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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 21 May 2003

Mercredi 21 mai 2003

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 21 May 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 21 mai 2003

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2003 ONTARIO BUDGET

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by Mr Eves, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Mrs Ecker moves government notice of motion number 1, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, filed on April 30, 2003, seconded by Mr Klees.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Mr Eves.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry. Seconded by Mr Eves.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I suspect Mr Klees would have been as happy to second this motion as Mr Eves.

I'll be splitting my time with the members from Simcoe North and Kitchener Centre, who also have some very important things to say tonight.

I'm pleased to rise today to speak about our government's fifth consecutive balanced budget and to talk a little bit about the plan that is behind it.

First of all, balancing budgets is about keeping our government's promise of growth and prosperity for this great province of Ontario. In making the right choices, we are securing our economic future and therefore the future of our children and our grandchildren.

Unlike previous governments, unlike our predecessors, what we've chosen to do is not carve up a shrinking economic pie into ever smaller pieces. Instead, we have chosen to make the economic pie bigger through the choices we've made: choices that are building blocks of our economic plan, choices that include doing things to ensure our economy works, our job growth remains strong and the province remains resilient.

Because of the choices, the economic plan we've put in place since 1995 is working. We can see it in the fifth balanced budget in a row, a feat not seen since 1908. We've paid down \$5 billion in debt, which has created significant savings for taxpayers in less debt interest, something no other government in history has been able to accomplish. We've built an economy that has created more than one million new jobs, and that economy is outperforming the rest of Canada and other leading industrial nations in economic growth.

The importance of having the right fundamentals in place can certainly be seen with what has happened recently in Ontario with the outbreak of SARS—successfully contained, I might add. Because of that, we've actually seen the first job loss in Ontario in the past 18 months. It certainly shows the far-reaching impact that SARS had, not only on people's personal lives, but also on many businesses here, especially in Toronto and the GTA.

But you can see the strength of our economy and the strength of our communities in how the people and businesses of this province have rallied together in an incredible effort to rebound from SARS, to rebound from the impact we've had, and our government's actions led by Premier Eves have certainly been part of that.

We announced a comprehensive set of measures to promote travel to Ontario, including a sales tax holiday on tourist accommodations and attractions, money for marketing and promotion, and compensation to those whose lives have been affected by the SARS outbreak. We did this to meet the different needs posed by this outbreak and also to tell the world—to make sure the world knows—that Ontario, Toronto and the GTA are not only open for business but also great places to come and visit and enjoy.

Interjection: They don't think it's a good place to visit.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I know. The Liberals over there don't agree.

The reason we are coming back from that is because we've had an economic plan of great fundamentals in place. We saw how it helped Ontario to rebound after the events of 9/11, and it will indeed help support our communities to rebound as a result of SARS.

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A strong economy quite simply means a strong Ontario. Over the past year, because of the building blocks that have been put in place by our government, we've not only sustained growth, but our economy has rebounded faster and stronger than our G7 partners. The plan is working. We believe it's essential, and we believe we need to continue to move forward with the important components of that plan. One of the most important, of course, is tax relief for individuals and businesses in this province, but also part of the plan is balanced budgets, competitive tax rates, paying down debt and setting key priorities for investing taxpayers' money in the priority programs they support.

One of the things that have helped spur economic growth in Ontario has been healthy consumer spending, supported very much by reduced taxes and low interest rates. Rising employment and higher after-tax income are expected to help sustain that consumer spending in the future. From the second quarter of 1996, when Ontario income tax cuts began, real disposable income increased by over 22%. That was stronger than the 18% pace for the rest of Canada.

During that same period, Ontario real consumption increased by over 28%, ahead of the 22% recorded in the rest of Canada. The healthy financial position of Ontario families will help underpin the sustained growth in consumer spending and future economic growth. Thanks to tax cuts and a growing economy, average family incomes have been rising dramatically in Ontario. Between 1995 and 2000, real average after-tax income of two-parent Ontario families with children rose by 19%. Over the same period, single-parent families saw a 33% increase in their real average after-tax income. So tax cuts have worked, not only for the economy and job growth, but also in helping to increase family incomes, a very important step for any government to take.

The market conditions needed to support stronger business investment are in place, and we need to continue to do that. Within a supportive economic environment, businesses of all sizes across a wide range of industries have contributed significantly to strong job growth in the province since 1995. Our tax reduction program will continue to support business, whether small, medium or large, because we understand that building a business environment that supports investment, job growth and prosperity requires strategic sector investments, support for innovation, strong capital markets and aggressive skills development, all part of the plan we have been taking. We can do that, because on this side of the House we understand the importance of supporting that investment, of supporting that job growth and prosperity, of making strategic sector investments, supporting through innovation, strong capital markets and aggressive skills development.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): Repeat that.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I agree with my colleague: it needs to be repeated because it is something that previous governments forgot to do, and we all paid the price. That's why the 2003 budget proposes significant new measures that will help give our growing firms improved access to venture capital, as well as the tax cuts I was mentioning.

For example, we're proposing changes to the labour-sponsored investment funds program. This program has been an important source of venture capital for small and medium-sized businesses, having invested \$350 million in Ontario businesses last year. So the changes that we will be proposing in the budget legislation would provide further support for companies that are having difficulty raising venture capital by giving the funds greater flexibility in the investments that they can make. The

proposed changes would allow investments in listed companies on stock exchanges to go up to 25% of its investments in a year, up from 15%. Also, the definition of a small business would be increased to include businesses with \$6 million in assets. We will be working with the federal government to increase the allowable maximum investment in a company.

We're also proposing changes to the community small business investment funds program to bring new sources of capital for commercializing university and hospital research by proposing to extend the deadline for registration of this type of fund from the end of this year to the end of next year to allow further expansion.

Mr Guzzo: The Liberals are against it.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I suspect they probably are.

We're also proposing another step which I think is going to be very important to attract and keep investment here, and that is to reduce capital tax rates in Ontario.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): Job killer.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Yes. The capital tax has sort of stuck up like a sore thumb, if I may use that phrase, when many companies around the world have been looking to invest here in Ontario. So starting on January 1, 2004, there will be a 10% reduction on that tax, and we intend to eliminate the capital tax by the time the federal government eliminates its capital tax.

So coupled with our previous reductions for our small business, our medium business and our corporate income tax rates, and coupled with our personal income tax cuts that we've made for people in low-income circumstances, all the way through, all taxpayers have received breaks because of the tax relief that we've provided. That has been important in supporting the economic growth that we've seen in Ontario.

But it's not simply tax cuts, tax relief and a competitive tax system, an important goal that we've been working very hard to achieve and we're seeing the success. There is more that we must speak to in an economic plan for this province.

When I travelled across the province doing extensive pre-budget consultations in over 17 communities, I talked to over 1,300 individuals. We certainly heard about the two most important priority programs for people: health care and education. The budget certainly responds to that. On this side of the House we recognize that having a universally accessible health care system that is available to Ontarians when and where they need it is central not only to our quality of life but also to our economic quality of life. The health care system that we have in Ontario is a key reason why people choose to live, work, invest and raise a family here. We need to help support that.

Our government's record on health care investment shows that we are willing to walk the talk on health care. We've increased spending every year. In 2003-04, we'll invest a total of \$28 billion in our health care system, investments that have made a real difference in the lives of Ontarians. That's the most that has been spent on our

health care system. These investments are going to make important improvements, for example, advancing primary care reform. We're increasing the supply of medical professionals and other health care professionals. We're expanding the number of nurse practitioners for rural and underserved areas—very, very important. We're reimbursing tuition for nurse and nurse practitioner students willing to practise in underserved areas after graduation. It's something that we've been doing to encourage more physicians, and we're doing it for nurses and nurse practitioners.

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We are completing the first new medical school in 30 years that we've seen in this province, in northern Ontario, with campuses at Lakehead in Thunder Bay and Laurentian in Sudbury. We're increasing the number of foreign-trained doctors certified to practise in Ontario—another important step to make sure that those who come here with medical skills will be able to contribute as they want to in our communities. I think this is an extremely important step.

Hospitals are part of that as well, and we've increased our commitment to hospitals again in this budget. We're providing \$10.3 billion to support our hospitals, and by 2005-06, multi-year funding will provide the hospital sector with an increase of approximately 16% of the level of support that they received prior to the third-party review of hospital finances in 2002-03.

I think that's important to stress. One of the things that we've heard from our funding partners was the need for multi-year funding, the need to be able to plan ahead and be more accountable, and they need those funding commitments to do that.

As part of the proposed multi-year-based funding framework that the budget announces, we're making it a requirement that all hospitals demonstrate that improvements in funding can translate into improvements in services. So we are working with the sector to provide stronger accountability standards so taxpayers and patients will know that those increased investments are indeed making the difference they should.

Performance measures will be developed with this as well. Also, we're working to improve how health capital dollars are being spent, another important investment. In the last two years, we've doubled health capital spending in Ontario so that virtually every hospital is being rebuilt, expanded or replaced, because we need to finish the hospital restructuring job we started to keep the system strong.

The budget also announced other investments in health care that are specifically focused on our seniors: for example, the strategy on osteoporosis, a condition that afflicts far too many of our seniors; more resources for cataract surgery, something that can make a big difference in the quality of life of our seniors; more nursing care in our long-term-care facilities and more long-term-care facilities themselves—important investments to support our seniors.

The budget has also announced an historic commitment to cancer research in Ontario. Experts have told us that for certain types of cancer we can, with a focused effort, actually find better prevention and cures. So we're investing \$1 billion over the next decade to establish a new cancer research institute to build on Ontario's strength in cancer research, so Ontarians can rest assured that our government will continue to fund what Ontarians believe to be the top priority for programs. We will continue to support that and continue to advocate, on behalf of our citizens, taxpayers, patients and health care professionals, to Ottawa, and continue to urge them to ante up with their fair share on health care for Ontario. So we will continue to do that.

But we also can't neglect the other important priority, the second priority that is mentioned by Ontario families when they talk about what they want the government to address. First is health care, but second—

Hon Mr Baird: Energy.

Hon Mrs Ecker: —is education.

If the energy minister wants me to mention energy, I will do that for him. But families tell me that the second most important program is education, while energy is very important. I'm getting to that later in the speech, actually.

Education is a major priority for us—for the people of Ontario and for this government. We need to continue to invest in our public education system. I believe it's one of the most important things that a government can do: make sure we have a strong public education system so that our young people get the tools and the support that they need to succeed. Not only is that good for our young people individually, but for our quality of life—to have strong, contributing citizens in our society. It's also good for our economic growth. So, since 1995, we have been working to improve our public education system to put in place a plan that would improve student learning and achievement.

We know that that plan is working: a more rigorous curriculum, standardized testing, standards for professional development and assessment of teachers; literacy tests, early reading programs—important standards and steps that we're actually seeing signs on national and international tests that our students are learning better. We know that is important.

Investments are important and so are the improvements in the plans and standards that we have been setting for the public education system in not only K to 12, but we can't ignore our post-secondary system as well. For example, the budget took another step to expand our post-secondary system to create over 20,000 additional new college and university spaces for students—

Hon Mr Baird: Hear, hear. Even the OFS cheered. The Canadian Federation of Students cheered.

Hon Mrs Ecker: —so that young taxpayers like Michael Fogarty will have a spot in post-secondary institutions so that he can succeed as well. I hope that in one of those spots he will be able to participate—

Hon Mr Baird: What's his name?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Michael Fogarty. There you go. Actually we could mention everyone's relatives, if you like, and staff tonight.

It's important because it's a commitment we made to Ontario families that every willing and qualified young person who wished to have a spot in a college or university could indeed do so. We've created over 135,000 new spaces and new quality assurance funds to help put the supports around those spaces.

On education: from K to 12, as I mentioned, we've increased funding from \$12.9 billion to—this coming school year it'll be \$15.3 billion; by 2005-06 it will reach \$16 billion. That's a 14% increase, almost \$2 billion in investments in our schools that are extremely important and that will help the government finalize the implementation of the Rozanski report.

