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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 24 June 2003

Mardi 24 juin 2003

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 June 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 juin 2003

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ROGER NEILSON

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'm sure I speak on behalf of all members in the House; I wish to pay tribute to Roger Neilson, assistant coach of the Ottawa Senators, who passed away on Saturday last after a long-term battle with cancer.

Roger Neilson was best known as a hockey coach. Indeed, hockey was his life. He was inducted last November into the Hockey Hall of Fame, and six weeks ago he received the Order of Canada, Canada's highest medal of honour, from the Governor General.

As the assistant coach of the Sens he was determined to see the last game of the season through. Indeed, he saw them one goal away from the Stanley Cup finals on April 13, the last game he coached.

During his career he coached over 1,000 NHL games, representing 10 different NHL teams.

Roger and I bonded over cancer treatment and, in particular, complementary treatments for cancer, albeit too late.

Roger Neilson was a caring man. Roger Neilson was a religious man. Roger Neilson was a teacher who ran hockey camps for youth and inspired them to perform their best. Roger Neilson was a man who loved life. Roger Neilson was an icon.

I want to pass on my condolences, and I'm sure those of all the members in the House, to his family and to his many friends throughout the hockey world and to his immediate family, the Ottawa Senators organization.

SERBIAN PICNIC

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): First, I'd like to thank the great member from Nipissing, the hard-working AL McDonald, for giving me his statement space today.

Thousands of Serbians will gather this weekend to celebrate their 58th annual picnic. The event is held every year on the grounds of St George Serbian Orthodox Church in Niagara Falls. As always, it is quite fitting that this year's picnic closely coincides with Canada Day, as

the Serbian people have contributed so much to the history and development of Canada.

An estimated 10,000 Serbs attended the event last year, with many travelling from all over Ontario as well as from US states, including Pennsylvania, Michigan and Illinois. Some even attended from as far away as Australia.

Everyone can look forward to this magnificent weekend with traditional Serbian food, dance and music, organized by the Serbian Orthodox Church along with the Serbian National Shield Society.

Unfortunately I am unable to attend this year's picnic, as I will be at a wedding near Montreal. I'm disappointed, because I always look forward to this weekend each and every year, as it is a wonderful opportunity to spend time with my many friends in the local Serbian community. It is also an opportunity for me to celebrate my roots, as my grandfather on my mother's side was Serbian.

I encourage my colleagues in the House today to inform any Serbian constituents in their ridings to look into attending this weekend's picnic in Niagara Falls.

MISSISSAGI RIVER DAMS

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): As Yogi said, "Déjà vu all over again." It's Canada, it's summer, it's hot and the air conditioners will be gobbling up electricity. The Eves government does not have enough electricity supply—its \$100-million worth of fossil-fuelled generators aren't ready—but the Mississagi River system dams are just waiting to meet the demand.

Last summer my office responded in mid-July to severe drops on Tunnel Lake. On the Saturday of the August long weekend, I spent the afternoon with stakeholders and the Great Lakes Power company trying to get a stabilization agreement for the lake and for the river levels. GLP managers told us, "It's too late for Rocky Island Lake. We've used all the water and there is no more, but we'll try to stabilize Tunnel Lake and the rest of the system." For most of the summer, the rest of the system was held relatively stable.

After discussions with the Ministry of Natural Resources and local stakeholders, Brascan has agreed to voluntarily hold Rocky Island Lake at reasonable levels this summer, but we need the Eves government to commit that the publicly owned Independent Market Operator will not order the hydro stations to operate regardless of the environmental impact.

Last summer, the IMO ordered irresponsible operations on the river. Ernie Eves must commit that the river system will be operated in accordance, not with the hopelessly inadequate existing management plan, but at least in the manner agreed to by the stakeholders.

Let's not have déjà vu all over again.

CONCERT FOR TORONTO

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): This past weekend there was an event in Toronto called the Concert for Toronto, and by all accounts it was very successful. But the one place it was not successful was that everyone except the workers who actually work and live here had jobs at this event.

The labour was flown in from Winnipeg, the labour was flown in from Vancouver, the labour was flown in from the United States to work this concert. Twenty to 30 people who work in this city at events like Lion King and Mamma Mia, who are facing layoffs, were not given an opportunity to work. It is also clear that the big video-trons that were at the locations were American—they came from Clear Channel—and those workers were also flown in from California to operate them, even though we have the facility to do it here. This was a \$150,000 contract alone that was given to Clear Channel, and about 20 workers there as well did not get jobs in rigging, in labour and in cameras.

We're going to have the Rolling Stones concert here in, I guess, about another six weeks. I would suggest that the government of Ontario and the government of Canada do everything possible to ensure that the workers who are capable of putting on that show get first crack at the jobs and that they not be brought in from other locations. If the people here truly want to help those who are hurting because of SARS, at least give them the opportunity to do the work.

1340

VOLUNTEERS

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I am deeply honoured to have this opportunity to recognize the extraordinary voluntary service of five dedicated members of the St John Ambulance, Mississauga Branch. These five individuals each gave in excess of 1,000 hours of voluntary service in 2002. This is truly an amazing achievement when, these days, there are so many competing pressures on everyone's personal time.

David Yam, the divisional superintendent, donated an incredible 2,785 hours of his personal time as leader of the patient care volunteer division. Andrew Ling, who covered mostly weekday and daytime duty requests, gave 1,863 hours as a patient care volunteer. Chris Shim, who donated 1,536 hours, not only provided first aid service at public events but also edited the division's electronic newsletter for its members. Augusto da Silva gave 1,311 hours as a patient care volunteer and was also very involved with the recruitment and orientation of new

volunteers. Finally, Michael Thomas donated 1,011 hours developing the Erindale campus response team at University of Toronto at Mississauga and providing first aid duties at public events.

There are simply no adequate words to thank these exceptional individuals who volunteered what would have been between 29 and 80 standard work weeks to St John Ambulance in a single year. You are all our heroes. Our whole community salutes your monumental efforts.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): Everyone who knows anything about the construction industry knows that the shortage of skilled trades is the most urgent problem facing the industry today. Presumably, that is why two years ago, the government introduced the strategic skills investment program, a program to use public funds to leverage private sector investment in a wide variety of training initiatives. Presumably, that is why 18 months ago, the government awarded \$1.8 million to the joint apprenticeship and training trust fund of local 27 of the carpenters' union. The investment represented public participation in a \$7-million-plus investment by the private sector in a state-of-the-art training centre for carpenters.

Last September, Minister Flaherty, the minister responsible for the program, and I were centre stage with local 27 and the fund at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new building that will house the training centre. It's in my riding of Vaughan-King-Aurora. The ceremony was a great photo opportunity for the minister. But since that time, the minister and his ministry have done whatever they could to avoid signing a final agreement with the training trust fund. Despite dozens of meetings and a series of amendments, the minister has not acted, no deal has been signed and no investment has been made. This shell game has got to stop and it's got to stop today. Construction of the facility is almost complete. Equipping it depends upon the minister honouring his commitment—

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

AILSA CRAIG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise today to tell my fellow members about the Ailsa Craig and District Historical Society and the grand opening of its new location. The historical society has moved its collection of artefacts into the former Ailsa Craig Baptist Church, which has been renamed the Donald Hughes Annex, in recognition of Mr Hughes's generous donation of the building.

The former Baptist church was restored for this purpose with the help of a \$57,600 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. I'm pleased to see our government invest in this kind of local museum which enhances the

quality of life for the residents of small communities like Ailsa Craig.

This group was started in 1996 by 12 individuals interested in preserving their local history. There are now more than 100 members who, by last year, had raised almost \$100,000. Those funds cover the operating expenses of the museum and pay the mortgage on their existing location in the former Ailsa Craig Trinity United Church, which will now be converted into a chapel and meeting hall.

The efforts of this group will ensure that the history of this area and the lifestyles of those early settlers in rural Ontario are preserved for future generations.

The grand opening of the newly renovated annex will be held this coming weekend, and I look forward to taking a tour and learning a bit more about the rich history of this part of my riding.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): The session is coming to an end, so I thought I would update members and our friends watching at home on the government's record this session.

First of all, the federal House of Commons has sat for 73 days. Do you know how many days the provincial House will have sat this year? Just 34, less than half the federal House.

Here's another interesting fact: in their platform, the Tories promised to make legislative committees more effective and meaningful. How many committee hearings have we had on a government bill? Was it 10, nine, eight? No, none. Nada. Zero. Not one day of committee hearings from a government that in its platform promises more hearings.

All the members of my party are familiar with ending mandatory retirement, and we support that. Is this bill going to get passed? No, it's not going to get passed because we've had no debate on it. We've had no committee hearings on it. This government's all talk on that issue and no action. Have they called it for second reading? No. Have they sent it for debate? No. Have they sent it to committee? No. Will they try to pass it with meaningful hearings, meaningful debate? No; they won't get it. The House never sits, committees never debate bills and the government's promises languish.

It's time for change in Ontario. It's time for Dalton McGuinty and an Ontario Liberal government.

SALMON SPECTACULAR FISHING DERBY

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I rise in the House today to inform my fellow colleagues and their friends of an upcoming event in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. The 16th Annual Salmon Spectacular Fishing Derby will take place August 22 to August 31 on the waters of Owen Sound and Colpoys Bay.

The derby is put on by the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association, which will utilize over 350 volunteer members and volunteer sponsors.

The 10-day event is one of the largest and longest-running fishing derbies across North America. This year, virtually every day is filled with special events packed with activities for the whole family.

On both Saturdays, enjoy the Molson's Monster Fish Fries, where we are proud to serve between 2,000 and 4,000 hungry friends who travel miles to partake in the annual event.

Numerous prizes are awarded daily and various musical talent will be ready to entertain folks in the evenings. There will be designated days for children and seniors, and it is anticipated that Elvis will be stopping by again. The festivities will finish up on Sunday as \$125,000 in prizes are given away to our best anglers.

All the money raised by the Salmon Spectacular goes toward helping fishery conservation projects, including operating the club's salmon and trout hatcheries.

I invite all of you to come up to Owen Sound for a great time and to support the 16th Annual Salmon Spectacular Fishing Derby. I know you've been there, Mr Speaker.

VISITORS

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if the members might join me in welcoming a large group from the area I represent, the Carefirst Seniors and Community Association.

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

We also have today in the Speaker's gallery Mr John Quirke, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. Please join me in welcoming our very special guest.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You would probably have noticed a few polar bears sitting on desks. I would ask unanimous consent that one be distributed to each member in this House and also to the pages.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed. If I could, for all members, ask that we ask for unanimous consent before we put them on the desks. In this case, I'm sure no one would—

Interjections.

The Speaker: I never thought of that. Actually, they could be tossed. I would ask all members to ask for unanimous consent before they do it in the future, just because it does make for difficulty for the staff. They are instructed not to put anything on, regardless if it's something very interesting like this, or it could be more controversial. So I would ask for that in the future. The member does have unanimous consent.

1350

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As members would know, Polar

Bear Provincial Park is in my riding and I support what the member is trying to do. But I just want to point out that if these were all black bears and they would be down here, we wouldn't have them in our backyards in Timmins. If you could have the black bears come down, we'll be happy.

The Speaker: We can even make statements about polar bears.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I thank you for this opportunity. I would like to ask for unanimous consent to declare Ontario's second smog day of summer 2003 Smog Day Clement. Can I have consent for that?

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent to have permission to have the Franco-Ontarian flag on members' desks since it is Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day today.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

I thank the member for asking before it was on there, although I think it was on.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I beg leave to present the report on corporations tax from the standing committee on public accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Mr Gerretsen presents the committee report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Gerretsen: The report has 12 recommendations, and I'll just highlight a few of them. It states that, "The Ministry of Finance should report ... on the success of electronic filings for corporate tax returns and the action taken to provide a corporate education program to encourage this approach for large and small corporations."

It also should report "on the administrative procedures implemented to ensure timely and accurate updates on information added to the tax roll and corporate information profiles."

Finally, it "should develop procedures to ensure that accounts are not closed without meeting all of the established criteria. Specifically, an account should not be closed unless it has been determined that the corporation is inactive and not in arrears while still registered as active with the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services."

It should also report "on the progress made under its follow-up initiative to address the backlog of corporations in default of filing tax returns."

There are 12 good recommendations that we hope the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services will not only take under consideration but will actually implement. With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker: Mr Gerretsen moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Gerretsen: The standing committee on public accounts has been very active because we have another report to present on the training division of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. I move the adoption of its recommendations.

Interjection: You're Chair of this committee. You work hard.

The Speaker: Mr Gerretsen presents the committee report and moves the adoption of the recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Gerretsen: I hear my colleague here saying, "The Chairman works very hard." I will tell you, all the committee members on all sides of the House work very hard on this committee.

There are five recommendations in this report. It states, amongst others, that "the ministry should review current legislation to ensure it allows flexibility for potential apprentices to gain some initial experience in a trade without registering."

It should also "ensure that all third-party agencies are fully aware of and follow prudent purchasing and project management practices, as is required by the Ministry of Management Board of Cabinet, and that it report to the committee within 120 days of the tabling of this document with the Speaker on the literacy and basic skills system's costs and effectiveness."

