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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 20 November 2001

Mardi 20 novembre 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 20 November 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 20 novembre 2001

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HIGHWAY FUNDING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): For several years now, I've been very disturbed about the unfair proportion of provincial highway infrastructure funding that's been allocated to north-western Ontario. In fact, while new capital has been spent on expanding the highway system in other parts of the province, we've only seen rehabilitation work being done in northwestern Ontario. As much as we appreciate those improvements, this lack of support for new highway projects has left us with rapidly increasing traffic volumes on our increasingly dangerous roads.

In that regard, I will continue to push for the necessary four-laning of the highway between Thunder Bay and Nipigon, as well as the need for more paved shoulders in passing lanes throughout the district.

But now, with an anticipated budgetary shortfall of perhaps \$5 billion next year and the likelihood of reduced funding for highway improvements as a consequence of that, I want to encourage the Minister of Transportation to provide the needed funding now for the projects that are on his own ministry's priority list.

Specifically, I would ask the ministry to speed up their plans for new passing lanes between Thunder Bay and the McKenzie Inn. This section of the highway is a virtual bottleneck that deeply frustrates drivers and quite frankly is a very dangerous part of the highway system. I would also ask the minister to move ahead with the construction of the Harbour Expressway extension, the beginning of the Shabaqua Highway. This project is ready to go and it would alleviate a serious problem on Arthur Street and Dawson Road.

Not only would these projects stimulate the economy in the construction sector, they would also vastly improve safety on our dangerous roadways. Minister, these are projects that are on your own list for completion. Do the right thing and give them the green light now.

APPRECIATION OF POLICE

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): Today I rise in the House, as I've done many times in the past, to

recognize, acknowledge and thank police officers for the work they do. Police officers work day in and day out to keep their communities and our children safe from crime. They do this continuously and it warrants mentioning again.

Today the Police Association of Ontario is representing the police officers of Ontario here at Queen's Park. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome members of the association to the House today.

I also wish to recognize the members of the board of directors of the Police Association of Ontario who are in the House today. They are Bob Baltin, president; Terry Ryan, chair; Dan Axford, director; Dave Kingston, director; Jim Mauro, director; Brian Miller, director; Brenda Lawson, civilian director; and Bruce Miller, administrator. This board of directors works for and represents over 13,000 police officers from municipalities across Ontario.

I know there are many municipalities, but I also wish to recognize members of the London Police Association: Bob Wilson, Doug Morton, Caroline Burge, Sam Cook and John Veilleux, all very good friends and former colleagues of mine.

For the work the police officers and civilian police personnel perform each and every day in Ontario, I am proud to rise in the House and to thank and recognize them.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): The recent economic statement by the Premier does absolutely nothing to alleviate the fears of small and medium business owners in Ontario. Large corporations have mainly benefited from the tax cuts, and those benefits came at the expense of the success of small and medium businesses, leaving small business owners to fend for themselves.

The Ontario's Edge package does not help small business to be more competitive either. While corporation taxes in Ontario are already lower than those of any American state, the emphasis of the Premier's announcement was again aimed at pleasing big corporations.

Premier, in announcing a further \$2.2-billion giveaway to big corporations, you are totally neglecting to assist the biggest job creators, the thousands of small businesses in our province. Small and medium businesses cannot compete. They cannot compete with the big-box retailers. They cannot compete with a disproportionately lower tax rate in other municipalities. They cannot

compete with promotion and advertising. They cannot compete with new technologies, high rent and the very limited ability to access financial resources. The small business community is in trouble and just managing to survive.

Premier, if you truly believe that small businesses create more than 75% of new jobs in Ontario, then I ask you to reconsider your recent \$2 billion in corporate tax cuts and pay attention to the call, the plight of the many thousands of small businesses in Ontario.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I'm standing today to ask the government again to reconsider your funding formula for schools. It has failed enormously.

Two weeks ago I attended a meeting in my riding of the school accommodation review for Catholic schools in Beaches-East York. In my riding there are nine Catholic schools. They are Canadian Martyrs, Holy Cross, Holy Name, St Aloysius, St Bernadette, St Brigid, St Denis, St John and St Joseph.

The meeting was called because at least two of these schools are going to have to be closed to accommodate the government's funding formula. At least two communities are going to see their schools closed down. At least two communities are going to see their kids having to be bused. At least two communities are going to see their schools fragmented and the teachers dispersed.

The Catholic board has set up studies to determine which two schools are going to close, but I will tell you that when that is announced, there will be people angry from one end of Beaches-East York to another. They do not want to see this happening to their children. They do not want to see the dislocation. They believe that the government's funding formula is totally to blame.

I ask the government to reconsider that formula, which is going to do so much damage to Catholic education in Toronto. I would ask the minister to rethink this and do the appropriate thing.

1340

FEDERAL CORRECTIONS SYSTEM

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): As you know, it's our nation's police forces that maintain peace in our communities. Every day these special men and women put their lives on the line. They are the thin blue line, if you wish, which separates a peaceful, orderly country from one of anarchy and chaos. Yet, it would appear that the federal government places very low value of the lives of the men and women in blue, our police officers. The Police Association of Ontario is outraged at the lenient treatment convicted cop killers are receiving by Corrections Canada.

Yesterday it was reported in the Toronto Sun that Clinton Suzack, a vicious cop killer, was transferred to the William Head medium-security camp on Vancouver

Island, "where inmates can go golfing or go fishing and watch whales swimming by.

"The reality is this is a less-than-secure five-star resort. If it wasn't so sickening, it'd be funny," PAO president Bob Baltin said."

I want to know how Clinton Suzack ended up in a medium-security facility and why he is being prepared for release, only eight years into a 25-year sentence. How is it that the Liberals across the way talk about justice but they don't have the intestinal fortitude to reproach their federal cousins in Ottawa to urge changes to this?

I want to know why James Hutchinson, one of Canada's most notorious police killers, was able to literally walk away on a civilian escort.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Thank you. Your time has expired. Order. Nobody else is going to speak until there is quiet.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): "Long-term care in Ontario is in crisis." Let me repeat that: long-term care for our seniors, our elderly, who have served this province to ensure that we can enjoy the quality of life that most of us are enjoying in this province, is in crisis. So says the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors.

Many of us from all sides of the House had an opportunity to meet with this organization this morning, and they made it crystal-clear to us that the amount of funding the province puts into long-term care is highly inadequate. As they state, "Government funding for the operation of ... homes for the aged and nursing homes is not keeping pace with the changing requirements of residents who today are being admitted with far more complex health care needs. As a result, these facilities are now finding that their ability to provide adequate, appropriate, quality care is being compromised."

There's a shortfall of \$558 million. The homes currently are being paid only \$62 per day, the lowest level for a patient anywhere in Canada. What is the result of all that? The result is that the level of individual attention is desperately lacking.

I say to the members on the other side, get after the cabinet and have them increase the funding for the people who made sure we could enjoy the quality of life that we do in this province.

DIWALI

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I rise today to draw to the attention of the House to the fact that over 800 million Hindus across Ontario and the world celebrated the Festival of Diwali on November 14. The celebration took place November 16 this year in London.

Diwali, or Deepawali, the most pan-Indian of all Hindu festivals, is a festival of lights symbolizing the

victory of righteousness and the lifting of spiritual darkness. It commemorates Lord Rama's return to his kingdom Ayodhya after completing his 14-year exile. Twinkling oil lamps, or diyas, light up every Hindu home in India and fireworks displays take place across the country.

The goddess Lakshmi, symbol of wealth and prosperity, is also worshipped on this occasion.

The festival also marks the start of the Hindu new year. At this time, most Hindu homes worship Lord Ganesha, the symbol of auspiciousness and wisdom. Spring cleaning and decorative designs for homes are the order of the day. Family members come together to offer prayers, distribute candles and light up their homes.

Diwali has been celebrated for many centuries, but celebration this year is especially significant. Given the events of the past few months, surely it is particularly important this year for all to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness and the triumph of good over evil.

I know that all members of this House would join with me in wishing Hindus across Ontario and the world a happy new year and a warm Namaste.

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I rise today to acknowledge, welcome and thank the presence of many good members of the Police Association of Ontario. From ridings right across Ontario, these fine officers represent the hard-working and professional men and women who day in and day out keep us and our hard-working families safe and secure.

They are here to remind all the members in the Legislature that there is still work to be done, work that on this side of the House we understand and take very seriously, and we are willing to put actions to our words. That's why it's important to point out that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus have provided many ideas and concrete examples of what needs to be done right now.

First, let me remind you that my leader offered the Ontario security fund \$100 million worth of help instead of a measly \$30 million from the Mike Harris government. Our caucus has offered legislation on the replica guns, which they stole; on child prostitution, which they stole; on protecting police information from people stealing their information, which they stole; on biker bunker mentality, which they stole.

We're awfully glad the Conservatives are finally getting tough on crime. We're glad you're going to start taking action that represents the ideas coming from this side. We're trying to protect those police officers who keep us safe and secure every single day of the year. I thank them for it.

PAT AND ROSA SIMON

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I rise today to pay tribute to Pat and Rosa Simon. Mr and Mrs Simon were

honoured recently by the city of Niagara Falls with a plaque outside their restaurant that represents 100 years of the restaurant being at that location in the Falls.

Pat and Rosa have over the years been extremely generous to the community. At every event anyone attends in the Niagara region, one will find Pat with his camera taking photographs of the people at the event. He's a chronicler of the history of Niagara.

Over the years, Pat and Rosa have also been generous with their restaurant in making donations to people in the community and those who come in the restaurant. It's been a meeting place for many years on Bridge Street at the foot of the Whirlpool Bridge.

Over the years, many famous people have been in this restaurant. Those people include Sir Winston Churchill, the Pope, and a more recent famous person, the Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris.

The community is very proud of Pat and Rosa Simon. They are a beloved couple. About a year ago now there was a surprise presentation for their many years of service to the community by the chamber of commerce. A spontaneous outpouring of goodwill came from the crowd, with a standing ovation that lasted quite a long time.

I'd like to stand here today and congratulate Pat and Rosa on the 100th anniversary of the restaurant and thank them for all they've done our community.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Members, before we move to reports by committees, I would ask you to join me in welcoming this new group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 37th Parliament.

We are pleased to have with us Nicole Agro from Halton; Andrew Brett from Scarborough Southwest; Eric Brown from Windsor West; Kathryn Herbert from Chatham-Kent-Essex; Edwin Horton from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant;

Maxwell Mausner from Parkdale-High Park; Kate McLeod from Peterborough; Andrew Persaud from Eglinton-Lawrence; Alim Remtulla from Trinity-Spadina; Hilde Romme from Oxford;

Natasha Rupani from Nepean-Carleton; Erica Skinner from Markham; Adam Stanley from Don Valley West; Patrick Suter from Burlington; Heather Sutherland from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke;

Joanna Van Dorp from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound; Jacie Webber from Essex; Michael Weersink from Perth-Middlesex; Graydon Whalley from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock; and Johanna Wilson from Leeds-Grenville.

Members, I present you with your new pages.

1350

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (MOTORCYCLE AND BICYCLE HELMETS), 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (CASQUES DE CYCLISTES ET DE MOTOCYCLISTES)

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 136, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to motorcycle and bicycle helmets / Projet de loi 136, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les casques de cyclistes et de motocyclistes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member now has an opportunity to say a few words.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to require motorcyclists and bicyclists to surrender their helmets for police inspections upon request. Presently, if a police officer pulls over a member of a motorcycle gang and asks to inspect his helmet, the member of the motorcycle gang can say no. The only way the police officer is able to pursue the cause is by charging the member of the gang with obstruction. If this bill is passed, it will maximize police resources for policing as opposed to pleasing motorcyclists in their effort to be disrespectful to police officers.

I look forward to quick passage of this bill, and I would like to thank Sergeant Robin Tiplady from the Sudbury Police Services and Constable Chris Hart, who were instrumental in doing the research on this.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS AND SECURITY GUARDS AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES ENQUÊTEURS PRIVÉS ET LES GARDIENS

Mr Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 137, An Act to amend the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act to require a minimum level of training for licensees and to require that uniforms and vehicles of security guards be readily distinguishable from those of the police / Projet de loi 137, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêteurs privés et les gardiens en vue d'exiger un niveau de formation minimum pour les titulaires de licences et d'exiger que les uniformes et les

véhicules des gardiens se distinguent facilement de ceux de la police.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Levac for a short statement?

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): This is another action bill that we have presented as the Dalton McGuinty team that requires that applicants for licensing as private investigators and security guards have a minimum level of training, to provide what they can and can't do as security guards, and not the action of a police officer. And they must be licensed.

The bill also requires that uniforms worn by security guards and vehicles that are used by security guards and any other private investigators in the course of their employment can be readily distinguishable from those of the police. This has been asked for by our police officers across the province. I am glad to bring this to the House and hope the Conservatives will work with us to make sure that this bill passes.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO SECURITY

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Ontario's everyday heroes. They are found in every city and every town and every neighbourhood. But they are far from common, because they are called to face uncommon dangers, make extraordinary sacrifices and risk their own lives. I am referring to the brave women and men, the everyday heroes, of Ontario's police forces.

All across Ontario, these everyday heroes are in plain view. Our officers are always there for us to protect us, to uphold the law and to show us what bravery and dedication and service really look like. Our officers remind us that safety—the safety of our families, the safety of our communities—must never be taken for granted. And sometimes that safety comes at a very high price.

Ontario's police memorial stands just across the street from where I'm standing. It bears the names of 211 heroes in life, not death, officers who are known to have lost their lives in the line of duty since 1804 in the province of Ontario, everyday names like William or James or George or Robert or Margaret, everyday names of mothers, of fathers, of brothers, of sisters, of sons and of daughters, all loved and missed by the families they have left behind.

We have a responsibility to these officers and we have a responsibility to their families. We have a responsibility to support the men and women who continue to serve our communities despite the danger involved.

We certainly have a responsibility to speak out strongly against Ottawa's outrageous decision to transfer Clinton Suzack to William Head. This is a medium-security "Club Fed" facility on Vancouver Island. I want to thank the police association for watching out for its members and for bringing this matter to our attention. Suzack is the convicted murderer of Sudbury Regional Police Constable Joe MacDonald. Today we join the association in calling upon Corrections Canada to immediately reverse its decision to transfer Suzack. We call on Corrections Canada to ensure he serves the rest of his 25-year sentence in a maximum security facility, just as his trial judge recommended.

For more than six years now, we have worked hard to give our police the tools and the resources they need. We've allocated 1,000 new police officers, officers who will work in communities all across Ontario. We've taken a tough new approach to organized crime by introducing civil measures to freeze, seize and forfeit the proceeds of unlawful activity. We've responded swiftly to new threats to our safety. We've taken a lot of these actions in spite of the deficits and tremendous budgetary pressures that we inherited in 1995.

The world also changed on September 11. It changed for Americans; it changed for Canadians; it changed for freedom-loving people everywhere in the world. It certainly changed for police officers, for firefighters, for emergency workers. Too many lost their lives that day. Those who remain must now face the possibility of new threats and dangers that some say used to be reserved for Hollywood movies.

We must give our police the tools they need to respond. We must not let our police officers down, and I'm here today to say we will not let our police officers down.

1400

As members know, we appointed retired RCMP Commissioner Norman Inkster and retired Major-General Lewis MacKenzie to advise us on security issues. We're helping municipalities plan for emergencies, and we're conducting a comprehensive review of Ontario's emergency preparedness. We're providing \$4.5 million to create a new rapid response team within the OPP to work with and to assist local police forces to respond to terrorist threats; investing \$3.5 million in a special unit to assist municipal and federal authorities to investigate and track down terrorists and their supporters. We are ensuring that our front-line officers have the necessary equipment to respond to terrorists threats. We are building new facilities to train police officers, firefighters and ambulance personnel to deal with terrorist threats and to manage emergencies.

In Ontario we pride ourselves on a culture that is welcoming and tolerant, but when people or organizations threaten that way of life, our police officers stand ready to respond. They are our first line of defence. They deserve our thanks and they deserve our support and they deserve our respect.

Mr Speaker, there is something else we must do to protect our people and our way of life. We need a North American security perimeter to protect our citizens and to protect our economic strength. Whether it's a terrorist threat from abroad or a more recognizable enemy here at home, we know that the good guys are our men and women in police uniform. Once again, we will call upon our police to help because we cannot keep Ontario secure without their assistance. Once again, I know they'll face the challenges and they'll face the dangers ahead with the same courage and determination that we are recognizing today.

So on behalf of the people of Ontario, I say thank you. Thank you for your bravery and for your commitment. Thank you for your professionalism. We have always needed heroes, and right now we need you more than ever.

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): It is a privilege to join the Premier in paying tribute to the men and women in police uniform who put their lives on the line every day to keep our streets and our communities safe. Like the Premier, I had the privilege to gather with the officers last May at the Ontario police memorial ceremony of remembrance. We paid tribute to the men and women who died in the line of duty. We thought of the families they had left behind: the spouses, the children and the parents. We thought of the friends who lost their companionship and support forever. We owe these men and women a tremendous debt. They have given their lives to keep our communities safe.

But we owe them more than gratitude and respect. We owe it to them to make sure the police officers who are safeguarding our communities have the tools to do their jobs. This government is committed to putting those tools in place. The Premier spoke of some of them. I'd like to take this opportunity to outline for the House some of the other steps our government has taken to make our communities safer and to help our police officers do their jobs.

We have seen that intelligence is essential to counterterrorism activity. And that's why we are enhancing the capacity of the criminal intelligence service of Ontario to conduct counterterrorism intelligence activities. We are helping the federal law enforcement officials track down illegal individuals in the province. To achieve this, we are expanding the mandate of the repeat offender parole enforcement unit, or ROPE unit. We have committed additional funding and staff to expand the Ontario Police College and also the hate crimes and extremist unit.

Criminal activity by young people continues to be a challenge for communities across the province. That's why our government has dedicated \$2 million a year to the youth crime and violence initiative. This program supports police service programs that focus on youth crime. The initiative will also support partnerships between police and community groups that assist youth at risk.

Tips to police about criminal activity are vital to the fight against crime. That's why our government has

assisted the Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers. We have provided three quarters of a million dollars over the last four years to support the Crime Stoppers call centre 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Yesterday in Hamilton I was pleased to announce an additional \$200,000 for the Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers. This will help expand and improve Student Crime Stoppers programs province-wide.

This spring our government acted where the federal government had failed. In April, we established Canada's first sex offender registry. It gives police the crucial information they need about sex offenders living in our communities. This allows officers to better investigate and solve crimes of such a nature.