Investments in K to 12 and post-secondary are important, but many of our young people find great career opportunities as well in apprenticeship in trades and other avenues. That's why the budget also speaks to a new apprenticeship tax credit to improve employers' ability to train and attract apprentices.

We're also investing \$90 million in our high schools over the next four years to renew technological equipment, train teachers and develop partnerships with employers and colleges.

While we have increased investments in our public education system to historic levels, we also recognize on this side of the House that supporting parental choice—respecting when parents make choices about their children's education that might better reflect that family's religious or cultural beliefs, for example, or better meet the unique needs of their young person, their child, and so we are moving forward to speed up the equity in education tax credit to support that parental choice.

Health care, education—very important priorities, but there are others as well that this budget spoke to because Ontario's families, our taxpayers know that we need to support programs that help us have a clean and safe environment, for example, because we want to have communities where people want to live and where it's safe for people to live, where the environment is clean.

One of the important priorities has to do with safe, clean drinking water. This government has been moving forward to put in place the toughest policies in the world to attain that goal. We're implementing the recommendations made by Justice O'Connor by strengthening our laws, doubling the number of inspectors and protecting groundwater. We're expanding our commitment to invest in safe drinking water to \$750 million over three years. This funding is going to help assist municipalities, for example, meet tough new drinking water quality standards, \$200 million to do that; \$31 million for provincial park compliance; \$41 million to support safe drinking water legislation and compliance; money for research and development for the Clean Water Legacy Trust and the Clean Water Centre of Excellence—important steps to make sure that every time our families turn on the tap, they can rest assured that they will be safe.

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One of the other building blocks of good economic growth in this province is of course to continue to have a sustainable, affordable energy system here in Ontario. This budget proposes incentives for using innovative technologies and renewable forms of energy. To encourage the production of clean, renewable energy in Ontario, we're proposing to expand the five-year retail sales tax rebate for solar energy systems which we announced in November 2002. The budget proposes to expand that to include wind energy systems, micro-hydroelectric systems, geothermal heating and cooling systems for residential premises—very, very important. The Minister of Energy has been very, very vigorous in pushing for these steps. The rebate would be available for purchases made after March 27 this year and before November 26, 2007.

Safe, reliable and affordable power is also key to Ontario's economic future. As you may recall, last fall our Premier introduced a comprehensive action plan to help lower electricity bills, protect consumers, encourage conservation and alternative energy, and support a new supply.

This year's budget builds on that action plan and takes some additional steps. For example, we will be working with the private sector on the Portlands Energy Centre Project and the Niagara Tunnel Project, two important steps to increase our supply of clean generation.

We're proposing an additional 100% corporate income tax deduction for companies making new investments in generating electricity for their own use from alternative or renewable energy sources.

With the assistance of the private sector, we're also proposing to develop all of the remaining economic hydroelectric power within Ontario. That will be another important step to make sure that we have a strong supply.

We're proposing to contribute \$20 million over five years to establish a new centre of excellence for electricity and alternative energy technology, another important step in achieving our goal. The centre will be responsible for coordinating applied research and commercialization projects for more efficient and environmentally friendly energy technologies.

Our budget makes a continued commitment to strong communities, a strong economy, strong public education, strong health care and a good energy system. All of those are part of that, but there are some other steps that need to be taken as well.

We're demonstrating this with multi-year funding commitments for our municipalities, and also for an expansion of transit services. We're increasing the funding for municipalities to support them by 18% by 2005-06.

We're also, with funding announced in this budget, going to help fund a new GTA bus rapid transit system so that commuters will be able to travel quickly and reliably across the top of Toronto, from Halton to Durham. For those of us who represent 905 communities, we know

how important bus transit and GO Transit are to those communities.

We're also introducing new initiatives to help our municipalities respond to their infrastructure challenges through the municipal financing authority, which will help municipalities with low interest loans for the financing of transportation, for example, and water infrastructure.

To support that investment in our municipalities, we also began an innovative new opportunity for Ontario investors of tax-free Ontario Opportunity Bonds. I must say, when we started those bonds earlier this spring, we anticipated we might attract perhaps \$50 million of investment. We are well over \$100 million. It's a great investment opportunity.

Our transportation corridors move goods and services across the province each and every day. We're committed to improving those highways and those services by working in partnership with the federal government and our municipalities. As I mentioned, transit investment is a very important priority. This budget moves forward with \$1.25 billion for inter-regional transit expansion in the Golden Horseshoe region, \$1 billion for GO Transit-based capital needs, \$750 million for the municipal transit renewal program and \$250 million for the strategic expansion projects in urban areas outside the Golden Horseshoe region.

Through SuperBuild, we're also continuing to invest in our highways, to keep our highway system strong—again, an important support for economic growth. We're investing another \$1 billion in highways this year as part of our 10-year, \$10-billion commitment.

In the pre-budget consultations, one of the things that people mentioned was their families and taking steps to make sure their families can remain strong and be prosperous. Of course, one of the initiatives this budget speaks to, to deal with that, is to help our seniors have a more secure and safe retirement. One of the highlights in the budget is the proposal of a new tax credit to help those seniors, to recognize the contributions they have made to our prosperity and our quality of life.

To help support seniors and their families, in the budget we are proposing a \$450-million-a-year benefit for our seniors in additional property tax relief for seniors who own or rent their home. This would result in an average net saving of approximately \$475 annually to 945,000 senior households. We're also proposing increased tax support to about 165,000 family caregivers and people with disabilities. This would result in an average tax saving of about \$300 per person, another important step to help our families. Together with the personal income tax age credit, additional support for seniors through property and sales tax credits, the benefits from the provincial personal income tax cuts, which many seniors benefit from as well, the new initiative in this budget—all these things combined—would mean \$2.5 billion in tax savings per year for our seniors. Some important supports in this budget also for

families—we have improved the child care benefit for working families as well—important steps.

In closing, there's one other initiative included in this legislation that I would like to mention, and we took this step last year in budget legislation: to protect investor confidence and the integrity of our capital markets. We know that is another important component of strong economic growth. In the budget legislation, we are proposing broader rights for secondary market investors to sue, to provide a strong deterrent to poor disclosure practices to help our investors and protect them. This budget moves forward with additional changes to make that happen. In the legislation we did last fall on investor protection, coupled with what will be happening this spring, should this legislation pass, these measures will make Ontario's regulatory system for investor protection the toughest in Canada, increasing fines, giving the Ontario Securities Commission the ability to order that offenders give up their ill-gotten gains if they are in violation and to increase court fines and prison terms—very, very important steps.

By choosing to focus on the right priorities, by having an economic plan in place that has the right fundamentals, we've been able to help build a strong economic foundation that can encourage growth and prosperity for all Ontarians. Our tax and fiscal policies undertaken since 1995 have focused on creating the conditions to increase growth and raise living standards on a sustained, long-term basis. This year's budget builds on our economic plan because we know that it is working, and this plan will continue. We will continue with the building blocks that are key to a strong and resilient economy: competitive tax rates, lower taxes, balanced budgets, prudent fiscal management, cutting waste and the strategic investment of public dollars in key priorities like health care, education and the environment. We believe this plan will continue to support a very strong and successful future for this great province, which is one of the reasons that members on this side of the House not only stood for election in 1995 with Premier Harris, again with Premier Harris in 1999 and that we are very prepared to stand again with Premier Eves to carry on our economic plan.

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The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's my pleasure this evening to rise to take part in the debate and the opening statements on The Right Choices.

I'd like to begin by thanking Minister Ecker for her comments and congratulating her for announcing her second balanced budget. I had the honour to work as her parliamentary assistant in the Ministry of Education for about 18 months, and I understand exactly the kind of work Minister Ecker puts into any ministry she represents. Certainly I know the thought she put into this particular budget bill.

As you know, this important piece of legislation would enact the measures announced in the 2003 Ontario budget. As the minister said, it is our fifth consecutive balanced budget. I'm proud, as a member of this

government, that each and every year I've been here we've been able to deliver a balanced budget. I'm very proud of that. I'm also honoured to be a member of the government that tabled this document. With this budget, I'd like to remind the members that our government will have paid down this year \$5 billion in debt.

Because of our track record and the economic growth that has resulted from our policies, we are also able to invest in what matters most to Ontarians: health care and education. I'd like to take a moment to say a few things about health care, particularly to relate a project in my riding, and that's the Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.

As a member of the county of Simcoe council in 1983, my first year as a county councillor, I had the opportunity to sit on the hospital services committee. At that time the Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital was looking at a redevelopment or expansion plan. Over the years, through different governments and different boards of directors, we finally got to the stage where we tackled this in 1999 with a great deal of effort.

I want to thank a few people along the way. One is Minister Ecker, who originally announced a provincial contribution of \$17 million toward this project. In the last three years, with inflation, the cost of building products and some changes to the plans, this project has actually risen to a total of around \$65 million to \$70 million. I was very pleased and very thankful to Minister Ecker and Minister Clement for allowing me to announce, about two weeks ago, a provincial contribution of \$40.5 million toward this project. I'm very proud of this, because it's something I've been working on, on and off, for basically 20 years. I believe—and I can say this to the minister—that if we look back in time over the last three years, the way this project has developed should be a model for all hospital expansions within our province. Because of the communities that got behind this project—the foundation, the auxiliary, the board of directors—we're very pleased that in our community alone the foundation has raised \$12 million in the last 18 months toward this expansion project.

When we are dealing with our other important priority, education, I would like to thank Minister Witmer for allowing four schools to be on the list of 34 that should be replaced in the province. That was announced about four weeks ago, and I happen to have two of those in my riding: Mount Slaven public school in Orillia and Parkview public school in the town of Midland.

If passed, this bill would ensure that Ontario remains the best place in which to live, work, invest and raise a family. As an Ontarian, I am pleased by the measures the budget contains, because they would ensure that this province remains on the right track for growth and prosperity for many years to come. Our government's plan to restore growth, job creation and prosperity to Ontario is in fact working. Lower taxes, balanced budgets, reduced debt and prudent fiscal management have created more than one million net new jobs since 1995 and are making our economy one of the most competitive on the globe.

When my honourable colleague Janet Ecker, the Minister of Finance, met with hundreds of Ontarians across the province in her pre-budget consultations, she received advice that was very helpful in developing the next steps in our plans. I'd like to again thank Minister Ecker for visiting Simcoe county in her consultation process. I know we had about 100 people out to an event in Orillia. She received invaluable input toward the budget that she delivered a little later on.

It was clear that health care and education continue to be the top priorities of Ontarians. There were no surprises there, either. That, of course, is what I mentioned earlier in the announcements we've made to date in my riding. I'm very pleased, of course, that they are the two top priorities in our riding.

We also heard that continued tax relief is vitally important, not just because it rewards individual initiatives by leaving more money in their pockets to spend, save or invest, but because they recognize that lower taxes attract and, in fact, keep jobs right here in the province of Ontario.

I would say that with today's amendments, we would continue to support the people of this province with good, effective tax relief. Indeed, the Right Choices Act, 2003, proposes a number of amendments to various statutes that are designed to cut taxes and sustain economic growth in our province.

As my honourable colleague has mentioned, the bill proposes to cut individual taxes and extend tax relief to persons with disabilities and to their caregivers. It proposes to reduce taxes for persons with low and moderate incomes and provide further child care assistance for low- and moderate-income families with young children.

The bill also proposes amendments to increase investment in alternative and renewable sources of energy.

As well, the bill proposes other amendments to the following acts: the Assessment Act; the Commodity Futures Act; the Electricity Act, 1998; the Limitations Act, 2002; the Municipal Act, 2001; and the Securities Act. In addition, the bill proposes a new statute called the Total Beneficiaries Liability Act, 2003.

Ontario's small and medium-sized businesses will benefit, as well, with the amendments in today's bill. For example, the bill proposes to cut taxes for corporations in Ontario and encourage investment, particularly investment in small and medium-sized businesses.

Allow me to talk about the specifics of how we plan to do this. The proposed amendments to the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act are intended to improve access to capital for small and medium-sized businesses in this province. Labour-sponsored investment funds, which are a significant source of venture capital for small and medium-sized businesses, would be given greater flexibility in the investments they can make. The funds would be permitted to increase their investments in listed companies.

