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of Ontario

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Jeudi 19 juin 2003

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Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 June 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 juin 2003

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
AND CULTURE AMENDMENT ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LE MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES
CIVIQUES ET CULTURELLES

Mr Beaubien moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 54, An Act to amend the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture Act / Projet de loi 54, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Affaires civiles et culturelles.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member has up to 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): It certainly is a pleasure for me to introduce this bill this morning. The bill would require the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture to establish a program to provide information, upon request, to a municipality or a charitable institution about constructing a tribute to honour persons who are or were residents of Ontario and who served in the armed services of Canada in any war outside Canada during the 20th century. If a body constructs such a memorial, the ministry is required to remit a scroll of recognition to those persons whom the memorial honours and whom the ministry considers to come within the description of persons who may properly be honoured.

On June 12, I had the opportunity to attend a book launch in Wallaceburg. The title of the book is *No Return Ticket*, and it's written by Al Mann. Basically, this book recognizes the veterans who lost their lives in the Wallaceburg area during the world wars. Today I want to talk about the veterans who fought in wars but had a return ticket to come back to Canada, to come back to Ontario—not that I want to forget the ones who gave up their lives, but I think over the past number of years we have somehow left the ones who came back to Ontario or to Canada somewhat behind.

The impetus for this bill came from Gert McClure, a resident in my riding, the community of Wallaceburg. Gert came upon this idea a while back. She was driving on the main street of Wallaceburg and saw two young teenagers skateboarding on the cenotaph in Wallaceburg. She stopped her car and had a discussion with the two

young fellows who were skateboarding and asked them whether they recognized or were realizing what they were accomplishing by skateboarding on the cenotaph. One of the young fellows told Gert that his grandfather had fought in the Second World War and had lost his life. So they looked on the monument, on the cenotaph and, lo and behold, the name of his grandfather was there. However, the second young fellow said to Gert, "My grandfather also fought in the Second World War." They searched for his grandfather's name on the cenotaph but it was not there.

At that point, Gert reflected and asked the young fellow, "I don't know why his name is not on this cenotaph, but did he lose his life during the Second World War?" The young fellow said, "No. My grandfather came back to Wallaceburg and was very involved in the community." So Gert said, "It doesn't seem to be fair that somebody who participated in a war for a number of years, a number of months or whatever the length of the stay was would not be recognized."

Consequently, she took it upon herself to introduce an idea to the local Legion branch and she called the name of her project "Rock of Honour," whereby you would honour all veterans who fought in wars. Technically, when we really think about it, we have to realize that many of the young men and women who fought, whether it was in World War I or World War II, came back. Some of them came back with injuries, some with permanent injuries, and some of them were lucky enough to come back without any injuries. We have to look at the fact that many of these young men and women came back to their communities in Ontario, in Canada, and were very involved within their own communities. They may have been involved on the local council, on the local hospital board or with the local Legion. But many were also involved with volunteer work, besides maintaining their full-time jobs. If we look back to the early 1950s and 1960s, arenas were built in communities by many volunteers. I'm sure if we were to assess the types of volunteers, we'd find that many of them had some war experience during the Second World War.

We also have to look at the fact that some of them may be dead now and some may be in retirement homes or nursing homes. But I'd like to zero in on a friend of mine, who passed away a couple of years ago, who fought in the Second World War and lived the rest of his life with shrapnel in his body. His name was George Menzies. George came back after the war and became an Anglican minister, very involved in the community, very involved with sports teams, involved with the local

hospital board, and later on in life he became a canon in the Anglican Church. Sometimes we forget that even though we recognize the fact that Canon Menzies was a veteran, there was really no permanent or acknowledgement that he had fought in the war. On November, 11 we always commemorate the passing of many of the veterans, but today there is really nothing to remember George by. Having a rock of honour, a wall of honour or whatever you want to call it, is a means of recognizing many of these young men and women in the Second World War, who probably gave some of the best years of their lives and have now passed away with no recognition. This bill would give them some type of recognition.

1010

In the community of Peterborough, the local Legion has started a project, also called the Wall of Honour, to recognize some of the veterans who fought in the world wars. I'm looking for comments from my colleagues in this House about ways and means to improve this bill to make sure that we cover all the veterans. Although I'm suggesting the veterans of the wars of the 20th century, I'm sure some of my colleagues will have some other suggestions.

The bottom line is that we have to realize that many people gave their lives and paid the utmost price during the war—with their lives, in other words. By the end of the Second World War, 45,000 people would sacrifice their lives for our freedom, but equally important is that 55,000 would be wounded defending our country and our freedom. I think we owe it to them, because most of them are getting to an age where there is not much chance for them to have recognition. Like I said, many of them are in residential and nursing homes.

But all we want to do is what Gert wanted to accomplish. She wanted to do something because, as I pointed out, we lose more and more of our veterans with each passing day. She recognized the urgency of doing something now. She was determined to construct a tribute to all the Wallaceburg veterans by inscribing their names on the large stones at the Wallaceburg cenotaph site. To date, her research has revealed the names of more than 900 Wallaceburg citizens who fought in various wars during the 20th century. As I said, she wants to call this project The Rock of Honour.

In conclusion, that is why I have prepared this bill and asked for my colleagues' thoughtful consideration and speedy approval. As a government, we have a province-wide responsibility to not only recognize and pay tribute to our veterans, but to play an active role in assisting municipalities or interested community organizations that desire to do what Gert McClure is doing in Wallaceburg. That's why I'm seeking everybody's support here today.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join the debate and lend my support to the member for his bill. I assume it's been run through the ministry and that they've provided their support, in terms of it being workable and practical. I just make that assumption.

I'm very lucky. I was born in 1940 and was obviously five years old when the Second World War ended. I've been very lucky in my life in that I have not been faced with that very difficult decision to volunteer and head off to a conflict. I often reflect on the stress those people must have gone through, particularly those who were in a combat zone or were heading into a combat zone. I think we know in our own personal lives, when we face minor danger, how stressful that is. I can't imagine, day after day, literally living in fear of your life. All those people made the conscious decision to voluntarily put themselves in that position. They knew what they were going to face. All those who headed off to World War II were familiar with what happened in World War I and the dangers they were going to face. The member is right: often we recognize those who died in the conflict and forget that those who were participants in the conflict suffered and made enormous sacrifice also. I think he mentioned 55,000 wounded in the Second World War. Even if you weren't wounded, you put yourself through years of considerable stress and strain. I do think those people deserve the community recognition.

The second reason is that memories begin to dim over time. We can slowly lose the memory of the enormous conflict that those world wars presented and the need to put enormous energy into preventing similar conflicts in the future. As we look back on both those world wars, I think the world community could say, "If we'd done certain things, we could have avoided those conflicts." But if our memories dim over time of the price we pay for major global conflict, we don't put the time, the energy, and dare I say the resources into trying to prevent them, to see them bubbling and to deal with them.

I think that the bill has merit; I am supporting the bill. I do not have recommendations on how it can be substantially improved, because the bill covers the things that appear to be important. It covers the mechanism whereby a community can proceed with a memorial. It provides the direction for finding the names and addresses of the people who were involved in it.

Just to summarize, I don't think there's a veteran left in the Legislature now. My colleague Gilles Morin was the last veteran we had here; he was a veteran of the Korean War, as I recall. You can see that as time goes by, the first-hand experience begins to diminish. The Legislature has always been fortunate to have individuals here who had first-hand experience with major global conflict, who could bring to the Legislature and the people of Ontario that first-hand experience. As memories dim, we need to do what we can so that we always remember those who died, those who were wounded and those who participated. I repeat, I've regarded myself as a very lucky person. I've grown up in an era with relatively little of that sort of pressure on my life. I can't imagine what it would have been like at the age of 18, or in some cases even 17 years old, to head off for five years—and as Mr Beaubien mentioned, often some of the best years of one's life—to put yourself in harm's way, in a period of constant stress and strain. I do believe that even for those

who were not wounded in the conflict it must have had a very profound impact on the rest of their lives.

As I say, I support the piece of legislation. I hope the Legislature passes it and that many of our communities around Ontario will take advantage of it.

1020

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): We are assembled here today to speak on a private member's bill that proposes to allow the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture to create the framework for municipalities and charitable institutions to recognize those Ontarians who served in 20th century conflicts outside of Canada through memorials.

When asked to speak to this bill, it occurred to me it's a humbling experience to think about those individuals who have participated directly in military conflicts. The closest I've come to understanding that experience, apart from a brief stint in the militia, 56th Field Regiment, is through the melancholic faces of veterans and families on Remembrance Day. As has been indicated earlier, how fortunate we are here in Canada and in Ontario to never have experienced war on this continent during one of history's most bloody centuries.

I would be remiss, this being Loyalist Day, if I didn't mention the sacrifice of United Empire Loyalists in the late 1700s and those who fought in 1763. Descendants of those who fought with Joseph Brant in the 1763 battle, during what was the British conquest of North America, reside in my riding. We should continue to recognize valiant Canadian fighters who defended our land during the War of 1812. For that reason, and recognizing these past conflicts in previous centuries, I would like to see this legislation expanded to encompass battles in previous centuries in our country.

In the 20th century, Canada was indeed blessed. Can you imagine, while Europe was cut in two by a muddy eight-foot trench, while bombs rained over ships, while the threat of nuclear war loomed, while the desert sun shone down on fighters, we in Canada never experienced the destructive effect of battle on our land here?

Can you imagine being one of those combatants who experienced the fight, the whiz of gunfire, the flash of an explosion or, worse, the death of a fellow soldier, a fellow pilot, a fellow sailor? Any of these occurrences must be among the worst an individual can experience. Can you imagine the difficulty of living with those memories and going through the horror once one returns to the normalcy of family life at home?

The tradition certainly has been to recognize and honour the war dead. We think of the cenotaphs that are present in every municipality across this province. However, the question before us today is whether or not to allow the ministry to facilitate municipalities and charitable organizations in recognizing those who survived war.

In my opinion, this bill is a good one. The intention is honourable, and its creation is necessary, in my view. I firmly believe that it's important for us to recognize in an important way the combatants who survived war and to

thank them and their families in a more permanent way. Again, if a community wants to raise a monument, a plaque or a statue to the survivors, the House and our ministry should encourage that to happen.

I do wish to address further the content of the bill. I believe there are some additions that could be made to recognize not only those who fought in the 20th century but in previous centuries in other battles. I believe the definition should be extended to allow for assistance in honouring veterans from wars going back to 1763, as I mentioned; 1776; the War of 1812, an international war in which Upper Canadians fought, which led to the disarmament of the Canadian-American border.

I think it's important to recognize the efforts of militiamen who fought against what was perceived as a national threat: the Fenian raids—raids that stretched from New Brunswick to Upper Canada in the 1860s. You see memorials to those who fought in the Fenian raids in Ottawa.

Again, battles in both Upper Canada and the United States were fought, and those who came back, those who survived, were never recognized to the extent of those who were killed in battle. Although the values and morals of those bygone eras may be different today, it doesn't lessen the importance of Ontarian combatants' contribution to conflict and, as Mr Beaubien has indicated, their contribution after the wars within their communities.

War has a way of both dividing citizens and creating a sense of national pride. We, the public, are reminded of it through these monuments. We feel this is very important. Although there are no living Canadian veterans of the Fenian raids, the War of 1812, the South African War, the Spanish Civil War—half the Canadians who fought there did not return in 1939. I suggest we recognize these people, we recognize the merchant marines, nurses and civilians who also played a part.

I'm very pleased to support this bill. I hope its parameters will be extended to include that to which I have referred today.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I want to indicate at the very beginning that I intend to support the bill that the member has put forward. I think it is most appropriate that we recognize those in two cases: first, those who have made the supreme sacrifice of their lives fighting in wars overseas to protect freedom, liberty and our recognized way of life; and also that we recognize—and I know the member would like this as well in his bill, but certainly in the general speech—people who have come back from those wars and have served our country as well.

There are a few times during the year when the Royal Canadian Legion and the country have special services that all of us endeavour to attend. The greatest focus, of course, is on Remembrance Day, when the veterans gather along with members of the public, elected representatives and others to remember those who have fought in wars in years gone by. We think mostly of the First World War, the Second World War and the Korean War

as the major wars, but there have been other conflicts in the world in which Canadian soldiers have been involved.

I think if people hearken back to many years ago, they will remember that the crowds were very big. One of the reasons is that the people who had come back from the war were with us. Today, those who served in the Second World War, for instance, would now be in their 70s, at the very least, and perhaps older, of course. Those who served in the Korean War are in their 60s and 70s for the most part.

It was a very difficult time. I think what a lot of people forget—and our former mayor, Joe McCaffrey, said this on an occasion when he was speaking at our local cenotaph. He said that what a lot of people don't realize is that we are paying tribute and remembering very young people. Because the veterans age as all of us age, we see veterans as fairly elderly individuals today. But when they went overseas, these were often people in their late teens and early 20s, who were looking forward to a life ahead of them—families, good jobs and an opportunity to enjoy all of the amenities that life brings for us. That was brought to an abrupt end on so many occasions in times of war.

People in Europe—and I think other parts of the world—tend to recognize Canadian soldiers and their own even more than we do, and I think they do so because they were directly affected. Their countries were invaded, their countries were occupied, and many of them are extremely grateful to Canadian soldiers who went overseas to fight not only for their own country, Canada, but of course on behalf of the countries that were being invaded by those who wanted to impose an entirely different kind of life and regime on those individuals.

1030

In each of our communities it is important that we remember the people from those communities who have served. In St Catharines we have memorials to those who have served in the past. In the old town of Merriton, in the old town of Port Dalhousie, of course in St Catharines itself, in Thorold and other areas there are memorials. Many of us would have attended the Decoration Day services the first Sunday in June of this year, where the graves, in our case in Victoria Lawn Cemetery, are decorated with Canadian flags and where we once again remember and recall and honour those who have died.

On every one of those occasions, in addition to those who have died, we speak of those who have come back, often scarred in more ways than one, often with injuries which are of a physical nature that stay with those individuals—and some of those individuals are in veterans' hospitals—but also the psychological scars that wars bring to people.

There is often a lament, I think a justifiable lament, that younger people who have never experienced war and who see war as something in the distant past do not have as good a knowledge of the role that Canadian soldiers, sailors and air force personnel have played in the past, and of the men and women who were involved in the

medical personnel—the merchant navy, for instance—who suffered grievously during the war as well, and of others who in any way helped in the war. I think it's important that we continue to remember them. A memorial in a community, the names of those listed in the community and the story behind them, is exceedingly important.

I attended another Legion ceremony on May 30, where they were honouring members of the Royal Canadian Legion. Many of those people now are well advanced in their years. Some are showing indications of age, but also of injury that was incurred during the war. So whenever we can pay tribute to them, we do so very nicely. There's one time when we are non-partisan in this Legislature, and that is the Thursday before Remembrance Day, or the last day the House sits, at least, before Remembrance Day, when a representative of each party gets up and speaks of those individuals. We walk along with them in the streets, and very often we see that they are walking more slowly now, but they're very proud individuals who have served. Often you see tears in their eyes because they themselves can recall the great difficulties that war has brought to them.

One of the most moving scenes as well, I must say, is the Silver Cross mother coming forward who has lost young people in war—usually they were young when they died in war—and the brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews and sons and daughters and spouses and so on who on that occasion have a special feeling of sadness, but also pride in the fact that their loved one went to serve on behalf of our democratic way of life. I certainly want to pay tribute to them.

The member has brought forward a bill which is most appropriate. Having the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture involved in this exercise I think is extremely important. We should be assisting municipalities and charitable institutions in constructing memorials in honour of persons who are or were residents of Ontario and who served in the Armed Forces of Canada in any wars outside Canada during the 20th century. That encompasses a lot of people, and I think it's important that we do encompass those individuals in this particular piece of legislation.

It's a word of thanks from all of us in this Legislature, a word of thanks from all the people in our communities to those who made a sacrifice, who left their families, who left their friends, who were in very difficult circumstances, terrible weather conditions, being fired at by armaments, sometimes being prisoners of war and not always very well treated as prisoners of war, and seeing the death and devastation that is part of war.

Paying tribute to those individuals is exceedingly important. We do so in our national war memorials; we do so in our communities. This is yet another step that can help individual communities and charitable organizations to thank and pay tribute to and remember those who have served in war and particularly those who have made the supreme sacrifice. I think this bill is worthy of support by all members.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I appreciate the opportunity this morning to speak to this bill. It's always an honour to follow the member for St Catharines, who has served long and honourably in this place, and to also say that we in this caucus will be supporting this bill, of course, because it's a bill that rightfully honours the efforts and sometimes the ultimate sacrifice of many of our veterans, our seniors who went to war on our behalf to protect freedoms and those things that we value and often take for granted in the society we live in today. So we will be supporting this bill.

However, my comments won't be so much targeted at the bill itself, because I think it's a very simple bill and really speaks for itself. The member presenting it made his case, and others will as well. My hope this morning is that the member, in presenting this bill and obviously being connected to veterans in his own jurisdiction and his own Legions, will also be talking to his caucus members and his government about the condition that many of these veterans, having fought for their country and returned, now have to live in: the poverty that many of them experience, the difficulty they're having in finding appropriate and safe housing, not to speak of the issue of health care, which for many of them, and I would guess probably all of them, is a huge task and undertaking and challenge in the world we live in today.

So I think it would behoove this government to investigate across the province the situation that seniors and in particular, in this instance, veterans find themselves in as they try to live a life that reflects the sacrifice they made at those times in our history when they had to be counted on, and were, and stepped up to the line and put their lives on the line, some of them not to come home but many to come home and to now experience the kind of difficulty that they are experiencing in finding the very basics of life so that they can live in dignity.

That's not to forget the difficulty that the organizations that often speak for veterans have as well in keeping their facilities open and providing the services they provide. I know in my own community we have a very vibrant and active Legion which every year on Remembrance Day puts on a wonderful ceremony. They gather the whole community at the community centre at Memorial Gardens—and named Memorial Gardens connected to this—to remember those who passed away and those who fought in those wars.

I have to tell you, in talking with them after the celebration and memorial and in talking with them in my office at times when they come in to speak to me about issues that they confront in trying to keep their facility open, they are having a very difficult time and are looking for assistance and relief to that end. They would love this government to come and sit down, talk with them and develop a plan that they could all agree would give them the kind of support and comfort they need to continue to do the work that they do, so they don't have to spend so much of their time fundraising and worrying about the very existence of their halls, for example, and could spend the kind of time they want to spend looking

after each other, looking after the veterans and providing the kind of support that veterans need.

I remember in 1995, when this government took over, the Legion had been talking to me for a couple of years about a housing complex in their back parking lot which would provide affordable housing to some of the veterans they saw coming to the hall every day so that they could be close, could be looked after, could have some services provided, such as food services etc. We had actually come to a point where we had agreed and had allocated some affordable housing units to the Legion to build, but that got caught by the government when it cancelled all of the not-for-profit and affordable housing projects at that particular point in time. So the spot that that housing unit was going to go up on lies vacant and empty today, as we speak, because this government hasn't found a way to honour the commitment we made to those veterans to actually build that facility.

1040

I was in Wawa on Tuesday, speaking to the leadership of that community about some of the economic challenges they're facing, particularly their inability to deal with the astronomical rise in hydro costs. As we pulled in and parked across the street from the Legion Hall in Wawa, I was told that it's in trouble, that it's having difficulty, financially, trying to keep the lights on and that in fact if things continue the way they are, it may end up closing.

I remember, as a young boy in that community, that the Legion was the heart, the centre of the community. On a Friday night particularly the parents, the adults, who worked in the mines and contributed to the economy of the community would be downstairs having a few drinks, celebrating and getting together as friends and neighbours, and we teenagers would be upstairs having a dance. It was the centre, the social heart, of that community. It stands today on the precipice of extinction because this government is doing nothing about the escalating cost of hydro, amongst other things.

I will be supporting this bill today and my caucus will be supporting it. I think it's the right thing to do. Any time we can honour and support our veterans in this way, we should do it. However, there is a lot more to be done than that in the everyday life of veterans, in some very practical and common-sense ways, to make sure they have an opportunity to live in dignity, to carry themselves through the community with the respect they're due and to know that they have housing, that they have income, that their pensions are protected and that they have the health care they so obviously need and will need as they get older, and more and more unstable in that perspective.

There is one other issue, if I had a bit more time to go on about it, that I would like to speak to the government about, but they don't seem to be too interested. The only member of the government who seems to have any interest at all is Mr Murdoch, because his Legion has come to him, as my Legion has come to me. It's around the issue of small raffles, lotteries and 50-50 draws that

Legions used to have. In many instances they became the only source of income that some of them had to cover the cost of their facilities, to keep the lights on, to be able to buy some flowers or to support a member at a time of the death of a spouse, or sickness in the hospital.

This government has tightened the regulations on how you manage and run lotteries, raffles and 50-50 draws, to the point now where most of the Legions are getting out of them. They're not doing it any more—not to speak of the bingos they can't run any more—because they can't funnel the money they make into the things they have been mandated to do through their charitable status and that historically they've always done.

Today, in saying that I will support this bill and in saying on behalf of my caucus that we will support this bill, I also say that we have a ton more to do if we're actually going to honour the effort and the sacrifice of our veterans and make sure they are in fact allowed to live in the kind of dignity that their service warrants.

I'll leave a little time for my colleague from Niagara Centre to speak.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Of course I'm going to debate this bill. In the interim, Mr Beaubien can organize his speakers' list, if indeed there's one. People should want to speak to it. It's a good piece of legislation, for Pete's sake. Of course we endorse celebrating, commemorating and paying tribute to those women and men who, in the service of our country, but as significantly in the service of humankind—because Canadians have played that role as military personnel—demonstrate courage, commitment and indeed, as has been noted and should never not be noted, make the supreme sacrifice.

This last Decoration Day we're reminded that we'll be there again on Remembrance Day, revisiting our communities. I'm very fortunate to represent communities that are part of small-town Ontario, and small-town Ontario contributed more than its fair share of young women and men during those bloody and tragic wars: the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War—to call it a “conflict” is to diminish the role that Canadians and so many others played in it—and yes, the war in Vietnam, and conflicts since then where Canadians have played an admirable but no less dangerous role as peacekeeping forces, and continue to.

I say this to Mr Beaubien: I want this bill to pass today. I appreciate we are pressed for time in that this Legislature in all likelihood will rise on June 26, next Thursday. Of course, we'll be coming back in September, but I put to Mr Beaubien, and perhaps in his response he could respond to the query as to why—and it's not a criticism—the bill restricts recognition by virtue of memorials to armed services personnel of the 20th century. Again, this isn't a criticism. It may well have been simply a reflection of the time frame in which the bill was drafted, but we still have armed services personnel out there. We have them out there today, this very day as we speak, putting their lives on the line in the service of their country and of humankind.

