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of Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 30 November 1999

Mardi 30 novembre 1999

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 30 November 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 1333.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JEANNINE SÉGUIN

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell) : Vendredi dernier, des centaines de personnes, incluant le député provincial John Cleary, se sont réunies pour dire au revoir et un grand merci à une de leurs plus grandes amies. Jeannine Séguin fut célébrée par ses amis, sa famille et les citoyens et citoyennes de sa communauté et de l'ensemble du pays. Les gens sont venus pour rendre un dernier hommage à une personne qui a tant donné pour promouvoir et améliorer la qualité de la vie de tous les francophones.

Née à Alexandria, Ontario, elle a fait carrière dans le système d'éducation de langue française de cette province pendant 35 ans. L'une des chefs de file de la francophonie ontarienne et canadienne, elle s'est dévouée sans relâche à promouvoir l'égalité des francophones à titre de présidente de l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario et de la Fédération des francophones hors Québec. En 1973, elle fut la directrice fondatrice de l'école secondaire La Citadelle de Cornwall.

Récipiendaire de l'Ordre du Canada pour sa contribution exceptionnelle en éducation et pour les droits des francophones, elle fut également une bénévole inépuisable auprès de sa communauté et son église.

Son travail pour les communautés francophones à travers le Canada en entier ne sera jamais oublié. La population entière perd une des plus grandes pionnières des communautés francophones. Son décès laisse un grand vide dans le coeur des résidents et résidentes de toutes les communautés.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr David Young (Willowdale): Recent tragedies involving young people have caused the people of Ontario to renew their call for tougher penalties to address serious crimes committed by young offenders. Real changes are needed to protect the public, to hold young persons accountable for their actions and to restore public confidence.

The federal government has ignored this issue far too long. Recent changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act do not address many of the serious concerns that have been brought forward by the people of this province over the past decade.

This government has consistently expressed serious concerns about the need to strengthen the Young Offenders Act to deal with violent young offenders so that people can feel safe in their communities. The recent changes contained in the Youth Criminal Justice Act do not go far enough. They do not serve as a serious deterrent to crime.

Most illustrative are the comments of the young who are harassed, terrorized, abused and assaulted by young offenders. Ask the victims and they will confirm that the greatest single measure that can be taken to reduce this menace is to have meaningful changes made by the federal government to the laws that apply to minors.

This government will continue to push Ottawa for changes that will strengthen the new Youth Criminal Justice Act, to lower the age of accountability for serious crimes, to promote parental accountability and to make the punishment fit the crime.

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IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): A week this Thursday, on December 9, the Legislature will vote on a bill that I hope will get all-party agreement. The short title of the bill is, the Truth about Ipperwash Act. It is An Act to provide for a public inquiry to discover the truth about events at Ipperwash Provincial Park leading to the death of Dudley George. People in Ontario will be aware this happened more than four years ago. It was the first death involving a First Nations person in a land dispute in this century.

There have been serious, serious questions raised about what happened that night and the events leading up to it, with much contradictory evidence of what took place. We will never have closure on this issue until there is a public inquiry. The local township, the local council and many people across Ontario support the call for this public inquiry.

The bill calls for the establishment of an inquiry that will look into the events leading up to the death and will make recommendations to avoid similar instances. Part of the bill says, "The commission may defer beginning

the inquiry if necessary to avoid prejudice to any person who is a party to court proceedings concerning matters which may be a subject of the inquiry.”

This is a bill that I think answers any questions about why we can't commit to an inquiry. It will once and for all begin the important process of bringing closure to this tragic event.

ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SCARBOROUGH

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Last week I had the pleasure of attending the official opening of Cedarbrae Mall in my riding. The mall has undergone a multi-million-dollar renovation and expansion over the past few years. The mall has been transformed from an aging plaza to a modern facility.

Cedarbrae is just one example of the economic growth witnessed in Scarborough Centre since 1995. The Scarborough Town Centre, also in my riding, recently completed a \$38-million expansion. The Rainforest Cafe, Famous Players Theatre and Indigo Books now call the Town Centre home. Over 400 construction jobs were created with the expansion and over 900 permanent retail and service jobs have been created by the businesses.

Kennedy Commons Plaza has been built, once again in my riding. Kennedy Commons is home to AMC Theatres, The Brick, Enbridge Consumers Gas and dozens of other businesses. Building the Commons created 350 person-years of construction employment and the businesses have created over a thousand retail and service jobs.

I'm proud to say that thanks to an economy fuelled by tax cuts, Scarborough Centre has done its share in creating the well over 600,000 net new jobs created in Ontario since 1995.

NEIGHBOUR TO NEIGHBOUR CENTRE

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): As the holiday season approaches and we think about those Ontarians less fortunate than ourselves, I want to recognize a unique organization on Hamilton Mountain which, year-round, makes a tremendous contribution to the needs of the community.

The Neighbour to Neighbour Centre was started in 1985 and exists to provide a range of support services to the unemployed, the underemployed and their dependent children. Neighbour to Neighbour provides the residents of Hamilton Mountain and neighbouring communities with self-help resources and emergency food in an environment of dignity and self-worth.

Let me outline the range of services Neighbour to Neighbour provides: 800 families a month receive emergency or supplemental food services; a job-finding club operates at a 79% success rate; a bundle-up program last year distributed over 500 coats to children up to 12 years of age; a Christmas hamper program services 650 households representing 2,300 individuals. Other services

include literacy training, computer access, job listings, a parent support group and a used book store.

Neighbour to Neighbour is an exemplary community-based agency which, in spite of losing all provincial funding support when this government came to power in 1995, continues to provide an invaluable support to those residents of Hamilton Mountain in need. I salute Neighbour to Neighbour and agencies like it. I wish it continued success in its good work. Neighbour to Neighbour passes any audit, particularly the audit of the heart, with flying colours.

NEWMARKET STINGRAYS

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I rise today to congratulate the Newmarket Stingrays for their outstanding achievements.

The Newmarket Stingrays swimming club was named the gold medal winner as the Maritime Life/Swimming Canada club of the year. The award is given out each year to the most outstanding club, recognizing planning and organization, community service, swimmer development, program delivery and innovation.

The 200-member organization competed at nearly 50 swim meets this year and, despite the small population in the area, its 90 competitive swimmers have held their own against clubs like Calgary and the region of Waterloo.

What makes the Newmarket Stingrays so special is their community involvement. Their members participate in York County Hospital's Circle of Hope, and they have donated approximately \$48,000 in recent years to the hospital's pediatrics department. This and other volunteer work, including swimmer development and participation in the Sears "I Can Swim" program, has set this club apart.

Congratulations to head coach Alan Swanston, president Grace Volkening, and to all of the swimmers and their families on their outstanding achievement in being named the number one swim club in Canada. Well done.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): My statement is directed to the Minister of Health. It concerns the deplorable lack of basic health care services in this province.

Last week, I asked the minister a question about Judy Vanderpol, a sole-support mother of three who desperately needs reconstruction surgery for her hip that was replaced 14 years ago. She suffers from serious stomach problems because of the morphine she takes for her pain. Her specialist tells Judy he cannot schedule her surgery until October 30, 2000. That is totally unacceptable.

Hearing nothing from the minister's office after my question last week, my office called the ministry directly to see what help the ministry would give to shorten the unacceptable wait for Judy Vanderpol. A medical con-

sultant from your ministry said, "We don't get involved in that." He said it was up to the specialist to try to find an earlier hospital date, but he is unable to do that. Or he could file for prior approval to send Judy out of the province for treatment.

Is that the choice facing patients in Ontario's abysmal health care system: Wait and suffer for almost a year, or go to the United States?

I'm sending this problem over to the Minister of Health, because she is the minister and it is her problem. Your cuts have created this nightmare for Judy, and you have to get involved to fix it and fix it now.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I rise today to discuss the report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on local government reform for Hamilton-Wentworth and to draw to the attention of the minister one of the serious problems I have with this recommendation. I give these remarks in the context of being one who supports one tier; I was prepared to support the Church accord. In fact, most of my colleagues don't agree, but given that it is a local issue, I feel strongly about this.

I want to point out that there are serious problems with the labour part of this—I don't know why the Minister of Community and Social Services finds this so funny. The headline in the Hamilton Spectator yesterday says, "Labour Leaders Threaten Work Action." If the Minister of Community and Social Services thinks this is something to laugh about, then go ahead, but I would suggest to him that we take it very seriously. And I would point out that at least three of the areas where there are labour recommendations that take away serious fundamental rights that workers have in Hamilton-Wentworth could easily apply to the other communities that are involved in restructuring in terms of Sudbury, Ottawa and Haldimand-Norfolk: literally thousands of people whose rights could be taken away.

Minister, remove these offensive recommendations from your legislation or look to serious action on the part of labour leaders, as well as losing my vote, which I do want to give to support one tier in Hamilton.

ALLAN BAKER

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Today I'd like to share a story with you. This is a story of hard work and dedication, a story of love of mechanics. This is the story of Allan Baker.

Born one of six boys and raised on a farm in Dummer township in Peterborough county, he developed an interest in mechanics at an early age, and it became such a strong passion that he still has it to this very day.

In 1953, along with his wife, Jean, he started his own business. He started out by repairing and maintaining the local milk trucks, but he didn't stop there; he repaired everything from farm machinery to buses. Over 45 years

his business even employed members of his own family. I'm sure his wife and three children, Dianne, Bob and Linda, have many stories to tell of their own.

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Mr Baker is also dedicated to his community. He is a devoted member of the Norwood Lions Club, and he is proud to say that he has missed only one Norwood Fall Fair in the last 70 years.

In 1998, Mr Baker closed his business. His tools may have been sold, but the love for his work still hasn't faded. In fact, it has been said that he even carries a few tools around with him in his jacket just in case he can lend a hand.

Mr Baker is a living example of the hard work and good business sense that this government has always been proud to encourage and to support. He is a man who has dedicated his life to the farm community. Allan Baker was recently awarded recognition by the Peterborough County Federation of Agriculture. It gives me great pride to recognize his contribution and to share it with you all today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE

Mrs Witmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to amend certain statutes administered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in relation to supporting and managing the health care system / Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant certaines lois dont l'application relève du ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée en ce qui concerne le soutien et la gestion du système de soins de santé.

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

Minister, for a short explanation.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The legislation I am introducing today, if passed, will provide added flexibility for Ontario hospitals as they restructure and build improved health care facilities to better meet the needs of their growing and changing population.

The proposed changes respond to requests from Ontario hospitals and the Ontario Hospital Association. If passed, this legislation will ensure that hospitals have the time they need to implement their restructuring projects.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): We are pleased to provide the Legislature and the people of Ontario with a report on the state of the province's finances and economy.

During the first half of this decade Ontario lost jobs, investment, confidence and hope. As we approach the new millennium, we see a tremendous improvement in economic growth, job creation and fiscal accountability in government. Our active agenda of tax cuts and sound economic and fiscal management has put Ontario back on track.

We are laying the groundwork for sustained economic growth. Ontario's economy is growing faster than the rest of Canada or any of the G7 industrialized countries. Investment and spending by households and the private sector are surging. Confidence is high. Strong employment creation is replacing job stagnation. Most of the growth is in full-time private sector jobs.

With continued vigilance, we are on track to balance the budget by the fiscal year 2000-01 and to begin paying down the massive debt that is the legacy of the tax-and-spend policies of previous governments. We have reversed the steady increase in taxes. We now have the lowest general personal income tax rate in the country.

In the 1999 budget in May, we noted that the outlook for continued job growth and prosperity was bright. We are very pleased to report today that Ontario's performance and prospects are even stronger than we had anticipated earlier this year.

Tax cuts, careful spending and removal of barriers to growth are creating an economic climate that is restoring business and consumer confidence, spending and investment in Ontario.

The result is that Ontario's economy is expanding at a vigorous pace this year. Real GDP rose by more than previously expected at annualized rates of 5.2% in the first quarter and 5% in the second quarter of 1999 fiscal year. So far this year retail sales are up 7.3%, housing starts are up 24.3% and exports have grown by 16.2%.

The May 1999 budget was based on projections of Ontario real GDP growth of 3.7% in 1999. Based on the economy's performance so far this year, we, along with the private sector, are projecting that Ontario is on pace for growth of 5% this year.

The consensus among private sector forecasters is that Ontario's economy will grow more rapidly than the economies of any of the G7 countries in 2000 as well. All private sector forecasters also expect Ontario to register stronger economic growth than the rest of Canada this year and next.

The people of Ontario can now see that the hard work and sacrifice of five years are paying off. The outlook shows that the policies that they endorsed, the policies

that were needed, policies of lower taxes and economic growth based on private sector investment and job creation, are working.

For all Ontarians, the most compelling economic issue is creating and keeping good jobs. Tax cuts have fuelled vigorous job growth in Ontario. In the first half of this decade, Ontario consistently underperformed the rest of the country. From January 1990 to September 1995, Ontario lost nearly 50,000 jobs, while the rest of Canada gained 350,000 jobs.

Since mid-1995, Ontario's job growth has consistently outperformed the rest of the country. Most importantly, the increase has been in the private sector. The jobs have been full-time. Ontarians of all ages, including our young people, have benefited from this growth. Ontario's youth unemployment rate, while still too high, has fallen to 12.7%. The overall unemployment rate has fallen to a new low of 6%.

Since September 1995, Ontario has gained 615,000 new jobs, nearly all of them full-time jobs in the private sector. These represent over half of all private sector jobs created in Canada. So far this year, 177,000 Ontarians have found jobs, virtually all of them full-time. This is roughly equivalent to the combined populations of Chatham-Kent and Sault Ste Marie finding full-time jobs. Job growth is estimated to be 3.1% this year, and we are well on our way to our goal of creating 725,000 jobs by the end of the year 2000.

As the Ontario experience demonstrates, low tax rates are critical for economic growth. As well, they enhance economic competitiveness. As announced in the 1999 budget, a business tax review panel is being formed in order to examine the current Ontario personal, corporate and property tax systems for their impact on the capacity of business, both small and large, to create jobs. Advice by this committee will guide us as we prepare Ontario's budget for the year 2000 and the years ahead.

In an open, global economy, jobs and investment find new homes quickly and easily. High taxes scare away new investment and jobs. They raise the costs of producing goods and services. They act as a drag on our economy. They depress job creation and prosperity.

1400

Although Ontario and most other provinces have been steadily reducing taxes, Canadians as a whole still face a higher personal income tax burden than citizens of any other nation in the G7.

The provinces cannot make the tax system competitive on their own. Most of the personal income tax burden in Canada, over 60%, is imposed by the federal government. The federal government can and should create jobs and strengthen the national economy by cutting taxes. Premier Harris and I have stressed that the federal government should cut taxes in the next federal budget.

I was pleased to host my provincial and territorial counterparts earlier this month. Every single finance minister from every province and the territories agreed that federal tax cuts should happen immediately, that full restoration of the Canada health and social transfer

should happen now and that they should be priorities for the federal government.

They also called for a reduction in the job-killing federal Employment Insurance premiums. As the surplus in the EI account continues to balloon, standing at about \$26 billion today and rising to about \$31 billion or more by the year 2000, Ottawa is missing the opportunity to offset scheduled rate increases for CPP with EI rate cuts.

The federal government actually increased job-killing payroll taxes in 1999 and will do so in the year 2000 as well. These increases in federal payroll taxes next year will cost Ontario employers and workers alone over \$560 million and will cost the province as many as 22,500 jobs. This is based on a paper issued by the C.D. Howe Institute, which estimates that every \$1 billion increase in payroll taxes results in a loss of 40,000 jobs.

It is time for the federal government to do its share. As we approach 2000, we call upon the federal government to show respect for the equal and evolving nature of Canadian federalism and to show flexibility in its understanding of our respective roles in this federation we call Canada.

The federal government has required that provincial personal income tax systems use the federal definition of taxable income. This limits the flexibility of all provinces in designing tax systems to meet the specific needs of their taxpayers. Ontario is no longer willing to accept federally imposed constraints from an earlier era of federal dominance in federal-provincial relations.

Ontario will be moving to a "tax on income" system in which Ontario's personal income tax will no longer be linked to the federal tax and subject to hidden tax increases of the federal system. A "tax on income" system would preserve the benefits Ontario taxpayers have gained from government tax cuts, as we embark on this course with the expectation that provinces will have the same flexibility as the federal government currently possesses over the personal income tax system of each.

The federal government must also restore CHST funding to 1994-95 levels immediately. Ottawa slashed \$6.2 billion a year from provincial transfers for health and social programs, and so far has only restored \$2 billion of the \$6.2 billion. We call upon Ottawa to return the rest of this funding to provinces in the year 2000, including an appropriate escalator clause for these cash transfers that keeps pace with future cost pressures and inflation.

Ontario's strong economic and job growth is continuing to propel gains in government revenue. While we have been cutting tax rates, our revenues have been rising. They will be an estimated \$59.1 billion this year, up from \$49.5 billion in 1995-96. Perhaps that will answer the criticism of some members opposite who projected that we would lose \$5 billion a year, not gain \$9.6 billion a year.

For this fiscal year, we are delighted to report that we are once again on track to exceed our target for deficit reduction. Based on the second-quarter Ontario finances, which are being released today, this year's fiscal deficit

is now projected at \$1 billion, down \$1.1 billion from the 1999 budget plan.

We can and do look forward to introducing a balanced budget for 2000-01 next spring, an excellent way to launch the new century. Furthermore, we will ensure that the budget remains balanced. The Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act, 1999, approved by the Legislature last week, will prevent Ontario governments from raising taxes in the future without the express permission of the people of Ontario, and will prohibit governments from incurring deficits except in extraordinary circumstances. It is imperative that we not revert to the tax-and-spend habits of previous governments once the deficit is eliminated.

Even when the budget is balanced, we will continue to safeguard taxpayers' hard-earned dollars. We will start paying down the debt, beginning with a minimum \$2-billion repayment during our current mandate. The legacy we inherited from previous governments was debt, over \$101 billion of it. Our legacy to future generations is a province that is on sound fiscal footing, with a plan to keep it there.

Successful businesses review their operations continuously, looking for ways to find efficiencies, to improve the products and services they deliver to their customers, and effective governments do exactly the same. We promised that under our government existing programs would all be reviewed and justified on the basis of cost, necessity and efficiency, and we are continuing to do this.

As announced in the 1999 budget, the Ontario Financial Review Commission will be reconvened to assist the government as we continue to strengthen fiscal management and public accountability. A blue-ribbon panel will be appointed and will provide recommendations to improve the fiscal management and accountability of key public-sector organizations such as hospitals, universities, colleges and municipalities. We are ever vigilant in our efforts to ensure taxpayers' dollars are spent wisely. We are making government work better by managing spending on programs and on compensation.