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker: Mr Gerretsen moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

VISITORS

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Minister of the Environment): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In a follow-up to yesterday concerning the Baulke family in Collingwood, Ryan Baulke is one of our pages here and his father Tom was a page in the early 1970s. Today, a friend of the family is visiting in the gallery, Anson MacKeracher; Ryan's mother, Laurie Baulke; and his grandmother, Norma Judges. Welcome.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): On a point of order, Mr speaker: I know that everyone in the assembly today would like to welcome Cathy Splinter, from Amherstview. Cathy is the mother of our page Sarah Splinter.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

POLAR BEAR PROTECTION ACT, 2003 LOI DE 2003 SUR LA PROTECTION DES OURS POLAIRES

Mrs Mushinski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act to provide protection for polar bears /
Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à protéger les ours polaires.

Interjection: Did you say “bear” or “Baird”?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): As my mother would say, if you give it to one, you have to give it to everyone.

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

The member for a short statement?

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): This bill requires a person to have a licence issued by the minister responsible for the administration of the bill in order to possess a polar bear or to export or attempt to export a polar bear from Ontario. The bill sets out standards for the care and treatment of polar bears for which a person holds a licence.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce Dr William Rapley and Dr David Barney, who are both from the Metropolitan Toronto Zoo and take care of Inukshuk, our little orphan polar bear.

MEGA-HOG FARM CONTROL ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LE CONTRÔLE DES GROSSES EXPLOITATIONS PORCINES

Mr Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 123, An Act to control mega-hog farms /
Projet de loi 123, Loi visant à contrôler les grosses exploitations porcines.

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

All in favour will please say “aye.”

All opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):

The bill deems mega hog farms to be identified as industrial for the purposes of the official plan of the municipality where the farm is located. Owners of mega hog farms are required to ensure that an environmental assessment is completed. The operation of a megafarm is not a normal farm practice under the Farming and Food Production Protection Act.

After watching 60 Minutes on CBS last Sunday, we should all support this bill for second and third reading.

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, so that every worker can have a long weekend this July 1 weekend.

The Speaker: Same point of order, Minister?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We were amicable, but now we all have to come back to work on Monday.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

I'm afraid I heard some noes.

MOTIONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): I move that the standing committee on public accounts be authorized to release any reports during the upcoming recess by depositing them with the Clerk of the House.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Agreed? Agreed.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated Monday, June 2, 2003, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 12:00 am on Tuesday, June 24, 2003, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Mr Baird has moved that, notwithstanding standing order—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense?

Interjections.

The Speaker: You'd like to hear it? Mr Baird moves that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated Monday, June 2, 2003, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 12:00 am on Tuesday, June 24, 2003, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

All those in favour will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1401 to 1406.

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

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic
Arnott, Ted

Elliott, Brenda
Galt, Doug

Murdoch, Bill
Mushinski, Marilyn

Baird, John R.	Gerretsen, John	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Gilchrist, Steve	O'Toole, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Gill, Raminder	Patten, Richard
Beaubien, Marcel	Hardeman, Ernie	Peters, Steve
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hodgson, Chris	Phillips, Gerry
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Hudak, Tim	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Ruprecht, Tony
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Cleary, John C.	Klees, Frank	Sergio, Mario
Clement, Tony	Kwinter, Monte	Sorbara, Greg
Coburn, Brian	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Spina, Joseph
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Sterling, Norman W.
Conway, Sean G.	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Cordiano, Joseph	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Crozier, Bruce	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
DeFaria, Carl	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Di Cocco, Caroline	McDonald, AL	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn	Wilson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dunlop, Garfield	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia	Young, David

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	
Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 75; the nays are 7.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

FÊTE DE LA SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE

L'hon John R. Baird (ministre de l'Énergie, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, leader parlementaire du gouvernement): Je demande le consentement unanime pour permettre des déclarations à l'occasion de la fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, et que celles-ci se limitent à trois minutes par parti ainsi qu'à trois minutes pour la députée indépendante.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Une voix.

L'hon M. Baird: Oui, Norman Sterling a appuyé fortement la résolution.

Je vous remercie, monsieur le Président. J'aimerais prendre quelques minutes pour rendre hommage à la communauté francophone en cette journée de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

Comme plusieurs d'entre vous le savent sans doute, la Saint-Jean-Baptiste est un jour où tous les francophones d'un océan à l'autre célèbrent leur héritage culturel. C'est une journée au cours de laquelle les gens parlent de leurs réalisations et pensent à leur avenir avec espoir.

La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste remonte à l'époque où le christianisme commençait à s'implanter en France. La fête a été transportée en Nouvelle-France avec les Français installés dans la région du Saint-Laurent. La Saint-Jean-Baptiste est célébrée au Canada depuis le

début du 17^e siècle. Il s'agit donc d'une journée spéciale qui vise à reconnaître les belles qualités de la communauté francophone.

Depuis ma nomination en tant que ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, j'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer des francophones de tous les âges et de tous les milieux, partout en province. Ces gens sont entièrement dévoués à la préservation de leur langue, et avec raison, puisque la diversité culturelle a fait de l'Ontario un meilleur endroit pour tous et enrichit notre façon de vivre.

Notre gouvernement reconnaît leur contribution et s'est engagé à protéger et à promouvoir les services en français. Parmi nos réalisations, on compte la création de 12 conseils scolaires de langue française, le financement de services de lignes de crise pour les femmes francophones victimes de violence, et un investissement dans le Fonds d'aide à la petite enfance veillant à la création de programmes pour le développement des jeunes enfants.

La semaine dernière, le gouvernement a donné 200,000 \$ à Destination Nord pour la promotion du nord-est de l'Ontario en tant que destination touristique intéressante pour le marché francophone.

La présence francophone en Ontario remonte à plus de 350 ans. La Saint-Jean-Baptiste est l'occasion idéale pour exprimer notre appréciation de la grande contribution des francophones à la société. La communauté francophone de l'Ontario constitue la majorité des francophones hors Québec au Canada.

J'aimerais souligner la présence des francophones et leur importante contribution à notre culture et à notre économie. Je vous invite donc à vous joindre à moi pour souhaiter à tous les francophones une joyeuse fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

La langue française est une langue historique et honorée par l'Ontario, et la Législature de l'Ontario reconnaît l'héritage culturel de la population francophone et compte bien le préserver pour les générations futures.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): C'est un honneur pour moi de souligner aujourd'hui cette grande fête, la fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, le patron de tous les francophones de cette planète.

La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste était célébrée tous les 24 juin bien avant qu'elle devienne la fête nationale des Québécois. À l'époque, des peuples païens célébraient le solstice d'été par un grand feu de joie, symbolisant la lumière qui était à l'apogée. Puis la France catholique a conservé la tradition du feu de joie pour célébrer la naissance du saint Jean-Baptiste.

La fête, qui était alors religieuse, était donc très importante pour les Français catholiques. Dans la nuit du 23 au 24 juin, le roi de France allumait le feu de la Saint-Jean. Évidemment, la tradition a continué en Nouvelle-France, où il y a eu les premiers défilés.

Lors du défilé, il y avait une personne qui portait les vestiges les plus précieux du régime français, ainsi que le drapeau du régiment de Carillon, souvent appelé le

drapeau fleurdelisé, qui avait été témoin de la victoire de Montcalm.

La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste était la fierté des Français et elle l'est toujours dans toutes les communautés francophones.

Cette année, les festivités de la Saint-Jean pour l'Ontario ont débuté vendredi soir dernier dans ma circonscription, plus précisément dans la communauté de Casselman. Nous avons pu assister au festival l'Écho d'un peuple, suivi par le défilé de la Saint-Jean dimanche dernier. Des milliers de personnes y assistaient et ce fut un immense succès. J'aimerais féliciter et remercier ses organisateurs, l'équipe de Francoscénie et les centaines de bénévoles qui ont travaillé depuis plusieurs mois pour assurer le succès de cette grande fête.

Les gens ont pu, entre autres, revivre des coutumes d'autrefois en y participant à travers de nombreux spectacles et activités jamais vus dans la région. Chapeau haut à Sylvain Charlebois et toute son équipe.

La langue française est présente dans notre province depuis plus de 350 ans et le français est l'une des langues officielles du Canada. En Ontario, il jouit du statut de langue officielle devant les tribunaux, dans l'éducation et à l'Assemblée législative.

À ne pas oublier : le 21 juin 2001, l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario a officiellement reconnu l'emblème de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario par son drapeau, qui est devenu le septième emblème officiel de la province.

La vie culturelle et communautaire francophone bouillonne en Ontario. Aujourd'hui, je souhaite bonne fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste à vous tous et toutes, et je partage avec vous notre fierté de faire vivre à chaque jour le français autour de nous.

Je suis fier d'être Canadien, je suis fier d'être Ontarien et je suis grandement fier d'être Franco-Ontarien.

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Je suis francophone et je suis fier. Aujourd'hui, c'est la journée où tous les francophones autour du monde, un milliard de francophones dans quelque 60 pays, ont la chance de se rappeler de toutes les luttes qu'on a eues comme francophones à travers nos juridictions. Ici en Ontario, on sait que cela n'a pas toujours été facile. Les francophones ont fallu se battre pour avoir les services, le peu de services que l'on a en place. Mais le message qu'on amène comme communauté aujourd'hui à travers cette province est qu'il y a encore beaucoup de travail à faire, et la communauté francophone va continuer dans la direction de s'assurer que ce n'est pas seulement pour protéger les programmes français pour les francophones de cette province mais pour promouvoir des programmes, pour s'assurer que, comme francophones, on peut vivre en français dans notre province et se servir des programmes de notre gouvernement.

Aujourd'hui, on a eu l'occasion, avec mes collègues M. Prue et M. Marchese, d'hisser officiellement le drapeau franco-ontarien ici devant l'Assemblée. C'est une cérémonie qui a eu lieu à travers la province. On sait que dans des communautés comme Kapuskasing,

Timmins, Hearst et autres à travers la province ils ont eu l'occasion de faire de même.

J'ai demandé aujourd'hui au ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones que, officiellement, on assure que le drapeau franco-ontarien ne soit pas hissé seulement une fois par année devant l'Assemblée législative mais, autrement, que l'on hisse ce drapeau pour 365 jours par année. Je vais le demander un peu plus tard cet après-midi, une fois que les déclarations seront finies, pour avoir cette déclaration unanime. J'espère que le gouvernement va l'approuver.

L'autre point que j'ai à faire, M. le Président, comme j'ai dit au début : pour les francophones cela n'a pas toujours été facile. Il y a encore beaucoup de services que l'on a besoin d'aller chercher. Moi, je suis fier d'être membre du Parti néo-démocratique, le seul parti dans la province d'avoir officiellement un programme pour les francophones dans notre campagne électorale et dans notre programme électoral qui va avoir lieu pour les élections à venir. On comprend, comme néo-démocrates, qu'il est important que les francophones ne se fassent pas simplement dire qu'ils sont les bienvenus, mais que les programmes sont là; qu'il est important d'avoir des centres de santé communautaires à travers la province où les francophones peuvent aller rechercher des services dont ils ont besoin, de s'assurer qu'à travers le système de santé, on répond aux besoins de la communauté, de s'assurer que le système juridique répond bien aux besoins des francophones de cette province et autres services que l'on connaît tous.

Je m'engage comme francophone, comme néo-démocrate, à continuer la lutte pour nous assurer que les services en français soient mis en place pour tous les francophones de la province, pour pouvoir nous assurer que, si on dit qu'on est francophone, on peut vivre en français dans cette province.

Avec ça, je demanderais le consentement unanime que l'Assemblée déclare que le drapeau franco-ontarien soit hissé pour 365 jours, pour tous les jours de l'année à l'Assemblée.

M^{me} Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): C'est avec fierté et enthousiasme que je m'adresse à l'Assemblée législative en ce 24 juin, fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Fête nationale du Québec, mais d'abord et avant tout la fête de tous les Canadiens français d'un bout à l'autre de ce grand pays et, bien sûr, la fête des Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens.

1420

Cette fête de tous les Canadiens français remonte au début de la colonisation du pays alors que les Français ont apporté au Canada la coutume de célébrer le soleil de l'été le 24 juin. Puis en 1908, le pape Pie X a déclaré Saint-Jean-Baptiste comme patron de la nation canadienne-française. C'est avec fierté que nous voulons aujourd'hui célébrer cette fête avec tous les francophones du Canada.

Aujourd'hui, tous les francophones de l'Ontario, qu'ils habitent Toronto ou Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Sudbury ou Pointe-aux-Roches, des petits villages, des grandes

municipalités urbaines, oui, tous les Francos, célèbrent ensemble la fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Que ce soient des festivals, des parades, des concerts en plein air, des soupers de campagne, des rencontres de famille, le cœur est à la fête. Toutes ces activités donnent une saveur de grande fête et de retrouvailles à des milliers de Franco-Ontariennes et de Franco-Ontariens qui célèbrent avec fierté leur appartenance à la grande famille des Canadiens français.

Comme je suis fière de pouvoir me lever en Assemblée législative aujourd'hui et proclamer bien haut mon appartenance à cette grande communauté de Franco-Canadiens et Franco-Canadiennes, et plus particulièrement de Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes. Je suis fière de ma langue, fière de ma culture, fière de mon drapeau, reconnu comme emblème officiel de l'Ontario, ce drapeau que nous avons hissé ce midi devant l'édifice de l'Assemblée législative.

C'est bien en l'an 2001 que cette Assemblée législative a reconnu officiellement le drapeau franco-ontarien en signe de la reconnaissance officielle de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario et qu'il a été hissé pour la première fois à la vue de tous et de toutes. Toute la communauté francophone s'en réjouit.