The city of Welland has a great cenotaph in Chippewa Park. We gather there for Remembrance Day ceremonies. Thorold, in its park a few blocks from Thorold city hall, and a few blocks from the Legion hall, has a cenotaph that commemorates young residents of Thorold—because they were young. It's old men who start wars and it's young women and men who fight them. No less great is the modest memorial in Port Robinson just outside the Port Robinson volunteer fire hall. It's oh, so modest, but oh, so grand nonetheless. Similarly, legionnaires and veterans, their children and grandchildren and, yes, great-grandchildren march from the Merritton Legion Hall to the Merritton cenotaph.

I want to go one further, Mr Beaubien. I believe we should embark on a province-wide campaign to give those communities that want to upgrade their memorials the resources to permit them to upgrade and update their memorials: those cairns, those cenotaphs, those monuments. I believe taxpayers in this province, and I'm one of them just like everybody else, would be pleased to see some small amount of their tax dollars invested in these permanent commemorations of the courage, dedication and sacrifice of decades and generations of young Canadians who have served their country and humankind.

As we debate this, let's all commit ourselves to ensuring that we as taxpayers guarantee that our armed forces personnel today, in the year 2003, have the resources and tools to safely and effectively do the dangerous jobs they're called upon to do. Let's stop sending our Canadian military personnel into some of the most dangerous places in the world with broken tools and inadequate resources. I believe Canadians support that proposition as well.

I support this legislation and look forward to Mr Beaubien joining in some of the modest amendments I've suggested.

1050

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to compliment my friend from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. Marcel Beaubien is a friend whom I know to be very genuine and sincere, and this bill speaks very much to the traditions he emulates in his riding, paying respect to those persons who have served their country and brought honour to their communities, their families and indeed their country. I want to put on the record very clearly that this speaks directly to the kind of person the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex really is. In fact, it speaks to almost all the members in the House here, I would put to you.

It's personal. When I read the explanatory note to Bill 54, it said it all. I'll read it for the record.

“The bill amends the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture Act to require the ministry to establish a program to provide information, upon request, to a municipality or a charitable institution about constructing a memorial to honour persons who are or were residents of Ontario and who served in the armed services of Canada in any wars outside Canada during the 20th century. If a body constructs such a memorial, the ministry is required to

remit a scroll of recognition to those persons whom the memorial honours and who the ministry considers come within the description of persons who may properly be honoured.”

It's the persons who did survive and whose lives were altered. In many cases, you could speak to members who are older—our parents, our grandparents and relatives. I think of how I view the world in my own experience. In closest proximity, I guess, would be my son, Erin Michael O'Toole, who was a captain in the armed forces until just recently. I think he gets his Canadian decoration, having served as a captain on the Sea King helicopters. He did spend time—not in helicopters, but certainly when he was training as a navigator—on the Hercules, I believe, flying into Bosnia. I have pictures that were taken by some of his friends which really drove home for me the risk to the young men and women on the Sea Kings whom we see in our newscasts, unfortunately, and the other persons serving our country with some degree of risk to themselves.

It also brings me back in a personal way to the formation that many of those people develop in their service to country. I believe Mr Beaubien talked of his father, and I reflected back to my family as well, both on my mother's and my father's side, and how that formation in serving their country and the discipline involved in that affected their lives, mostly positively, but also I'm sure they've had memories and nightmares etc of their time.

Clare Driscoll rose to become a contributor in his community. He was my uncle and has since passed away. He served in the navy. Ray Driscoll also served the public. In fact, I think I spoke at some length here upon his death. He rose to be reeve and warden and served the county of Peterborough and Otonabee township with some distinction, and indeed served the province on the Good Roads and other committees that were important at that time.

I also think of my other uncle on my O'Toole side, Alphonse O'Toole, who was quite a brilliant fellow. I believe he got his PhD from the University of Toronto. In fact, he was a professor. I think he was in the military before he got his PhD. I'm not sure about the sequence there, but he went on to publish several books. I think the discipline or the sense of responsibility to community, giving service to others and to the country, is really what carried him further to make a contribution. Frank O'Toole, who was the first, I think, in George Brown College, also was a teacher. I'm not sure if he was a PhD, but I think he was president or at least in senior management at George Brown College. He also served his country in the military, as an officer.

The point I'm making is that all these people went on for the most part, in a voluntary sense or in a role of community, to serve their country in a broader sense—not necessarily in a military sense but in a public role. My father himself did not serve. I think he had, as I've described, brothers who did. When he passed away, my mother married a fellow who—actually, one of his legs was blown off in Italy, I think. He was a remarkable guy,

with the courage of life. Jack Condon was his name. Marcel, he didn't lose his life, and therefore he's not mentioned at one of the Remembrance Day celebrations where they read out the scroll of those who gave their lives. I would not in any respect diminish the importance of that contribution, but the others, specifically Jack Condon, I'm sure had nightmares. In fact, I remember him telling me once that he always felt that his leg was still there, even though it had been blown off by a grenade or a land mine or something. It certainly affected his life in a real sense, and the others I've described as well.

In my area, I know there was a huge contribution to the Juno Beach memorial. The province's original contribution—I was talking to people—was going to be \$100,000 or something like that. On the day of the announcement, Premier Eves changed it to \$1 million. He was so moved—and this is quite a genuine story—that he changed that amount to \$1 million, because it reflected the contribution of Canadians, and the majority came from Ontario, who contributed not just to D-Day but to the defence of freedom and democracy in the world.

All who served should be recognized, be memorialized. I support the member's bill, and I think all of us should take the time to reflect, not just on November 11. As we give our public service and have our names on a plaque someplace in this building, I think the others who have served this country should as well.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I want to compliment the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for his bill. I think this is one of those non-partisan bills that everyone should support. I was a little disappointed that a couple of members opposite decided to make a political speech on a bill such as this, which should be totally non-partisan.

My own father is a veteran of the Second World War. A number of my friends' fathers also fought in the Second World War. Some of them did not come home. A number of friends' fathers fought in the Korean War, and some of them did not come home. There are innumerable instances of this throughout the country, throughout the province, of people my age who grew up fatherless. A number of others of us of course view our fathers, even though they came home, as heroes.

There are municipalities throughout the province that, for one reason or another, have not put together a memorial of any type to the veterans who fought in the wars, whether it be the First World War, the Second World War or the Korean War. I heartily commend the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for having put together this bill in honour of these people.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has two minutes to respond.

Mr Beaubien: First of all, I would like to thank Gert McClure for giving the idea to introduce this bill. I certainly appreciate that. I would also like to thank the members from Scarborough-Agincourt, Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, St Catharines, Sault Ste Marie, Niagara Centre, Durham and Kitchener Centre, who spoke on this particular bill.

A couple of comments. The member from Sault Ste Marie mentioned the government enforcing regulations with regard to lotteries in the Legion. I think if you check the record, member for Sault Ste Marie, you'll find that the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has been working diligently and very aggressively with regard to this. I do agree with you that tightening up the regulations on lotteries and Legions is somewhat ludicrous at this point in time.

1100

With some of the comments from the member for Niagara Centre, he was not here when I started my presentation. However, I did ask for input from different members. With regard to his comments about upgrading the existing memorials or cenotaphs across the province, whereby the provincial government would provide some help, I certainly would support that. I know that once you introduce a private member's bill that you're not supposed to expend government funds, but if the government saw fit to provide the funds somewhere in the future with regard to upgrading memorials or cenotaphs in the province, I certainly would be in support of that.

For almost 60 years we have benefited from the peace and freedom these soldiers earned with their sweat, bought with their blood, and some of them paid with their lives.

In closing, I think we should never forget the ultimate price paid for our freedoms and beliefs that we sometimes take for granted. I would like to remind all the young people, and certainly older people, in the province and across the country that freedom is not free.

The Acting Speaker: This concludes the time allocated for debate on this ballot item.

PUBLIC SECTOR
ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACT, 2003
LOI DE 2003 SUR L'EFFICACITÉ
ÉNERGÉTIQUE DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

Mr Cordiano moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 87, An Act to require that public sector organizations conduct an energy audit, submit an energy efficiency plan and implement the plan / *Projet de loi 87, Loi exigeant que les organismes du secteur public fassent une analyse énergétique et soumettent et mettent en oeuvre un plan d'efficacité énergétique.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member has up 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): This bill is a straightforward bill that requires that public sector organizations conduct energy audits, that they submit energy efficiency plans to the Minister of Energy for approval and that they implement these plans within a year after submitting them.

I believe that this is of vital importance to the province of Ontario. At the present time, we face dire circumstance and a real crisis when it comes to electricity in

Ontario. We've gone through a major crisis over the last year. We continue to go through that, and I believe the time has come for the government to act, to bring about a conservation program. This bill attempts to do just that with the public sector and the broader public sector: schools, hospitals, universities, any transfer recipient from the province of Ontario; it would require them to submit these plans and to implement them.

The bill essentially does five things: first, it will conserve energy and thus reduce the demand for energy; second, it will save money by reducing operating costs; third, it will cut down on the need for additional power or additional energy sources; fourth, it will cut down on dirty emissions and help the environment; finally, fifth, it will help to support an emerging alternative energy industry and also an industry that would support energy efficiency. That would increase employment as well.

This bill would do a number of beneficial things for the province. This bill stems from the recommendations made by the select committee on alternative fuel sources. In the committee's report, recommendation 50:

"The Ontario government shall establish commitments and targets for alternative fuel/energy, including energy efficiency and conservation for universities/community colleges, public and separate schools, and the hospital/health care sector. Energy plans for individual institutions shall be prepared and shall include targets for alternative fuel/energy use and/or energy efficiency and conservation measures by December 31, 2003."

Isn't that interesting? I say to the government, the time is running out. Here we are, June 19, and there's very little action on the part of the government. Apart from some vague reference in the throne speech that the government would initiate conservation programs for the public and broader public sector and consumers, there is no bill that's been put forward by the government, there isn't an initiative that's been announced by Management Board with regard to the broader public sector and, furthermore, in the budget itself that was brought down by this government there is very little initiative shown on the part of the government to substantiate that commitment in the throne speech.

That's why I believe this bill is necessary. This bill, as I say, will get us going in the direction of conservation. What better place to start than with the public sector organizations that the government is directly controlling, directly mandating, and, furthermore, the broader public sector, school boards, hospitals and the like, transfer recipients? I believe it's absolutely critical that we begin this process. Again, the select committee on alternative fuel sources recommended that the government put this in place by the end of this year. The government is not moving on that front. I don't understand why, but this bill is required as a result of the lack of government initiative.

It's important to note that in the state of California, for example, they were able to reduce consumption by 9% in the first year after they implemented a conservation strategy—a tremendous saving, 9%. What that means for Ontario, for example: if we were able to reduce con-

sumption of our electricity demand by 9%, that amounts to the reduction and the elimination of two coal-burning power plants the size of Lakeview. That is a tremendous saving.

When you look at peak demand in Ontario in August of last year, it was at approximately 25,000 megawatts of electrical power that was used a peak demand in Ontario. If we were to take 10% of that, it's about 2,500 megawatts of power. Lakeview generates, at peak demand, about 1,200 megawatts of power. So by reducing consumption by 10% in Ontario we would eliminate two coal-burning plants the size of Lakeview. That is an astounding figure and it's data that would really help the environment.

We know that the coal-burning plants are producing toxic emissions that contribute to smog in this province. Last year we had, I believe, a minimum of 37 smog days in the GTA in southern Ontario. That is causing untold damage to our economy and to the health of the people of this province. The asthma rates for children have gone up dramatically. It is just unacceptable that in Ontario today we continue to burn these dirty coal-fired plants at the rate at which we have to burn them. That is because we don't have the additional supply, and it's very critical that we begin by reducing consumption through conservation.

1110

As I say, it is a dramatic impact that we can have in terms of the reduction that we can bring about by simply conserving. There are many examples of this in other jurisdictions. In the state of Iowa, for example, they brought about energy efficiency plans in public schools and they were able to save about \$12 million a year through their program. Texas, of all places, is also saving \$5 million a year with regard to the reductions in energy consumption they brought about in their school system. Right here in Canada we have the city of Windsor, which saved \$2 million over five years by bringing about energy efficiency programs. They reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 6,500 tonnes annually—astounding reductions. Yet here in the province of Ontario, we lag behind with respect to the broader public sector and the government ministries under the control of Management Board, the buildings that we use.

The Sooke school district in British Columbia undertook a performance contract—and I want to talk about this for just a moment. I believe we could use performance contracts to effect these changes. I also believe the government of Ontario needs to provide some incentives by way of capital funding. I couldn't put that in my bill today because it is a private member's bill and it would call for the expenditure of funds. But through regulation, the Minister of Energy and Management Board should bring about an incentive program, should put together a capital fund to ensure that this is taking place and that the broader public sector has access to the initial capital investment that might be required.

In conclusion, as I've said, this bill brings about a huge number of benefits. It is time for Ontario to act, to

begin a conservation strategy. It is time for Ontario to act with respect to the broader public sector and the public sector. I think members should support this bill.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to join in the debate with respect to ballot item number 16, which is the second reading of Bill 87, An Act to require that public sector organizations conduct an energy audit, submit an energy efficiency plan and implement the plan, by the honourable member Mr Cordiano.

I'd like to say that from our government's perspective, and on behalf of all of the members on this side of Legislature, conservation and energy efficiency form a major component of our energy policy. In fact, it's so much a cornerstone that Bill 87 is redundant and would appear to add little to programs and legislation this government has already put in place. Whether it would be proposals in the recent budget or programs put in place by the Minister of Energy, this government has an impressive record on conservation and efficiency.

Let's start with the Energy Efficiency Act. The province has in place minimum efficiency levels for 54 residential, commercial and industrial products and appliances. This program alone has resulted in energy savings in excess of \$250 million and has saved enough energy to meet the electricity needs of Windsor and London for an entire year.

The government is leading by example. We are taking actions that will reduce our own consumption in all our facilities by 10%. Management Board of Cabinet will look for ways to construct buildings that are energy self-sufficient using alternative or clean sources of energy. Last fall we passed the Electricity Pricing, Conservation and Supply Act, 2002, which outlines a number of impressive efficiency measures. This act strengthened the Ontario Energy Board's mandate and made it have a greater role in promoting conservation, energy efficiency and load management.

We also created a sales tax rebate for consumers who buy certain high-efficiency appliances. This program has enjoyed tremendous success so far, and we've had over 55,000 applications for the rebate. In fact, counting only the approximately 36,000 rebate applications that have been processed to date, the appliances that those applications represent have saved enough power to equal the total annual power consumed by 4,000 homes—a staggering step forward.

The Minister of Finance is putting the final touches on new regulations for tax incentives that will encourage energy conservation, including allowing new investments in qualifying electrical energy-efficient to be eligible for a 100% tax write-off in the year of acquisition. This will encourage large power users to take steps to lower their demand.

We also announced that we would create a task force on conservation and supply which will, first, provide an action plan outlining ways to attract new generation and identifying mechanisms for demand-side management. The plan will be based on the principles of security of

supply, adequacy, affordability, reliability, environmental soundness and the competitiveness of the Ontario economy. Second, it will identify any barriers to the development of long-term electricity supply and conservation and recommend solutions. Third, it will make recommendations on how to enhance the reliability and responsiveness of Ontario's electricity grid. Last, it will ensure that all electricity stakeholders have input into the process by organizing two-day-long consultations, one on new supply and another on conservation.

My colleague the Minister of Energy recently directed the Ontario Energy Board to consult with stakeholders on an appropriate demand-side management framework for Ontario's electricity market and report back to him with recommendations. The minister has asked the Ontario Energy Board to identify and review options for the delivery of demand-side management and demand response activities. He also asked the Ontario Energy Board to look at the role local distribution companies and other groups, such as the Independent Electricity Market Operator, can play in demand-side management.

Finally, the budget announced last March committed the government to provide consumers more information on saving energy. It committed the government to providing incentives to get energy-efficient products into homes of consumers who want them. It also commits the government to developing an integrated conservation strategy that includes the government, public sector groups and consumers.

I'm proud of this government's conservation efficiency efforts. While we support the goals of Bill 87, I want it to be absolutely clear that this government has already taken decisive action to protect the environment, help consumers and reduce energy consumption. We believe in the policies and programs we have put in place and we believe our record on conservation and energy efficiency speaks for itself.

I also want to comment on a few other areas. Conservation and energy efficiency go hand in hand with alternative energy and green power, and this government takes a back seat to no one in these areas. Bills such as Bill 87 are well-intentioned, but why weren't these policies allowed to surface when either of the parties opposite was in government? Why are they coming out now? I suspect it's because they looked at our record and decided it was time to join the parade.

We're the first government to do more than just talk about clean energy and conservation. In the year 2005—no later than April 1, 2005, in fact—the Lakeview coal generating plant, west of Toronto, will stop producing power based on the consumption of coal. We've made the unprecedented commitment to shut down all the province's coal-fired facilities no later than the year 2015.

I think it has to be stressed that it's not just a date picked out of the air. We've said that, hand in hand with the creation of new renewable power generation across Ontario, we will, coincidentally, shut down the dirtiest existing forms of energy generation, namely the coal-

fired plants. We are not going to leave people out in the cold, though. The renewable power comes first, before you pull the plug on the coal plants.

1120

We know that the provincial government itself is a very large user of electricity, so we think it's important to lead by example and make a commitment that 20% of the power we use, not just in this building but in all government agencies and in all the offices across Ontario, will come from new green sources of power. As well, we will reduce our consumption by 10%. That will be an impressive amount, when you consider the number of offices and other facilities the government operates.

Our recent budget included proposals such as 10-year tax holidays, unprecedented anywhere in North America. The provincial government has basically walked away from any form of revenue from new green power generation for 10 years.

Not only have we said that that the generator will pay no income tax, but there will be no increase in the property tax, no increase in the capital tax, a full rebate of the sales tax and an opportunity to take a 100% write-off of any investment in the year that investment is made. My colleague the Minister of Finance is just putting the final touches on these regulations.

We've already instituted a sales tax rebate that would give consumers a full rebate of all the Ontario sales tax if they purchased either a solar thermal or a solar photovoltaic energy system.

We've gone further down the road to conservation by coming up with a rebate program that will return your provincial sales tax if you buy an Energy Star appliance: a washer, a dryer, a dishwasher or a freezer. So far, we've had over 50,000 applications for that rebate. If you add up all the energy savings from only the 36,000 applications processed so far, it's the same as the annual use in 4,000 homes.

It was this government that made it possible for the wind turbine down on the waterfront here in Toronto, the wind turbine in Pickering and the Huron wind farm on the shores of Lake Huron to be built.

It was this government that pledged to allow people who want to install their own renewable electricity generation systems to take advantage of net metering.

It was this government that put in place a system where Ontario Power Generation and other generators can now market green power to their customers.

Both parties on the other side had their chance but, while they talk a good game, our actions speak for themselves.

It was this government that announced plans that will make Ontario the leader in clean energy technologies. To do that, we have undertaken to invest \$20 million to create a centre of excellence for electricity and alternative energy technology in a total of five universities.

I'm extremely excited at the opportunity that gives us the ability to attract some of the leading-edge pure research to take us beyond even the technical innovations that have already happened in the renewable energy field

into an even more promising and even more affordable renewable power future.

As my colleague the Commissioner of Alternative Energy noted the other day, other companies are lining up to build wind farms, new photovoltaic manufacturers have been created, and this was all because our government put in place policies that allowed it to take place.

My colleague The Minister of Energy recently directed the Ontario Energy Board to consult with stakeholders on an appropriate demand-side management framework for Ontario's electricity market and report back to him with recommendations. The minister has asked the OEB to identify and review options for the delivery of demand-side management and demand response activities. He also asked the OEB to look at the role local distribution companies and other groups, such as the Independent Electricity Market Operator, can play in demand-side management.

I could go on, but I know that my time is limited. Let me conclude by saying that I take great pride in this government's record on energy efficiency and conservation, both the actions we have taken to date and the commitments we have made for the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): It's highly irregular and improper, but I have been asked to introduce Joy Cox in the members' east gallery. Joy comes from Leeds-Grenville and is the mom of Bryant, to my left.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): Before I start I would like to introduce a gentleman with me today, Ted Belyea, from my riding, whom I had the pleasure of working with for 25 years. An incredible individual is here to see how democracy works, and I hope we don't disappoint him.

It is a pleasure to speak to this bill, and I don't think it's a coincidence that representing the Liberal Party today will be the member for St Catharines and myself, both of whom have had the pleasure and privilege of being on the select committee on alternative fuel sources, a good committee that I think produced a fine report that is now occupying spaces on top shelves in a number of government offices.

There were quite a number of other recommendations that should have been brought forward out of it, so I applaud the member for York South-Weston for bringing this forward. It was a unanimous report, and I'm disappointed in how little action the government has taken on the recommendations for it. But this is certainly an excellent one to get started.

I think it's maybe a little bit ironic or coincidence that I learned that this very day within Whitby they are experiencing about the second-worst power outages that they ever have. Rumour has it that the heavy drain on power may actually be that there's a printing firm there that's producing government brochures to distribute across the province, and we don't have enough electricity in the system to actually keep all of those presses running. So if you fellows would slow down a little bit on that—there's no need to send the same brochure three or

four times to each house. If you'd back off, we'd save on trees, we'd save our forest. Just a suggestion.

Interjection: And frustration would diminish.

Mr Parsons: Yes.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): You have nothing more to say except spurious comments.

Mr Parsons: Don't. That's hurtful. That hurts.

Interjections.

Mr Parsons: OK. Don't wave at me.

The government record, seriously, on energy is probably as dismal as one would find in North America, if not the world. One need only read the newspapers over the past years, if you had the light on in the house so that you could read the newspaper. But over the last year we have had a lurching series of energy crises, lacking direction. The apparent solution to it was to impose a freeze of 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. So everybody is happy; 4.3 cents is not much to pay for electricity. Indeed, with the wonderful unveiling of it, at a house where the homeowner said, "Now I can turn on my Christmas lights," certainly the appearance was that electricity was so cheap we can do anything we want with it.

However, I would say to the people of Ontario, take the amount of energy that you use and work that in relation to your total bill, and you're not paying 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour; you're paying eight cents, nine cents, 10 cents a kilowatt hour. The delivery charges were also frozen, and they were frozen at the highest rate in history. So the 4.3-cent announcement actually I think psychologically has caused people to increase their power usage, now that it's so cheap, and has been detrimental to conservation rather than encouraging conservation. It is a unique commodity: we can't store it; we can't save it overnight. We have a huge surplus of electricity at 2 o'clock in the morning, a shortage in the afternoon.

