our children can get jobs, so that our friends, our neighbours, our relatives can have jobs.

We all can't be PhDs, we all can't be academics, scientists, computer experts. There are many of us who just want to look after our families, to go out and make a living, work from one end of the day to the other, come

home with a paycheque and enjoy a quality of life and spend some time with our families.

This government has created an atmosphere and has continued to create an atmosphere so that we will have those opportunities in the future. The 572,000 jobs that have been created have been referred to a countless number of times. The job has only begun. We've committed to 825,000 jobs over the next five years. That is no small feat. The job is not over, it has only begun.

That has a small comparison to what I experienced in Cumberland-Gloucester during the 1980s. In Cumberland in particular we went from a population of 15,000 to over 51,000, as it is today. That's just in the city of Cumberland.

There's a community called Orleans that is in the riding of Carleton-Gloucester. It straddles the boundaries between the city of Cumberland and the city of Gloucester. It was a small village back in the 1960s. The regional official plan in the late 1980s said it would be a community that would grow to 32,000. It's 80,000, and in 12 years it will be 130,000 population. Of course the trick is to try to balance the jobs with the growth so people can live, work and play in the same community. We've got to learn how to maximize our infrastructure—water, sewer, transit, roads—so that we become more efficient in how we plan our communities. That is a constant challenge.

I mentioned earlier on that we have diverse cultural activity in our community, with the francophone and anglophone population. That's something we're very proud of, the cultural and linguistic diversity that is a strength, and it demonstrates harmony and an enriched appreciation for the interests, the opinions and the goals of all residents.

I think one of the greatest compliments that can be paid to a community I heard time and time again as the mayor of Cumberland. Our community, over the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, was a very transient community. People were working in the federal government or the RCMP or the military. They'd move in, be there for two or three years and then move on to other places, and some of them world travellers, not originally from the Carleton-Gloucester riding. But when they retire, they come back and that's where they retire. To me, that is a tremendous testimony to a community.

It's people who have gone through our community and, to a person, have got involved in our community, whether it's in Scouts, the Lions Club, Optimists, those kinds of things. These are the real hearts of our community, and they got involved and helped the community grow, and their families got involved. In a number of cases where we didn't have the financial capability to put in the facilities that many communities with a large commercial tax base enjoy, we had to become innovative in how we did things. Those initiatives were undertaken by our residents.

That, I believe, is one of the roles we play as government, whether it's municipal, provincial or federal. We have to be facilitators to empower the people back in our

own communities to do some of the things. We've become so encumbered in red tape and bureaucracy that we've got rules to prevent us from doing the right thing. You go to do it and you trip over something and you can't do it. "Yes, it's the right thing to do, but I'm sorry, we've got this rule, and if you don't like it, you've got to change the rule." Then we're off on another two-year consultation process to try and get something changed. We witness that day in and day out through government agencies. We consult till the cows come home.

If you've noticed, in my experience, in some of the structured process we have—yes, we want to consult; we want to hear from everybody. But over the last 10 or 15 years, particularly in some of the processes, when we have people come in we lead them to believe that when this process is over, everyone will be happy, and we know that's not the case. Rather than, "Yes, we want to hear your comments, yes, we want to—"

Interjection.

Mr Coburn: I'm over my limit? I'm sorry, Mr Speaker. I went over my time. I just want to go through one thing very quickly. I apologize. I lost track of time. It's just like in the council chamber, only I got to call the shots there.

Going back to the complexities we have in our processes, I think we owe it to our public to be responsible, that yes, we have a process and we want to hear what you have to say, but we have to make decisions and move things along because there is an affordability factor; there's a cost to everything. If we waste money, that takes money away from doing some of the other things the members opposite are concerned about, that we're all concerned about, as a matter of fact.

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I'd just like to mention that my community of Carleton-Gloucester is no different than some of the others throughout Ontario. We have our heroes, ordinary people doing extraordinary things. I was very pleased, just this past Monday, to be sitting in the front foyer of the provincial Legislature when the Honourable Hilary Weston bestowed the Order of Ontario on Miss Winnie Leuszler from Orleans. Do you want to hear a couple of firsts? This lady was the first Canadian to swim the English Channel. She was the first female baseball umpire, in 1957. Here's something I found rather interesting: She was the first female vice-president of the men's senior softball league, in 1952.