Je suis aussi fière de reconnaître les 500 000 et plus de francophones que nous sommes en Ontario qui contribuent à faire de cette province une province forte aux points de vue social, culturel et économique.

Depuis les débuts de cette province, les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes ont contribué à la vitalité de notre province et ils continuent à y participer à part entière. De plus, des centaines de nouveaux arrivants parlant le français ont choisi l'Ontario comme leur patrie.

Nous célébrons aujourd'hui et je m'en réjouis. Nous célébrons notre fête, notre drapeau, notre francophonie, quoi. Mais j'ose cependant répéter le vœu que j'ai déjà exprimé devant cette assemblée et que plusieurs de nous caressons depuis longtemps. Nous rêvons tous et toutes du jour où la pleine reconnaissance de notre communauté franco-ontarienne sera complète. Je parle du jour où nos droits seront officiellement reconnus dans la constitution canadienne. C'est ce que je désire de toutes mes énergies, de tout mon cœur.

Bonne Saint-Jean-Baptiste à tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes françaises. J'invite toute la population ontarienne à se joindre à nos activités.

The Speaker: The member for Timmins-James Bay on a point of order.

M. Bisson: Je demande le consentement unanime que le drapeau franco-ontarien soit hissé 365 jours à l'Assemblée.

The Speaker: The member has requested that the Franco-Ontario flag be flown in front of the Ontario Legislature for 365 days. Same point of order, Minister?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): I'm certainly very excited about that idea and I look forward to discussing it with the member in the House leaders' meeting on Thursday.

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

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I'm asking for unanimous consent to have second and third reading of Bill 39, An Act to restrict the operation of large hog farms and to amend the Nutrient Management Act, 2002.

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we continue, joining us in the Speaker's gallery today are four Ontarians, here to receive the internationally recognized medal of la francophonie, l'ordre de la Pléiade, for their outstanding contribution to French-speaking communities in the province. They are Liliane Beauchamp, Marcel Bourassa, Gilles LeVasseur and Pascal Sabourin. Please join me in welcoming our distinguished guests.

The member for Toronto-Danforth first on a point of order, and then I'll get to the other members.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Mr Speaker, I ask for second and third readings of Bill 36, An Act to protect sources of drinking water in Ontario.

The Speaker: You're seeking unanimous consent?

Ms Churley: Unanimous consent.

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

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): On a point of order, Speaker: I want to take this opportunity to welcome the city of Brampton's budget chief, Councillor Linda Jeffrey, to the Legislature. She is here today checking out the operation of this place, and I want everyone to join me in welcoming her to the gallery.

Ms Churley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent to have third reading of Bill 16, An Act to amend the Vital Statistics Act and the Child and Family Services Act in respect of adoption disclosure.

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

Ms Churley: On a different point of order, Speaker: I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome students from the Jones adult learning centre in my riding of Toronto-Danforth.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): I move that one member from each party from the standing committee on public accounts be authorized to attend the 24th annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

SARS

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My first questions today are for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. On the matter of securing SARS relief funding from the federal government, I think Ontarians have come to the conclusion there has been a lot of finger pointing, name-calling and blame-laying, with very poor results at the end of the day.

I have for you, Minister, a positive, constructive proposal. I will give the page here a copy of a motion that I tabled in this House yesterday. This motion would require, quite simply, that the House require the Provincial Auditor to conduct an assessment of the real and actual costs connected with SARS, now and anticipated, so we could then make a better case before the federal government.

I think this is a positive, constructive proposal. It's better than name-calling and blame-laying. Will you support this motion, Minister?

Hon David Young (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): For a very long period of time, many of us in this province have suspected that Mr McGuinty is nothing more than an apologist for the federal Liberals.

Today he comes forward in this Legislative Assembly, after having—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I understand everybody is getting heated. The Minister of Municipal Affairs has the floor, please.

Hon Mr Young: For a very long period of time, many in this province, including many on this side of the Legislature, have suspected that you, sir, are nothing more than an apologist for the federal Liberals. Today, beyond any doubt, you have demonstrated that is so.

You, sir, have today called into question the integrity of the doctors, nurses and health care professionals across this province. You, sir, have taken—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The minister will get his time. We'll just wait.

We've lost the time, so we'll let the minister continue. Minister.

1430

Hon Mr Young: You, sir, Mr McGuinty, have called into question the credibility and the integrity of individuals like Dr James Young, who is an internationally respected health care professional. All of those individuals understand that this province has faced an extraordinary challenge over the last 100-plus days, and you are prepared to discard all that in the interests of supporting your federal cousins.

The federal Liberals have abandoned this province through this crisis, and you are nowhere to be seen. You are missing in action, just like you—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock.

Supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you may measure success on behalf of the people of Ontario in terms of the number of names you call the federal government, in terms of the number of times you point the finger of blame, in terms of the number of times you engage in partisan rhetoric. We measure it in terms of how much money you're getting for our province, and you're not getting enough money for our province. You are failing miserably when it comes to securing our justifiable funding here in the province of Ontario.

Here's the way we can strengthen our case before the federal government: rather than the federal government suggesting that you are highballing and you suggesting that the federal government is lowballing, why can't we get the Provincial Auditor to weigh in, to conduct a careful review, tell us exactly what the costs are and then let's present that case to the federal government? Why won't you support that motion?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Just before we begin, I usually warn people. I'm not going to warn people. Everybody is warned. I'm going to start throwing people out. I'm going to throw you out in groups. We're not going to continue yelling and screaming across. Be forewarned, there's going to be no more warning. I'm going to pick two and three out at a time, and if there's nobody left here, so be it.

Both sides can ask and answer the questions. You've got a minister and the leader of the official opposition that the people want to hear who can answer very well for both sides and ask the questions. If there's any more noise where I have to stand up again, I'm not going to do it. We've got three days left. I'm not going to stand up here and get in between you guys when you're yelling and screaming names across from each other. I'm not going to do it; I'm going to toss you out. We're almost at 50. If we go over 50 as my record as Speaker, so be it.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon Mr Young: The only two people in this country who don't believe that SARS is a billion-dollar, life-and-death issue are John McCallum and Dalton McGuinty.

On not one, not two, not three, not four, not five, not six occasions, but seven occasions, we presented the federal government with proof that this issue was costing the people of this province over a billion dollars, but more importantly, we have lost 38 of our friends, neighbours and relatives to this deadly killer. Over 30,000 people have been quarantined, and yet you aren't prepared to stand up on behalf of the people of this province and agree with us that this is a disaster.

You of course see no hypocrisy in the fact that the same federal Liberal government was prepared to say that the ice storm in Quebec—

The Speaker: The minister's going to have to withdraw that, please.

Hon Mr Young: I withdraw the term "hypocrisy."

You see nothing wrong with the federal government that is prepared to flow hundreds of millions of dollars—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up as well.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, when it comes to securing our fair share of disaster relief, the approach that you are bringing is a disaster itself. We're not getting our fair share of funding. You're not prepared to go about it in a responsible manner on behalf of the people of Ontario.

You have failed us. You failed to ensure that our health care system had the necessary surge capacity in the first instance. You failed to flow the money to our hospitals and public health units in the aftermath of SARS. And now you tell us that addressing this issue, this disaster, is your single greatest priority, but on the other hand, you continue to maintain you're going to put \$3.2 billion into tax breaks for corporations.

Why can we not do something that is intelligent and responsible so that we can secure funding from the federal government? Let's put this out in the hands of an independent person, the Provincial Auditor, have him take a look at the numbers, have him make a genuine and real assessment, and then let's give that to the federal government. We will strengthen our case and we can then get our fair share from the federal government.

Hon Mr Young: To the leader of the provincial Liberal Party, this isn't really that complicated, sir. We want to be treated just as the people of Quebec were treated when they had the ice storm. We want to be treated in Ontario just the way the people of Manitoba were treated when they had the floods. We want to be treated just the way the community of Oka was treated when they had a crisis there. We want the disaster relief funding to apply to us. We are prepared to apply that principle, that template to our funding.

You know we have paid in excess of a billion dollars to support doctors and nurses and to support individuals through a compensation program. When you were asked by Minister Clement on numerous occasions to sign a letter in support of the people of Ontario, you were missing in action. You were nowhere to be seen.

Back on Friday, you put out a press release that agreed with me, I say with respect. You said the federal offer was woefully inadequate, which of course it was. It was a pittance. It was an insult. Then today you're standing up saying, "Why aren't we accepting it? Why aren't we taking their reasonable offer?" You have to be consistent. This is too important to play politics with.

I say to you, Mr McGuinty and all the Liberals, come join with us, come act on behalf of the people of this province. We are getting—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up. New question.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My next questions are for the Minister of Energy. Today, we've had it confirmed that the Bruce A nuclear reactor

will not be operational by the end of June, as originally anticipated. That means another 750 megawatts of power will not be available to us, will not be on the grid. This bad news follows on the heels of yet more delays in restarting the Pickering A nuclear reactors; and the portable emergency generators, which you so warmly embrace, will now not be operating until July.

We now find ourselves in the midst of our very first heat wave. The Premier himself has said that the grid is being put to the test. With the risk of blackouts and brownouts being very real for the first time in the history of this province, can you tell us why your Web site doesn't give consumers a single tip on how to conserve electricity?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): We believe that conservation is an important strategy in Ontario. We've come forward with some substantial initiatives to promote conservation. We've had more than 50,000 people apply through our appliance rebate program to have energy-efficient appliances, which can do a lot to reduce demand. That's good for our electricity system, it's good for the environment and it's good for the pocketbook.

We've announced that we'll be forming a task force on conservation and new supply. That will be coming very shortly, which I think will provide more good news to the people of Ontario. We think that's important. We're bringing a substantial amount of new, clean green energy on to the grid. Since last summer, we've increased that by 500 megawatts with a new plant that's opened in Sarnia. We've increased that with 800 megawatts of new, clean non-emission power from Bruce. That's good news to the people of Ontario. That's not enough. We're going to continue to work on having more conservation initiatives and more green energy.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, I wonder if you understand just how very real the crisis is that we're facing. There's a very real possibility, according to the Premier himself, that we're going to run short of power. You yourself cannot guarantee us that we're not going to run short of power.

When it comes to patting yourself on the back, you've spent \$250 million on partisan political, self-promotional government advertising. You've got brochures for everything that are coming to our doorsteps on a regular basis. Why is it there is not a single tip available on the Web site? As a result of the mess you've put us in, we're going to have to harness the goodwill and interest of the people of Ontario when it comes to dealing with this crisis. We could do things like encouraging people to close their blinds; asking them to do their laundry early in the morning or later at night, turn off unnecessary appliances or defrost food in the fridge instead of in a microwave. These things sound small and petty in themselves, but if many of us do those kinds of things, if we do the equivalent in our businesses, we can reduce energy needs by 5% to 10%. And 10% is the equivalent of five nuclear reactors; 5% is the equivalent of two and a

half nuclear reactors. Why are you doing nothing to ask Ontarians to help us so we can work together to face this crisis?

1440

Hon Mr Baird: I take the issue of conservation very seriously. We've committed—and our action plan will be coming forward in the coming days—to move forward on a major public education campaign.

For the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Ottawa South, to stand in his place and give anyone lectures about self-serving advertising—this is the man who spent \$25,000 of the taxpayers' money at Bill Clinton's campaign school in Chicago. This is the leader who spent \$25,000 of taxpayers' money to try to have an image makeover. That is an outrage. That is a disgrace. He should pay the money back.

Mr McGuinty: Two words in reply to that: Gord Haugh. Maybe a third word: \$300,000. You may want to keep that in mind.

You may choose to whistle while you walk by this blackout and brownout graveyard, but I think you're being unfair to the people of Ontario. There's a very real possibility that we're going to run short of electricity this summer. I think it's important to be straight with the people of Ontario. I think it's important to enlist them in the cause of conserving energy. There is not a single tip to be found on your Web site that helps Ontarians better understand what they can do in their homes and in their businesses to reduce electricity demand in Ontario. You have had over \$250 million to pat yourself on the back when it comes to self-congratulatory ads and brochures that you distribute to our doorsteps. I ask you again, given that this crisis is so real and so serious, why is there not a single tip to be found on your Web site that would encourage Ontarians to reduce, in practical ways, their demand on electricity in Ontario?

Hon Mr Baird: As I've indicated to the Leader of the Opposition, we believe conservation is important. We've brought forward a range of tax incentives to encourage businesses to convert their equipment to energy-efficient electricity consumption. We think that's important. We brought in a program where more than 50,000 people in Ontario are turning to energy-efficient appliances. We think that's good news to the people of Ontario. We believe we can do more. We believe more can be done, and we'll be coming forward with a major initiative. I'm sure when we do, he'll complain that we're not spending enough with respect to promoting conservation. Whenever we do, he'll probably complain that we're spending too much on advertising.

NORTHLAND POWER

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Today, when your energy minister can't guarantee that there's enough hydroelectricity to keep the lights on, we've discovered that another private company that is supposed to provide temporary emergency power has a very cozy financial

relationship with the Conservative Party. Kingston CoGen is controlled by Northland Power, and Northland Power has conveniently contributed \$57,000 to the Conservative Party. This now brings the dirty donor list to \$175,000. So while Ontario citizens breathe polluted air and wait to see if the lights will stay on, the Conservative Party got \$175,000; your private power corporate friends got \$100 million, even though they're not producing electricity yet. People have to be concerned about whether the lights will stay on.