Interjection.

Mr Parsons: I'm just going on what I was told by people on the other side, but we have more electricity than we require at 2 o'clock in the morning. In fact, I would suggest from a conservation viewpoint that it would behoove the government to consider establishing a program. So many people do their dinner in the late afternoon, after using the stove and high energy consumption, put the dishes in the dishwasher and turn it on. Under the current system that this government has, they're going to pay the same price per kilowatt hour at 6 o'clock in the afternoon as they would have paid at 3 o'clock in the morning. Surely there should be some system put together that would give an incentive. Certainly we can have timers that would have the dishwasher kick on at 3 o'clock in the morning, when we don't have the energy crisis that we do. But we need to encourage people, and we need to encourage them with carrots.

This member's bill provides for, first of all, finding out where the government buildings can reduce their energy consumption—absolutely wonderful concept. The question has been asked, why didn't it do it earlier? We didn't have an energy crisis 10 years ago. It simply wasn't an issue, because we had a Hydro that was able to

provide safe, cheap, reliable power. Now we've seen in the last couple of years, where we're into the crisis, that something has to happen. The member for York South-Weston has done that.

It also means the government must not just do a study on the buildings, as they did on the alternative fuels. They have to accept that there has to be some upfront money to produce the energy savings to produce the long-term savings for it.

I'm concerned that they don't act on it. This government seems to think that once we talk about an issue, we're going to do an audit and whatever, well, the issue is solved in the public's mind, when in fact it isn't. You have to implement the recommendations of a report before you can be assured of any cost savings out of it.

1130

With the current electricity situation—we've got issues with oil and natural gas—it became apparent from the select committee that we don't have unlimited resources as it relates to natural gas; and with oil, we are probably, within the world, reaching the limit of cheap oil, oil that's easy to access, oil that's easy to extract and process. We are probably moving into an era where we're looking at expensive oil—oil from underneath the ocean, oil from the Arctic—that will still be there for our generation but will be much more expensive to obtain. So there are all kinds of motives to decrease our demand on those fuels.

Unfortunately, probably the fuel we have the largest access to that is incredibly cheap is coal. I know the government is committed to shutting down the coal plants in 2015, but we put that in the perspective of the medical community telling us that about 1,200 people die prematurely in Ontario every year because of the effects of pollution from coal plants. So from now to 2015, an awful lot of individuals and families will pay a severe price for our reliance on coal.

I applaud Dalton McGuinty for his commitment to 2007. Our leader would like to shut them down today, but realistically we know we have to find alternative energy sources for it, but there's a profound difference between 2007 and 2015 when we take those eight years and multiply them by 1,200 premature deaths each year. The government could do better. They could do it much faster than they are.

Green energy: I note one of the platforms of the government is to produce savings for companies that want to use green energy, such as windmills, but I find it kind of funny that one of your commitments is that there will be no increase in property tax. That's not going to cost you a penny. That's a great promise. You're saying you're going to let somebody else go without the revenue from it. That's downloading on to municipalities, so please don't take credit for it.

This bill is a good bill that will certainly help to reduce the supply and save it for our children, our grandchildren and future generations.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I want to welcome Edie

Thurston's class from V.K. Greer Public School in Utterson, in the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, that is visiting today in the west public gallery. This is one of many trips they have done down to Queen's Park.

Mr Cordiano: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I believe the clock was running against our time. You should probably add a little more time to it.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll make sure that gets corrected.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I'm pleased to speak on this piece of private members' public business this morning. This may be a worthwhile idea, but without aggressive financial incentives, the plan will fail to achieve serious energy efficiency savings. However, it doesn't mean we won't support it, because to send a message to the government that something needs to be done—they are doing absolutely nothing—is really important today and as we move toward an election.

As the member, Mr Cordiano, rightfully suggests in bringing it forward, this is an Achilles heel of this government's. It talks a good line but it really delivers very little. There are no targets set and no money, so this could amount to little more than filling out forms and implementing small changes.

Broader public sector organizations need help. This government's cutbacks have left them little room to manoeuvre. The NDP's Public Power, Practical Solutions book has in it a program called Efficiency Ontario which will provide \$300 million per year in energy efficiency incentives so that deeper cuts can be achieved.

Just a little background on the bill. Every organization with the majority of members of its board appointed by or under the authority of cabinet or a cabinet minister, plus all municipalities, hospitals, universities, colleges and corporations owned at least 90% by a public or broader public sector organization and other BPS institutions will be required to submit an energy efficiency plan to the minister within one year of the coming into force of the relevant section of this bill.

The plan must include an energy audit and describe proposed energy efficiency changes as well as projected costs and savings.

The plan must be approved by the governing body of the organization.

If an organization ceases to be a public sector organization during the period in question, it does not have to prepare a plan. The overly suspicious might suggest that a privatization agenda is afoot here.

The minister can ask for repeated alterations to the plan before it is approved.

"Within one year after the energy efficiency plan is approved by the minister, the public sector organization shall implement the plan." It is unclear from this sentence whether the entire plan must be implemented within one year, which may be impractical.

The minister can designate or exempt public sector organizations.

Having said that and put on the record some of our concerns, support for any initiative that will promote and

move forward an energy efficiency agenda out of this place is good. We as New Democrats are saying, in contrast to both this bill and the lack of anything of substance coming forward from the government, that by the end of a New Democrat government's first term, Efficiency Ontario will reduce electricity demand by some 3,500 megawatts. That's the equivalent of the entire Darlington nuclear station. This represents the same percentage of electricity demand as California saved through their conservation in 2001. For an Ontario family with an electricity bill of \$1,200 and a gas bill of \$1,200, this would represent a saving of some \$360. That's a significant saving, particularly for the many, many citizens in this province today experiencing the significantly rising prices of energy in communities like Wawa and Echo Bay and Thessalon and Elliot Lake and Sault Ste Marie. This is significant money, particularly for people on fixed incomes who have no room to manoeuvre.

California instituted a 20/20 program in the spring of 2001 in order to prevent blackouts. The program was continued in 2002. Consumers who reduced electricity consumption by 20% got a further discount of 20% on the energy portion of their bill. About one third of residential consumers qualified by achieving the required energy savings, so it can be done. The 20/20 program was part of an extensive conservation strategy that saved the state over 5,700 megawatts, or 14% of its peak summer electricity consumption, thereby preventing blackouts. Community-based public education efforts, including a public conservation campaign called Flex Your Power, were also an important part of the package. According to a report done for the California state auditor, California's efforts cost three cents per kilowatt hour, or 4.2 cents Canadian, substantially less than the cost of new generating capacity.

This Efficiency Ontario project is of course consistent with some of the programs we were delivering between 1990 and 1995 when we were the government. We talk about home green-ups. Home energy audits have long been an excellent way of assisting homeowners with energy conservation. These measures can include such things as basement wall insulation, energy-efficient windows and proper caulking and sealing. The NDP government's green communities program, a program we had available when we were government that was slashed almost immediately when the Conservatives took over in 1995, made these audits available free to the public. I actually had one done on my own home, I remember, and we're still doing some of the things that were suggested by that group to reduce our energy costs. It is important. Our kids actually bought into that as well. The Conservatives cancelled the program, but many of the community groups carried on. Audits were no longer free, and few, if any, other incentives were available.

A recent pilot project in Peterborough, sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources Canada, found that without incentives, audited homeowners only undertook about 5% of the recom-

mended improvements. This is where we think the lack of any reference to financial support or incentives in the bill that we're discussing here today is a real shortfall in the proposal. With an \$800 incentive covering about 25% of the total cost, however, the ratio increased to over 40%.

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So without the incentives, we had a 5% take-up of the suggestions made through these audits. With an \$800 incentive covering about 25% of the total cost, the number of people taking advantage of that program rose to over 40%. Efficiency Ontario will be able to provide significant incentives. That's why we're talking about the kind of money that we are.

According to the Suzuki Foundation, the kinds of building envelope retrofits facilitated by home energy audits lead to significant savings in both heating and air conditioning, which of course are the two big consumers of energy these days; that which we focus on so readily in the winter, heating, and in the summer, air conditioning, as we deal with some of the shortfall in energy supply we see in the province today.

There will be big savings potential in commercial and industrial buildings as well, we think. The Mountain Equipment Co-op on King Street in Toronto has saved 40%, compared to the energy costs of the average building. The city of Toronto has had great success with its program retrofitting commercial, institutional and multi-unit residential buildings for big energy savings.

The New Democrat government began switching public housing buildings away from electric heat to natural gas and improving building insulation. That kind of approach, that kind of initiative, will be restarted under our proposal, included in the Public Power: Practical Solutions for Ontario document we are taking out and around the province these days as we move closer and closer to an election in this jurisdiction.

The Conservatives are offering a rebate on provincial sales tax for new energy-efficient appliances. Unfortunately, this has only been enough to entice 3,200 consumers to tap into the program.

A program of interest-free loans would help more consumers exchange their old refrigerators or air conditioners for new energy-efficient models. Of course, that's part of our program as well and part of what we did when we were in government.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): A free beer fridge program.

Mr Martin: Well, whatever. You can call it what you like, but if it works, it works. If people take it up and do it, then it's effective. That's what we're saying.

For example, many older refrigerators like those beer refrigerators that many people have in their basements consume 900 kilowatt hours of electricity per year. The most efficient new ones use around 200 kilowatt hours. Switching would save a homeowner \$77 a year. So we're talking about some pretty serious, significant money here.

We talk about saving \$360 a year by making sure your home is energy-efficient in terms of insulation, doors,

windows and those kinds of things. Also included in that would be efforts by residents in homes and buildings to do things like turning off water, turning out lights and bringing in automatic turnoffs of those utilities.

You add that \$360 to the \$77 a year that we feel people could save by turning in some of their old refrigerators or other appliances, like air conditioners, and we're talking about over \$400 a year in savings. As I said before, that's a lot of money, particularly for somebody on a fixed income.

So we think this bill before us today is certainly a good signal to be sending out to the people of Ontario and to this government. It's something that we think is worth supporting, and we will support it at the end of the morning here. We congratulate Mr Cordiano for bringing it forward. However, as I've stated, we think it doesn't go far enough in that there isn't identified in this—although I know in bringing forward a private member's public bill you have to be careful that you're not calling on the government to spend money, because that would disqualify the bill and perhaps that's some of why he hasn't gone a little bit further than he has in identifying money that should be made available to induce people to want to take up some of the incentive that's here.

But we think it's really important, and it's unfortunate that the government itself isn't putting out some detailed program or plan to take us down that road as well. But then, it shouldn't surprise us, because as we look at what's happening out there today in the energy field and we see the damage that's being done to communities, to business and industry and to individuals across the province, no less than in places like Wawa and Dubreuilville and White River, where I, with my colleague from Timmins-James Bay, was this past week and the insensitivity, it seems, or the lack of interest or whatever it is—last night I used the term, "Nero fiddled while Rome burned." We have a government with Mr Baird, the energy minister, and the Premier saying, "We're looking at it. We're concerned. We're going to do something," yet every day that goes by, another business closes down, another industry lays off people, people on fixed incomes have to get out of their homes and move into smaller accommodation in many of these communities, and they will never return. Once you go into bankruptcy, once you leave a business, once you lay off hundreds of people in an industry, it's really, really difficult to turn that around. So those communities will lose those enterprises for good.

Places like Wawa, White River and Dubreuilville, which depend on one industry for their livelihood, can't afford that—as is happening in White River: if Domtar closes the mill, it's the only industry in town of any real consequence that takes them through all the seasons—gone. Over 300 people are out of work, unemployment insurance will only last so long, and then those folks have to look at something else. In most instances, they will leave town and they will take with them the tax base that the municipality needs to continue to support and build the infrastructure.

As these communities make overtures to the government, it seems to be falling on deaf ears, because nobody will come up, nobody will meet with them. A week ago Thursday, today, there was a meeting in Manitouwadge, where it was suggested an interministerial task force be set up—no response from the government yet on that. I suggest that this morning we'll probably find that they'll vote against this bill as well.

Mr O'Toole: I'm pleased to rise and address the member from York South-Weston's Bill 87. As I understand it, really, I can't stand here and oppose it, because I think anyone here should be in favour of supporting conservation, for all the right reasons: for the Kyoto emissions and all the other reasons that we should be supporting conservation. It's the right thing to do. In fact, I suspect if you looked at the price of energy in the marketplace, I suppose we should have a policy that reflects conservation. In other words, if you were paying market price, you'd probably be using less electricity.

I think what's wrong in the marketplace, actually, is that some of the right tools aren't in place. If we had time-of-rate metering, people could be rewarded for using the clothes dryer late at night. But as it stands today, you pay a flat rate, and that flat rate isn't adjusted for the time of day that you use it. So your bill is sort of averaged, unfortunately. But I think the government is taking steps to introduce the time-of-rate metering. In fact, I believe you'll see with the strengthened role of the Ontario Energy Board in Bill 23 that it will mandate many of these things.

This government really believes that it's important to lead by example. I think really if you looked at the government's April throne speech, they made a number of commitments, one of which was to start with themselves, to reduce their own consumption by 10%. This would extend, of course, to the broader public sector, and of course that, in the preamble, is much of what Mr Cordiano is talking about. So I don't really disagree.

I think it's just good management. The fact of setting up a whole regime to review these energy audit plans—I think there will be a lot more bureaucrats all making \$100,000 a year.

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I think the school boards and other public sector partners have the resources today—in fact, have been. When I was a school trustee, many of the boards were introducing energy-efficient light bulbs, lighting systems and heating systems to save money. In fact, I would just strengthen that and perhaps reward them for doing it themselves, as opposed to allowing the ministry. But, substantively, I think the government is on the right track in its energy plan. There's a rebate for people purchasing energy efficient appliances.

Just one more comment: one of the earlier speakers said something I don't agree with: that there is no way to save electrons; that when you generate electricity, you've got to use it. Well, if you look to the future of the use of hydrogen and other mechanisms for storing energy, I think you'll see a lot of new responses to levelling the

peak load on our system. In fact, rather than building new generation capacity, we should be looking at ways to store existing capacity when it's not being used.

From this side of the House, I believe we'll be looking at it very carefully. Respecting the member from York South-Weston, it's an important initiative we'll be supporting on my side.

Mr Martin: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just wanted to recognize the presence in the visitors' gallery of a school from Sault Ste Marie, St Mary French Immersion School. Welcome to Toronto.

The Deputy Speaker: Welcome to our Legislature.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I join the member in welcoming our friends from Sault Ste Marie, the home of the Soo Greyhounds and the home of a lot of very good people who were born in Sault Ste Marie. I have some relatives, in fact, who reside in Sault Ste Marie.

I want to begin by commending my colleague the member for York South-Weston, Joe Cordiano, for bringing forward this timely piece of legislation.

Those of us who served on the select committee on alternative fuel sources believe that the recommendations we found in this particular report were excellent. We were all looking forward, and I think without political affiliation interfering with it, to a timely implementation of the recommendations contained in the report. The advantage, of course, of the select committee was that, I think all members would agree, we put our partisan hats aside, worked together, did a lot of discussing, did a lot of investigating, became somewhat expert in the field of alternative fuels and came up with, I think, a good report.

The problem when you get a report of this kind is whether it's ever going to be implemented. Some recommendations, I see, are being implemented. All of us who were on the committee want to see more of those implemented, and that's why it is timely for the member for York South-Weston, Joe Cordiano, to bring forward this particular measure.

The cheapest way of dealing, I say as the Minister of Energy comes in—and he would agree—with the demand side of electricity is to reduce the demand in the first place; that is, a major conservation program. That usually happens when there's a crisis. Some will recall that back in 1973, when there was a boycott on oil from the Middle East, there was a great effort made then to reduce the consumption of gasoline and oil products, and there was a reduction in consumption as a result. That was driven by a boycott, driven by highly escalating prices.

The member for York South-Weston is saying we can do that without a crisis. We simply have to anticipate and recognize that we have to implement a major, comprehensive, extensive conservation program in this province to reduce electricity consumption, particularly so that in the peak hours in the summer, when air conditioners are going and there's a great demand, and in the winter, when furnaces are going and there's a great demand, we will not have a crisis of supply; but also that we will be able to simply make all of us more efficient.

The suggestions about what we can do within houses are important, within industry. There were some good programs—the member for Sault Ste Marie made reference to this—in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, which unfortunately were terminated when the government got into cost-cutting measures after being elected in 1995. As a result, we've lost eight years of potential progress in energy conservation.

We have to recognize as well that the member has said he wants to see a reduction in the demand for electricity produced by coal-fired plants. I remember reading last July the edition of the *Economist*—certainly not what would be known as an environmental magazine—and on the cover it said, "Environmental enemy No 1"—coal. We recognize that it produces sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and a number of other toxic substances which are detrimental to public health and to the health of plant life in this province. Mercury comes to mind as being a very significant one, and carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, as I mentioned, and sulphur dioxide.

What the member is saying in effect is, and he's gone through the detail, "Let's look at the public sector: the government of Ontario and the government of Canada, municipalities, universities, colleges, hospitals and so on. Let's have a thorough evaluation or audit of these and come forward with concrete proposals and implement proposals which would substantially reduce the electricity that is consumed in those instances," and he has provided us with some examples.

I remember reading about the city of Windsor, for instance, which has reduced by a substantial amount its consumption and has saved a lot of money. They saved \$2 million over five years and paid for the performance contract over nine years. They reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 6,500 tonnes, annually lowered emissions of nitrous oxide and methane and improved comfort, lighting and air quality in buildings, so they had greater employee productivity.

You see, it has to be done by setting the example. Those of us who had a chance to see this in other jurisdictions recognize, for instance, that solar power is one way we can do this. The Honourable Robert Welch, when he was the member for Lincoln and Brock, partially in the city of St Catharines, ensured that there was an experimental program, a pilot program at Applewood public school in the Merriton section of St Catharines to put solar panels on that school. With the advanced technology we have today, we can use a lot of solar power. It's not something that's way off in the distance, it's not something that's outlandish. It can be used now.

We have an opportunity to utilize wind power. Again, there were people who were naysayers about that. Look at the province of Alberta: the entire system of public transit in the city of Calgary is in fact fuelled by electricity produced by, notionally speaking, windmills at Pincher Creek and at other locations in Alberta.

The member has I think clearly indicated that we as a government in Ontario have a chance to show the way and to effect major reductions in the costs of energy in

this province. You can't do it simply by hoping it's going to happen. You have to have, unfortunately, whether you like it or not, a very strong comprehensive audit of your buildings, vehicles, everything within the jurisdiction of government and the greater public sector that I mentioned previously. When we do that, we'll reduce consumption. When we reduce consumption, we'll reduce the amounts of contaminants that are produced by coal-fired plants. We will save money. It'll be nice, I know, for our industries and businesses that want to be competitive to save money as well. On their bottom lines they can be more competitive, more productive and more economically viable by implementing these measures.

I want to commend the member for York South-Weston. I see no reason why any member of this House would be in opposition to this legislation. It's very forward-looking. I know his constituents will be pleased to see that he has taken the initiative to put this bill before the House for consideration.

The Deputy Speaker: The time allotted for debate has expired. I'm sorry—the member for York South-Weston has two minutes to respond.

Mr Cordiano: Very briefly, just a couple of comments. Thank you to the members who have spoken to this bill.

This bill is not intended as a comprehensive conservation strategy. It is, however, intended to get the government moving with the broader public sector and the public sector. It's about leadership. It's about the fact that this government hasn't shown that leadership with respect to the reduction and consumption of energy. If you examine the throne speech, it clearly indicates a lack of government commitment on this front. They, the Conservative Party of Ernie Eves, intend to phase out coal-fired generating plants by 2015. Well, guess what? The Liberals and Dalton McGuinty are going to do that by 2007. We can't afford to wait that long. This needs to be done immediately. My bill will enact changes that will start us in that direction.

I couldn't put other concerns about financing in the bill, calling for the expenditure of funds, since this is a private member's bill. It can't be done in private members' bills. Let me just say this: the government can do that. As well, with respect to setting targets, that can be accomplished by way of regulation. The minister can do that by enacting regulations to set those targets.

I think that any of these concerns that have been raised can be addressed in committee. I would hope that members would support this bill so that we can bring it to committee and deal with those concerns. Again, I say that it is leadership that's required on the part of this government, and they have failed miserably over the last eight years to show any kind of leadership. They have the chance to do so now. Let's move forward.

The Deputy Speaker: The time for debate has ended. Thanks for intervening, Mr Cordiano, or I might have gone right past that.

We'll deal first with ballot item 15.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
AND CULTURE AMENDMENT ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LE MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES
CIVIQUES ET CULTURELLES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Mr Beaubien moved second reading of Bill 54. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Shall the bill be referred to the committee of the whole?

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I would like the bill referred to the standing committee on general government.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed? It is agreed. We will now deal with ballot item 16.

PUBLIC SECTOR
ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACT, 2003
LOI DE 2003
SUR L'EFFICACITÉ ÉNERGÉTIQUE
DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Mr Cordiano moved second reading of Bill 87. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Shall the bill be referred to the committee of the whole?

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): I'd like it to go to the standing committee on general government.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk. Thank you. Take your seats.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

A majority is in favour. The bill therefore stands referred to the standing committee on general government.

The business of this morning having been completed, I do now leave the chair. The House resumes at 1:30.

The House recessed from 1204 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I'm honoured to have the occasion today to stand before this House and express the great satisfaction that the gay and lesbian community has with Canada. I'm always a proud Canadian, but my pride was intensified to an even greater extent when, earlier this week, the federal government announced that it would not appeal but would rather move forward legislatively with a prescription that would open marriage up to gays and lesbians in this country.

I'm very, very proud always, as someone who was drawn to politics by Pierre Trudeau, to see the work he did on the Charter of Rights expressing the values that, as a Canadian, I'm very, very proud to celebrate.

I'm very proud as well of the extraordinary people who have given service to my community in advancing our move toward equality: lawyers like Martha McCarthy and Douglas Elliott, and Reverend Brent Hawkes and the congregation at the Metropolitan Community Church. I'm excited that this Friday afternoon—tomorrow—I'll have the opportunity to participate as a celebrant at a wedding involving my good friend Toronto city councillor Kyle Rae. This is an extraordinary opportunity for our community.

Canada, as the third nation in the world to allow same-sex couples to marry, is at the forefront, as we should be as a country, in acknowledging the fundamental equality of our people.