In addition, these proposed amendments would facilitate the establishment of additional community small business investment funds in Ontario. These very important funds have become a key source of capital for universities and hospitals that are commercializing research. The amendments would increase the maximum asset size of an eligible business for the purposes of the small business investment requirement from \$5 million to \$6 million. A further amendment extends the deadline for investing in a community small business investment fund from December 31, 2003, to December 31, 2004.

The Business Corporations Act authorizes the director to dissolve a corporation that is in default of its obligations under the Corporations Tax Act. This bill proposes an amendment that will give us increased powers to dissolve a corporation that is in default of its obligations under other specified tax statutes. We believe we need to clamp down on these corporations that do not comply with the law.

Tax rates in Ontario remain competitive in order to promote consumer spending and to attract new businesses and new investment to our province. To that end, we're proposing a number of amendments to the Income Tax Act that would contribute to continued economic growth in the province. For example, amendments to the act would increase the threshold at which Ontario taxpayers are required to pay the provincial surtax. Effective January 1, 2004, the surtax will become payable when Ontario income tax exceeds \$4,727 as adjusted for inflation. The threshold is proposed to increase to \$5,240 as of January 1, 2005.

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Our government believes that we need to help support individuals with disabilities and people who care for infirm or disabled family members. Our tax system currently provides assistance to these people through a number of non-refundable tax credits, including the disability credit, caregiver credit and infirm dependant credit. However, the care provided by individuals for an infirm spouse or common-law partner goes unrecognized by the current tax system, as do the efforts of adult children to help their infirm parents or grandparents with modest incomes remain in their own homes.

We are proposing three enhancements to these credits, effective January 1 this year. First, the amounts on which these tax credits are based would be increased to \$6,637. Second, we propose to extend the caregiver credit and the infirm dependant credit to include spouses or common-law partners who are dependent by reason of a mental or physical infirmity, and to provide support to more caregivers living apart from infirm dependent relatives. Third, we propose to raise the level of the dependant's income above which these credits would be reduced or eliminated. This means more people would qualify.

We are also proposing to enhance the Ontario tax reduction by increasing the amount of the basic tax reduction to \$197, plus an increase for inflation, effective January 1, 2004.

In addition, we are proposing an amendment that would increase the threshold at which an individual's entitlement to the Ontario child care supplement for working families is reduced. Beginning in July 2003, this threshold would be increased from \$20,000 to \$20,750 of family net income.

Proposed amendments in the bill also support corporations in this province. As you know, capital taxes hurt businesses, especially in their early start-up years when they can least afford it. We are proposing changes to the Corporations Tax Act that will reduce capital tax rates for all corporations by 10%, effective January 1, 2004. We intend to propose legislation to eliminate the job-killing capital tax by the time the federal government eliminates its capital tax.

Additional proposed tax improvements include a refundable tax credit for businesses on salaries and wages paid to an eligible apprentice in a qualifying skilled trade. I'd like to spend a couple of moments on that, if I could. That goes back to an opportunity Minister Ecker gave me as her parliamentary assistant when I was allowed to tour the province and visit a number of schools and stakeholders, and we dealt with the technical and vocational report.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Excellent.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Great job.

Mr Dunlop: I think it was a great—a good report; I'd better not say a "great" report. But certainly some of the comments we made in that report dealt with additional money for schools. Minister Ecker has already mentioned tonight about the \$90 million for technological equipment, but this part here, the tax credit for business that will take on more apprentices, I think is just such a winning combination.

I came from a background in construction, where I dealt with construction businesses for the last 25 years, and I know that one of the key areas of concern employers have when they train an apprentice is that quite often the apprentice will leave and go to a better job when they get their journeyman's papers. This tax credit will encourage more businesses to take on apprentices. Some may leave, but if they do leave at the end of their five years or four years of apprenticeship, the employer will have the benefit of the tax credit for his compensation in training that person for our workforce here in Ontario.

I congratulate the minister for including this in the budget. I think it's a winner for young people across the province, it's a winner for small business and it's certainly a winner for construction and manufacturing trades across our province as well.

Another proposed tax improvement would be the changes to the Ontario business research institute tax credit to improve its effectiveness as well.

Allow me to highlight some of our tax relief measures over the past seven and a half years. Since 1995, our government has dramatically reduced the tax burden on people and businesses. Tax cuts have been broadly based

and have played an important role in the province's comprehensive economic policy, which is designed to support and promote the following: we know about job creation, and we can say that again—I think it's 1.1 million net new jobs since 1995; innovation, entrepreneurship, economic growth, and of course prosperity. I was a small business person in 1995, and toward the end of the NDP's five years in government there weren't a lot of happy campers out there as far as small business people went. They didn't feel confident in the future of our province and were looking for dramatic changes. I say thanks to Mike Harris and the bravery he showed in setting tax cuts as an example to create jobs. We've come a long way, and I think the 1.1 million net new jobs will be what people will look at on the ballot when we do in fact go to the polls.

Our government has announced 225 tax cuts since 1995, and here's just a sampling of them: 10 tax cuts in the 1996 budget; 20 tax cuts in the 1997 budget; eight tax cuts in the 1997-98 inter-budget announcements; 29 tax cuts in the 1998 budget; 30 tax cuts in the 1999 budget; 67 tax cuts in the 2000 budget; nine tax cuts in the 2001-02 inter-budget announcement; 17 tax cuts in the 2001 budget; eight tax cuts in the 2002 budget; eight tax cuts announced as part of the November 25, 2002, energy incentives; and 17 tax cuts in the 2003 budget. I'm proud to say that Dalton McGuinty and Howard Hampton voted against every one of those tax cuts. It's too bad. Those tax cuts have created \$16 billion in additional revenue for this province.

Economic growth spurred by tax cuts has enabled our government to invest in priority programs and services: health care and education, the two top priorities for Ontarians. Across the province, people of all ages, backgrounds and income levels have benefited from these tax cuts. Ontario's tax cuts are the key to opportunity and prosperity.

What does this mean for Ontarians? It means more jobs and less welfare. Since 1995, our economy has created 1.1 million net new jobs. That's almost half the jobs created throughout all of Canada in the past seven years. I have to remind you that we represent about 33% of the population and our job creation has represented about 48% of all the jobs created in our country. And because of job opportunities and our work-for-welfare plan, 627,000 people have left welfare since 1995. I think that says something in itself right there. The people I've met who have had an opportunity with entrepreneurship and have had an opportunity to get jobs, some of their first good jobs—and some jobs they've got that have been created in this province have acted as stepping-stones for better jobs. That's what investment and innovative thinking do in a province like Ontario.

It means more income for families. Thanks to tax cuts and a growing economy, family incomes are rising dramatically. The average after-tax and after-inflation income of a two-parent family with children rose 19% between 1995 and 2000.

It means balanced budgets and less debt. Because we made the difficult choices, annual deficits are a thing of the past. With the \$484-million repayment we made in the 2002-03 fiscal year, we have now reduced the provincial debt by \$5 billion.

The fundamentals our government put in place helped us rebound from the downturn of 2001. Last year, Ontario's economy expanded by an estimated 3.9%, more than two and a half times the rate of the previous year. I've got to say there must have been some very, very difficult decisions between Minister Flaherty and Minister Ecker as we looked at the year 2001 and the after-effects of September 11. There hasn't been a time in this House in a number of decades, but certainly not in Canada or North America, when we've been so afraid of the future, with the terrorist activities of September 11, 2001. I'm so pleased that the people of Ontario have rebounded. The economy has been strong. There has been continued investment in our province and in our economy. Last year, our economy expanded by an estimated 3.9%, again, more than two and a half times the rate of the previous year.

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Private sector forecasters expect our economy to continue to grow on average by 2.8% this year, rising to 3.5% in 2004. With our economic plan in place, we will continue to move forward. The foundation of our plan is tax cuts. The reason? Because tax cuts work. I think you saw that last week in our rollout of *The Road Ahead*, Premier Eves's platform for the next election. We will continue on the road of tax cuts building a strong economy. Only with that strong economy can we continue to have the revenues flowing to the province to pay for the \$27 billion we paid into health care and the \$16 billion into education and the money into all the other thousands of programs delivered by the province.

I've been doing a calculation of the provincial investments in capital projects in program announcements in my riding. I'm pleased that between 1999 and 2003 our government has made announcements and investments of \$260 million in the riding of Simcoe North. That doesn't include monies such as the more than \$65 million, or 20.7% increase, for operating monies for school boards in the Simcoe County District School Board, or the additional \$37.31 million, or 30% increase between 1999 and 2003, that our Simcoe-Muskoka Catholic District School Board received. These are all on top of the \$260 million that the province has invested in my riding. As well, I'd like to thank the Attorney General for the investment of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Commission for the new entertainment centre and hotel complex at Casino Rama. It's been a very positive move for the area. Our economy is strong in the Orillia and Midland area, but investments like the casino—our summer and shoulder seasons are normally the best times of the year, and that's made our whole year-round tourism activity even stronger as we get more and more people visiting north Simcoe throughout the year.

Let me reiterate that governments don't create wealth and prosperity; people do. It is our role as government to create the right conditions for Ontario citizens and businesses to flourish. We've come a long way since 1995. With 1.1 million more people working in our province and five balanced budgets, I think the people of Ontario have confidence in the future of our province. They'll look forward to the government to continue down this road, to continue prosperity for many generations to come. With people like Mrs Ecker as our Minister of Finance, we'll continue down that path.

With that, I'd like to thank the minister for allowing me to follow her this evening. As her former PA in the Ministry of Education, I was pleased to be able to work with her. I've also got to go back to my early years with Minister Ecker when she was Minister of Community and Social Services and I was the warden of the county of Simcoe. In those days, the city of Orillia, the city of Barrie and the county of Simcoe were all fighting to see which municipal level of government would become the municipal consolidated service manager for Ontario Works and all the programs that are delivered by the ministry. I thank the minister for choosing the county of Simcoe at that time. Certainly we had the largest population, and that was our argument. But I think we represented the 250,000 people in the county of Simcoe very well, and the county has done a good job. We've seen the welfare rates in the county of Simcoe drop from 11,700 cases to 3,400. The savings are something like \$20 million a year to the residents of the county of Simcoe as a result of the Ontario Works program. That's something we're proud of, and it's certainly reflected in the county's budget because they've been allowed to spend money in areas like roads etc that they wouldn't have had the money before to do.

I thank you for choosing that, but I continue to thank you for bringing out Ontario Works and following through on that promise to take more and more people off the welfare rolls of our province.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Over 600,000.

Mr Dunlop: Yes, over 600,000 people, and that's along with the 1.1 million people who have found jobs in this province. Minister Ecker, I appreciate that. I congratulate you on your second balanced budget in a row. I am very pleased that we've been able to come this far, and I thank you for your efforts in all the ministries you've had. I congratulate you for a job well done as the Minister of Finance, and appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I'll be sharing my time with the member from St Catharines and the member from Prince Edward-Hastings. I was waiting for questions and comments, but I guess we don't have any questions and comments on the budget, or we're not allowed to do that here.

The first thought that comes to mind is how disappointing it must be for the Minister of Finance to

give this speech in an almost empty chamber, when surely a budget speech should have been presented way back on March 27 right in this place rather than in an automotive plant out in Brampton.

What I found absolutely fascinating is that earlier today, you may recall, we voted on Mr Conway's motion that the budget should first be presented in the House and the government actually voted against that. I know we're here to talk about the budget itself, but I've just got to say a few words about that.

What I find very interesting about that is that the government was condemned by literally every daily newspaper editorial in this province back in late March, early April for not presenting its budget in the House. We finally came back here on April 30, and after the throne speech, you, Speaker, found that there was a prima facie case of contempt. You didn't find contempt, but you felt there was a prima facie case of contempt in that the government did not present its budget right here in the House. Mr Conway was then given the floor and moved a motion which was a very simple motion, that the House declares it's the undoubted right of the Legislative Assembly, in Parliament assembled, to be the first recipient of the budget. It was probably the most non-partisan motion I have seen in this House over the last eight years. After much debate, we voted on it today, and I think the people of Ontario should know that this government, after having been condemned editorially, after having been condemned by the people of Ontario, after you found that there was a prima facie case of contempt, voted against this motion.