In response to the Campbell report on the Bernardo investigation, our government once again demonstrated its commitment to safe communities. We have invested more than \$25 million to establish a major case management system which was launched in May. This new tool allows police to more effectively investigate serial crimes that cross different jurisdictions.

This government has not forgotten the debt we owe to these police men and women whose names appear on the police memorial. We can never repay them fully, we can never truly comfort the loved ones they have left behind, but we can honour our obligations to them. We will continue to fulfill our responsibilities to the police officers who work so hard and bravely so the rest of us can live our lives in peace and security. To these men and women, let me echo the Premier and say a simple, heartfelt "thank you."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Further statements by ministries? Hearing none, the two opposition caucuses now have up to five minutes each to respond.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): Speaker, before I begin my formal response, I would like to rise on a point of order. I would like to seek unanimous consent to move and pass the following resolution without debate:

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario offers its unequivocal support for the Joe MacDonald resolution adopted by the Police Association of Ontario and calls on Corrections Canada to immediately return Clinton Suzack to a maximum security facility.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to introduce the motion? I hear unanimous consent. If the leader of the official opposition would formally put the motion, please.

Mr McGuinty: Yes, I will. The Legislative Assembly of Ontario offers its unequivocal support for the Joe MacDonald resolution adopted by the Police Association of Ontario and calls on Corrections Canada to immediately return Clinton Suzack to a maximum security facility.

The Deputy Speaker: The unanimous consent was without debate. Therefore, I will immediately put the motion to the House.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): Mr Speaker, on a point of clarification: Does that include fulfilling the full term of his sentence?

1410

The Deputy Speaker: There's no debate on the matter. If you're unclear, then I would suggest you may have to vote in the negative, but the House has allowed—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: I suspected that. The House has allowed the motion to be put.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It's a very serious matter. The motion has been duly put. There will be no debate. I will immediately put the motion to the House.

All those in favour of the motion, please indicate by saying "aye."

All those opposed, please indicate by saying "nay."

The motion is carried unanimously.

Hon Mr Jackson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the same spirit, then, would the House be willing to entertain an amendment to the resolution to include the words—

Interjection: A further resolution.

Hon Mr Jackson: A further resolution—thank you—calling upon the federal government to ensure that Clinton Suzack fulfills his full term in a maximum security prison.

The Deputy Speaker: I need that in writing, but there is a request that the House unanimously agree to allow that motion to be put. Is there agreement? I hear no opposition, so if you can get that to me quickly in writing.

I'll ask the Minister of Citizenship to please read out the motion.

Hon Mr Jackson: A further resolution, Mr Speaker, that states that this House urges Corrections Canada and the federal government to ensure that Clinton Suzack serves out his full sentence in a maximum security institution.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Sudbury.

Interjection: He's not in his seat.

The Deputy Speaker: Neither is the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr Jackson has moved that this House urges Corrections Canada and the federal government that Clinton Suzack serve out his full sentence in a maximum security institution.

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

Any opposed?

Hearing none, the motion is carried unanimously.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. You don't have the floor yet.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Using a piece of paper to hide your lips doesn't do it, John.

The member for Niagara Centre.

Mr Kormos: I seek unanimous consent to put a motion, to be determined without debate, that this House urges the federal government to restore immigration and custom personnel staffing at our borders to an appropriate level, and I have written it.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent that the motion introduced by the member for Niagara Centre be allowed?

I heard noes. Let me test the House again. Is there unanimous consent to allow the introduction of the motion as presented by the member for Niagara Centre?

I heard a no. We will therefore resume the response by the leader of the official opposition to the remarks of the minister and the Premier.

Mr McGuinty: Thank you, Speaker, and at the outset let me thank all members of the Legislature for their unanimous support of the resolution.

What I really want to do today on behalf of the members of the Ontario Liberal caucus is to offer my words of support and thanks to the men and women of Ontario's police services. Let me say directly to those officers present in the gallery today and to all those watching these proceedings on TV that for your courage, your sacrifice, your dedication and your unwavering commitment to serving our communities, we thank you.

Words are important, but we in the Liberal caucus know that words alone will never be enough. We believe that fighting crime starts with actions, not words.

That's why we took action by proposing a plan to protect the personal information of our police officers. Last spring, MPP Dave Levac, our colleague, proposed a private member's bill that would have required the government to create a comprehensive plan to protect police officers and their families.

Again we showed that fighting crime starts with action, not words, when we took the lead on banning replica guns in Ontario. When Michael Bryant first proposed this, the Solicitor General and Attorney General laughed. I am proud to say that the government eventually passed a law based on our proposal, and our police and the broader public will be the safer for it.

Because we believe that fighting crime takes action and not words alone, we fought hard to end the Harris government's practice of allowing criminals sentenced to jail for drunk driving to serve their sentences outside of jail in a place much more comfortable, like their homes. When we first raised this matter, the corrections minister said we were wrong. After we provided additional evidence, it was the minister who was forced to admit that he was wrong. I'm proud to say that because of Ontario Liberals and the good work of my caucus colleague Dave Levac, the drive-by window has been taken out of Ontario's jails.

Again this summer, Ontario Liberals showed that fighting biker gangs starts with actions and not words. We proposed legislation that would have allowed municipalities to get rid of the barricades and surveillance equipment used to protect biker gang clubhouses. The government was slow to react, but they have recently tabled their own legislation modelled on our proposal, and we look forward to passage of that bill.

There is so much more that this government might be doing to fight crime and make our streets safer here in Ontario.

For years now, Liberal MPP Rick Bartolucci has campaigned on behalf of legislation to get child prostitutes off Ontario streets. The government has promised to follow Rick's lead and to pass legislation, and we look forward to passage of that bill.

We also urge the government to listen to our police, who oppose this government's plan to privatize our jails, because our police, like us, understand that privatization means a greater number of escapes, putting our public at greater risk.

This government could adopt our post-September 11 proposal for the creation of a \$100-million Ontario security fund to pay for security improvements. This fund would help municipalities hire police officers and firefighters. In a post-September 11 world, that would be a very significant advancement.

There is much work to be done by the Ontario government to fight crime. Ontario Liberals have led the way, but our work is not yet done. We look forward to working with the police, and we will continue to propose policies that ensure our communities are safe for our working families and all others.

1420

Mr Kormos: New Democrats were pleased to be able to join representatives of the Police Association of Ontario today here at Queen's Park, police officers from Sarnia and Sault Ste Marie, among others. We were pleased to be able to sit down and dialogue with them as they explained to us matters that are first and foremost among their concerns currently in terms of the nature of policing in Ontario. We join every member of this Legislature in applauding our police officers and expressing gratitude in the modest way that people can in view of the incredible service that police officers provide to our communities, big here in Toronto and, yes, small like so much of Ontario.

Quite frankly, at the end of the day platitudinous speeches don't cut it, and although we welcome the opportunity to pay tribute to our police officers who, in solidarity with other front-line people out there like firefighters and emergency medical personnel, the people who are front and centre performing incredibly challenging jobs, incredibly difficult jobs, increasingly over the course of decades incredibly complex jobs—the demands on a police officer have never been higher. There are no two ways about it. The requirements of policing have never been more demanding; no two ways about that. The challenges a cop out there in big-city Ontario or

small-town Ontario faces have never been more daunting.

At the end of the day, all of the kind words, all of the congratulatory speeches, all of the platitudes in the world don't address what remains a very fundamental crisis in policing in Ontario, and that is the underresourcing of police services boards, police forces in every community in this province. The bottom line is that there are fewer police officers per capita today than there were six and a half years ago.

The reality about confronting crime is that it is the likelihood of apprehension that remains the single biggest deterrent. As long as crooks and thieves, among others, in community after community can assess the status of the number of police cars, sometimes down to a miserable low of two or three in small-town Ontario patrolling huge, vast areas, as long as the bad guys know there are only two or three police cars on a given midnight shift spread from one end of a huge geographic district to the other, those bad guys are going to feel they've got licence to do whatever they want to do to your home, to your business, to your property and beyond.

The fundamental issue is one of ensuring that our police forces are adequately staffed, that they have the tools to do the job, that they have access to the technology that permits them to do their job effectively and, yes, safely. It does no good to tell cops to go out there and bust the bad guys when crown attorneys, because of understaffing, are plea bargaining away serious charges, plea bargaining away charge after charge. We've documented that phenomenon in this House and confronted this Attorney General with that over the course of the last six years on a regular basis. It does no good for cops to be out there doing what they do and what they do well and what they're committed to doing when the courts are underresourced so that sausage-factory justice results in guilty people being discharged or results in charges being withdrawn or results in yet once again more of this growing and pervasive phenomenon of plea bargaining.

I want to speak to you also about the plight of police officers in remote areas of northern Ontario, in communities like Peawanuk, in communities like Fort Albany, Ogoki or Attawapiskat. I've told you before how the member for Timmins-James Bay and I have travelled through those communities visiting native police services, one-person police forces trying to conduct 24-hour-a-day policing; Attawapiskat—virtually no holding cells available for their police officers to hold people in detention; in Peawanuk, the police boat on the coast, a boat with no motor.

It's that phenomenon, it's that understaffing and that underresourcing, that's the fundamental issue that should be addressed. All the new legislation in the world won't solve policing problems in this province until we recognize the need to adequately invest in police forces in every community of Ontario, until we recognize the need to ensure cops, women and men out there on the

front lines, have the tools to do their job and do their job effectively and safely for themselves.

VISITOR

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming the mayor of Kenora, David Canfield, to the Legislative Assembly today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): That's not a point of order, but we all join in the welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Later this afternoon, we are going to be voting on a resolution we've introduced which calls on the government to "forgo its \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut rather than impose any new cuts to health care services, public education, environmental protection or the introduction of new user fees." Quite simply, we believe that health care, public education and the protection of our environment are greater priorities than cutting corporate taxes by an additional \$2.2 billion. Our priorities are the priorities of our working families, and I'm asking you, Minister, on behalf of Ontario's working families, will you be supporting our resolution?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): The tax reductions that are spoken of by the member opposite extend from now to 2005 in the province of Ontario. Is the member opposite suggesting that all tax reductions in the province scheduled from now to 2005 should be cancelled? Does he seriously think that will assist economic growth in the province of Ontario? Does he not understand the difference between a vibrant economy and a stagnant economy? Doesn't he realize what has happened in the past six years under the leadership of Premier Harris, where we've seen the creation of in excess of 800,000 net new jobs? Does he not realize that tax savings are reinvested in the economy, creating investment, jobs, new plants, new equipment? Does he not want prosperity for Ontario?

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you're telling us that we're looking into the face of a \$5-billion deficit and, notwithstanding that, you want to cut taxes. You're fond of looking into the TV camera. I want you to look into the eyes of Ontario's working families and I want you to tell them now that your corporate tax cut is more important than hospital care for a sick family member. I want you to tell Ontario's working families that your corporate tax cut is more important than textbooks and smaller classes for our children. I want you to tell

Ontario's working families that your corporate tax cut is more important than home care for our parents and our grandparents. I want you to come clean. I want you to be honest with them and tell them for the first time that you've never been on the side of Ontario's working families and that when it comes to corporate tax cuts, you're proving once again that when it comes to a choice, tough choices, you're not choosing the needs of Ontario's working families.

Hon Mr Flaherty: Looking at the Leader of the Opposition, let him come clean with the people of Ontario when he says, "I will not reverse the tax cuts if I become Premier. You can't afford to do so. It would send out a negative signal about our economy." Will you, Leader of the Opposition, stand up and tell the people of Ontario that you will reverse all of the tax cuts, contradicting what you've said before? What's the truth? What would you actually do? Would you reverse the tax cuts? I don't think you have the guts to do it. That's what you said before in Ottawa. What are you saying at Queen's Park today?

Mr McGuinty: I'm flattered that the Minister of Finance is looking to me for guidance with respect to financial policy, quite flattered. It's obvious that the minister is having some considerable difficulty coping with the changing economy.

My advice to him is to look for a good example to Ontario's working families. Our families are doing everything they can to protect the essentials. They won't be cutting the food budget, they won't be cutting winter clothing for their kids and they won't be cutting accommodation costs like rent and mortgage. They're protecting the essentials, and they expect that you will do the same thing in government, that on behalf of our working families you will protect their essentials: you will protect health care, you will protect education, you will protect our environment.

So I'm asking you, Minister, to look for a good example to Ontario's working families. Why won't you do that, Minister? Why won't you do what families are doing in their homes today? They're protecting the essentials.

1430

Hon Mr Flaherty: I note that we did not get an answer from the Leader of the Opposition about whether he would reverse the tax cuts. We did not get an answer from him. I don't know which to believe. But we do know that Mr McGuinty has always indicated that he—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Order. Minister, take your seat, please. Let's just calm down. I can't hear the minister. I want to hear the minister. Minister, if you would please answer.

Hon Mr Flaherty: This is about tax cuts and the Leader of the Opposition. We don't know what he believes today. Here's what he believed in 1996 on TVO. He was asked by Steve Paikin, "Would you raise taxes a bit?" Mr McGuinty: "No, I don't think so. No." Mr Paikin: "Not income taxes? Would there be other kinds

of taxes?" Mr McGuinty: "No. Well, I mean that's something that I'd consider. It would depend on the financial situation that obtained at the same time. We'll have to wait and see." We don't know where he stands.

The Deputy Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mr Flaherty: We don't know if he's for tax increases or against tax increases. We know at election time he changes his tune.

The Deputy Speaker: New question, the leader of the official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: My second round of questions is for the same minister. Minister, yesterday you said our taxes were still not competitive in comparison to the US. But this is what you say as your pitch in this booklet that's distributed to Americans when you're soliciting business, Here's Where You Should Be Doing Business: "In the area of corporate income tax, manufacturing and processing companies located in Ontario enjoy an advantage on average of close to 4 percentage points compared to their US counterparts."

Your corporate tax cut isn't about competitiveness. We're already very competitive in comparison to our American counterparts. It's about ideology. Why are you putting your ideology ahead of the needs of Ontario's working families?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I don't want to talk about ideology. I'll let the Leader of the Opposition talk about ideology. I want to talk about small business, reduction in taxes for small business in Ontario, and where the jobs are created in Ontario. You'd think the Leader of the Opposition would know by now that most jobs in Ontario are created by small business. We support entrepreneurship. Why doesn't the Leader of the Opposition? Why don't the Ontario Liberals support entrepreneurship? Why don't you support small business? Why do you want to make it more difficult for them to grow and to invest and to hire more people in Ontario? Don't you realize that's where the jobs come from? Don't you realize that the tax reductions that are before the House right now would reduce the small business income threshold to 6%, the small business rate? Are you against that?

The Deputy Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mr Flaherty: What do you think about increasing the threshold to \$280,000? What do you think about eliminating the capital tax for 11,000 small businesses? Is that what you're against?

Mr McGuinty: We have a much broader and more ambitious vision when it comes to competitiveness, much broader and much more ambitious. We understand that in the new economy the most highly prized and sought-after commodity is the skilled worker. The skilled worker still lives in a family, and skilled workers' families want—in addition to competitive taxes, which we already have—the best schools, the best health care and the best protection for our environment. That's what we mean when we talk about competitiveness. With your bent for proceeding with a corporate tax cut that will make our corporations pay taxes at a level that is 25% below their

American counterparts, you are compromising our true competitiveness. So I ask you, Minister, why are you bent on proceeding with this corporate tax cut and thereby compromising our true competitiveness here in Ontario?

Hon Mr Flaherty: If ever there was a time when we need to keep up with our competitors, if ever there was a time, it's in a time of economic slowdown. We need to stay competitive. We need to stimulate the economy in Ontario.

I understand the Liberals don't agree with that. I understand they want to raise taxes. I understand the way they governed in the province from 1985 to 1990: big government, big spending, big taxes, increase the sales tax, increase the gasoline tax, increase personal income tax, increase the corporate tax, increase taxes on small business, increase the payroll tax. That's what you believe in.

You don't understand that when you reduce taxes, that money goes into the economy. It helps to create jobs. It actually creates more income for government, \$15 billion more in Ontario today than six years ago, thanks to the leadership of Premier Harris.

Mr McGuinty: Better be careful whose coattails you hang on to over there, Minister. You might just need a parachute, hanging on to Mike Harris's coattails.

Minister, I think we should cut to the chase. This reckless corporate tax cut was not your idea. The fact is that you inherited this mess from Ernie. I mean, this wasn't even part of the party election platform. We both know that, as Minister of Finance, Ernie Eves made a lot of mistakes. He borrowed \$10 billion for a tax cut. He added over \$20 billion to the debt. Ernie Eves then hopped into the getaway car, and he left this minister holding a \$5-billion-deficit bag.

The minister is looking for every opportunity to distinguish himself from his predecessor. Here is an opportunity, Minister. Tell Ernie Eves to take his corporate tax cut back to Bay Street and that you're going to do something that nobody in your government has yet to do: you're going to stand up for working families and you're going to say no to this corporate tax cut.

Hon Mr Flaherty: The Leader of the Opposition seems to think—I think I understand him today—the way you help working families in Ontario, hard-working working families, is to increase their taxes. That's what he believes in. He believes that you help people by increasing their taxes.

Well, let me tell the Leader of the Opposition that the people of Ontario don't agree with you. They don't think that the way to be helped is for you to put your hand in their pocket. They had enough of that from 1985 to 1990. You want to talk about Ernie Eves and Mike Harris. Look how you left the government of Ontario in 1990. Look what you left for the NDP government. Look at the condition the economy of Ontario was in when you left it like that, in a shambles, a disaster in 1990. You should be ashamed of yourself. We're not going down that road again. We've learned better.

CHILD CARE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. The minister will know that today is National Child Day.

Yesterday you refused to rule out cutting \$200 million from child care and family resource centres across Ontario. At the same time, your Minister of Finance confirmed that he intends to proceed with \$2.4 billion in corporate tax cuts, another \$1-billion tax reduction in income taxes for the well-off and a \$300-million tax break for private schools: \$3.7 billion in tax reductions or tax breaks for your friends while you cut \$200 million from licensed child care. Can you tell the people of Ontario why children matter so little to your government?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I reject the premise of the question by the member opposite.

What was reported yesterday was that a preliminary draft discussion paper with some options was presented, was written by someone in the ministry. It is something which was seen to be of such little consequence it didn't reach my desk.

I can't say what will be or what won't be included in the budget process in March or April or May of next year in options for finding efficiencies and ensuring that we can honour a commitment that we made—I think that all members made in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario—to bring in a balanced budget. What we won't do is turn our backs on a sound economy. We won't turn our backs and watch an \$11-billion deficit once again ravage this province.