Deputy Premier, why did you put the Conservative Party and your private power corporate friends ahead of the health and safety of Ontario citizens?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Energy.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): The RFP process that we followed was free from political interference. In his question, the member opposite brought forward no evidence to suggest otherwise. There's a reason for that: he doesn't have any. I believe the member for Kenora-Rainy River, the leader of the third party, to be an honourable person. I believe him to be someone of integrity. I find it regrettable, disappointing and quite frankly beneath the dignity of any member of this place to engage—and the member for Toronto-Danforth smiles when an issue of the integrity of all elected officials is in question. Those types of questions, that type of laugh and that type of smirk are regrettable.

I would like to be very clear: nothing that the honourable member has said—nothing—is true.

Mr Hampton: Minister, I suggest that you merely need to look at the documents. This is your request for proposals for temporary emergency power. What do we find on page 1? On page 1, it says that we need the power "commencing on or about June 1, 2003." Then we go over to page 7, and it mentions the earliest anticipated date for in-service capacity. That means being ready to provide power.

You paid \$100 million to these companies, and if you look at the list of companies, they contributed \$175,000 to the Conservative Party.

The people of Ontario are breathing dirty air because the coal-fired stations have to run full blast. The people of Ontario have to wait and see if the lights are going to stay on. I don't see where the people of Ontario benefited from this at all. They're not getting the power, they're breathing dirty air and they don't know if the lights are going to stay on, but the Conservative Party got \$175,000 from the same corporations that get \$100 million of public money but aren't producing any power.

I ask you the question again: why did you put the interests of the Conservative Party and your private power corporate friends ahead of the health and safety of Ontario citizens?

Hon Mr Baird: For the leader of the third party to stand in his place and suggest that any member of this

House on either side would put political interests ahead of the health and safety of any individual in the province of Ontario—I know the honourable leader of the third party doesn't believe that. I know he couldn't suggest that any honourable member of this House would suggest that. He's playing politics. Those type of tactics are sleazy gutter politics, and I want nothing to do with them.

Mr Hampton: Minister, let me remind you that there are hundreds of thousands of people across this province who have medical equipment where they need an assured supply of electricity. If the electricity isn't there, the medical equipment doesn't work and people's health and safety are at risk. It is that simple.

You had other alternatives. We suggested to you over two months ago that what you needed to do was to implement an across-the-province energy conservation and electricity efficiency program now. We suggested how you do it: offer low-interest loans so that you could get the energy-inefficient refrigerators out of people's homes, put in new ones that are energy-efficient and reduce the electricity consumption by over three quarters. You didn't do that. We suggested to you other energy efficiency moves you could put in place. You didn't do that.

What did you do? You gave your private power corporate friends \$100 million. They gave the Conservative Party \$175,000, and the people of Ontario don't have electricity.

Why did you put the interests of the Conservative Party and your private power friends ahead of the health and safety of Ontario residents?

Hon Mr Baird: I even notice that some of the members of his own caucus don't subscribe to that type of gutter politics.

We're taking a number of initiatives to clean Ontario's air. We're the first government that brought in vehicle emissions testing. Some 50% of our smog is caused by cars. If you had felt so strongly that that was important, you would have brought in vehicle emissions testing. This is the government that did that. If you felt so strongly about the plight of the people of the province of Ontario, why didn't you close any of the coal plants? You, sir, and your government did absolutely nothing.

Ernie Eves's government has continued the moratorium on new coal plants. He has committed to close Lakeview by 2005. He's one of the first leaders of a government anywhere in North America to commit to phase out coal. These are positive initiatives to clean our environment.

When the leader of the third party was in government, he did absolutely nothing.

PENSION PLANS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): To the Minister of Finance—but let me say that we didn't have to run the coal-fired plants 80% or 90% of the time.

Minister of Finance, on several occasions, I have brought to your attention the tragic story of the collapse

of the Participating Co-operatives of Ontario Trusteed Pension Plan. The 2,300 former employees of Ontario farm and dairy co-operatives have been hit with a 50% reduction in their pension cheques. I also told you that other Ontario pension plans were in danger of precisely the same kind of collapse. The reason? Because the Financial Services Commission of Ontario is doing an inadequate job of regulating, and the pension benefits guarantee fund doesn't provide backup for all pensions. Now a second case has happened. The retired workers of Frost Fence in Hamilton have been told their pension has collapsed. Their pension cheques are being cut by 25% immediately.

Minister, you've got a serious pension problem on your hands in Ontario. How many pensions have to collapse before you do something to protect the pensioners and the pension plans?

1450

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): Yes, we are aware on this side of the House of the pressure that many pension plans are experiencing because of the investment climate. That's why the regulator has taken additional steps to work with those pension plans that may be facing difficulties, to try and take appropriate steps to protect pensioners. In this case, again, they are working with the company. They are working with the organization to see what can be done for these particular pensioners.

Mr Hampton: Yes, after the fact. After they get a letter that says, "Your pension cheque is now going to be cut by 20% or 25%," then you're there.

Minister, all of this has been predictable. A majority of Ontario pension plans now have an unfunded liability, and the pension benefits guarantee fund has holes in its coverage so wide you could drive several trucks through it. It only covers \$1,000 a month, in terms of pension guarantee. You've already had groups saying it should be increased to \$2,000. The people of Ontario assume that the Financial Services Commission is regulating their pensions, and doing it carefully. They assume that their pension fund is protected. But it's becoming increasingly clear that under your government, it's not being protected; an inadequate job of regulation is in fact being done.

As a sign of good faith, would you do one thing? Would you increase the monthly benefit backed up by the pension guarantee fund to \$2,000? Would you do just that?

Hon Mrs Ecker: This is the only province that has a pension benefit guarantee fund, so this is protection here in Ontario that is not available to pensioners in other provinces. Secondly, employers have an obligation to top up pensions. There is a requirement to make sure that those pensions remain solvent. There are many pension plans that are facing challenges. Running out and forcing them to make short-term changes that cause them to be at more risk is not the solution either.

The regulator has indeed been on the case. The honourable member's statement of the facts is simply not accurate. They are working with the plan to try and do

what can be done to assist pensioners. For example, as he mentioned in one of the other ones, half the pensioners who did have a problem are being taken care of. They are making arrangements to make sure that those people do have pensions, because it is important that when people put their money into pension plans they know it will be there, they know that they will have—

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

AIR QUALITY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Today in a scrum, when you were asked about smog, you said that coal-fired plants are only a small part of the problem. I recognize that you are new to your job, but surely you understand that the single greatest contributor to smog in the province is coal-fired generation; not only in Ontario, for that matter, but right across the country. You may know that Nanticoke is the single largest coal-fired generator in North America, and it puts out the equivalent of 3.5 million cars' worth of pollution every single year. Coal-fired generation is not a small part of the problem; it is the single biggest problem connected with the generation of smog in Ontario.

Minister, how can you dismiss the single largest polluter in Canada—one for which you yourself assumed responsibility for five years as Minister of Energy—as a small part of the problem when it comes to smog?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Minister of the Environment): All of Ontario's five coal-fired electricity generating plants—there's an agreement from the federal and provincial governments and environmental groups that they're responsible for about 8% of the smog problem in Ontario. About 50% of the smog comes from the United States. That's another figure that's agreed upon among groups and activists, and particularly in the GTA, where it's 50% of the problem. About 90% of the problem in southwestern Ontario comes from the 205 coal plants—and they're building more as we speak—in the Ontario-midwest US airshed. In our airshed, we have five; they have 205. When we get attacked by the United States about our air—and again, 90% of southwestern Ontario's smog comes from the United States—I don't see the honourable member saying anything about the US plants. He continually picks on our plants. He's got an unreasonable and, in fact, undoable promise to close the coal plants by 2007. There isn't enough natural gas in the province of Ontario today to replace those coal plants—

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

Mr McGuinty: You're the Minister of the Environment. Coal-fired generation is something that cannot and should not be tolerated in our province. Charles Dickens wrote about the blight of coal in 19th-century London. In the 21st century, in a highly technologically developed Ontario, we're still burning coal. That air is making our

kids sick. As the minister whose responsibility it is to protect the environment, you have a responsibility to move as quickly as you can to shut those things down and replace them with a cleaner kind of energy. We've made a commitment to get that done by 2007 because we're not prepared to pay the price of doing nothing. We're not prepared to continue to allow Ontario kids to get sick as a result of breathing Ontario air.

I ask you again, when are you going to stand up, when are you going to admit that the single greatest contributor to smog in the province of Ontario is coal-fired generation? When are you going to do something about those plants in a very real and ambitious way to protect the interests of the health of Ontarians?

Hon Mr Wilson: When I was Minister of Energy, I moved to begin to put state-of-the-art scrubbers on our coal plants. Some \$200 million has been spent to date in doing that. That technology is almost completed. We are phasing out Lakeview in a common sense way by 2005.

But the honourable member has been getting away with murder, frankly, when it comes to his promise to close all coal plants by 2007. There's not enough natural gas in the province of Ontario. You would have to take the natural gas from the hospitals, from the nursing homes, from the residents. All the natural gas would be required to replace that energy being produced by those coal plants today. I don't see them building a new pipeline from either eastern or western Canada. I don't see any plans in the works to replace those coal-fired plants by 2007 with natural gas-fired plants.

Frankly, he's got to fess up to the people of Ontario. Your promise is undoable, it's unworkable and, frankly, it comes very close to the edge of not being completely honest with the people of Ontario. Where are you going to get the natural gas from? You and David Anderson have got some explaining to do to the people of Ontario, because your promise is undoable. We're working with Manitoba. We're working with other provinces. We're moving on alternative fuels.

MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTIBILITY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is to the Minister of Finance. You have repeatedly stated that our government has cut taxes 225 times, which has helped to create more than one million net new jobs.

Interjection: How many?

Mr Gill: More than one million net new jobs.

What is your plan to help many homeowners in my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and homeowners across Ontario?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): One of the things that we recognize on this side of the House is that home ownership is a goal and a dream for many, many families. What we have done on this side of the House to try and assist individuals and more families to have home ownership is, for example, to bring in tax relief, like personal income tax relief. The average family is experi-

encing over \$2,500 worth of tax relief because of the tax cuts we've brought in. That has helped them do many things; home ownership is part of it.

Another proposal that we have to help homeowners in this province is to have them be able to deduct a portion of their mortgage interest—the mortgage interest deductibility plan. We know that on the other side of the House they don't believe in tax relief for homeowners; we on this side of the House understand the importance of that for families' dreams, and secondly for economic growth and job creation in this province.

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Mr Gill: The ownership of property, particularly a home, is truly a Canadian dream, yet some in our society are saying we should not encourage home ownership through the proposed mortgage interest deductibility. Minister, can you tell us who will benefit most from this important tax reduction?

Hon Mrs Ecker: As the honourable member knows, there is a cap on this so that those with the most expensive homes will not be receiving more of the benefit. The goal of mortgage interest deductibility, which we are putting forward for families, for homeowners in this province, is to assist homeowners to do what we know is best for their family and best for the economy. Again, we know the Liberals on the other side of the House do not agree with that. We also know that their record is to increase taxes on families. They increased personal income tax some three times; they increased sales tax. We understand that tax relief helps promote jobs, promote growth and promote benefits for Ontario families. That's our record; that's our commitment to Ontario families.

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Minister of Finance. I would say your fiscal plan is unravelling, whether you want to admit it or not. We're heading for at least a \$2-billion deficit in the province of Ontario, and you continue to make promises you can't keep. I would just say to the people of Ontario: expect this. It was just last year, a year ago, that the minister had to get up and cancel \$1.5 billion in tax cuts and break the Taxpayer Protection Act. You have a phony budget, Minister.

I will say this: you say we're wrong; we say we're right. The way to solve this is to ask a credible, independent third party to look at the finances and give us an opinion. Will you do this? Will you do what other governments have done? Will you ask an existing advisory group, consisting of the chief economists of the banks and major private sector economists, to look at the numbers and give us an independent, credible analysis of whether or not we're heading for what we think is a \$2-billion deficit in the province of Ontario?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): The record speaks for itself: five balanced budgets, \$5 billion in debt repayment. What did the record show on that side of the House? A 33% increase in the provincial debt, tax in-

creases that take income away from our families and kill jobs. The record is very clear.

Mr Phillips: The record speaks for itself. You have in this budget \$2.2 billion of asset sales. You won't tell us a single thing you're going to sell—not credible. You've got \$800 million of savings in the budget. After eight years you've been around here, you've got \$800 million of savings; you won't tell us a single thing it is. You've got \$770 million that's only available if the federal government runs a \$6-billion surplus. I say this to you again, Minister: the province of Ontario is entitled to an independent look at your phony budget. It seems very clear to me and very simple: will you agree to allow an existing advisory group, consisting of the chief economists of the major banks in this country and the major economic forecasters, to look at your numbers and give us an independent look at those numbers, and will you do it, importantly, before you call the election, so we don't end up with an enormous surprise after the election?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The only phoniness in this House is the phoniness of the promises that are coming across the way. Under their promises, the taxpayers' federation says there will be \$4 billion of tax increases—\$4 billion of tax increases. If that's what they think the economy needs at this time, when we're wrestling with the challenge of SARS, they should say so. We on this side of the House understand that tax relief creates jobs, one million new jobs—225 tax cuts that they have voted against and continue to vote against, every single one. Their record is clear: deficits, taxes, lower jobs, lower family incomes, not the kind of record that in the last eight years this side of the House has created for the people of Ontario.

FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Public Safety and Security. The fire departments in Waterloo-Wellington provide essential emergency services. Most of them are in small communities, ably served by volunteers, and they continue to deserve the full support of this Legislature.