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Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we're addressing the issues of the budget, not the process. I think the honourable member is off topic.

The Deputy Speaker: That's close to being a point of order, but it's not.

Mr Gerretsen: What's interesting about that is that, yes, the contents of the budget are extremely important, no question, but I think the process as well is important, and I guess this member doesn't want to talk about the process at all. The net effect of what's happened here today with the earlier motion is that this government is still intent on presenting any future budgets in any old way it sees fit, even though the Speaker has condemned them for that and the people of Ontario have condemned them for that.

Now let's deal with the budget itself. First of all, it is not a balanced budget. It is not. You can balance a budget by moving figures around, by putting all sorts of fictitious revenue figures in a budget, but that doesn't mean it's a balanced budget. Don't take my word for it. I know I'm partisan, in exactly the same way as the members of the government are partisan speakers as well. I would like to take a look, for example, at a document issued by the Toronto-Dominion Bank Financial Group. What do they say about the budget? I'm reading from a release in March of this year. It states the following:

“The revenue assumptions are based on economic growth assumptions that—while not over the top—are on the optimistic side, especially given the heightened uncertainty with respect to the war and the state of the US economy.” They go on to say, “But, even more potentially problematic”—and these are not my words but the words of the TD Bank Financial Group—“the government has for the second year in a row incorporated a roughly \$2-billion revenue windfall from asset sales, which—if last year is any indication—it may be hard-pressed to achieve. Moreover, the Ontario government has already included its share of the \$2 billion in additional federal transfers included in the February 2003 health accord that remains conditional on federal surplus funds being available at the end of the next fiscal year—probable, but hardly a slam dunk.”

The point I’m trying to make is that there may be as much as a \$3-billion shortfall. That’s in a budget of about \$70 billion, so we’re talking about a potential shortfall of some 5%. I certainly hope it doesn’t happen that way. But you may recall that the last time they had a tremendous amount of money in their budget for potential sale of assets, the people’s assets, was back in 1999. That of course was also just before an election so they could say, theoretically, that the budget was balanced by putting in an over \$2-billion revenue item for the sale of the 407. We all know what happened to that sale. The 407 was sold basically in a fire sale.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): The gift that keeps on giving.

Mr Gerretsen: Yes, the gift that keeps on giving. What’s worse is that the government, on numerous occasions in the House, indicated that the rates on the users of the 407 would not go up beyond 2% or 3% per year, I think it was, and there have been increases by as much as 10%, 20% and 30% per year. Talk about a financial boondoggle, particularly for the people using the 407.

The point, quite simply, is this: this is not a balanced budget in any way, shape or form.

Let’s take a look at some of the other issues. I heard the former parliamentary assistant, who was grovelling on the other side there, say—I’m positive I heard him correctly—that there was \$5 billion paid down on the public debt of this province. Well, I’ve got the budget document right here. It goes back from 1994-95 to the current year, 2003-04, and the most I can see being paid back in the last year is perhaps \$400 million to \$500 million. It doesn’t come anywhere close to the \$5 billion that he just claimed was paid down on the public debt of the province.

Hon Mrs Ecker: That’s not what the auditor says.

Mr Gerretsen: Well, if it’s not what the auditor says, he obviously hasn’t looked at your budget document. I am just going by what it states in this document. Let’s just go back a little. In the year 2000-01, the public debt of the province was \$110 billion, and now it’s \$109.706 billion. So it hasn’t gone down by more than about \$300 million or \$400 million during the last two to three years.

Let’s take a look at some of the other things about this budget. Let’s take a look at health care. I have particular interest in the community care access centres, as our party’s long-term-care critic. You may recall that earlier today I gave a statement in which I said the Premier of this province was visited by the Home and Community Care Roundtable, an organization made up of about 25 different organizations that represent the interests of seniors and the vulnerable in our society. They include organizations well known to you and me, such as the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, the Ontario Community Support Association, Communities for Home Health Care, the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens Organizations, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Ontario Health Coalition, the Retired Teachers of Ontario, the Victorian Order of Nurses, the United Senior Citizens of Ontario and I could go on and on and on.

These individuals met with the Premier and his staff and made an urgent plea to him earlier this month. They said, “Premier, in 1999, your Minister of Health made a statement in the House that you were going to increase the budget of the CCACs by some \$500 million, that there was going to be a program to be phased in over a number of years. You haven’t done that, Premier, and as a result, the following has happened.” This is directly from their letter to the Premier. They say that more than 115,000 vulnerable seniors and persons with debilitating diseases have lost services completely. They used to get some home care and nursing care services; they no longer get it. The number of hours of service has declined by some 30%. Over six million hours of services for home-making, personal support, nursing and therapy services have been cut. They go on and say, “Please live up to your commitment of 1998 and put in that \$76 million dollars this year.” That would leave, then, a balance of about \$150 million of that commitment over the next two years.

You may recall that they of course didn’t get it. The Premier didn’t live up to his promise. Luckily, today we got the estimates, the actual estimates of what the government intends to spend in these different areas. What is the estimate for community care access centres? Well, let me just give you the figures. In last year’s estimates, it was \$1.191 billion. What is it this year? \$1.204 billion, a \$13-million increase. It is at least \$60 million short of providing the kind of home care services that this government committed itself to.

Who are the losers in all that? The most vulnerable people in our society.

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The government likes to applaud the fact that it is giving the senior citizen education tax credit, worth about \$450 million. It will average—well, I’ll take the minister’s figure—something like \$450 per resident. Of course what she isn’t saying is that, first of all, tenants won’t be getting any of that money. Some people may be getting as much as \$27,000 per year, if you live in a multi-million dollar home. If you live in a home assessed

below the average, you may be getting something much less than that. What's interesting is this: it is a very smart move on the government's part to try to buy the votes of the seniors by saying, "You're all getting \$300 to \$400 back as your education property tax credit. You're not going to school; you no longer have to pay it." I suppose an argument could be made by a heck of a lot of young people. They could say, "Well, we're not using the health care system. Why should we pay for that?" If we kept going with that kind of analysis, we'd end up with a society that would no longer be Ontario, that would no longer be Canada, because people would only be paying for what they figure they need at any given moment. But that's not the kind of society we live in.

What would be a heck of a lot smarter for the government, and is something we have committed ourselves to in our election platform, is to take that \$450 million that they want to hand out to all the seniors out there and say, "OK, how can we really serve the senior population out there?" They could meet the requests of the long-term-care facilities, which are about \$250 million short, to give the proper nursing and personal care standards in our long-term-care homes, and the \$250 million for community care so that all those people who are living in their own homes who want to recuperate from hospital procedures or who have some sort of chronic health care problem could be properly looked after.

In other words, wouldn't it have made an awful lot more sense to make that \$450 million available for those seniors who either need it in nursing homes for increased standards of nursing and personal care or need it in home care so they could stay in their own homes longer? In survey after survey, if you ask a senior, "What do you prefer? Do you prefer to live in an institution or would you prefer to live in your own home?" the vast majority, 99% of them, will say, "I prefer to live in my own home environment. I'd like to live at home, but I need some services to do that." The government could have accomplished that by taking that \$450 million they're prepared to give away to all the senior citizens and actually channel it to those individuals who need it. That's what government should be all about. Government should be all about helping those individuals get the proper services they need. I think that would have been the compassionate way of dealing with this.

Let's go on to some of the other health care issues. It's interesting. We've heard a lot about two-tier systems. I just want the people of Ontario to know that we, in our policy platform on health care, are committing ourselves to passing a law, a commitment to medicare act, that will make universal public medicare the law in Ontario. Isn't that the right thing to do? Isn't that the best thing we could possibly do for individuals, to ensure they will get the medical services required?

It's interesting. When you take a look at the number of doctors or nurses we have in the province of Ontario and compare it to how many nurses or doctors there are elsewhere in Canada, we are by far the lowest-ranking province. We have 95 doctors for every 100,000 people

in our population. The rest of Canada has closer to 100 doctors for every 100,000 people in their population. We have 67 nurses per 10,000 population. What does the rest of Canada have? They have 85 nurses per 10,000 population.

The point is quite simply this: as a result of the mismanagement by this government of our health care system over the last eight years, we have in so many different ways become the absolute lowest standard in Canada. I suppose there is no better way to look at it than how we treat our senior citizens in our long-term-care facilities. It is hard to believe that when we compare ourselves to jurisdictions of roughly an equal size in terms of population, when we compare ourselves to Mississippi, Louisiana and to some of the other provinces and states in Canada and the United States and to some of the European countries of roughly our population base, we provide the least amount of nursing and personal care for the people in our long-term-care facilities. Even that standard, about 2.25 hours per day per senior, even that criterion has been done away with by this government. What's the net result? The net result is that the people who live in those homes aren't getting as much nursing care as they should be getting. We all know that the people there are getting older, getting frailer, have a much greater acuity level than they ever had before. The people who work in those facilities work extremely hard, but they simply cannot keep up. As a result, an awful lot of our seniors are neglected to some degree or another in the long-term-care homes. I once again say that this government would have served the neediest in our population an awful lot better by making sure that the funding was available there, rather than providing it for all the seniors out there.

There are so many other issues that we can talk about and debate in the budget, but let me just tell you this: I am absolutely convinced, from the platform policies that have now come out from all three parties, that it is only the Liberal Party, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, that can once again bring back to Ontario a sense of compassion, a sense of balance and the kind of Ontario that I think you and I want for ourselves and for our children.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The member for—

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): Prince Edward-Hastings, the greatest riding in the province. It's a pleasure to represent it.

I'm pleased to follow the member for Kingston and the Islands on this issue. It is a bit of a challenge to speak on. Do you perceive it as a genuine budget, or is it an election platform in the guise of a budget? I think it's probably an election platform, but still, we will give it the respect a budget deserves.

First of all, it didn't hurt all that much to do it in the Legislature, did it? It wasn't that painful. I do hope you're not offended; I'd like to make a little constructive criticism on several points that I think you will find

beneficial and want to incorporate. That's my role, and I think you appreciate the role.

Having read and studied and listened to it, the first thing I'd like to advise you is that it's not a balanced budget. It's not. I mean, you can keep saying it. It's like saying, "We're going to fix health care," but saying you're going to fix health care doesn't fix health care. Saying it's a balanced budget doesn't make it a balanced budget. Now, this isn't me saying it. This is a fairly complicated province to do a budget on, so we look to people who are neutral—no political party—but have great financial expertise. Standard and Poor's, a firm that has been around a long time rating governments and their financial viability, says it's actually a \$1.2-billion deficit. The Dominion Bond Rating Service, a neutral organization that's very, very credible, I'm sure you will agree, and the TD Bank, again an organization that's extremely credible and extremely neutral, say that you actually have a \$2-billion deficit.

You're saying it's balanced, but it's balanced if you sell \$2 billion in assets. Let's think about it. It's as if I sat down at home with my family—and this province is like a very large family—and said, "Look, we have worked out a budget for next year that will enable us to balance all of our income and expenses for the house, except we have to sell the house. We will have to sell the house, but once we've sold it, we'll be balanced." You're selling assets, and if they don't sell well, you're going to sell them at fire sale prices, and that is very unfair to the people of Ontario.

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First of all, certain things are essentially public services that should not be sold. But I would remind you of the old axiom that you'll never buy anything as cheap as something you already own. You're going to sell off things that were bought with hard-earned taxpayers' dollars to get re-elected. I really fear this is a re-election document; it's not a budget.

To balance your budget, you're going to include in it \$967 million from the federal government, but you know from your discussions with them that that money comes only if there is a sufficient surplus at the federal government. That's a best guess, but you know things change rapidly in this world. The issue with mad cow disease has the potential to have a very negative impact on a lot of farms and a lot of jobs in manufacturing. That could erode some of that surplus, so the budget is even less balanced.