The real tragedy of the economic situation of the province is that we'll spend \$7.8 billion on social services but we'll spend \$9 billion on debt interest, run up by your government in the years of waste and wild spending. We will not allow the clock to be turned back.

1440

Mr Hampton: Minister, while you try that answer, you might want to explain to people how from 1995 to 1999 you borrowed money to finance tax cuts. You racked up debt to finance tax cuts.

But the question is about all those children and all those parents across the province who rely upon secure, licensed child care to help look after children, the hundreds of thousands of parents, and the tens of thousands of parents who are on a waiting list for safe, secure, licensed child care.

If this is just a suggestion from an underling in the ministry, then you as minister on National Child Day can stand in your place today and say it won't happen; you won't give away \$3.7 billion in tax reductions for the well-off and corporations and at the same time cut \$200 million from child care. Say that today as the minister who's supposed to be looking after children.

Hon Mr Baird: I think I was very clear yesterday, when I said that this draft preliminary report with some options to create a children's benefit was not something I'm considering.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Let me remind the minister of the government's legacy so far with respect to child care that you've cut the budget for regulated child care by 15% since 1995. You've cancelled all funding for capital for new centres, for renovations and for playground equipment. You've capped proxy pay equity funding for child care workers at December 1998 levels, but centres still have the obligation and many are going to go under because of that liability. You've capped funding for subsidies for low-wage parents, you've capped wage enhancements for child care workers, and you've downloaded 20% of the whole child care budget on to municipalities. In the face of that, you have \$2.3 billion to give to your friends in the corporate sector.

Minister, the question is simple: if you are not going to proceed with a \$200-million cut to regulated child care and family resource centres, denounce the plan today and guarantee that you will protect the current level of child care funding and family resource program funding in this province. Will you do that today?

Hon Mr Baird: I have already said that the proposal that was released in the leak is not something I am considering. I don't know how much more clear I can be on that.

The member opposite talked about legacy. I'll tell you the legacy. We're spending more than \$700 million supporting parents and their child care needs. That's more than any Ontario government's history. That's more than the government with which she was a member of cabinet, I'll remind her.

She also talks about pay equity. This government has an unprecedented financial commitment to pay equity. We will spend more money supporting pay equity than any government in Ontario's history.

If you measure compassion by how much money you spend, by your own measure this government is showing more compassion.

The member opposite wants to talk about legacy—high debt, high taxes and high unemployment, and that led to despair in this province. We won't turn back the clock.

TAXATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Finance. When economists across the province heard that you were looking at cutting \$5 billion from health and education and environmental protection and a host of other services in the midst of a recession, they couldn't believe it themselves.

Toronto-Dominion economist Don Drummond says it would be "draconian" to pull that much money out of the economy. "It would lower the growth rate.... There would be fewer dollars and cents flowing around the economy because every government dollar ends up in some

citizen's pocket." He said, "I wouldn't recommend they take \$5 billion out of the economy next year."

Minister, rather than making the recession worse, rather than killing more jobs, would you kill your corporate tax cuts and your \$300 million for private schools so that the services people depend on can continue and we won't be forced to take \$500 million out of circulation?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): Again, I'm disappointed that the leader of the third party is off his tax-cutting stance on the retail sales tax and now he's back on increasing taxes, as the Leader of the Opposition is. They labour under the assumption that increasing taxes, increasing the size of government, increasing government spending make for a better Ontario. They did that from 1985 to 1995, and they left the province with an \$11-billion deficit for that particular year. As the Minister of Community and Social Services has just said, what it means is very substantial interest payments every year on the public debt, in excess of \$9 billion this year, that isn't available to pay for health care and education.

What tax decreases create is more revenue, more investment for the government—indeed, \$15 billion more revenue today than six years ago in Ontario, after all those tax reductions. That's why we can spend record amounts on health care, record amounts on education in Ontario: because of the tax cuts.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you might want to check the record since you became Minister of Finance, since after all of your tax cuts you have now lost over 27,000 jobs in the province during your reign as Minister of Finance.

My point is simply this. Withdrawing and cutting another \$5 billion from health care, from education, from protection of the environment, from child care is neither good for the services people depend on nor is it good for our economy, because taking \$5 billion out of circulation will mean a loss of jobs. It will mean more economic dislocation. Will you recognize that? Will you cancel your corporate tax cuts, cancel the further \$1 billion in income tax cuts for high-income people, cancel your \$300 million for private schools, maintain the funding in our health care system, our school system, environmental protection and child care, and maintain some continuity in our economy?

Hon Mr Flaherty: The member opposite misses something in his equation. He misses the fact that when you reduce taxes, that money goes into the economy. That money gets invested. It creates jobs. It purchases equipment. It expands businesses. Indeed, in the last six years in Ontario more than 800,000 net new jobs have been created. Surely the hard-working families of Ontario welcome jobs, welcome pride in their families. We should celebrate their successes. We should welcome tax reductions as a way of creating wealth and creating jobs in Ontario.

I know the member opposite doesn't understand that. I know he was part of the government from 1990 to 1995: big spending in a time of economic slowdown. I know he was part of the government who thought they could

spend their way out of an economic slowdown, resulting in an \$11-billion deficit in 1995-96.

POLICE OFFICERS

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is to the Solicitor General. Two weeks ago, on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals, I introduced Bill 128, An Act to permit the naming of highway bridges and other structures on the King's Highway in memory of police officers who have died in the line of duty.

Most of the members from the Police Association of Ontario who are delegates to their convention have a copy of this private member's bill. The preamble to it says, "We, the people of Ontario, are forever grateful to the dedicated police officers who have courageously and unselfishly given their lives in the line of duty." You and the Premier reaffirmed that, along with my leader, Dalton McGuinty, and the leader of the third party.

Today, Solicitor General, will you please give your commitment to the PAO and the Ontario Provincial Police Association that you will ensure that this bill becomes law before we break at Christmas?

1450

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): I join the gentleman across the floor in saying what an incredible job the police do. We all share in the absolute tragedy of officers being slain in the course of duty. Clearly, I am supportive of anything to recognize our police officers.

I presume that you will have a follow-up question. So far as the naming of highways is concerned, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation, and so I would suggest that perhaps the member may want to address his follow-up to the Minister of Transportation.

Mr Bartolucci: I don't think that answer is satisfactory to the Police Association of Ontario or to any police officer. If you are committed, as you say you are committed, this is a simple act. You can do it by way of order in council, as you know. You have never, ever done that. That is the reason for this bill.

Mr Solicitor General, the reality is that Sergeant Rick McDonald was killed 12 feet away from an overpass. Constable Joe MacDonald was killed hundreds of yards away from the Lasalle Extension. What we are asking for is very simple. We believe there should be lasting tributes for police officers. Will you give your undertaking and your assurance to the Police Association of Ontario, the Ontario Provincial Police Association, in fact all police officers in the province of Ontario, that you will ensure and your government will ensure that this bill receives second and third reading, along with royal assent, before we break at Christmas?

Hon Mr Turnbull: I'm very sad to see this member playing politics with a very important issue. This is the party, the Liberals, that spoke out against the expense—they didn't want the expense of building a police memorial. It is absolutely outrageous—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Stop the clock. All right, please come to order.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Kingston and the Islands.

Start the clock. Solicitor General, you have the floor.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I actually believe it was Mr Colle and Mr Caplan who in fact spoke out against it. In point of fact—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Stop the clock. What is the point of privilege?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The minister is talking about playing politics and saying that I opposed the police monument. I never did such a thing.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. Take your seat. Take your seat immediately.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will come to order. Start the clock. Solicitor General.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I believe it was also the Liberal government, when they were in power, that refused to go to the funeral of a slain officer.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Stop the clock. The House will come to order.

New question.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, on your visit to Rouge Valley Health System in Scarborough on November 14, you announced that the hospital will be the site of a stand-alone angioplasty service, to be up and running by April 2002. Granting Rouge Valley Centenary the stand-alone angioplasty service will lead to dramatic improvements in quality of cardiac care in Scarborough East, and in fact in points east of Scarborough. Minister, can you please confirm your announcement of a stand-alone angioplasty service at the hospital and provide the members of the House with further details about the government's timeline for implementing this very significant advance in cardiac services?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member from Durham for asking the question. I was in a position last week to announce, and I wish to share with this House, that this government is committed to providing the patients in the Rouge Valley Health System with the first pilot stand-alone angioplasty program. I have directed the ministry to work with the Cardiac Care Network and Rouge Valley Health System to implement this stand-alone program.

The honourable member is right; we have some clinical requirements that we have to work through. I am confident that we will. According to our estimation, we will have the program in place by the spring of 2002,

with the terms of reference being established early in the new year. That is good news. It means access to quality cardiac services, which is a top priority of this government, and we will continue to make similar investments so the people of Ontario have the assessment and the care and the treatment they require.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you for that, Minister. I, along with Phil Diamond and other members of the community, applaud your initiative here. The stand-alone angioplasty program is one of the many initiatives this government has made to enhance services not just at Rouge Valley Health System but indeed across Ontario. Can you please expand on some of the other announcements you have made recently, in fact in my riding of Durham?

Hon Mr Clement: I should incidentally state for the record that the member for Durham, the member for Scarborough East, the member for Pickering-Ajax and other members on this side of the House have been very relentless in their advocacy for the angioplasty program. Of course, at that time I was also able to see the placement of the new MRI at the same institution.

I can say that on the same day that I attended with the honourable member in Bowmanville, we were able to also announce a hospital on-call agreement with the local physicians to ensure access to quality emergency services in that hospital for extended periods of time, with remunerated staff according to the amount of effort they were putting into that, which was also announced on the very same day. The honourable member attended with me. It is another example of our ability to place the resources that are available to us through taxpayers' money for these kinds of investments in our local community. Again, the honourable member from Durham is doing his job as a local member to ensure that health care is looked after in his community.

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today you will be aware that I sent a letter to the Premier with evidence of his involvement in the Ipperwash situation. He has said to the Legislature that he gave no direction, gave no influence, left it entirely to the OPP. The evidence that I sent to the Premier today shows that on the day of the shooting he met with 14 people, including an OPP inspector and an OPP sergeant. He told that meeting that he wanted the protesters removed in 24 hours. The Deputy Attorney General argued against rushing in, but according to the evidence we have, the Premier and Minister Hodgson came out strong, and when the OPP found out what was happening, they were caught off guard and said that's not what they wanted; they wanted more time.

My question to you is this: with this clear evidence that contradicts the Premier's statement, will you now agree to do the right thing and call a public inquiry?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I'll refer it to the Attorney General.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): As we've talked about in this Legislative Assembly on numerous occasions, usually on matters raised by the very same member, there is a pending court case. There is a court case that will ultimately be adjudicated by an independent, impartial judge. All of the evidence will be placed in front of that judge. Ultimately that individual, he or she, will make a decision. It is not for any member of this assembly to make that decision. Members in this assembly, including the member who posed the question, are motivated by a political agenda. The judge who ultimately rules in this case is not so motivated. The judge will be independent and will be impartial and I, for one, look forward to having the matter placed in front of that judge so that we can get a decision from an independent, impartial individual, not from the member opposite, who is attempting to advance a political agenda in a very serious matter.

1500

Mr Phillips: The brother of Dudley George, Sam George, is here in the gallery today. He has begged you to drop the civil case and to call a public inquiry. Tomorrow, the Premier will appear in private. We will not have access to this. He will have three days of discovery. None of the public will see or hear about that, all done behind closed doors.

The Premier has spent \$700,000 on outside lawyers attacking the George family's case. This is not a fair fight. The province is using millions of dollars of tax money fighting the George family. The Premier tomorrow, behind closed doors, will be giving testimony that should be done in a public forum, just like Walkerton.

So I say to you again, on behalf of the Premier will you do the decent thing? Stop dragging the George family through turmoil and bankruptcy. Will you do the appropriate thing, drop the civil case and call a full public inquiry so we can finally get at the truth about what happened at Ipperwash?

Hon Mr Young: Let's be perfectly clear. The civil case was instituted by the George family. It is not for the defendants to drop the case. It simply is not that simple.

The other thing that needs to be said loudly and clearly is that there is nothing sinister, nefarious or untoward about a matter being in front of the civil courts of this province. It happens every day. Litigants from across Ontario turn to the civil courts of this province for a decision in matters in dispute.

But somehow or other, and likely because my friend is trying to inject some political agenda, some political purpose into this very serious matter, he wants to remove it from the civil courts, in spite of the fact that the matter is well advanced and that it is going forward to an examination for discovery, which is an appropriate pre-trial procedure where the parties will be examined under oath. By the way, in this instance, the matter has been placed in front of a judge for case management at the request of the defendants. The judge has ordered where,

when and how the discoveries are to proceed; that's what we asked to happen and that's what's happening.

But somehow or other, that doesn't agree with my friend's political agenda, so he objects to it on a regular basis in this Legislature. Let the defendants have their case and let them have their day in court.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Minister of Transportation. Last spring, Bill 33, the Outside Riders Act, was not passed as it lacked unanimous support for third reading. This bill would have increased road safety and helped to decrease the number of fatalities on Ontario roads. Why members of this Legislature who claim to have a social conscience would be against road safety is difficult for me to ascertain.

Minister, can you tell this Legislature and the constituents of mine who have lost sons in truck accidents what plans, if any, you or your ministry are currently considering to ensure that this piece of proposed legislation does in fact become law?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): I want to thank my colleague for his question. I want to commend the member for Northumberland for drafting this important piece of legislation. The bill was drafted in response to a terrible tragedy that took place in the member's riding. Recent studies have shown that people who ride in cargo areas of vehicles are 26 times more likely to be ejected than passengers riding in the cabs of the pickup.

Several provinces have now some form of legislation that makes riding in the backs of pickup trucks illegal. Ontario has the safest roads in Canada and the second safest in North America. We are hoping this House will support this bill and enable it to get past third riding this session.

Mr Galt: While we're on the topic of road safety, could you please explain what's being done on the issue of occupant protection in motor vehicles? Minister, we know that seat belts save lives, we know that air bags save lives, we know that improved vehicle design saves lives and we know that improved highway design saves lives.

What steps are you taking to ensure that occupants of vehicles are indeed protected on Ontario roads?

Hon Mr Clark: The very heart of this matter is seat belt use itself. Twenty-five years ago Ontario took a major step in improving road safety by becoming the first province in Canada to make seat belts mandatory. In 1986 it took another big step by making child seats mandatory. Have these laws made an impact? Yes, they have, where it counts most, on the roads.

On September 28 we launched our province-wide fall seat belt campaign with the support of police services. I can't say enough about the importance of buckling up properly, especially where children are concerned. I encourage everyone with children to spend the extra few

seconds before each trip to ensure your child is buckled in properly. It could mean the difference between life and death.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): To the Minister of Correctional Services: When you announced the appointment of an American private for-profit operator of the Penetanguishene superjail, you talked about improving public safety. Today, after last weekend, the people of Penetanguishene certainly don't feel safe, because with less than 70 inmates out of the total capacity of 1,000, the American operator just doesn't seem to be in control. Are you prepared to admit today that it is wrong to turn Ontario public correctional facilities over to private American operators?

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): I'm prepared to admit today that what's appropriate for corrections in Ontario is to focus on results and to focus on safe, secure, effective and publicly accountable institutions, which is what we are trying to do across all institutions in this province, including the one that's brand new in Penetanguishene.

The member referred to an event that occurred over the weekend in Penetanguishene at the brand new institution that was opened just last week. What clearly happened, according to the on-site correctional monitor we have, the board of monitors of their local citizens and the individuals in the institution, is that the inmates, who came into a new institution, tried to test the limits of the security of that institution and tried to test the limits of the people who run it. Thankfully that operator followed the procedures set out in the contract and in our governing manuals that cover all institutions and the incident was dealt with, as it would have been dealt with, by the way, I say to the member opposite, if that had occurred, and it does many times, in publicly run institutions.

Mr Kormos: There were only 67 inmates out of what is intended to be, when it is full, 1,000, and on the weekend with only 67 inmates all hell broke loose, a riot over basic needs like blankets, heat and food. The deputy mayor of Penetanguishene has expressed grave concerns about the private American operator's ability to run that facility. If the operator can't do it with 67 inmates, how is it going to run safely with 1,000 inmates? How can the people of Penetanguishene feel safe when that capacity of 1,000 inmates is achieved with the American operator you've got in there now who can't handle 67?

Hon Mr Sampson: I say to the member opposite that not too many weeks ago we had many fewer inmates destroy an entire publicly run jail in Peterborough, to the point that we can't even open it again. That was a publicly run institution. Is that OK? Is it OK if it happens in a public institution? The answer clearly, if you ask any reasonable individual, is no. It's not OK if it happens in any of the institutions in this province, which is why we focus on how—I say to the member opposite, who is ideologically bent, that's why we have chosen not to go

there. That's why we focus on the results of institutions. We ask all operators—

Mr Kormos: Sixty-seven inmates.

Hon Mr Sampson: I'm sorry if the member doesn't want to talk about results and safety and security of institutions. We do. It's an important part in the operation of correctional services across this province that jails be safe, whether they're privately operated or publicly operated.

1510

HEALTH CARE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. Yesterday you responded to the parents of Joshua Fleuelling by assuring them that if their son had been in an ambulance today, the nearest hospital would have had to take him in. What you don't say is that for every new critical care patient that's taken in, someone else has to wait even longer. Telling hospitals that they have to take patients in when they're already full, I suggest to you, is no answer.

The crisis of hospitals stretched beyond their capacity just goes on and on. A week ago Saturday, a Scarborough woman pregnant with twins went into premature labour. There was no place for her in a Toronto hospital; there was no room for her in London; there was no room for her in Hamilton. She was airlifted to Kingston, where her babies are in care today. Minister, how will you reassure this young mother that everything is fine in Ontario hospitals today?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Clearly I'm not familiar with the particular circumstances the honourable member mentions. I can say, because the issue came up yesterday, to the family of Joshua Fleuelling that I believe his death was not in vain, that there are 30 recommendations with respect to that particular inquiry that relate to the Ministry of Health, and with respect to all 30, we are making progress on them. This includes a commitment for \$4 million annually for asthma prevention and management research.

With respect to the honourable member's question directly, we've got the new patient priority system that went into effect on October 3, so our hospitals can actually talk to our ambulance drivers, can actually talk to our dispatchers. Of course there are the new investments we've made to increase hospital capacity, including \$63 million on emergency service strategy, which includes new beds, new transitional beds and new flex beds, and new discharge planners and new regional coordinators.