I realize this is a contentious issue and that it challenges many people's values, but I want to say that I've been extraordinarily impressed at the way all people in this debate have conducted themselves. As a Canadian I'm very proud and as a gay person, I'm extraordinarily proud to call Canada my home. I'd like to thank all three party leaders in this Legislature, who supported this initiative.

PETER GZOWSKI INVITATIONAL

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): Peter Gzowski would have been delighted with plans to pass on the torch for a tradition he began 17 years ago. It was 17 years ago when he hit the first golf ball off the tee at the Briars Golf Club to start the first Peter Gzowski Invitational. The tournament is traditionally preceded by a night of entertainment at the Red Barn Theatre. Some of Canada's top stars have performed, volunteering their time and talents for Mr Gzowski's support of the cause of literacy. One of Canada's most acclaimed writer-broadcasters, Mr Gzowski died last year, but not before leaving a legacy that has become a part of the essence of the Canadian identity.

Telling the stories of Canadians and having them able to read and write those stories was his passion. The Red Barn gala was held on Monday evening, June 9. It began with a barbecue on the lawns, followed by an evening of special performances. This year's Red Barn event was hosted by the CBC's Shelagh Rogers, while Peter Mansbridge was host and spokesperson for the golf tournament.

Anyone who attended the event received a unique literary gift, a facsimile, complete with cigarette burns and coffee stains, of Peter Gzowski's manuscript for Leacock's Smile, considered to be his best piece of writing. It is part of an exhibition by the Stephen Leacock Museum in Orillia, entitled "Beautiful Words," which includes a provocative epigram by Stephen Leacock, a writer whom Mr Gzowski greatly admired.

The Peter Gzowski library is hoping to bring the exhibition to Sutton in the near future. Thank you, Peter Gzowski, for your legacy of literacy.

THUNDER BAY EXPRESSWAY

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Earlier this week, another major traffic accident took place on the Thunder Bay Expressway, this time at the extremely dangerous intersection of John Street and the expressway. Seven people were taken to hospital, with one person in very serious condition.

As is always the case when such an incident occurs, we naturally ask whether this accident could have been avoided. I can't say for sure, nor can I categorically tell the Minister of Transportation today that if an advance warning light system had been in place this accident would not have happened. But the fact that it might have alerted the driver cannot be denied, and it is for that reason that I once again call on the province and the minister to install lights at all the lit sections of the expressway.

Frankly, the real issue here is that what we have in Thunder Bay is a part of the Trans-Canada Highway, where speeds frequently exceed 100 kilometres an hour, interrupted by six sets of traffic lights. Does anyone in this Legislature believe for one second that such a situation would be allowed to exist on the 401? What clearly needs to happen to avoid these needless and tragic events is for the province to recognize its obligation to complete its own plan for the expressway. This is a stretch of the highway that needs overpasses and interchanges that aren't just on the drawing board, but are part of a real funding commitment with a real timeline. We've been told that the province will move forward once the northwest arterial is built. I view that as simply a cop-out. It should not be used as an excuse not to move forward on safety improvements that should have happened long ago. People in northwestern Ontario should not have to accept a different quality in terms of highway standards just because we are far from Queen's Park—certainly not when the price of that lower standard may cost us our lives.

HERITAGE MILTON

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): Throughout Ontario there are pockets of citizens committed to preserving Ontario's history for future generations. These various historical societies are staffed in large part by community volunteers who care very deeply about their communities.

In Milton we're very fortunate to have one such organization with several individuals dedicated to the preservation of the town's history. Heritage Milton was founded in 1977, with a goal of protecting and preserving the local courthouse and jail. Since that time, it has been converted into the council chambers, and the jail exercise yard is one of the prettiest gardens in town.

In September 2002, Heritage Milton celebrated its 25th anniversary with the opening of the Waldie Blacksmith Shop, a blacksmith shop sitting in Milton which was run by four generations of Waldies. This volunteer organization carries out several projects in the town of Milton aimed at education and preservation of our history.

One outstanding volunteer is 90-year-old Leonard McNeil, one of the founding members of Heritage Milton. Yesterday, at Allendale, a retirement home in Milton, Mr McNeil was presented with the Ontario Heritage Foundation award recognizing over 25 years of dedication to Heritage Milton. Through his years of service with Heritage Milton, Mr McNeil helped carry out many activities, including the implementation of the town's historical plaque program. These plaques help visitors and newcomers to our community identify buildings of historical significance. The group also preserves documents for the town of Milton archives so that we can pass along records of interest to future generations.

Halton has many remarkable citizens who are committed to preserving our culture and heritage, and we are proud of the time Mr Leonard McNeil has dedicated to the community through Heritage Milton.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): Finally, relief for Great Lakes Power customers. Late yesterday, Energy Minister Baird announced that rural rate assistance will apply to Great Lakes Power customers. This means that customers will receive an average reduction in their electricity bills of \$21 a month, and an average credit of \$350 to their Great Lakes Power accounts, retroactive to May 1, 2002. Obviously, people who heat with electricity or otherwise use large quantities of electricity will receive larger credits.

The rate for residential consumers will be slightly less than for Hydro One customers. This ends the blatant discrimination against Great Lakes Power customers. Further, large industrial and large commercial customers will also receive mitigation.

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The effects of these rates still need to be clarified, but the minister has committed to provide some clarification for me today. I want to thank the minister for his help in this endeavour. I want to thank municipal leaders, community groups and residents for supporting my campaign for rural rate assistance and rate fairness in the Great Lakes Power area.

There have been many casualties over the last 12 months. Hopefully, this means that, going forward, consumers and businesses within the Great Lakes Power area will receive rate fairness.

SUDBURY REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): If rumours are true, the government is finally ready to deal with the

unacceptable construction delay at the Sudbury Regional Hospital. It's how this will be dealt with that greatly concerns me. Government-appointed supervisor Graham Scott says the government isn't likely to change the hospital funding formula to assume a greater percentage of the costs, so the community must raise 30% of the higher construction costs. A mortgage option seems to be on the table. A financial institution would upfront local costs and the hospital would pay mortgage payments from savings in the operating budget.

The problem is that the Sudbury Regional Hospital has an operating deficit of \$25 million and an accrued debt of \$90 million. The board has agreed to cost-cutting measures which may see the hospital break even by 2006, if all the operations are at one site by that time. If not, there's no guarantee of savings, much less the hoped-for \$7.1 million annual savings. The plan involves the elimination of 125 to 145 full-time positions.

There are no operating savings to pay mortgage payments, and there is no guarantee of any savings for some long time to come. So what will the hospital do? Cut even more programs and staff to find the money to pay the mortgage? What will that do for patient care? And what will it do on top of the 125 full-time positions the hospital has already agreed to cut by 2006?

This scheme will force the hospital to take big risks that could jeopardize patient care. It's not acceptable. The government must recognize Sudbury as a regional centre servicing northeastern Ontario, and the government should change the funding formula so the government assumes a greater cost of this share.

ELECTROVAYA

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I am very excited to have this opportunity to recognize and applaud the achievements of Electrovaya, a remarkable high-technology company located in my riding of Mississauga South.

With Electrovaya's groundbreaking products, the era of Star Wars remote technology has indeed arrived. Last year, Electrovaya won the innovation category of the Ontario government's Global Traders Award for its SuperPolymer battery technology, which allows longer run times than any other rechargeable battery currently in production.

Electrovaya has also created the Scribbler, which is considered to be the world's most mobile tablet PC. Using the company's award-winning battery, the Scribbler can run up to 16 hours—much longer than its competition. This ingenious computer is called a Scribbler because the user can handwrite on a screen. The PC then transcribes the notations and can send them anywhere in the world via remote, wireless technology. Like the company's batteries, the Scribbler is taking the world by storm.

Today we welcome Electrovaya's president and CEO, Dr Sankar Das Gupta, and members of his family, who are in the members' gallery. I invite all members to join

me in congratulating Dr Das Gupta and Electrovaya's vice-president and chief technology officer, Dr James Jacobs, for building a visionary company that has put Canada on the leading edge of mobile technology. This is the Scribbler.

BEEF PRODUCERS

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I rise today to plead with the Minister of Agriculture on behalf of the cattle producers and other ruminant farmers in our province. Yesterday, the bottom fell out of the market in Alberta. Cattle were trading at 50 cents. At that price, producers are losing \$700 a head. It is less than half the value of the animal. Last week, the industry was already in crisis and free-fall. This has the potential to be the nail in the coffin.

The phones in my office and other members' offices have been ringing off the hook. Beef farmers are in dire straits, in danger of losing everything, not able to hold on any longer. The federal government has announced their recovery program. We all know there are areas of contention and shortfalls with this plan. The sliding scale of compensation may not be enough to save some farmers; the timing of the wind-down of the program is problematic, as well as how to ensure equitable distribution across the country.

The feds tell me that Alberta will have applications out to their farmers tomorrow and that cheques will be flowing next week. Our farmers in this industry need money now. They cannot hold on any longer.

As a cost-shared, provincially administered program, our minister does have the authority and the option to enhance, extend or boost the program if she has to, if that is what is necessary to save the beef industry in our province. I urge this government and its Minister of Agriculture to commit to this industry that they will immediately take action, get the money into farmers' hands and do what it takes to ensure this vital industry does not disappear from the face of the province.

STEPHEN CHANDLER

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise today to honour a man who has devoted 35 years to children and families; 25 of those years to the children and families of Perth county.

Stephen Chandler is the longest-serving continuous director of any children's aid society in this province and is retiring from his post as director of the Perth county children's aid society.

I had the honour of presenting Stephen with a Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in February. That medal recognized not only his professional service to our community but his efforts with the United Way, St John's United Church and the Rotary Club.

Stephen's contributions have also been felt far outside the borders of the city of Stratford and the county of Perth. He was involved in an international exchange pro-

gram with the Zimbabwe Council for the Welfare of Children, which resulted in Project Wheelchair, a partnership between the Stratford Rotary Club and its sister club in Zimbabwe.

Unfortunately, I was unable to get to Stephen's retirement party last Friday night to tell him this in person, but on behalf of the people, and especially the children, of the riding of Perth-Middlesex, I want to thank him for his years of service. I'm sure all members of this house will join me in wishing Stephen well and letting him know that his contribution will never be forgotten.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent for second and third readings of Bill 100, An Act respecting the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site Park.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? I didn't hear any noes. Agreed. The member may proceed.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Who said no?

The Speaker: Did you say no?

Interjection.

The Speaker: Oh, OK. Sorry.

The minister over here needs to move second and third readings.

KAWARTHA HIGHLANDS SIGNATURE SITE PARK ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LE PARC DE LA RÉGION CARACTÉRISTIQUE DES HAUTES-TERRES DE KAWARTHA

Mr Baird moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act respecting the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site Park / Projet de loi 100, Loi concernant le parc de la région caractéristique des Hautes-Terres de Kawartha.

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

KAWARTHA HIGHLANDS SIGNATURE SITE PARK ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LE PARC DE LA RÉGION CARACTÉRISTIQUE DES HAUTES-TERRES DE KAWARTHA

Mr Baird moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act respecting the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site Park / Projet de loi 100, Loi concernant le parc de la région caractéristique des Hautes-Terres de Kawartha.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

VISITORS

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if you and the members of the Legislature would help me in welcoming Derek, Roseanna and Amelia Redmond, who were the successful bidders on lunch with their member of Parliament in the legislative dining room today. Would you please join me in welcoming them? They're in the west gallery.

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Many in the House have met Aja Sutton, our page. I wish to draw members' attention to the members' gallery, where Aja's mother, Tara, and her grandmother, Mrs Ollie Sutton, are present.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise to introduce a former member of this House, Mr Allister Johnston. He served in this place from 1948 to 1971, representing the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. Mr Johnston is currently in his 94th year. I welcome him back to this House.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We welcome our honoured guest.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It gives me great pleasure and honour to welcome His Holiness Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin in the members' gallery, head of Dawoodi Bohra Community worldwide, celebrating his 92nd birthday tomorrow, as well as members of the community: Amil Saheb Juzer Zakari, Shiek Hamza Najmi, Sheik Zulfiqar Zakir, Sheik Aziz Dohadwala, Shiek Habib D Tawawala, Sheik Khuzeima Dohadwala, Sheik Murtaza Bhujwala, Mulla Onali Jeevanjee, Bhai Abdulhussein Alibhai, Hussein Bhutwala, and Taha Tawawala.

Tomorrow this community will be celebrating, June 20, the birthday of the Holy Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon Him. I would like to ask the members to join them tomorrow.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to introduce the last two people in the members' gallery: Paul Halliday and his daughter, Bronwyn, who purchased at a charity event the opportunity to have lunch with myself and other members of caucus. I'd like to welcome them here today.

ANNUAL REPORT,
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today I laid upon the table the 2002-03 Annual Report of the Ombudsman.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 110, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

DEFERRED VOTES

ONTARIO HOME PROPERTY
TAX RELIEF FOR SENIORS ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR L'ALLÈGEMENT
DE L'IMPÔT FONCIER RÉSIDENTIEL
POUR LES PERSONNES ÂGÉES
DE L'ONTARIO

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to provide Ontario home property tax relief for seniors / Projet de loi 43, Loi prévoyant un allègement de l'impôt foncier résidentiel pour les personnes âgées de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1353 to 1358.

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

Ayes

Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Newman, Dan
Beaubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Witmer, Elizabeth
Flaherty, Jim	McDonald, AL	Wood, Bob
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Young, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Ernie
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Kennedy, Gerard	Prue, Michael
Bryant, Michael	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony	Sorbara, Greg
Curling, Alvin	McGuinty, Dalton	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 46; the nays are 35.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 11, 2003, this bill is ordered for third reading.

THE RIGHT CHOICES FOR
EQUITY IN EDUCATION ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2003

LOI DE 2003
SUR LES BONS CHOIX POUR L'ÉQUITÉ
EN MATIÈRE D'ÉDUCATION
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 53, An Act respecting the equity in education tax credit / Projet de loi 53, Loi concernant le crédit d'impôt pour l'équité en matière d'éducation.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We also have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 53, An Act respecting the equity in education tax credit.

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

The division bells rang from 1401 to 1406.

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

Ayes

Baird, John R.	Gill, Raminder	Molinari, Tina R.
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Beaubien, Marcel	Hastings, John	Mushinski, Marilyn
Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Newman, Dan
Clark, Brad	Jackson, Cameron	O'Toole, John
Clement, Tony	Johns, Helen	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Coburn, Brian	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Cunningham, Dianne	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Curling, Alvin	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Kwinter, Monte	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Maves, Bart	Wilson, Jim
Flaherty, Jim	Mazzilli, Frank	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	McDonald, AL	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Miller, Norm	Young, David

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	McLeod, Lyn
Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Boyer, Claudette	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Brown, Michael A.	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Bryant, Michael	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Christopherson, David	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Churley, Marilyn	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Martin, Tony	Sorbara, Greg
Cordiano, Joseph	McGuinity, Dalton	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 48; the nays are 35.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 17, 2003, the bill is ordered for third reading.

1410

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like my vote to be

recorded as a negative on this side. Somehow there was some mistake here.

The Speaker: I appreciate that, and he obviously will be on the record as recording that. The problem is that the table is not allowed to make a change in a vote. I understand that it may have been an accident. Unfortunately, the table recorded it. I'm afraid it is not a point of order. Those are the rules, but of course your point of order will be recorded that your intent was that way.

VISITORS

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Today we have the pleasure of receiving the unstoppable leader from Grand Ravine and some 55 young ladies belonging to the Grand Ravine women's exercise classes. Today, thanks to the leader, Mrs Cristofolis, they wanted to exercise by coming to visit their Legislative Assembly and seeing how the members of Parliament behave. I hope they enjoy their stay here today.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We welcome our honoured guests.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My first questions today are to the minister responsible for children's services. Yesterday, Madam Minister, a very damning report was released that says you have been failing Ontario's 17,000 children in care. These are children and young people who are without parents and for whom you and your government have assumed parental responsibilities. This report places Ontario last when it comes to protecting children in care, and we come last in every single category.

Here is a very compelling and frightening statistic: between 1978 and 1995, there was not one single questionable death among children in care in our province. Since 1995, there have been seven questionable deaths.

After you formed the government, children in care in Ontario began to die. These kids are without parents. It is your responsibility to protect them. They find themselves in your care. Why have you failed to protect children in care in the province of Ontario?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I cannot agree with the comment of my colleague across the way. This government has been very, very diligent in taking every effort that it can to protect the children of Ontario. We know that this is very important, particularly when children find themselves in a circumstance where they can no longer stay with their own families and must come under the care of the province.

I want to say to my colleague across the way that it's our government which in fact changed the Family and

Children's Services Act so that not only would we be able to look after children who find themselves in the most unfortunate circumstance of being abused but also children who find themselves neglected and needing someone to look out for their interests.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, here are the facts again: during the 17 years prior to 1995, there wasn't a single questionable death in our province. Since your government assumed responsibility as the government, seven young people have died questionable deaths.

There have been five inquests—there are two more underway right now—into the deaths of these young people. They have made over 280 recommendations. You're not following those recommendations. In fact, the very last inquest report made a specific plea to you to actually follow the recommendations of previous inquests.

The Office of the Child Advocate is supposed to help protect these kids, but the report clearly shows that your government is not giving Ontario's child advocate the tools she needs. The report says, "Ontario's advocacy office is not allowed the tools or powers to conduct meaningful outreach or public reporting." It goes on to say, "The only government that would consider this situation to be acceptable is a government seeking to minimize, contain and silence its child advocate."

Minister, why are you trying to minimize, contain and silence Ontario's child advocate?

Hon Mrs Elliott: Your characterization of the report is unfortunate. When a child dies in this province, whether it occurs in a family, or particularly when it occurs in the care of the state, we take this very seriously. In unfortunate circumstances where an inquest, for instance, is undertaken I can tell you that we look closely at the recommendations to see what we can do as a province to do things better. I look to one recommendation, for instance, as a result of an inquest where 52 of the 54 recommendations have already been undertaken.

With regard to the report that was distributed yesterday which somehow tried to indicate that this government would not want to allow the child advocate to do her job, would somehow try be standing in the way of the child advocate doing her job, I can only say to you that that is absolutely wrong.

Mr McGuinty: Seventeen years prior to your government: zero deaths. Since your government took over the job, seven deaths: James Lonnee died in September 1996 in a young offender facility. He was 16 years old. Stephanie Jobin died in 1998 in a physical restraint in a group home; 13 years old. William Edgar, 1999, physical restraint in a group home; 13 years old. Paola Rosales hung herself; 14 years old. Joshua Dumford, February 2000 in a correctional facility; 18 years old. He died as well. In 17 years we had zero deaths. During the past years of your government we've had seven deaths.

You have not even met with the child advocate since assuming your responsibilities over one year ago. You won't even allow the child advocate in the province of

Ontario to file an annual public report. Every single other province gives their child advocate that responsibility.

Madam Minister, if you're not prepared to stand up and protect the interests of the 17,000 children who find themselves in your care, if you're not prepared to allow the child advocate to assume her responsibility and give public reports about what's going on with respect to those children in care, then I suggest to you that you step aside and allows somebody else to take on the job.

Hon Mrs Elliott: I expect the child advocate to do just what the child advocate in Ontario is supposed to do, and that is to step aside from the government, from the interference of the minister, and offer his or her best advice on how children should be taken care of.

I take issue with the comments from the Leader of the Opposition, who says that we do not take our job seriously and we do not act. When any child dies in this province, particularly under the care of the province, we are most concerned. He referenced one particular inquest that was held as a result of a death. I want to tell you that as a result of that most unfortunate incident, we took specific action to look at our training program to make sure those who are responsible for caring for our children were as best trained as we could have them trained.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today the Ombudsman released a damning report on the failures of your prisons, your tenant protection and your Family Responsibility Office and I have questions with regard to all three.

The Ombudsman describes conditions in jails with three prisoners to a cell with two beds, the third sleeping on the floor with his head next to the toilet. Mr Lewis warns that this not only increases the likelihood of contagious disease, he tells us that these kinds of conditions are resulting in judges letting criminals go after serving only one half to one third of their sentence.

Prison conditions on your watch are resulting not only in dangerous conditions for prisoners themselves but they are endangering the public because you're letting prisoners out after they've served only one half or one third of their time. Your response was to cut \$181 million out of the public safety budget this year. Madam Minister, why do you allow conditions to exist in our jails that are leading to the early release of criminals who are doing only one half to one third of their time?

1420

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I think it's important that the leader understand that the report has been received today. I understand that the respective ministries are reviewing the issues that have been raised by the Ombudsman. Obviously, each ministry wants to work co-operatively with the Office of the Ombudsman to address the concerns that you have indicated, but I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that certainly during and since 1995 this gov-

ernment has worked extremely hard to ensure the demands of public safety are met and that offenders are held securely while incarcerated and that they are rehabilitated upon their release.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, that's not what the Ombudsman is saying, and I suggest you take a look at the report. My colleague Dave Levac has been talking about this for over a year. The fact of the matter is, you're not acting.

The Ombudsman hit the nail on the head when he said, regarding the Family Responsibility Office, that the FRO is "unable to fulfill its support enforcement mandate adequately."

There are 130,000 families who are not receiving their child support. There's over \$1.3 billion owing to these children. That's up \$200 million since last year alone. The Ombudsman makes it clear that the fault here doesn't lie with the kids or their parents; it isn't the workers who are struggling over at the Family Responsibility Office with antiquated computers. He says the fault lies entirely with your government.

We intend to use Internet tracking to find deadbeat parents and make them pay. We're also going to suspend drivers' licences if two or more support payments have been missed.

It has been two years since the Ombudsman recommended upgrading the computer system at the FRO. Why do they continue to wait, to this very day, for an upgraded computer system that will enable them to get the job done and collect the money for those families that are desperately depending on it?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): We acknowledge that there's always more to do in many of our files, including the Family Responsibility Office, but to say that we're not doing a lot and not working to do more is incorrect.

First of all, let's be clear. The Ombudsman said, "FRO operates for many people's benefits properly." We now process claims faster. It used to take 10 days. Now 95% of support orders are out the door in less than 48 hours. And 85% of court support orders are paid directly to banks. More is being collected for families who need care. In 1994, \$368 million was collected for parents and families who needed help. Now that's up by 50%, to \$561 million to families who need help.

Mr McGuinty: Only this minister could describe \$1.3 billion in arrears, \$1.3 billion that is desperately needed by families, particularly young mothers and their children, as somehow some kind of a success. Only this minister could describe it in that way.