And there's an innocuous little line in there that says you're going to cut \$700 million from in-year savings. What does that mean? More cuts to public service? The words "public service" are significant. The public pays taxes for service. If you think you can find more cuts within the public service—first of all, I'm going to suggest to you that you pretend you're a farmer, or perhaps you even are a farmer. Call the Ministry of Agriculture and then come back to us and tell us how long you waited on the line. How long did the recording say it would be before they got to your call? Try dealing

with the Family Responsibility Office even now. I can't picture it with further cuts. Try to deal with the Family Responsibility Office. And if you're an Ontarian with a disability who needs to apply for ODSP, try going through the process that, because of the lack of staff and lack of support, we're forcing our most vulnerable citizens to go through. There is not \$700 million in in-house savings unless you're prepared to sell out even more Ontario citizens to get re-elected.

Every day on every media outlet is the issue of safety and security in our province and in the world. We live in extremely difficult and challenging times. We heard statements made within this Legislature following that horrible event of September 11, and now I look at the budget and realize that the budget cuts \$181 million out of safety and security. That's the wrong direction.

Mr Smitherman: Way to go.

Mr Parsons: Yes, way to go, that once the issue appears a little bit quieter, we can chop the money there. The people of Ontario aren't looking for less safety and less security.

I go through the budget and I look at seniors. As a government, you've cut home care. There's no money in here to restore that. You've raised nursing home fees. Now, you were going to do a 15% increase, which you tried to put through very quietly on a Friday after the House was recessed, and you backed off to do 7%, 4% and 4%; 7% plus 4% plus 4% is 15%. I believe it's fair to say that no seniors in this province will have had a 15% increase in their income over the three years, and you're still doing it.

You've announced some money into long-term care. But the public needs to know that about a quarter of that money is actually coming from the residents; it's not government money.

I have visited a number of seniors' homes in my community, and I am intrigued by your philosophy regarding meals. You allocate so many dollars per senior per day in a nursing home. Similarly, for provincial jails and detention centres, you allow a certain number of dollars per inmate. Intriguingly, you allow about three times as much per day for an inmate as you do for one of our seniors. You fund our seniors at about \$5 a day for meals, and you fund our jails at about \$15 a day for meals. Wouldn't it be nice if your government would treat our seniors as well as you treat our prisoners? That would be a phenomenal improvement for the seniors in our community. You should be ashamed of that, and this budget doesn't change it.

Health care: I have been told that in 1995 two hospitals in Ontario had deficits. I now understand, if the information is correct, all but two hospitals had deficits. Granted, there's money in your budget for new construction, but the reality for our health care in the hospitals is that they're virtually all experiencing significant deficits.

There aren't a lot of things they can play with in a hospital to make cuts. In my community, because of a \$2-million shortfall, they're going to be getting rid of

nurses, and they are doing what every other hospital in Ontario is doing: employing part-time nurses, part-time registered professional nurses, trying to operate at the minimal level, not to break even but to minimize the deficit position they're in. They're in a deficit position because, although they're providing quality care at the best possible delivery cost, they're not being funded.

In this budget, this government has talked about 8,000 new nurses. There's no money in the budget to pay for 8,000 new nurses. This government has made statements very supportive of nurse practitioners, but there's no money in this budget to pay nurse practitioners.

The multi-year funding concept is good; I applaud that. We're going to tell our hospitals and we're going to tell our schools for several years ahead what the level will be, but if the level that you grant them is too low, knowing it two or three years ahead still doesn't enable them to provide the service that they need to provide to the patients.

In education, the attacks on students with high needs, special-education needs, continues unabated. I do not understand, because I know the phone calls that come to my office from parents who can't get their children an educational assistant, can't get in the special-education program. I don't understand how I can get those calls and be bothered by it and you must be getting those calls on that side of the House and are not reacting to it.

Our young people who have special needs in schools continue to get short shrift. Rozanski gave a report which indicated very clearly, in simplest terms, that the money you took out of the education system needed to go back in. Within \$1 million or so, that balanced on it. You immediately pledged \$610 million last year because of Rozanski's recommendations. You actually spent \$349 million. You pledged \$610 million; you spent \$349 million.

One of the challenges facing us as a society is encouraging people to vote. Only about half the people in Ontario vote, slightly over half at the provincial level, because they're becoming very cynical about politicians and about the legislative process. Holding the budget in a training centre doesn't help at all to get respect for the Legislature. When you keep saying the budget is balanced and it's not and when you say you're giving more money for special education and you actually don't deliver what you're saying, it makes our young people cynical enough that they say, "I'm not getting involved with this." If our young people do not vote, we are on a downward, very dangerous slide into losing the democracy that the rest of the world envies. It is not just a matter of these numbers to try to get re-elected; it is much more serious than that, ladies and gentlemen. It is serious because it drives the voters away when they see games being played—and games are being played.

We heard a statement earlier about the wonderful new transit plan that would allow you to go from Peel to Durham with an electronic card. You need to mention you can't go through Toronto, because the TTC is not part of it. Why aren't they part of it? It's not that they

don't want to be part of it; they have been so starved for cash since 1995 that they don't have the \$40 million that it takes to buy into the technology to make this work. It would be great for the citizens of the greater Toronto area to genuinely be able to get on something in Peel and travel through on the TTC and get off at Durham, but it ain't going to happen. When you talk about it, you need to mention, "But there is this little area in the middle called Toronto that you can't ride through."

2020

The Ministry of the Environment continues to struggle in terms of funding. This budget doesn't improve it. There's so much emphasis in this budget on safe water. You're going to have the plants, you're going to have the pipes cleaned, you're going to have the technology to take this dirty water and make it clean drinking water. Would you not sit down and think about it? Would it not be simpler to protect the groundwater source from getting polluted, protect their streams, protect their underground water? Instead of investing money in the technology to clean up the dirty water, keep the water clean. That's not rocket science; that's fairly elementary. But there's no money devoted in this budget. There's no emphasis at all on keeping the water clean, and I simply don't understand that. I guess there's no ribbon-cutting at a water treatment plant if you don't have to treat the water to clean it.

I have a prime example right in my community where there's a company that wants to considerably expand the Richmond landfill, which is just outside the town of Napanee. This government has approved a greatly scoped environmental assessment. They said, "We don't need a full environmental assessment; we'll just restrict it to a few things to check, and that will speed the process up." Well, it hasn't sped the process up, because all the parties are in court arguing over it. But it would seem to me that if that dump really doesn't present any risk to the groundwater, then it would pass an environmental assessment. So why would you reduce the criteria for environmental assessment unless you feared that it wouldn't pass it?

If you think about it, you want to expand a dump that is located on fractured limestone. You may not be geologists—I'm not—but the word "fractured" certainly tells me everything I need to know about the fact that there's going to be leakage out of this dump into the groundwater, and there's nothing you can do to clean it once it gets into there.

For rural Ontario, groundwater is the difference between being in business and not, living in an area and not living there. You can have the finest house in the world, you can have the greatest farmland and the most prosperous farm operation, but if you don't have clean water for yourselves and for your livestock, then that land just becomes dormant, barren land for absolutely generations. This government still has nothing in this budget for the Ministry of the Environment to address the very simple object of, "Let's keep the water clean so we don't have to clean it up after."

As an engineer, I have a fair appreciation for the shortages of apprentices in Ontario. We have a crying need for apprentices in a lot of our skilled trades. You're going to give a tax credit for employers to hire an apprentice, and that's great. But you also very quietly implemented a \$400-per-course fee for apprentices. Apprentices have signed up with a company to start their apprenticeship. They work at a considerably reduced salary compared to the regular tradespeople. On top of that, they have to go on unemployment to go back and take these courses, and in many cases they have to travel somewhere and pay temporary living expenses while they're taking these courses. They have to buy their own tools for many of the trades. I'm telling you, quietly adding the \$400-per-class fee is not an incentive to attract people into apprenticeships. When you are short a particular occupation, I would suggest to you that you want to do things to attract them into it, not drive them away. A tax credit for the employer is great for the employer. The more employers will hire, the better the apprenticeship program, but you need to do something to attract our young people into apprenticeship. You're failing miserably, and in fact you're penalizing them with this \$400 fee.

There was reference made by the minister that the opportunity bonds have sold very well. There was going to be \$50 million, and now that they're actually sold there's \$100 million. So now we have \$100 million for municipalities to work with. That's not \$100 million that fell out of the heavens; it's not manna, it's debt. It is debt that the municipalities have now incurred. So rather than boasting about it, you have again downloaded to the municipalities an additional \$100 million. Granted, the person who buys the bonds doesn't have to pay Ontario tax on them, but the municipality has to pay interest to the bondholder. You have very quietly transferred debt, so it's an opportunity for you to download something more. I guess that's what "opportunity bonds" means: a wonderful opportunity for the government to download a debt onto our local municipalities. That's too bad. I think that's a shame.

I look at some other things in here. There's a reference to people on ODSP in the budget. You're going to allow a tax credit to them that will enable them to benefit; increased support for caregivers, and you're going to have a tax credit.

If someone on ODSP who's disabled and living with their parents receives \$708 a month, which is about \$8,500 a year, that's not very much money, folks. If they're living on their own on ODSP, they can receive the huge sum of \$11,160 a year. That's only about \$8,000 below the poverty level. What appears to be generous in here—first of all, it says that they're going to have tax credits. When you make \$8,496 a year, a tax credit is not going to have a big effect on your income. If you don't pay taxes, it's going to do nothing for you. This will mean, though, an average tax saving for people of \$300 a year. So now we have someone who makes \$11,160—and I would challenge anyone on the government side to

try to live for one year on \$11,160 and pay rent, purchase clothes and buy food. Now, instead of \$11,160, they may make as much as \$11,460, still \$8,000 below the poverty level.

This doesn't improve anything for people on ODSP. In fact, the budget doesn't provide one penny in increased funding for people who have been unfortunate enough to have a disability. I've never met anyone who chose to have a disability, but they're being penalized for the disability by being made to live far below the poverty level. In this budget there's absolutely nothing on it.

On the health portion, you speak about waiting lists being too long and that you're going to deal with them. Even with this budget you will continue to have the horrendous situation where two thirds of the individuals in our province who have been diagnosed with cancer will not have access to radiation within the eight weeks recommended by the medical community. The waiting lists for the most critical people still will not be improved. Granted, some of your friends will be operating private MRI clinics, but there still will not be radiation technology. So the waiting lists for those who need the cure don't get any better.

I hope the government side has understood that these are very mild constructive criticisms. The atmosphere perhaps isn't as nice as it was at Magna, but I think we have an obligation to point out, on behalf of the people of Ontario, that this budget is an election document that really doesn't have defensible numbers.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I would like to mention that before I came to the House today I attended a funeral for an individual in St Catharines who was highly respected. This gentleman's name was Paul Salfi.

All of us have gone to funerals of our friends, and I think one of the marks of a person who has been a major part of the community is that he is an individual who gathers at the funeral people from all walks of life. Members of the House would find it amusing in its way that as pallbearers, on one side of the casket was the president of the Progressive Conservative association provincially in St Catharines and on the other side was an executive member of the Liberal Party. So you had both Liberals and Conservatives, and I'm sure New Democrats, in St Julia's church in St Catharines.

There were two different schools: one a Catholic high school, Denis Morris, which is right across the street from Sir Winston Churchill, where Paul Salfi coached, and both of them had students and teachers there to pay tribute. An individual of great intellect—you would have enjoyed it. You represent Stratford as part of your riding, Mr Speaker. Paul Salfi loved Shakespeare. He taught English in such a way that everybody who had him as an English teacher would remember that experience.

While it was a very sad gathering, because we are always sorry to lose an individual of that kind—and indeed the church was completely full, overflowing with people who were there to pay tribute to him—it was nice

at least to have his contribution to his community and to the members of the family recognized on that occasion.

I should tell you that he was also interested in politics. He stopped in to my constituency office a few weeks ago and left me a letter, which I will not read in the House today. It was a letter concerning his observations on the budget outside the House and a few other observations on what the government was or wasn't doing. I say that only to indicate that here was an individual interested in the process, interested in politics, interested in the arts, interested in the classics and interested and involved in sports.