The obvious answer to the question is that more has to be done, but I can tell you we have made great progress and great strides reinvesting in the health care system and in the emergency services system in this province.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, Ontario has the fewest acute care beds in the country. In Toronto, paramedics are waiting in hospital corridors for over an hour just to transfer the care of their patients to overburdened hos-

pitals. Hospitals are getting mixed messages from you about whether they're supposed to cut more services or run deficits, and that's just acute care hospitals. An independent review of long-term care in 10 jurisdictions put Ontario last in meeting the needs of residents in nursing homes and homes for the aged. Community care agencies are cutting services to the frail elderly and to people discharged from those overcrowded hospitals.

In the face of all this, you refused yesterday to rule out the possibility of making more cuts to health care to pay for your government's corporate tax cut. Your answer, as Minister of Health, is to say that you want to cut another half a billion dollars in taxes if you become leader of your party. You're supposed to be the Minister of Health. Why do you keep putting tax cuts as a priority over health care for people in this province?

Hon Mr Clement: Of course nothing could be further from the truth, but then we're left answering the honourable member's question when her leader does not know where he stands on these important issues. I can quote from September 22, five years ago, where he said at that point, "I am convinced there is enough money in the system. I don't think we're spending it as effectively as we can." When asked the same question this year, it's "More money, more money, more money."

Since he said that in 1996, we, as members of this government, have invested billions more dollars. Incidentally, they are 100% provincial dollars. They sit on that side of the House, married philosophically and strategically to the federal Liberal Party, which has cut and cut and cut again when it comes to health care spending, not only in the province of Ontario but throughout the Dominion of Canada. Shame on you, shame on your leader and shame on the Prime Minister.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): My question is for the Attorney General. Your ministry is known for providing front-line justice services such as the prosecution of criminal offences and the administration of the courts. It is also known to provide support to victims through all stages of the justice system by introducing new programs, streamlining existing ones and expanding victim support programs. An example in my riding was a pilot for the victim/witness assistance program, now to be expanded to every court in the province over the next three years. Minister, can you tell the House how your ministry informs and educates the people of Ontario about these important services?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for her question, which is just another example of that member's deep concern about justice in this province. Let me say to you that my ministry has initiated and partnered in a number of public education projects focused primarily on family breakdown and domestic violence. We have produced a number of publications. We have arranged for personnel to be available in the

court and we have videos for participants in those sorts of very difficult court cases to view and to benefit from.

A couple of the examples have been well received, particularly by children who find themselves involved in domestic disputes or family breakdown situations. There is one entitled "Where Do I Stand: A Child's Legal Guide to Separation and Divorce," and the other is "What's My Job in Court?" which is an activity book that is provided to children prior to their taking the stand to testify.

Mrs Munro: Thank you for that answer, Minister. This government has proven its commitment to providing accessible support within the justice system for families in Ontario. To have an effective justice system and one that is accessible to its citizens, the Ministry of the Attorney General must not be isolated. Will you please tell the House how you and your officials work effectively with schools to bring legal education to young people in Ontario?

Hon Mr Young: Again, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this very important project. Courtrooms and Classrooms is a program that was initiated by one of my predecessors, the current Chief Justice of the province of Ontario, the Honourable Roy McMurtry. It's a program that the Minister of Education and I have supported in many different ways. It's a program that contributes greatly to public education, particularly of teenagers. It allows them to experience what it is like being in court, as an observer in these instances, to understand what the jobs of the various participants in the court process are and to better understand just how the justice system works. It is essential that that understanding be there at an early stage and that's why I'm so proud to be a participant in this program that I referenced earlier.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is to the Minister of Energy and it concerns the future of Hydro One. The minister will know that there has been an active discussion in at least one of our national newspapers over the last few days about an apparently vigorous debate now occurring inside the Ontario government about the future of Hydro One. My question to the Minister of Energy in this House this afternoon is simply this: what is your view and where do you stand as Minister of Energy about the future ownership and structure of what we now call Hydro One?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): I'm going to refer the question to the Minister of Finance.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): No decision has been made with respect to the disposition or possible disposition of Hydro One or of the other successor company, OPG. As you know, Super-Build, which I'm responsible for as minister, is tasked with looking at any and all opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness. We want to maximize efficiency and effectiveness for the taxpayers of Ontario. We continue

to look at all publicly owned entities to ensure that their level of efficiency and effectiveness is maximized.

1520

Mr Conway: I will agree with the minister that no decision has yet been made. My question to the Minister of Finance is twofold. First, what is your view as Minister of Finance for Ontario as to what the future ownership and structure of Hydro One should be and, second, given the fact that the Ontario government will make few decisions with such important consequences for Ontario citizens, Ontario business, Ontario electricity consumers, when will Ontarians and this Legislature get an opportunity to assess in some detail your government's future plans for this enormously important and valuable public asset that we know as Hydro One?

Hon Mr Flaherty: My view is certainly that we need to have the most efficient and effective operation, and not only in Hydro One but also in OPG. It's crucial that the people of Ontario are served well by those companies and by their successor companies, if any. We were looking at this issue carefully through SuperBuild. We're examining various alternatives. There are a number of possible alternatives. We're doing all of the due diligence work in that regard and taking advice in that regard from excellent sources of advice.

Once that process is completed, then I'm sure the matter will be formalized and we'll be in a position to offer a decision.

MCMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. Minister, we know that the McMichael gallery is a cultural icon and treasure in this province. In fact, I used to attend many school trips with my children when they were little to visit the McMichael gallery. We in my riding were all very concerned to hear that the gallery was seriously in debt about a year ago and that while attendance was down, expenses were up.

You can imagine that I was delighted when our government passed the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment Act, 2000, to address these particular issues, and I'm wondering, Minister, if you could tell this House what progress the McMichael gallery has made since the passage of the legislation a year ago.

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation): I'm very pleased to report back about considerable success and progress at the McMichael gallery. Since Minister Johns, my predecessor, introduced the act, we heard the usual gloom and doom from the opposite benches, but in fact the results are quite the opposite of what we heard at the time.

Attendance is up, costs are down, the agency is back in the black and major exhibitions are attracting record crowds to the McMichael. Last year attendance was about 112,000 people. This year we're on track to surpass 125,000 people, a more than 10% increase in attendance.

The Carr, O'Keefe and Kahlo exhibition was a huge success, with between 5,000 and 6,000 visitors coming per weekend to see that exhibition.

To quote Peter Worthington, who wrote in the Toronto Sun, the new CEO Vincent "Varga and the McMichael are on a roll. Every day the McMichael is crowded. A new board of directors under David Braley has revived the gallery." Good news.

Ms Mushinski: Minister, that is indeed very good news, and I'm very pleased to hear that the McMichael gallery is thriving. We can all be very proud of this provincial treasure.

Minister, I believe it's important that the McMichael success continues over the long term so that future generations can visit the gallery and learn about the development of Canadian art. Could you elaborate on how the McMichael was able to revitalize itself and what plans there are to ensure its stability into the future.

Hon Mr Hudak: Certainly a McMichael gallery in debt and in decline was no way to protect this Canadian cultural jewel. Bringing more entrepreneurship, a business approach to McMichael and encouraging new exhibitions have turned this around, as I said, already surpassing the 125,000 target in only eight months' time. In fact, in the past two years in addition, the province has supported capital improvements at McMichael, about \$2.7 million in total.

New initiatives like Art2Life, an integrated multimedia Web-based learning tool for grades 7 to 12, has 35 galleries participating; and certainly to those listening today, the current exhibition, Traces of Colour: A Celebration of the Season, going on until November, and the Carmichael and National Gallery of Canada collection running December to February.

Again, I want to congratulate the leadership of Minister Johns and the Mike Harris government, Braley and the board. Of course, it is home to Tom Thomson, with the Group of Seven and First Nations artwork like that of the Haida represented.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): I'll take a point of order. Take your seat, please.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: After checking Hansard yesterday and previous Hansard records regarding a discussion the Minister of Correctional Services had with me, he indicated that I, along with the Liberal caucus, voted against the pedophile bill. Quite clearly, that did not take place, and I would assume the minister would correct that record.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. Start the clock again. The leader of the third party has the floor.

RACIAL PROFILING

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): A question for the Deputy Premier. Last night, over 300 people came to our civil liberties forum at Toronto city hall because they are concerned about their freedom and about their security. Among those who came was Mr

Bhupinder Singh Dhanoa, a Sikh man who nine days ago was forced off his airplane flight because another passenger felt Mr Dhanoa was staring at him. This was pure and simple racial profiling, and he's been told that. Your government's security adviser, Lewis MacKenzie, says he is in favour of racial profiling, the same racial profiling that affected Mr Dhanoa, an innocent, law-abiding man.

Can you tell us, Deputy Premier, what is Lewis MacKenzie doing to protect Mr Dhanoa's right to security and the rights of all those Ontarians who today are being unfairly targeted because of their race or religion?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): To the Minister of Citizenship.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I want to assure the member opposite that his line of questioning is out of line. The Premier, as well as myself and several officials of this government, met with leaders of the Muslim community. The issues around racial profiling were clarified. The Premier has been very clear on this issue. In fact, I want to reassure the member opposite that under no circumstances is racial profiling an issue. It would appear, however, that there are some concerns being raised about racial profiling by the federal government at this time, and he may wish to raise that issue.

I have referenced in this House that one issue on racial profiling I've been able to uncover was that up until recently, the NDP Web site asked people what their ethnic origin was before they'd let them join the NDP. I'm pleased to see that as leader, you had that removed.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Hold on. We have a nice lineup of points of order. I'll start with the one I heard first, Don Valley East.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Thank you, Speaker. In response to a question from the member from Sudbury, the Solicitor General attributed comments to me which are untrue. If he had an ounce of class, he would withdraw them.

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

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): This is a legitimate point of order, Mr Speaker. Earlier, when a Liberal member raised a point of order during question period, you had the clock stopped. I thought it was a rule of the House that Speakers would not stop the clock if points of order were raised during question period, and I'm looking for clarification.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate that. The reason I did that was that one of the important aspects Speaker Carr focuses on in question period—there are many, but one of them is to ensure that the third party gets their fourth question in if at all possible, if reasonable. We were down to final moments and it was one of the opposition parties, not the third party itself, that could have seen the clock expire, and they would have lost that question. Therefore, to ensure that didn't happen, I stopped the clock and took the point of order.

Hon Mr Runciman: Mr Speaker, I obviously don't want to debate this with you, but I think it should be raised with the House leaders. If that is the case, if that is occurring, I think the Speaker should ask for consent to allow them to have that final question. I have a problem with this game being played. Speakers in the past have quite clearly stated that this would not be allowed.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Hold on. The matter, of course, has gone now. I would suggest, if your House leader feels as strongly as you, that indeed they take it up at House leaders and convey any message they might have to the Speaker.

I have another point of order here with the Solicitor General.

Hon Mr Turnbull: Mr Speaker, the member for Don Valley East has suggested that something in my reply was incorrect. In point of fact, let me quote from a newspaper from September 25.

The Deputy Speaker: You don't have a point of order, Minister. Please take your seat.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Turnbull: He said it was a lie.

The Deputy Speaker: I didn't hear it.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Hang on. Order, order, order. What on earth are you doing?

Interjection.

1530

The Deputy Speaker: Just stop. If somebody said something unparliamentary, I didn't hear it. I would give them an opportunity now to withdraw it.

I'm not hearing anything. Therefore, there is at this exact moment—are you going to withdraw?

Mr Caplan: I never said anything unparliamentary.

The Deputy Speaker: All right. There's nothing out of order at this moment. Therefore, I would ask everybody to come to order. The time period for oral questions has expired. It is now time for petitions.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: We almost got there. We're trying. A point of order here.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I just wanted to make reference to the discussion of the police memorial. According to Hansard, on November 15, 1999—

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. Please take your seat.

Minister of Correctional Services on a point of order, I would imagine.

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): This might be a valid point of order. The member for Brant rose to draw my attention to my response to his question yesterday. I will now correct my record and stand corrected by his comment.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. That was a point of order; you're right.

We're now in petitions. I'm sure I have somebody with a petition. The member for Brant has the floor to present a petition.

PETITIONS

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): A quick comment: I thank the minister of corrections.

The petition is to the provincial Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas puppy mills and other cruel animal breeding activities are unregulated and unlicensed in the province of Ontario;

“Whereas the Ontario SPCA needs more power to inspect and control animal kennels or breeders;

“Whereas Ontario consumers have no way of knowing if the animals they purchase as pets have been abused;

“Whereas there are no provincial penalties to punish people guilty of abusing animals that are bred and sold to unsuspecting consumers;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“That the province of Ontario pass legislation that outlaws puppy mills and other cruel animal breeding activities and also strengthens the powers of the Ontario SPCA to establish a provincial registry of kennels and breeders subject to SPCA inspection, and to allow the SPCA to impose fines and jail terms on those found guilty of perpetrating cruelty to animals for the purpose of selling these animals to an unsuspecting public.”

I sign my name to this and support this petition.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a petition which reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in Ontario, adopted adults are denied a right available to non-adoptees, that is, the unrestricted right to identifying information concerning their family of origin;

“Whereas Canada has ratified standards of civil and human rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

“Whereas these rights are denied to persons affected by the secrecy provisions in the adoption sections of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas research in other jurisdictions has demonstrated that disclosure does not cause harm, that access to such information is beneficial to adult adoptees, adoptive parents and birth parents, and that birth parents rarely requested or were promised anonymity;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to enact revision of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts to permit adult adoptees un-

restricted access to full personal identifying birth information; permit birth parents, grandparents and siblings access to the adopted person's amended birth certificate when the adopted person reaches age 18; permit adoptive parents unrestricted access to identifying birth information of their minor children; allow adopted persons and birth relatives to file a contact veto restricting contact by the searching party; replace mandatory reunion counselling with optional counselling."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

FEDERAL HEALTH SPENDING

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas schedule 5 physiotherapy clinics provide the only OHIP-covered physiotherapy to people in need, like seniors on fixed incomes and others that do not have private health insurance coverage;

"Whereas the Ontario government is being forced to consider changes in funding to schedule 5 physiotherapy clinics because of the federal government's refusal to pay its fair share of costs for medical care;

"Whereas in 1985 the Brian Mulroney government paid 18% of Ontario's total health care costs, but today (2001) the Jean Chrétien government pays less than 14% of Ontario's total health care costs;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government continue to strongly insist that the federal government pay its fair share of medical costs, including schedule 5 physiotherapy."

I'll sign my name to that as well.

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I have a petition here with in excess of 1,000 names that was presented to me by Roseanne Boucher of the London Transplant Gift of Life.

"Whereas the London Health Sciences Centre is a world-class academic health sciences centre serving people throughout southwestern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has forced the London Health Sciences Centre to find \$17 million in annual savings by 2005; and

"Whereas the London Health Sciences Centre has agreed to cut 18 programs in order to satisfy directions from the provincial Ministry of Health; and

"Whereas these cuts will put the health of the people of southwestern Ontario, and particularly children,"—and individuals with transplants—"at risk; and

"Whereas these cuts will diminish the London Health Sciences Centre's standing as a regional health care resource; and

"Whereas these cuts will worsen the continuing physician shortages in the region;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike

Harris government take immediate action to ensure these important health services"—such as the transplant program—"are maintained so that the health and safety of people throughout southwestern Ontario"—and the over 1,000 people who have signed this petition—"are not put at risk."

I am in full agreement and have affixed my signature hereto.

OHIP SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition addressed to the assembly and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government's decision to delist hearing aid evaluation and re-evaluation from OHIP coverage will lead to untreated hearing loss; and

"Whereas these restrictions will cut off access to diagnostic hearing tests, especially in geographic regions of the province already experiencing difficulties due to shortages of specialty physicians; and

"Whereas OHIP will no longer cover the cost of miscellaneous therapeutic procedures, including physical therapy and therapeutic exercise; and

"Whereas services no longer covered by OHIP may include thermal therapy, ultrasound therapy, hydrotherapy, massage therapy, electrotherapy, magnetotherapy, nerve therapy stimulation and biofeedback; and

"Whereas one of the few publicly covered alternatives includes hospital outpatient clinics where waiting lists for such services are up to six months long; and

"Whereas delisting these services will have a detrimental effect on the health of all Ontarians, especially seniors, children, hearing-impaired people and industrial workers; and

"Whereas the government has already delisted \$100 million worth of OHIP services,

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately restore OHIP coverage for these delisted services."

I have signed my name to this, and I agree with the petitioners.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we the residents of 145 Liberty Street South in Bowmanville wish to continue to rent our apartments and are not interested in purchasing condominium units; and

"Whereas we the residents of 145 Liberty Street South in Bowmanville have invested considerable amounts of money in decorating, upgrading their apartments; and

"Whereas we the residents of 145 Liberty Street South in Bowmanville were of the understanding that this was a rental property, not a condominium;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to review this matter and request the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing or

any other relevant ministry investigate these concerns to ensure that the residents of 145 Liberty Street South in Bowmanville can continue to rent their apartments.”

I am pleased to support my constituents in this issue: Wilma Paul and others at 145 Liberty Street.

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the London Health Sciences Centre is a world-class academic health sciences centre serving people throughout southwestern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Health has forced the London Health Sciences Centre to find \$17 million in annual savings by 2005; and

“Whereas the London Health Sciences Centre has agreed to cut 18 programs in order to satisfy directions from the provincial Ministry of Health; and

“Whereas these cuts will put the health of the people of southwestern Ontario, and particularly children, at risk; and

“Whereas these cuts will diminish the London Health Sciences Centre’s standing as a regional health care resource; and

“Whereas these cuts will worsen the continuing physician shortages in the region;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government take immediate action to ensure these important health services are maintained so that the health and safety of people throughout southwestern Ontario are not put at risk.”

It’s signed by many people from Tilbury, Blenheim, Wheatley and Chatham.

DIALYSIS

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a petition which says:

“Whereas there is limited dialysis treatment available in the Cornwall area and the Cornwall dialysis clinic’s waiting list continues to grow; and

“Whereas this lack of medical treatment forces dialysis patients throughout Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and beyond to drive to Ottawa, Kingston or Brockville several times each week, even during dangerous winter driving conditions, to receive the basic medical attention and, at the same time, incurring unnecessary stress, cost and inconvenience; and

“Whereas the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has been presented with a proposal that could drastically reduce the number of kidney patients that are forced to travel to receive this life-saving medical treatment; and

“Whereas the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care could temporarily increase the number of patients receiving treatment at the Cornwall dialysis clinic until such time as the dialysis unit at the Cornwall General Hospital is up and running;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to ensure that increased patient treatment places are opened at the Cornwall dialysis clinic.”