As my colleague the Chair of Management Board recently noted, the province has reached collective agreements with its employees that are reasonable and fiscally responsible. Ontario's broader public sector, such as municipalities, boards of education, post-secondary institutions and the health care sector, should do the same.

In a competitive world economy where markets change with lightning speed, we cannot rest on our laurels and assume that the battle is over. We need to keep an eye on the future, while making the right investments today to sustain our economic competitiveness.

Earlier this year, the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board presented our government with an economic road map for jobs and economic prosperity. We will be following this direction to make the strategic investments that will promote new technology, innovation and skills

development, and enhance our competitiveness now and into the future.

The actions the government has taken to date, and the actions we will continue to take, are not quick fixes. They have not always been the easiest choices. But our economic and fiscal record of success, together with the brighter outlook of our economic future, demonstrates that they are the right choices. Our policies are working. The outlook for Ontario's strong and growing economy is very positive.

Our government's agenda is motivated by our goal of ensuring that the people of Ontario have the opportunity to access good jobs, quality health care, first-class education services and a prosperous future. We will not waiver from this agenda or from the often difficult decisions required to implement it.

By continuing on the path of sound fiscal and economic management, we are laying the foundation for prosperity and quality of life that will benefit all Ontarians for many generations to come.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Responses?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to begin the debate on the government's fiscal and economic outline. I start by looking at the government's record on debt, where we can see that since Premier Harris became Premier, the debt of the province, and these are the government's own numbers, has gone up by \$22 billion—25%. These are the government's own numbers.

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I would also point out that virtually every other province in this country now has a balanced budget. When Premier Harris became Premier, the federal government and Quebec had substantial deficits. The federal government balanced their budget three years in advance of Mike Harris. Quebec balanced their budget two years ahead of Mike Harris.

Mike Harris, in the analogy I have in my mind, is prancing along, waving to the crowd. Bouchard runs by him, Chrétien runs by him and they balance the budget. They have been paying down the debt of the provinces.

Interjections.

Mr Phillips: I know you don't like to hear this. I would just ask us to take a look at the credit rating agencies. They look at the way Mike Harris manages the finances of Ontario. What has happened to the credit rating agencies—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, member. Stop the clock. I cannot hear the response coming from the member.

Member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

Mr Phillips: I go back to the independent bodies that rate credit worthiness. They downgraded Bob Rae three times. Mike Harris was mad about that. Mike Harris has been Premier now for four and a half years, heading to five years: the same credit rating. Why? Because you have mismanaged the finances of the province. That is what they're saying. Hydro played games with the books. Now they're on our own books.

One of the most important pages in this document is page 22. What it says here is that exports now account for 51.9%—almost 52%—of Ontario's economy. It was about a quarter of Ontario's economy; it's now 52%. I think it's important, when Ontario looks at our economy, that we recognize why we have been growing strongly. It is because of exports virtually doubling.

While Mike Harris is patting himself on the back, I really think he should be patting Bill Clinton on the back. The reason I raise this is, let's recognize what is driving Ontario's economy. It is exports; there's no question. The minister himself said 52% exports.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Stop the clock. Minister of Finance, please come to order so I can hear the response.

Mr Phillips: The reason I think it's important is this: On Friday, Palladini sent us all a letter saying: Why are people investing in Ontario? It is for these reasons. These are the people who are driving our exports.

Here's what Mr Palladini's letter to us said: It's because of "first-class education" in Ontario that is "highly affordable and accessible." What is Mike Harris doing? He has taken tuitions from 20% of the cost to 35% of the cost now. No longer is it highly accessible and affordable.

It goes on to say here: "A typical company operating in Ontario might find its employee benefits bill slashed to one sixth of what it'd pay south of the border." This is Al Palladini's letter to us on Friday. What is Mike Harris doing? He's systematically moving to a two-tiered system where people pay for their health care costs, not by all of us sharing the burden but paying for it—if you can afford it—out of your own pocket; if you can't afford it, too bad. I would say that one of the most important pages in this document, for all of Ontario to recognize, is that what is driving Ontario's economy is exports.

You're undermining by your own definition the major reason why companies want to invest in Ontario, like a quality health care program. "Save Civilized Society" is the big heading here. "Ontario's outstanding quality of life"—they talk about the quality of life in our urban areas. "Our civil society"—what's Mike Harris doing? He's undermining the very thing that is driving Ontario's economy, and that is our exports.

I go on. The minister misspoke himself. He said that Ontario is now at an all-time low in unemployment. The fact is that this is the document he sent out to us two weeks ago. In the late 1980s, Ontario's unemployment rate was 5%. You misspoke yourself, Minister. You may want to correct the record a little bit later.

I would also say on the job front that we are looking forward to the government delivering on its commitment for 825,000 jobs. The minister never mentioned that today, but that was in the Blueprint.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Yes, he did. You didn't listen.

Mr Phillips: Oh, I did listen. He never mentioned 825,000 jobs. You're using the old promises. You're

looking at some new promises now you're going to have to live with.

While you are touting the accomplishments of Ontario, it is on the backs of our most vulnerable and it is as a result of exports, not what you did.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The member for Sudbury, come to order, please.

Responses.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Let me begin by congratulating the Minister of Finance on the hyperbole of his spin. He would have us believe that because he gave 6% or 7% of the highest-income people in the province a tax cut, everything else has flowed from heaven. The reality is in a study of the auto industry that was just released today. It's a study which shows that we are now going to surpass Michigan in the production of automobiles. But nowhere—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Order. Leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: But nowhere in the study does it mention the government's tax cut. They point out that Ontario is going to surpass Michigan in the production of automobiles not because of some phony tax cut; what they point out is Ontario is moving ahead because our currency is so much lower vis-à-vis the American currency and because health care costs—medicare—are so much cheaper than that American system of health care that you're trying to emulate.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. I would ask the government benches to come to order so I can hear the response, please. Leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: I know the Conservatives don't want to hear this. When anyone does an analysis of what has become the number one industry in Ontario, they don't want to hear that that industry has grown not because of any phony tax cut. In fact, they don't even mention your phony tax cut. What they mention is the low value of the Canadian dollar. What they mention is the efficiency of a medicare system that you're tearing apart. What they also mention is that 90% of the automobiles produced are exported.

What it means is what this government doesn't want to admit: It's exports that drive the Ontario economy. Once again, your phony tax cut has got nothing to do with it.

The person we should be thanking is not the Minister of Finance over here, but Alan Greenspan and Bill Clinton for allowing the American economy to hum and allowing them to import our automobiles, our trucks, our buses, our trains, our transit equipment, our computer equipment, our pulp, our paper and our lumber. But no, this government wants to go on with this fantasy.

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The fantasy is further exposed when you look at the opinion research that was done earlier this fall which

shows that 75% of the people in Ontario don't feel they have had a tax cut. Lower-income people know that they haven't had a tax cut. Middle-income people know they haven't had a tax cut. Modest-income people know that they haven't had a tax cut. If anything, those people are now paying the higher tuition fees, the motor vehicle registration fees, the higher property taxes, the family responsibility taxes, the public guardian and trustee taxes and the new property assessment fees. That's the reality of what you've done. You've given the wealthiest 6% a tax cut. You've hit everybody else with a tax increase. You're lucky enough to live at a time when the American economy is functioning.

What I really want to say to the Minister of Finance, though, is this: You failed to mention the health deficit, the education deficit, the environmental deficit and the social deficit you are leaving behind, and it's those deficits which hurt the prospects of the majority of people in this province.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I would also point out to the minister that page 55 of his own document that he has tabled here today shows that the outlook of personal income tax revenue projections, as opposed to the 1998-99 actuals, shows that you're going to collect over \$1 billion less in personal income tax. That's your rich friends getting wealthier because of your tax cuts. When you look across our communities, what are the vast majority of citizens facing? Cuts to their education system, cuts to the hospital system, cuts to our environmental protection laws, cuts to our labour laws and the inspectors who are there to enforce all those laws.

Minister, your friends are doing great in your wonderful little world; it's everybody else who is getting screwed.

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the member to withdraw the last word, please.

Mr Christopherson: I withdraw it, Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ELGIN-MIDDLESEX DETENTION CENTRE

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Minister, on June 6, 1996, you told this House that you had just learned of allegations of abuse at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. We know that a phone call was received in your office three months before that date from the mother of a young offender at Elgin-Middlesex, and she was concerned about her son's safety.

In recent weeks, we've been told that the staff in your office tried to hide the fact that a call had been made to your office. Today there is new evidence that your office tried to have the documents changed to cover up the fact

that that call did in fact come to your office. There are voice mail records now that back up those who say that there were changes to those documents ordered by your office.

My question for the minister is this: Given the new information that is now available in the public, we'd like to know what you believe your course of action should be.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I refer this to the Minister of Correctional Services.

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): As the member opposite would know, the matter she is raising today is before a quasi-judicial board and it would be totally inappropriate to comment on the specifics that are before that panel. I think that has been the position that has been raised by members opposite on a number of occasions.

I think the member should be aware of, and I would have thought she would have been concerned about, what we have done to deal with the young offender institutions and our involvement with young offenders in this province as a result of the numerous inquiries into that particular incident. We have taken action. I would have thought the member would have wanted to know whether we have appropriately trained corrections officers to deal with young offender situations. I would have thought the member would have wanted to know whether or not we were prepared to implement different correctional policies for people who are attending those institutions.

I would have thought the member would have wanted to know whether or not we have attempted to deal with how we deal with emergency situations in our institutions in general. I would have thought those would have been the questions the member would have posed in this House.

Mrs Pupatello: I'll tell you what the public wants to know. The public wants to know, who is defending their interests today? We want to know why, on April 26—I'm going to quote this same minister who I directed the question to and who I expect to answer the supplement. He said in this House: "I can indicate clearly that there was no undue interference from the minister's office with respect to this whole matter." That's the quote by the minister that I would like to answer today.

Today we have information through the media that voice mail records confirm that this same minister's executive assistant knew, approached correctional officers about changing documents. The evidence is mounting, the evidence is damning, the evidence seems clear. What we know is that this happened on this minister's watch. What we know now is that he should do the right thing. We are asking this minister to answer, this minister to step aside until this investigation which should be launched into his office is over.

Hon Mr Sampson: For the record—and I think the honourable member understands that this is the record but I'll clarify it for her—the former minister, the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services,

indicated to this House over three years ago that he first became aware of the incident at Elgin-Middlesex in June 1996. That is on the record.

Minister Runciman, I think the House would agree, has the utmost integrity in this House. In fact, a member of your party agreed with that comment because they said at that time that they accepted Mr Runciman's statement as that being the fact.

Mrs Pupatello: Let me tell the minister that I would like to answer this final supplementary on this, that the bar has been set by your colleague, and that was Jim Wilson, then Minister of Health.

Here is what he said in this House. When he stepped down because of the behaviour of a staffer, he said, "I hope I've set a precedent that when there are questions of impropriety by staff members, of ministers themselves, that they fully step aside and allow an independent third body to look at this."

That is the precedent. That is the integrity. That is the integrity that you are speaking of where this minister is concerned, that as a matter of his integrity, as a matter of the precedent that has been set by that same cabinet colleague when he stepped aside because of the behaviour in that minister's office, we are asking you today, in light of the evidence that is mounting—records by the assistant deputy minister at the time, that the minister's office was fully informed; records today—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Member's time is up. Minister of Correctional Services.

Hon Mr Sampson: The member knows this issue is before the grievance settlement board. Unfortunately, yet again, the opposition is dredging up old stories and allegations that, frankly, serve no purpose in this House, and not focusing on the real issue of the day, which is how young offenders are treated in institutions across this province; not dealing with the fundamental policies as to how we deal with the very serious challenge in this province of properly providing security and custody and treatment services to young offenders in this province.

It's not prepared to deal with the fact that there's a tremendous challenge in this province to make sure that we have young offenders who come out of the system and are properly rehabilitated so that they don't reoffend, so that they don't create yet other victims.

These are the policy issues, I say to the member opposite, who I hope is listening. These are the policy issues that we are taking forward to the people of Ontario. These are the policy issues that are important to Ontarians, how we deal with young offenders, youth justice and criminal activity in this province.

These are the issues that we should be debating in this House and not old stories and not old allegations that you continually want to raise in this House for your own political advantage.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Minister, your special adviser for municipal restructuring in Sudbury has done the job you have asked him to do. Now it's time that your government put its resources behind his plan. When you forced amalgamation on Toronto, you gave Toronto a \$50-million grant, plus \$200 million in interest-free money. When Chatham and its surrounding municipalities amalgamated, you gave them \$22 million to cover the cost of restructuring. The citizens of Sudbury deserve no less.

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Restructuring in Sudbury is estimated to cost between \$12 million and \$14 million. It must be your government that picks up the cost of municipal restructuring. The citizens of the new greater city of Sudbury cannot be saddled with a \$12-million to \$14-million debt. Will you commit today in the House to the citizens of Sudbury that you will pick up the entire cost of amalgamation in the greater city of Sudbury?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the honourable member for the question. I take it from his comments that he is supportive of the report, and thank him very much for that support.

We are in the process of reviewing a very complex report which had quite an interesting series of recommendations, including the fact that the citizens in the new, amalgamated greater Sudbury would see taxpayer savings of around \$14 million annually. I believe this is good news for citizens in the Sudbury area as well.

The honourable member raises a point about transitional costs. Indeed there are transitional costs, and I certainly will take his comments under advisement as we seek to respond to the report.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): To the same minister: Let me make it clear on this side of the House that you will not get a clear commitment of support on this bill until you address our issues in regard to restructuring funding and the costs to those municipalities. So you can put that assumption aside.

Let us tell you again: The same situation applies to my community of Hamilton-Wentworth. Minister, we have clearly seen the fashion in which you treated Toronto regarding restructuring costs. We've seen that you treated Chatham-Kent, with a population of 110,000, to \$22 million. The recommendation for Ottawa-Carleton is in excess of \$50 million. However, the recommendation for Hamilton is only a \$10-million loan. That is not acceptable. That does not cover the cost. We estimate the cost, based on this formula and the formula you have used, to be in excess of \$50 million.

Will you outline to us clearly today how you address that issue, and will you commit today that Hamilton-Wentworth will get every single cent it needs in regard to restructuring costs up to the \$50-million formula that is in front of us?

Hon Mr Clement: I am detecting a trend in the questions, and I thank the honourable member for his commentary with respect to the special adviser's report

for Hamilton-Wentworth. I'll certainly take his views under advisement.

We are always looking for ways to save the taxpayer money and to deliver better services for less. This is not only a challenge for us at the provincial level; it is a challenge that our municipal counterparts also have. We are looking at proposals that would deal with that, that would create a more efficient level of government, more transparency for the taxpayer and more accountability to the taxpayer.

It looks like at least this honourable member is on the same side, and I welcome his views to get to a better deal for the taxpayers. The policies he ran on in the election certainly did not guarantee that. Maybe he's had a change of heart since the election.

Mr Agostino: To the same minister: Let me tell you again that you will not get a commitment from this side of the House until we get a commitment from you that you will give money to Hamilton to the tune of \$50 million to deal with restructuring.

I want to ask the minister about the betrayal of one of your members, the betrayal by the Premier of the member from Wentworth-Burlington. Yesterday we asked the finance minister in the House about comments made by the Premier reassuring the member, Mr Skarica, that he would not bring in one-tier enforced restructuring. The Minister of Finance said yesterday that he knew of no such commitment that had been made to him.

Let me tell you what the member from Stoney Creek says today. He said he was baffled by Eves's statement to the Legislature. He said Skarica personally assured him before the election that those assurances were from the Premier and the party. He also said it's possible that Eves does not know or he forgot. Could I ask you who is right? Is it Mr Eves, the Premier or Mr Skarica, or is Mr Clark wrong? Who committed to whom? Did the Premier commit to Mr Skarica that he would not bring in one tier in Hamilton-Wentworth?

The Speaker: Sorry, the member's time.

Hon Mr Clement: There were quite a few questions in that supplementary, so let me provide the House with this information. Certainly we are looking for ways to give the taxpayer a break. The one thing that I found quite curious in the honourable member's remarks was the fact that he was willing to oppose any proposal to give the taxpayer a break unless he got his way on another issue. I would think that his party would want to be the party of principle. Maybe I'm wrong on that as well; maybe they're taking a new tack—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Minister, take a seat. I cannot hear the minister's response. I need to hear the minister's response. The member for Windsor West, please come to order. Member for Hamilton East, please come to order. Minister.

Hon Mr Clement: We, on this side of the House, welcome support from the opposition when it comes to giving the taxpayers a break. I ask the honourable member this question: If he is in favour of doing so, why

not support all of our initiatives in this regard? The finance minister has made it clear that this is our priority. We would love to have their support on this side of the House. For the taxpayers, we welcome it.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, you're playing a callous game with the lives of cancer patients and their families. I've obtained confidential documents that show your ministry is asking Princess Margaret Hospital to put itself in a position of being sued. You're asking Princess Margaret to accept changes to the referral process and put patients on their list that don't have any hope of being treated within the four-week recommended time period.

You want to move people off the holding list and onto a list whose only purpose is to politically manage the waiting period and do absolutely nothing about reducing the waiting time. Your demands have forced the hospital to seek legal advice. I have obtained a copy of the legal opinion from Borden and Elliot, and it makes it clear that you are putting Princess Margaret in a position of being sued.

Minister, why are you forcing hospitals to bend over backwards to avoid lawsuits when the real issue is the lack of resources that you're prepared to put into reducing cancer waiting time?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the member full well knows, we actually have invested over \$155 million in cancer services since 1995. In fact, we were the ones who set up Cancer Care Ontario in order to ensure that all people throughout the province would have access to cancer services. We have also made a commitment, as the member understands and knows, to reduce the waiting time for cancer radiology patients. We also are expanding access to cancer facilities throughout Ontario.

We have announced that we will be building new facilities closer to home in the communities of Mississauga, Durham, Waterloo, St Catharines and Sault Ste Marie. We actually have taken significant steps and invested \$155 million to do all we can for cancer patients.

Ms Lankin: Minister, what you're doing is asking Princess Margaret to join with you in a shell game. You're asking them to take patients off the holding list and to put them on their waiting list for treatment when they have no hope of being treated within the safe time frame. The hospital has got a legal opinion. It says they could be open to being sued for lack of duty of care.

Minister, you have created this situation. The hospital is about to send out a draft letter—they're considering it at the oncology committee meeting today—that will make clear to patients this waiting game of yours, and it will say, "Delays of this length are well beyond the recommended time frame after diagnosis."