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): She's a baseball fan. What does she think of Roger Clemens?

Mr Coburn: I must ask her when I visit her next week. She has been recognized by the Canadian military and the Ontario Swimming Hall of Fame for her contribution.

We have another lady who was recognized on June 30 in our community as well, Miss Ivana Baldelli, who received the medal for good citizenship. This is a prestigious award that recognizes acts of generosity and kindness during her many years of volunteer work with

countless organizations over the years. The list goes on. We all have tales of people who give generously of their time.

Having been involved in municipal politics, it was quite a decision for me to run for provincial politics. One of the reasons that really struck a chord with me was that I felt, for the first time in a long time, this was a government that actually did what they said they were going to do; a government that wanted to decrease taxes, cut red tape; a government that wanted a better future for all Ontarians; a government that had the courage to step up and take the initiative to refocus our priorities in education so that more money is spent in the classroom, so that more money is available to meet the needs of our seniors and all users of the health care system and still be on track to balance the budget in 2000-01; a government that understood that the status quo was not good enough for the residents of Ontario if we were to have a strong and prosperous future. Today, I am very proud to stand here and be part of this team on behalf of the residents of Carleton-Gloucester.

Mr Sergio: I wish to congratulate the member for Carleton-Gloucester not only on his welcome here as an elected member on behalf of his community but also on the presentation he has made in the House, his maiden speech. I wish him well as we move on in the next term of office here.

Mr Hastings: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I understand that we have a rotation in the House now on question period and all others. I thought the member for Guelph-Wellington should be up next.

The Speaker: Would the member take his seat.

Mr Hastings: It is a point of order.

The Speaker: I didn't realize there were two minutes left. I thought he was finished on the clock. I apologize. With your indulgence, we could go the final two minutes and then do the rotations. That was my error, and I apologize. It was a point of order. The member for Etobicoke North is correct. The member for Guelph, two minutes.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): Since this is my first opportunity to speak as we return to the Legislature, I would like to take a moment to congratulate all the new members, to welcome them and also to congratulate my colleagues who are returning once again with me.

It is a pleasure to be here. We are all here for the reason that we want to serve and do the best we can for our constituents. Here on the government side, through the throne speech, we've made it very clear what our priority is in this next term, and that is to do what we can to provide the leadership required to keep Ontario thriving.

Perhaps my colleagues would be interested: I was at an opening of a new corporate headquarters in my riding, a company called Linamar. This is a company that was begun 33 years ago by a gentleman in his garage. He has, in the last year or so, increased the number of sub-companies in his business from 19 to 28. He is now

manufacturing in four countries. He is employing almost 8,500 people. His sales are up to over a billion dollars.

When I spoke to him and congratulated him about his growth and his thriving business, he was very clear that a businessman like this appreciates reliable government. They appreciate responsible government. They appreciate a predictable environment that is conducive for them to do business. That's very important to our government because we know that entrepreneurs like Frank Hasenfratz, who owns Linamar, can't thrive in this province unless we provide the kind of climate for economic growth that they need.

The throne speech outlined a number of initiatives that we're anxious to get started on in this term. The one thing I would say to all my voters in Guelph-Wellington: You know from seeing us that we've made promises and we've learned to keep our promises.

Mr Kwinter: Before I do anything, I just want to thank my colleague from York West for allowing me to respond to the member from Guelph-Wellington.

When I was the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, I had the privilege of visiting Mr Frank Hasenfratz at Linamar and presenting him with a contribution from the government of several millions of dollars. That was close to 13 years ago. That was the basis for the success—among other things; I'm not trying to say that was the only thing. But the point is they became a very successful company.

This government, by its policy, would have turned him down. They would have turned him down. The former minister in the last Parliament said to me, "It is not the role of government to help business, only to help the business climate." I'm saying to you that Ford Motor Co got its van plant and its paint plant because of our contribution. Frank Hasenfratz at Linamar is the same thing. What you should do is look back at those examples and make sure that we continue to do those things so that we can have the growth in the economy, have the type of employment that they create. That is what it's all about.