I've been contacted by fire departments in my riding in the townships of Wellesley and Wilmot that are aware of the 2003 provincial budget funding commitment for municipal fire services in small and rural communities. Will the minister please inform the House what is happening with this funding commitment and what kinds of fire service needs and projects will be eligible for funding under this new initiative?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I thank the honourable member for the question and for his dedication to the volunteer firefighters of this province. Our government recognizes, supports and values the hard work of Ontario firefighters. This is why the government has promised the allocation of \$40 million to assist small town and rural fire services to purchase the new and updated firefighting equipment they need. At the present time, the Ontario fire marshal's office is working with other ministry staff, including the

Ministry of Finance, to develop funding criteria and administrative processes, and we hope to bring these forward within the next two to three months.

Mr Arnott: I want to thank the minister for that answer, and I appreciate the work he has done to recognize the importance of fire departments in small communities by helping to make them a priority in this past year's provincial budget. The minister has received a request from Mayor Doug Bergman of Wellesley township that outlines some of the equipment his fire department needs; this includes a new pumper truck and upgrades to rescue vans. He has also received a letter from Chief John Ritz of the township of Wilmot, asking how his township can improve their services through this initiative. I want to support them and the other fire departments in my riding in every way that I can. Ontario's firefighters risk their lives every day to keep the communities of Ontario safe. Can the minister tell this House what the government is doing to ensure that their efforts are not in vain and what initiatives the government is undertaking to assist local and rural fire services such as those that exist in my riding?

Hon Mr Runciman: I'd like to say that the government has demonstrated its commitment to the fire safety community in Ontario. It was this government that introduced the Fire Protection and Prevention Act in 1997, the first updating of that act in 50 years. We pledged \$3 million in funding in support of the enhancement of the Ontario Fire College and the creation of an emergency management centre of excellence. In addition to this, we've announced \$2.5 million in annual funding for generic and specialized fire training. Now we're working toward fulfilling our promise of \$40 million in additional funding. The government remains committed to ensuring that all emergency services in the province have the tools and resources they need to respond to and manage emergencies. Our actions are an indicator of this commitment.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Finance. For the past two weeks I have given you example after example of some of the outrageous rip-offs that private insurance industry providers have inflicted on Ontario drivers. I've also raised examples of individuals and families who are now paying far more for auto insurance here in Ontario than they would if they had a non-profit, public auto insurance system such as they have in British Columbia.

Yesterday you admitted that the auto insurance rates in that system in British Columbia were lower, but incredibly you tried to say it was because there was some kind of taxpayer subsidy. We checked with several knowledgeable sources, including the Consumers' Association of Canada. They all said the same thing: rates are much lower under BC's public, non-profit auto insurance system, and it has absolutely nothing to do with taxpayer subsidies, because there aren't any.

Minister, will you finally admit what the drivers of Ontario already know, that public auto insurance provides lower and more stable rates than Ontario's private system does?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): Maybe the honourable member would like to explain why it was that his former leader thought that taxpayers in this province shouldn't have to pay over \$1 billion to set up public auto insurance in this province. Maybe he might want to explain why his former leader didn't think it was appropriate for the taxpayers of Ontario to pay for a job loss of 13,000 with setting up public auto insurance in the province of Ontario. That's what his party and his former leader concluded after they studied the issue, after they looked at it very carefully. On this side of the House, we want solutions that are going to work for the benefit of consumers.

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Mr Hampton: To put it to you bluntly, the government at that time was concerned with the worst recession since the Great Depression. They were concerned with trying to make sure that some companies kept their head above water. That was the primary concern then. The problem you have is that drivers across Ontario are watching their auto insurance rates go up by over 40% over the last two years.

I know you and your Liberal friends are pretty cozy with the private auto insurance industry here in Ontario. But drivers deserve a break, and they know that in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia rates have gone up by less than 10% over the last two years in those provinces. The drivers of Ontario want to know this: are you going to bring in a not-for-profit public auto insurance system, yes or no?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The honourable member is quite right that drivers in this province do need assistance. But what drivers in this province do not need is the kind of public auto insurance proposal that his party and his leader rejected.

Let me quote, just to refresh his memory. Bob Rae said, "We will not be proceeding with it for two very simple reasons: it will cost too much money; it will cost too many jobs."

On this side of the House, the policy decisions we make promote economic growth and promote jobs. That will continue to be the policy approach we take. And yes, we are working with all of the providers, the people and the groups within the auto insurance sector to come up with solutions that will work for consumers.

OHIP BUILDING IN KINGSTON

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): My question is to the Deputy Premier. A previous Conservative government built the OHIP building in Kingston at a cost of \$23 million. In the year 2000 it was appraised for \$19 million. It was sold in that year for \$12.3 million to a private owner. The private owner immediately mortgaged it for 110% of the value, which is somewhat

unusual. Besides, a lease was signed with OHIP by which the government will pay \$1.5 million for that building. A recent environmental and engineering study showed that the government now has to pay \$11 million in order to deal with the engineering and environmental deficiencies.

Minister, can you explain why the government would sell a building for \$12.3 million, retain a liability of \$11 million—in other words, sell it for absolutely nothing or next to nothing—and end up paying a lease for \$1.5 million? Why would you have sold that building in the first place when you got absolutely no value as a result of that sale taking place?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I do appreciate the question. I will certainly take the question under advisement and make sure that the Chair of Management Board provides the response.

Mr Gerretsen: I appreciate that, and hopefully the response will come before the end of the week.

I might just remind the minister that the Chair of Management Board at the time said, “We want to avoid the repair costs in the future and give ourselves more flexibility.” That’s directly from a Hansard of September 27, 2000, in a question that I put to him at that point in time.

Minister, why would you sell a building, retain the liabilities that go along with that building, and finally, after 10 years of complaints from the employees in that building—many of whom got cancer and some of whom died as a result thereof—retain that liability, so that, in effect, the building cost absolutely nothing or next to nothing? Why would you even get involved in that situation? To me, that shows absolute, total mismanagement of resources that the taxpayers of Ontario have worked so hard to provide you with.

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I mentioned, we will certainly take the questions under advisement and prepare an appropriate response.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Finance. I understand there are some 582 independent schools across Ontario that were eligible in 2002 for the equity in education tax credit. I might say, rather proudly, that there are, I believe, several such independent schools in my riding of Durham.

I understand that this tax credit provides flexibility in making the choices that parents need to make on that very important decision of where to send their children to school. Minister, could you please inform this House what action this government promises to those parents who want that choice of where to send their children to school?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): Again, our government believes in two things very firmly: (1) the importance of a strong, publicly funded education system; and (2) the importance of respecting parental choice. I know the Liberals believe that parental choice is fine, as

long as the parent makes a choice they agree with. On this side of the House, we think supporting parental choice is the right way to go, so we have brought in an equity-in-education tax credit, which will provide some assistance to those families who wish to choose an education for their child that may not be within the public education system.

In the meantime, we are continuing to make public and unprecedented investments in our public education system. For example, the 8% increase in public education that Dr Rozanski has recommended to us will make sure that with new investments and higher standards, our students are learning the way they should.

Mr O’Toole: Thank you very much for that rather comprehensive response. I know the province of Ontario wants to empower parents to make those choices. What really is confusing for me is this. The other day, I know Alvin Curling and Monte Kwinter clearly stood in contrast to their leader’s wishes and voted with the government. That’s understandable. They understand what choice is about for parents. Could you define for me—or is it an impossible task—the Liberal Party’s position on giving tax credits to parents who choose to—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): You will know I have said that you have to ask questions relating to the minister’s responsibility. Asking about another policy is not. We’re going to move on. I gave you the warning last time.

New question?

BSE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Minister of Agriculture, since the US has closed the border to Canadian ruminants and products, you’ve been aware that compensation would be in the works. Alberta farmers have their application packages. Their government has been on top of this since day one. Why don’t our farmers have their applications yet? Where are they, and what have you been doing? Last week I called on you to move immediately to get money into farmers’ hands and to enhance, extend or boost the program, as necessary, to do what it takes to save this industry in this province.

The program only allows for compensation of cattle slaughtered in Canada within 14 days. Where are we going to slaughter these cattle? We don’t have the hook space. We don’t even have a facility for Holstein steers and slaughter cows. The program inherently discriminates against auction markets, licensed dealers, future finishers and exporters. We need all those players bidding on cattle.

Minister, what are you doing to do to fix the very serious shortfall in the program and save Ontario’s beef industry?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I think the critic doesn’t really understand the program, so let me explain very clearly that this government was one of the first two governments to come out and say

they would match the 40% that was required by the federal government.

Once again, we're pretty much first out the door. Once again, we committed \$35 million to ensure that the agricultural community in this province was protected. Once again we worked with the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, a farm group, to make sure that we had a program that worked for the farm groups in Ontario. Both the Ontario Cattlemen's Association and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture have worked with us before and since we announced this program to ensure that we get it right for the agricultural community.

I think that the member opposite doesn't understand that we can't use a program that's designed in Alberta for Ontario farmers. That's why this government and this ministry has been working with the Ontario cattlemen and the Ontario federation to get—

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

Mr Peters: Well, Minister, you just touched on one of the points. There are many stakeholders out there that have been left out of the process that's been embarked on. I wonder if you actually comprehend the magnitude of this industry. The questions are endless.

In my riding alone, three exporters of commercial and registered cattle easily represent a \$30-million economic impact. I've asked your office to set up a meeting with them, and I expect that you will meet with them. The dairy industry is heavily reliant on export, not only for breeder Heifers and replacement cows, but also for the slaughter of finished Holsteins and culled cows. Why hasn't the dairy sector been recognized for the importance within the cattle industry in this province?

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Marketing: no leadership in addressing competition issues or transparency in the marketplace. You must take a serious look at the drastic differences between the loss our producers are taking and what plants and retailers are receiving. The price drop is not reflected in those levels. Someone out there is making a killing. Do you have any plan for orderly marketing, should the border remain close? You need to stand in your place today and publicly shed some light on these issues in the days to come. This industry cannot be left in the dark.

Hon Mrs Johns: It's always easy to give to complaints; it's always more difficult to work with the farm groups to make sure we get the right program. Let me say that the eastern program will be different from the western provinces' program, and we're going to make sure it's right for our community. Right now we're working with the auction yards, because our system is very different. Our cattle go from the farm to the auction market in about 25%, and we have to make sure we have the right system there. We're also working with veal producers and other ruminant producers, because we need to make sure we have this program right.

I know he wants me to come out with a program without talking to my stakeholders. I'm just not going to do it, because I care too much about this industry. I'm

going to get it right before I ram it out the door and it's wrong and doesn't work for the industry. I'm here to protect them; maybe you're not.

CAPITAL TAX

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I have a question for the Minister of Finance. As you know, I was in small business before I got elected in 1995. One of the greatest deterrents to my ability to invest and create jobs was the capital tax. This is a tax that must be paid year after year, whether or not a business makes a profit. Investors earn lower returns, and in the case of even larger businesses, many of these investors are pension funds, about which the NDP claims to have so much concern, and mutual funds. They earn lower rates of return on their investment for the risk they take. You have heard, I have heard, we have all heard from small and medium-sized businesses throughout this province that they need elimination—sudden if possible, but gradual if necessary—of the job-killing tax.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I was enjoying the honourable member's comments very, very much. I didn't think I needed to add to them, but I will, now that I have the opportunity. We understand that the capital tax was a profit-insensitive tax. It was killing jobs and it was serving as a barrier to businesses to come and invest here.

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Ecker: We know—I hear some razzing from the other side of the House—that where they've increased taxes, where they've increased payroll taxes, they've killed jobs. What we're attempting to do is bring down taxes in every single budget. Every single budget has had additional tax relief. That's why we have one million more jobs. Every single tax cut we brought in, including the 10% first step on the capital tax that will come into effect January 1, 2004, they are voting against. This side of the House, jobs; that side of the House, kill jobs.

Mr Wettlaufer: As you're aware, most of our competing jurisdictions surrounding Ontario do not have a significant capital tax. This puts Ontario businesses at a particular competitive disadvantage. That tax makes it extremely difficult for small business to invest and provide jobs. There are many direct and spinoff economic benefits to be derived from elimination of the capital tax. Please spell out, from your discussions with these small and medium-sized businesses, just what those benefits are.

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, we have to start from the fundamental belief that if we want to attract and keep jobs here, a competitive tax system is how you do that. To keep those taxes down, we on this side of the House have provided \$16 billion of tax relief to individuals and businesses in this community. The capital tax reduction is another step in doing that. It will help attract more capital investment to Ontario to support innovation, productivity and economic growth.

The other side of the House has put out promises in the next election that independent organizations say are going to result in a \$4-billion tax increase. That's how you kill jobs in this province. We have the record that proves that you bring down taxes, you create jobs, you support additional economic growth. That's how you help families in this province.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James): Ma question est à la vice-première ministre. Vous savez que la convention collective des employés de la fonction publique de l'Ontario existe seulement en anglais. Le syndicat a demandé l'an dernier au Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion de partager les coûts de la traduction en français de la convention collective, mais le ministre a refusé. Le syndicat est prêt à négocier pour la prochaine convention collective une telle entente pour payer leurs frais. Est-ce que vous êtes—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order; if I could interrupt. What we'll do is we'll stop the clock for the member. It's my recollection that he's at 2:05, which should allow for a question and supplementary. The minister had trouble with her earphone, and in fairness to her—is it working now? OK. I'm sorry. I saw the minister going for it. I apologize. We'll allow the time. I thought it was for the Deputy Premier. The member can ask the question.