They don't want to play this cynical, callous game of manipulation. They don't want to open themselves up to a lawsuit from patients who you are looking at manipulating, who you are looking at politically managing instead of treating.

Will you take responsibility for this and withdraw your request from Princess Margaret to play this political shell game?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Cancer Care Ontario, which was created in 1997 in order to ensure that all people in this province had equal access to cancer services is the agency that coordinates standards and guidelines for the treatment of patients requiring cancer services. I know that agency is doing all it can to ensure that high-quality services are provided to the people in this province.

As I said, we have invested an additional \$155 million to respond to the needs of cancer patients.

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Ms Lankin: Minister, don't try and push this off on someone else. Listen to this, please. Let me read this to you, very clearly:

"If the University Health Network were to accept the changes to the re-referral process requested by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, patients re-referred to the Princess Margaret Hospital would be registered on a list by the PMH at the PMH.... My concern is that such a patient may be led to believe that he or she is being attended to in a proper and timely fashion as he or she is in the care of Princess Margaret, a renowned cancer treatment centre."

It goes on to say they can't give that treatment in a timely fashion; they don't want to be part of your game to fool patients; they don't want to open up themselves to the risk of a lawsuit.

Take responsibility, please, today. Assure us that you will withdraw this request, these pressure tactics to manipulate patients, and just get on with addressing the real problem in terms of the waiting list.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member perhaps doesn't understand, but since December 1998, within the past year, we have provided an additional \$5.8 million through Cancer Care Ontario to the University Health Network and to Princess Margaret Hospital for equipment upgrades, which I understand will result in the treatment of more than 700 patients.

SPORTS FACILITY TAXATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Deputy Premier, and it's a further question about his plans for tax subsidies for NHL hockey millionaires. You've refused public hearings on your property tax subsidy scheme for NHL hockey millionaires, and you've refused public hearings because you don't want people to know about this.

But my question today is about another scheme. The Ottawa Senators want you to classify them as a charity for the purpose of their home games so they won't have to pay entertainment tax of \$3.5 million a year—a

completely cynical scheme to declare them a charity so they could avoid paying a tax that every other entertainment provider pays.

Minister, tell us today that you will not get involved in this cynical tax subsidy scheme and that you will reject their request to be classified as a charity for the purposes of their home hockey games.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): First of all, the leader of the third party will know that charities are registered and get their registration number from the federal government, not from the provincial government. So we don't have the power to do what he's suggesting even if we wanted to.

Second of all, there has been an issue, as he knows, in the media etc with respect to payment or non-payment of RST. I want to be perfectly clear. I think that every corporation that should pay entertainment tax, provincial sales tax, whatever, should meet their obligations and pay it. I'm not considering any exceptions to that rule.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you know very well that the owner of the Ottawa Senators has this cynical game in mind. You know very well that they've put forward a scheme to have their home 40 games treated as charity events. I would think, Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier, that in the interests of fairness you would want to step forward and say very clearly, very publicly, that Ontario is absolutely opposed to this.

At a time when we obviously don't have enough money for cancer patients, when you're promoting hall-way medicine in our hospitals, when you're thinking about taking more money out of schools, I would think you'd be on your feet saying that Ontario is not going to play any part in this, that Ontario is absolutely opposed to it, and saying to the federal Liberals in Ottawa that they ought not to take any role in this too. Will you do that, Deputy Premier?

Hon Mr Eves: I guess the member just can't take yes or, in this case, no for an answer. We are not considering making any changes as to who should pay entertainment tax, what is a charitable organization and what isn't in the province of Ontario. I just gave you the answer you wanted twice now.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. When the Provincial Auditor released his annual report two weeks ago, he confirmed that your government was risking public safety and costing taxpayers more in its relentless bid to privatize road maintenance work across the province. You responded unbelievably with the claim that the Provincial Auditor was wrong. Minister, I can assure you that the auditor is more than prepared to prove that he is right and you are terribly wrong when he appears before the public accounts committee, which will be investigating this important matter at its first opportunity.

But winter is already upon us. It hit northwestern Ontario last week, southern and southwestern Ontario yesterday and today. The need for public safety obligates you to guarantee that your determination to privatize this vital government service does not put people's lives in further peril on the road.

My question is, will you put aside your misguided disagreement with the auditor and impose a moratorium on any further privatizations of road maintenance for the sake of public safety?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): It's interesting. I think you should get your information from listening to answers in this House as opposed to reading the Toronto Star. There's no disagreement with the auditor. The fact is that safety is our number one priority and public safety has in no way been compromised. In point of fact, maintenance contracts specifically require adherence to traditional maintenance standards. These maintenance standards are monitored and there are significant penalties for any outside organization which does not adhere to them.

Mr Gravelle: Minister, I can assure you the auditor himself is very upset about you accusing him of being wrong and he looks forward to the opportunity. Yes, he is.

It's vital that you acknowledge that not only is your privatization of road maintenance not saving taxpayers any money but that it has put the public at risk. To make it worse, you have lowered your own ministry standards for maintenance in order to achieve those phantom savings. In other words, we have increased costs and less maintenance.

Just 10 days ago, municipal truck sanders from Schreiber and Terrace Bay in my riding were called out by emergency crews after a freezing rainstorm because your ministry crews didn't get there in time, which begs the question, do you even have the equipment you need to do the job, and why have the number of road closures increased since your standards were lowered?

The mayor of Terrace Bay, Mike King, expressed the feelings of many of us when he said last week, "I've lived here 25 years and I truly believe the frequency of road closures is a result of cutbacks and contracting out."

My question is, will you back off from this dangerous approach you're taking, or perhaps more to the point, in light of your wild sell-off of ministry equipment, can you?

Hon Mr Turnbull: Interesting question. The fact is the particular area that you're speaking about hasn't been given to the private sector. The fact is there has been no change to the safety standards or the maintenance standards and we strictly adhere to them.

The fact is that in this province we have snow, we have ice. It happens every year. Believe it or not, we had snow and we had ice when you were the government.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister take his seat. Order.

Minister.

Hon Mr Turnbull: The same maintenance standards apply as have always applied and they are strictly adhered to. It is important that everybody in this province take steps to get their automobiles ready for serious weather in the winter. We understand the importance of good roads in this province. That's why we're putting more money into our roads than you ever—

The Speaker: Order. New question.

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ONTARIO PLACE

Mr David Young (Willowdale): My question is for the Minister of Tourism. The Toronto Star reported last Saturday, and again this day, that attendance is down at Ontario Place over the past year. Ontario Place, as you are well aware, has been an important part of Toronto's waterfront for the past 25 years, and the park, although it has continued to evolve over that period of time, has always been there as a constant for the people of Toronto, for the people of Ontario and for the many visitors from around the world who have come to our fair city. The Star suggests that the management of Ontario Place and the board are to blame for the drop in attendance.

My question to you is, do you agree? If so, what actions are you and your ministry going to take to correct this?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism): First of all, I'd like to thank the member for his question and indicate that tourism and the number of tourists who have come to Ontario has increased in the last couple of years under the leadership of our government. However, tourism in the city of Toronto has actually declined, and this is a serious concern.

What the Toronto Star failed to report was that we've experienced declines at the CNE, at the Metro Zoo, at Ontario Place, at the ROM, virtually across the board in the city of Toronto. It has actually been a decline of about 17.5% over the last few years. On the one hand, it has increased for the province, but it has declined in Toronto.

The facts at Ontario Place are very clear, and this was not reported in the Toronto Star, and that is that in 1991-92 Ontario Place was given away to the citizens of Ontario with a free admission. The revenue was \$13.4 million, but the grants from the subsidy from the province—

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

Mr Young: While I'm sure that my constituents are pleased about the reduction in taxpayer dollars to subsidize Ontario Place—I am sure of that by reason of the fact that the people of Willowdale and the people of this province, both in June of 1995 and in June of this very year, sent a very clear message, a message that they wanted, they demanded that Queen's Park would eliminate subsidies where it was reasonable to do so and where there was an alternative form of funding.

Toronto, as you are well aware, is a world-class city in which there are hundreds of thousands of tourists that come each and every year. As a result of that, we have great revenue in our city and in our province. My question is, what steps are being taken to improve the sales and marketing of this city, not only Ontario Place but all the great attractions that we have here?

Hon Mr Jackson: Many of the attractions in Ontario are moving to a greater emphasis on marketing and sales promotion. In fact, the ROM has restructured in the last year. They've already seen some new attractions coming to the city of Toronto.

We know that Ontario Place—and I support the board in their decision to reorganize their senior management team, to bring in additional expertise in sales and marketing, which is what this attraction requires. We have a new private sector general manager coming into place by the end of this year.

These are all positive signals, and they complement the fact that this is the first government in Ontario's history that has dedicated \$120 million solely to marketing tourism for the province of Ontario around the world.

We're seeing clear results; more tourists are coming to Ontario. We need to make sure that they also come to Toronto.

CONTAMINATED LANDFILL

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. My constituency has the province's only hazardous waste landfill site, the largest in Canada. It has been found to be leaking methane gas and water. The clay liner of this toxic dump, which was guaranteed to be impregnable, now has at least three areas that are leaking. This creates an even higher risk to groundwater contamination, to the health and safety of the people in my community. We are talking about a hazardous, toxic site that has received an imported 386,493 tonnes of hazardous waste this year alone; almost 25,767 dump trucks worth. Minister, will you close this site and do a full environmental assessment on a site that is clearly out of control?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Thank you very much for the question. I want to assure the people who live near this landfill that we will take any action needed to ensure that the health and safety of their environment is protected.

When we found out about the situation the honourable member refers to, we immediately ordered the closure of the newly constructed sub-cell at the landfill, because there was methane gas and water seepage. We acted immediately on the methane gas and groundwater problem, and we made sure it was not affecting other areas of the landfill and that there were no impacts outside the facility. We are continuing to monitor the site to make sure that that's the case.

We are doing an investigation to see what the cause of the problem is and what remediation has to take place.

I'd be happy to work with the honourable member to ensure the health and safety of the citizenry around that area.

Ms Di Cocco: Unfortunately I understand you only have a \$1.25-million bond on that site if anything should happen. As well, in 1997 you fast-tracked the expansion to 300 acres, and Safety-Kleen, which is operating the site, bought another 1,000 acres.

So again, that liner leaks. I'm glad to hear you are trying to do something about it, but the standards are low, you have gutted the environment ministry, and the community and the residents fear for their health and safety.

Minister, it's like environmental genocide. Please shut it down and assess the situation.

Hon Mr Clement: I want to assure the honourable member that our top priority is the health and safety of the citizens around that area, and that will continue to be our top priority.

I can report to her that the honourable member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has already talked to me about some of the issues that she has raised in question period. I would be happy to work with both him and her to deal with

some of the bond issues and other issues related to ensuring that remediation is the top priority.

Again, these sorts of things are not acceptable and we have to respond to them. That's part of our job as the Ministry of the Environment and the government of Ontario. My further commitment to her and to the honourable member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex is that we will work with the local members—I believe there is a community liaison committee—and keep them advised on all the work that is undertaken to correct the problem, because we all want to correct the problem as quickly as possible.

CONTROL OF SMOKING

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I recently read with great interest and concern that the number of teenage smokers is on the increase. Even the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health recently released a report that stated that the number of teenage smokers has increased to 28.3%, which is almost a third of their population. I have also read reports that tobacco companies have been allegedly targeting children as young as 11 years of age to start smoking.

Minister, this issue certainly should not be overlooked. We all know the devastating effects of tobacco smoke. Could you please tell us what our government is doing to address the issue of teen smoking?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): We share the concern. We certainly are quite alarmed to see the incidence of substance abuse among young people in the province.

We have been providing funding to the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association over the past three

years. I know they have developed programs that respond to the needs of students in grades 7, 8 and 9, to encourage them not to engage in substance abuse.

However, recently we have expanded funding for our tobacco strategy from \$9 million to \$19 million and are putting in place more programs which will specifically target teenagers. There will be public-awareness campaigns and programs in the schools that will focus on preventing smoking and encouraging those who are currently smoking to cease. We have a 1-800 number to encourage quitting smoking as well.

Mr Galt: Thank you very much for your response. It's very apropos today with several of our young people in the gallery to hear that message.

It is indeed important that we send a message to our youth that smoking is extremely harmful and that the negative effects can certainly last a lifetime. Lung disease, ranging from respiratory distress through to cancer, results from both primary and secondary smoke, and the costs to our health care system are absolutely unacceptable.

Minister, could you provide members of the House with an update on our government's tobacco strategy?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I indicated in my first response, we have expanded the amount of money available to deal with the elimination of smoking. We have increased the funding from \$9 million to \$19 million, which is an over 100% increase. Our target group will be our teenagers in Ontario. We have a telephone line which will assist them. We are working with educators and community groups throughout Ontario to again raise public awareness. We also have a heart health program in place. We know we can decrease the incidence of heart disease and cancer if we encourage people to stop smoking. We are doing everything we can. We are working with our provincial counterparts and the federal government to eliminate the use of tobacco in the province.

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MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Labour, the minister designated to chop down Toronto city council to possibly as few as 22 members, who is going to ram it through before Christmas. I want to tell you, before the gobbledegook I'm going to get, that I know the game. It's not about saving pennies, because the Provincial Auditor already told you how you can save millions of bucks. This is about silencing Toronto city council, because they have been tough on you guys. They've been tough on you guys as it relates to issues of homelessness, rent control, child care and public transit. So what have you done as part of the game? You're going to throw a little grenade. The grenade goes off and all these poor little city councillors are going to scamper about to protect their futures and not have enough time to worry

about any of the other issues they have attacked you on for such a long time.

Have I got the game plan pretty well defined?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The question should be going to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as I understand it. Could you help me out here? Was it a labour question or municipal affairs and housing?

Interjections.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): The honourable member has quite a fertile imagination. I congratulate him on—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. You cannot—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, please. The question has to go to a minister with that responsibility. The standing orders are very clear. The question has to go to the minister responsible. The minister responsible is the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon Mr Clement: Again let me congratulate the honourable member for the fertility of his imagination in terms of conspiracy theories. I'm sure the truth is out there somewhere.

I can assure the honourable member that, yes, we are always looking for ways to ensure that taxpayers throughout Ontario, indeed taxpayers in Toronto, get a break. They deserve a break, they deserve better government, they deserve more efficient government, and they deserve better services for less money. We are engaged in a process in which we are collecting information and opinions. I will take his opinions under advisement if he wishes to share them. Perhaps his caucus has a position on this issue that he would like to share with us.

Mr Marchese: I told this minister, and the other minister who I thought was designated to deal with this, that the Provincial Auditor has told them how they can save millions and millions of dollars. You have a number of ministers saying he doesn't know what he's talking about. Go to that report to save your millions.

In relation to this issue, this is what your predecessor, M. Gilchrist, said about this: "We gave the city the power to make those changes under Bill 103, and so it is quite appropriate for the councils themselves to be using the power if they see fit."

Councillors thought they had your blessing, or at least the other fellow's blessing, but I thought he was speaking for your government. All of a sudden, what I get from you is that yes, they have the power under Bill 103, but they're powerless to do anything. What you're telling me is that you can change, unilaterally, dictatorially, issues as they relate to schools and that you, unilaterally, in relation to this Toronto city council, can decide what is good for them, contrary to what your predecessor said.

Minister, I think I've got your game plan. You're throwing a grenade to keep these people busy so they don't attack you. You don't want the city councillors to attack you in your—

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

Hon Mr Clement: I'm not quite sure I understand what the honourable member is talking about. There is no game here, there is a determination from this government to make sure that taxpayers get a break, and indeed I can tell you that Toronto taxpayers have done very well under this government and under the leadership of Mayor Lastman. They have a property tax freeze. Their property taxes in Toronto, on similar homes, are lower than in Ottawa, Hamilton, Windsor, London or Mississauga.

They are getting a break, but we are always looking for ways to deliver better services for less. That's our obligation as a government. So if the honourable member has a solution that he would like to share with us, rather than in engaging in conspiracy theories, we're all ears because that's our mandate: Give the taxpayer a break, more jobs, more prosperity, more opportunity. That's hard work, but this government is up to it.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a question for the Minister of Education.

Minister, today I want to ask you about the way you are cannibalizing the provinces' school boards, taking money away from some boards, taking some of it for tax cut purposes and giving some to other boards. Particularly, I want to address what you're doing to the Toronto Board of Education. Some \$256 million has been taken out and it's already having a real effect because it comes on top of \$100 million that your ministry has removed from the students in Toronto.

I know from past experience that big numbers sometimes cause you to get away from the subject, but let me just focus this for you. That \$256 million translates into General Mercer Junior public school, where the principal, Debra Porter, says they're only able to get resources for one subject in the new elementary curriculum a year. Will you tell Debra Porter and her teachers that you are willing to take some responsibility, as the EIC said you should, for the lack of money in the Toronto school board?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): We've been very clear to all the school boards that we are funding in a much more equitable manner, so it's very fair to all of the boards in terms of what is paid for, how it is calculated.

We quite recognize that there are many boards that have unique circumstances; Toronto is certainly one. That's why they received \$700 million more, on top of what they got before, to help with the transition, because we quite recognize they have unique challenges. The Education Improvement Commission was also very clear that the Toronto board has a task to do in terms of living

within its budget, as we're asking all boards to do. It's a difficult challenge, no question, but it's a challenge that's no more difficult than anyone dealing with their household budget or their business budget. We have to live within our budget. We're prepared to help the boards solve those challenges. We've been flexible in the past in terms of helping that board and I am sure if there are legitimate issues we'll work with the board to solve them in the future.

Mr Kennedy: You just said you'll do nothing for this board.

This school is struggling to try and provide for its kids. It had a new classroom and it could get no supplies for it. I have pictures here to show you that, five weeks into the school year, there were no supplies on the shelves for that classroom. None. The teacher, Mary Ann Fedchak, who has taught for 30 years, is so frustrated with your cuts, with the position that you have put the board in, with your lack of taking responsibility, which you are exhibiting already here today, that she's going to retire. She's going to get out early. A committed teacher is going to give up because of the conditions that you've created.

I wonder if you have something positive today to say to this school, to that principal and to that teacher who, in the face of your cuts and your failing of the children, is getting out?

1510

Hon Mrs Ecker: Only a Liberal would think that \$700 million is "doing nothing." Only the Liberal Party would think that.

We appreciate that managing any school board is not an easy task. That's why we have put forward the independent consultant to help the board, to work through the challenges, to find the savings that they've been asked to make, as all boards have been asked to live within their budget. I would also like to remind the honourable member that there are many figures that are being used by staff, there are projections, there are forecasts. We've been down this road before with this board, with all due respect.