2030

I know in all of our communities we have such individuals. I think their mark on our community and on individuals in the community is seen by the number of people who are at a funeral home, by the number of people who attend a funeral, by the number of people who send messages to the family. Certainly I say to his wife Lillian and son Jamie and daughter Patricia and all members of the family that people in our community were extremely sad today, but were celebrating the life of Paul Salfi.

Sometimes when we're in this House we think that what is important is what we do in this House, and indeed it is important. But in events and circumstances of this kind, we recognize that there are people outside the realm of active politics who make a substantial contribution to a community. Paul Salfi, who was a good friend of so many in our community, and I was pleased to be able to call him a friend and confidante, is no longer with us in terms of his physical body, but his spirit lives on and his memory lives on.

I want to thank you for permitting me to make some remarks about Paul Salfi, which we sometimes can, and it's showing a little bit of leeway in the rules. But I also want to speak about the budget, because at long last we have the budget debate in this House. I think that would have been good in the first place. Much has been said. Editorial after editorial, experts in the field of public affairs and the general public have expressed the view that this is where the budget debate should take place.

Earlier today we had a vote on contempt of the House. A ruling had been made by the Speaker that there was a prima facie case of contempt of the House but that the House would have to decide. The two opposition parties voted for Mr Conway's motion indicating there was contempt—his motion didn't even say that. His motion, interestingly enough, was milder than that. It simply said that the budget should first be presented in this House.

I won't dwell on the issue a long time, but I think the people of this province decided that that should be the case. I must say I was genuinely surprised at the degree of anger, the degree of annoyance with this manoeuvre, obviously advised upon the government by what I call political whiz kids, political smart characters in the backrooms, and perhaps not agreed to entirely by members of the cabinet or of the government caucus. I

think this is the place where the debate should take place, and indeed there will be a difference of opinion.

I must say even the opposition would see virtue in some provisions in the budget. There's no budget I've ever seen in this House that was all wrong because the government presented it or all right because I happened to be part of the government presenting the budget. I think there would be a consensus in this House that this budget has some measures that are good and some that are not. For instance, my colleague mentioned those who are on Ontario disability support payments or pensions. Those individuals have not had a raise for some 10 years, through two different governments, through various circumstances. The member for Don Valley West waves a copy of the glossy, expensive document that he has, his Conservative platform. As he leaves, I'll try to show him this—I know it's illegal to have this, Mr Speaker, but you will recall, because you're a reader of Maclean's magazine, in the May 19 issue a 30-page insert paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario. Is it straightforward information? No. It is what I think every fair-minded person out there would say is government propaganda.

I want to say to the people of this province that, as they watch the commercials on television—I'm not talking about the ones paid for by the Progressive Conservative Party, and there are a few of those there now, and that is certainly legitimate, but the millions upon millions of dollars that have been expended on government commercials that extol the virtues of government policies: the full-page ads in newspapers; the inserts we saw last Wednesday in various newspapers; the huge signs on the highway saying something like, "Building Ontario Together: Ernie Eves, Premier"; the radio ads that talk about the budget and how it is so good for the people of Ontario; the pamphlets that seem to arrive weekly.

None of them could match even the weak advertising content directive from the provincial government itself, which says that the following, and I think the public would like to know—they're paying for these ads—should happen:

"Material should be presented in unbiased and objective language, and in a manner free from partisan promotion of government policy and political argument. Material should not directly attack or scorn the views, policies or actions of others such as the policies and opinions of opposition parties or groups. Information should avoid party-political slogans or images. This may involve restrictions on the use of ministerial photographs.

"Care should be taken to ensure that government advertising material is not used or reproduced by members of political parties in support of political activities without appropriate approval.

"All advertising material and the manner of presentation should comply with relevant law, including broadcasting, media and electoral law."

These are fairly weak guidelines, and the advertising I've seen by this government, the carpet-bombing of the province with advertising, does not comply with this. If a

government's policies are good enough, surely by press releases, by government announcements, by speeches by members of the Legislature in their own constituencies and others, they can present it in such a way that the public may or may not disagree. But in my view it is an abuse of public office, an abuse of power and some people would use the term "cheating," in an electoral sense, to use government funds, taxpayer funds, to do this.

If the political party wants to do it, and some members put out political pamphlets, that's fine with me. I think that's part of the political system. But I think the government has shown disdain for the electorate through this, and I suspect there are some government members who believe it to be excessive and inappropriate, though I don't expect they're going to rise in the House to say it this evening.

I see my friend Bill Murdoch here. I want to touch on something else, because I know that he, as a former municipal political representative, would likely agree with me, though I don't ask him to get up to agree, that this idea contained in the Conservative platform that every time a municipal council wishes to, or is forced to, raise taxes, it must have a referendum is bizarre to say the least. I found no one, but no one, of any political stripe—perhaps those who are candidates for the Conservatives who are municipal politicians might be in favour—who is in favour of that. It's absolutely bizarre. I don't think it's really going to get you any more votes than you had before. The core of people who believe that are going to vote for you anyway.

But those of us who have sat on municipal councils and watched senior levels of government—particularly provincial, because the provincial government has a closer relationship with the municipal governments—download responsibilities and put obligations on municipalities, recognize that those municipalities sometimes, as a result, are forced to raise the municipal tax levy. They, at the end of their term, as we do, must face the electorate. If the electorate is displeased, the electorate will indicate so by putting those people out of office and electing new people.

2040

I want to know if any government member, outside of Tory candidates, has found any municipal elected representative who believes this is a virtuous policy. I can't find them. That tells me that policy didn't come from the elected members. That came from the backrooms. There is a name I use in this House often, because I see his name in the paper and on television from time to time. He is alleged to be a very powerful person, a gentleman by the name of Guy Giorno. He appears to have—

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): What seat did he win?

Mr Bradley: The member my friend Bill Murdoch asks a very good question: "What seat did he win?" Indeed, I wonder what seat, because he seems to have more power even than some members of the cabinet. I'm often surprised by that, and I would think that some of the

government members are probably as annoyed at this as when they watch him write the platform. If you let the elected representatives write the platform, or even write the budget, it might be somewhat different than it is now.

I look at the need for—I started out with this—a raise in the payments for those on disability in this province who have had that frozen for some 10 years. These are people who are trying to cope. Sometimes they get some employment they're able to take on. They should not be penalized for doing so if it is within the bounds of reality. They don't expect that to be the case, but I think there's a need there.

Seniors in this province, in terms of health care, recognize the importance of having funding for health care. Every time a tax is cut in the province, and I know there's a dangling of bait before seniors now saying, "Look, you don't have to pay the education tax any more"—let me tell you, all those taxes go into one pot; they don't just go into an education pot. It may well mean less money for nursing homes, more user fees for seniors when they want to get prescription drugs or access the health care system. It comes back to haunt you. The government has already cut taxes on many occasions. I think most of the public recognizes now that there's a need for revenue to provide the kinds of services people need and want. Many of those are services for seniors.

People with macular degeneration, a terrible eye affliction, have had to go through several hoops and barriers set up by this government, which finally capitulated to opposition demands that some compensation and payments under OHIP be provided for macular degeneration. But today it's still difficult to get this particular service. I think that's important.

Another one that I get a lot of calls on, and perhaps other members do, is the prostate specific antigen test, which helps to detect at least the possibility of cancer of the prostate. People have to pay for that test. That is wrong.

Mr Murdoch: Ten bucks

Mr Bradley: It some cases it may be \$10. I know it can be up to \$50 in some cases. It seems to me that at least once a year, or ordered by a medical specialist, this test should be available, particularly when it can save lives or improve the quality of life of people.

I look at my friend Bob Runciman. I hear this government talk about security and police and worry a lot about those issues. I look in this budget and there's a \$181-million cut in that budget this year. That's after a \$60-million cut last year. I know it's difficult for my friend Mr Runciman to rise in the House, as he does with such vigour and vitality to denounce the opposition, or to denounce another level of government or to talk about the virtues of government policy, when they've cut \$60 million last year and \$181 million this year from his budget.

I look at public transit in this province. We in the Niagara Peninsula want to see GO Transit service come to the Niagara Peninsula. The other alternative, of course, is VIA Rail, or a combination of both. What I think could

happen is this: the federal government has already said they've got their money on the table. They've challenged the provincial government to allow more trains—that is, public transit, GO Transit—to come to the Niagara region. Perhaps tourists will use it to come to the Niagara region, to Niagara Falls, St Catharines and other parts of the region. Perhaps those who have medical appointments or have to commute could use it at the same time. That would be beneficial. Yet I noted in—when was it, Bill—1998 this government got right out of the public transportation business completely, which I thought was unfortunate.

There's a need in our area where we have prime agricultural land to save that agricultural land, but if you want to save that agricultural land, it seems to me you have to save the farmers first; that's exceedingly important.

I notice the issue of insurance premiums has reared its head again around the province. Particularly with car insurance, but with house insurance and other forms of insurance, rates have gone through the ceiling in many cases. That is something that may put some people out of business, hurt some businesses and certainly be hurtful to individuals who need car insurance, house insurance or other forms of insurance that are required, with high premiums being the word of the day.

In education, I think what people are looking for is, again, stability and a good feeling out there.

I lament the fact that I see the government in its latest document getting involved in wedge issues again. Do their advisers say they're politically astute? Yes. But do they bring the province together? I think we, as political representatives, have a role in bringing out the best in people, the generosity of people, generosity of spirit of people in the community. When we set one set of the population against the others, when we dangle special favours in front of some at the expense of others, when we set one group of people against another group of people through legislative measures, when we rail on against—or we have what we call a dog whistle. A dog whistle is a whistle that only the people you want to hear, hear it—the dog, in this case. If you want to stir up resentment against immigrants to the country, you simply use some code words, and that conjures up in the mind something that has been said about immigrants over the years.

Jim Coyle of the Toronto Star wrote a column a number of years ago where he talked about what they said about each new set of immigrants as they arrived in the country. The remarks were not complimentary. But it is said again today, and down through the generations—your ancestors and mine, perhaps they said that about, Mr Speaker—and now new generations have things said about them that are not complimentary. I think that's fanned by policies which aim, in an indirect way or a direct way, at the immigrant population.

In our community, we have a proposal for two new hospitals, right across the street from one another, to replace two existing hospitals. It's an outstanding pro-

posal. Why? It didn't come from the hospital destruction commission, as I call it; it came from the local community. The Catholic hospital and the general hospital got together and said, "We have this wonderful plan. We think it can work. We can share resources. We'll bury the hatchet of past arguments." I think that would be good for our community, and I'm certainly supportive.

Lastly, I would hope that we improve substantially the care that is given in our home care homes—our nursing homes and seniors' homes in this province.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): At the outset, I want to let you know that I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Sault Ste Marie.

I want to deal with a couple of issues that arise, both from the budget—the bogus budget that the government brought in at Magna Corp—and also one issue that has arisen with respect to the release of their platform.

Let me deal with the first one that has a direct link to Magna. Of course, that has to do with the gift that this government is going to make to one Frank Stronach, who desperately needs help to pay for his property taxes on his \$10-million estate—I think that's the value that we're putting on it. Poor Frank, having great difficulty paying his property taxes, is now going to benefit from a change that this government made and announced in that bogus budget. That, of course, is the change that will say that seniors who own or rent their homes are now going to be eligible for a credit that will reimburse their full residential education property tax, or just over a third of their property taxes. Because that is uncapped in the proposal that the government has put forward, this of course is going to result in a huge benefit for the wealthy like poor Frank, who can't afford to pay his property taxes, I'm sure.

In short, Mr Stronach, who owns Magna, where the bogus budget was held, is going to get a cheque from the government of one third of his property tax. Given that his estate is worth about \$10 million, I suspect that that is going to be a quite substantial bit of money that he's going to get back from this government. I'm sure he needs it; he's not wealthy enough. I'm going to deal with his personal income, and the benefit he's going to get on his personal income, in a minute. But the first gift that the government gives to its friends, rich corporate friends, is that one.