Deputy Premier, the Ombudsman has also blown the whistle on your failure to protect tenants. He points out that while landlords may apply for a rent increase based on your skyrocketing utility costs, you refuse, on the other hand, to allow tenants to apply for a rate reduction when those same utility rates come down. My colleague David Caplan has a bill that would end this problem.

Deputy Premier, will you immediately support David Caplan's bill? Why won't you call it for second and third reading immediately and close this loophole that the Ombudsman has specifically called discriminatory?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'll refer that to the associate minister.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'm well aware of the issues raised by the Ombudsman. As a matter of fact, the ministry and the Ombudsman staff and office have already met to discuss this issue.

I want to comment on the Leader of the Opposition's comments about adopting Caplan's amendment. I want to put on the record that their real rent control, until vacancy rates reach 3%, means no rent control at all. As a matter of fact, if they read the Globe and Mail report, it says that vacancy in Toronto is 3.5%. What it really means is that there's no rent control in Toronto at all—that's the Liberal plan.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a question to the Minister of Finance. Minister, we spoke with a woman, Valda Francis of Toronto. She drives a four-year-old compact economy car and had been paying Belair premiums of \$2,200 a year, which was already pretty steep. Belair just notified her that her premiums are being jacked up by 80% to \$4,200 a year, jacked up by two grand a year. When Belair was asked about it, Belair said that across the board they're increasing premiums by 50%.

You and your government since 1995 have held committee hearings, chaired by Mr Sampson—I was there—have passed legislation, have promised to control and stabilize auto insurance premiums. Why is it you're letting Belair jack up premiums 50% across the board, and in the case of Ms Francis—no driving infractions, no claims—to the tune of two grand a year? Why are you letting that happen?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I appreciate that your solution to the auto insurance problem was to bring in public auto insurance. When you had the opportunity to do that, you did not do it. Second, we had legislation before this House that put in place a framework that will benefit consumers. You voted against it, sir.

Mr Kormos: The fact is, your framework hasn't helped Ms Francis, who's being gouged to the tune of an additional two grand a year. Let's take a look at a family with one young driver, perfect driving record, and driving a 1994 Ford Taurus. In Vancouver, they'd pay around \$1,100 a year in premiums. In Toronto, they'd be paying \$2,000 a year. That's a gap of more than \$850, and that's based on 2001. Since then, as you well know, the gap has grown even larger. The reality is that British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have been able to control and stabilize rates and keep premiums consistently lower than they've been in Ontario. Quite frankly, BC

has a package of benefits very similar to that of Ontario, indeed a better tort package. You know that.

The difference is that public auto insurance works; your private auto insurers don't. Why don't you commit yourself now to public auto insurance, a system that's proven, a system that's tried, that's fairer to drivers, fairer to victims and provides more modest premiums?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I agree that consumers of auto insurance need help. That's why we've taken the action we've taken and why we're going to take more action. Again, they want solutions that work, not pie-in-the-sky promises. You didn't bring in public auto insurance because you recognized that it wouldn't work, that it was going to cost some billion dollars to implement. Who do you think was going to have to pay those costs? Taxpayers or consumers. Someone would have had to pay those costs.

Second, you voted against legislation that can benefit consumers in auto insurance. You voted against every tax break we gave them on auto insurance premiums. I appreciate the concern, that you're raising this issue here, but what consumers need are real solutions that work, not promises that it has been proved will not work.

Mr Kormos: Minister, your government's approach hasn't provided any solutions and the fact is that the 30-year-plus history of public auto insurance in BC is tried and tested. When are you going to get it? I've been here 15 years and watched three governments try to regulate the private auto insurance industry. You still haven't learned. It's a monster that can't be caged; it's a beast that can't be tamed; it's a mad dog that can't be leashed. When are you going to understand that you can't regulate the private auto insurance industry?

Don't just listen to us, listen to Robert Wesseling, a vice-president of Co-operators insurance, the second-largest auto insurer here in Ontario. He says, "The systems that are working best in Canada are in Manitoba"—public auto—"and Quebec"—public auto.

1430

Premier, when are you going to listen to the people out there—the drivers who are being scammed, gouged, ripped off and exploited? When are you going to look to systems that have proven themselves to provide affordable and fair auto insurance coverage? Why don't you stand up today and say that public auto insurance works for British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and if you're going to provide fairness for drivers and innocent victims, you want to make it work in Ontario?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I thank you for the promotion, but I think the record should show that the Premier sits one seat to my left. Thank you for that thought anyway.

I agree with the honourable member that consumers of auto insurance are feeling significant pressures. That's why we're taking the steps we are taking. We've responded to this before. When we brought in earlier legislation, there was actually a 12% reduction, which is something the honourable member's government was not able to achieve.

We appreciate the advice. If you were serious about it, I hope you would support the legislation we've brought

forward. I hope you would support the additional tax relief we are providing consumers on auto insurance premiums.

Interjection.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I will take that as support from the honourable member for tax relief for auto insurance consumers.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Your government is failing in its obligation to ensure that women and children get the support payments they are entitled to. The Ombudsman revealed today that Ontario families are owed \$1.3 billion in support payments; that is a record high. Families are ending up on welfare because of mistakes made in registering court orders or failures in ensuring serious enforcement action. The computer system is completely outdated, and despite repeated requests by the Ombudsman to have it fixed, his requests have been ignored. The Ombudsman said very clearly at the press conference today, "The FRO is not working."

Minister, when are you going to finally respond to the Ombudsman's concerns, and what are you going to do to ensure that women and children get the \$1.3 billion in support payments they are owed?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): Doing everything we can to make sure that families get support is very important to us. I note again that the Ombudsman did say, "FRO operates for many people's benefit properly."

I acknowledge that there is more work to do in the Family Responsibility Office. I have visited it personally, and I recognize that there is more to be done. I want to say that while we recognize things need to be improved, action is being taken. We have recently invested \$800,000 in new staff, so that we can process claims more quickly. I checked just before I came into the House today, thinking you might be asking me about this, and we are working on options for new software solutions to build a new system that will allow us to do an even better job.

Is there more to be done? Yes. But do we, to this date, have measurements to say we are doing a better job? Yes. And I look forward to offering those in the supplementary.

Ms Martel: I repeat, the Ombudsman said at the press conference today, "The FRO is not working." And that's not the first time he's raised concerns about the FRO. He's raised concerns in every single report since he's been the Ombudsman, and his predecessor, Roberta Jamieson, raised concerns too. In fact, both of those people raised concerns about a computer system, which you have done nothing about since you have been in government, Minister.

I remind you that support payments owed to women and children are at a record high: \$1.3 billion owed to

families that they are not receiving because of problems at FRO. Resources for the computer system have not been allocated, despite repeated calls for this to be done. Staff are totally demoralized because they can't do the job they want to for women and children.

I ask you again, Minister—this fiasco has gone on long enough—when are you going to assume your obligation to ensure that women and children get the support payments they are owed?

Hon Mrs Elliott: I say to my colleague across the way that we recognize that more needs to be done. We have added more staff, and a new computer system is in the works. And I say to my colleague across the way that under their government, if a family contacted the Family Responsibility Office and needed assistance in getting support, it would take up to 10 days to get assistance, to get that court-ordered support to the family. Now, under our government, 95% of payments are delivered to the families or to the banks within 48 hours. The \$368 million in 1994 is now up to \$561 million delivered to families. Complaints are almost half of what they were just a few years ago.

Looking for tools: what has this government done to find ways to get support for families? It's our government that now allows a driver's licence to be suspended, that now can garnish joint bank accounts and that now calls upon private collection agencies to help us get help for families.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a question for the Minister of Energy. People in my community were outraged at retroactive natural gas price increases that were approved by your government. Now they could be ripped off on their electricity.

This week the Ontario Energy Board issued a consumer advisory warning customers that your government will now allow negative-option billing in electricity. There's no sales tactic more despised in this country than negative-option billing; that is, charging first and asking second. Consumers could get stuck with a contract they have absolutely no interest in. They can have a contract imposed on them simply by forgetting to open a letter. The Consumers' Association of Canada says, "The government has no plans to inform and educate consumers about this change in regulation."

You have left electricity consumers at the mercy of electricity retail marketers. This is a sector where more than a few predatory practices were exposed last year. Minister, why did your government fail to notify consumers of your support for negative-option billing in electricity?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): Nothing could be further from the truth. There's no support for that practice in Ontario. In fact, the member opposite identified specific concerns with respect to electricity. There is not a single retailer of

electricity offering retail contracts to consumers in Ontario. Any concern that a residential customer might be forced off the 4.3-cent plan: it's simply not the case.

Mr Duncan: Minister, then let me refer you to the Ontario Energy Board Act. Section 79.4 brings in the price cap. Subsection 79.4(5) grants an exception to the price cap if, and I quote, "The consumer renews or enters into a contract." Subsection (6) says, "The commodity price for electricity payable by a consumer is subject to any contract the consumer renews."

Last year we heard about electricity retailers bamboozling people into signing contracts. Now you're giving them the power to simply renew old contracts, without any consent from consumers, and forcing them to pay more. Minister, it could happen tomorrow. Why are you setting up the conditions for gouging consumers with negative-option billing in the electricity market?

Hon Mr Baird: In fact, the government is undertaking no such process. Let me be clear: no one is offering renewals with respect to electricity in Ontario. The 4.3-cent fixed price that's available to residential customers remains in place. No one is out there offering renewals—zero per cent chance. I can't be any clearer than that.

There is an ability, between now and 2006 and after 2006, if green power were offered at a greater rate, over 4.3 cents, for people to enter into those contracts. If someone says, "I don't want dirty coal. I would like clean-generated wind power for use in my home," and they voluntarily want to pay more, those contracts aren't available today, so there is no possibility of renewal. I can't be clearer than 100%, it won't happen.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The secondary school year is almost over. Many graduating students from both grade 12 and grade 13 form the double cohort. We have reached the time when students must decide what college or university they want to attend. That is, the students must accept an offer of admission. I know your target is 70,000 students. Are you on target?

1440

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): In fact, we did have a great announcement by the Council of Ontario Universities this morning. It has been a time of anticipation for our students, but they are to be congratulated. They've actually accepted offers—71,913 students have now accepted offers from the universities and colleges. It is keeping our promise. It is a great day for our students. Every qualified and willing student will find a place in our colleges and universities.

Over the summer, there will be some students who will continue to apply. There are some spaces still available. They can call the application centre in Guelph, whose number is 519-732-1940. Just to say—

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

Mr Miller: That's great news, Minister. I know you've been working for many years on the challenge of preparing Ontario's colleges and universities for the double cohort.

I've got a personal interest in the double cohort, as my daughter Renée is graduating from grade 12 next week—the good news is that the whip has given me permission to go to the graduation. In Renée's case, she applied to three universities—the University of Guelph, the University of Ottawa and McMaster University—and was accepted to all three. She has chosen to go to the University of Guelph.

Could you tell me about what preparations your ministry has made to prepare for the double cohort?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I do appreciate the compliments, but the compliments really go to the students and their teachers, to the university presidents, to the leadership we have in this great post-secondary system in the province of Ontario.

To begin with, another \$200 million will be committed in the 2003 budget to a special fund to protect quality during the time when double-cohort students are enrolled. I say this because that's on top of 355 million new dollars in operating funds. On top of that, we're very proud of the research and development—the Ontario Innovation Trust—the set-aside on tuition; OSOTF 2, which is 400 million new dollars that will go into student assistance. Every student who qualifies will, in fact, get student assistance.

I'd like to finish by saying that what we're really focusing on here is the additional wonderful academic staff, the books, the computers and all the libraries. Those are the quality issues—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. New question.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): My question is to the Minister of Finance. One hundred and ninety-two days ago, you passed Bill 198, which promised rate relief for Ontario's driving motorists. Yet, 192 days later, while Ontario motorists are facing an average increase of 19.2% in auto insurance, you have done nothing except talk about round tables, task forces and sending your regulations out to focus groups. You've done nothing to move forward with these regulations and offered nothing but empty words as some promise to come for Ontario's driving motorists.

Will you stand in your place and tell us today why you're sitting there and fiddling when, 192 days after the passage of a piece of legislation, you've still failed to get your cabinet colleagues to support a package of regulations to deliver any reform or any support or any help to Ontario's driving motorists? When are you going to actually do something?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I appreciate the honourable member's concern, and I appreciate his

advice. It would have been helpful if he had voted for the legislation.

Mr Smitherman: Well, to the same minister, and a little—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Smitherman: The member from Scarborough East says, "Gotcha," but here's the "gotcha": I'll remind you what Bill 198 was about. That was the bill where you had to pull out your flawed pension reforms because they were so poorly done. That's why we didn't vote for your lousy bill, Madam Minister. You can sit there all you want and try to turn the responsibility back, but for right now, you have the responsibility and apparently you have the power to move forward on regulations that have been promised.

Since you're so unwilling or unable, it seems, to get your cabinet colleagues to support any package of reforms, will you stand in your place today and commit to releasing the regulations in their current form—the ones you've been focus-grouping—and will you give a commitment as to when Ontarians can expect to see this package of regulatory reform you're hanging your hat on but that you're not getting done?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The fact remains that you voted against the same legislation you are now so anxious to have put into effect. Secondly, you also voted against tax relief for auto insurance consumers.

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Watch the finger.

I appreciate your advice. Perhaps the honourable member would have preferred that we did not consult and did not meet with health care practitioners, advocates on behalf of consumers and insurance representatives. Perhaps he would have preferred us to simply go out and do something before we knew it would be a package that would help. This government is indeed going to do what it said it was going to do. We're doing it with the help and the assistance of people in the field who understand the issue, as opposed to the record of your government when you were in power—19% increases.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, 40,000 people move to York region annually. This kind of tremendous growth in York region has created a population that—along with increased traffic. More and more people are commuting from my riding and other parts of the 905 region into Toronto for work and other activities. In order to maintain the competitiveness of the region and to keep our economy strong, we must keep this flow of traffic moving. Could the minister explain what action his ministry has taken to combat GTA congestion and improve the efficiency of the region's transportation network?

Hon Frank Klees (Minister of Transportation): I want to thank the hard-working member from York North for that question. Those of us who live in the GTA

fully understand the challenges of traffic gridlock. Our government has invested some \$7.5 billion since 1995 in the transportation network in our province. In the GTA alone, some \$4 billion of that was invested. We've made improvements to Highway 401. In fact, \$401 million was invested in the 401 corridor to expand lanes and bottleneck locations. Some \$100 million of that investment was made as well in Highway 404 expansions, with some 30 kilometres of additional lanes from the 401 to Aurora Sideroad.

Just this morning, I joined my colleague Tina Molinari to officially open two new ramps on the 404 at 16th Avenue. That will add to the economic benefits of York region. It will add to the quality of life. It's just one more investment on the part of our government to do what has to be done to deal with the gridlock issue in the GTA.

Mrs Munro: Minister, thank you for that response. One of the comments many of my constituents make is that they want to know what we are doing to encourage people to take public transit. They understand that an increase in the use of public transit has the added benefit of improving our air quality by cutting down on harmful vehicle emissions. To accomplish this, we must improve public transit by making it more efficient and accessible. Minister, what is the government's plan for improving public transit in the province?

1450

Hon Mr Klees: The fact is that our long-term commitment to transportation in this province includes a balance between investment in our road system and in public transit. We've committed \$3.25 billion over 10 years to deal with this balanced and integrated system of transit. Our challenge, quite frankly, is to bring the federal government to the table to join us and to make a long-term commitment to funding transit in this province. We made an announcement of some \$50 million to the York region quick start transit program. That is going to deal with some of the pressures for public transit in York region. Some \$67 million was committed to a GTA bus rapid transit system. There is much more that has to be done, but quite frankly we can't do it alone. The federal government is quick to speak about this. We need them to match our \$3.25 billion over the next 10 years, and then we can truly begin to deal with the long-term challenges of transit—

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

CONTAMINATION IN PORT COLBORNE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the new part-time Minister of the Environment. I'm going to send you a letter from Neighbours Helping Neighbours in Port Colborne, which corrects the record of the former Minister of the Environment who stood in this House and tried to blame the victims for the environmental problems in their homes in Port Colborne. The government has ordered a full cleanup of the soil around 25 homes in Port Colborne. That's only a small

fraction of the homes affected by contamination. INCO ignored that order and offered to clean up only parts of those yards. Then INCO discovered in January that there was serious contamination inside the houses. They hid that information from the residents.

I have been through this in my own riding in south Riverdale. I've watched children whose brains are damaged permanently. They have learning disabilities because of high lead levels in their blood. Now it's happening to the children in Port Colborne. They're here today to demand that you require Inco to immediately conduct a full cleanup to protect their children and community from this toxic lead which is in their homes, which they're breathing in on a daily basis.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Minister of the Environment): First of all, I want to say in defence of my colleague Chris Stockwell that he answered this question very sincerely in this House last week to the best of his ability and he gave the facts as were known at the time.

Ms Churley: Read the letter, Jim.

Hon Mr Wilson: I've just read the letter. Thank you, Marilyn. I certainly will take it very seriously. Officials have informed me in the last 24 hours that they have an air quality assessment study that has come in. The results have come in. I've not seen that. They're going to brief me on that as soon as they get a chance to go through it. It is a priority. It's part of the community-based program that has been put in place, I understand. Of course we'll do everything we can to help these residents, and I welcome them here to Queen's Park today, and I welcome your suggestions along this line.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Well, Minister, you certainly haven't done everything that you could have. Look, I know these folks. I know their neighbourhood. They're hard-working, honest people, senior citizen, retirees, young families, kids, and they've been poisoned by tons of lead that has been spewed out by Inco over the course of decades now. We know that some of those kids have overly high levels of lead in their blood. We also know, as you should, that those lead levels can affect their development and brain functioning. Your government has done nothing to assess the level of risk or to impose an immediate cleanup of the lead contamination outside and inside these homes.

You see, these folks don't have a choice. These houses have no value. They can't sell these houses and move on. These are their homes. They have to live there. They're prisoners in those homes, and they're being poisoned and killed by Inco's lead and by your inaction. Tell these people today that the Ministry of the Environment is going to come to their defence and insist on an immediate cleanup and immediate remediation, not just of the 25 homes but of every home impacted, not just outside those homes but inside those homes as well. Don't let these people suffer and die slowly any longer.

Hon Mr Wilson: I think the Ministry of the Environment wants to do the right thing for these people and for all Ontarians. The lead issue is an issue that we'll look at

on a priority basis. As you know, Inco has already been into, by your own letter here, six of the 25 homes and properties to try and clean those up. I don't think either side should be saying much more about this, because there is a civil action suit on appeal with respect to this issue.

So I appreciate the letter. We will look at the lead issue and the whole issue once again, but I want to tell you, the people at the Ministry of the Environment who have briefed me recently seemed very, very sincere about wanting to help. They're not a part of any political party and they don't do political stunts like you do every day in the House like this—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Wilson: —every day in the House. We're going to do the right thing for these good people. I tell you that, Peter.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and the Environment. Minister, Premier Eves, when he was establishing his cabinet previously, made the mistake of forcing one individual to take on the responsibility of being the Minister of Energy and the Minister of the Environment at the same time. That was the Honourable Chris Stockwell. I said at the time, as did others, that you cannot have a person with regulatory responsibility and a person with other responsibilities that would be regulated having the same position. You're the Minister of Northern Development, you're the Minister of Mines, which means you have obligations which are far different from being Minister of the Environment. How on earth did you accept from the Premier of this province a situation which places you in a direct conflict of interest as a regulatory minister and as a minister who is there to advance the cause of the mining industry and other exploiting ministries?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Minister of the Environment): I don't agree with the premise of his question. He's on a fishing expedition, I guess. We'll see what he comes up with here.

Mr Bradley: If we can demonstrate it, your answer to the last question, where you're dealing with a situation where you have a mining processing company and then as Minister of the Environment, is a clear indication of where a conflict can arise.

Let me quote from the editorial in the St Catharines Standard, which was talking about the previous situation:

“Although Stockwell may be competent to lead either ministry, he should not do both. When push comes to shove over environmental issues versus energy considerations, he is inclined to let the energy considerations prevail.”

It goes on to say, “The health of Ontarians is too important to continue to jeopardize through improperly tested drinking water and air polluted by government-

owned power stations. Both those issues need straightening out, and Eves should appoint a second person to do the job.”

Minister, you have a specific responsibility. You are an advocate for companies, for industries which are in the business of exploiting natural resources. You're also in a regulatory ministry. How on earth can you do both without being in a direct conflict of interest?

Hon Mr Wilson: This is a fellow who's always asking for more bureaucrats in the Ministry of the Environment. He's had a very good record supporting government bureaucrats. Now today he's saying that northern development bureaucrats—staff—somehow don't have the environment as their top priority when they're reviewing all matters before them. I can tell you that the environment is a top priority for this government, unlike the five years when you were in office—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Wilson: —and failed to really do anything except put out a whole pile of press releases. Every ministry, whether it's environment or labour, transportation or health or rural affairs or municipal affairs, has the environment as a number one priority. Did you not learn anything from Walkerton? Did you not learn anything from the last few years in this province? We have the environment as a top priority, and no minister is in conflict with respect to the environment in this province.

CANCER SCREENING

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I would like to direct my question today to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

First of all, I want to thank him and the Premier for handling the SARS crisis so efficiently and effectively. On behalf of all Ontarians, I want to thank him. I hope the federal government will help in our efforts to deal with the effects of SARS.

Minister, I understand that today you were at an event with Toronto Police Chief Julian Fantino where you highlighted a recent investment in a program to screen for colorectal cancer. As you know, the effects of cancer are felt by every citizen in this province, whether it be through a personal battle or that of a friend or a relative. Cancer has unfortunately touched the lives of too many people.

I know that all Ontarians, including members of this House and the citizens of my great riding, welcome new initiatives to help fight this terrible disease. Can you provide us with the details of the new program you discussed this morning, please?

1500

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for his question and for his unsolicited appreciation.

I'd be happy to share the details of this program in the House. As the member alluded to, the initiative is a \$2.8-million investment to support a brand new pilot project for colorectal cancer screening. This will be managed

through Cancer Care Ontario. It is a pioneering project that will monitor the screening of patients through public health units and their family doctors, and assess how we can maximize participation. This is vital information because we know that screening reduces both the number of new cases of colorectal cancer and the number of deaths it can cause. In the span of one year, this initiative will provide access to the screening procedure to nearly 150,000 Ontarians through the participation of 450 physicians and six public health units.

We cannot underestimate colorectal cancer. It is the third most common cancer in Canada, with 17,600 cases diagnosed last year alone. We are taking a proactive approach.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I'm very proud of the work our government has done to set up this program. It is undoubtedly a significant step toward reducing the incidence of colorectal cancer.