The other change here that the honourable member seems to forget is that, while teachers in classrooms were sitting there with no textbooks, with no computers, taping things together, we had school boards with high-paid staff, with fountains in their foyers, with golf courses on their land ownership list. The priorities were all wrong. We are changing that so those dollars are in the classroom, where they should be, with those good teachers—

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

ONTARIO SUMMER GAMES

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

First, let me put for the record that I want to publicly thank you, Minister, for coming to Durham, for awarding the Ontario Summer Games to Durham and more

recently, last week, bringing a fat cheque to help pay for it. I really commend you for that.

Often I've heard the debate that there is a discussion between the competitors, whether able-bodied or disabled. In my riding of Durham, I've personally met a number of able-bodied athletes and disabled athletes: people like Sommer West, Rob Snoek and Jim Shaw come to mind. I see them as real competitors, able or disabled.

I'm wondering what you can tell us today about integrating those two sets of athletes in this province.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): I would like to thank the member for the question. I know of his commitment both to his community and of course to the athletes in the area of Durham.

I was pleased and thrilled to attend last week with my colleagues from the Durham area to talk about the summer games that will be happening in Durham. It's quite an unusual thing, because we have eight municipalities from the Durham region which are joining together to bring forward these games.

It's very important because, along with Sault Ste Marie, this will be the first and second time that disabled athletes and able-bodied athletes, if you will—we'll use those terms for this question—are able to come together and compete at the same time. This is a wonderful opportunity. We're really looking forward to these games. We know they're going to be very successful, and I know the region of Durham is going to do a tremendous job of putting these games on.

Mr O'Toole: I'm confident that Durham, with your support, will do an excellent job. Of course, Durham is very well represented, with two or three members in cabinet, so if they need help, they know where to come.

Seriously, Minister, I'm pleased to hear that you've made a real effort to embrace and increase inclusiveness and eliminate barriers for able-bodied and disabled athletes. Perhaps you can tell us something about the future, the successive games. Is this just one time or are you going to continue this policy into the future?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say, first of all, that there's no question that Durham is well represented by cabinet ministers, but it's also very well represented by Jerry Ouellette and John O'Toole, who have done a terrific job. We're very proud of all four members we have in Durham, and we're always grateful to the good people of Durham for continuing to re-elect Conservatives.

We are committed to an integration of the people with disabilities into games. We think it's important. I had some great opportunities this summer to see some disabled athletes, both in Kitchener and at the Mobility Cup. These people are amazing athletes in their own right, in any right that they can be judged in. It's important for us to continue to integrate the disabled people in the games. I know it's going to be very competitive. I know that a number of new competitors are very excited about the games. We're going to see a great show in

August in Durham. I hope everybody in the House is going to be there.

HÔPITAL MONTFORT
MONTFORT HOSPITAL

M^{me} Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): Tout le monde à la Chambre ici sait qu'une décision unanime historique a été rendue par trois juges de la cour divisionnaire de l'Ontario. Ces juges ont déterminé que la directive de la Commission de restructuration des services de santé de réduire de manière substantielle les services de l'hôpital Montfort doit être renversée parce que cette directive n'a pas tenu compte des droits constitutionnels des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. Ma question s'adresse au ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones.

Le premier ministre vous a confié le dossier des Affaires francophones. Vous êtes le conseiller principal du gouvernement en matière des Affaires francophones. De plus, une de vos responsabilités consiste à favoriser le développement de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario. Ma question : je vous enjoins, en tant que responsable auprès du gouvernement pour la communauté francophone de cette province, à savoir si vous êtes prêt à dire aujourd'hui même à cette communauté que vous allez respecter, que vous allez défendre avec force, que vous êtes prêt aujourd'hui même à dire oui à la décision de la cour au sujet de Montfort.

L'hon John R. Baird (ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones): Je vais référer cette question à ma collègue la ministre de la Santé.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I think the member appreciates that this is a very complicated and very serious legal case. I understand that the named respondent in this case, the Health Services Restructuring Commission, is considering the decision. They must review this and respond to the court's decision, and I have been advised that the commission will be responding in the very near future.

M^{me} Boyer : Je suis très désappointée que le ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones n'ait pas pu répondre à ma question. Je ne m'adressais pas à la ministre de la Santé mais bien au ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones.

Alors encore une fois, j'adresse ma question au ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones. Pouvez-vous vous engager aujourd'hui à vous acquitter pleinement de vos responsabilités pour défendre avec force les droits constitutionnels de vos concitoyens francophones, premièrement devant vos collègues autour de la table des ministres et aussi à votre caucus ?

L'hon M. Baird : Je vais bien sûr, comme toujours, parler à mes collègues au Conseil des ministres et de mon caucus.

C'est sûr que tous les citoyens et citoyennes francophones dans chaque région de la province reçoivent des

bons services en français, des services de qualité en français, parce que la provision de services de santé est très importante pour notre gouvernement. C'est pour cette raison que cette année on a dépensé plus de 20 \$ milliards, le plus d'argent de tous les gouvernements dans l'histoire de cette province.

EXTENSION OF DRINKING HOURS

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. New Year's Eve is a special time for all. It gives us an opportunity to share with our friends and family the memories of the year past and a chance to discuss the good times in the year to come. This year will be extra special as we begin the last year of this century.

In Perth-Middlesex, plans are already underway to celebrate the occasion in many different ways. Fireworks, street dances, plays and children's games are all available for those who wish to celebrate the year 2000 in a grand style. Licensed establishments will be offering a wide variety of talent as well as beverages for those who are inclined to dance the night away.

With only 31 days to go, my constituents are eager and anxious to begin celebrating. In light of the importance of this New Year's Eve, the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations recently announced that licensed establishments in Ontario will be able to serve alcohol until 4 am on January 1, 2000. I'd like the minister to explain to the people of Ontario why he chose to—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member's time is up. Minister.

1520

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I appreciate the question. We know that New Year's Eve this year is going to be a very special occasion. In the past, Ontario has recognized its special occasions by extending drinking hours. The tradition for the past few years of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission has been to extend the hours to 3 am.

Given the nature of this New Year's that's fast approaching, I asked the AGCO to consult widely to determine what consensus we might arrive at on a province-wide basis with respect to further extension of the drinking hours in the province. They talked to municipalities, policing organizations, organizations like Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the hospitality industry, and the consensus seemed to be that the responsible approach was in another extension, to 4 am.

Mr Johnson: I'm glad that we'll have more time for the events in my riding. I encourage everyone who doesn't have plans for this New Year's to join me in the riding of Perth-Middlesex for good times with good people, particularly at Al Jerky's and MoDean's in Listowel.

I know that some other Canadian provinces are extending their hours significantly beyond what we're

doing in Ontario. For instance, in Newfoundland, bars will remain open for 42 consecutive hours. That would be Labrador as well. I'd like to know if the minister has considered a longer extension?

Hon Mr Runciman: They don't have much else to do in Newfoundland perhaps. I apologize if I offended anyone.

We did take a look at what was happening in other jurisdictions. By and large, most other Canadian jurisdictions are extending the hours to 3 am or 4 am, as Ontario is doing. Really, it reflects this government's concern surrounding public safety. We have discussed this with, as I indicated, the chiefs of police organization. We've had a very positive response from Chief Grant Waddell—

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

LOTTERY AND CASINO CORPORATION OFFICES

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Chair of Management Board. It's about the lottery corporation. The people of Sault Ste Marie are beginning to notice that you continue to transfer executives of the lottery corporation from Sault Ste Marie to Toronto and that the OLC chairman and CEO, Mr Barbaro, is based in Toronto and that you've put the Roberta Bondar building up for sale, that you plan, in the red tape bill, to merge the lottery corporation and the casino corporation and that those two corporations are already sharing a single suite at 4120 Yonge Street in Toronto.

Can you put some of the fears of my constituents to rest? Can you demonstrate your government's confidence in the Soo? Can you show that when your officials say, "There is nothing to fear," we can in fact take their word? Will you give your word today for the record that if the red tape bill is passed and the lottery corporation and the casino corporation are merged into a new single entity, the headquarters will be in the Roberta Bondar building in Sault Ste Marie?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The only person I know who's fear-mongering on this whole issue is the member himself. He has been told numerous times. We've had to have press statements. There have been 524 new jobs created in Sault Ste Marie since the opening of the Sault Ste Marie charity casino. There have been 40 staff hired corporately for the charity casino and racetrack slot machines. He knows that we've done more for Sault Ste Marie than the past governments—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister, take a seat. Order. Did the Chair of Management Board finish?

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: On behalf of the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and the member from Broadview-Greenwood, I'd like to ask the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations to withdraw the

derogatory comments about the province of Newfoundland.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): As I indicated, I will withdraw my remarks if they offend anyone.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions is over.

PETITIONS

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have one that's been approved by the table, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas patients requiring eye care in Niagara are faced with a shortage of ophthalmologists and as a result, are compelled to wait several weeks to secure an appointment with an ophthalmologist;

"Whereas, while the shortage of ophthalmologists is in existence, the removal of the billing cap on these medical specialists provides a temporary but essential easing of the health care crisis;

"Whereas the solution of the Ontario Ministry of Health removing the exemptions of the billing cap and forcing patients from Niagara to travel along the very busy Queen Elizabeth Highway to receive treatment in Hamilton;

"Be it resolved that the Ontario Ministry of Health remove the cap on billing for ophthalmologists in Niagara until such time as Niagara is no longer an underserved area."

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement with the sentiments in this particular petition.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have further petitions forwarded to me by Cathy Walker on behalf of the CAW. Cathy is the director of the health and safety department of CAW national office. The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals every day for Canadian workers who died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances (carcinogens);

"Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes and the International Labour Organization estimates that one million workers globally have cancer because of exposure at work to these carcinogens;

"Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government had the political will to make industry replace toxic substances with non-toxic substances in work;

"Whereas very few health organizations study the link between occupations and cancer, even though more study of this link is an important step to defeating this dreadful disease;

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

"That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for diagnosis or treatment of cancer and that the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation."

I continue to support these petitioners by adding my name.

MARRIAGE

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):

I have a petition addressed to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas the majority of Canadians believe that fundamental matters of social policy should be decided by elected members of Parliament and the legislatures, and not the unelected judiciary;

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada, in the M and H case, has rejected biology, tradition and societal norms to redefine the term 'spouse' to include the non-procreative partnerships of homosexual couples, and has effectively granted these relationships 'equivalent-to-married' status;

"Whereas the court's decision will devalue the institution of marriage, and it is the duty of the Legislature to ensure that marriage, as it has always been known and understood, be preserved and protected;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature to use all possible legislative and administrative measures, including invoking section 33 of the charter (the 'notwithstanding clause'), to preserve and protect the commonly understood, exclusive definitions of 'spouse,' 'marriage' and 'family' in all areas of provincial law."

I have signed this petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I have 812 names here on a petition to add to the over 1,000 that I presented last week.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Conservative government has gravely impacted the education of our students with special needs through the introduction of the special education funding formula and the subsequent freeze in funding;

"Whereas the children of Ontario, especially those requiring extra support, are being forced to accept lower levels of service while at the same time being expected to meet higher expectations by this government;

"Whereas each and every child deserves the right to learn to his/her potential;

1530

"We, the undersigned, petition the Minister of Education and the Ontario Conservative government to make the necessary changes in the funding formula to see that every child has the support required to learn, especially our children with special needs. We petition the minister to listen to parents, teachers and school boards who have acted as strong advocates for these students."

I support this with my signature.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): The government has recently increased the hunting and fishing licence fees in this province. A number of my constituents are very concerned about the fact that the special-purposes account is not being used in the manner that it should be.

I have petitions here from Thunder Bay, Dorion, Hurkett, Nipigon, Red Rock. They're very concerned and want to have the funds being properly used.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Black Sturgeon Road in the district of Thunder Bay is an important access road for fishing and hunting to area lakes and forests;

"Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources is attempting to block access to this road by refusing to implement upgrades;

"Whereas a vast area will be rendered inaccessible unless the government maintains responsibility for this road;

"Whereas the government has recently increased fees for hunting and fishing and has considerable funds in its special purpose account;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to use funds from the Ministry of Natural Resources special purpose account to maintain the Black Sturgeon Road as an important access road to protect the rights and freedoms of fishers and hunters in the district of Thunder Bay."

I am very keen to have the government listen to this petition, and I am very proud to sign it as well.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition signed by many residents in the west end of Toronto against the closure of Toronto schools. It is addressed to the Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government's decision to slash education funding could lead to the closure of many neighbourhood schools, including one of the most community-oriented schools like F.H. Miller Junior School; and

"Whereas the present funding formula does not take into account the historic and cultural links schools have with their communities nor the special education pro-

grams that have developed as a direct need of our communities; and

“Whereas the prospect of closing neighbourhood community schools 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

“Whereas F.H. Miller Junior School is a community school with many links to the immediate neighbourhood, such as the family centre, after-school programs, special programs from Parks and Recreation, and a heritage language program;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens, demand that the Harris government changes the funding formula to take into account historic, cultural and community links that F.H. Miller Junior School has established.”

Since I am in total agreement with this petition, I am signing my name to it.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have a petition that reads, as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the community of Sarnia is witnessing many women developing mesothelioma and asbestosis as a result of the asbestos brought home on their husbands’ work clothing; and

“Whereas similar cases are occurring in other areas of the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to allow compensation for family members who develop occupational illness as a result of workplace toxins inadvertently brought home.”

I respectfully add my name to the list of petitioners on this important matter.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Petitions continue to come in related to the inaccuracy and underfunding of the northern health travel grant. We are very close to 10,000 signatures. I am hoping the minister is listening and will do something about it.

“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’m very pleased to sign my name to this petition.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition against the hospital emergency departments closing. The petition 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 Northwestern Hospital, 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 had 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 reopening 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.”

Since I agree with this petition, I’m delighted to sign it as well.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, stamped by the table. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the northern travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside of

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 affix my signature as I am in complete agreement with this petition for fairness.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation last week concerning the consultation process in regards to an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

1540

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MORE TAX CUTS FOR JOBS, GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 RÉDUISANT DE NOUVEAU LES IMPÔTS POUR STIMULER L'EMPLOI, LA CROISSANCE ET LA PROSPÉRITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 24, 1999, on the motion for second reading of Bill 14, An Act to implement the 1999 Budget and to make other amendments to various Acts in order to foster an environment for jobs, growth and prosperity in Ontario / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre le budget de 1999 et à apporter d'autres modifications à diverses

lois en vue de favoriser un climat propice à l'emploi, à la croissance et à la prospérité en Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Pursuant to the order of the House dated Monday, November 29, 1999, I am now required to put the question.

Mr Skarica has moved second reading of Bill 14, An Act to implement the 1999 Budget and to make other amendments to various Acts in order to foster an environment for jobs, growth and prosperity in Ontario.

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

All those in favour will say “aye.”

All those opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1541 to 1546.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Quellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Skarica, Toni
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Eves, Ernie L.	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Newman, Dan	Young, David

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Lankin, Frances
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	Levac, David
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Marchese, Rosario
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martel, Shelley
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	McLeod, Lyn
Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 54; the nays are 32.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

MORE TAX CUTS FOR JOBS,
GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT, 1999
LOI DE 1999 RÉDUISANT DE NOUVEAU
LES IMPÔTS POUR STIMULER L'EMPLOI,
LA CROISSANCE ET LA PROSPÉRITÉ

Mr Skarica moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement the 1999 Budget and to make other amendments to various Acts in order to foster an environment for jobs, growth and prosperity in Ontario / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre le budget de 1999 et à apporter d'autres modifications à diverses lois en vue de favoriser un climat propice à l'emploi, à la croissance et à la prospérité en Ontario.

Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth-Burlington): Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to split this afternoon's time equally among the three caucuses.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mr Skarica: I am going to split my time with the member for Scarborough Centre.

This is third reading of the bill to make amendments to various acts to foster an environment for jobs, growth and prosperity in Ontario. The key to the bill is to implement 30 more tax cuts in addition to the 69 we implemented in the four years prior to the last election.

It was interesting to note that the Liberals again, on second reading, all stood up and voted against tax cuts. As I indicated in the second reading debate, I don't know how to reconcile that with the fact that they passed the taxpayer protection act and agreed to that and joined our party in approving that legislation. They fully know that we campaigned on the tax cuts that are implemented in this bill. The public re-elected this government based on the commitments made in the Blueprint, which now appear in this budget plan and total 30 more tax cuts. So even though they know these tax cuts are being implemented and even though they know they can't raise those taxes again, due to the taxpayer protection legislation—they voted for the taxpayer legislation knowing that these 30 tax cuts have been voted for by the public, yet they're opposing these tax cuts. So I have some trouble understanding the logic and consistency of their position.

As the Minister of Finance, Mr Eves, indicated today, we've had tremendous economic growth in Ontario in the last five years. In particular, since the Conservative government took over in 1995, we have created 615,000 jobs. The tax cuts started in 1996 and, as indicated in the Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, referred to by Minister of Finance Ernie Eves today, it's interesting to note the economic growth since the tax cuts started to be implemented. The rate of growth for the whole five-year period from 1990 to 1995 was 1.1%, virtually no growth at all. In fact, there was a loss of 10,000 jobs.

In 1995 this government took over and, pursuant to the commitments made in the Common Sense Revolution, we started to implement the tax cuts in 1996. At first there was a minimal impact of 1.6% economic growth in

1996. But then more tax cuts started to be implemented, and as the tax cuts started to accelerate so did economic growth. In 1997, after the first few instalments of tax cuts, we had economic growth of 4.8%. So compare 4.8% economic growth in 1997 with 1.6% the prior year and 1.1% for the whole five-year period under the NDP government.

I remember being in the Legislature in 1997, and basically the view of the opposition was: "We don't really have an explanation. It's exports, it's the low Canadian dollar." However, in 1998 economic growth was again very high, much higher than in the five years from 1990. It was at 4.2%. What was significant about 1998 is that we had the greatest job growth in the history of this country. Over 200,000 jobs were created in 1998, the most in history, and what was also significant about 1998 was that there was virtually an economic boom in Ontario. We hadn't seen that for six or seven years. The opposition really didn't have an explanation for that. Their mantra at that time was, "Well, you have to borrow to pay for the tax cuts." I heard that many times. The member for St Catharines basically said that daily.