My colleague, I'm sure, will want to say something.

Mr Sergio: Just to take the rest of my time, I'm pleased to respond to the member who, even though she was on for two minutes, did that on one foot. I think that doesn't happen too often. Since I only have a few seconds left, I want again to congratulate the member. I hope he will be very watchful of the goings-on within the PC caucus and report back, not only to the House, but to his constituents, and I'm sure he will be doing that in the next session.

Ms Martel: I want to congratulate the member for Carleton-Gloucester on his maiden speech here, and I want to say to the member from Guelph-Wellington that I would have liked to have heard more about what you had to say. You can thank your own colleague for being cut off. Maybe you can get in the rotation some other day.

Let me just say that both members made the point, which I will emphasize, that the throne speech represents the priorities of this government. So let me say from this perspective that my concern is that there was so little, if

anything, said with respect to what this government's priorities are for those most vulnerable in our society. I'm referring both to the homeless in our communities and to our children.

I deeply regret, as I've reviewed the throne speech several times now, that this government has so little to say about two issues which I think are very important, because they speak to who we are as a society and they certainly speak to who we are going to be with respect to how we treat our kids and where we want them to be and where they are going to end up if we don't give them the kinds of supports they need.

A child in the gallery cried out.

Ms Martel: I say again that I would have expected that in the throne speech, for example, the government would have reiterated, when they were talking about the homeless, its own commitment to set aside government land on which to build affordable housing. It was the former Minister of Community and Social Services who made that commitment only a few short months ago in this Legislature. There was nothing in the throne speech, there was nothing in the most recent announcement that the Chair of Management Board made with respect to the disposition of crown assets and crown land.

I would have expected the government to talk about, very specifically, the recommendations they were going to follow with respect to Dr Fraser Mustard, and again there was nothing.

I say to the government, get your priorities straight. We are judged on the basis of how we treat our most vulnerable, and there was nothing in the throne speech about those things.

1750

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want to draw to your attention that the member from Kenora-Rainy River is taking it to great lengths to demonstrate the need for day care in this province. We want to welcome him and his children in the gallery.

The Speaker: It isn't a point of order, but I must admit, looking up there was one of the reasons I missed the two minutes. The member for Scarborough South-west.

Mr Newman: It is my pleasure to comment on the two speeches here today by the member for Carleton-Gloucester and the member for Guelph-Wellington. I think the member for Guelph-Wellington hit on all the points of the throne speech in her brief period speaking here today.

I've had the opportunity to work with the member for Carleton-Gloucester. He also serves as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, we are co-chairs on the Land Ambulance Implementation Steering Committee. I've had the opportunity to work with him and I want to say how hard he's been working on that.

Also, you could hear in his speech how much he cares about his community. Today in question period, he asked

a question the Minister of Finance that dealt with the Ottawa Senators, obviously near and dear to him and his community, and I think he got a response that was quite favourable. In fact, when he served as the mayor of Cumberland—I understand from the former parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour that the mayor of Cumberland, now the MPP for Carleton-Gloucester, worked hard to ensure that the Fairness is a Two-Way Street bill was brought forward. He wanted to ensure that workers in his community had equal access to Quebec construction sites as Quebec construction workers had in Ontario.

I think the people of Carleton-Gloucester are well served in having the member as their MPP. I think I'll wrap up my comments with that.

Mr Bradley: I know the members didn't have sufficient time, because there isn't enough time in this Legislature, to deal with all issues, to deal with the situation with Gallaher Paper in Thorold, Ontario, where a number of people now have occupied the building because they want to see this place continue to operate. There is some question that whoever buys the mill may simply close it down and sell the assets. It is to be hoped, and I know all members, regardless of their political party in this House, will want to ensure that we try to persuade the banks, or the receiver in the particular case, to select a person or an organization or a company, in other words a buyer, who will continue to operate the mill.

These are good jobs; they're well-paid jobs in the community, so they have a wonderful spinoff effect. This has been an efficient operation over the years. I know there are many challenges facing that industry right across the country and indeed internationally. I know the Premier has indicated that his intervention, he hopes, will be of some assistance as well. It is a multi-party experience in this case. The member for Niagara Centre raised the issue in the House, as the plant is in his riding. There was an appeal to the Premier to be of some assistance. I think calls have gone from the office of the government to try to persuade the receiver to choose someone who will continue to operate that plant. I know the members who made their speeches from two different

parts of Ontario, from the Guelph area and the Ottawa area, both would be supportive of seeing this plant continue to operate and the efforts of people of all parties to be successful in this regard.