Unfortunately, I have to recognize that this particular initiative is just one battle in the war against all cancers. A quick glance at recent medical statistics tells me that there are more than 400,000 people with cancer in Ontario, and that 53,000 more people will be diagnosed this year, unfortunately. Could the minister please inform the House as to what other initiatives are being taken by this government to fight all cancers?

Interjection.

Hon Mr Clement: The deputy leader of the opposition has some questions as well, but I'd be happy to answer them when it's her turn. In the meantime, I am answering the honourable member's question.

I am proud to say that I can answer this question very directly, because we do have a proven record of making unprecedented investments in fighting cancers of all types. We're spending \$2.5 billion a year on cancer services, which is an increase of 1.6 billion new dollars since 1995, and we're investing \$1 billion into a new world-class cancer research institute that will attract top researchers from around the world. We're committed, as part of our Road Ahead plan, to fund research to find the cures for the two most common forms of cancer: breast and prostate.

If I could take this opportunity today, being with Chief Fantino and another great volunteer, Darryl Sittler, a great Canadian and a great hockey player, is showing that we're getting the volunteer community out here to fight the fight against cancer as well. At this time I would like to thank both Chief Fantino and Darryl Sittler. They're a great advantage to this community and this province.

LANDFILL

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. My constituents are relieved by a landmark decision of the Ontario Superior Court this week that renders the terms of reference of the proposed Richmond landfill expansion invalid. This decision will impact all scoped environmental assessments.

From the beginning of the process, concerned residents and the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte worked together to stop the approval of the terms of reference that prevented the community from considering alternatives to the landfill expansion. They wrote to your ministry and asked you not to approve a scoped environmental assessment, but your government did not listen. My constituents had no choice but to turn to the courts.

The Superior Court has ruled in favour of the people of Napanee and struck down the flawed terms of reference at the Richmond landfill expansion. Minister, will you now listen? Will you tell the people of my riding that you will not appeal the Superior Court decision?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Minister of the Environment): It's a little premature for me to say that definitively today. The ministry is reviewing the court's decision—I gather it's a fair decision and a lengthy decision—and considering all their options. I'll await the advice of the staff at the ministry and will inform the honourable member when we've come to a decision on that.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Minister, the courts have validated the concerns not just of my constituents but of thousands of Ontarians who have been crying out against your government's assault on our environment. Even a member of your own caucus stood in this House yesterday and urged your government to respect the rights of his constituents to consider alternatives. I wrote to the minister a year ago outlining many of the issues which the court has addressed. Now the courts have clearly ruled that the people in our province have the right to consider alternatives to any environmental proposal.

If you appeal this decision, you will prevent people in my community from presenting alternatives to the landfill. The Superior Court has acted in the best interests of the environment and of the people of Ontario. Minister, will you do the same? Will you respect their rights and the court's decision and not seek to appeal it?

Hon Mr Wilson: Again, I appreciate the question. We're reviewing the decision. I'll be sure to get back to the honourable member and her constituents and Mr Jackson's constituents, the people of Ontario, just as soon as we've made a decision.

ITER FUSION PROJECT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is for the excellent Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. I recently tabled a petition in the House concerning the international thermonuclear experimental reactor project, commonly known as ITER. I introduced it in the House, and the petition asked that the Parliament of Ontario take the necessary steps to strengthen the Canadian bid on the ITER research facility, which is in my riding, hopefully. The province asked the federal government to show some leadership and the commitment necessary for Canada to win this bid.

Minister, if any, what leadership role or what action has the government taken to show that ITER is an

important project, and what can we expect to come from the petition I presented in this House?

Interjections.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): I just made it in this week. Thank goodness for that. I thank the member for Durham. You don't know how much I thank you for that question here this afternoon.

It is in the great riding of Durham that ITER will be located. This is the visionary research project, a global-class research project, to establish fusion as a viable option for power generation. The member for Durham, Mr O'Toole, has taken a leadership role in advocating this proposal for the people of Ontario and for Canada.

The government of Ontario has been supportive since 1996, and most recently, as this matter is coming to a head, Canada is competing with Japan, France and Spain in this area for this visionary project. Most recently the government of Ontario committed to equal funding of the project whether it's sited in Canada or not. Now we need the federal government to do the same thing; it's absolutely imperative that they do the same thing. I say to the Liberals opposite, talk to the Liberals in Ottawa. Tell them to stop being sheepish. Stop grazing on this one. Stand up for Ontario.

Applause.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much, Minister. I too applaud you and the pride and enthusiasm and leadership that you show, not just in Durham, not just in Ontario but indeed across Canada. I was there when Minister Flaherty actually engaged the federal members—he often has other names for them. The federal members were in the council of Clarington's chamber and he challenged them to get to work to do their job to represent not just Durham but indeed Ontario.

Minister, this is another example of your leadership and our government's commitment to make sure that research in Ontario is the road ahead. Can you please tell the House what some of the benefits would be and how positively it could affect not just my riding but every Ontarian.

Hon Mr Flaherty: What an opportunity it is, not only for Durham region but for Ontario and for Canada. I do urge the federal members—there's something like 100 of them, I'm told, in Ottawa, grazing in Ottawa—we need them to stand up for Ontario. Here's what they need to say. They need to say that it would result in the creation of 68,000 person-years of employment, the attraction of 250, and perhaps more, international scientists of global quality. That's the kind of project this is for the people of Canada, for the people of Ontario. It takes vision, it takes the big picture, and I urge those 100 elected people in Ottawa to rise to the occasion, stand up for Ontario, stand up for all of us in Canada.

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SCHOOL POOLS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, your

policies are about to shut down a swimming program with an Olympic record. The North York Aquatic Club trains 28 children at Riverdale school in my riding. Six Olympians have—

Interjections.

Ms Churley: Mr Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Stop the clock for a minute. The member is having—I know it was fun-loving; it wasn't yelling across, they were being fun-loving, but it is rather loud. The member may continue. I thank the members.

Ms Churley: I'm saying that a swimming pool in my riding is about to be shut down. It trains 28 children at the Riverdale school. It's a great pool. Six Olympians have come out of that club. Now your board supervisor says he's going to triple the fees to the pool, which will add another \$33,000 to the cost of the program. Parents of these Olympic hopefuls say they simply cannot afford to pay these fees. They're not rich people. The program will shut down.

I'm asking you: will you order your board hatchetman, Paul Christie, to stop his fee hike and let the kids swim? Minister, will you do that?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I understand that the Toronto District School Board does have a working group in Toronto with the Toronto council. It was my understanding that they had been discussing permit fees and community access to schools and pools. I would certainly hope, in response to the concerns that have been expressed by the member—and I know that she is very sincere about the children involved in this program—that the board would be sensitive to the group's ability to pay and also that any charges would be based on a fair recovery based on the actual costs.

Ms Churley: Minister, you control the purse strings. You set the rules with your funding formula. School boards are increasing fees across the province, and in Toronto the situation is much worse. One parent using the Riverdale pool says only parents who have tons of money will be able to enrol their kids in competitive sports programs. She says that because of your policies we're losing the next generation of Olympic hopefuls.

Public power means that every child gets the same opportunity to work toward the Olympics and to succeed, that you don't have to be rich. The NDP will fund community use of pools and other facilities. Minister, why won't you do that for the lower- and middle-income kids in my riding?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Other boards in the province of course are in similar situations. I would just say to the member opposite that what has happened there is that they have worked with their municipal partners, and oftentimes they have developed partnerships and they have reciprocal agreements. Again, getting back to what you said before, I think it's important that our young people have an opportunity to participate in these extracurricular programs. I would hope that the Toronto board would be sensitive to their ability to pay and also

that they would only be recovering costs based on the actual use of that space.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I have the business of the House for next week.

On Monday afternoon, we'll debate Bill 23, the great Ontario Energy Board reform act. In the evening, we'll debate Bill 41, the budget legislation arising from the budget of the Minister of Finance.

Tuesday afternoon we will again debate Bill 41. Tuesday evening we'll consider a motion for interim supply.

Wednesday afternoon we will debate Bill 41.

Thursday morning we'll debate ballot item number 17, standing in the name of Mr Colle, and ballot item number 18, standing in the name of Mr Parsons. Thursday afternoon is to be announced, so stay tuned.

PETITIONS

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned" 4,000 individuals "petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the" Ontario "government take immediate action to ensure that these important health services are maintained so that the health and safety of people throughout southwestern Ontario are not put at risk."

I'm in full agreement and have affixed my signature to this petition.

BENEFITS FOR RETIRED WORKERS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have hundreds of petitions on health care. They read:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, in an era of growing health care privatization and care for profit, retired Ontario workers are entitled to live their senior years in dignity without fear of unaffordable health-related expenses; and

"Whereas following the 2002 OPSEU public service strike, the Eves government exploited special cabinet powers to impose serious cuts to the medical benefits of its own retired employees; and

"Whereas these benefit rollbacks will force public service retirees to pay out more and more of their fixed incomes for costly prescription medications, dental services and other benefits;

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of the affected retirees were front-line public service workers who spent their working lives providing care and protection for our communities;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: the Eves government must immediately reverse all the cuts to the Ontario public service retirees' benefits package, which it imposed following the 2002 OPSEU strike."

These petitions are signed by OPSEU members. I will affix my signature because I fully support it.

ITER FUSION PROJECT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Earlier today I raised a question with the member from Whitby-Ajax, the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. Here are some petitions on that same topic.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the proposed ITER fusion research facility would result in 68,000 person-years of employment and an estimated \$9.4 billion in foreign investment;

"Whereas ITER would bring international scientists and researchers to Canada and place our nation in the forefront of new developments in research and technology;

"Whereas ITER is strongly supported by business, labour, educators, elected officials and citizens throughout Durham region, the host community;

"Whereas the province of Ontario has already recognized the economic importance of ITER to Canada and the world by committing \$300 million to support the Canadian ITER bid;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: that the Parliament of Ontario take all the necessary steps to strengthen the Canadian bid for the ITER research facility, including the commitment of more funds and other resources to support a successful Canadian bid; and that the province of Ontario ask the federal government to show the leadership and commitment necessary for Canada to win the ITER bid."

I'm pleased to present this petition to Mario, who is from the riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan, having signed and endorsed this same petition.

HOME CARE

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas well-managed and adequately funded home health care is a growing need in our community; and

“Whereas the provincial government has frozen community care access centre budgets, which has meant dramatic cuts to service agency funding and services to vulnerable citizens, as well as shortened visits by front-line workers; and

“Whereas these dramatic cuts, combined with the increased complexity of care for those who do qualify for home care, has led to an impossible cost burden to home care agencies; and

“Whereas the wages and benefits received by home care workers employed by home care agencies are well below the wages and benefits of workers doing comparable jobs in institutional settings; and

“Whereas front-line staff are also required to subsidize the home care program in our community by being responsible for paying for their own gas and for vehicle maintenance; and

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“Whereas other CCACs and CCAC-funded agencies across the province compensate their staff between 29 cents and 42.7 cents per kilometre; and

“Whereas CCAC-funded agency staff in our community are paid 26 cents a kilometre, with driving time considered ‘hours worked’;

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

“To act now to increase funding to the CCAC of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington in order for it to adequately fund service agencies so they can fairly compensate front-line workers.”

I will affix my signature to this petition because I am in full agreement.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I’ve got hundreds of names of people supporting this petition against the continuing actions of supervisors in Hamilton-Wentworth, Ottawa-Carleton and Toronto district school boards.

“To the Ontario Legislature:

“Whereas the government has cut over \$2 billion from public education over the past seven years;

“Whereas the provincial funding formula does not provide sufficient funds for local district school board trustees to meet the needs of students;

“Whereas district school boards around the province have had to cut needed programs and services, including library, music, physical ed and special education;

“Whereas the district school boards in Hamilton-Wentworth, Ottawa-Carleton and Toronto refused to

make further cuts and were summarily replaced with government-appointed supervisors;

“We, the undersigned elected leaders of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, call on the government to restore local democracy by removing the supervisors in the Hamilton-Wentworth, Ottawa-Carleton and Toronto district school boards.”

I support this petition.

SENIORS’ PROPERTY TAX CREDIT

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I’ve got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s senior citizens have devoted themselves to building Ontario’s outstanding quality of life and have earned the right to a safe, secure retirement; and—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Could the member drop the prop?

Mr Gill: “Whereas the government of Ontario has introduced the Ontario Home Property Tax Relief For Seniors Act, 2003; and

“Whereas the act will ensure that every eligible senior homeowner or renter would receive property tax reimbursements on their principal residence, starting July 1, 2003; and

“Whereas this would provide an average annual net savings of \$475 for 945,000 senior households;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario enact the Ontario Home Property Tax Relief for Seniors Act, 2003, to ensure Ontario seniors benefit from lower taxes on their homes.”

I’m pleased to affix my name to it.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government, led by the Eves Tories, has severely damaged public education and created turmoil in our schools since they took office in 1995; and

“Whereas the current Toronto-based education funding formula is broken when it comes to rural schools; and

“Whereas our community schools in both Springfield and West Lorne are being threatened with closure; and

“Whereas rural schools are the heart and soul of their communities;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that Education Minister Elizabeth Witmer immediately address the funding formula in relation to rural schools and place a moratorium on rural school closures.”

I’m in full agreement and have affixed my signature hereto.

BENEFITS FOR RETIRED WORKERS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Another petition from hundreds of people:

“Whereas in an era of growing health care privatization and care for profit, retired Ontario workers are entitled to live their senior years in dignity without fear of unaffordable health-related expenses; and

“Whereas following the 2002 OPSEU public service strike the Eves government exploited special cabinet powers to impose serious cuts to the medical benefits of its own retired employees; and

“Whereas these benefit rollbacks will force public service retirees to pay out more and more of their fixed incomes for costly prescription medications, dental services and other benefits; and

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of the affected retirees were front-line public service workers who spent their working lives providing care and protection for our communities;

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

“The Eves government must immediately reverse all the cuts to the Ontario public service retirees’ benefits package which it imposed following the 2002 OPSEU strike.”

I support this petition.

SENIORS’ PROPERTY TAX CREDIT

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s senior citizens have devoted themselves to building Ontario’s outstanding quality of life and have earned the right to a safe and secure retirement; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has introduced the Ontario Home Property Tax Relief for Seniors Act, 2003; and

“Whereas the act, which ensures that every eligible senior house-owner or renter would receive property tax reimbursements on their principal residence starting July 1, 2003; and

“Whereas this would provide an average annual net savings of \$475 for about 945,000 seniors’ households in Ontario;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly enact the Ontario Home Property Tax Relief for Seniors Act, 2003, to ensure Ontario’s seniors benefit from lower taxes on their residences.”

I have attached my signature in support, as well.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities by 15% or \$7.02 per diem effective August 1, 2002; and

“Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month; and

“Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the increase in the government’s own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day; and

“Whereas, according to the government’s own funded study, Ontario ranks last amongst comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

“Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services these residents need; and

“Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario’s long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999; and

“Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live out their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

“Demand that Premier Eves reduce his 15% fee increase on seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities and increase provincial government support for nursing and personal care to adequate levels.”

I will affix my signature as I am in full agreement.

HIGHWAY 407

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the member for Durham, but I think the member picked up some extra paper for that.

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): I’m busy reading this document called The Road Ahead. It’s sort of like the Harry Potter book.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the timely and efficient movement of people and products is crucial to the success of the Ontario economy;

“Whereas the province of Ontario is meeting the challenge of traffic congestion in the greater Toronto area by improvements to our highway networks and by improved public transportation;

“Whereas the further construction of Highway 407 eastward into the Durham region would improve the flow of traffic in Durham region and throughout the GTA;

“Whereas the citizens and municipalities of Durham region have faced uncertainty over the final alignment of the proposed 407 highway for many years”—in fact, when I was on council—“and are entitled to a timely resolution to this matter;

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

“That the Parliament of Ontario take” the necessary “steps to fast-track the extension of Highway 407 eastward, into the Durham region, while ensuring that all the necessary environmental assessments and public” consultation processes are followed, as they should be.

I’m pleased to present this petition to Timothy and sign it with my endorsement.

LONG-TERM CARE

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

“Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term care facilities by 15% or \$7.02 per diem effective August 1, 2002; and

“Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month; and

“Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the increase in the government’s own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day; and

“Whereas according to the government’s own funded study, Ontario ranks last amongst comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

“Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario’s long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999; and

“Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live out their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

“Demand that Premier Eves reduce his 15% fee increase on seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities and increase provincial government support for nursing and personal care to adequate levels.”

I affix my signature; I’m in complete agreement with the petition.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent of the House to pass third reading, without debate, of my Bill 2.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is there consent? There is not consent.

1530

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THE RIGHT CHOICES ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2003

LOI DE 2003
SUR LES BONS CHOIX
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr Baird, on behalf of Mrs Ecker, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to implement Budget measures / Projet de loi 41, Loi mettant en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): I’ll indicate that I will just be speaking for about two minutes, and then I will be sharing my time with the hard-working, effective member for Halton, the minister from Thornhill and the whip from the rolling hills of Northumberland.

This is the budget bill, which of course deals with tax measures and government expenditures. I wanted today to use a few minutes just to recognize someone who has worked in my constituency office for more than eight years, who is retiring later this month, and tomorrow evening we’ll have a retirement party for her. Cathy Boswell has served the people of Nepean for four years and then the people of Nepean-Carleton starting her fifth year. She is someone who has been very helpful to a lot of constituents with Family Responsibility Office problems, with birth certificates, with requests for information on government programs. From time to time, constituents have called to give their opinions on the issues of the day and she has been a sounding board for me, and has been able to report back on what the people of Nepean-Carleton are thinking. Some days that’s a pleasant job, and other days it’s more of a challenge, as you’ll know.

I’d like to wish her well in her retirement. While it’s a loss for the people of Nepean-Carleton and a loss for me personally—because she has been such a great friend—it certainly is a win for her husband, Al, her three children—Lee, Alana and Stephanie—and, most importantly to her, her three grandchildren.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further debate.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): My congratulations and condolences to the Minister of Energy. Congratulations on having a wonderful constituency worker like Cathy. They mean so much to the members. All of us on both sides of the House have constituency workers who are the unsung heroes of this political game. Also my condolences, because I know how difficult it is to replace someone who has done that kind of work for you in the constituency office over eight years—in fact, over your entire political career, be that as it may. She’s certainly, I’m sure, going to be missed. That’s something we don’t

do often enough in this House: to recognize those people who work so hard on our behalf.

It's a pleasure for me to lead off the debate on the second reading of The Right Choices Act. This is the budget measures act of 2003.

It's interesting to be standing here today, because if you remember, after the reading of the budget in a warehouse in Brampton, I believe it was, this is the bill that the opposition said would never be introduced in this House. In fact, this is the bill that they said would never be debated in this House, and this is the bill that they said would never be voted on in this House. Well, they were wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong—four wrongs. They were wrong four times, because here is the bill, it has been introduced in the House, it is going to be debated in the House and before we rise it will be voted on in this House.

We are the party which understands that making a promise to the people of Ontario is indeed something that is sacred to us, and it remains that way.

As my honourable colleagues may know, this bill incorporates amendments to a number of pieces of legislation, including the Securities Act; the Income Tax Act; the Corporations Tax Act; the Assessment Act; the Municipal Act, 2001; the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act; and the Retail Sales Tax Act. So it's a very comprehensive bill. It amends a number of pieces of legislation.

The measures in this bill, if passed, would cut individual taxes. Individuals who pay tax will again get their taxes cut. In our first term of office, from 1995 to 1999, we cut personal tax rates by 30%, and to follow that up, in our second term, from 1999 until today, this will complete a 20% cut in the tax rates Ontarians pay.

This bill, if passed, will also expand the tax relief to persons with disabilities and persons who stay at home or give care to family members at home. It will give them added tax relief.

The bill also proposes amendments to statutes that would reduce taxes for persons with low and moderate incomes and provide further child care assistance for working families with young children with low or moderate incomes.

As well, the bill proposes amendments to increase investments in alternative and renewable sources of energy.

In other words, if passed, this bill would ensure that Ontario remains the best place in North America to live, work, invest and raise a family. What an attribute for a province: to be able to say that they are the number one jurisdiction in North America to live, work, raise a family and invest.

It would ensure that a prosperous future would exist for the people who live in our province. Prosperity means a growing economy that provides more and better jobs, more disposable income and more revenue to invest in our future. This in turn renews economic growth and creates even more prosperity.

That prosperity can reinvest in health care. It makes the kinds of reinvestments in health care—like the

billion-dollar fund we have set up for research into prostate and breast cancer over the next 10 years. With the human genome mapped, the progress which is going to be made in that area over the next 10 years will be phenomenal, and Ontario will be at the leading edge of that with this billion-dollar fund to lead us in that area.

It will also allow us to reinvest in education. After all, reinvesting in our children's future—there will be no greater opportunities in the world than to reinvest in our education and in our young people.

It will allow us to reinvest in our environment: to ensure that as we go forward, the environment in which we live—the land, air and water—become cleaner than they are today and indeed become some of the cleanest in North America, if not the world. That is an admirable goal, one that will satisfy the needs of our health and the future of this province and one that is attainable in today's environment.

It will also allow us to reinvest in the safety of our communities, such as the 1,000 new police officers we have hired in Ontario over the last three years and the proposed 1,000 new police officers we will be hiring over the next three or four years. There is nothing more important to Ontarians: not only to be safe in their homes and communities but to feel safe in those communities. That also is very important.

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Our economic growth has been nothing short of phenomenal. Ontario's economic plan has laid the foundation for continued job creation and economic growth. The province's economy rebounded strongly in 2002, growing by an estimated 3.9%. This was more than two and a half times the rate of the previous year, and that is because of the strong fiscal foundation we have laid in this province over the past eight years. Eight years ago this province was last in Canada; today we are first. Ontario's economy has grown and rebounded faster and stronger than any of the G7 nations because of the fiscal and economic policies this government has put in place. Tax cuts have led that strong economic policy. They have led to more jobs and more reinvestment. They have led to the prosperity we currently have in Ontario.

The current average private sector forecast for real growth in Ontario is 2.6% in 2003 and 3.4% in 2004. Strong economic fundamentals reinforced by sound fiscal policies will help maintain Ontario's healthy economic growth despite the negative impacts we've had in the last few months because of the SARS epidemic.