But the truth of the matter is that we didn't have to borrow a nickel for the tax cuts, because as our economy was growing, as we created 200,000 jobs, as people were coming off welfare rolls in the hundreds of thousands, there was a lot more inflow of revenue to the government. The net effect was that revenues were not going down but were increasing even though the rate of taxes was decreasing, and that was purely and simply because there was an economic stimulus.

In any event, after that record economic growth in 1998—more job creation in the history of this country—Ontario moved in 1999. It would be pretty tough to duplicate those kinds of results—4.8% in 1997, 4.2% in 1998. In fact, the forecast from all the economists as we moved into 1999 was that it was really going to be tough to keep up that tremendous rate of growth, and they projected 3.7%. Even at 3.7% the TD Bank was indicating that Ontario had the strongest economy in Canada.

We were growing at a rate faster than any province. We were growing at a rate faster than the United States on the whole. We were growing at a rate faster than our competitors on the Great Lakes. In fact, we were creating jobs at a faster rate than any other country in the G7. So we were having tremendous economic growth, and the TD Bank projected that it would be hard to duplicate it. But they still felt the economy was strong and with the stimulus of tax cuts and the strong American economy—there's no doubt about it; unfortunately our dollar is weak compared to the American dollar, and that gave us a competitive advantage.

It didn't give just Ontario a competitive advantage. It gave all the provinces a competitive advantage over the American states and a lot of other countries. But it was in Ontario that most of the economic growth was taking place. Almost half the economic growth in Canada was happening in Ontario. If you look at some of the other provinces, there were some economic disasters.

If I was going to look for an economic disaster in Canada, the first question I would ask is, "Where is there an NDP government?" Well, there's an NDP government in British Columbia, and what have you got? Another economic disaster. They will tell you that there was an Asian crisis.

Interjections.

Mr Skarica: Yes, there was an Asian crisis. But the Asian crisis basically affected the west coast of the United States, and they didn't have the economic disaster there was in British Columbia.

So what you have is record economic growth in Ontario, far outstripping the other provinces, basically outstripping the G7, and there has to be a reason for that.

In any event, with all that background, the forecast was that the economy would still be growing strongly, and the economists figured we would have economic growth of 3.7%, which still would be pretty strong—stronger than the rest of Canada and stronger than the G7. But what do we actually have? It looks like we're going to have 5% growth in 1999. On a percentage basis we're having the strongest growth in 1999 that we've had in this decade, and that's after record growth in 1998 and record job creation growth of over 200,000 jobs.

How are we doing in job creation in 1999? According to the Ontario Economic Outlook, on page 16, 177,000 net new jobs have been created so far in 1999 compared to the same period in 1998, and we still have a couple of months left. So in 1998 we had record job creation, and it looks like we're on pace to do it again.

The only real question in the 1990s is: What's the year that's going to have the most job growth, 1998 or 1999? I think that's a pretty good question for Ontario to have to consider.

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Where have all the jobs been created? In second reading I heard the debate and some of the Liberal backbenchers were indicating, "Well, you know, these are McJobs, they're part-time jobs." That's not what the economic statement is indicating. They say the jobs created in 1990 have been full-time jobs. Another one of the backbenchers in the Liberal caucus said, "Part-time jobs; there are a lot of part-time jobs," but in fact in 1990 they have been full-time jobs, almost at a record level, 177,000 at this point.

Where did they come from? Manufacturing has added 55,000 net new jobs. Other leading sources of job growth include: retail and wholesale trade, 34,000 jobs; professional, scientific and technical services, 29,000 jobs; financial, insurance, real estate and leasing industries, 21,000 jobs; construction, 20,000 jobs; and restructuring, zero jobs, to answer the question from one of the members opposite.

What has happened to the unemployment rate is that in fact it continues to plummet. When the government took office, the unemployment rate was 8.9%, a very significant sum, a very significant percentage, and far in excess of what was happening in the United States. The unemployment rate in the United States has continued to

diminish to the point now where it's between 3% and 4%, and that's basically full employment, given the non-accelerating rate of inflation. Ontario now is following that lead. We're down to 6% in October 1999, an almost 3% drop since we took office. That's in four years. That's a pretty incredible statistic.

One of the other problems when we first took office was that whatever job growth had taken place, young people were missing out. In fact that picture is now changing as well. Even in February 1997, when the economy was finally starting to take off, we still had very high youth unemployment. In February 1997, there was a youth unemployment rate of 18%, but now that has dipped significantly to the point where, in October 1999, it's 12.7%, which is a drop of a full six percentage points.

What's happening with the economic recovery—even the Toronto Star now indicates that Ontario is booming—is that there has been growth in sectors throughout the economy and a lot of people are benefiting. The youth sector, which did not benefit from what happened in our economy in the 1990s and had a very high unemployment rate of almost 20%, which is almost Third World figures, that rate has now been reduced dramatically. In 1999, youth averaged 50,000 more jobs than in the previous year, and 1998 was the year that had the strongest and fastest job growth in 20 years, I understand.

What has happened with Ontario as well is that now we've become the North American leader in manufacturing job growth. In 1998, Ontario recorded its seventh consecutive year of record production of motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts. The auto industry added over 15,000 net new jobs in the 1995-98 period. Also, strong job gains occurred in metal fabrication, 15,000 jobs; chemicals, 9,000 jobs; and rubber and plastics, 8,000 jobs. These aren't McJobs. These are full-time, good-paying jobs that are permanent and add considerably to the economic vibrancy of this province. They're another reason why, even though we've cut the income tax rate, our revenues have gone up, to the tune of \$6 billion. That's not just \$6 billion total; that's \$6 billion each and every year.

Ontario has been a job creator. As I've indicated, our job growth here is stronger than the United States in general and all the Great Lakes states. Michigan, which is our major competitor, had manufacturing job growth of 79,000 jobs between 1995 and 1998. We in fact had 98,000 jobs. Of all the states and provinces in North America, only Texas beat us in the last three years.

As well, one of the encouraging aspects of what's happening with our job creation is the following fact. One of the problems that Canada has is that with all the provinces except Ontario, most of their exports, most of their economy, is resource-based. You've got an economy that basically relies—I don't have the statistic in front of me, but I think it's about 80%—on resource-based manufacturing. The problem with that is if you don't have a diversified economy, if the price of oil goes down, you have a problem if you rely on the price of oil. Right now that's a benefit to Alberta because the price of

oil has doubled in the last year. However, if you look at British Columbia, some of their raw materials have depressed prices and that has hurt the economy, in addition to having an NDP government, which is almost a virtual guarantee for having a bad economy.

In any event, one of the really encouraging signs about our economy is it is diversified. Resources account for only about 15% of the Ontario economy. The rest of it is manufacturing, and there has been a rapid expansion as well in information technology industries. A recent Deloitte and Touche study concluded that the GTA has developed into one of North America's premier centres for information technology, and it's one of the top five R&D-performing urban areas in North America.

I anticipate that what I'm going to hear from the Liberal backbenches, when it's time for them to speak, is: "It's not really your fault. It has nothing to do with your tax cuts, it's all exports, and it would have happened no matter what." I think the best example to refute that argument is to look at what's happening in the film industry. Each and every budget has tax breaks for the film industry. If you look back to when we took office in 1995, that film industry was depressed and in a decline. What happened with the Ontario government and, I have to concede, somewhat with the Canadian government—it's one of the few times they've recognized the importance of tax cuts—is both levels of governments, but most particularly the Ontario government, dramatically cut taxes for the film and entertainment movie industry.

With the cheap Canadian dollar which existed in 1994-95—when we took over in 1996 we gave tax credits specifically directed at that industry. What happened with that industry was the movie moguls, if I could put it that way, looked around North America and thought, "Toronto is a great place to go, because not only is there a low Canadian dollar, which exists in the rest of Canada, but we're going to get a tax credit, so when we make money there, we'll keep that money." There was a dramatic increase in investment by the movie industry. Each and every budget came through with more tax credits, and what happened with that industry is it started to grow and grow. Basically, foreign investment, the last time I looked at those statistics—for 1998—was increasing at a rate of 58% over the previous year. That industry in fact grew substantially and is creating 35,000 jobs and producing an economic stimulus somewhere in the area of \$1.5 billion.

There's an example of how you have an industry that was languishing; we were definitely falling behind the United States. We targeted tax breaks. There was investment in that area, including significant foreign investment, and what happened was you had this tremendous expansion of jobs, 35,000 jobs, in that area. All those people are paying taxes. Some of them may or may not have been on welfare, but certainly they're not on the welfare rolls.

What happens is that government revenues go up even though the tax rate goes down, because you have the jobs; those people are paying taxes. At the same time,

there is a lot more economic activity, a lot more investment. In fact, members of the Legislature see virtually every day, when they walk around this area, movies being made on a very regular basis. I can't recall seeing that when we first arrived here in 1995.

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Rather than give numerous statistics, it's clear from all the statistics that appear in the Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review there's just tremendous growth. Merchandise exports have grown by 16.2% in the first nine months of 1999; that's on top of an 11.8% growth in 1998 and a 9.7% growth in 1997. There's just been tremendous economic growth.

What has that meant for balancing the budget? Simply, we're ahead of our plan to balance the budget. It's interesting to note that even though with the tax cuts—and again the mantra of the Liberals, the opposition, was, "Those tax cuts, you're going to have to pay for them, you're going to have to cut programs, you're going to have to borrow money." None of that has ever happened. In fact, the revenues to the government have increased for the simple reason that there are more people working, there are less people on welfare and revenues have increased. Particularly with welfare payments, a lot of people have come off welfare, and that's a significant saving to people on welfare.

The tax cuts in my area of Hamilton-Wentworth have produced savings of almost \$200 million. If people don't pay that in taxes then they can spend it instead on consumption. The argument is, "You're going to have to pay for those tax cuts." In fact, we haven't. We've made money on the tax cuts—\$6 billion a year, as I've indicated—because of the economic growth. We keep exceeding targets. The budget was based on a conservative economic growth of 3.7%. We've vastly exceeded that, by 5%, and the impact has been that the deficits have decreased to the point where this year we anticipated a deficit of \$2.6 billion but the deficit will be \$1 billion. We're actually ahead of schedule to balance the budget next year.

With the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act that was approved a couple of weeks ago in this Legislature, we've now seen the end of the era of deficits. I think that's something that we can all be proud of on this side. Frankly, I don't think that would have happened without tremendous courage by the members of this side. We stood up to the special interests. We stabilized the growth of government, many administrative areas. Government spending was reduced and at the same time we implemented the tax cuts and achieved significant extra revenues for the provincial budget to pay for increasing demands in health care and education.

To conclude, the track record of this government is clear. It has implemented the tax cuts it promised. That has produced a tremendous economic growth. It can't be a coincidence that we've had more growth in Ontario here than anywhere else in Canada, really in the free world. We're far outpacing our immediate competitors, and as far as the lower Canadian dollar goes, exports to

the United States, those are advantages that are available to other provinces and yet they're not experiencing the economic growth we are.

I'm happy to conclude by indicating that the 69 tax cuts have produced tremendous economic growth. The further 30 I think will keep us on the same track and keep Canada growing at a rate faster than any of the G7 major industrial countries. It's something that all members on this side of the House are very proud of.

I'll turn over the rest of the time to the member for Scarborough Centre.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): It does give me great pleasure to rise in this House today to speak in favour of Bill 14, the More Tax Cuts for Jobs, Growth and Prosperity Act.

In our first term in office, the Mike Harris government sat for more days than any other government in recent memory and yes, there was good reason for it. In the elections of 1999 and 1995, our government made many commitments to the people in Ontario; and in 1999, just as in 1995, the people of Ontario responded by voting for us. On both occasions, the people of Ontario told us they wanted a government of action.

The people of Ontario were tired of governments that talked a big game but simply didn't deliver. The people of Ontario were tired of governments that sat idly by, twiddling their thumbs as the serious problems of the day were left to get worse and worse. The people of Ontario were tired of governments that refused to make the tough decisions that were necessary. Indeed, the people of Ontario were tired of governments that took the easy way out and raised taxes instead of cutting spending.

Governments of the day were quite content to raise taxes to levels that resulted in double-digit unemployment rates. Governments were quite content to let budget deficits and debt increase to levels that threatened our health care, education and core social services. Reacting to high unemployment levels, governments were content to pursue the Pavlovian response of raising welfare rates rather than making the tough decisions that were necessary to get the economy back on track.

While watching our students fall further and further behind the rest of the industrialized world, governments continued to be content to merely throw money at the education system. Once again, rather than making the tough decisions that would ensure that the money in the system would actually reach the children in the classroom, governments refused to make those tough decisions.

I guess the same can be said about health care. Rather than make the tough decisions that would see our health care system modernized and equipped for the needs of an aging population, governments were again content to throw more and more money at the problem without solving it. More than one government took this "Clench fists tightly and pray that the problem will go away" approach to health care and education, and as a result there are only a few Liberal and NDP MPPs here today who survived the wrath of the voters.

In 1995 the people of Ontario elected a government with the mandate and the willpower to make the tough decisions. Rather than raise taxes, increase the deficit and encourage people to go on welfare, we made the tough decisions.

The Mike Harris government cut personal income tax rates by 30% in our first term. We reformed property taxes. In fact, over 75% of homeowners in my riding of Scarborough Centre received property tax decreases because of our reforms. We created exemptions to the employer health tax for small business. We took hundreds of unnecessary, job-killing regulations off the books.

All told, our efforts on the job creation front have helped lead to the creation of well over 600,000 net new jobs in Ontario since we came to office. In Scarborough this has resulted in massive commercial development undertakings such as the Cedarbrae Mall redevelopment, Scarborough Town Centre expansion and the building of Kennedy Commons and the Home Depot, creating well over 2,000 jobs in the retail and service sectors in my riding alone.

Recently, decade-old plans for a condominium development in my riding were resumed because the economy is finally strong enough to make it worthwhile.

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When we came to office, over 1.3 million Ontarians were on welfare. This was unacceptable. Our tax cuts for jobs and welfare reforms have helped over 400,000 people once again become productive members of society.

We inherited an \$11-billion deficit. We reduced that deficit, and we're on track to meeting our commitment to eliminate it in the next fiscal year, as confirmed by the Honourable Ernie Eves today.

We reformed the education system. We reduced the bureaucracy and ensured that more money went to the children in the classroom. We began restructuring the health—

Interjections.

Ms Mushinski: Yes, I know they can't take the truth over there, but they never really were able to handle the truth.

We began restructuring the health care system to make sure that we are ready to deal with the changing needs of our population.

The people of Ontario wanted us to make many changes in our first term, and we have delivered the changes Ontarians asked for.

Yet, while we're indeed a better province today, there are still greater things ahead of us, and much work still needs to be done to achieve them. That is why the workmanlike spirit of our first term must and has to continue into our second. We must do all that we can to help the economy in order to continue creating jobs and opportunities for the future. That is why we must again cut income taxes, to put \$4 billion back into the economy and create 825,000 new jobs.

We are determined to break the cycle of welfare dependency. As we all know, the best social program in

the world is a job. As well, giving everyone the opportunity to earn a living is the only practical way to address serious issues such as child poverty.

We must continue to reform our health care system to provide the most modern and effective services to Ontarians. We must protect health care funding, which we will increase to record-breaking levels. We must continue to aim at achieving excellence in Ontario's schools. That is why we must guarantee stable funding to boards on the basis of enrolment.

None of these goals, however, can be achieved without a strong economy. We cannot adequately address the funding needs of our health care and education systems without the added revenue that we have generated through tax cuts. By easing the tax burden for each individual, we have helped get nearly two thirds of a million people back to work and paying income taxes.

People have had more money to spend on goods and services, which has led to more revenue being generated through sales tax. Our tax cuts have put money back into the health care and education systems, something we said we would do.

As a government, we have a responsibility to the people of Ontario to do all that we can to make certain they have the opportunity to succeed. To do this, we must move ahead with building a strong economy. To build a strong economy, we, as a government, must get out of the way of those who invest in it; we must continue to provide hope and opportunity for those who are still on social assistance; we must cut taxes for the low-income families that are living from month to month; we must cut taxes for the middle-class families that see the federal government stealing EI from every single paycheque. We must prove to all Ontarians that our province is indeed the best place in the world to live, work and raise a family.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Etobicoke Centre, who is the Minister of Labour, rose in the House the other day to object to the word "stealing." Are you able to give a ruling this time whether "stealing" is acceptable?

The Acting Speaker: I ruled at that point, since the word was used in the context of the speech and wasn't specifically pointed at anybody in the House, that it was in order. In being consistent with that ruling, I don't find anything out of order.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You can say that the government is stealing from the people of Ontario in their health care and in their education. That is perfectly all right, is it? Because that's exactly what they've been doing.

The Acting Speaker: That's not a point of order.

Ms Mushinski: May I continue then? We've come a long way over the past few years to make our economy more competitive and to create jobs and to help people to become better off and more secure. Other leaders I know are looking to us, and looking to Ontario's example, as a

model for building stronger communities and stronger economies.

Speaking today at the Fraser Institute in Vancouver, Premier Mike Harris will say that we can all be very proud as Canadians and can look forward to the future with pride and confidence.

However, for Canada to reach its full potential in the next century, it is absolutely essential that the federal government reduce federal taxes. Also, it's important to encourage innovation and new ideas to make our country a place where creative thinkers are valued and there are far more leaner, more efficient governments in Canada.

In closing, I will say that the people of our province and the rest of the country can count on Ontario to take a leadership role in keeping our nation competitive so that we can all be more secure in the 21st century.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's an honour to rise this afternoon to take part in the debate on Bill 14. As a member of this government, it is exciting for me to see this legislation that our minister has brought forward so early in our mandate.

We made promises to the people of Ontario and we intend to keep those promises. In our election platform, Blueprint, we asked the citizens of our province to support a mandate which would provide them with a safer Ontario while at the same time growing an economy that would provide us with the necessary resources to support the health and education systems that our citizens expect and deserve.

Our government has had the courage to make the difficult but necessary decisions in order to rebuild an Ontario that will be able to sustain a strong economy throughout changes in a global economy.

Let me again update the members present.

Here is some of the legislation brought forward. As an example, Bill 7, An Act to protect taxpayers against tax increases, to establish a process requiring voter approval for proposed tax increases and to ensure that the Provincial Budget is a balanced budget, was brought forward as an election promise to the citizens of Ontario and to ensure that no future government would inherit the financial disaster the Harris government inherited in June 1995.

As outlined in the Common Sense Revolution, our plan to balance the outrageous deficit of \$11.3 billion is exactly on target. The Minister of Finance gave us his Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review earlier today.