What's also interesting as a result of that change, which sees seniors who are extremely wealthy get a big tax break from this government, is that, of course, everybody else suffers because the promised 10% reduction in education property taxes for everyone else has gone by the wayside to pay for Frank and others, who obviously need this relief so desperately.

2050

It was interesting that the Toronto Sun wasn't very happy with this prospect either. You know that the Toronto Sun is usually quite supportive of anything this government puts forward. The Toronto Sun is a big supporter of the Conservative party. But even the Toronto Sun has some huge difficulties in knowing that Frank

Stronach and Steve Stavros and others are going to have big chunks of their property taxes paid for courtesy of everybody else—people who least need to have their property taxes paid for.

You see, it's worth pointing out that there already was a program in place to support low-income and modest-income seniors with their property taxes. That was a change made by our government. So seniors in the province who were having trouble dealing with property taxes—usually as a result of the downloading of services by this provincial government on to municipalities without any corresponding funding to go with those programs—as a result of changes we made, were getting property tax relief, and well they should, because we want those seniors to be able to stay in their homes. There is no reason—no reason whatsoever—for us to be giving property tax relief to millionaires in Ontario. This is what the government proposes to do with this budget change.

Here's what the Toronto Sun had to say:

"In the 1999 election, the Ontario Tories promised 'we'll cut the provincial portion of residential property taxes by 20%, phased in over our next term.'

"It's right there on page 11 of their 'Blueprint' ...

"They promised this would provide 'relief to every homeowner and renter in Ontario' since they'd require apartment owners to pass along the savings to tenants through lower rents.

"Of course, that was then and this is now.

"The Tories did implement the first 10% of this promised tax cut. But in Finance Minister Janet Ecker's March 27 budget—the one delivered at the auto parts plant"—and it's noteworthy that the Toronto Sun raises that—"they broke the second half of this promise. Instead, they used the final 10% of the promised general tax cut to pay for an enriched program of tax relief for seniors, one of their core groups of supporters.

"Thus was born their new promise to give seniors an average \$475 tax break on the education portion of their property taxes.

"As John Williamson, Ontario director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, notes, 'It's bad public policy not only to break your election promises, but to set tax policy based on such things as age or gender.'"

I'll remind you that John Williamson, Ontario director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, is no friend of the NDP but a big friend of the Conservatives. He's not very excited about this proposal either. He says, and I'm just going to quote it again, "It's bad public policy not only to break your election promises, but to set tax policy based on such things as age or gender."

I go back to the editorial:

"The Tories argue seniors have paid into the education system all their lives and, especially since they no longer have children in the system, deserve a special break. Fine. Many younger taxpayers have no kids in the system, either, and use far less health care than seniors. Using Tory logic, where's their special tax break?

"The Tories have made a bad idea even worse by not setting a cap on the value of a property to which this tax break applies." Hence Magna and Mr Stronach. "While the average senior will get \$475, those with homes valued at, say, \$5 million, will get about \$20,000." Well, we know that Mr Stronach is going to get more because his house is valued at about \$10 million. "At least the Tories should cap the value of a home to which the break applies at around \$300,000.

"But that would simply be mitigating the damage caused by one targeted tax by targeting it even more. Instead, we believe the Tories should do what they said they would do in 1999. As we recall, that was one of the principles" of the Common Sense Revolution.

I'll remind you, Speaker, and those who are watching, that that's an editorial from the Toronto Sun, usually very supportive of initiatives brought in by this government and not usually very critical publicly of things this government is doing. But I guess even the Toronto Sun realizes how absolutely asinine it is to ask other taxpayers to pay for a property tax break for the likes of Frank Stronach. It's unacceptable; it's ridiculous; it shouldn't be happening.

What's interesting is that the Conservative candidate in Nickel Belt was invited by CBC Radio in northeastern Ontario to come on to their show. They had a 25th anniversary program just before Easter, on the Thursday before Easter weekend. The issue the CBC wanted to deal with was this very promise the government had made, this commitment to give a tax break to seniors, even wealthy seniors, to help them pay for property taxes. What was interesting was that every caller but one to the show was absolutely opposed to what the government was doing—opposed. And the Tory candidate tried desperately—desperately—to defend the government initiative and got nowhere.

The people who called, and many of them were seniors, gave two reasons. The first reason they had to be opposed was that they said very publicly that they recognized the benefit of education and the benefit that Ontario realizes by having a well-educated workforce, and that education in Ontario produces our doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges and all of those people who make our society work. Those people who called in and were supportive—and only one, I remind you, was opposed—made mention of the fact that they were quite prepared to pay for education because they benefited by having the service of a doctor, they benefited by having the service of a nurse educated in Ontario, they benefited by having the services of many, many other people who benefit from Ontario's education system. They were quite prepared to continue to pay for that because they recognize the value in it for them, even as seniors.

The second argument made was that many of them expressed concern that if the government was prepared to do this to benefit them because they were seniors and no longer have kids in school, what would happen, for example, if a government decided that younger people should not pay for CPP or old age security because

younger people were not directly benefiting? Their argument was that you can change this and younger people would have a very legitimate argument to say, "I don't benefit from getting old age security or CPP. Why should I pay?" And many were—

Hon Frank Klees (Minister of Transportation): Oh, get serious.

Ms Martel: The member says, "Get serious." That's what people said when they called in. I am relating to you what callers said when they called in. Maybe you don't like that your poor Tory candidate had nothing to say and only one person supported him. I bet you he was feeling pretty bad by the end of that interview as well. But the fact of the matter is, seniors called in to say, "We recognize there's a common good for programs that all of us contribute to. Younger people help us and support us by paying for CPP and OAS; we should be paying to support our grandchildren and other people's children in a first-class education system."

That was the reaction from people in our region to the proposal put forward, and the Conservative candidate got nowhere—absolutely nowhere—in trying to sell this initiative. People saw through it, people didn't accept it, and I think when people understand just how great the benefit is that people like Frank Stronach and others are going to receive from this as their tax dollars get diverted to paying for property taxes for wealthy people, they're going to like it even less.

The second gift for Mr Stronach that occurred on the same day the bogus budget was held at his facility at Magna had to do with the elimination of the high-income surtax. Of course, Mr Stronach benefits quite directly from this. I should point out that it's a budget promise that the government intends to completely eliminate the high-income surtax. When that surtax is eliminated, it will result in a \$3.5-million personal savings for one Mr Stronach, based on his 2001 income.

Poor Frank needs help paying his property taxes, and now poor Frank needs some help getting some of his income tax back. He's going to get a windfall of \$3.5 million because of this government's tax initiative to do away with the surtax on high-income earners.

In fact, full elimination of this surtax is going to cost Ontario \$3.1 billion alone, 95% of which will go to the 5% of taxpayers with incomes over \$100,000 a year. Ninety-five per cent of the benefit of that change, a \$3.1-billion change, is going to go to the top 5% of taxpayers with incomes over \$100,000 a year. Talk about Robin Hood in reverse. Talk about a shift of the tax burden downward on to those least able to pay, to benefit the government's friends like Frank Stronach and others.

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That's a huge shift. Frankly, it's a huge loss in income for the government because there is a cost when the government has tax breaks for wealthy corporations and its wealthy friends. In this case, \$3.1 billion will be lost as that surtax is eliminated. Frank Stronach is going to get \$3.5 million. Do I think he needs \$3.5 million? No, I certainly don't. Obviously, that's clear from my com-

ments. Do I think it's going to make a big difference in the economy, that he's going to do something with that that might create more jobs or wealth? No, I don't. He's just going to add that to his own personal wealth and go waltzing merrily down the road with it, along with the break that he's going to get from this government on paying a third of his property taxes for his \$10-million estate.

It's clear who this government is here for. They're making it absolutely clear in this budget because we all recognize we're heading into an election and they're trying to appeal to their core support. But that comes at a very significant cost to people who can least afford it. That's the real shame of what this government is doing. They have never been here to govern for anyone; they have used all of their time in office and all of their tax cuts to really benefit wealthy corporations and their wealthy friends.

A third change that the government has most recently announced—I don't think it was in the budget; it probably came out in the platform, but let me reference it anyway. That has to do with the requirement of municipalities to hold a referendum before they increase property taxes. Needless to say, there's not much of a positive reaction on that from our special part of the world. That has to do directly with the fact that under this government since 1996, we have seen tremendous downloading of services and a tremendous loss in grants. In fact, the city of Greater Sudbury has estimated that the total impact of lost provincial grants is approximately \$126 million from 1996 to now—a loss of \$126 million in provincial grants that our city and the outlying municipalities, which have now been forcibly amalgamated into the city, used to receive.

Part of the reason that municipalities like ours have been forced to increase property taxes is directly as a result of these kinds of losses in provincial grants and the kinds of downloading of services on to municipalities that this government still refuses to pay for.

Let me give you some examples. This, interestingly enough, comes from a presentation that was made on February 13, 2003, to the Ministry of Finance round table when the minister was in Sudbury. It's a presentation made by the city of Greater Sudbury, whose mayor is one Jim Gordon, who used to be a Conservative MPP and Conservative cabinet minister—a friend of these guys.

In the presentation he gave—well, he might not have, himself, so let me just correct the record—the presentation from the city, and he had a letter on the top of it so it was clear it was done with his endorsement, made it really clear that there has been a real revenue imbalance with respect to downloading. Here are some examples of the increased cost that the city is picking up this year as a result of the downloading of services.

Number one: ongoing increases in costs with regard to Ontario Works and children's services. "The province has imposed a ceiling on its subsidy for administration which does not recognize salary, benefits, rent increases, etc. These costs are passed on to the municipality at

100% dollars. An estimate for Ontario Works indicates that this alone will cost \$440,000 in 2003.”

Second example: “There is insufficient funding for social housing. In 1998, the city became responsible for social housing and assumed approximately 5,500 units. The revenue neutrality of this transfer was questioned at the time and is still questioned today. The 2003 social housing budget, net of CRF changes, has increased by \$900,000”—an additional cost at the local level.

Third example: “The provincial offences revenue that was used to offset the CRF calculation was never realized. Because the CRF does not take into consideration lost revenue in provincial offences, this has resulted in a cost to the city of an additional \$700,000.”

Fourth example: “Again dealing with the CRF, the province has imposed an unrealistic salary cap for land ambulance services—namely 2%. Salary increases today in both the private and public sectors are over 3%. This will add approximately \$700,000 to the municipal budget in 2003. Cross-border billing also remains an ... issue. This could cost a further \$700,000 if not resolved.”

Those are just the increased costs the municipality is dealing with in 2003 as a result of flaws in downloading, as a result of the additional costs that the government put down, as a result of the fact the government doesn’t want to recognize that this change was not revenue-neutral. Those are some of the costs this year. The total impact so far of lost provincial grants is \$126 million. It’s really difficult for our municipality—and the taxpayers in it—to swallow this government’s latest proposal that they’re going to require municipalities to hold a referendum before they increase property taxes.

We are having to increase property taxes directly as a result of this downloading of provincial services without associated provincial funding under this government. We are having to increase municipal property taxes directly as a result of the loss of provincial grants, be that subsidies for public transit, subsidies for roads, which again costs our municipality about \$8.5 million. That’s why we’re having to do it—directly as a result of actions of the provincial government.

It’s an insult for this government to come forward now and say that they will insist the municipalities have a referendum before they increase property taxes, because this government refuses to put the money on the table that’s necessary for municipalities to deliver important core services.

The final issue I want to raise has to do with an issue I have had some involvement in over the past year, and that involves autism and autistic children. The budget made an announcement that there would be an increase in funding in 2003-04 for autism services. What’s interesting is the government made a previous announcement about additional funding as long ago as November 18, when the minister, under pressure because of the cases we were raising, the families we were bringing here and the children who had autism whom we brought to this Legislature—the government started to feel some pressure and, on November 18, the minister

made an announcement that the government would double funding for IBI treatment by 2006-07.

What was interesting about the announcement at the time was that the government did not set out a timetable for this increased funding. No, they didn’t do that at all. Secondly, the government did not end its discrimination against autistic children aged six whose IBI treatment is abruptly cancelled, terminated by this government immediately upon that child turning age six.