The Speaker: It now being almost 6 of the clock—

Interjection.

The Speaker: I'm sorry. I apologize again. The member for Carleton-Gloucester has response time.

Mr Coburn: I just want to once again apologize to my colleague for not keeping a closer eye on the clock. I guess that's one of the major criteria in this place, that you keep a close eye on the clock.

Mr Bradley: Never apologize for that.

Mr Coburn: I'm told that there are masters within this place too that you should watch and you'll learn all the tricks of the trade.

There's one other item that I'd like to touch on that I think is important in our society today. I talked a bit about empowerment, that we have the confidence that people will do the right thing. I think that's what we're trying to do by trying to get rid of some of this red tape. We have a Red Tape Commission, a watchdog that will evaluate all of our legislation. I think that's an extremely important function that prevents us from making decisions that are not common sense.

I'd like to talk about one partnership, and it has to do with one of the members opposite, in Prescott-Russell, Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde, who worked with me and all of the municipal colleagues up and down both sides of the Ottawa River. We set up the Ottawa River committee in 1990. Mr Lalonde was chair of that and I was vice-chair. It provided jobs and initiatives to clean up that river, and the economic spinoff from that has been tremendous. That was an initiative that was done that created employment. It's those kinds of things that there is plenty of opportunity for in this province. If we just unburden ourselves of some of the rules and regulations, we can make some things happen that will create additional employment for the average, ordinary Ontarian.

The Speaker: It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 on Monday.

The House adjourned at 1757

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) | Halton | Chudleigh, Ted (PC) |
| Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford | Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) | Hamilton East / -Est | Agostino, Dominic (L) |
| Beaches-East York | Lankin, Frances (ND) | Hamilton Mountain | Bountrogianni, Marie (L) |
| Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale | Gill, Raminder (PC) | Hamilton West / -Ouest | Christopherson, David (ND) |
| Brampton Centre / -Centre | Spina, Joseph (PC) | Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington | Dombrowsky, Leona (L) |
| Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga | Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre de l'Environnement, ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement | Huron-Bruce | Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women / ministre des Affaires civiles, de la Culture et des Loisirs, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées et à la Condition féminine |
| 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) | Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles | Gerretsen, John (L) |
| Bruce-Grey | Murdoch, Bill (PC) | Kitchener Centre / -Centre | Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC) |
| Burlington | Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme | 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 |
| Cambridge | Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) | Lambton-Kent-Middlesex | Beaubien, Marcel (PC) |
| Carleton-Gloucester | Coburn, Brian (PC) | Lanark-Carleton | Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, leader parlementaire du gouvernement |
| Chatham-Kent Essex | Hoy, Pat (L) | Leeds-Grenville | Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Consumer and Com- mercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce |
| Davenport | Ruprecht, Tony (L) | 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 |
| Don Valley East / -Est | Caplan, David (L) | London West / -Ouest | Wood, Bob (PC) |
| Don Valley West / -Ouest | Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports | London-Fanshawe | Mazzilli, Frank (PC) |
| Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey | Tilson, David (PC) | Markham | Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Solicitor General / solliciteur général |
| Durham | O'Toole, John R. (PC) | Mississauga Centre / -Centre | Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels |
| Eglinton-Lawrence | Colle, Mike (L) | Mississauga East / -Est | DeFaria, Carl (PC) |
| Elgin-Middlesex-London | Peters, Steve (L) | Mississauga South / -Sud | Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Children) / ministre sans portefeuille (Enfance) |
| Erie-Lincoln | Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines | | |
| Essex | Crozier, Bruce (L) | | |
| Etobicoke Centre / -Centre | Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail | | |
| Etobicoke North / -Nord | Hastings, John (PC) | | |
| Etobicoke-Lakeshore | Kells, Morley (PC) | | |
| Glengarry-Prescott-Russell | Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L) | | |
| 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 | | |

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

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