I’ve also signed the petition.

1540

HIGHWAY 407

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): It’s my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of my constituents.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario has proposed the extension of Highway 407 into the Durham region and the proposed routing, designated as the technically preferred route, will dissect the property of Kedron Dells Golf Course Ltd Oshawa,”

“Whereas such routing will destroy completely five holes, and severely impact two additional holes effectively destroying the golf course as a viable and vibrant public golf course;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change this routing to one of the other identified alternate routes, thus preserving this highly regarded public facility patronized annually by thousands of residents of Durham region,” which may include my constituents and myself, “and the GTA.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition.

CHILDREN’S MEDICAL SERVICES

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): “To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas the recent events at the London Health Sciences Centre, where 18 programs have been lost due to funding shortages, and in particular, the Children’s Hospital of Western Ontario, cause us to be concerned that we may lose medical and surgical subspecialty pediatric services for ourselves and our children;

“Whereas southwestern Ontario is a vital region of the province of Ontario that requires urgent access to pediatric subspecialty services and to travel to other children’s health facilities in Ontario would result in serious personal hardship and risk to our children. Further, that families would not be eligible for travel grants similar to those provided in northern communities;

“Whereas we have greatly benefited from the expertise in pediatric care provided by Children’s Hospital of Western Ontario over the years and we appreciate that we may not be apprised of all the reasons for these physician losses. However, our children deserve to continue to receive the pediatric subspecialty care from the London Health Sciences Centre and Children’s Hospital of Western Ontario that our region has depended on for decades;

“Whereas the loss of these services will result in great hardship to the families and seriously endanger the health of our children, we look to you as leaders to address this issue immediately and thoroughly. These times of great

uncertainty about children's access to health care is a significant stress to ourselves and our families;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to demand that our government respond immediately to restore these critical services to the citizens of southwestern Ontario."

This is signed by a number of residents from Paincourt, Chatham, Thamesville, Wallaceburg and Wheatley.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is signed by a number of residents from Chatham, Oakville, Wallaceburg and Tilbury.

OPPOSITION DAY

TAXATION

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I move that the Legislative Assembly call on the government to forgo its \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut rather than impose any new cuts to health care services, public education, environmental protection or the introduction of new user fees.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

Mr Phillips: To begin debate on the issue of the postponement, delay or stopping of the corporate tax cut, I think everybody in Ontario is aware, and most dramat-

ically aware in the last few days, that we face a significant fiscal challenge in the province now.

We've been blessed over the last five or six years in Ontario and Canada. Indeed, North America has had an almost unprecedented run in terms of strong economic growth. Ontario's been fortunate to participate in that, I would argue heavily, because of the terrific increase in our exports to the US, but regardless.

But we are now into a different period. The government had predicted, if you look at the budget that was presented just six months ago, faster growth in the second half of 2001 and then a very buoyant 2002. That was just six months ago where the government based its plans on real growth next year of 3.5%.

The government has acknowledged, in a statement just two weeks ago today that was presented in Ontario's Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, that growth next year, rather than the 3.5% that had been predicted, is going to be more like perhaps 1%. Two weeks ago the government said, "While we have some challenges next year, they appear relatively manageable." Then, in to me quite an amazing turn of events, just yesterday, or perhaps Sunday, the government said, "No, we've got a much bigger problem than we thought just two weeks ago." They talk now about a \$5-billion gap in their budget and the minister has been saying we have now got a \$5-billion gap to close.

If it's done on the expenditure side, I would just remind all of us—the budget in Ontario is about \$53 billion exclusive of public debt interest charges, which are relatively fixed—to find \$5 billion across the whole budget you're talking a 10% cut in the budget. If you exclude health care and find it everywhere else, it's about a 17% cut in the budget. So if in fact what we're being told by the government is true, that we have a \$5-billion problem, we have a very significant problem. I personally think the government is somewhat exaggerating the magnitude of the problem, but nonetheless we have, I would suspect, a \$2-billion to \$3-billion problem for next year.

Job growth in these two years, 2001-02, of about 320,000 jobs was what the budget was based on, 320,000 jobs over a two-year period. Now, just in the statement released two weeks ago, it's not going to be 320,000 jobs; it's going to be 120,000 jobs in two years. I'm using the government's projections. So suddenly we're going to see 200,000 fewer jobs in the province of Ontario. As a matter of fact, since this budget was presented in May, Ontario actually has lost 29,000 jobs. We've got 29,000 fewer jobs in Ontario than we had when the budget was presented.

1550

That leads to the key point in our motion, and that is that the government must make a decision on the corporate tax cut, to not proceed with it. I want to remind Ontarians that this corporate tax cut is not designed to get us competitive with our major competitors; it's designed to get our corporate taxes 25% lower than our major competitors. There's no doubt that our major competitors

now are Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Minnesota. This tax cut is designed to get us 25% lower, and I say, in the opinion of the Liberal Party and Dalton McGuinty, it is not a long-term sound economic strategy to say we're going to compete on the basis that we're going to have corporate taxes 25% lower than our neighbouring states, because I'll tell you what they're doing and what we have been trying to compete on.

I carry this document around with me. It's called *Doing Business*. It's an Ontario government document and it's the selling document of why companies should invest in Ontario. We all should read it, because it points out, in my opinion, the major reason that companies do want to locate in Ontario. It talks about "exceptional workforce," and it points out here that, "Ontario's workers are well educated. Sixty per cent of the 1998 workforce attended university/college, 30% earned diplomas/certificates." It points out that Ontario—well, they talk about Canada—"spent 7% of its gross domestic product on education. That was more than the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy or the United Kingdom." In other words, one of the key reasons that companies should invest in Ontario is because of the quality of our workforce, because of the quality of our education system, and one of the reasons the quality is there is because we've chosen to spend money on it.

Right at the start of this document it says—big selling point—"Ontario is also one of North America's most peaceful and secure communities, and our remarkable health and education systems are publicly financed and open to everyone." It goes on, in the cost section, to point out another enormous advantage of coming to Ontario. It says, "US manufacturers pay, on average, more than \$3,100 per employee for the kind of health care coverage provided by Canada's publicly supported system, whereas Ontario employers pay about \$540." In other words, we have a cost advantage of \$2,500 per employee in Ontario. And so I say, if indeed we believe these are the competitive advantages that Ontario has had to attract industry—to use the language in the government's own document, "our remarkable publicly financed health and education system accessible to everyone"—that, "Come to Ontario. Locate your plant here, because it will cost you \$2,500 per employee less on health care than it does in Michigan or Illinois or Pennsylvania," how is that possible? There's no magic to it. We have chosen to fund our health care system in a unique way. We've chosen to have in Ontario and in Canada a publicly funded health care system financed through no magic, primarily through taxes. We've chosen to impose taxes to pay for that.

We're all, I think, reasonable sensible people here. Tell me again how we are going to be able to compete long-term for our quality health care system and quality education system with taxes 25% lower than in the US. I come from a business background, as do many of the people here. I always believed that you compete by having a superior product at a competitive price. If you have an inferior product at a very low price, frankly in

my experience, you're not in business long-term. Yet, that's what the government has decided to embark on. They've decided on a strategy of saying, "Come to Ontario because corporate taxes are 25% lower"; but believe me, Louisiana, Arkansas and Alabama are all going to be able to duplicate that strategy, and we will undermine our health care and our education systems.

I think it is a huge mistake and it is an extremely costly one. I remind ourselves that the third-largest source of revenue to the province of Ontario, almost \$10 billion, comes through corporate taxes. I believe strongly that if we want to attract business to locate in Ontario long term, we should be selling them on the basis of this document: come to Ontario or build your business in Ontario because you will find an environment with a superior education and health care system.

I go back to the government's own document—my leader, Dalton McGuinty, referred to this today—because it says in this document already: "Our corporate tax rate for manufacturing is 5.3 percentage points less the average US rate." It's already 5.3% less than the US rates: US rates are 40; we're 35. We're already, on the manufacturing side, dramatically lower and we want to lower it dramatically more. On the general rates, we're at the US rates.

As we look ahead at how we are going to sustain our quality of life here—for all of us, and particularly the business community—I think a strategy that creates an environment in Ontario where we don't have quality health care and quality education is one that will discourage investment. I would go further. I think that the talk over the last few days about the serious problems we face with a \$5-billion gap also discourages investment in Ontario.

I might add that we simply exacerbate the problem when we proceed with a program to take a minimum of \$300 million of hard-earned revenue in the province and invest it in private schools at a time like this. It is almost beyond belief that at a time when the government said just yesterday, "We've got such a problem on our hands, a \$5-billion gap, that we're going to have to go back and look at everything," they said, "But I'll tell you two things we're not even prepared to consider: we won't even look at the decision to proceed with corporate tax cuts—\$2.2 billion—and \$300 million to \$500 million going into private schools"—which I think we'll find is desperately needed by our public schools.

On the corporate tax side, it's fundamentally bad policy to say, "This is how we've chosen to compete." I've often mentioned that when Tom Ridge was the governor of Pennsylvania I'd watch the commercials here in Ontario, and he'd say, "Come to Pennsylvania, because we have the best-quality education: we are graduating more engineers, more technicians and more science people. That's why you should come to Pennsylvania." We've chosen a bad policy. I appreciate that the government has this sort of mantra, as they say, "We'll just keep cutting taxes," but taxes 25% below the US make no sense to me, to our party and I think make

no sense to Ontario in the long term, coupled with the decision to put into private schools \$500 million that is going to be desperately needed by our public schools.

So I would urge the government to make the decision that they will not proceed with the corporate tax cut, they will not proceed with the \$500 million for private schools, and make that decision now, because it's clear from what the government is telling us that we have a significant and serious fiscal problem in the very near future.

As I say, I go back to the government's own documents where you look at the cost advantages we have here in Ontario already: \$2,500 per employee on health care savings, and corporate taxes on the manufacturing sector that are 5.3 percentage points below, not just 5.3% lower but 5.3 percentage points lower. The smart thing to do to protect Ontario for the future is simply to say, "This was a bad decision. Let's reverse it and get our fiscal house in order and make sure we are able to sustain our public education, our environment, our health care and our community services.

1600

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I will be supporting the motion by Mr Phillips, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. I would remind the viewers of this political forum that we obviously have an economic problem on our hands, something the Tories probably never dreamed would come. They hoped it wouldn't come, but it's here, and it's here for a while and we have a problem. I would remind the viewers of this political forum of that lunatic gesture they made a while ago where they decided to give away \$1 billion by giving back money that belongs to you, and they gave you two hundred bucks.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): Is that parliamentary?

Mr Marchese: "Lunatic gesture"? Yes.

They gave you Ontarians \$200 back because, they said, it's your money. They never dreamed we would have a bad economy. Never could they anticipate that the Americans would somehow have a slowdown in their economy, and besides, the Tories were utterly convinced the tax cuts would simply prevent a recession from coming.

Hon Mr Runciman: "Lunatic" is trying to spend your way out of a recession. Remember that?

Mr Marchese: Bob Runciman, I'm coming to you. Don't go away.

In that context, Ontarians, New Democrats understand the cyclical nature of our economies, that sometimes the economy goes up and sometimes it goes down. We New Democrats got caught in that and the Tories—

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): What goes up must come down. That sounds like a Bob Rae one.

Mr Marchese: I'll have a song for you in the future, David. The Tories now are experiencing the economic slowdown, but they never dreamed it could happen to them because they hoped, of course—and hope is never

enough—that the income tax cuts they gave away, the billions, would simply prevent this recession. It didn't turn out that way. So they in their arrogance gave one billion bucks to make you feel good by giving you back \$200, and that one billion—there are a lot of zeroes after that one billion—is gone away for good. It cannot be retrieved. It is irretrievable. It's gone.

This government at the time said, "We don't need any extra money to put into education, health, natural resources, the environment, labour. We don't need any of that money, because oh, good God, we're going to get so much; so much will flow into our coffers." It hasn't turned out that way.

That one billion is gone, but this government doesn't stop at that. No. M. Flaherty, the illustrious M. Flaherty, you will have observed, those of you who watch this political channel, is incredibly obdurate, incredibly unflinching in his conviction—not ideological because he's not an ideological kind of guy—that giving more money by way of tax cuts to the corporate sector, and to other taxpayers, dare I say—he is convinced and impervious to any other suggestions—that those tax cuts will create the jobs.

But it's not the first time. In fact, citizens watching this program, he introduced tax cuts a while ago. He claims, M. Flaherty—and Mr Eves as well, who is coming back—that it's the tax cuts that created this buoyant economy, that the tax cuts created the jobs that we were enjoying for five or six years. Then I remind him and others that the federal Liberal government created jobs too. The federal Liberal government, which did not institute tax cuts as fast as you did, claimed that they too created this buoyant economy and they did so without cutting taxes.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Without running up a big debt.

Mr Marchese: And no big debt, simultaneously. To be equally fair, the federal Liberals later introduced tax cuts, corporate and individual, which I disagreed with. I disagree with the federal Liberals having done that and with the provincial Tories having done it much sooner. But both governments, provincial Conservative and federal Liberal, say they have accomplished this economic boom because they are in power. The Tories say they've done it because of the income tax cuts and the Liberals say they've done it because they're just great too but without income tax cuts at the time.

So how does it happen, how does it work? It works because, as we told them years ago—and the Tories used to laugh at us, they still do, when we said, "You were lucky because the Americans were doing so well economically." You said, "No, it's because of our policies, not because the Americans are doing so well." All of a sudden the economy slows down there and they have a problem.

Luckily—I don't say "luckily" because September 11 is something one wants to remember with any kind of memories, because it's been a very sad experience. But they constantly refer to September 11 as having been the

factor that slowed down the economy. The economy was slowing down before September 11 but they will hook on to anything they can to blame the slowdown of the economy on something other than themselves.

So I say to you Ontarians, this government claimed that the income tax cuts and the corporate tax cuts would prevent a recession. I say to you it hasn't happened. The lunacy of this policy is that rather than the illustrious Mr Flaherty, the finance minister, slowing that problem down, holding on to some money that he needs, he is giving away \$2.5 billion that he doesn't have. The economy has slowed down, money isn't coming in, he still is giving money away that he doesn't have.

Of late, we heard the Minister of Finance say, "We have a cushion of \$1 billion. Don't you worry, Ontarians. We will protect you." A week later the Chair of Management Board says, "We're going to have to cut five billion bucks." Where did all that money go when we had a good economy? Where did it go? When you have a good economy you're supposed to have tremendous surpluses. You're supposed to keep it aside for the bad times. These people never saved any money; they gave it all away in income tax cuts to make you feel good. That has not prevented the recession. And now \$2.5 billion to the corporate sector that can never get enough from these guys. They can never get enough. They'll never be happy enough until they get more and more and they can squeeze more and more out of the Tory government so they can enjoy higher and higher profits.

They're going to take \$5 billion away and it's going to come out of education, out of social services that go to seniors and other vulnerable people. Two hundred million dollars will be cut out of child care that every man and woman needs desperately to have; \$200 million will be gone because there's no money in the kitty any more.

We told them in 1999, in that election, that New Democrats would roll back income tax. Why? Because we knew a recession would come down the line and that we would need money in our provincial coffers. We knew that, but oh no, the Tories were so blind—and still the illustrious finance minister is so completely blind—to the fact that we have an economy that's crumbling. He's giving money away that he doesn't have on the hope that somehow by giving more away, the economy will turn around. If it hasn't turned around in the last six years, it will not turn around by giving more money that you don't have.

In 1999, New Democrats unequivocally said we would roll back income taxes for those who had a taxable income of \$80,000 and up, which meant that we would tax people in the bracket of \$90,000 or \$100,000. We made that promise then. We were the only political party that was brave enough to say we could not afford to give away money that we didn't have. And we certainly can't do it in an economy where we don't have the money that people want us to hold on to for services that they depend on, that seniors depend on, that mothers and fathers need because they work and they need support from our

government to provide the child care they need to be in the workforce.

1610

We have schools that are crumbling and closing. We have a demoralized educational system that has been battered from the first day you people got into government. We have people working for minimum wage who simply do not earn enough to make a living, to live in this kind of society, particularly in the cities where earning \$6.85 an hour is simply not enough to have a decent life. We have a society that's crumbling in front of our very eyes and we have a finance minister who is so obdurate, impervious to the pleas of the opposition and to so many in society who are saying, "Please, you cannot cut any more than you've already done in a good economy."

You cut services in education, health, social services, environment and labour at a time when you had money. What will happen now when there is no money? How can you cut away five billion bucks and what will it mean to our society, to the services that we depend on, for you to dare take \$5 billion out of essential services that we need by giving the corporate sector and other individuals tax cuts that we cannot afford? A banker earns \$1.5 million, he gets \$120,000 back.

How can you Ontarians support a policy that gives more to those who don't need a cent and takes away from those who are in desperate need, and will now take more from those who are in desperate need because the government so blindly, stupidly is giving our money—your money—away? They're giving \$500 million more to private schools, money they do not have in the bank. They do that at a time when the economy is so vulnerable, slipping between our very hands, and they, ideologically, with the conviction of a M. Flaherty, are saying, "We will not bend. We'll stay the course."

M. Clement says, "No, we will give greater tax cuts," should he become the leader. Good God, hopefully he won't become the leader and give away more of our money that we don't have to those very wealthy individuals who are begging Conservative governments to give them more and more. We can't afford it.

Ontarians, we're in trouble. We need to change this thing around and we won't be able to do it by listening to this minister who says that decreases of our taxes on the corporate sector will create more revenues. It hasn't worked in six years. It simply will not work now that we have less money to play with than ever before. It isn't true. It's not there. They have to stop whining about the federal Liberal government not giving them enough. You have to stop crying like little puppies.

When you were in opposition you said to the NDP, "In a recessionary period, don't go crying to the federal Liberals for money." Now you, who have had a good economy for six years, whine day in and day out about how those Liberals at the federal level are not giving you enough money. How much more do you want in a good economy? I could understand in the bad economy that we had, but when you've had billions and billions of dollars in a good economy, that you should whine so much about

the fact that you need more and more is just pitiful. You look so bad. You look so pitiful.

I'm not disagreeing with the fact that the Tories and the Liberals at the federal level have cut our money, cut our share, particularly when we New Democrats were in government and had a serious recession. That was a time for the Tories to have said, "We stand up with you New Democrats and for Ontario to get our fair share from the Liberal government." I don't remember Harris on this side saying, "We're with you, Bob Rae." No siree. Now he and others whine like little children, saying, "Give us more and more and more." It's never enough. It's pitiful to see you doing that. Please stop and take back this corporate tax cut and save Ontarians from the looming disaster that is about to befall us.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to speak on the Liberal opposition day today. Just for those who might be viewing, Mr Phillips has moved "that the Legislative Assembly call on the government to forgo its \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut rather than impose any new cuts to health care services, public education, environmental protection" etc.