M. Bisson: Cette fois-ci, on espère que ça marche. La convention collective des employés de la fonction publique de l'Ontario, comme vous le savez, existe seulement en anglais. Le Syndicat des employés de la fonction publique de l'Ontario, SEFPO, voudrait que le document soit traduit en français. Le syndicat a demandé l'an dernier au Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion de partager les coûts de la traduction en français de la convention collective, mais le ministre a refusé. Le syndicat est prêt à assumer tous les frais de traduction—je dis tous—sauf que la version en français de la convention collective ne serait pas officiellement applicable sans la participation de l'employeur. La question est bien simple : êtes-vous prête à accepter, dans les prochaines éditions du contrat, que la convention collective soit traduite en français et acceptée par le gouvernement ?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to refer that to the minister of francophone affairs.

L'hon John R. Baird (ministre de l'Énergie, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, leader parlementaire du gouvernement): L'une de mes responsabilités comme ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones est de prier les traducteurs d'entendre mon français.

L'une de mes grandes responsabilités comme ministre des Affaires francophones est de sensibiliser mes collègues aux besoins de la communauté francophone. Je suis très fier de faire cela. Je suis bien prêt, comme je l'étais toujours, à travailler avec le député de Timmins-

James Bay sur ce sujet et à parler avec mes collègues dans le Conseil des ministres. Bien sûr, avec un nouveau contrat il y a toujours une opportunité d'avoir des négociations avec les deux parties. Je suis bien prêt à parler de ce sujet très important avec mon cher collègue.

M. Bisson: Si j'ai bien compris votre réponse, c'est que vous vous êtes engagé à vous assurer que, dans les prochaines négociations provinciales, le gouvernement va accepter que la traduction soit faite du document de la convention collective—si j'ai bien compris—et qu'on puisse s'attendre à ce que cela va être fait à la prochaine négociation. Ma question est bien simple : est-ce qu'on peut s'attendre à ce que la convention collective de SEFPO va être disponible en français après les prochaines négociations, oui ou non ?

L'hon. M. Baird: Je suis bien heureux de travailler avec le député, le porte-parole pour les Affaires francophones du Parti néo-démocratique, sur cette politique. Je suis bien conscient des besoins des francophones. Je vais parler avec mon collègue le chef du Conseil de gestion à ce sujet et je vais aussi parler avec vous quand il y aura des négociations. C'est bien sûr une bonne opportunité pour les deux parties et leurs négociateurs, pas dans l'Assemblée législative, d'avoir une négociation pour un nouveau contrat, mais je suis bien prêt à parler avec vous à ce sujet si vous pensez que c'est une priorité et un besoin de la communauté.

MEMBER FOR RENFREW-NIPISSING-PEMBROKE

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We are finished question period, I believe? Yes.

The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is retiring. As we know, he is not seeking re-election. I don't know when the election is, but I hope that someone who has served in this place for 28 years would be recognized by each of our caucuses before he does leave. I'm wondering, if today or tomorrow is his last day, whether that could be addressed by the House leaders. I think it would be most important to recognize that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Yes. He's going to join me in my endeavours.

I'm sure the House leaders will get a chance to do that. The member is here to advise them where he will be over the next few days.

1530

VISITORS

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It gives me great pleasure to welcome, in the members' gallery, advocate Mr Arun Walia; his wife, advocate Mrs Renu Walia; their friends Mr Gulab Saini and Mrs Savita Saini; and their young daughter Miss Prateek Saini. I would like to have the House recognize them, please.

PETITIONS

BENEFITS FOR RETIRED WORKERS

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I present this petition on behalf of OPSEU.

“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 am proud to add my signature to this petition that’s signed by hundreds of retired Ontario public servants.

TUITION FEES

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I have thousands of names of petitioners. They’ve sent me this petition to stop the cuts, freeze tuition fees and restore government funding. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Canadian Federation of Students, Local 24; the Ryerson Faculty Association; the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Local 596; and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Locals 233 and 3904.

“Whereas average tuition fees in Ontario continue to be the second-highest in Canada; and

“Whereas for every \$1 in increased tuition fees at Ryerson University, at least \$2 was cut from the university budget due to government underfunding; and

“Whereas user fees for a university degree have increased more than 135% over the past 10 years, more than six times faster than the 20.6% increase in inflation during the same period...; and

“Whereas Statistics Canada confirmed in a December 7, 2001, report that young people from low-income families are less than half as likely as those from wealthy families to participate in university education; and

“Whereas the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador have all recognized that user fees are a barrier to accessibility and have accordingly frozen or reduced tuition fees;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the Ryerson University board of governors to freeze tuition fees for all students and programs at their current levels; and restore government funding for all students at public universities and colleges in the province; and reduce tuition fees for all graduate, post-diploma and professional programs for which tuition fees have been deregulated since 1998.”

I support this petition and sign it.

SENIORS’ PROPERTY TAX CREDIT

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): It’s my pleasure to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“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” this act would ensure that eligible senior homeowners or renters “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 over 945,000 seniors’ 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 that Ontario’s seniors benefit from lower taxes on their homes.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham and present it to Ryan on this, one of his last days in the Legislature.

SERVICE DE DIALYSE

M^{me} Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): J’ai une pétition à présenter à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario.

« Attendu que chacun a droit à l’éducation;

« Attendu que chacun a droit de se faire soigner;

« Attendu que chacun a droit à une qualité de vie;

« Attendu que chacun a droit à son indépendance;

« Attendu que Marie-Ève Chainey requiert les services quotidiens d’hémodialyse à la maison;

« Attendu qu’elle était candidate pour recevoir ces services sous peu;

« Attendu que le mercredi 29 mai 2003, faute de financement du gouvernement, le campus Riverside de l’hôpital d’Ottawa se voit dans l’impossibilité de lui offrir ce service important pour sa qualité de vie et la poursuite de ses études;

« Attendu que ce service coûterait moins cher à la province;

« Attendu que ce service permettrait à Marie-Ève d'avoir une meilleure qualité de vie, de se sentir mieux, de poursuivre ses études, de manger mieux et d'être plus indépendante;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante:

« Que le service quotidien d'hémodialyse à la maison soit disponible immédiatement à Marie-Ève Chainey et à tous ceux et celles qui vivent une situation semblable. »

Il me fait plaisir d'apposer ma signature à cette pétition.

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

“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 own community are paid 26 cents per 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 as I am in full agreement.

SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): At the request and on behalf of Hamilton Mayor Bob Wade and city council, I present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the province of Ontario should remove the funding of social services from the property tax base; and

“Whereas the province should agree to pool municipal social service costs across the GTA-Hamilton area if these costs are not removed from the property tax base; and

“Whereas the province should recognize that the city of Hamilton has been considered a partner in the GTA’s urban transportation showcase program; and

“Whereas every city region named in this program except for the city of Hamilton is included in the GTA’s social services pooling;

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

“That the provincial government remove the funding of social services from the property tax base and, failing that, that the provincial government include the city of Hamilton in the greater Toronto area social services pooling.”

On behalf of my constituents in Hamilton West, I add my name to this petition in support.

1540

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas the province of Ontario has delayed the second phase of the equity in education tax credits for parents who choose to send their children to independent schools; and

“Whereas prior to the introduction of this tax credit, Ontario parents whose children attended independent schools faced the financial burden of paying taxes to an education system they did not use, plus tuition for the school of their choice; and

“Whereas the equity in education tax credits support parental choice in education and make independent schools more accessible to all Ontario families;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully request that the government of Ontario introduce the second phase of the tax credit forthwith and continue—without delay—the previously announced timetable for the introduction of the tax credit over five years.”

INSURANCE RATES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Progressive Conservative government of Ernie Eves has failed to protect Ontario consumers who are experiencing skyrocketing automotive, home and commercial insurance rates; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has failed to create the regulatory environment that would adequately protect loyal customers in a tough insurance marketplace; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has twice introduced ineffective legislation which has done nothing

to stabilize insurance rates in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the average individual increase in auto insurance rates over the past four years have increased by over 40%; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario are having difficulty obtaining reasonable insurance coverage or are being dropped as customers—even in cases where there has been no change in their risk factors;

“Let it be resolved that the government of Ontario:

“(1) introduce effective legislation to ensure those injured in automobile collisions have fair and rapid access to appropriate medical-rehabilitation services;

“(2) reduce, then stabilize, auto insurance premiums in Ontario;

“(3) improve access to automobile insurance coverage through a more competitive marketplace.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario today, which reads as follows:

“Whereas the province of Ontario has delayed the second phase of the equity in education tax credits for parents who choose to send their children to independent schools; and

“Whereas prior to the introduction of this tax credit, Ontario parents whose children attended independent schools faced the financial burden of paying taxes to an education system they did not use, plus tuition for the school of their choice; and

“Whereas the equity in education tax credits support parental choice in education and make independent schools more accessible to all Ontario families;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully request that the government of Ontario introduce the second phase of the tax credit forthwith and continue—without delay—the previously announced timetable for the introduction of the tax credit over five years.”

HOG INDUSTRY

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition from concerned citizens of the village of Dalkeith in the township of North Glengarry, where a mega-farm is to be built.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ernie Eves government passed Bill 81, the Nutrient Management Act, on June 26, 2002, and this bill received royal assent on June 27, 2002, without regulations to protect our environment as well as our aquifer and the safety and security of Ontarians; and

“Whereas the Eves government has not to date defined the criteria for mega-hog operations; and

“Whereas the environment in areas of Quebec, New Brunswick, USA and Europe has been negatively impacted by mega-hog operations in their area;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that an environmental assessment be done by a consultant recognized by the Ministry of the Environment of Ontario before a building permit can be issued by the municipality for a mega-hog farm operation in Ontario.”

I gladly sign my name to this petition.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada approved Visudyne on June 1, 2000, as therapy for the treatment of the wet form of age-related macular degeneration; and

“Whereas clinical trials have demonstrated that this treatment safely and effectively stabilizes vision loss in 67% of patients and improves visual acuity in 13% of patients; and

“Whereas patients requiring therapy using Visudyne face a cost of \$1,750 for the drug and \$750 for the clinician procedural fees each time therapy is administered, and to complete a full therapy cycle, a patient would be required to pay \$15,000 to preserve his or her sight; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health in May 2002 announced Visudyne funding criteria that is not retroactive to June 1, 2000 and effectively excludes 80% to 90% of all eligible patients who suffer from macular degeneration;

“Let it be resolved that the Ontario Ministry of Health immediately change its unfair restrictions on macular degeneration patients and reimburse those patients who have used their own financial resources to receive this vital treatment.”

I have affixed my signature. I'm in complete agreement with the petition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): This completes the time allocated for petitions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THE RIGHT CHOICES ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2003

LOI DE 2003

SUR LES BONS CHOIX (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 19, 2003, on the motion for second reading of Bill 41, An Act to implement Budget measures / Projet de loi 41, Loi mettant en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Today is likely the last day my colleague from Pembroke-Nipissing-Renfrew will sit in

this House. I believe we have unanimous consent for each caucus to spend five minutes to address Mr Conway on this very important day.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): I'll deal first with—

Mr Bisson: To that.

The Acting Speaker: To the point of order? The member for Timmins-James Bay.

Mr Bisson: I believe we have agreement that what we will do is, today we'll do one person for the Liberal caucus, on Wednesday we would do either the Tories or the New Democrats and on Thursday we would do the opposite. Each party will have an opportunity to send off their fine members like Mr Christopherson and others.

The Acting Speaker: I'm not exactly sure what we're agreeing to.

Mr Duncan: We are.

Mr Bisson: It's agreed.

The Acting Speaker: Oh, it's agreed. The member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The member for Pembroke-Nipissing-Renfrew of course very reluctantly has those of us in the House paying tribute to him as is his wont. Nevertheless I must say that our friend Margaret Marland, who has served a long time with him, would like to see us pay tribute to him, despite his reluctance to be feted in this particular fashion.

I want to simply say what a wonderful experience it has been to be in this House for 26 of the 28 years Mr Conway has been in the Legislature. He is an individual—and this is quite unusual for most because they don't have this opportunity—who's been able to, as Rudyard Kipling would have said, walk with kings and keep the common touch, because Sean Conway has had an opportunity to meet Premiers, Prime Ministers, people prominent in various levels of government and internationally, in the academic field and the cultural field and the sports field, but always feels most at home in the Ottawa Valley with the people he has represented over the years in the many hamlets and villages, towns and cities and rural areas of his riding.

It goes almost without saying that he is extremely eloquent and articulate in the presentations he has made in this Legislature, and on many occasions he has delivered impassioned speeches about subjects near and dear to his heart and those of his constituents.

1550

It is not often that a person elected in 1975 is still in a legislative body in the year 2003, but Sean Conway was elected out of university, without ever having what some might say is a real job, into this Legislature and immediately had an impact on its deliberations and on the people of the constituency then known as Renfrew North.

It is also noted that on many occasions—today may be the exception—people actually came into the Legislature, as they did, I can recall, when Stephen Lewis was in the House, to hear Sean Conway speak. Whether one agreed

or disagreed with the content of the speech, there is a knowledge of Ontario history and politics which is unsurpassed by any member of the House and Sean has always brought to the debates and deliberations of this House that kind of historic perspective that all of us wish we could bring to our deliberations and our arguments.