Because of the unexpected strength of the Canadian dollar, finally the world is recognizing that Canada and Ontario have strong economies. We have natural resources that abound in our province. Those and the people who work in Ontario give us strength that is unmatched in most other jurisdictions in the world, and the world is beginning to recognize that. That is the fundamental reason why our dollar has leapt from 63 cents to 75 cents. That's an unbelievable growth in a currency. I think it's down to about 74 cents today, but we will maintain that very strong growth.

When we came to office, we set targets. We set a target to create 725,000 new jobs over the next five years, and we exceeded that target. That was a promise made by this government. What happens when this government makes a promise? We keep it. Well, that's a promise we kept: 725,000 new jobs. By 2002, the Ontario economy had added more than a million new jobs. And do you know what happened when we added a million new jobs? A million new people were working, those people became new taxpayers and those new taxpayers sent in a whole bunch of new revenue to the government. In the past, when the Liberals, the NDP and the federal government wanted more revenue, they increased taxes; not so with this government, not so with our formula, a formula that works. We reduce taxes, increase economic activity and create new jobs. Those new jobs create new revenues, and those new revenues are reinvested in areas that Ontarians expect their government to reinvest in, such as health care, education, the environment and safe communities—the things Ontarians hold near and dear whether they live in Cornwall or Kenora. This government promised those things, and we have delivered.

Ontario gained a total of 43,000 new jobs over the first five months of 2003. In fact, that accounted for almost all the new jobs gained in Canada. Ontario created 32,000 new manufacturing jobs in 2002. That led all provinces in Canada, and it also led all 50 states in the United States. We beat them all. We produced more manufacturing jobs than every other jurisdiction in North America, because this is the finest jurisdiction in North America. With Ontario's stellar job-creation record, I'm happy to say that we remain the job-creation engine of Canada, and we are confident that lower taxes will continue to promote growth and new jobs. Of course, those new jobs will create new taxpayers; those new taxpayers will add revenue to the Ontario government; and that revenue will be reinvested in the things that Ontarians hold near and dear to them.

Thanks to tax cuts and a growing economy, family incomes are rising dramatically. The average after-tax and after-inflation income of two-parent families with children rose 19% from 1995 to 2000. As stated in the budget, continued growth and prosperity are expected in 2003-04, which will result in more new jobs, more investments in productivity, more take-home pay and more new homes for families to live in. This is good news for Ontarians.

What's more, our government is fulfilling its promise on repaying the debt. Annual deficits are a thing of the past. With the half-billion-dollar payment we made in the 2002-03 fiscal year, we have now reduced the provincial debt by over \$5 billion.

As we reported in the 2003 budget, we are on track for a balanced budget in this fiscal year, 2003-04. Through our economic and fiscal policies, this government has met or exceeded our debt-reduction targets over the eight consecutive years that we've been in government. First, we paid down the deficit at a rate that exceeded our

goals, and since that time, we have balanced every budget that we have put before the House. Every one of those budgets has involved tax cuts.

I think the members of this House who were elected in 1995 are amongst the only politicians in political history who have served in a government for eight years; and in every one of those eight years, we have given the taxpayers of this province and the taxpayers in our constituencies a reduction in their taxes. I doubt if that record is matched anywhere else in the world. It's one that I'm very proud of.

The fact is, cutting taxes, balancing budgets and creating a positive environment for investment and job creation have helped Ontario weather the somewhat stormy economic conditions in global growth and, indeed, in the global economy over the last three years.

This year's budget continues our government's commitment to create more opportunities and jobs and to build Ontario's competitiveness and productivity.

Ontario continues to be an attractive location for businesses to set up shop. Personal and corporate taxes have been lowered and barriers to investments have been eliminated. Here in Ontario we have a record of strong, broadly based economic growth. So often, people look at our economy and they see that the automotive sector demands such a huge part of our economy. Well, it's about 20%, 25% of our economy, which is a very large part. It's a wonderful business to have in our province because it has good, high-paying jobs, but it isn't the only part of our economy. We've got a strong economy in agriculture and food processing. In fact, Ontario probably has more international food processors operating in the province than any other jurisdiction in North America, outside of California.

Technology—the IT industry: there are clusters in Toronto, there are clusters in Ottawa and there are clusters in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. It's a very strong economy of good, high-paying jobs, and one which will lead in the future.

Ontario's real gross domestic product growth has exceeded that of the rest of Canada, has exceeded that of the USA and has exceeded most other countries in the industrialized world since 1995. Our manufacturing sector continues to outperform its competitors in other jurisdictions.

Over the 1996 to 2002 period, 241,000 new manufacturing jobs were created, and that also is a record—from 1996 to 2002, a quarter-million new manufacturing jobs—more than any other province, and more than any other US state, right here in Ontario. Once again, sound economic policies lead to strong, productive growth.

This government believes that higher productivity is the only enduring way to achieve a rising standard of living. I think most economists would agree with that. Economic growth and productivity are also stimulated by a positive business climate, which, in turn, makes this province an attractive location for investment. We say it's the best place in North America to invest. It's also the

best place in North America to work, to live and to raise a family.

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We continue to cut taxes; make strategic investments in education, health care, innovation and infrastructure; modernize financial regulations; reduce red tape; and eliminate other barriers to growth wherever they may exist, such as the capital tax on new equipment and new industries. Beginning to reduce and phase out that capital tax—it's a job-killing tax, actually—has stimulated the manufacturing sector in Ontario. Our policies are creating a positive business climate that contributes to the diversity and resilience of the economy.

Maintaining investor confidence in Ontario's positive economic prospects remains an important goal for this government, given the geopolitical uncertainty and the shocks to confidence resulting from the collapse of companies like Enron and other stock market developments. People in Ontario have legitimate concerns about the markets and their retirement savings. We recognize their concerns, and we're taking action to protect those areas. We have helped ensure that the Ontario Securities Commission is a strong regulator with the tools it needs to do its job and the ability to respond to challenges and changes in a rapidly moving marketplace.

As we move forward, we're looking at the economic strengths of our province, and we know, for example, that small and medium-size enterprises—companies that generally have less than 100 employees—have responded strongly to the improved tax, regulatory and general business climate. Small and medium-size enterprises led job creation, with almost half a million new jobs, almost half the new jobs in this province over the 1996-2002 period.

It is no coincidence that Ontario created more than a million net new jobs. Did I mention that before? This province has created a million net new jobs, a record for all communities, all provinces, all the US states—throughout North America—on a per capita basis. As I've mentioned before, that's a million new taxpayers. And when you have a million new taxpayers, you don't have to increase taxes. In fact, you can reduce them and that will create even more economic growth. It's such a simple formula. Business spending on machinery and equipment rose nearly 71%, and when companies buy new machinery and equipment, they also hire new employees. Real investment in commercial and industrial construction rose by 35% over that same period, and we expect healthy growth to continue in 2003-04.

Corporate profits have rebounded. There are more jobs and more taxpayers. It all comes down to a philosophy of how you want to manage the economy, of whether or not you want to manage the economy by raising taxes, controlling more of the expenditures in the gross domestic product within a province by the government increasing taxes and taking a larger share of people's incomes out of their pockets. That is the philosophy of Liberal and NDP governments. Our philosophy is simple. We get our increased revenues from increased growth, from new jobs.

With the recent slowdown in the economy throughout North America, Ontario didn't experience much of that slowdown; sure, we did a little bit. But we were the last jurisdiction to feel it and the first jurisdiction to emerge from that slowdown. That's what sound fiscal policies will do.

In the coming election, whether it's this fall or next spring, the people of Ontario will have a clear choice. They will have a choice of paying higher taxes and having fewer jobs, a choice offered by the Liberal government, or they will have a choice of paying lower taxes and having more jobs, a choice offered by this government. The choice will be made by the people of Ontario: pay more and get less, or pay less and get more.

I rest, and I have confidence that the people of Ontario will make the proper choice.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): It is a pleasure for me today to rise before this House to debate the Right Choices Act (Budget Measures), 2003. As you know, this important piece of legislation would enact the measures announced in the 2003 Ontario budget, our government's fifth consecutive balanced budget. I am honoured to be a member of the government that tabled this document. With this budget, I would like to remind members that our government will have paid \$5 billion toward our debt. Because of our track record and because of economic growth that has resulted from our policies, we are also able to invest in what matters most to Ontarians: health care and education. Our government's plan to restore growth, job creation and prosperity to Ontario is 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 more competitive.

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 plan. It was clear that health care and education continue to be the top priorities of Ontarians. There were no surprises there. But we also heard that continued tax relief is vitally important, not just because it rewards individual initiative by leaving more money in their pockets to spend, save or invest, but because they recognized that lower taxes attract and keep jobs here in Ontario. I would like to say that with today's amendments we would continue to support the people of this province with effective tax relief. Indeed, the Right Choices Act (Budget Measures), 2003, proposes a number of amendments to various statutes that are designed to cut taxes and sustain economic growth in the province.

As my honourable colleagues have mentioned, the bill proposes to cut individual taxes and enhance tax relief to persons with disabilities and 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 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 Trust Beneficiaries Liability Act, 2003.

Ontario small- and medium-sized businesses will benefit as well from 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, many of which are in my riding of Thornhill. Allow me to talk about specifics on 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 the 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. The amendments would increase the maximum asset size of an eligible business for the purposes of a small business investment requirement from \$5 million to \$6 million.

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. A further amendment extends the deadline for registering a community small business investment fund from December 31, 2004.

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

Tax rates in Ontario must remain competitive in order to promote consumer spending and to attract new business to our province. To that end, we are proposing a number of amendments to the Income Tax Act that would contribute to continued economic growth in this 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. This threshold is proposed to increase to \$5,240 as of January 1, 2005.

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 dependent

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, 2003. First, the amounts on which these credits are based would be increased to \$6,637. Second, we propose to extend the caregiver credit and the infirm dependent credit to include spouses or common law partners who are dependent by reason of 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 dependent's income above which these credits would be reduced or eliminated. This means that more people would qualify for them.

We are 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 the 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 the salary and wages paid to an eligible apprentice in a qualified skills trade, and changes to the Ontario business research institute tax credit to improve its effectiveness.

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 business. Tax cuts have been broadly based and have played an important role in this province's comprehensive economic policy, which was designed to support and promote job creation, innovation, entrepreneurship, economic growth and prosperity.

Our government has announced 225 tax cuts since 1995. Here is just a sampling of those tax cuts: 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 2000-01 inter-budget announcements; 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.

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 of 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 more than one million net new jobs. That's almost half the jobs created throughout Canada in the past seven years. Because of job opportunities and our work-for-welfare plan, over 600,000 people have left welfare since 1995. It means more income for families. Thanks to tax cuts and a growing economy, average family incomes are rising dramatically. The average after-tax and after-inflation income of two-parent families 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 payment 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. Private sector forecasters expect our economy to continue to grow. The current average private sector forecast for real growth is 2.6% in 2003 and 3.4% in 2004. Strong economic fundamentals reinforced by sound fiscal policies will help to maintain Ontario's healthy economic growth despite the negative economic impact of SARS and the higher-than-expected Canadian dollar.

With our economic plan in place, we will continue to move forward. The foundation of our plan is tax cuts, because they work, because they are an investment in productivity.

Let me reiterate that governments don't create wealth and prosperity; people do. It is our role as a government to create the right conditions for Ontario's citizens and businesses to flourish. Tax cuts are good for Ontario residents. They save the average family hundreds of dollars a year and have helped create more than one million net new jobs since this government's first throne speech.

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Our government has put in place a multi-year tax reduction plan to support growth and prosperity. Our past tax cuts, combined with the further reductions that were proposed in the budget, would benefit individuals and businesses by \$16 billion in 2003-04. Every one of our budgets has reduced taxes. Legislation already in place fulfills the government's commitment to completing its additional 20% reduction in personal income tax by January 1, 2004. So far Ontario's personal income tax cuts are providing \$12 billion in benefits to all individual taxpayers this year. Personal income tax cuts are part of our pro-growth plan to promote economic development

and financial security, which allows us to make further investments in our priorities, like health care and education.

Let me give you an example of how tax cuts are working for Ontario families. A family of four with \$60,000 in net income for two earners is already benefiting by \$2,125 in Ontario income tax savings this year. By next year those tax savings would rise to more than \$2,500. As well, we propose to eliminate Ontario's personal income tax for more people with modest incomes. The 2003 budget's proposal to enrich the Ontario tax reduction program would increase to 700,000 the number of people no longer paying Ontario income tax as a result of our government's personal income tax cuts since 1995.

Clearly, tax cuts are good for economic growth and prosperity. Our record has proven that time and again. Our government continues to focus on its long-term plan for competitive tax rates. We sought advice on our multi-year tax reduction plan, which included the next steps toward eliminating Ontario's income tax surtax. As most of you know, this tax is the extra tax that reduces the province's attractiveness for mobile professionals and managers to work and invest. Beginning January 1, 2004, the surtax will be eliminated for those who pay only the first tier. The 2003 budget proposes to raise the surtax threshold effective January 1, 2005, so that the lowest-income person paying the surtax would have taxable income of about \$75,000.

This government believes that eliminating the surtax would improve Ontario's ability to attract and retain skilled workers and increase incentives for investors. Lower taxes are equally important to Ontario's small and medium-sized businesses, the backbone of our economy. We will continue to lower their taxes as well. Many businesses in my riding of Thornhill appreciate this government's steps toward tax cuts. We will do this by lowering the small business tax rate from the current level of 5.5% down to 4% on January 1, 2005.

What this means is that more money will be left in the hands of more than 125,000 businesses to invest and create more jobs. In fact, a significant factor in the resilience and flexibility of our economy is this government's focus on cutting taxes. We have shown that cutting taxes invigorates our economy. It gives both entrepreneurs and employees the incentive they need to expand, invest and create jobs.

We know for a fact that lower small-business taxes create jobs. Between the period 1990 to 1995, under higher taxes, Ontario's small and medium-sized businesses laid off a net 69,000 workers. Between 1995 and 2002, with lower taxes, small and medium-sized businesses have hired 478,000 net new workers.

We will continue to reduce the general corporate income tax rate too, from the current level of 12.5% to 8% by the beginning of 2006. Meanwhile the manufacturing and processing tax will be lowered by 11% today, down to 8% at the start of 2006.

The importance of competitive business tax rates in attracting investment is confirmed by experience around

the world. Indeed, one US study found that a difference of only 1% in tax rates increased business investment by 9% to 11%.

Members of this House may recall that when our government first brought in our tax cut plan, critics said it would kill government revenues, but they were wrong. In the coming year, our tax revenues are expected to be \$16 billion higher than when we started cutting taxes. Increased revenue has allowed us to invest in the health care and education programs that support Ontario's prosperity and quality of life—key parts of our competitive edge.

These days, many of us have family or friends struggling with the challenge of caring for elderly or dependent parents and relatives, so we are acting to recognize the higher costs faced by these family caregivers. Our tax system currently provides tax assistance for people in these situations. However, this year's budget would enhance the support and bring \$50 million in benefits to approximately 165,000 Ontario taxpayers.

As I mentioned earlier, we are proposing to increase the amount of the disability tax credit, caregiver tax credit, infirm dependant tax credit and disability credit supplement for children with severe disabilities; expand eligibility for the caregiver and infirm dependant tax credit to include spouses or common-law partners who are dependent by reason of a mental or physical infirmity and provide support for more caregivers living apart from dependant relatives; and increase the threshold for the dependant's income above which the caregiver and infirm dependent credits are reduced. This means that more people would qualify for them.

We announced several other tax relief measures in this budget. Let me talk about those at this time.

To further encourage electricity self-sufficiency, our 2003 budget proposes an additional 100% income tax deduction to Ontario corporations for the cost of qualifying assets used to generate their own electricity from alternative or renewable energy sources.

Other energy-related initiatives in the 2003 budget include: a proposed expansion of the five-year retail sales tax rebate for solar energy systems, which we announced last November, to include wind energy systems, micro-hydroelectric systems and geothermal heating and cooling systems if purchased and incorporated into residential premises after March 27, 2003, and before November 26, 2007; and a proposed doubling of the retail sales tax rebate for qualifying alternative fuel vehicles to \$2,000 for vehicles purchased by or delivered to the purchasers after March 27, 2003. The maximum rebate for propane vehicles remains at \$750.

As I mentioned, the tax measures outlined in the 2003 budget continue our work to ensure Ontario remains on the path to prosperity. Budgets are about setting priorities and making choices. Our government has made these priorities and choices very clear: lower taxes to keep Ontario's economy strong, competitive and growing, to create more jobs and higher incomes; increased support for caregivers, seniors and children; health care we can

all depend on, where we need it and when we need it; an accountable education system that provides our young people with the knowledge and skills they need for success; and colleges and universities that prepare our students for the opportunities of a lifetime.

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We will continue with our economic plan, and that plan includes cutting taxes. Cutting taxes stimulates our economy.

Ontario continues to be the number one place in North America to do business. Through our government's commitment to tax cuts, debt reduction, strategic investments in health care and education, innovation and infrastructure, modernizing financial regulations, reducing red tape and eliminating other barriers to growth, we believe there is simply no better place to open up shop than here in Ontario.

Private sector forecasters, on average, project the Ontario economy will grow by 2.6% in 2003 and 3.4% in 2004. This rate is faster than any of the G7 nations in this two-year period.

Ontario has been the leader in reducing taxes and removing barriers to growth and job creation. This has contributed to the province's impressive economic record. Our economic foundation is strong. Our businesses are more competitive than ever before. Inflation is in check, interest rates are low and after-tax incomes are rising. Sound policies will continue to strengthen these fundamentals. Balanced budgets, tax cuts and positive business conditions have created a climate that is stimulating economic growth and raising living standards.

Our economic plan is working. It's a plan to continue the growth and prosperity our government has put in place since 1995. It's a plan to secure a strong and successful future for Ontario.

I know all the members in this House want to secure a successful future in Ontario, and if that is in fact the case, then they will see the benefits of this budget we are proposing here today.

The Deputy Speaker: Just before we start questions and comments, if I could, Kristian is a page to my right. He's sitting in between these other two pages. There is absolutely no way I can introduce his family that is in the west gallery, but if I could have, he would have liked me to have mentioned that he comes from, of course, the riding of St Paul's, represented by Michael Bryant, and that his mom Donna is in the gallery. He would have wanted me to also mention that his aunts Itta, Lucy and Ippi are there too, and especially to Itta, I'd like to say welcome.

Questions and comments?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I hope the member will respond to my comments. I've had many phone calls from people who said, "Listen, in 1999, when Mr Eves was running, he promised me a 20% cut in my property tax. Now I understand he's cancelled the last half of it. He's not even going to proceed with it." This person said, "I've kept a copy of it, and it said, 'We'll cut the provincial portion of residential property taxes by 20%, phased in over our next term."

We'll make it mandatory for owners of rental units. The tax cut will put \$500 million in the hands of individuals.' I understand from the minister that they've cancelled the last half of that tax cut. That was a pretty solemn promise, and I hope you have an answer for why you've cancelled it."

The second thing I'd say is that it was only a year ago that the Minister of Finance got up and said, "Well, because of our fiscal situation, the Ontario government has made the decision to reschedule certain major planned tax cuts." Then they said, "How can we justify breaking the Taxpayer Protection Act?" which they had to do. As you remember, Mr Eves had to bring in legislation to say, "Sorry, we didn't mean it. We don't believe in the Taxpayer Protection Act. We are going to pass legislation allowing us not to proceed with \$1.5 billion in tax cuts." The government said, "The reason we had to do that was to meet the target of a fourth balanced budget."

I look forward to the answer to my constituents, who want to know why they're not getting the 10% cut in their property taxes that was promised in 1999—and now they've been told that's cancelled—and why the Taxpayer Protection Act, which they thought the government believed in, was changed through a little act last year to cancel \$1.5 billion in tax cuts. I look forward to the response.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): The junior minister said, "Let me tell you how the tax cuts work." I want to give another example of how the tax cuts work, for the benefit of taxpayers who are watching.

A bank president who earns \$1.5 million or so—most presidents earn that amount in salary alone. Any bank president who earns that kind of salary would get \$120,000 back at the end of the year because of the glorious income tax cuts these people praise. These poor presidents of these poor banks would get back \$120,000 to help them out because they're starving, and this government, the Conservative government, is helping out these poor bank presidents because they need more money in their pockets. That's what this tax cut has been about over the last eight years.

Remember, when they talk about a balanced budget, they've got to recover \$2.2 billion by selling off assets in order to balance the budget. This is before SARS; this is before the rising Canadian dollar; this is during the slowdown of the American economy. Federally, it means a loss of \$1 billion or \$1.5 billion. Imagine what this means in Ontario. Imagine how these people are going to balance the budget, should they get elected. They can't.

Ten billion dollars has been going out every year to service these tax cuts that go to wealthy people who don't need my support and don't need the support of taxpayers in this province; \$10 billion is going out every year, putting at risk our health care system, our education system and our environment, as we've seen in Walkerton. Do we need more of those tax cuts? I say no. We need to save ourselves from this government.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Any time there's a speech made on the budget, what is not men-

tioned in the speech is always rather interesting. I've been eagerly awaiting the substantial increase in payments to those on ODSP, the Ontario program that assists people with disabilities, because they've not had an increase for some 10 years in the allocation for them on an individual basis. Many have called to ask whether at least the amount of inflation over those 10 years would be reflected in an increase. I have not yet found any specific figure from the government, but I do hope that at long last, even if it's conscience money, we will see money going to people on disability.

As well, I hope the government would revise its budget plans as they relate to people with macular degeneration. After two years, the government finally made an announcement. We in the opposition and others in our society implored the government to cover the treatment for macular degeneration under OHIP. Finally, the government was dragged kicking and screaming into doing so, but after the big announcement we found out there are many strict rules that prevent many people from getting that financial assistance, the coverage. They have to be at least 50% blind before they can get coverage.

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I also note that in this budget there is nothing to assist people who are having great problems with insurance. There are two basic problems with insurance: first, the premiums are going out of sight for people in my constituency and others, and second, and as important to them, is the fact that they're unable to get insurance; many people will not insure them again. We're not simply talking about auto insurance; we're talking about all kinds of insurance now. I think it's something the government is going to have to address or they may face what Premier Bernard Lord faced in New Brunswick.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I guess the people of Ontario have to ask themselves, after eight years of tax cuts and more cuts, are they really better off? Are their schools better off? Are their hospitals better? Is their health care better? Are city services better? Almost everybody except the Conservatives agrees that the reckless tax cuts and cuts have really put a heavy burden on our schools, our hospitals and our cities, so we have fewer services. We know that when they say "tax cuts," they mean service cuts. That's what a tax cut means. You get your services cut to pay for the tax cuts that go to Frank Stronach. The top 1% in Ontario get all these tax cuts. Guess who pays for them? It's everybody else who pays for them through cuts in services. Services are what nurses provide, and they are proud of firing 10,000 nurses. You see the consequences of firing 10,000 nurses. So those are the promises they're making in this budget again.