Clearly, there were questions asked today by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr McGuinty, which I think really do need to be repeated and revisited. If I look at the context of what Mr McGuinty was saying earlier today, it's that they simply have another agenda, and that agenda is not just to ignore the tax competitiveness issue, but in fact they would probably increase them. When questioned in many forums, it's clear that they've refused to recognize what their position is on the tax cuts this government has already delivered. They haven't admitted that they would roll them back—and everyone knows they won't—yet they voted against those tax reductions. You can't have it both ways. It's evident today that they still don't get it, I guess meaning they haven't got the courage of their convictions by recognizing that the economy today in large part is a result of the economic policies of this government.

Clearly, the economy of Canada, indeed of the world, is in a challenging mode. It's those very elements that require the kind of fiscal leadership that Minister Flaherty and our Premier are advocating.

What they're advocating is a return to the old ways. We've heard that repeatedly, that they've got the solution to every problem. What I hear them saying here in code language is, "Tax and spend." That is their mantra. That's exactly what they'll do.

The member from Trinity-Spadina often refers to the dilemmas that people find themselves in. There was no worse dilemma than when they were in government. He knows there's no possible way you can continue the regime of taxing to support services that you're unable to support in the general economy. I like to think we can summarize the whole debate by understanding a simple equation. It's sort of like, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" The equation I put to you for your consider-

ation is, "Which came first, the good economy or the good quality of life?"

It's evident that you can't have a good quality of life without a good economy. We're talking about an economy, like it or not, that is converging and becoming globalized, and in that sense and in that context must be very competitive. I know, having worked in business myself, in a small way, I would put to you, but nonetheless watching the larger picture—I am a modest-income person with five children, and I look at my constituents. They're all hard-working families, indeed members of the community. I look at that and try to understand it. If you tax—for instance, let's take the largest employer, General Motors. If we don't have the right property tax mix, the right capital tax mix or the right corporate tax or tax on emissions etc, those companies will simply move, because they have shareholders and their shareholders depend on a certain return on equity. If they don't have that, they move today. Capital is very, very mobile. Arguably, they could be moving to one of the closer jurisdictions, perhaps Mexico, where they have source plants and engine and other components today. In fact, I believe they have assembly plants there.

This whole convergence and streamlining is an important issue for one of the most important parts of our economy, the auto sector. If you're looking to advantage them, tax competitiveness, whatever that number happens to be, is a very important instrument for the government to encourage investment, thereby having the good economy with the jobs and social order so you can have the good quality of life. It's that simple. You've really got to look at it, yet I hear the other side relentlessly saying they have a solution to every problem. What it says to me is more money, more money for every problem.

There isn't anyone in this House who wouldn't want to re-examine continuously the priorities of health care, education and the environment, but at the end of the day, it's the taxpayer, the hard-working families, who are actually paying for it.

1620

I've found that if you look at the statistics in other jurisdictions of the world—take a country like Brazil. Not to be critical of Brazil or Brazilians, but their economy, Brazil and Venezuela, is in absolute chaos. Their monetary system is in some problem. Naturally there's no confidence for an investment climate. Naturally their whole quality of life is being threatened because they have no economy.

So I return to the very fundamental argument: which came first? You must have a strong, competitive, globally focused economy before you can ever consider having the strong quality of life, and in that I'm implying health care, education, the environment and social programs for the most vulnerable in our society.

I think our approach speaks volumes to tax strategies and being tax competitive. Clearly the numbers are there, and Mr Phillips would know that. There were pressures

when we were elected in 1995. We inherited an annual operating deficit of \$11.4 billion. That \$11.4 billion wasn't stopped immediately. We did have the following two years where there were still deficits. People should know that deficits and debts are simply deferred taxes. Some of them might be good investments, but for the large part they are forwarding taxes; the tax burden is being pushed forward.

I think there's great recognition of that in almost every province. Certainly the federal government, Mr Martin, is getting the same message. I think that's a compliment to Premier Harris and Minister Flaherty. We've got to be focused rather rigorously on the fact that you can't continue or return to an annual deficit pattern. That's certainly not on.

I heard today that their solution to every problem is to spend more money. Those pressures exist; they existed for the NDP, they existed for the Liberal government. And what did they do? They both, during their own times, doubled the debt. Let's repeat that. They had the highest revenues in the province's history—1985 to 1990—and they also increased the debt, doubled it. The same thing happened with the NDP from 1990 to 1995; they doubled the debt. In fact, they were trying to sustain a standard of living that the economy itself couldn't support.

Living in dreamland, never-never land, came to an end pretty much in 1993-94. There were a number of attempts by the NDP to stop the hemorrhaging of money. One of the plans was the expenditure reduction plan. I was a councillor at the municipal and regional level; I chaired finance at the municipal level. At that time, they put the expenditure reduction plan to the municipalities and all the partners to try to get them to freeze the expenditure side and to make them realize that they couldn't keep advancing borrowed money. You know, they were spending \$1 million an hour of money they simply didn't have in revenue, and the more they exacerbated that problem of failing revenue by increasing taxes to try to keep pace, the more investments and confidence—in fact, the whole economy was to some extent under threat as their bond rating and other indicators kept declining.

It is tough medicine, and no one here, on either side of this House, I might say, lacks compassion to help the most vulnerable. But every time I hear that they have a solution to every single problem, I honestly think it's code language for increasing taxes. So I think Mr Phillips's position and his argument—most of his numbers are completely wrong, and the following speakers today will refute his numbers on the amount of the corporate tax cut.

But Minister Flaherty to date responded that most of the impact of the tax implications for business tax and corporate tax—business tax affects mostly small businesses. These are very small, fragile businesses. These are families, in many instances, working hard. I think of my sister and her husband, who are a small business operator, and they are working harder than they ever

have just to keep the door open and to pay the bills. They need relief; otherwise their family jobs disappear, and the jobs of the two or three part-time people they have. To stand up here and deny that small business is the largest beneficiary of these initiatives of fast-forwarding these reductions in capital tax and business tax is simply wrong. In fact, it's my understanding that the total cost of the corporate component or the business tax component is something less than \$30 million next year. The \$2.2 billion is anticipated revenue.

Mr Speaker, you would understand that as businesses have difficult times, hopefully they're able to keep the doors open and keep the inventories fairly level so they don't have a lot of carrying costs, but I would hope they just don't close the doors. We see these as a stimulus to keep the doors open, to keep the people and to keep the machines running and the business operating to the greatest degree possible, taking a short-term loss not to lose their presence in the market. These tax measures were advanced to keep those small businesses open.

I heard the opposition today completely deny the importance of tax reductions for small business. They should speak with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and other business leaders in the community: chambers of commerce, boards of trade. They are actually supporting many of these moves, and these people themselves aren't the corporate giants. Very little, in fact none, of the proposed \$5 million, I believe, in the corporate capital tax reductions—I don't actually have the numbers with me. But the capital tax reductions on the first \$5 million of capital—that's the factory, the building—is entirely a small business capital tax reduction.

So when they go at this thing as the corporate thing, most of the banks, as they know, are to a large extent federally regulated institutions. As such, I think Paul Martin—when they're talking about that type of working capital, there are all kinds of depreciations and other incentives to encourage investment. If you look at some of their tax measures with respect to RSPs and other ways of sheltering income, those measures federally are probably just as important to keep that working capital, that money, in this country.

Just on a little bit lighter note, I was reading a rather humorous joke today, and I hope nobody takes offence to it. It reminded me of the member from Trinity-Spadina's comments. The analogy of the cow in these jokes represents the economy, and it really describes a Liberal this way. The Liberal policy would be that if you have two cows and your neighbour has none, you feel guilty for being successful. You vote people into office who tax your cows, forcing you to sell one to raise money to pay your taxes. The people you vote for then take the money that they tax you, buy a cow, and give it to your neighbour, and you feel righteous.

Mr Marchese's point here, I think, more of the NDP policy: if I had two cows, they, the government, would take one and give it to your neighbour, and so there's no reward for performance.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): And they tax you back two cows.

Mr O'Toole: Exactly. Now, the other analogy here is the Conservative policy. Really, the logic of it all—it's tough medicine, making the right decisions. If you have two cows, the Conservative policy would be to suggest that you sell one, buy a bull, and start making progress to building a herd.

I don't think the policies of this government are given the complete respect. I just think there's a bit of humour in that, that there have to be ways of attracting and encouraging entrepreneurship, innovation. Those are the cultures that we live in, and if you don't have competitive tax regimes, whether it's the municipal level, the provincial level or the federal level, as Canadians our standard of living is going to suffer.

1630

But I want to put on the record some important background. When the Liberals came to power in 1985, the provincial debt was just over \$22 billion, but by the time they left, there was more than a 50% increase to \$36 billion. That was a result of their tax-and-spend strategy.

The next thing is, the NDP came into power in 1990, and during their years in office the debt increased another 50% and they ended up with something in the order of \$100 billion.

I guess the key is, it's important to summarize the accumulated debt. In 1996 and 1997—

Interjections.

Mr O'Toole: If you would listen, I'll explain. We still had an annualized deficit for 1996-97. That was as we slowed down the spending side, and that deficit did accumulate into the debt bucket. There's no question about it. That was always in the plan. You couldn't just stop the spending instantly like that. That grew to today's debt, which is in the order of \$110 billion. I will say this, though. For the first time ever, Minister Flaherty paid \$3 billion off the debt this year. That is saving millions of dollars in interest charges. The cost of servicing the debt today is over \$9 billion, that debt that was accumulated by the NDP and the Liberals.

I just want to make one other thing clear in case the record is read later, that we also took aboard a large problem, which was the old Ontario Hydro. The old Ontario Hydro, over many years of being ignored, I suppose, by the public and by government, had accumulated a significant debt, part of which was identified by the Macdonald commission as stranded debt. We also created this stranded debt by restructuring electricity transmission and distribution, and we put that approximately \$20 billion into a specific debt box on the financial statement, which accounts for \$110 billion of accumulated debt and an additional \$20 billion of what I call stranded debt or old Ontario Hydro debt, and there is a charge on the system to repatriate that debt.

I just want to be on the record as saying that the opposition parties, the Liberals and the NDP, certainly don't get it. The evidence is very clear that during our

first six years in office we have an additional 824,000 new jobs. I also think many economists have complimented this government's approach by increasing our bond rating, improving our bond rating. That is the most direct way they can compliment it.

But I want to be on the record finally as making sure the viewers today understand that the opposition once again are almost flip-flopping. This is according to Gerry Phillips, and this is from Hansard, December 5: "In my opinion, a key to our economic growth will be our ability to continue to attract quality people"—I agree—"who want to come to Ontario in the future. I might add that I don't think it's going to be as easy as it was in the past. World economies are doing well." That's the code line for competitiveness. He went on to say, "You watch Ireland and California: they are aggressively attracting people to move to Ireland and to California." Little did he know, or perhaps he didn't recognize—again, the Liberals don't get it—that those jurisdictions have had very aggressive tax policies to encourage investment. Without knowing, perhaps, he's complimenting this government's policies.

It is tough. The economy today is in a far better position. We don't have an annual deficit that we've had for 10 years. We have reduced the commitment to annualized debt payments, interest on debt, and I believe there's a plan within this government—it's in our policy document—to reduce the debt by \$5 billion over this term, and that is going to reduce taxes. When you reduce the debt interest, you actually have more disposable income to spend on priority programs like health, education and the environment.

But all of it comes back to having a strong economy so that we have a strong quality of life. You can't have it the other way around. The other side would like you to believe that magically governments just open up the cardboard box, pull out some money and put it into the program that the most recent demand has been about. It simply doesn't work that way. The NDP know it. The Liberals still haven't caught on.

The NDP, with all respect, had a very difficult time. Mr Laughren—the economy was going in the tank. The more they taxed, the more they took off.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It may be of interest to the member that a quorum is not present.

The Acting Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. The member for Durham.

Mr O'Toole: I'd just like to conclude, because Mr Miller and Mr Spina would like to speak, so I'll just quote one of my favourite economists. David Dodge, the governor of the Bank of Canada, recently stated, "It is clear that over the past decade we in Canada have done a lot to strengthen our economic fundamentals. Because of

this, we are now in a better position than we have been in a long time to weather the economic turbulence and to take on the new challenges.”

We have well managed with the Minister of Finance, Minister Flaherty, and this cabinet. It's not an appropriate time to ignore the signs on the horizon, but to have strong leadership that's prepared to make the difficult but necessary decisions is exactly what we need now. The Liberals certainly don't understand that. They want to return to the old ways of tax and spend. I'll be voting against this opposition day, and the people of Ontario I think feel the same way.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I just want to take a couple of minutes to point out several things. One is that if we take the government's theory to its extreme, then we'll eliminate all corporate taxes and we'll have all kinds of jobs. Well, we know you can't do that. I just wanted to make the point that they say the less the corporate taxes are, the better things get.

We know, for example, that the three main functions of an effective tax system are: (1) the collection of adequate revenues to finance the government's expenditure programs, (2) redistribution of income to improve fairness, and (3) the encouragement or discouragement of specific types of behaviour or activities, for example, job creation programs.

I'm afraid this government, by foolhardily going ahead with this \$2.5-billion tax cut to already profitable corporations, is going to affect the government's ability to provide for government expenditure programs. This is where I want to make my couple of points.

Today the Windsor-Essex Community Care Access Centre made an announcement commenting on the government's recent introduction of legislation that is going to take over complete control of community care access centres. The community care access centre in Windsor-Essex has a board of about 12 members who very well might be summarily dismissed. This board comprises representation from throughout the community, with a mixture of representation from clients, caregivers, consumers and representatives from fields of business, education, law, labour, health, social sciences and the francophone community. We know that community care access centres—and the Windsor-Essex county one is no different than many others across this province—have struggled with budgetary problems in the last few years. Because of this government's policies, people are being released from hospital who are sicker and have more complex care concerns than ever in the past. There are more frail and elderly in the province. Our population is simply growing.

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Yet what did this government do? It froze the community care access centres' budgets and said, “Notwithstanding that the need is growing, you're going to have to make do with what you have and what you've had in the past.” What happened as a result of that policy is that community care access centres and their boards and their communities started to speak out. This govern-

ment in particular can't have that. We know by their rules in this Legislature. You can't have anybody speaking out against this government, so they said, “What are we going to do? We'll take over the boards. We'll appoint the boards.” There will be people on those boards who will speak out only when spoken to and they'll speak out only on issues that the government wants them to speak out on. In fact, they're going to go one step further than that. They're going to appoint the CEO of the 43 community care access centres across this province. What the public should know about that is that it's a position in the range of, oh, probably \$100,000, so the government will be able to give to their friends a \$100,000-a-year appointment. Now, isn't that sweet? Do you think it'll do the community care access centre in my community any good? I doubt it very much. There's a great deal of concern about that.

I think it is foolhardy to go ahead with this corporate tax cut. With shrinking revenues and growing needs in the area of community care access centres, special-needs kids in our schools, it is a foolhardy thing to do. They should support this resolution.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It is my pleasure to speak today on this Liberal opposition day. To remind those watching what it is about, it is a motion by Mr Phillips calling on the government “to forgo its \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut rather than impose any new cuts to health care services, public education, environmental protection or the introduction of new user fees.”

Right off the top, this motion is trying to mislead the general public by suggesting that there's a \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut planned when, in effect, that would be if it was used over the full five years and if the economy was booming. This corporate tax cut in the year 2002-03 would be as little as \$20 million.

Let me begin by reading an excerpt from a speech by John Cleghorn, the former CEO and chairman of the Royal Bank, that he gave to the Montreal Board of Trade about two years ago: “Higher taxation has diverted savings into the government sector that would earn high productivity returns for companies and society at large in free markets as companies invest in timesaving innovations, more and better equipment, greater knowledge, advanced skills and more efficient organizations. Higher taxation also hits living standards more immediately by cutting into what's left in our pocket at the end of the day to spend on our family and ourselves.”

Mr Cleghorn also talked about how the job-killing capital tax was affecting his industry. “Regulated financial institutions, banks, other deposit takers and insurance companies are the only companies in this country faced with a capital tax. This is payable even if they lose money. And Canada is alone in the world in imposing such a tax. Certainly none of our major competitor countries have one.

“But while the capital tax is unique, Canadian financial institutions are not alone in facing higher taxes than our international competitors.”

Mr Cleghorn was correct when he said that high taxes are a burden for all Ontarians and businesses. However, capital taxes are imposed on general corporations as well, not just financial institutions. In fact, there are some 11,000 small businesses that will pay no capital taxes when the \$5-million capital tax threshold is put into effect.

Since this government began cutting taxes, tax revenue has increased by nearly \$15 billion in this province. Ontario has led the way in cutting taxes, and governments in other jurisdictions are now following suit. Governments in other provinces and other countries have witnessed the effects of lower taxes on job creation, economic growth, consumer confidence, competitiveness and investment and have admired Ontario's growing prosperity.

Continuing to cut taxes now, after the tragic events of September 11, is a clear indication of our commitment to maintaining the successful economic course that we embarked on in 1995 and that the people of Ontario endorsed in 1999. It demonstrates our faith in the tremendous growth potential for our province as well as in the entrepreneurial spirit and productivity of Ontario workers.

Canada currently has one of the highest corporate income tax rates in the world. This is very different from what the member for Scarborough-Agincourt was saying when he suggested that these tax cuts will make us 25% lower than all other jurisdictions. Ontario is just taking measures to make our taxes competitive. We're doing that because Ford doesn't have to necessarily locate a plant or keep a plant going in Ontario. They can run the same plant in Michigan or in Mexico, so we must be competitive and give long-term stability so that they can plan and make investments and know that they're going to get a return on the investments.

Many of the countries that have enjoyed the strongest growth in standards of living in the past decade have cut their corporate tax rates to levels far below the Canadian average, which is why we introduced Ontario's Edge in this year's budget: to help both small businesses and large corporations in the province remain competitive in the international marketplace. I can certainly tell you that in Parry Sound-Muskoka, where 80% of the business is small business, tax cuts are definitely something that is a real plus for the businesses. From my own experience in being in small business, I can tell you that tax cuts in most cases get reinvested into the business and help make the business stronger and more productive.

Ontario's Edge is a package of taxation initiatives and transportation and environmental infrastructure projects aimed at keeping Ontario's corporate and small business sector strong and encouraging new businesses to set up shop here.