I have discovered, because I’ve been talking with some of those agencies that provide IBI services for the government, that despite the November 18 announcement, despite the announcement again in the budget, the government in fact has not flowed one single penny of that new money to those agencies to deliver IBI services to more children—not a penny; not a cent. Six months ago the government made an announcement of additional funding; not a cent of that has gone out the door. The shame of it is, when that money in fact does go out the door, because some of the agencies have been given a tentative understanding of how much money they’re going to receive, the government will hardly make a dent in the waiting lists for service for children who have autism and need IBI. In northern Ontario alone, in all likelihood only two more children who need IBI will be taken off the waiting list and actually provided with treatment—two children out of the many who are on the waiting list.

What is also unacceptable is that the government continues to discriminate against autistic children aged six. It is unacceptable that the government would abruptly terminate treatment for these children who are finally beginning to receive treatment, beginning to do things they could never do before, beginning to have hope, themselves and their parents, that they might actually be able to lead a normal life, live independently and not end up in an institution. But this government continues to discriminate against those children, and that is wrong.

It is also wrong that we have 50 families in court in Toronto right now trying to fight against this government to get what their children so desperately need and should legitimately have. That’s an incredible waste of their money. Frankly, it’s an incredible waste of taxpayers’ money, because so much money has been spent by this government trying to drag these poor parents through court.

In fact, I got an e-mail today from one of the parents who is a litigant in that proceeding who said—this is with respect to the trial that’s going on right now where the government is trying to defend its discrimination against these children. The crown is employing two senior lawyers and their assistants. There is daily representation by members of the Ministry of Community, Family and Children’s Services, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. Imagine how much money is being blown trying to deny autistic children the treatment they so desperately need when the government could be using that money to provide treatment to these very same children.

In closing, let me say those are just some of the issues I wanted to highlight. There are many more, but the government has made it clear yet again with its budget that it's here really for one group of people: the rich and famous, and that's whom they're going to continue to support.

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Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I appreciate grabbing the torch from the member for Nickel Belt this evening to finish the few comments we have as New Democrats concerned with the budget that was delivered to Magna on behalf of the people of the province.

The member for Nickel Belt spoke of the very clear priority this government has shown for the interests of those who are well-heeled and well off as opposed to those who are out there in communities that all of us represent across this province, struggling from day to day with the agenda this government has foisted upon them.

We're talking this evening about the priorities of government as indicated by the budget they put down, because I think in your personal life, in the life of a family or a business or a community, you can always detect the priorities of that particular person or group of people by where they spend their money, what they spend their money on and what they consider in making decisions about where they spend their money, and that's no less true where governments are concerned. You take a look at whom they talk to, whom they listen to, whom they are influenced by, which brings me then to a question of the process through which this government developed its priorities.

It was mentioned earlier by members of the government that the Minister of Finance went out and spoke to literally hundreds of people across this province. Perhaps she did. The question, though, that's raised with me by my constituents is, who are those hundreds of people? Whom did she meet with? I know when she came to Sault Ste Marie, she met with a very select group of people invited to a particular meeting. I would suggest that 95% to 100% of those people were folks who were card-carrying members of this government, members of the chambers of commerce and members of the community they have delivered for in spades over the last eight years, and continue to deliver for in this budget. She then brought what she gathered from those very select meetings back to this place, put together her budget and delivered it at Magna International, again to a sampling of the people they think are important, who they think should have influence and whom they believe government needs to serve in this province, and indicated by way of the priorities they rolled out that they heard very clearly and very loudly from those folks because the budget reflects that in spades.

If you believe, as I do, that government's first and prime priority is to look after those things and those folks and those groups in your jurisdiction who are most at risk and vulnerable, then you would have to consider this budget a complete and total failure.

In Ontario today one of the things that's at risk, I think reflected by the fact that we had the Walkerton tragedy, is the environment and how we look after the environment and those things that are supported by the environment: our water, our air. Was there anything in this budget to indicate that there's going to be more money spent on the environment and hiring more inspectors, for example, out there in the Ministry of the Environment, to make sure that those things we're doing on behalf of communities and industry are environmentally the correct things to be doing? No, there wasn't. So the government fails on that front.

Is there anything in this budget that reflects a concern by this government for the many communities out there that are literally reeling because of the decision by this government to deregulate and privatize Hydro? No, nothing. Absolutely nothing in here indicates that they either understood or have any interest in understanding or coming to the aid of those communities that are literally on the ropes out there because of the now ever-increasing cost of power and the effect of deregulating its delivery is having on them.

I need to look no further from my own jurisdiction of Sault Ste Marie, north to Wawa, to understand that. The people, the employers and the municipal leaders have been trying to get the attention of this government for over a year now, since the introduction of deregulated and privatized power last May. They can't get anybody to return their calls. They can't get anybody to return their faxes. They weren't invited to that meeting in Sault Ste Marie where the Minister of Finance came to ask for input and hear about their concerns regarding the budget. They weren't invited to that meeting. They can't even get a meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources, as they try to get some consideration of a fibre allotment that they need in order to set up a new plant in that town. They can't get this government to respond.

I suggest to you that they're only one example of communities across this province having a really difficult time, because of the agenda and priorities of this government, making ends meet, paying their bills and having any hope or optimism for the future as they look at new investment and try to better the lot of the folks who over a long period of time have lived and invested in those communities. The town is dying because of sky-high hydro rates caused by deregulation.

These rates have not been affected by the November rate freeze that the government brought in. Great Lakes Power has sent people registered letters saying that they must pay hundreds, even thousands of dollars to them for the hydro they used up this past winter. They're saying to them, "If you don't pay up, we'll cut you off." Those are the challenges these folks are facing out there. This little town of Wawa is very much, I think, symbolic of the impact that the decision by this government to deregulate and privatize hydro is having out there.

Wawa has become the canary in the coal mine, and people need to know that. People need to sit up and take notice, because it's coming to your neighbourhood next.

The November freeze may have given you some relief, but once that freeze is over, once this government gets back into power, if they should be so successful after the next election, that rate freeze is gone. Deregulated and privatized hydro is on, and then we're all in the same stew Wawa finds itself in now.

In Wawa there's a small family, again I think reflective of many small families across this province—also a small landlord, a small business person who owes \$10,000 to Great Lakes Power that he can't pay. He and his tenants are on the verge of being cut off. It's not just in Wawa, as I said; it's in Echo Bay, where a retired couple, Lyn and Ben Sigfried, owe over \$1,400, almost double what they had to pay last year. Small businesses, including a grocery store in Wawa that I used to work in as a young boy, carrying out and stocking shelves, is closing down. Right next door to that grocery store, which used to be the heart of that community—it's been there for the history of the community—is a clothing store that's closing down too, not to speak of the fact that Dubreuil Forest Products, in a town just north of Wawa, has now laid off over 100 people because they can't afford their hydro bills either.

Was there anything in this budget to respond to and indicate that this government understands and is willing to take the action in order to live up to its responsibility to be a caretaker for those communities and people and issues that are most vulnerable and most at risk in their jurisdiction? Absolutely not, because this government spends too much time in the boardroom at Magna, listening to Frank Stronach and others like him—

Ms Martel: Brascan.

Mr Martin: —in the boardroom of Brascan. I would guess that if Brascan phoned the Minister of Energy tonight, he'd call them back before midnight. They'd have an immediate return on their phone call. But if Earl Deresky, Dubreuil Forest Products or the mayor of Wawa called, they wouldn't get a call return. They wouldn't answer. They weren't invited to that meeting, they're not in this budget, they don't count, they're not a priority. I suggest to you that if we look closely at this budget and the agenda and activity of this government, you'll find that this isn't an isolated case. This is the way it is for literally thousands and thousands of small businesses, small communities and families across this province.

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Across the north we're seeing job losses because of high hydro rates. In Wawa, Dubreuil Forest Products has laid off 150 people because of high hydro rates. It has also caused layoffs at Kidd Creek mine in Timmins. Northern Ontario has been reeling since this government came into power in 1995 with an economy that just won't get better, because this government doesn't care. This government will not come to the table in the same way as we did from 1990-95 to restructure those resource-based industries that are so important to the economy of this province. Kidd Creek mine in Timmins has had to lay off people because of high hydro rates. Has this government gone to Kidd Creek? Has this government gone to

Timmins? Has this government talked to anybody in that community about the effect of that decision on them and their ability to make a living and keep an economy going? I suggest to you, no, they haven't. They won't even return phone calls.

Not that long ago I myself launched a campaign to try to figure out why so many of our fellow citizens were falling into desperate and dire poverty in this province, not just up in northern Ontario and in small communities but right here, in the heartland of the industrial centre of the country, in Toronto; why so many people were sleeping on the streets at night; why so many people were dying on the streets in the wintertime; why so many families were being ejected from their homes and ending up homeless; why so many people couldn't make ends meet on the income they were making in minimum-wage, part-time jobs in this province. What I found out was that not only were they suffering because they weren't participating in the economy that this government was supporting, in its growth, which accrued most benefit to those who are most well off, but this government was actually implementing programs, taking away opportunity and forcing people into poverty and creating difficulties for them.

One of the things we discovered very early on in our People's Parliament on Poverty was that the federal government decided at one point, in order to live up to the resolution that was passed in the federal House that was introduced by NDP leader Ed Broadbent in 1989 to eradicate poverty by the year 2000, to introduce the child tax benefit supplement, which was going to give \$100 per child to every poor family in this province. We thought that was a great idea. We thought that was a wonderful thing to do and that the provincial government would be most happy to flow that money through so that we would have poor families in communities across this province with more money in their pockets to help feed and clothe their children, pay their rent, participate in the economy of those communities by spending that money and helping small business in those communities. But alas, no. This government decided to claw back the child tax benefit supplement, to literally take money out of the pockets of poor families in this province who happened to be on assistance of one sort or another from the province.

We went out on a campaign to try to get them to stop that. We had literally thousands of people from across this province sign petitions. I was personally in about 12 communities letting them know about this clawback of the child tax benefit supplement from the most vulnerable and at-risk of our families and their children, and I had them sign petitions and write letters. We even set up an e-mail postcard on a Web site. The minister must have been inundated with people asking her—asking him; it used to be the Minister of Energy, and now it's Minister Elliott—to stop the clawback. But did she do that? No, she didn't do that; she didn't stop the clawback. She said, "No, I can't do that. These people are doing OK, thank you very much." The fact that they

can't feed their kids, the fact that their kids have to go to school every morning dependent on what's there by way of a breakfast program, didn't affect her one iota.

The other thing we discovered in this whole process was that people living with disabilities in the province were also living in poverty. On average, a single individual living with a disability in this province on the Ontarians with disabilities support program was making about \$930 a month. That was supposed to cover the cost of their rent, their food and their ability to clothe themselves.

Hon Mr Baird: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member opposite is giving such an enthralling speech that I wonder if you might check if there is a quorum in the House?

The Deputy Speaker: Would you check and see if there is a quorum present?

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

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Deputy Clerk: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Martin: I just want people to know that that was the Minister of Energy who called a quorum there. He

used to be the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services—the minister who is attacking small communities, after he attacked poor families. I guess he's practising to be in opposition after the next election, because it's usually the opposition who call for a quorum in this place.

I think the priorities of a government are always clearly indicated by where it plans to spend its money in its budget.

Hon Mr Baird: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Again, I'm astonished that the member is not drawing a bigger crowd. I wonder if you might check if there is a quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Would you check and see if there's a quorum?

Deputy Clerk: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Deputy Clerk: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: I think this might be a time when we would—you'll get the rest of your time the next time this comes up for debate.

It being almost 9:30, this House stands adjourned until 10 am tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2129.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
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Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
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Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
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Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
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Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
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Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
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Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Northumberland	Galt, Hon / L'hon Doug (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
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Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
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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, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timmins-Baie James	Smitherman, George (L)
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Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Willowdale	Duncan, Dwight (L)
		Windsor West / -Ouest	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		Windsor-St Clair	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York Centre / -Centre	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York North / -Nord	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
		York West / -Ouest	
		Mississauga West / -Ouest	Vacant

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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