He has also had the responsibility to deal with some very tough issues. He has been on both the opposition side and the government side. In government, after Bill Davis announced that we would have separate school funding in the secondary schools of this province, the Minister of Education who actually had to bring the bill forward and proceed with it was Sean Conway, and that was a matter of great negotiations. But previous to that there were significant negotiations that took place between the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party when an accord was reached to have a government stay in power a minimum of two years. One of the architects of that—I would say the central architect of bringing the two parties together on that occasion for the purposes of an agreement to govern—was none other than the member for Renfrew North at that time, Sean Conway.

He also had to be the government House leader in times of government, which is always difficult, not during the minority when it would be particularly difficult but certainly during a majority period of time. Anyone who has served in that capacity recognizes that it is a difficult challenge.

Sean Conway has always been an individual of principle. When some of us may stray to be more partisan than perhaps we should on many occasions, Sean Conway, in his speeches, has often been critical of governments of which he has been a part or all political parties, or complimentary of all political parties. I think again that kind of ecumenical approach has brought him the kind of respect that few in the field of politics are able to have.

He has been passionate. At one time I can recall—we're not here to recall a number of instances, but I recall a famous question he asked about the Walkerton inquiry—and there was some question at that time whether there would be an inquiry into the situation in Walkerton. Mr Conway stood in the House and in a very impassioned way made a plea to the government to proceed with a full public inquiry. Whether coincidental or not, it was shortly after that that the government announced that in fact there would be an inquiry.

So the House is losing an individual who brings much to its deliberations. He has seen changes that he himself is in the best position to talk about, but I know he has been concerned across this country, not simply in this Legislature, with the diminishing of the role of legislative bodies in various jurisdictions in this country and at the national level, and I'm sure he will continue to be vocal and forthright on that issue.

I suspect that those in the academic field will have access, particularly students in our universities—at least one of them somewhere in this province—to that tremendous knowledge that has been accumulated by

Sean Conway and the wisdom that he has gained through his experience in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I suspect that in the news media we will see Sean Conway from time to time asked to comment objectively, as only he can, on matters related to politics in this province.

Whenever we lose a person who has served—and 28 years is a long period of time to serve and still be a relatively young person to be in this House. Twenty-eight years is a long time to serve. It means that the constituents he has represented have had faith in him. I have seen him at work in his riding in the Ottawa Valley, where he seems to know each and every person and relates well, whether it's the fiddling contest in Eganville, the Rotary picnic just up the street from the fiddling contest, or in any one of the many towns and villages and hamlets that he has mentioned during his many speeches in the Legislative Assembly.

I know that those of us in the Liberal caucus will miss very much the continued contribution that he has made over the years to our deliberations, to the ongoing history of this province and to the debates which are so important in discussing public issues. We wish Sean Conway the very best in his new vocation, his new occupation; I suspect we cannot say "in his retirement." The Legislative Assembly will be a lesser place as a result of his departure.

Mr Bisson: I am pleased, on behalf of the New Democratic Party of Ontario, to be able to take these few minutes in order to talk a little bit about the history of Sean and his time here in the Legislature. We all know him as Sean. There are a number of members who come through this place sometimes where we're a little bit more formal with each other in regard to relationships, but Mr Conway is certainly one of those members who has his political beliefs, believes in his political beliefs and the party that he serves but still commands the respect of all of the members of this assembly, and I would argue probably commands a fair amount of respect with most Ontarians for his even manner and the fairness with which he's tried to deal with things.

I have only been here for some 13 years now; I first came here in 1990.

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): It seems like 20 to me.

Mr Bisson: Seems like 20? Thanks a lot.

Anyway, I just say that when I first came here I was really taken aback by his ability to ask a question in the House and be razor-sharp in the way he would deliver the question and hit the mark right on. I remember sitting on the government side of the benches and thinking to myself, "Wow, that takes some ability to do that." As a new member back then—we all come in here and we all have role models; let's admit it. We don't talk about that, all of us—do we? But we come here and we aspire to be better people as we move on in the development of our understanding of how to do our jobs as MPPs. Sean is certainly one of the people I looked to in this assembly, as somebody you had to look at and learn something from when it comes to how you present yourself in the

Legislature and how you present yourself, I think, in the greater community of Ontario. From that particular point of view, I just want to say that it was not only the Liberal caucus I think who benefited from Mr Conway's time here in the Legislature, but I think all of us have learned something from watching Mr Conway in debates in this Legislature, how he performed at committees and did other things.

What a lot of us noticed as we watched the debates is that he always comes in with these big books. I don't know where he gets most of these books—I imagine he gets them from the legislative library—but some of the titles are not very well known to my reading, and I do a fair amount of reading of history. I've got to tell you, I'm a history buff. I love to read political history; I love to read history in general and biographies. He always would manage to come into the Legislature with some book that I hadn't read and with some quote where I thought, "Did he stay up all night researching that one quote that nobody else has heard so that he can be seen as being more deeply read than all of us?" I'm beginning to wonder, and I'm challenging Mr Conway on this. I need you to fess up. I've got to get you to fess up, Sean, as you leave this assembly, what it is that you did to come up with some of those quotes that, quite frankly, many of us haven't read. I would say that pretty well all of the members of the assembly do a fair amount of reading, because that is one of the passions I think it takes to be a good legislator. So I need you to fess up: where did you find them quotes; how did you come up with them? Did you have somebody on your research staff, or did you really do that yourself? I look forward to the answer.

The other thing I've got to say is that even in the most difficult debates—and this is an attribute that I think a lot of us should try to learn, because it's one that I've certainly remarked in Mr Conway and one I've tried to do myself, and that is, even in the most difficult of debates, when we're into a really partisan issue that we really feel strongly about, to keep your sense of humour. I remarked, as I sat here initially, in the first days that I was here in the Legislature, that it was far more effective for a member to keep that sense of humour. No matter how partisan the debate got—and at times, Mr Conway has been known to get a little bit excited or, as we say, over the top—he always managed at the end to keep a sense of humour and walk away from that debate, even though it might have been somewhat boisterous with respect to the members. I think one of the keys is that Mr Conway well understands that at the end of the day we first of all are all honourable members and should all respect each other, we should never take ourselves so seriously that we discount others, and we should keep our sense of humour. I think that's a very—

Mr Sorbara: You're not serious.

1600

Mr Bisson: I'm being heckled by the Liberal caucus about these nice things that I'm saying about Mr Conway. I can't believe it. You Liberals. Sean, I'm trying to defend you here, and they're trying to heckle me.

I think it's a lesson that most of us can learn.

I also think of some of the discussions I've had with Sean over the years. He would always come to me and say, "Did you drive down from your constituency this week?" I was always amazed because Mr Conway, unlike me, is unable to fly into Toronto every week when he comes into the assembly; far too often, he needs to drive. It's a fair jaunt to go back to his home community. He always had a little bit of a razz with me in regards to whether I had driven to the assembly. I think he's probably done far more driving than I have, because at least I have airplane service coming into the riding.

The other thing I want to say is that 28 years, Sean, as you well know, is a long time. To be elected in this assembly—I don't know how many elections it was.

Interjection: Seven.

Mr Bisson: To be elected by your constituents in seven consecutive elections says that you are doing something right.

I've watched Sean as he prepared for debate and got up in this House; he always tried to go back to what Tip O'Neill said about politics: at the end of the day, politics is local. Sean would come into the House, whenever we would see him speak, and talk about Mary who lives down the street and owns the bakery, or Sam who lives around the corner from so and so. He always tries to bring the debate back to somebody locally within the constituency. I think that attests to the fact that Sean understands his riding and has worked it well over the years. He knows his constituents and they obviously have a great respect for him and have re-elected him seven times.

So in the name of all of us here in the assembly, the New Democrats as well, we want to wish you well, Sean. We know this is not goodbye, this is just we'll see you later. It's not that you're going to come running back here, but we know that we're going to be running across you, because you still have quite a career ahead of you. You were elected here at a very early age and are leaving early enough to start up a second career. So we wish you well in that work. Who knows? There might be a fall session. We might do this all again this fall if the government doesn't call an election. I notice you're just about choking on that one. But you never know. If the polls don't change, Sean, we'll be seeing you in the fall. We wish you luck.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I'm going to share my time with Minister Runciman, who has served with Mr Conway, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for, I believe, 22 years. Of course, being much younger, I have only actually served with him for 18 years.

This indeed is a privilege for me. I was sort of panicking last week, thinking that Sean was going to skip out before we had an opportunity to recognize his 28 years in this place. So I took some licence last week and used a two-minute response to give my personal expression of how I feel about Sean Conway and his service in this place. To be elected at age 24 obviously in

itself is very unusual, and there have been very few members who have been elected at such a young age, and as has been said, he was re-elected seven times.

But to serve in this place with Sean Conway is a privilege I wish every member could have had, before his time, and after it, when he completes his service here. He is a unique member in how he prepares for his debates, his statements, and all the work that he does in this chamber, because, as I mentioned before, he is one of only a handful, in my experience in 18 years, who has this unique ability to get up and talk about things of historical fact that most of us haven't studied but are tremendously interested in, in the way that he presents them. I have said to him on a number of occasions that I hope he does take a teaching position in the greater Toronto area, if not with the University of Toronto, because although I recognize he's a Queen's boy, and I guess Wilfrid Laurier before that, I think it would be fantastic to be able to attend some classes at which he was the professor. I know they would be fun; I know they would be interesting.

I know that over the years some of the notes I've received across this floor of this chamber from the pages—I have kept some of the notes, by the way, Sean. I recall his humour was very well demonstrated one summer; I think we were actually sitting in early July. I had been to the hair salon and had an experimental dye job and I came in with this flaming red hair. Of course, I wasn't in the chamber more than but a few moments when the page came over with a note, and the note said, "Oh my, Mrs Marland"—he never has called me anything but "Mrs Marland"—"I didn't realize how early the fall colours were this year." That's only one of many notes.

I just want to read very briefly from the official biography here because, again, I believe it's Sean's use of words that is so fantastic. It talks about the fact that his grandfather, Thomas Patrick Murray, served as the Liberal MPP for South Renfrew also for 16 years starting in 1929. He introduced Sean to politics at countless church basement political meetings where, in Sean's words, "Politics was a combination of contact sports and morality play, muscular, entertaining and deeply relevant to the people in the community." Indeed, I say to my fellow colleagues in this chamber, this member has been everything to his community for 28 years.

I would add, to all of us who have been here with him, no matter which side of the House Sean Conway sat on, from my experience of sitting on both sides of the House also, he was always remarkable to listen to and to enjoy his oratory skills. I never experienced him being unfair or discourteous or rude and he always had the greatest respect for the institution of Parliament and the privilege that all of us have in being elected to serve.

On a personal basis, Sean, and on behalf of the PC government caucus, we wish you great happiness in your retirement from this place and your new career path, wherever that takes you. May God keep you healthy and successful in whatever you decide to do.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I want to start off by complimenting my colleague Mrs Marland for suggesting this. She is the epitome of class and dignity and she always rises to these kinds of occasions. It's good to have members in this place who recognize the importance of someone like Mr Conway's service in this place on this date of his departure.

I'm not accustomed to saying complimentary things about the members of the opposition, especially Liberals. It can come back to bite you. I once said something complimentary about the member from Hamilton and it showed up in his election pamphlet as an endorsement from a Conservative member. Since the member isn't running again, I know there's no risk attached to this.

1610

We've heard about his oratorical skills, and I think we would all agree that he has been an outstanding orator and always someone you would wish to listen to, although not necessarily enjoy. He could be and can be quite a partisan fellow.

I recall we shared the west lobby for five years. Of course, we were competing to replace the NDP government of the day, so tensions rose on occasion. I can remember one evening when Mr Conway was in fine fettle and using great oratorical flourishes, and I was so heated up that I came up to the House and took him on. I think it was the only occasion that we sort of went head to head in the House. I'm not sure if he remembers that occasion but I do.

I was trying to recall, in my going on 23 years here, other members of the assembly who have been as impressive. Certainly Mr Conway has this attraction to the history of this province, this place and the people who have represented various constituencies over the history of the province. That has given him, I think, great fuel to raise these issues and hark back to historical precedents and the service of many others. I think that has certainly added to his ability to have an impact in this place.

I was trying to think of people. There have been impressive speakers on both sides of the House and people who can speak at length—there's no question about that—and bore us all to tears. John Williams comes to mind. I apologize, John.

I think the only other fellow, and I only heard him speak in such a way on one occasion, was a former leader of your party, Stuart Smith. I came into the House to hear his last speech in the House, and it was truly impressive. It was the kind of speech that had an impact on you, sitting on this side of the House as a member of the Davis government at that time and listening to Stuart Smith, someone I liked, as well, as a member. I knew his heart was in the right place. He has gone on to serve his country in other ways.

I think things have changed since I came here 23 years ago. I think Mr Bradley and Mr Conway would agree. Some things are better, but in many respects, in terms of the business of the House, there has been a deterioration. I don't think we see the friendships across the aisles that

we used to see. I don't know why that is. I'm not really sure. I think the impact of television may be a contributing factor.

Mr Bisson: Rules of the House.

Hon Mr Runciman: The rules have been changed by all three parties. All three parties have restricted the abilities of members to do what they used to do in years gone by. I don't know if there is one contributing factor.

I think we've discouraged a lot of good people from coming to this place, and then from staying in this place, because of the changes that have occurred over the past 20 or so years. That is, indeed, regrettable.