We have chosen to accelerate our corporate tax cuts to send a message: Ontario is open for business. Cutting corporate tax rates builds on our goal of making Ontario the best-performing economy with the highest quality of life in North America.

We have legislated the full schedule of corporate income tax rate cuts each year from now until 2005. By 2005, no Canadian province will have a lower general corporate income tax rate, which will make the province a prime destination in North America to do business. Lower corporate tax rates will encourage companies already here to invest in more facilities and will attract other companies that may not yet have operations in Ontario.

I think back to when my father was Treasurer of this province, I believe it was around 1980, when times were pretty tough in Ontario. I was in small business, in the resort business, at that time. He brought in a small business tax holiday, I believe it was three years, and I can tell you from my experience with that three-year small business tax holiday, virtually every dollar of the tax savings we had got reinvested into our resort business. It got reinvested into necessary improvements to keep our business competitive. It got invested into new cottages. It made the whole long-term viability of that business that much more sound.

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The tax cuts we have already put in place have created much stronger rates of job creation than the rest of Canada in the last five years. Since September 1995, the Ontario economy has created 824,000 net new jobs.

The accelerated corporate tax cuts that we're proposing would free up \$116 million in saved taxes, including capital tax, for businesses to reinvest and keep workers on the payroll.

We're proposing to reduce the general corporate income tax rate, effective October 1, 2001, to 12.5%, the manufacturing and processing rate to 11%, the small business rate to 6%, and the small business income threshold would be increased to \$280,000. As I previously mentioned, 80% of the business in Parry Sound-Muskoka is small business and it's very important to the livelihood of our area.

When we introduced our budget this spring, CIBC's economics division released a provincial budget analysis. They support this government's decision to cut taxes. "We strongly endorse the province's efforts to reduce corporate taxes and eliminate capital taxes to improve Ontario's long-term competitiveness and attractiveness to investors."

The C.D. Howe Institute also released a report last week on taxing business in the province. Here's what they had to say: "All in all, the costs of corporate taxation are sufficient to persuade most economists that there is little, if anything, on efficiency grounds for corporation taxes and not much for most taxes on business in general. On the contrary, there may be substantial economic gains from reducing or even eliminating most existing business taxes."

Also part of Ontario's Edge is the first step in eliminating the job-killing capital tax, as I previously mentioned. Based on advice from the business tax review panel, we have already begun to reduce the capital tax. The panel told us this tax serves as a deterrent to

attracting international investment. They also told us it is a cost of doing business that almost no other country imposes. A tax on capital discourages investment in capital, when more capital per worker is what is needed to boost productivity and living standards.

We have taken the first step toward eliminating this job-killing tax by removing it on the first \$5 million of taxable capital. This is also one of the steps we have proposed to accelerate to make this cut effective October 1, 2001, rather than January 1, 2002, as was originally planned.

The opposition would have you believe that the proposed tax cuts will only benefit large corporations. However, our proposed tax cuts would eliminate the capital tax for more than 11,000 existing small and medium-sized Ontario businesses, as well as benefiting larger firms that pay this tax.

In periods of economic slowdown, when businesses have to cut costs, the capital tax forces businesses to cut where they have flexibility. They have to cut wages, which is something we don't want to see them cutting. It is a potential job-killer. Businesses should not have to choose between paying taxes and paying wages.

TD Economics released a report last month on the status of government finances across the country. They agree that reducing capital tax in Ontario, and in the rest of Canada, can only help the economy.

"On a somewhat encouraging note, there were a few initiatives announced over the past year aimed at reducing the high rates of capital tax in Canada. These taxes, of which about two thirds are levied at the provincial level, are arguably the most damaging tax, since they effectively raise the cost of capital, impeding productivity and growth, and must be paid whether or not a firm is profitable."

This echoes Mr Cleghorn's earlier statement that capital tax is unrelated to profits, making it a fixed cost for businesses. They are burdened to pay this tax even if they don't make a profit.

We know that corporations are unwilling to invest where their businesses will face a high corporate tax burden. We know they are also unwilling to invest in places where their workers and executives will face an exorbitant personal income tax burden.

As announced on October 1, 2001, Ontario proposes to accelerate the personal income tax cuts previously scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2002. The opposition would have you believe that these tax cuts affect only the wealthy. The personal income tax cuts announced in the 2001 budget will remove another 75,000 people from the income tax rolls. That means another 75,000 Ontarians will not pay Ontario income tax. Ontario's tax cuts to date have already removed 325,000 people. Approximately 735,000 low-income earners will pay no Ontario income tax but will still pay federal income tax.

The highest percentage of savings will be concentrated on taxpayers with the lowest incomes. A family with two children dependent on one income of \$30,000 will pay

\$1,635 less Ontario income tax when these tax cuts are completed, which is a 100% reduction in Ontario income tax. That money will be in their pocket to spend and stimulate the economy and help create jobs. That same family will continue to pay \$2,140 in federal income tax, even after the proposed federal tax cuts.

In short, cutting taxes means people have more money in their pockets to spend as they choose. They can invest for their children's education or in future gains. They can spend more to buy a new computer or a new car. They can save more to buy a new home, get married or other substantial investments.

The proposed accelerated personal income tax cuts would distribute about \$60 million in additional tax benefits to Ontario taxpayers for the 2001 taxation year.

The Brookings Institution in the US put together a report on tax policy after the September 11 terrorist attacks. They stated, "Any individual tax cuts should encourage people to spend the funds, in order to boost the economy further."

In conclusion, I'm happy to be able to speak on this bill today. I believe the opposition party has been misleading us in terms of how much in tax cuts there really will be.

The Acting Speaker: You will have to withdraw the word "misleading."

Mr Miller: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I withdraw that statement.

The opposition may not want to believe this, but tax cuts really work. We are confident that our policies to cut personal and corporate income tax rates have been the main reason that Ontario's economy has performed so remarkably over the last six years. I know the member for Trinity-Spadina said that if it hadn't turned around in the last six years—what was his exact quote? "If it hasn't turned around in the last six years"—well, the economy has turned around in the last six years. I can tell you, having been in business, the last three years have been the best ever that I have experienced in the last 25 years being in business in this province. The economy has been doing extremely well.

Even in the face of potentially slower economic growth, our policies will prevail. Tax cuts will continue to help the businesses and people of Ontario.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this this afternoon.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I'm very pleased to get up and speak on this today. I'm going to give you a very different, I guess, spin on this, as we say in our business. This government really is in crisis, and the reason they're in crisis is that they've been governing and planning their budget process in a very reverse order, a backward way, if you will.

Most governments, as you know, would obviously decide what are the essential services that they need to provide for the people, and hopefully most governments, unlike this one, would do that in a consultative way. But that's not been the case. In fact, it's not only not the case, but they've done it in reverse order. What they do is

decide, "We're going to forgo so much revenue by tax cuts. We've got a schedule of reducing personal tax by so much over the next few years and then we've also got a schedule of reversing corporate income tax over so many years." Of course, this fall the Treasurer announced that he was going to accelerate that tax cut.

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What they've done is really govern in a reverse way. They've created a box for themselves, because the pressures for those essential services are still there for every Ontarian. Ontarians need proper access to health care, to doctors and nurses, to hospital beds and to long-term care. And, of course, their education system is in a mess.

We've known for at least a year that we were going into a recessionary economy, and I guess officially we now are in a recession. We all hope the economy bounces back soon. We don't want to be too pessimistic about that; we want to be optimistic about the future of our economy, which is strong and we will bounce back. But government revenues are shrinking, at an incredibly fast rate. It's not because of September 11. Obviously there has been an additional impact from the events of that day. But we knew last spring this was coming.

This government is still looking at this corporate tax cut, even now, when the Chair of Management Board has brought to the government's attention that they may be in danger of a \$5-billion shortfall of revenue, of what would be required to provide all these services the government has been providing to Ontarians over the last few years. Now they're going to have to look to very drastic cuts in the provincial budget.

When Dalton McGuinty, our leader, and Gerry Phillips, our finance critic, offer suggestions in question period, that maybe this might be the time to at least examine everything the government has at their disposal, including tax cuts, that this may be the time to put everything on the table and take a look at the full financial picture of the Ontario government—that would include all sources of revenue and all expenditures—the Treasurer, Jim Flaherty, consistently says, "No, we're going to keep going with this \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut and we're going to forgo that revenue for now."

I think a prudent government, a truly common sense government, would say, "Things have changed. We are in desperate times." Maybe for the Tories it's time for some desperate measures. For them, a desperate measure, which wouldn't be very desperate for us, would be to say, "We should forgo this \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut at this time, because the government needs the revenue so that we don't go into a deficit in order to provide these essential services for the people of Toronto."

That would be common sense; that would be practical; that would be a practical solution, a good start anyway, to this supposed \$5-billion problem. I'm not sure it is a \$5-billion problem. Governments like to inflate these figures and sometimes the opposition can get caught out on this and say there is this really big problem, and the government can come in and say, "Actually it's only a

\$2.5-billion problem." I think it's going to be something less than \$5 billion and something more than \$2.5 billion, I suppose.

What they're going to do now is force themselves to cut into the very essential services that Ontarians require. In the end that means probably more cuts to the health care system, even though they don't want to do that. The next big budget item is education, and boy, there's a system that cannot afford any more cuts. I was in five schools last week throughout the riding, speaking to grade 4 and 5 classes. I saw the paucity of school books in those schools and some of the rundown conditions of those classrooms. The mood of the teachers wasn't the very best. This should be the last time we should be making further cuts to the education system and I certainly hope they don't do that.

But where are they going to look? This is sort of a scary point. That's why we have brought forward this motion today, that the prudent thing to do right now would be to forgo that \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut. That would provide revenue the government can retain to provide these services. It would be the right thing to do. It would be the proper way of planning a budget: how do we find the revenue to provide for the services we require, rather than basically forgoing this revenue? Now it's starting to take the axe to all these services that are going to be required.

Of course, you don't think they're going to be consulting with the people when they do this exercise. They're going to be doing it in the back rooms here at Queen's Park, from on high, making announcements as to where these cuts are going to be, and anger another set of people in the province and deprive many Ontarians of the essential services they need.

I would just hope they put everything on the table. Some of the ministers, I understand, are saying everything should be on the table. I think that's the way it should be and I hope some of the more prudent ministers will convince the finance minister, when they have those discussions at their planning and priorities committee, that they need to look at all the resources the government has at their ability and at hand right now to get through this very difficult time.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I want to first of all congratulate the opposition caucus for having brought forward this resolution. It's an important debate that we need to have, because we came to Queen's Park this week with the anticipation, based on the rumours that we had been hearing, that the government was poised to make announcements this week about massive cuts in public spending yet again because of the slowdown in the economy. We know that the government is expecting to be probably in a situation where they're not going to hit a deficit this year. They're expecting about a \$700-million surplus by the end of the fiscal year for this particular budget. That's good. But what they're looking at is that because of the recession, the slowdown in the economy—and if it happens that the worst-case scenarios end

up becoming true, the government could be facing a \$5-billion deficit in the next year's budget.

That's a serious situation. I want to speak as a person who has some experience from having gone through government at a time of the worst recession since the 1930s. When we were elected in 1990, at the time we were told there was going to be a balanced budget, in fact that there would be a surplus. We got elected and we found out that Bob Nixon had not quite told the truth when it came to the finances of Ontario, that in fact there was about an \$8-billion deficit when we got there.

The point I want to make is this: nobody believed those figures when the budget was being made in the spring of 1990. Nobody believed that we would be in a position eight months later where the recession would be so deep and so hard that the worst-case scenario might actually come to fruit and that you might end up in a situation with a huge deficit. The then government, the Peterson government, said: "We're going to have a slight surplus of"—I think it was—"under about \$100 million." If the NDP had done nothing but follow the Liberal budget plan, we would have ended up with about an \$8.5-billion deficit.

So I want to say here and now, when the forecasters are coming to this current government and saying, "The worst-case scenario can be \$5 billion," I certainly hope it doesn't end up there. That is something that the province doesn't want to go through because it's going to mean a bunch of decisions will have to be made that, quite frankly, a lot of people are going to be unhappy with and most of which I will oppose. I hope that it doesn't come to bear. But the reality is, those numbers can be true. That's what I want to speak to.

If you end up in a situation where next year the recession goes even deeper and you end up in a situation of \$5 billion, it seems to me that the government has some choices to make. That's what we're trying to frame by way of this debate: which should be the choices that the government should make. One choice is that you could run a deficit, if there was not legislation in place that says you can't do that. The government can, by way of Keynesian economics, decide that it wants to spend more money in order to prime the economy, to get things working as far as the economy and protecting services. That's one choice. The government could do that. We know they're not going to because they passed legislation that says you cannot have a deficit Ontario among the current legislation that we have.

So the government is now left with two choices. Their choice is that they either go out and cut government spending and find a way to be able to offset the losses so that they can balance their budget, or they have to deal with the issue of revenue. This is what I want to speak to, because the government is now saying that it's going to try to have it both ways. I find that very difficult to take as a prudent, fiscal New Democrat. There is no way in my mind, and I think no way in the minds of most people, that the government should be trying to have it both ways. The government is saying, "We're going to

reduce corporate income tax by \$2.4 billion next year, and on top of that, if the numbers end up being that we're in a \$5-billion deficit, we're going to have to cut another \$5 billion from expenditure." As a fiscal New Democrat, I want to say that doesn't make any sense. You cannot be put in a position of trying to have it both ways.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: A fiscally responsible New Democrat is what I'm saying.

You can't have it both ways. The government can't on the one side say, "We're going to cut taxes at a time when we're losing revenue," and at the same time say, "We're going to cut expenditures on top," because at the end it's a combination that is going to be the worst possible part of both worlds.

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Now, Minister Flaherty in his rhetoric says, "Oh, if we cut income tax, the economy is going to get primed and the economy will be so good that we'll get extra revenue and we won't have to make these cuts." That ain't the truth. That ain't going to happen. We already know the government has cut a number of income taxes over the last six years, for which they take credit. That's fair. But here we are, 27,000 jobs less now than when this minister took office, and the economy is going down the tubes. It tells us that it's not strictly the government of Ontario's income tax cuts that are going to be able to save us from the effects of what is a worldwide recession.

The point is, we are in a worldwide recession, and as the world economy and the American economy slow, the Ontario economy, with over 90% of its produced goods exported into the United States, is going to be in a position where we're going to lose economic activity because of that and hence we're going to have less revenue coming in. Basically, our economy goes the way of the American economy.

So I say the government has some choices. The government can choose to reduce expenditures or they can choose to cancel those tax cuts at the time that we're entering into this recession. Maybe when the economy is better, maybe when we're in a situation where the economy and the provincial coffers can afford it, we can look at trying to give income tax breaks to corporations, if that's what the Tories want to do. But I argue, as a fiscally responsible New Democrat, that it is not responsible to be trying to give an income tax cut of \$2.4 billion to the corporate sector at the same time that we're going to be forced to make possibly up to an additional \$5 billion in cuts to public services.

I would argue that what we need to do is to cancel those tax cuts until the economy is in a position that it can afford it. If you are really set on doing it, you should do it when you've got the money, not when you don't have it. You're trying to spend money you don't have. That's my problem in the approach. So I say you can save \$2.4 billion by not going ahead with the corporate income tax cut and use the \$2.4 billion as a cushion to not affect public spending when it comes to much-needed programs in Ontario. We all agree, New Democrats,

fiscally conservative Conservatives and Liberals, that programs such as health care, education, policing etc are important and that we need to preserve those programs, because we certainly know they've been cut severely over the past number of years. If we all agree on that premise, it means we've got to find the money somewhere to pay for them. So if we want to find the money, I'm suggesting one way we can do that is to cancel the corporate income tax cut that this government is so intent on going forward with.

I would say that it's not only myself who agrees. I thought it was interesting. Chris Stockwell, the Minister of Labour, who we all know is a potential candidate in the leadership race for the Conservative Party, yesterday in a press scrum was quoted as saying that he thought that quite frankly these tax cuts didn't make a lot of sense, especially in the current situation. I agree with Minister Stockwell. At least Minister Stockwell, I think, is looking at things from a bit more of a balanced view, that you don't do these kinds of things, first of all, when you can't afford them. And that's where we're heading.

So I would say to the government across the way, put the brakes on the corporate income tax side. The banks that made record profits last year and other corporations that have made profits can well afford to do without the income tax cut. It's not as if our tax base is not competitive with the American economy or the Quebec or Manitoba economies. In fact, our taxes are probably lower when it comes to income tax when compared to those other jurisdictions. So we don't need it in order to be able to compete with others. The Tories are just doing it because it's something they believe they should do. So I argue, not at this time. You should hold off. You should wait until the economy is in such a position that you can afford to pay for the tax cut, and only then should you go ahead and do it. I would argue that if you're trying to do something in order to stimulate the economy, there are many other ways that the government can actually do that.

With that, I want to thank the members for the opportunity to participate in this debate. I know our finance critic, Mr Christopherson, is looking forward to speaking in this particular debate as well.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): Thank you, Speaker. Maybe I'll get a microphone on in half a minute. There we go.

I am pleased to finish off the remaining moments of our portion of this debate on the opposition's motion.

I wanted to take the opportunity to springboard off a comment that my honourable friend from Timmins-James Bay made. His comment was, "You're trying to spend money you don't have." Oh, my goodness. This is a born-again politician. It is unbelievable. This from a member of the party that, when they won the government in 1990, were like a deer caught in the headlights of a truck. They appointed a very nice man, but he was a community college economics instructor, as the Treasurer of Ontario. He still believed in practising what many people, many economists, certainly in the academic

world, preached—being a business graduate myself—and that was that Keynesian theory stuff. What Keynesian theory said was that when you're in a recession, you deficit finance. Most governments did that, but the problem is that when you come out of that recession or when you begin to have positive quarters, you're supposed to pay back that deficit. That was the other half, and you know that, Speaker. Unfortunately, the only government that was doing that or that started to do that was ours when we came to power.

I wanted to remind the member from the third party that as a result of their economic practice, the deficit jumped in one year from \$6 billion to \$9 billion, just like that. Of course, they want to blame the Liberals. I think there was something about double bookkeeping in the books in 1990.

You know, I don't want to leave the Liberals out here. When David Peterson, running a very successful and strong economy through 1988 and 1989, very booming times—inflation was climbing, prices were climbing, people were making all kinds of money on capital gains. But the bubble was coming to an end. There was going to be either a burst or certainly a very quick decline. Economists called for it. What did David Peterson do? Instead of taking the boldness of managing through that, he called a snap election. He lost. He blew his opportunity, or he could have perhaps still been Premier. Nevertheless, he's not; we're now here today.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): Given the shortness of time here, I want to frontload some key points.