As I've said before, it's no accident they did this budget at the feet of Frank Stronach up at Magna in Brampton. They did it up there because they wanted to please the likes of Frank Stronach. That's why they're doing their so-called seniors' tax cut. Most of the money will be going to Frank Stronach, who is going to get a cheque for \$50,000 from Ernie Eves. Ernie Eves is going to send Frank Stronach a \$50,000 cheque that will come

from the cuts in home care, school textbooks and nursing care. They're going to write Frank Stronach a \$50,000 cheque with this budget. That's what they're saying the people of Ontario should buy.

Hon Mrs Molinari: I'm again pleased to comment here on some of the comments that have been made by the other speakers.

This is a bill that recognizes, as I said in my comments, the tax cuts and what tax cuts have created for the province in the way of economic growth and in the way of putting more money into people's pockets so that they are able to spend the money the way they best see fit. They know how to spend their money much better than any government would be able to spend their money. Keep in mind that our priority issues are still taken into account and that tax cuts are creating the kind of economy that we need, that increases the revenue for Ontario, which allows us to provide more money to our priority areas such as health care and education.

In Thornhill, one of the tax cuts that is very welcomed and one of the most popular ones is our equity in education tax credit for the constituents in my riding of Thornhill. There are a number of schools in my riding—Associated Hebrew, Leo Baeck, Netivot and a number of other schools—I won't list them all, but I must tell you that all of the parents of the kids who go to these schools are very happy with the policies of this government, a government that finally recognizes that these parents have been paying education taxes throughout all the number of years they've been paying taxes, and they've also been paying tuition for their kids who go to these schools.

What this does is give parents choice. A lot of the parents in my riding of Thornhill don't have a choice. Public education is not a choice for them because public education does not offer them the type of religious education and the type of environment they need to be able to respond to their ethnicity and their religion. So my constituents in Thornhill are very happy that this government, this Premier, Ernie Eves, has recognized the fact that there was an inequity in this province and the inequity was that Catholic schools and public schools were funded fully with the new funding model. Now other children also get the benefit of that funding.

Mr Phillips: I think I should acknowledge that I'll be sharing my time with the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

I'm pleased to continue the debate on—I think this is the third budget bill that we're dealing with. This is the larger bill dealing with many different acts.

Just to follow up on some of the comments made by my colleagues across the way, I just think it's important that the public recognize that Mr Eves has now been in charge of the finances of the province for close to eight years; actually, more than eight years now.

I take out the budget. This is the most recent one, the one that was never presented here. It was presented, strangely enough, at a private company a few kilometres away from the Legislature.

I notice that the debt of the province has gone—as of March 31, 1995, a few months before the government came in, the debt was \$90.7 billion. I see now that it's \$111.7 billion. It's gone up \$21 billion since they came into office. That's 23% that the debt of the province has increased.

The government talks about tax cuts, but I'll just say that the way Alberta handled tax cuts was they said, "Listen, we're going to balance our books before we begin to cut taxes," and they did that.

Mr Eves borrowed at least \$10 billion to fund the tax cuts, so \$10 billion of this \$21 billion in debt that went up was as a result of saying, "We're going to proceed with tax cuts before the books are balanced." It's the only government in Canada that did that. Consequently, we're faced now with a debt of \$21 billion here.

The credit rating agencies have commented on this. In 1990, the province of Ontario had an AAA credit rating. It was downgraded three times under the NDP. From AAA it went to AA+, AA and AA-. Here we are now, eight years later, and the province has had only one upgrade. We are still two levels below where we were in 1990. This costs us an enormous amount of money in increased interest costs. Mr Flaherty, when he was the Minister of Finance, said that it apparently cost us about one quarter of 1%—"25 basis points" is the jargon that's used—for every interest downgrade. So we're paying about one-half of 1% increase in interest costs on our debt as a consequence of the government not being able to get our credit rating back to where it was in 1990.

They've now had more than eight years, and the credit rating agencies—as a matter of fact, two of the credit rating agencies have commented. There are three major ones; Standard and Poor's and Dominion Bond Rating have both commented on this year's budget. Dominion Bond Rating said—and the reason I raise this is to respond to some of the comments that the members across have made on this budget bill. Here's what the credit rating agencies say. DBRS says, "Ontario could face a ... deficit of \$1.9 billion in 2003-04, compared to a shortfall"—a deficit last year—"of \$572 million." Then they comment on next year: "Despite government optimism, balancing next year's budget will likely pose challenges. Revenue growth is likely to slow markedly as a result of the tax cuts planned for January 2004."

Standard and Poor's say that in their opinion, the province appears to be on track this year to post a deficit of roughly 1.7% of revenues. That's about \$1.2 billion.

Here we are now, eight years after they've got into office. We find that the debt of the province is \$21 billion higher than it was when they took office. We find that the credit rating is still dramatically lower than it was in 1990. We find that the bond rating agencies that have commented on the fiscal plan—by the way, both of them commented before the impact of SARS was felt—said that the province is really running a significant deficit.

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I've always been interested in the comments on tax cuts because, for one thing, I always say to people, "Listen, don't accept what they say about tax cuts." This

is the campaign they ran on in 1999, and I remember very well my opponent getting quite a few votes on the basis of these promises. They said, "We'll cut Ontario's income tax rate by another 20%." It still hasn't been done. The government's saying, "We will complete this January 1, 2004." It's still not done, though.

On the property tax, they said, "We'll cut the provincial portion of residential property taxes by 20%." So everybody was promised, all of the people of Ontario were promised they were going to cut the residential property taxes by 20%. Well, guess what? The minister recently said, "I'm sorry; we're not going to do that. As a matter of fact, we're cancelling it. You're not going to get the last half of that cut. We simply have decided we're not going to go ahead with it." It's gone. So all of those people who voted for the Conservatives on the basis of, "We're going to cut everybody's residential property tax by 20%"—the first 10% was done just at the last election, and they said, "We'll cut it another 10%." They decided to cancel it, completely cancel it. It's \$250 million of tax cuts that were promised for everybody in the province of Ontario, and it's gone. Why is that? It's because they simply will make a promise to get elected and then if they don't want to do it, they'll abandon it.

As a matter of fact, it was just a year ago when—that is what the minister said in the budget. There was \$1.5 billion of tax cuts. Actually, they were not only promised, it was in legislation. The government said then, "Well, because of the fiscal situation, the Ontario government has made the decision to reschedule certain major planned tax cuts." You see, we couldn't afford them. We could not afford to proceed with the tax cuts. What they'll often say is, "These tax cuts pay for themselves. They simply pay for themselves." That's not the case, and the evidence of that is in their own budget, where they say, "We have to cancel these tax cuts, because we can't afford it."

I remember very clearly this issue, because I was asked to appear on a television program called Focus Ontario, a well-known program that airs Saturday evenings. It was just before the budget a year ago. The person who was interviewing me said, "We're hearing rumours that they might cancel those tax cuts that they've legislated effective January 1, 2003. Do you think they will?" I said, "No way. They will go ahead with those tax cuts." "Why is that?" I said, "Because if they don't, they're breaking the law. They passed a law called the Taxpayer Protection Act. If they don't proceed with the tax cuts, they're breaking the law." The person said to me, "If they don't proceed with them, will you eat your hat?" I said, "Yes, I will eat my hat, because I'm convinced they will obey their own law." As a matter of fact, that was a big part of the Conservative government getting elected last time: "We're going to have this Taxpayer Protection Act that will, in legislation, protect you from any government trying to not proceed with legislated tax cuts." So I said I'd eat my hat.

Well, I was amazed when the budget came out and they said, "We're not proceeding with \$1.5 billion of tax

cuts." They brought in here a one-page bill, Bill 109, that said, "Sorry, we are going to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act."

This is the document the government put out. It's called the Official Newsletter of the Ontario PC Party: Questions and Answers for the Members of the PC Party. Number one question: How can the government justify breaking the Taxpayer Protection Act by delaying tax cuts? Well, the government itself said the rationale for it is that to meet the target of a fourth balanced budget, the government delayed for one year scheduled reductions in a number of tax rates.

So here we are, the government's saying—

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: The member for Scarborough Centre is heckling me, and I'll just say to her, your opponent is going to challenge you on that.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. If you'll give me a minute, your debate speech is interrupting the heckling. Talking back and forth is not allowed and we can't have it. So I'd like you to stop.

Mr Phillips: I would say that all the members of the government are going to be challenged on this during the election, because I remember my opponent saying, "We are going to cut your residential education property tax by 20%, and you can count on us doing that."

It was just a few weeks ago that the minister said, "Sorry, we're abandoning that. We're not going to proceed with that. I know we promised that, but it's not going ahead. You're not going to get that. Sorry, we're just going to break our word." Then it was just a year ago that the 2002 budget was presented, June last year. There they said, "Sorry, we can't afford the tax cuts that were in legislation, and we're not going ahead with them. Not only that, we're going to break our Taxpayer Protection Act, and the way we'll do that is, we'll just bring a little piece of legislation in here that will allow us to not proceed with it." Why was that? Why did they not proceed with it? Because they couldn't afford it.

To meet the target of a fourth balanced budget, the government delayed these tax cuts. So I say to the people of Ontario, take their promises with the same seriousness that apparently they did, that is, promised here, a 20% cut in residential education property tax—gone; promised, \$1.5 billion of tax cuts, January 1, 2003—gone. I find it ironic, passing strange as they say—

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: The member for Scarborough Centre is still heckling, Mr Speaker, but she's going to have to answer this question during the election.

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: Wait a minute. You got elected on this famous Taxpayer Protection Act and then you simply abandoned it. Ms Mushinski and the rest of the government simply abandoned the Taxpayer Protection Act. I find it interesting now: they are going to hold the municipalities to the Taxpayer Protection Act. If they want to ever increase taxes, they're going to have to go to referendum. That's not a standard the government holds itself

to. If they want to abandon the Taxpayer Protection Act, they simply come in here and they pass a one-page piece of legislation.

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: I know Ms Mushinski doesn't want to hear this. I know this is not something she's going to want to defend when she's running in the campaign, but you're going to have to. You're going to have to defend this, and it's indefensible.

I want to move on now to dealing with the budget bill in two or three areas. I remember this document. Maybe I'm sensitive because they won, we lost, and they won on the basis of making these promises.

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: Ms Mushinski is heckling again. I appreciate that she does not want to have to defend these things, but what the piece of legislation does is, it abandons something called the fair share health levy.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Scarborough Centre, come to order.

Mr Phillips: I appreciate that, Mr Speaker. She does not want to hear this, but luckily there are rules in the House, and when we have a chance to speak, we should be given that chance. I appreciate your fine job in making sure we do.

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Here's how the government got elected. This is what they said then, in 1995: "We believe the new fair share health levy, based on ability to pay, meets the test of fairness and the requirements of the Canada Health Act while protecting the fundamental integrity of our health care system." Do you know what we're dealing with today? The government is abandoning the fair share health levy.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Scarborough Centre, I'll not warn you again.

Mr Phillips: It was the way by which they got elected in 1995, saying that the fair share health levy is the fairest way to fund health care. I noticed about two years ago they stopped using the term "fair share health levy" and they started calling it a "surtax," and this budget bill eliminates one of the two fair share health levies.

I smile to myself when the government says, "We'll do what we promised we'd do." Oh, yes: they promised the residential education property tax—gone; they promised a billion and a half dollars of tax cuts on January 1—gone; they promised this fair share health levy as the best, fairest way to fund health care—gone.

I also want to talk about where we are now with our budget, after eight years of Mr Eves at the helm of our finances. The only way we're balancing this year's budget is by selling off \$2.2 billion worth of provincial assets. The government has refused to tell the people of Ontario what they're going to be. They've refused to do that. Ms Mushinski can't tell me, the Minister of Finance can't tell me—

Interjection.

Mr Phillips:—nobody will tell us what those are. The reason we're so suspicious is because it was—

The Deputy Speaker: I'm naming the member for Scarborough Centre, Ms Mushinski.

Ms Mushinski was escorted from the chamber.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

Mr Phillips: Here we are after eight years of Mr Eves being at the helm, managing the finances of the province, and what do we have now? We find that the only way we can balance the books this year is by selling \$2.2 billion worth of assets.

Frankly, what makes us so suspicious of this is that we saw this before. The election was called on May 5, 1999. I remember that because that was the day the 407 was sold. Literally, the cheque arrived here for the 407 and then the election was called, and for the last four years the 407 users have been ripped off royally. I remember that the government announced, "We've got toll control. The tolls can go up 2% plus inflation." Well, that was not the case. Tolls in some cases have gone from four cents to 12 cents. The users of that road have been royally ripped off. I say to my friends living out in the Oshawa area who are eagerly awaiting the 407, do you know that it's going to cost you \$4,000 a year to drive that road? It's a mixed blessing. It will come, but you're going to have to lay out \$4,000 a year to get on the road to drive into Toronto every day.

That's why we're so suspicious of this \$2.2 billion worth of assets. Asset sales, so that the public understands, normally go along at about \$400 million a year. They have been bumped up to \$2.2 billion. What is it?

The second big issue in the budget is that the government has assumed \$800 million worth of savings. They've said, "Listen, we're going to balance the books. We're going to find \$800 million worth of savings." They haven't identified any of that. The normal number in the budget is \$200 million to \$300 million. I sort of smile to myself; they're going to find \$800 million of savings. They've been in office for eight years. Surely they've rooted out the bulk of the waste in the system by now. If they could find \$300 million in the early years, they're now going to find \$800 million? Like, what have you been doing for eight years, that you can find \$800 million of savings? By the way, once again we say to them: show us where you're going to find the savings. Nothing. We have nothing from them on where they're going to find the savings. They've assumed—the budget was built on 3% real growth. By the way—today is the first time I'd heard—one of the cabinet ministers said that the private forecasters are now down to 2.6% real growth, and in this budget the private forecasters were well above 3% three months ago. If in fact the economy is now going to perform half a per cent lower than the budget estimate, that is another \$310 million of forgone revenue. In this document the government says that for every one-point reduction in the gross domestic product, the province loses \$620 million.

So here we are now, eight years after Mr Eves took charge of the finances, and we've got a serious fiscal problem on our hands, with no manoeuvring room, nowhere to turn. I've talked about what the rating agencies have said as a result of the impact of these budget bills, and the two that have commented have said that in their opinion we're running a real deficit. By the way, they commented before the impact of SARS, which is having obviously a profound impact.

I don't think there's any doubt that when you add up all of those things, we face at least a \$2-billion deficit problem this year. I said to the Minister of Finance yesterday, "How are you going to deal with this? To the best of my thinking, you've got two ways of dealing with it: you cut spending or you find ways to increase revenues by delaying tax cuts." I said, "Will you at least assure the people of Ontario that one of the considerations is to delay tax cuts so that you don't deal with this problem simply by slashing programs?" I think people in Ontario recognize that basically the budget of Ontario is health, education and what I call law and order—our police organizations, our Attorney General, our correctional services. Will you at least assure the people of Ontario that you're prepared to look at delaying tax cuts?

I use last year's example because last year what the minister said was that because of the fiscal situation—that is, we were faced with a fiscal problem—the Ontario government has made the decision to reschedule several major planned tax cuts. Well, why did they do that last year? Because the revenue wasn't there. Because they knew that there was not going to be the money to fund the tax cuts, and they delayed the tax cuts.

I know some government members like to say, "Well, these tax cuts pay for themselves. We cut the taxes, and it's like a money-making machine." But the evidence of it is different. The evidence is what the minister said last year: "In order to deal with our fiscal situation, a growing fiscal problem, we are going to delay the tax cuts." I simply said to the minister, "Are you prepared to look at that as one of the things you're prepared to do?" Of course, heading into an election now, they're convinced that all you have to do is say, "Listen, we're going to give you a tax cut," and you can get re-elected. But I say to the people of Ontario, there's no magic in how this problem is going to have to be dealt with. There are really only two areas to look at, and that is, finding ways to minimize the revenue loss and finding ways to reduce expenditures. Last year the evidence was that they delayed the tax cuts in order to deal with the problem.

I might say that the problem becomes perhaps more acute—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Would you stop the clock, please.

1700

MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): On a point of

order, Mr Speaker: I'm sorry to interrupt the member's speech in mid-term, but this may take some time in the Legislature this afternoon.

This afternoon, the Leader of the Opposition named five young people who are now deceased, some of whom were young offenders.

I have been talking with my chief prosecutor and with various other legal people in my department, and there was some thought that there may have been a breach of law here.

In order to maintain our laws and ensure that the names of these particular individuals are not published in Hansard, I would suggest that perhaps we take some remedy this afternoon to ensure that there has not been a breach of law here, and that we therefore take some immediate action to expunge these names from the record to ensure that a breach of their privacy has not occurred.

Notwithstanding the standing orders and we are standing now, I would seek unanimous support to put forward a motion to expunge these names from the record until any investigation into this matter has been completed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Would you like to speak on this? The chair recognizes the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I think it's pretty important to put on the record to the minister opposite who has brought this forward that the names that were referenced are names that have been repeatedly carried in the public domain, in newspapers and media across the province of Ontario and in this report. To prejudice by expunging, as you've called for, would be, I think, an inappropriate step.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): This is a most regrettable and unfortunate matter. The House is not unfamiliar with it, however. The House will recall that on two previous occasions, and one was the matter of the reading of the throne speech—again, I think one concedes that the motive of the speaker in this instance was benign. In the instance of a throne speech, as I recall, it was then-Minister Runciman who found himself under investigation; he eventually was cleared. As I recall, Mr Runciman similarly did the honourable thing and removed himself from his position. That was an instance where it wasn't he who authored the throne speech. Nobody suggested or pretended that he authored, nor did he read, the throne speech, and similarly, nor did he utter the words; that is to say, the identification of, yes, what were young offenders.

The second instance was one where I recall being in the House as well, when a government member, one Mr Galt, the member for Northumberland, was reading from a graduation program of a facility that contained young offenders. I recall that in that instance I took the floor and there was an investigation commenced. Once again nobody suggested that the member from Northumberland was being anything more or less than benign in reading it. He persisted in doing it but was given the opportunity to correct the record at the time, but that's a different issue.

I recall that the matter then underwent a thorough investigation. Charges were not laid in either of those instances, but I think what's interesting in this instance—and it's most regrettable. I, quite frankly, understand the motive of the leader of the Liberal Party in wanting to read those names. He was making a point. It's acknowledged that those names that were published in the newspaper were very much a matter of public record. It wasn't a matter of this being a revelation of any sort. In fact in this instance, as I understand it, there's some notoriety, and that notoriety doesn't attach to the character of the deceased young people who were named. But the matter has been the subject of much debate in this House. It's been the matter of many questions in the House. It's been the matter of any number of public reports.

What I would invite in this instance is an opportunity for House leaders to discuss a resolution of the matter, that would address the matter. I suggest we could do that promptly now, in view of the fact that there's precedent, in view of the fact that we've seen what the results were that flowed from previous instances. I would submit that a House leaders' meeting, a House leaders' conference—it would be interesting, quite frankly, to see if we could arrive at a resolution to this that would address the interests of the purported named young offenders. It's naive to talk about alleged young offenders at this point; it's trite. But I suggest that that might be a resolution at this point.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm looking for the direction of the House. Because it's been requested for unanimous consent, I'm willing to take a short recess, if you would prefer that meeting before the motion be put rather than afterwards.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Just with respect to the name that has been referenced—and certainly we can adjourn—the individual has been named also by Mr Hampton in the reference and has appeared in every major newspaper in the province, as I understand it. I just want that to be put out there as well.

Hon Mr Sterling: There are five names that were mentioned specifically this afternoon. I think the House leader would be quite willing to recess for a short period of time. I only raise it because I think it's important to act with some haste if we are going to do something about this particular matter.

Mr Duncan: We certainly would be prepared to recess. It should also be noted that the other names have also appeared in most of the periodicals in the province. These are not names that have not been in the public domain.

The Deputy Speaker: We will have a five-minute recess.

The House recessed from 1709 to 1716.

The Deputy Speaker: I will be declaring another five-minute recess.

The House recessed from 1716 to 1722.

The Deputy Speaker: There will be another five-minute recess.

The House recessed from 1722 to 1728.

The Deputy Speaker: There will be another five-minute recess.

The House recessed from 1728 to 1734.

The Deputy Speaker: There will now be a 10-minute recess.

The House recessed from 1734 to 1745.

The Deputy Speaker: There will be a five-minute recess.

The House recessed from 1745 to 1750.

The Deputy Speaker: I think the parties involved are getting very close to resolving it, so we will just suspend the Legislature. I'll stay in the Chair until we're ready to proceed, and then we will proceed.

The House suspended proceedings from 1750 to 1758.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr Kormos: Here we are, Speaker. We have but three minutes left for this House to sit. The House leaders have had discussions. I am concerned about the publication of the names that were uttered. I'm not about to make judgment around how it was that they came to be uttered or whether or not that in and of itself—I made reference to two previous instances, and I think this House should be concerned about the fact that the names are being published when there is any doubt about the appropriateness of that.

Mr Duncan: Mr Speaker, we are not prepared to support any motion at this time. We've just had advice from the director of crown attorneys that the government doesn't even know what act may have been violated at this point and they're simply looking at it. I again want to emphasize that in the case of the one individual, he has been referenced in Hansard 11 times, including by Mr Runciman, including by Mr Hampton, including by others. The other four names have appeared in various publications, major national publications, on numerous occasions. Accordingly, the official opposition is not prepared to support any motion at this time.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, like the House leader from the third party, I don't take a position on this. I don't know—I don't think anyone can say that they know—whether there's jeopardy. It is a concern, though; it has been raised as a concern. Obviously, the issue would be the Young Offenders Act, the specific point you said.

I'd like to ask for unanimous consent for the House to sit past 6 o'clock so that the House leaders could once again meet and confer on this very, very important issue. I don't make any specific allegation—I don't know—but I am, like the House leader from the third party, deeply concerned about this issue. I'd ask for unanimous consent that we sit past 6 o'clock.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there consent? There is not consent.

It being almost 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 next Monday.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité et de la Sécurité publique
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre délégué à la Condition féminine
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	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
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)
Eglington-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises		
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Chris (PC)		
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Chris (PC)		
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, government House leader / ministre de l'Énergie, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, parlementaire du gouvernement	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Minister of the Environment / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, ministre de l'Environnement
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)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of 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)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, 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)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Willowdale	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)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
		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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