In 1995, the people of Ontario were told that their government would balance the books over a five-year period while at the same time issuing tax cuts which would stimulate our economy. The minister informed us today that, as promised, the budget will be balanced in the year 2000-01, exactly on the target. It was wonderful news when the minister proved once again that tax cuts do fuel a strong economy.

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The Ontario economy is expanding at a vigorous pace this year. The economic climate of the business and

consumer confidence and spending and investment in Ontario is up. Real gross domestic product rose by more than previously expected, at an annualized rate of 5.2% in the first quarter and 5% in the second quarter of 1999. So far this year, retail sales are up 7.3%, as the minister said earlier, and housing starts are up 24.3%. Exports have grown by 16.2%.

The Ontario economy is very strong. In the May 1999 budget, the minister projected real gross domestic product growth of 3.7% for 1999. Based on our performance so far in 1999, we and the private sector are now projecting a growth of 5% for 1999. As the minister said earlier today, the people of Ontario can now see that the hard work and sacrifices of the past five years are paying off.

As we have said many times before, the debate is over. Tax cuts create jobs. Tax cuts have fuelled vigorous job growth in Ontario. In spite of comments from the members opposite, in the first half of this decade Ontario consistently underperformed against the rest of the country. From January 1990 to September 1995, Ontario lost nearly 50,000 jobs, while the rest of Canada gained over 350,000 jobs. The work is not yet done. So far this year, 177,000 Ontarians have found jobs, virtually all of them full-time. I'm pleased to be able to support this debate at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Further debate?

Mr Bradley: I wish we were debating the restructuring of local government this afternoon, because it's perhaps a more relevant and compelling issue before the Conservative caucus and, indeed, eventually this House. I do want to say I have a good deal of sympathy with the predicament in which some members have found themselves, having campaigned on the fact that they would not want to be part of a government that would break a promise in terms of restructuring, that is, imposing one big city on a community. If I were in that position in Niagara I would certainly, regardless of who wanted me to vote how, be voting against one big government. That's a commitment I make in this House today, that if a bill ever came in about one big government in Niagara, I'd do that.

So I have sympathy for others who may represent places like Ancaster and Stoney Creek and Greensville and Dundas and Glanbrook, when the powers that be who really control this government—Guy Giorno and the whiz kids—say, "This is the way it must be," and the individual elected members find themselves in a predicament of not being able to represent their local folks. I am sympathetic with them and I certainly will be looking forward with anticipation to what they will do in terms of keeping their promise to their electors. I know them to be noble people, people who will, above all, keep their promise to their local electors.

I'd like to vote for one of these bills that the government passes, but here they're breaking another promise. In the 1995 election campaign—I'm reading this here—the government promised that the sale of

assets would go to pay down the debt. In keeping with this, they established the Ontario opportunities fund in the 1996 budget to channel the proceeds of the sale of assets into debt, not to current-year finance.

I used to listen to my friends in the chamber of commerce and the taxpayers coalition and all these other organizations which were concerned about taxes and so on, and paying down the debt, and they said that debt accumulation was a problem. I agree with that, that the debt accumulation is a problem in this province. That's why I wanted to ensure that indeed these funds were being devoted to paying down the debt. Now I find out in the bill they're not going to be, and I can't vote for the bill. I wish you would bring forward a bill that would get a consensus in this House, that one could vote for.

I also noticed, and I can see that this has something to do with the bill, but I was watching an infomercial the other night on CNN and I thought I saw—I could be wrong—the member for Oshawa doing an infomercial for the National Rifle Association. I don't know if anybody else saw this; it could be mistaken identity. Somebody on the other side will help me out and correct me if that's the case.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): That's the case.

Mr Bradley: It is the case, I'm told. My friend from Perth-Middlesex tells me that it is the case.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mr Bradley: I'm trying to get the riding right.

Mr Johnson: Perth-Middlesex.

Mr Bradley: No, I'm trying to get the riding of Mr Ouellette correct.

Interjection: Oshawa.

Mr Bradley: Jerry Ouellette, Oshawa. That's right, Oshawa.

I thought he was part of the infomercial. I'm surprised because the law-and-order government that we have on the other side I know would be concerned about someone perhaps doing a commercial, an elected representative doing commercials for the National Rifle Association. I know that those who are in the government and are worried about this will want to look into that. I don't know whether members are allowed to do commercials. Maybe we are. I don't know that. But it did seem odd. Maybe I'm wrong. I will apologize in the House if I'm wrong, if somebody can clarify that for me. Maybe the Minister of Transportation, who has an interest in these matters, would be able to clarify it.

I just want to say that when I see the tax cuts here, I say to the local people, "Well, you got your tax cut, didn't you?" Every time they say a service is cut, I say, "Did you get your tax cut?" The hard fact is that you can't continue to cut income taxes and continue to provide the services to which the people of this province have become accustomed, and justifiably so, such as a good health care system, a strong education system, proper transportation in this province and so on.

The government has been forced to engage in even further cuts to its budget, already engaged in a budget-cutting exercise, which has really diminished the positive role that government plays in the lives of people in the community at large that we know as Ontario.

I noticed that there is no provision for dealing with the banks in this. We see what the banks are doing today. The banks with their huge profits that they have—I'm not saying they're unprecedented—are all announcing that they're laying people off, firing them out into the streets. I don't know how that could be justified.

The latest was the Royal Bank. I think they said 6,000 people are going to be thrown out in the street. If the Royal Bank were losing money or had significant losses in the year, I could understand that; wouldn't like it, but I could understand it. They're making huge profits—I guess the top person gets a bonus when they get that blip in the stock market—and firing people out in the street, cutting back their hours.

I can remember a Royal Bank at the Grantham Plaza in St Catharines that used to be open, not that long ago, from 8 o'clock in the morning to 8 o'clock at night; in other words, serving ordinary people at regular hours, on Saturdays from 9 am to 5 pm. Today, it's cut back considerably. Now, they don't open until 9:30. Sounds like the old days, when they didn't open until 10. They stop at 5 o'clock and maybe 6 o'clock or 8 o'clock on a Friday night, only 9 to 1 on a Saturday. In other words, they're constricting these hours.

You say, "Why don't you go to trust companies?" Well, trust companies are being gobbled up by the big banks. What happens is, do they say, "Oh, well, here's another service for people"? No. They gobble them up and close them down, put them out of business, put people out of work. I think that's grossly unfair to those who have given dedicated service to our major banks in this province. Yet I do not hear any protest from this government. Usually they're railing on about the federal government doing something about something. Here's a chance to rail against the banks, but they are silent.

I notice, as well—because I hear a lot about debt over there—the debt has increased by \$21 billion at least under the Harris administration. Once again, when I used to meet with the chamber of commerce political committee in the provincial section, they would say, "Look, we've got to solve the deficit problem and the debt problem." This government has been in power now into its fifth year, and they still haven't balanced the budget. Why is that? It's because they have given up potential revenues, as the Dominion Bond Rating Service said, and therefore they've had to make huge cuts and at the same time allow the debt to accumulate even further, even though they used to talk a lot about the debt.

1640

When you have tax cuts, it means the people in the Niagara Peninsula do not have the ophthalmologists they need. I know that some ophthalmologists are meeting today to discuss their future. Will they continue to provide a service when they're only getting about a quarter of

the compensation they would normally get? They're trying to do is provide service for people in our area. If you're underserved, the only solution in the short term, and perhaps the mid-term, is to lift the cap so that people can get the service and don't have to travel to Hamilton. I'm sure my colleagues in Hamilton know that the situation with ophthalmologists there is critical as well, and they can't have people from the Niagara Peninsula coming in competing with people in the Hamilton area.

That can be solved by the Minister of Health. But what is this government doing? I have to tell the people: "You may not get the care of an ophthalmologist, but you're getting your tax cut. Are you happy with the tax cut now?"

I say that to the downtown business people in St Catharines. When I went to their meeting they were shaking their fists, led by Frank Sheehan, the former member for Lincoln, who was advising them. He said: "It's the local government's fault. They're the ones who are putting up your taxes."

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): He voted for them.

Mr Bradley: As the member for Niagara Centre says, he voted for the bills that made these changes. But it's easier to blame the local government and then want to abolish all the local representatives than it is for the provincial government to take responsibility for the net downloading of \$18 million worth of additional financial responsibilities on the Niagara region.

I notice—and my friend from Niagara Centre would be interested in this—that not only do we have fewer politicians; we have fewer pages. I remember when there was a cut in this Legislature in the number of pages who could serve at Queen's Park. I suggest their pay is probably quite limited as well.

Mr Kormos: Their pay has been cut, and their benefits.

Mr Bradley: The pay, the benefits and the number of pages have been cut. We're preying upon the youth of our country. These pages serve so well in this Legislative Assembly, but even they haven't escaped the axe of Mike Harris and they don't get the tax cut. The rich people get the tax cut, and the pages bear the brunt of the effects of that tax cut.

The other day I met Bill Saunderson, a former Toronto member and a person for whom I have a lot of respect. We were recalling the gas price issue. I remember asking him a question as Minister of Tourism at the time, and he said the government would be crazy to get involved in the regulation of gas prices. I said to him, "You know, your members were shaking in their boots as you said it." That was an honest answer about what this government thinks about gas prices. He was the one who gave the only honest answer I heard over there about gas prices. The rest of them pointed to the federal government or pointed somewhere else, never to their friends in the oil industry, the oil barons themselves. I just remind them of that. I have a bill before the House and Mike Colle has a

bill before the House. Both those bills deserve passing by the people around here.

I notice as well that the poor people of Sarnia are faced with a situation where they didn't have a hearing on the expansion of the hazardous waste dump, and today the Liberal member for Sarnia-Lambton is up saying, "We've got real problems with this dump." Well, that's getting rid of red tape. You didn't have your hearing. I hope you're happy with the result of that.

Anyway, I want to ensure that my other colleagues have an opportunity to speak and to make sure I have left the appropriate time, so I will now close my remarks.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I am pleased to rise today to speak to third reading of Bill 14, known as the budget bill. I want to go back to Hansard of November 22, when we were debating this bill at second reading, and I said, "I'm willing to suggest that debate will be limited on this bill before we're finished, as the government has done on so many other bills." As you know, it was only yesterday that we were voting a motion to choke off debate on this budget bill. One of the most important issues that we discuss in this Legislature is the budget, and I'm sorry to say that today, at third reading in fact, we're going to be limited in the sense that there's agreement that we'll have only this one session of third reading.

As well, you will recall that yesterday, while that motion of choking off democratic debate was being discussed, the member from Kitchener Centre quoted from my comments on the 22nd. He said that I had debated on that day that "A job doesn't mean a damn thing..." and he stopped there. In the quiet of the debate today, I want to reconfirm, as I did in my point of order yesterday, that what I said was, "A job doesn't mean a damn thing to a child in a classroom who doesn't have the assistance they need." In other words, I agree that a job is everything to everybody, but you have to have the education first.

In the few minutes I have today, I want to speak about the deplorable lack of assistance that's being given to our children in schools today who have special needs. In fact, there are children who aren't even in school today because there isn't the special assistance they need. Their parents can't let them go and not be cared for the way they should be.

Earlier today the finance minister, the treasurer, the exchequer of the province, as my friend from Pembroke often calls him, gave a very glowing report of the economy in the province of Ontario. And times are good. During that discussion, he pointed out that albeit a few years behind, they're even looking forward to having a balanced budget. He reported that revenue is up.

It's very difficult to explain to teachers, teaching assistants, parents and children that when things are so great in Ontario, we have children with special needs who aren't being cared for properly. For example, the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board, in the letter that they wrote to me, said that they will be about \$2 million short this year in special education funding. The Greater Essex County District School Board has

written to me and written to the Minister of Education that they will be \$2.5 million short in the area of special-needs education.

Now, the Minister of Education will get up and say, "We're spending more money in that area." That may be true. It's difficult for anybody to really determine what is true and what isn't that is sometimes spoken of in debate in this Legislature. It may be true that there's more money being spent on special education, but the problem, and what we can't seem to make the minister acknowledge, is that the needs are greater than the money being spent.

The Minister of Education sets the standard at which we assess these special education needs. The Minister of Education is the one that says: "You look at your student body, school boards, and according to these parameters, you tell us what your needs are." And then turns around and says: "I'm not going to give you any more money. I'm going to freeze the money, as a matter of fact, at what it was before."

That's all they're asking: that if they're assessed as having a need, then they have the expectation that the school board, through the funding that's provided by the province of Ontario—because the province controls all the educational spending—will be adequate to satisfy those needs.

1650

I've presented petitions from my riding in the Legislature over the last two weeks—close to 2,000 petitions in this respect. I have hundreds of letters being sent to me. I will read from one. It says:

"Dear sir:

"I am writing in regards to the funding cuts within the school system dealing with special-needs children. As a foster mother to four special-needs children I find this very concerning. The eldest child I currently care for is now 17 and if it wasn't for the efforts of teacher assistants and the specific organization of the programs that challenge these children to achieve far more than what was to be expected at the beginning of her education she would not be the mature, independent young lady she is today.

"These children deserve a chance to perform everyday tasks at the level of a normal child, and if it's a little extra attention or assistance that's needed for them to progress beyond their disabilities financial cuts should not be an option.

"The affection and dedication teacher assistants who work with special-needs children put into their daily activities is something to be admired, and the reduction of these exceptional people will in the long run hurt the learning process of many children who would thrive from a little extra assistance that a teacher doesn't have the needed time to provide for.

"In closing, on a more personal note the five-year-old boy who has cerebral palsy that is currently with me is an unbelievable character with the potential to become anything his heart desires. His incredible mind however needs some assistance when it comes to some motor

skills. The teacher's aide that has been helping him for just over a year now has broadened his potential and improved his capabilities in the time she has been with him. She is involved in many aspects of his life and has become a true friend to the whole family. To lose this special bond for one child would be horrible, but to lose it for many children would be tragic. The special-needs programs are essential for the development of Ontario's youth and funding for these programs cannot be cut."

I implore the Minister of Education to refrain from saying that we're just spending more money but, in this great economic boom that we're having, that the minister ask the Minister of Finance to provide at least adequate funding.

Mr Gerretsen: I'm very pleased to join this debate to just go over some of the figures once again. It's kind of interesting how today, when we're dealing with third reading of Bill 14, the treasurer of Ontario also came out with his economic statement. I think it's appropriate to once again remind the people of Ontario that according to the government's own documents, the public debt of this province will have gone up by almost \$30 billion. In 1994-95 it was \$88.5 billion, and it's expected to be \$119.2 billion in the year 2000. The relevance of that is that we are saddling the younger generations with this debt.

I find it very fascinating in this day and age, when we are talking about reaching a balanced budget—and Ontario will be the last province to reach that—as to what should happen with the excess money. It's interesting that all you ever hear on the other side of the House is tax cuts. I say it's just as important to start paying down some of that public debt. It's just as important, if not more so: Again using the government's own figures, the number of dollars to be spent on paying the interest on the public debt is going to rise from \$9 billion just last year to \$9.3 billion; in other words, another \$300 million because of the extra debt that has been added on.

The other fact that I always find very interesting is that not only are we spending that much money on the public debt, but when you look at how much we spend on interest on the public debt each and every year in relation to how much we spend on social services in this province, anybody I speak to is quite amazed to find out that we spend more annually on interest payments on the public debt than we do on social services. The community and social services figure for the coming year will be \$7.8 billion. That's the budget and those are the people who benefit from that money who are always under attack—always, on a continual basis—from this government as they've tried to increase that ever-increasing gap between the haves and the have-nots in our society.

It's also interesting to see how the so-called economic boom has projected itself throughout the province of Ontario. The government has a very interesting chart in its own publication, on page 18. You will see that it outlines in five different areas where the job growth has taken place. You will see that by far the greatest job growth has taken place in the GTA. Not for a moment

would I deny to people that you need jobs here, that you want to see the growth here, but I think there has to be a realization by this government that northern Ontario and eastern Ontario, when you look at the job figures there—and I know they're smaller population bases—that the job increases there are much smaller. Those are the areas that need to grow. That's where we have the greatest unemployment.

My question is, what is the government doing about the ever-increasing disparity of economic benefits to the various regions of this province? I haven't heard of a program, I haven't heard a minister speak even for one moment in this House over the last five years as to what they're doing for those areas of the province that are outside of the GTA.

Yes, there has been economic growth. Of course, you like to take credit for it, which I think is a bit laughable. We all know that the American economy is mainly the reason for that. If it wasn't for a strong American economy and for the tremendous amount of exports that are currently going out from this province to the United States, we wouldn't see this kind of growth, and if it wasn't for some of the federal policies of Paul Martin, we wouldn't be seeing this kind of growth.

There is another very interesting article today in the Toronto Star that talks about the Canadian motor vehicle output. I guess in Ontario we produce about 92% of all the vehicles that are made in Canada. It talks about how figures show that Ontario produces almost as many vehicles now as Michigan. That's great. If our automobile industry grows in this province, we all benefit from that. But let's just look at the reasons.

One of the reasons that was given by the Bank of Nova Scotia, a Mr Gomes, who is the Bank of Nova Scotia—what is his title exactly? He is one of their directors and I'm trying to just find his title here. He's the bank's auto industry specialist. What does he give as the main reason as to why this economic growth is taking place here? He talks about how the output in Ontario "has surged alongside a competitive currency"—we all know that we have a low dollar which makes our automobile products much more in demand in the States—"and lower compensation costs than in the United States." We all can understand that.

But then the other reason he gives is, "Higher US health care expenses for employers account for much of the difference." I'd like the members on the government side just to listen to that. "Higher US health care expenses for employers account for much of the difference, Gomes noted," the Bank of Nova Scotia's auto industry expert.

What that means is that the health care system we have here in Ontario, which is supposed to help everyone when in need of medical services, as we all know, has a lesser cost than the American system. So I ask the government, why are they trying to do whatever they can to, in effect, Americanize our health care system? Why don't they make the health care system here in Ontario stronger, making sure, for example, that people who need

cancer radiation treatment will get it within the four-week time period that's prescribed for them, whereas now only 32%, or less than one in three patients, get it within the required period of time? Why don't they do whatever they can to build up that system? Here we have a leading automobile industry expert saying that's one of the reasons why we are competitive: because of our excellent health care system. In my opinion and in the opinion of many people, that is simply not happening.

1700

The other very fascinating statement that was contained in the treasurer's economic statement was the following, and I think the people of Ontario should put their minds to this. It states:

"The federal government has required that provincial personal income tax systems use the federal definition of taxable income. This limits our flexibility"—the government's flexibility—"in designing tax systems to meet the specific needs of Ontario taxpayers. Ontario is no longer willing to accept federally imposed constraints—constraints from an earlier era of federal dominance ..."