We've got public education in some difficulty. Tuition fees for post-secondary have gone up 65% during the life of this government. We've got a very high percentage of our doctors leaving upon graduation. We know that half of them don't come back. The reason they don't come back is that they can make more money, they claim, to pay off exorbitant student debts. In terms of liquid assets, especially post-Walkerton, we've got municipalities waiting in desperation for some partnership funding assistance. This government has allocated less than \$50 million to that. With respect to CCACs and hospitals, 23% of the people in Hamilton's acute-care hospitals shouldn't be there. I can tell you the story of a disabled burn victim who was ready to be released from the hospital, but the family wasn't of means, couldn't afford the \$40 per day for the pain pump, and she remains in the hospital at \$812 a day. That's just bizarre. Why? Because the CCAC isn't allowed to fund that particular expenditure.

While I'm pleased to be into this debate, I want to just broaden it a bit if I can. I think politics is about how our values get reflected and how we make decisions about the distribution of goods and services and what have you. I believe a decent, responsible government is one that finds ways to share benefits and burdens for the good of all and encourages that we feel one another's pains and share one another's burdens.

If we insist on government supported by principle, directed by reason, designed to achieve the greatest good, we will reject the notion that the price of progress for the majority of us is government that forgets the rest of us, kind of a modern A Tale of Two Cities, where we have the lucky and the left-out. I don't believe government can do everything, but it must do more than simply taking care of the strong and hoping that the economic ambitions of some and charity will do the rest, particularly when we know that can't and simply won't work.

I've said before that I thought tax policy and spending ought to be targeted and triggered. I would repeat that advice to the finance minister again.

1720

Mrs McLeod: I'm pleased to have a few moments to contribute to this debate and to speak to the resolution as the health care critic for our party, because I'm absolutely appalled that this government is marching ahead, in fact that this government is accelerating a \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut for corporations when it's failing so dismally to deliver the health care the people of this province need, and it would take much longer than the three minutes I have to participate in the debate to outline all of the areas where the government is failing to provide essential health care.

Our hospitals are facing millions of dollars in deficits and are getting mixed messages from the Minister of Health as to whether or not they're supposed to balance their budgets according to the legislation the Minister of Finance, the same minister who's bringing us the \$2.2 billion in corporate tax cuts, is proposing where hospitals will have to balance their budgets regardless of the consequences for patients. That's one message. The other message from the Minister of Health is to say to hospitals, "Well, we don't expect you to be able to balance your budgets unless you have multi-year funding, unless you know how much you're going to have to spend," because he recognizes, it seems, that you can't plan to provide patient services if you don't know how much money you're going to have. But the Minister of Health says, "I can't deliver the multi-year funding to you, because the Minister of Finance isn't prepared to free up the funding. He's not prepared to tell me how much money hospitals are going to have this year." So hospitals are left in limbo, some of them trying to make extensive cuts to programs like the London Health Sciences Centre, others running huge deficits just in the attempt to keep their doors open to patients.

It's not that our hospitals are overfunded. We have the fewest acute care beds per capita anywhere in the country. We have the second-lowest number of nurses anywhere in this country. That's the record of failure on health care issues from this government.

The same thing happens if we look at home care agencies. Again, I can't recite all of the stories that every one of us hears in our constituency offices about the complete failure of this government to respond to the needs of the frail and the vulnerable and the sick seniors in our communities. I know in my home community, for

example, for the first time ever nursing services are not being provided when somebody is discharged from hospital. People will have to wait 20 days to get a dressing changed.

Long-term care: we heard today that Ontario ranks last in an independent review that was done of home care and long-term care in 10 jurisdictions. We rank last in terms of our ability to provide nursing and personal care to people in long-term-care institutions, homes for the aged and nursing homes. We know that only 10% of people in our long-term-care facilities are receiving physical therapy.

Rehabilitation: so often it is the service that makes a difference between people being able to function independently in their communities or being institutionalized, and we know that rehabilitation services are provided less and less with public dollars.

I know the Minister of Health is a believer in the tax cut. I know he believes not only in the \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut, but he in fact has called for a further half billion dollars in tax cuts, cutting the health levy that is specifically targeted to pay for the health care services people need so badly. The Minister of Health seems to say, "Let's have the tax cuts. Let's go that ideological route. If people want to get health care in this province, they're just going to have to pay for it. Let's go to private delivery and let's go to private pay as our solutions." I would argue that the priority for the Minister of Health, the priority for this government, should be providing essential health care to people, not providing a \$2.2-billion tax cut to the well-to-do corporations.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): This resolution this afternoon is about priorities the government should have. What my colleague Mr Phillips is saying to members of the government and what we're offering in debate today is that health care and services for people in the area of health, education, providing a quality environment in which our children learn, should be a priority, that our environment should be a priority.

I'm here this afternoon as well to talk about another priority. It has become evident in recent days that there is some question around the support that this government is prepared to offer child care in Ontario. Members of staff within the Ministry of Community and Social Services have been set on an exercise to consider reducing their operating budget by \$200 million. This will have a devastating effect on those people who provide child care services within the province. It will also have a devastating effect on family resource programs that provide such an essential service to families within communities that may not be able to access regulated child care.

So again, we're talking about priorities. This government has commissioned the document, the Early Years Study, where it was identified very clearly that investing in the early years, the years from zero to six, is critical, and yet now this same government is talking about or considering plans and options for removing dollars from

that very ministry that offers services to families in those areas.

It's about priorities. The government is prepared to consider removing dollars from child care and family resource programs so that they can provide a \$2.2-billion tax cut. I think it's absolutely unconscionable that while we hear the government talk about reducing expenditures in these key areas—health, education, the environment, the resources that it provides to families and to children in our province—there is no mention made about the possibility of reducing tax cuts. That's what this is all about. The discussion this afternoon is about priorities, and we hope that the government will reconsider theirs.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate. To reiterate, the motion before us reads, "That the Legislative Assembly call on the government to forgo its \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut rather than impose any new cuts to health care services, public education, environmental protection or the introduction of new user fees."

As far as it goes, it's a good motion. But it's also nice and Liberal safe. It's not exactly radical. The Liberal position is becoming very clear. What they want to be able to do is to keep the revenue that they now have in the government from imposed user fees, because they make reference to it here, they want to be able to keep that money, but they also want to be able to preserve the fact that they're big entrepreneurs too, they're capitalists just as good as the Tories are. So what they want to say is—and you're going to hear it over and over again—that the issue of competitive taxes already has Ontario 25% below the Americans.

It's a nice, neat, safe little position, because they don't have to take the argument one step further and they can continue to attack the government—and they sound an awful lot like New Democrats when they attack the government. But we all know that when they get there, they'll just govern like the Tories. If anybody has any doubts in their mind, take a look at Chrétien. He promised a huge alternative to that popular Canadian, Brian Mulroney. And what happened maybe two, three years into the Chrétien mandate? Brian Mulroney publicly congratulated the Chrétien Liberals on moving further and faster on his agenda than he was able to do while he was on watch. That's the same deal here.

So at the outset, let me say that, yes, we'll be supporting this, but it really doesn't address the immediate needs that literally hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Ontarians are either experiencing today or they're about to very soon.

Why stick with just the motherhood issues of education, environment and health care? Those are obviously priorities. Even the Tories have said, when they go about their hatchet job, that they're not going to touch health care and education, which by the way means devastation everywhere else.

I'll return to that in a moment. They aren't talking about regulated child care. Isn't that just as important? It certainly is for those parents, particularly single-parent

families, for whom somewhere safe to take their kids is an absolute priority. The government's not doing anything about it; the Liberals don't mention it in their resolution.

1730

What about homelessness? When did that stop becoming a priority? Just because it's not on TV every day now—the war is what's on TV; our economy is what's on TV. Fair enough, but what happened to homelessness? What happened to the collective shame Ontarians felt when they saw on TV over and over again, Ontarians, in one of the wealthiest states in the world, living on a street corner in a box? The fact that a homeless person died a stone's throw from where we sit today, right under the window of the Premier's office, why isn't that a priority?

Boy, you moved fast enough on those corporate tax cuts. You accelerated those. That was the only thing you have talked about in terms of the economy since then. All the other things that matter to Ontarians and that you say you care about get nothing—out of sight, out of mind? If we don't think about it, they don't exist? How about all those hundreds of thousands of people who are on ODSP, or people on minimum wage who haven't had a wage increase—you got a wage increase; I got a wage increase; we got a wage increase. What about the minimum wage? It has not gone up one penny under your government. You say that affects competitiveness, yet with the engine that drives the boom we're just coming out of, the American economy, they raised the minimum wage twice during the last boom. The minimum wage in the United States is now higher than it is in Canada. Doesn't that count? For all your lofty discussions about wanting to step in and protect people from terrorism and a lot of the other horrible things that, yes, legitimately happened since 9-11, what about those people who are still living in poverty? It's not addressed by this government; it's not addressed by this resolution.

What about those people who are getting pink slips today, who are looking at Christmas in a few weeks saying, "How am I going to buy presents for my kids?" who are looking at the spring and saying, "How am I going to continue to pay the rent? Never mind that we were going to buy a new car, that we were going to go on vacation, that we had plans, that everything was looking wonderful, and now the bottom has fallen out and I don't know how I'm going to provide for my family in the next six months." What does this government talk about? Corporate tax cuts. Corporate tax cuts are not going to put one meal in front of one child, and you've got nothing else to offer?

I want to say that I don't see this resolution offering a whole lot more. This is more about positioning than it is about action, and people want action. I'll give you an example of action. It's not just the NDP in Ontario. There are other people, other parties, other governments that care about their populations. Quebec: I am not a fan of the separatist agenda, but the fact of the matter is that the Parti Québécois, the governing party in Quebec, is by and large self-defined as social democrats, again notwith-

standing the separatist agenda, in terms of how they approach things. Some of the most progressive legislation in Canada has come out of Saskatchewan with an NDP government, Manitoba with an NDP government, and in Quebec with the PQ. They just brought in a budget in the last few weeks. What did they do? They are building 20,000 new child care spaces after they have already got cutting-edge child care programs, at \$5 a day. It is supported widely in the province of Quebec. It is providing people with a safe environment to take their children.

Hon Mr Jackson: They pay people to have babies.

Mr Christopherson: I hear the Minister of Citizenship babbling away about something. I'm sure that he, his family and a lot of his supporters and friends may not need to worry about where they're going to put their kids while mom goes off to work. But the fact of the matter is that in Quebec they've identified it as a legitimate problem, done something about it and it is supported by the vast majority of the population as far as I can tell.

What else are they doing? Remember, so far, all this government has done is say, "We'll accelerate the corporate tax cuts that were supposed to take effect on January 1 and we are going to make it October 1." That's it.

What did they do in Quebec? In addition to the 20,000 new child care spaces, they're building 13,000 new affordable housing units and renovating 27,000 other units. Not only does that give people a decent place to live—and I would say through you, Speaker, to the Minister of Citizenship that in our area the statistics that are collected, and by the way include his community with ours, are some of the most frightening in the entire province in terms of waiting lists for affordable housing. Not one affordable housing unit has been built since this government came into power, not one. I would remind members of the Legislature that this resolution doesn't speak to that either.

In Quebec, they're going to do that. What impact does that have in this time when we are heading into a recession? Obviously, the first thing it does is it puts people to work. You don't have to have a PhD in economics to understand that if you're building 13,000 new affordable housing units and renovating 27,000 others, people are going to be working while they do that. This is a good thing. We don't hear that coming from either of the other two parties. In fact, the last time any affordable housing was built in this province was during the time of the NDP government. We built almost 50,000 units. We kept tens of thousands of construction workers employed during the deepest recession we had had since the 1930s. Nothing from them.

In Quebec, they're boosting the province's sales tax credit by \$250 million. Sales tax of course is paid by everybody. When you give a rebate in that area, it goes to everybody. Let's keep in mind that we don't even have a sales tax credit, let alone increase it. Again, at least they are thinking of measures that impact the maximum

number of people. Corporate tax cuts, accelerating them, aren't going to do that.

They're creating a new government agency to provide capital for fledgling business. By 2003, they expect to be granting \$100 million in either grants or loan guarantees. Nothing from them. What have they said to us in the past about this day that we've now arrived at, where we are in recession and where things are going to get worse? We were given assurances by none other than the Premier himself, who said, on April 20, 2000, right here, when he was under heavy questioning by the leader of the NDP, "As long as the voters of Ontario don't make the same mistake they made in 1985 and 1990 and elect big-spending, wasteful governments, there will not be a recession in this province."

I think we should call the Premier back in here to make another statement to order the economy to do what he said it would do, which is remain in buoyant times. We weren't going to have a recession. So why is it and how is it that the Chair of Management Board says we've got to carve \$5 billion out of public services? It wasn't supposed to happen.

You told the people of Ontario that if they could just withstand the pain of the cuts that you were making in the past, we wouldn't have a recession in Ontario; that all they had to worry about was keeping you in power because you had this magical formula where you cut the revenue of the province and that, in and of itself, was going to guarantee that the economy would stay buoyant. The Premier said last year there wouldn't be a recession, "No recession if you do what we say," and we say today we have to cut \$5 billion because of the recession. A little bit of a gap in credibility, one might argue, wouldn't one?

1740

Does anybody have any idea what \$5 billion in cuts looks like? I've been there. I've been at the cabinet table when cuts have to be made. That was back in the days when, literally, we were trimming fat, if you will, out of the system and we were making things more efficient. At the time, a lot of folks said, "My goodness, you people have gone crazy. You're wielding this huge axe and cutting expenditures." It was minuscule compared to what you've got now, and this is after how many other rounds of cutting?

You promised the people that if they supported you, they wouldn't be where they are today. You have to answer for that. You gave rich people the money of poor people and you said that would guarantee there would be no recession. The obvious happened: the rich got a lot richer and by all accounts the poor got a lot poorer, but today we're in a recession. There are words to describe what that is, but they're unparliamentary. You told people that if they went with your plan to give billions of dollars to people and corporations that already had billions of dollars, it would protect us from any kind of recession in the future, and all you had to worry about was never to go back to electing a Liberal government or an NDP government and everything would be wonderful.

Well, everything is not wonderful. There are people out there who are hurting. There are children who are hurting. There are people in dire need, and there are more coming. You told them it wouldn't happen, and when it does happen, what are you confronting people with? No action, save and except to cut another \$5 billion in public services. As long as you've got lots of money, you don't need to worry about that \$5 billion, just like you didn't need to worry about the last \$6 billion. But if you're like the vast majority of people in this province, you require that money for public services that you cannot pay user fees for. That's the whole idea of everybody putting a little bit of money in the pot and then collectively we can provide good public services, like police. Police are public services and so are firefighters, and so are child care workers, and they make a difference between life and death. Almost every other public service, in one way or another, comes back to the quality of life for the majority of people.

Yes, we'll support this resolution, but understand this resolution, and certainly this government doesn't go anywhere near far enough in dealing with the pain that's being inflicted on the families of Ontario.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): It's a pleasure to rise on this important resolution. This is, after all, supposed to be the chamber where members make up their minds: what do they stand for? What priorities do they have?

I would say to the member who just spoke, my friend from Hamilton West, that in fact there is something radical in this resolution, and what's radical about it is a government that needs to have the question put to them: would you make a bonus payment to the largest corporations in this province, one not required for competitiveness, one not required for jobs, but simply required to satisfy either ideology or rare political opportunism with certain elites? Would you make that decision over the fundamentals of what the people of this province require? I think it's illustrative just to know that it's that kind of radicalism that is taking the province closer and closer to the ditch economically and certainly has already brought us there socially, and a lot of other measures that people in this province hold important.

And it isn't possible, if we're to go by the members of the government party who have participated in this debate, to see any awareness of this on the government's part. They have been blinded by their convenient ideology. It has to this point served their political opportunism too well. The comic book revolution has no one on the other side able to understand its essential simplicity, its essential lack of reality. That reality is coming home to too many of the people who live in Ontario, the people who live in Ontario that this government is prepared to write off, and that they're particularly prepared to write off now as a number of them slink away to sinecures in the very corporate world that they want to pad the profits of.

The New York Times, the economic round table in the United States, says the last thing to do in the face of the

rec ... session is corporate tax cuts. This government is putting 85% of its available resources into large corporate tax cuts that no economist anywhere in the Western world would say is a beneficial measure, given the status of the economy in the Western world at this time.

And yet here we are in Ontario, this band of unthinking, insensitive, so-called Conservatives, unable to connect with the communities that sent them here. Because the communities that sent them here are saying, "You've already cut too much from education. You've already done a job"—as many of the members who have spoken have related—"that doesn't fulfill the basic essential requirements of what the people of this province expect." They expected you to live up to that promise you made not to interfere with the education of young people. And you've done that. You said you'd set a standard all across the province. Well, in Burlington and in Niagara and all over this province are students who get less. They get fewer textbooks and they get less by way of teacher attention because there are fewer resources available to make those schools possible.

It is conceivable that we would stand in this House faced with a challenging time, that we would have a government that is already expensing \$2 million a day. Rather than buy textbooks, rather than deal with special-needs kids, rather than deal with class sizes at the lower level and make kids successful, make the investments that an intelligently compassionate government would make, we have instead a dunderheaded approach that says, "We'll give the money away and cross our fingers." Because that's what a further \$2.2 billion means in terms of emptying the resources of this province and its capacity to deal with what's happening.

It's a reward. It's a bonus. It's gratuitous in the face of the circumstances. And it's insulting to the people of this province. It's insulting that the members opposite would stand there and not even have the courage to defend whatever hidden conviction there might be. If they're prepared to throw over the needs of most of the people of this province for a rare elite, they should say so. They should stand in their place and defend it. Instead, they'll slink in here, they'll vote and they'll ignore the people who really count.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for debate.

Mr Phillips has moved that the Legislative Assembly call on the government to forgo its \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut rather than impose any new cuts to health care services, public education, environmental protection or the introduction of new user fees.

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

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; this will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1748 to 1758.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Phillips has moved that the Legislative Assembly call on the government to forgo its \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut rather than impose any new

custs to health care services, public education, environmental protection or the introduction of new user fees.

All those in favour will stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	McMeekin, Ted
Boyer, Claudette	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Di Cocco, Caroline	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael D.	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob

Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Snobelen, John
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Miller, Norm	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David
Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 33; the nays are 53.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock this evening.

The House adjourned at 1802.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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

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

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

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

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Frank Mazzilli, Norm Miller, John R. O'Toole,
Steve Peters, Wayne Wettlaufer
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