This is the relevant part: "Ontario will move to a 'tax on income' system"—which presumably is different from the taxable income system the federal government currently has—"in which Ontario's personal income tax will no longer be linked to federal tax and subject to the hidden tax increases in the federal system. A 'tax on income' system would preserve the benefits Ontario taxpayers have gained from this government's tax cuts."

Do you know what that's all about? They basically want to set up their own tax system here, with their own rules and regulations. I find it absolutely preposterous to even contemplate that the government is thinking about that. This is the government that has talked about cutting red tape. They talk about it in their economic statement and how wonderful you've done to cut red tape. What are you doing? Thirty or 40 years of a blended tax system that we've had in this country, where at least we might disagree from time to time as to what should or should not be taxable income, but there has been one definition that has been applied to both the federal and provincial scene, and now you want to set up your own system.

Do you know the reason why? I'll tell you why. As we know, the federal government is now starting to produce budget surpluses. Undoubtedly, one of the things that the federal government will do, in addition to paying down on the debt, in addition to putting more money into much-needed programs, is lower some of the tax rates. I've got no problem with that. Once you've got the budget balanced, you should be looking at lowering tax rates. If the federal government were to lower the tax rates under the current system, the province wouldn't get any credit. This all has to do with who gets credit for any tax cuts, and so for that, we are setting up a whole new taxation system in Ontario. I think that is an awful, awful shame.

You talk about red tape. The Income Tax Act already has, I don't know, 10,000, 20,000 pages, and probably just as many decided cases as to what is and is not this,

that or the other thing. Now you're just going to duplicate that situation by setting up your own tax on income system rather than an income tax system.

I hope that we will have the opportunity to debate this issue, not only here but also out in the general public, because anything you have ever said about cutting red tape, of which I am in complete favour—I believe that red tape ought to be cut. People ought to know where they stand, whether they're developers or whether they're individuals dealing with government—local, provincial, federal, what have you. Nobody wants to see undue delays. But you are going to lose whatever credibility you ever had in cutting red tape if you, in effect, are going to set up a taxation system that is going to rival the federal government's taxation system. It's going to be expensive and it is totally and absolutely inexcusable.

The final point that I want to make, because I do want to leave some time later on for our finance critic, is on the housing starts. The government takes great pride in the fact that the housing starts this year are 24% higher than last year. Of course we don't know what the figures were last year, we don't know what the figures were the year before, but it's kind of interesting when you take a look at where these housing starts are taking place.

You may recall that there was a press conference held here on November 3, which was attended by Marion Dewar, the former mayor of Ottawa; John Sweeney, the former provincial Minister of Housing, Liberal minister in the Peterson years; and Alan Redway, the former federal Minister of Housing, I believe in one of the earlier Mulroney governments. They did a housing report and they urged both the federal and provincial governments—and I don't for a moment suggest that it's just this government's problem, because I think it's just as much the federal government's problem—to get back into the social housing field, something that I thoroughly believe in and have been involved in over the last 25 years. I think it is totally and absolutely indefensible for the two senior levels of government to completely get out of the social housing field.

What do they say the real problem is with respect to housing? They're saying that it may very well be that there are as a result of the increased activity in the economy further housing starts taking place, but when you look at what kind of housing has been built over the last number of years, they say that in Ontario as a whole—and I'm reading from their report that was issued here by these three eminent people who have been involved in the housing field from all three political parties—only 2%, two out of every hundred houses that are being built are for rental accommodation. Most new rental development in Ontario over the last five years has been geared to the ownership market. What does that mean? Yes, houses are being built, and they should be, but there are no houses being built for the people who are most vulnerable and who rely, for whatever reason, on government services. Again, we have that ever-widening gap between the haves and the have-nots.

So I say yes, the economy of Ontario is obviously looking up, but it is very sporadic. The GTA has benefited but certainly not the outer reaches of Ontario and certainly not the most vulnerable in our society.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I'm pleased this afternoon to stand up in the House and explain the perspective of the people from my riding with regard to the budget bill. We've heard at great length the members of the government share with us how they perceive the tax cuts included in their budget forecasts have actually improved the quality of life for the people of Ontario. I have to say that in the month of May, as I was going door to door in my riding and talking to the people who live in eastern Ontario, many of them had very great concern about the quality of their life and how things had changed.

They would say to me that tax cuts were not even noticed in many families. Yes, they may have paid less Ontario income tax; however, in many communities in my riding municipal taxes were increased. That was a direct result of the downloading of services from the province. Rural municipalities were required to pay for services that their tax base really made it very difficult for them to provide to the people in their areas.

Constituents told me that they were penalized by more user fees for garbage and so on, the facilities they once used at very reasonable cost. They had to pay more money for minor hockey and figure skating and those sorts of activities. People in my riding told me that those constituents who had students at university and colleges were paying significantly higher tuition fees. So whatever they might have received in additional money from income tax went out of the other hand to pay higher tuition fees.

1710

There has been a significant reduction of government services in rural Ontario, most especially in my riding. In my riding, offices of the Ministry of Natural Resources closed. These were offices that provided services in areas that need those services. Now constituents must drive some distance in order to avail themselves of the services that they require from the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Ministry of Transportation offices have closed across my riding and across the province. We are now faced with the very serious problem that people who need drivers' licence tests are not able to access this important services for many months. In my riding right now, people are making appointments for the months of April and May 2000, and one report to me was as late as August. These are teenagers. These are young people who are looking for jobs in some cases. Whether they can either acquire or maintain a job depends on whether or not they have a valid driver's licence, and they are not able to access that test for many months.

Also, seniors have come to me in my riding. They have indicated that they are not able to be tested for many months. They don't know if they're going to be able to continue to stay in their homes. If they don't have a driver's licence, that could be a very serious challenge or

problem, and they won't have that uncertainty confirmed for many months when they might be able to get a test scheduled.

That is a direct result of the budget plan of this government. They want to cut services so they can provide a tax cut. I maintain, ladies and gentlemen, you get what you pay for. The government has a responsibility to provide services to the taxpayers. They have a responsibility to manage the finances of the province responsibly. I don't think it's responsible, because the people of Ontario have worked hard for their money with the expectation that when they need a government service it will be there, and it is not.

I believe over the years the people who work on behalf of the government have taken great pride in providing these services to the people. Now there's great frustration and there's great demoralization in the government service, because they are overloaded, they are overworked, and they recognize that they can't meet the demand. They're the ones taking it on the chin every day.

For the people in my riding, there's some great sympathy for the people they engage at the government offices. When is the government going to realize we have a responsibility to provide services to the people?

In rural Ontario, certainly in my riding, the people have indicated very clearly that they value those services. It's not appropriate to ignore the needs of the people in a particular part of the province, as I believe this government and this budget will do if it is supported.

I say to the members of the House today, we need to recognize that tax cuts are important and necessary when they can be afforded. But what price are we paying for the tax cuts that Ontarians have today? We're paying for it directly with service to the people, and in many cases people who would need it the most.

For that reason I am not going to be able to support the budget bill. I believe that the people in my riding have given me very clear direction in terms of what they think are priorities for our area. I would say to the government, you need to look at the people of Ontario and the kinds of services that they've valued over the years and that they continue to need. In rural Ontario, it's in the area of agriculture and food, in the area of transportation. Again, municipalities need more support to address the downloading of services that has been placed upon them.

I thank you very much for the time this afternoon and the attention on this matter.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Let me begin by, first of all, commenting on the previous speaker. I realize she's a new member here, and I think she's doing a fine job representing her constituents here. But again, I have to take exception to this line of argument from the Liberals that we saw all the way through the last election, and we continue to see here now, where they stand up and they argue against the tax cut, like New Democrats. To hear them talk, you'd think it was the root of all evil and that there's no way that ought to be allowed to stand. Then, when you asked them

what they were going to do about it during the course of the last election, which is when things really mattered, what did they say? "Nothing. We would leave Mike Harris's economic Blueprint in place."

Mr Gerretsen: Not true.

Mr Christopherson: It is absolutely true, I say to the member for Kingston and the Islands. By the same token you were also arguing there has to be more reinvestment in education and more reinvestment in health care, but you never really showed where the money was going to come from.

Mr Gerretsen: Yes, we did.

Mr Christopherson: No, you didn't. You talked like Tories. You said "efficiencies" and you'd change the way of doing things and a whole lot of gobbledygook. But the fact is that you cannot in all good conscience say you want to reinvest in health care and education, which is primarily where the Tories took the money in order to pay for their tax cut, without reversing at least a portion of the tax cut. What is incredible is that you seem to have no shame about it. You'll just continue to say that the tax cut is wrong, but you say to the people of Ontario that if you form the government, the tax cut stays. You can't have it both ways.

As much as the Liberals might look to Jean Chrétien and say, "Gee, maybe you can have it both ways," the reality is that you can't. That's why, for the second time in a row, when you offer up a little milder or different version of what the Tories are offering, you don't beat them. You've got to offer an alternative.

I won't suggest that our alternative was such a smashing electoral success, as I look around at our caucus seats. However, I feel a great deal of pride, having been in government, that we knew the importance of showing that if we're going to invest billions of dollars in health care and billions of dollars into the education system, the money has to come from somewhere.

We said that the top 6% of income earners in Ontario, who are receiving 25% of the tax cut, could afford to put some of that money back so that we could maintain—or re-establish, actually—the education system that we were so proud of. That gave us the economy that you take all the credit for, in large part—the health care system that not only provided the best health care in the world, I say to the Chair of Management Board, but also gave us an edge in terms of competition, particularly in the auto industry, vis-à-vis what we see in the United States.

You feel that it's OK to privatize all of that because you know that portion of the population you care about the most, those who have already significant wealth and power and influence, can afford to buy private health care if you smash and grind the system into the ground. But the reality is that the vast majority of people can't.

I am still surprised at how people react when they find out that fully 25% of the money that was given back out of our health care and education system goes to the top 6% of income earners—25% of the benefit goes to 6% of the population.

By the way, that 6% of the population now enjoys not just 25% of the benefit; the figure is now over 36%. So when my friend from Wentworth-Burlington talks about growing the economy, he ought to be talking about the growing gap between those who already have and those who don't. The evidence is there. Take someone who makes \$250,000 a year. For anyone watching this who thinks they did quite fine with \$50 or \$100 a month or whatever in a tax cut, think about those people who are attending some of these Tory fundraisers who are making \$250,000 a year. Do you know much they took home? Around \$26,000. It's not a wonder that they're a fan of your agenda. And now that figure has increased. They're getting 36%.

1720

What's upsetting is that we are now seeing the reports that are showing and confirming that we have more and more poor people than we've ever had before. How come none of you have mentioned that? While you were standing up today beating your chests about your economic statement, not one of you talked about the victims of these policies.

Let me tell you, there are an awful lot of middle-class working families who are looking around and realizing: "You know what? Yes, I'm going somewhere, but the odds of me going up are not nearly as likely as the odds of my standard of living and quality of life going down."

These are the people who can't afford a private health care system, and they can't afford a private education system. They need the kind of education system we had that provided us with some of the most skilled workers in the world and a health care system that was envied by countries around the world.

In their statements today, a couple of members referred to the Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, and I mentioned this briefly earlier and I just want to expand on it a bit. All along, when we've pointed out that there is this significant amount of money available from this tax cut, this tax scam—the 25% of this benefit that's going to 6% of the population, that's now 36%. They're getting the lion's share. When we raise this issue, the government has consistently said, "Oh, you know, the opposition is talking about the fact that we reduced the income tax rate for the very wealthy and yet we're getting more money in taxation revenue than we ever got before." That has been their statement.

On page 55 of the document released today, top item under "Taxation Revenue; personal income tax," the projected outlook for 1999-2000 is over \$1 billion less. The reality is, whether you like it or not, and how much you try to put it down doesn't matter, had you not brought in this tax scam that gives so much more to the wealthy than it does to the average person and literally nothing to those of modest income, your numbers are showing that if you hadn't done this we could have balanced the budget at least two years ago and we wouldn't have had to make one cut.

If you just take the numbers from your own document and extrapolate them from when you took power, the

reality is—you may find it discomfoting; it's meant to be that way—that if you had not given that massive tax cut to your wealthy friends, you wouldn't have had to make one dollar in cuts in government spending anywhere and the budget would have been balanced two years ago.

Why wouldn't they do that? Because they made promises. They brag about keeping their promises. They made promises to their wealthy friends that “When you back us, give us all the money and all the clout and all the third-party help that you can during the election, look what's in it for you if we get elected.” Yes, you kept that promise. But look at the price we're paying.

The headline in the Hamilton Spectator today is, “Hospitals Will Stack Patients.” We've got kids with special needs in the Hamilton area who are still not getting the support they need to get the education they are entitled to and that they deserve. Why? Because you cut transfer payments to our school boards.

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: Yes, that's the reality. You cut the money—

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: Well, we're going to get into this shell game again. That's fine. Let's go there. I'd love to go there. Let's get into this classroom spending stuff again, the shell game you have going on there, where you redefined what is classroom spending and you carved out as much as you can so there are only a few things left. More and more people are beginning to realize that some of the things that aren't left couldn't possibly be related to classroom spending, like lighting the room or heating it or cleaning it. Those don't count. That's not classroom spending.

Transportation: millions of dollars cut across the province. It's a significant issue in my community, and I'm in one of the most urban ridings in the province. Move out to the rural areas and these transportation costs leap exponentially. But you could cut that, and you have, to whatever degree you want. The same with custodial costs, the cleaning of classrooms: You have hacked away at that. But because you've changed the definition of classroom spending and put a bit of money into those areas, you can accurately, if somewhat deceptively, say, “We've increased classroom spending.” Yet the bottom line is that on a per capita basis less money is being spent in our school system now than when you took power. You can't pull this tax cut money from nowhere. It's got to come from somewhere. We're talking billions—between \$5 billion and \$6 billion a year—and education and health care are the big budget items. So of course there's big money coming out of there.

And you don't mention again the fact that you've cut the income of the poorest of the poor by 22%. God almighty, could you imagine what would have happened if he had said to anybody earning more than a quarter of a million dollars a year, “Your income will be cut by over 20%”? The roof would have caved in. But it's OK to go after the poor in Harris's Ontario. It's OK to stand

up, as the former Minister of Housing did, and say, “We're getting out of the business of housing and I'm proud of it.” I wonder how proud he is now, and how proud the rest of you are, with the number of people who are homeless. But then as a rule they don't vote, do they?

The problem is that more and more people, through conscience, are having a lot of difficulty continuing or choosing to ignore the plight of the most vulnerable in one of the wealthiest states in the world. I think that's why you've got a gender-gap problem. The women in Ontario who may have supported you in the past are beginning to feel more and more uneasy recognizing that that's somebody's son lying in a doorway and somebody's daughter on the street, and that you've done the opposite of what a wealthy province like ours should be doing. That's what's so frustrating when we hear the speeches we heard today about how wonderful everything is.

How else did you pay for it? You changed the legislation on environmental protection, negating and gutting decades of improvement in protecting our environment. Why? To protect the health of our children. You have done more damage in one term in government than one would have thought humanly possible. You have decimated that ministry. You've laid off staff—there's nobody there to do the inspections and enforce the rules. And since you've watered down the rules, it makes it that much easier to justify not having the inspectors. That's what you've done. It's interesting.

1730

Before I leave this document, let me point out that in the same category it talks about taxation revenue, where I pointed out that the government is projecting that in the next year we're going to receive \$1 billion less from personal income tax. I don't think for a minute there are very many people watching saying, “Well, yes, a big chunk of that billion must be mine.” Most people aren't noticing it. What they are noticing are the cuts in services and access to services in their communities.

What else do we find in here? I just found it passing strange that if you looked at the preferred share dividends tax, a line item I'm sure the vast majority of people would be quite familiar with—not. They don't have enough money for preferred shares, certainly not in Mike Harris's Ontario. What's happening? What are they showing here? What happens to the revenue line from preferred share dividends tax? Well, surprise, surprise. It's going down. How about that? It was \$65 million 1995-96, then it shot up to \$73 million in 1996-97. That must be right about the time the massive lobbying started, because then it drops to \$60 million in the next year, \$50 million the next year, and your projection is \$35 million the year after. Yet you have the gall to tell me, and everybody else in Ontario, that the rich are not getting richer in Mike Harris's Ontario and that the poor aren't getting poorer and that the middle class are not slowly but surely dropping and sliding in terms of their standard of living and their quality of life.

You know, just because you stand up in this House and say it doesn't make it so, doesn't make it true, doesn't make it reality. Every time we get a report, whether it's the auditor's report, whether it's the report on poverty, whether it's the growing gap—and they're due for an update; that'll be interesting to have a good look at. All these studies seem to prove the opposite of what you say, and you wonder why we react the way we do to the things you say in this place.

I was listening as best I could, tending to other things, to comments from the government members. I know that certainly my friend from Wentworth-Burlington, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, and others talked about what's going on in other provinces. Certainly my colleague from the adjacent riding to me talked about, "If you want to look for the worst disaster,"—or words to that effect—"look where there's an NDP government." Yet he always overlooks the fact that it was the NDP government of Saskatchewan that was the first province in the modern economic era to balance the budget. They did it after Tories had left an economic disaster. I realize that a lot of these things have to do with who the individual leader is, who the people are who make up these caucuses and governments at the time, but that's not the approach my friend took. My friend took the approach that if it's NDP, then obviously there can't be anything good economically. I suppose the opposite of that would be that if it's Tory, then it must be good management. Well, again, those are words; that's not the reality. The reality is something completely different.

I would remind the member that, yes, Saskatchewan takes great pride in being the first province in all of North America, not just Canada, to bring in universal health care, but they take equal pride in the fact that under Tommy Douglas, after 16 years of continuous power—they won every election over the course of 16 years—they brought in a balanced budget every year. Why? Two reasons: Tommy said, number one, "I'm not going to bring in a universal health care system that has the side effect of making the banks wealthier than they are." Secondly, he said, "I'm going to bring it in and ensure that it's so economically sound that future governments wouldn't dream of stepping in and killing it."

Tommy faced a lot of heat from his own party, his own party activists, because bringing in universal health care had been a platform for a long time in Saskatchewan and with the national party. He took tremendous heat from activists who said: "Tommy, you've been in office four, eight, 12, 13, 14 years. Bring in universal health care." But he waited. He waited until the 15th year of his premiership, until he was satisfied that the province could pay for it and that it was sustainable. Didn't he see things correctly?

More recently, when the NDP won the last election in Manitoba just a couple of months ago, the new NDP government brought in an outside firm to take a look at the books, because Manitobans had elected a Tory government previous to this last election and the Tories

brought in that much-touted, wonderful economic magic wand that Harris likes to brag about: balanced budget legislation. You bring in balanced budget legislation and never again can we get into the situations that we've seen in the past. It guarantees it can't happen.

By the way, if you look at all the different types of balanced budget legislation that exist across Canada, Manitoba is the one that almost perfectly patterns what Mike Harris has introduced. So it's fair to ask the question: If they've got this great balanced budget legislation just like what Mike Harris introduced, and Mike Harris says all these wonderful things about what this balanced budget legislation will do, then, hey, when the NDP came into power, everything must have been just fine, right? Wrong.

The government—and I give them full marks for doing this—hired an outside agency, a well-respected firm, outside of government, outside of the influence of any of the parties, to come in and do an objective analysis of the books of the province of Manitoba.

What did they find? Well, much like when the Liberals were in power in the early part of 1990—and when we took over, there was supposed to be a \$25-million surplus which, once we took a look at all the books and took a look in all the corners, became close to a \$3-billion deficit—the Tories had said there was going to be a surplus of \$21.4 million. The numbers are almost the same. What did the outside consulting agency find? A deficit of between \$262 million and \$417 million. So what did the balanced budget legislation do? It made for a great showpiece, but all it did was cause the Tories to hide the money in other pockets, in other accounts, in other line items in the budget.

That's why I raised earlier the fact that in the United States the National Conference of State Legislatures did an analysis of what states had done where they had balanced budget legislation, and they came up with a whole raft of methods and tricks and shell games that governments were using to get around the legislation. Why? Because it makes far better PR than it does economic policy.

I'll leave it to the Liberals to defend why they supported Mike Harris's balanced budget legislation in the face of evidence that shows that it doesn't do what it purports to do, but I think the point is important to make.

It's also interesting, I thought—and I'm looking at a CP article released November 17 this year, just a number of days ago. The managing partner, Mr Calvin Buss, said of what the new NDP government has to do—if you'll bear with me, Mr Speaker, you'll see it's relevant: "The province either has to increase their revenue or reduce their expenditures," he said. "Those are the only two ways to actually balance the financial position for the province."

Isn't it interesting that they didn't say, "The number one thing that they ought to do in Manitoba is cut their revenue." He said maybe they ought to cut their expenditures or increase their revenue or some combination of the two, but he never mentioned cutting taxes.

1740

I would have thought that if your claim that cutting taxes automatically makes everything just peachy keen in terms of the economy, they would have recommended that. Why do you think they didn't recommend that? Might it be that it doesn't make a whole lot of sense that when you're in a deficit position as we've been in Ontario and they are now in Manitoba, if you want to balance the budget, the first thing you don't do is cut \$6 billion out of your revenue source? I think so.

When we hear the government members stand up and talk about how wonderful they are and how knowledgeable they are, let's just take a look around for the evidence that tells the real story. Manitoba is about as good an example as you're going to find in terms of the reality of the economic direction this government has taken.

I'm going to say this. Again, I know the backbenchers get upset about it, but you can't hide from these things. It's true. One of you said—this is so arrogant: "The debate is over. Tax cuts create jobs."

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: I knew you were going to all say—I could have predicted it. I'm surprised you didn't applaud. I was sort of waiting for that part when I made that statement. The fact of the matter is, it's arrogant. How arrogant of any of you to suggest, "The debate is over." Where the hell do you think you are? Harris is the Premier, not the Pope. It's an arrogant thing to say.

Secondly, I don't believe it's true. There's a legitimate debate out there, at the very least, about whether or not what you're saying is the truth. There are economists who argue that the reason—and this was pointed out by the Liberal finance critic earlier today, that your credit rating is no better than it was when we were in the depths of the recession, struggling with that, and here you are going through the biggest economic boom North America's ever seen in our history and you didn't move up that credit rating one iota. Why? Because you cut your revenue source, your revenue stream, at a time when you were trying to balance the budget.

The reality is that our economy is doing well—and it is—largely because of the exports that are going out of Canada. Where's the demand for those exports being generated? In the United States. Everybody understands that it's the American economy that's driving ours. The second their economy catches a bit of a snuffle, we're going to get pneumonia. That moment is going to happen, unfortunately.

You cannot continue to expand, expand. At least historically, there is absolutely no evidence of a continuing sustainable expansion like this that just goes on forever. At some point, there's a day of reckoning. That's why I worry about the balanced budget legislation, because I think you'll hide behind that and when that day of reckoning comes, it'll be, once again, the same people you've hit earlier: the vulnerable, the middle class, our communities, the environment, municipalities, students, the disabled, on and on, who are going to face the wrath

of you cutting to meet your so-called phony balanced budget legislation.

I would say to you that you might want to stop this arrogance of "The debate is over." The debate is not over. It's far from over. There are an awful lot of us and a lot of people who have a lot more knowledge and credibility, quite frankly, and experience in economics than myself who will argue strongly that the tax cut was exactly the wrong thing to do at the time you did it. The reason you got away with it was because there was so much bounce and boom to our economy because of its attachment to the American economy, "which is truly defying gravity," to quote my leader Howard Hampton.

I want to talk a bit about a copy of a letter that I got, dated today. It's addressed to Minister Eves and it's signed by David Bragg, who is the president of Loblaw Properties Ltd. I am assuming this is a legitimate letter. If it's not, then I will duly apologize at the appropriate time, but it certainly gives every reason to believe so.

This is about the actual bill, Bill 14. What do they say? It's interesting. To be fair, overall they're clearly supportive of the government, they're clearly supportive of your economic framework and your tax policy. To be fair, they make reference to that and I acknowledge that right up front. They are supporters of your overall direction. But they do say, and this a letter dated today regarding this bill, exactly this bill:

"However, we have strong concerns that proposed changes to the Assessment Act," which is of course one of the pieces of this omnibus bill, "will be a step backward and will put power in the hands of civil servants to regulate against the interest of the taxpayers. We assume that your government intends to pass detailed regulations, which would provide for a process to protect a fair and equitable assessment system, however, it is our understanding from your office that detailed regulations do not presently exist. Without seeing those detailed regulations, we cannot support the government in making the proposed changes.

"The proposed amendments to the Assessment Act contained in section 19 of the Assessment Act, namely the addition of sections 19(2.1) and 19(2.2) if misused, which the present drafting definitely would allow, are completely in contradiction to the attainment of a fair and equitable assessment system. These sections could be used to penalize individual taxpayers without proper means of objection through the appeal process. They could also create inequity between competitors in a given sector and create uncertainty for investors.

"We have been advised that there is no other jurisdiction in North America with legislation that provides such wide discretionary tax powers without included due process to individual taxpayers."

It's funny how the government gets quiet when I'm reading from a business person's letter. However, to continue:

"We do not believe that this is a fair or appropriate approach for Ontario nor is it a necessity at this point in time.

“We strongly urge you to withdraw these sections from the bill until proper consideration can be given as to how the legislation and/or regulations will protect taxpayers from arbitrary and unfair assessments.”

When you boil that down, it's my understanding that what it means is that the way you calculate CVA can be different for individual properties and that the government or staff would have the ability to identify these individual properties and assess them differently. Hence Mr Bragg's concern about a potential unfair advantage to competitors and that the uncertainty may spook investors.

Are we going to have time to deal with what seems like a very legitimate concern? Regardless of your philosophical bent, when someone argues that the legislation you're proposing could cause unfairness, inequity, all kinds of concerns—they've done some homework on this, looking at other jurisdictions—when that's raised, we all pay attention to pay it. It doesn't matter then whether you're a New Democrat, a Liberal or a Tory, when you're here as a parliamentarian and you hear a concern like that, you want to do something. Is that going to happen? No. Why? Another one of the jewels in Mike Harris's crown is all the undemocratic changes to the rules in this place. We're now bound by a time allocation motion, and this debate, this bill, democracy as it relates to Bill 14, ends in about six or seven minutes, because the government deemed it so.

1750

So these concerns may or may not get addressed in the regulations, but they certainly aren't in the legislation itself, because the legislation is about to become law, save and except the rubber stamp of the LG, in a matter of minutes. Are the regulations going to alleviate the concern that Mr Bragg raises? I don't know. Unless the member from Wentworth-Burlington wants to tell me that Mr Bragg has his information wrong and that indeed he has a copy of the regulations in his pocket, it would appear the regulations are not written and we don't know. So you will use your majority to pass this and you won't know whether or not the concerns raised by Mr Bragg are going to be met, because there has been absolutely no time to do that. Normally we do it in committee, but this government doesn't believe much in committee any more.

Laws passed through here from years ago, people just catching on now, their eyes light up, they're just shocked, they say, “What do you mean that happened?” Oh yeah, during all that tumultuous change, all the trouble and the thing we had, that was one of those bills that just didn't get a whole lot of attention. Massive changes in this province have happened that way. Here's an example of it happening right in front of our eyes, and not one of these backbenchers sitting here is doing or can do anything about it, not a thing.

In the few moments I have left, I want to just focus on a couple of things; one is a reminder, again, that one of the tricks this government played—and it really was a trick they played on the public, and an area where they have broken a promise. The government promised in the

Common Sense Revolution—and I'm quoting directly from the Common Sense Revolution document—“The money we make from such asset sales will not go into the government accounts. Every penny will go directly to pay down the \$80-billion provincial debt.” The debt, of course, is over \$120 billion now because they gave the tax cut and they weren't able to balance the budget soon enough, so they had to borrow enough money to keep the whole thing going while they gave all those billions of dollars to their wealthy friends. So this is \$80 billion as written when they took power, not the over \$120 billion that we have now, thanks to the wonderful management of Harris and company.

They said they would take every dime from any asset sale. Last year—I believe it was this year, 1999, calendar 1999, but it could be 1998—there was a bill passed that allowed for the sale of Highway 407, and \$3.1 billion was generated. With the Common Sense Revolution promise there, that \$3.1 billion went straight on to the debt. Right, Speaker? Absolutely, because they said in the Common Sense Revolution if they sold any assets, that money would go—what were the words? “Every penny.” So we know \$3.1 billion must have gone right on to that debt. It must have gone straight into lowering the debt, because Mike Harris says that he always keeps his promises.

Gee, that didn't happen. You know what they did with that \$3.1 billion? They used it to make their projected budget for 1999-2000 look better. How did they do that? They took the whole \$3.1 billion and showed it as revenue. They counted it as revenue. Now we know that they've got to make up that money, because there's not another 407 to sell. Now we know they're on a selling spree.

Interjection: Want to buy another highway?

Mr Christopherson: Want to buy a hospital? Want to buy a university? Hey, want to buy a community? There's Mike Harris standing on the corner selling out all of our inheritance that we received from our parents and grandparents, all of it going. Why? So they can support the phony numbers that are in your budgets.

What did we see the other day? I have a little less than two minutes left. Background, detailed information on government savings. Here we go again, more words, their descriptions. What does it mean? It means \$300 million is being cut again, and that's only step one. Ultimately, they're going to cut at least \$900 million. Why? Because they've got to pay for the next bloody tax cut they're giving to their wealthy friends.

What are some of the things they're looking at? There's a reduction in provincial grants to nine cultural agencies. I heard the PA for finance earlier bragging about what they did for the film industry. Well, go take a look at what they're doing to the rest of the culture in Ontario as they cut to give money back to their wealthy friends. Remember, this is only \$300 million. They have to find at least \$900 million. We suspect that the number they need is much higher because they have to make up for the \$3.1 billion they don't have because there's not

another Highway 407 to sell, and that's assuming the economy stays as buoyant as it is. If that starts to fall, the number of dollars cut in order to continue feeding this gift to their wealthy friends goes higher.

I'll just list some of them in the seconds I have left. They're downloading non-profit housing program administration on to municipalities, another favour for the municipalities, more cuts to our services in municipalities.

OSAP: There's the word—they love these words—“cracking down.” They're going to crack down on all those students, like they haven't already carried an unfair burden of your economics.

The municipalities are going to lose the 20% share of child care they used to receive from parent-paid child care fees. That's more downloading.

They're putting in place fees for the Family Responsibility Office, which my leader Howard Hampton took you to task for just a while ago. The reality is that everything this government says about the budget and the economy is only words. The reality is, Ontario is hurting.

The Acting Speaker: Pursuant to the order of the House dated Monday, November 29, I am now required to put the question.

Mr Skarica has moved third reading of Bill 14, An Act to implement the 1999 Budget and to make other amendments to various Acts in order to foster an environment for jobs, growth and prosperity in Ontario.

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

All those in favour will say “aye.”

All those opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

I have a letter from the chief government whip:

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I would like to request that the vote on Bill 14, third reading, be deferred until Wednesday, December 1, 1999.”

The vote is deferred.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The motion to adjourn the House deemed to be made, pursuant to standing 37(a), the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London has given notice of his dissatisfaction with an answer to a question given by the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation respecting an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The member has up to five minutes, followed by five minutes allotted to the minister or her parliamentary assistant to respond.

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): One week ago today, almost to the minute, this Legislature voted unanimously to enact a strong and effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act before two years had passed.

I was overjoyed that this resolution received such support from the members of all three parties. It was unfortunate that the Premier did not think the demands of 1.5 million people were important enough to vote on. I was happy, though, to see the Minister of Citizenship cast her vote in support of my resolution.

The government of Ontario has an obligation to act here. We have a moral responsibility to assist those among us who require aid to achieve success and self-actualization. An Ontarians with Disabilities Act will free 1.5 million people to live their lives to the full.

In her statement, the minister admitted that a new round of consultation is required when she said that, “... debate in this House and concerns expressed by people from the disability community made it very clear to the government that additional consultation and planning were required before we proceeded.”

It is encouraging that the minister is meeting with groups to develop a formal consultation plan. Obviously her current schedule of meetings with groups is not a formal consultation. She is not asking for a written response to a proposal or a white paper. She is not asking for advice from the public or on the record. These meetings are closed-door, invitation-only discussions.

1800

However, the minister also made the farcical comment that it will be another year before we have any timeline toward the development of this act. In September the minister asked the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee for input on how this consultation process should go forward. In response, they sent a detailed letter that related their deep concerns about the consultation process her predecessor had employed. I concur in their recommendations and wish to reiterate those recommendations to the House today.

The consultation should be barrier-free and accessible, so that all persons with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of the consultation process. This includes holding meetings in accessible locations and ensuring that real-time captioning and sign language interpreters are available, providing material in all accessible formats.

The government should use as a starting point the 11 principles that the Ontario Legislature unanimously adopted on October 29, 1998, and the consultation should focus solely on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

The consultation should be truly public. Anyone who wants to participate should have the opportunity to present his or her view. It should not be an invitation-only process.

MPPs from all three parties should conduct the consultation, to help ensure a non-partisan and bipartisan effort. It should build on the fact that all three parties have expressed support for an Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Sufficient time must be given to those who want to participate and make their submissions.

Adequate time must be given for each presentation so that the people have a meaningful opportunity to be heard. The forums and the hearings should be conducted

across the province, with financial assistance provided for those who need to travel significant distances to reach centres where they are held.

Since people with disabilities have already waited more than four years for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the government should promptly finish designing this consultation and announce it as quickly as possible.

The government should introduce a new bill for debate in the Legislature within as short a period as possible after the completion of this consultation. After the new bill is introduced in the Legislature, the Legislature should hold public hearings on the bill. The procedure for those hearings should comply with the principles set out in the document.

The consultation should be conducted, though, by an all-party select committee of the Legislature. The select committee would hold public hearings in centres across this province, and they should be designed to achieve the goal of a barrier-free Ontario.

My question, to which I was unsatisfied with the response, is that this consultation process should be in accordance with the 11 principles the Legislature unanimously approved on October 29, 1998. Will the minister or her representative commit immediately to striking such a committee? Yes or no?

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): Thank you very much for the opportunity for me, on behalf of my minister, to address the House during this adjournment debate.

The House will know that exactly a week ago all sides of this House agreed to a resolution calling on the government to implement an Ontarians with Disabilities Act within two years. This was the latest reaffirmation of the government's commitment to implement an ODA. We promised it in 1995, repeated that promise in April in the 1999 throne speech and again when Her Excellency the Lieutenant Governor opened the 37th Parliament in October.

In the Common Sense Revolution we promised to treat the disabled with dignity. We took them off the welfare rolls, where they didn't belong, and established a program—

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): You didn't do anything. You should be ashamed of yourself.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mrs Elliott: We kept our promise.

I remind members of the House and the public that the opposition parties each had a chance to address the barriers faced by Ontario's disabled community. The Liberals did nothing during their term of office. The NDP left it to a backbencher to introduce legislation and then let that opportunity languish on the order paper.

The timeframe this government agreed to last Tuesday is tighter than that proposed by the leader of the official opposition in the leadup to last June's general election. Apparently the opposition has more faith in us to get it done than they had in their action plan. I guess they are acknowledging what the people of Ontario acknowledged on June 3, that the Liberals are just not up to the job.

I can assure members of the opposition that their faith in us is not misplaced. This government has made significant advances to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities and to create opportunities for all members of our society. We have announced over half a billion dollars for disability programs since taking office in 1995, and I listed many of them in my remarks last Tuesday. The people of Ontario have come to know that we keep our promises, and we shall keep this one.

Despite all the noise coming from the opposition benches, we are the only government in the history of this province to have ever introduced an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. It was the first, it was the most comprehensive and, as I said earlier, it is a record they cannot match. The government's commitment could not be clearer.

As we have worked towards legislation, we have provided incentives to employers to encourage them to make their businesses more accessible. We have taken the disabled individuals off the welfare rolls, invested in programs like attendant care, and developed other programs to assist those who are willing and able to work.

Earlier this year, major program and funding announcements to assist children with disabilities and their families included \$20 million in annual funding for the enhancement of children's mental health services; \$5 million, increasing to \$19 million annually, for intensive early intervention programs for two- to five-year-olds with autism; and additional funding of \$17 million for up to 1,700 families caring for medically fragile or technologically dependent children.

I want to be clear in this opportunity we have that we are planning to undertake a strategy to address the barriers that face Ontarians. We know that this is desirable and this is needed, but it must be balanced, it must be practical and it would be wrong to set standards or raise expectations to a level that can't be met.

An Ontario disabilities act and action plan is not going to fall from the sky; it's going to take a lot of hard work. This government has committed to doing that work, and we do keep our promises.

The Acting Speaker: It being after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1807.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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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 civiques, 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.

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

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

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

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

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

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

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

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

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

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

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

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

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

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John C. Cleary
John C. Cleary, John Gerretsen, John Hastings,
Shelley Martel, Bart Maves, Julia Munro,
Marilyn Mushinski, Richard Patten
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

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

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