I just want to say that this member has certainly served his constituency, his province, his country and this place well. I'm proud to have served with him. I hope he stays out of my riding in the upcoming period. He seems to be in my riding, showing up at Liberal events every time I turn around. But I know he has good friends in my riding. They share a passion for US college football.

As a member who has served 23 years with him, I want to compliment him on his service. He has much to be proud of. His family has much to be proud of in terms of his service. I wish him only the best for the years ahead.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I thank my colleagues for those too kind remarks. I really did plan to leave quietly today. I guess I said something to Margaret. I always get into trouble when I say things to Margaret that I should keep to myself.

Listen, it's very kind of you. I do expect this to be my last day. I've got an important day in the constituency tomorrow, and then, since eight months ago friends of mine and I planned a post-election trip to the Maritimes once their kids got out of school—I thought June 26 or 27 would be very safe. So it is with some regret that I will miss the last two days of this sitting. I'm fully expecting that someone will make a trip down to His Honour's quarters sometime later this summer or early this fall to cause writs for a general election sometime before we would normally return in the fall. That is my operating assumption.

At any rate, very kind words and too kind in some cases. I just want to say to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that one of the things I will cherish as long as I live are the colleagues, and most especially the characters, I have met in this place over 28 years. I must say quite honestly, it is the characters. We've all had them.

When I was first elected, the now deceased but the endlessly colourful Edward Carson Sargent, for 20-some years, really the independent member from Bruce-Grey, was a character of the likes I don't ever expect to meet again in politics, certainly in this jurisdiction. There were Vernon Singer; Margaret Campbell; Pat Lawlor; Elie Martel, father of the member from Nickel Belt. John Rhodes and John Clement were two cabinet ministers in the Davis government, two characters who could have made a living as stand-up comics. I've never met funnier people. I say quite seriously—John Clement's stepson is now minister—John Clement and John Rhodes were cer-

tainly very, very interesting, endlessly funny people. I think it's stating the obvious. It may be a part of the political ego, I don't know, but certainly the characters and colleagues over the years, again on both sides of the aisle, are a very positive part of the legacy that I will take from this place.

Early in my public life, the late Jim Renwick, one of the truly distinguished people with whom I served, said to me—it was very early in my days here; Jim at that point was a front-bench member of the New Democrat caucus—“You know, young man, you should realize that there are good people in each of the caucuses, and a wise young person would get to know those men and women and do business with them.” I never got better advice in my 28 years than I did from Jim that day.

I think of my constituents. It is true, I was elected literally upon—not my graduation from Queen's University, because I still had some work to do on my master's thesis which I happily completed shortly after my election in 1975. I often look back to the circumstances of my nomination and election in 1975 and think, will I ever be able to thank the really tolerant, patient people of, firstly, the North Renfrew Provincial Liberal Association, and then the general electorate which returned me to this place for the first time in September 1975? Talk about a leap of faith. That was it, in ways that words cannot convey today. To my riding association and certainly to my constituents, I have to say publicly, yet again, my genuine thanks not just for doing that then but for supporting me through good times and bad times. Certainly 1990 comes to mind as one time they were more patient and tolerant than they probably should have been.

I think again of people here. The member for Timmins-Cochrane said, “About the books, where did it come from?” Actually, there's a very simple answer. I say this seriously to friends on both sides of the aisle: it came from the library. I will say, Mr Speaker and Mr Clerk, that members of this Legislature are served better than they realize by that legislative library. To the extent I seem knowledgeable and literate, most of the credit goes to that wonderful staff at the library, to whom I want to say thank you one final time for all the good work they did to support me and all of us. No better resource do we have than that place.

In a sense, I would also say to young people, when your parents and teachers talk to you about the importance of homework and study, it is important. I don't want to get maudlin. But the library is a good place to go. They will make all of us look good. They made me look good on more than one occasion.

1620

I'm glad Mrs Marland is here today because I want to say to her, and through her to all of you as private members, it is an important job you've got. I've wanted to say this publicly—I don't know that I've said it publicly before, Margaret—but you go through your daily life as a constituency politician, and you think, what have I done? Well, Margaret did something—this is a very topical point to raise this week. I don't know if she ever

will get credit. I was in cabinet, a senior minister for the better part of five and a half years, and what Margaret Marland did to clean up TV Ontario about 15 years ago—I'll be no more specific than that—was something that successive cabinets were unable to do. She did it, as far as I could tell, on her own. The public good of this province was substantially and materially enhanced by her good work in that very particular matter, I say this week when the federal Privacy Commissioner is in the news. It is a reminder of the good work that individual members do, as private members and as members in cabinet.

I want to say again publicly that I've been both, and ministers have far more difficult jobs. I was a better member in opposition for the time I spent in government. But I want to say to those of you who have not been in cabinet, you should, every one of you, have that opportunity, because I was a much better, much more responsible member of the Legislature having been in government, if only because I understood something about the constraints of power.

Having said that, one of the evils of our current system, quite frankly, is that we have, as individual members of Parliament, somehow accepted the notion that we are inevitable nobodies if we cannot get to cabinet, and that is a serious mistake. I say, as I take my leave after nearly 30 years, I cannot imagine a better job than being a member of the Legislature. Yes, it is frustrating. Yes, we are sometimes not as appreciated as we might like, both here and at home, but it's a great job. I think I'm about to find out just how good a job it has been, because as someone indicated a while ago, this is the only job I've ever had.

But don't diminish and in any way discount the inherent value and importance of the job that you have won by very hard work at the nomination and at the general election. You have, by dint of our convention and constitution, very considerable powers as a member of Parliament. I am personally not as attracted to some of the new fads in how to improve the system because, quite frankly, I want to see—and I hope to live long enough to actually witness—a behaviour modification in members of Parliament on both sides of the Speaker's chair that indicates a willingness to use prudently and sensibly the powers vested in you, me, us as members of Parliament. It is a great job. It is a wonderful job in which we take very important issues—Mrs Marland made the comment about “in my part of the world.” It is true; if you live in Renfrew county, the provincial government owns 40% of the land base—schools, highways, natural resources, health care and hospitals. The provincial government is really an important presence in your daily life. To be able to have an impact on how public policy is framed here and administered locally in those critical areas has been a wonderful education, an enormous opportunity and something I'm going to miss. To be able to say that in this room, where people like Mowat, Meredith, Whitney, Ferguson, Joliffe, Raney, Frost, McMurtry, Nixon and people like that met, that I had an opportunity to be part of that parade—boy, that's a great honour.

One of the reasons, in a sense, I was interested in both politics and history is that my grandfather, who was here during the tumultuous times of the 1930s, lived to be a very old man who enjoyed great health until he died nearly at his 102nd birthday. He would talk to me, and I would go to meetings with him. So people like Hepburn and Ferguson and that crowd were real and living memories. To the extent I have an interest in hydro, quite frankly, it comes from those great hydro stories of the 1930s and, dare I say it, some of the political scandals around Hydro in those times as well.

Enough said. I'm going to miss the place. I'm now learning that for the first time in my adult life I'm going to have to do some things for myself. I'm taking a computer course that's not going very well at all. I have to learn that I'm not going to have staff to do this and do that. Those of you who came here with a life experience and job experience can't appreciate just how mollycoddled I have been to have come directly out of graduate school to a place where someone pays you very well and provides you with the kind of supports we have.

To all of you, to my family for their forbearance, their tolerance and their patience—my 86-year-old father may in fact be watching this as I speak, although I hope he isn't, because it's too hot to be inside; maybe it isn't for him on a day like today—to my riding association and again especially to my constituents from Calabogie to Chalk River, from Combermere to Arnprior, thank you a thousand times over.

To all of you, both here today and those now departed from this place, thank you for the ride and thank you for the fellowship. I shall miss participating in the race, whenever it begins; this fall, I expect. But as just a regular taxpaying citizen of Ontario, Mr Bradley, I expect to be on the phone or writing letters to let you know how I feel about what you're not doing to look after my interests as I slowly move toward retirement.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, colleagues.

The Acting Speaker: I might say, from my perspective, Mr Conway, it's a pleasure to be the occupant of this chair and be the last one to sit you down.

Interjection: He's been sat down by better men than you.

The Acting Speaker: I'm sure.

The member for Sarnia-Lambton.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): Speaker, I ask for consent to use the remaining time in the leadoff.

The Acting Speaker: Is it agreed? Agreed.

Ms Di Cocco: First of all, I just want to add in this portion of my debate this afternoon on the budget that I certainly have appreciated and feel privileged to have known Mr Conway for a short time. At the same time, I want to add that there's a student who came to me, who was turned on to politics just two weeks ago, and he said to me that he had this professor by the name of Mr Conway. This young man is all gung-ho for politics, and I guess it was because of the advice or the encouragement Mr Conway gave him. I do want to say that.

I agree with the consensus here that this place is going to be a little bit poorer because Mr Conway's presence won't be here. His eloquence and depth and oratory skills gave a touch of class to this place, and I, as one of the newer members, will certainly miss him. I want to wish Mr Conway all the best as well. I'm sure many of us might call him now and again for advice as we move forward in our careers in the Legislature.

I want to talk about the bill at hand, the budget measures, on which I am finishing the leadoff. One of the aspects of this place that's probably the most important is maintaining—and I'll say this again—the integrity of why we have a precedent, a convention in this place of holding a budget speech in the House. That's something that Mr Conway certainly was extremely passionate about. He brought forward a motion which asked that the budget be read in this House because of his respect and his commitment to protecting our parliamentary traditions. It was one of the last things that he did in this session, which he did not expect to come back to. Everybody was expecting an election. Mr Conway certainly took on—as I believe he is called the dean of the Legislature—the responsibility to attempt to restore some of that dignity which was lost because the budget was presented outside of this House. I certainly hope that will never happen again, because I think we lose a great deal of dignity and also the whole notion of the spending of the people's money being presented to the people's representatives.

1630

I remember Mr Conway asked all of us to think—if this is OK with everyone, we then have to ask ourselves, why are we here? Why are we here as individual members if we are going to decide that it's OK to take parliamentary convention and move it outside the House?

As I move on to this topic, one of the issues that I think is important to address is the fact that a budget is about choices. This budget bill is about choices. I want to talk about some of the choices that have been made.

The Ontario government, under Premier Ernie Eves, made a number of choices, starting in March. They chose to provide to themselves spending power of \$36 billion. Of course, they also made the choice to present the budget speech in a car parts plant. It certainly saddens us, and it was probably one of those things one wishes to forget: that we actually presented the budget speech in a car parts plant.

A choice was made to again begin this conflict with teachers, with educators, because of the bill to ban teacher strikes and also to force what are considered voluntary commitments by educators outside the classroom, almost as if, "Well, we're going to incorporate this in what we expect educators to do."

There was a choice to bring in a funding formula. This is going back to 1998.

I want to talk a little bit about the consequences of those kinds of choices. Government has this important role, and this role assists in the shaping of our society,

and the commitment and the philosophy is mirrored by the budget priorities.

I want to talk about one of the issues that has come to the forefront more and more over the last two years in regard to education, and it deals with the public spaces that our schools provided.

I want to talk about the consequences of cash-starved school boards. Of course, one of those consequences brought about the Rozanski report. The Rozanski report did an analysis of what the issues and problems were. That report indicated that \$2-billion-plus was removed from the system and that it needed to be injected again.

I had an interesting meeting with a number of very, very good people from across this province who are called SPACE, Saving Public Access to Community Space Everywhere. What they are is a network of organizations that support affordable, accessible space for non-profit community programs that serve children, youth, adults and seniors in publicly funded facilities such as schools, libraries, recreation centres and municipal buildings.

I want to focus on the whole issue of the usage of school facilities. SPACE is alarmed at the number of community groups that are at risk due to new fees to use school facilities and playing fields. It is interesting, going back to a bit of history here, that in 1994, I believe it was, while promising not to raise taxes, the Minister of Finance of the day, Floyd Laughren, was trying to add some fees to Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. But they were nominal fees. The Tory leader at the time was Mike Harris. His comment about government changing some of the fees when they went to provincial parks was, "A fee hike is the same as a tax hike." That's what Mike Harris said then.

I say this because groups that are using school spaces today are seeing hikes in the cost of using those facilities. In Simcoe it has gone up from \$25 a child to \$400 a child if they want to play basketball. I heard the Minister of Finance say, "When we lower taxes in this province, it creates jobs," and that's the simplistic answer to everything. Yet we're seeing these fee hikes as a consequence of not having properly funded our public schools.

It's interesting. SPACE has done a great deal of research. It talks about the funding formula, but it also says what Premier Eves said. He said, "For many small communities, schools are not just places of learning but focal points of community life." SPACE believes this is true for all communities, regardless of their size. This coalition was formed as a way to deal with the inaccessibility of community space.

Dr Mordechai Rozanski said, "When community groups, parents and others visit the school to participate in community activities and use the school's facilities, they develop a sense of interest and ownership in local education. More public interest in and ownership of educational issues can only strengthen our education system."

Why do I bring this up? When we talk about budgets, budgets are a way to invest. They're to invest in people,

and there's supposed to be an outcome. What I found really interesting is that SPACE talked about the 12 reasons why these spaces are important. "Twelve Good Reasons to support affordable community access to school space." It's for a nominal fee, not these exorbitant hikes. You know, I talked to a representative of a Girls and Boys Club. They said that the space in schools now has gone up—they were able to use for a very nominal fee—to \$1,000 for two hours.

These groups will fold. The basketball teams that are run by volunteers will no longer work, or the programs will definitely fold. This is the "Twelve Good Reasons" to keep school space access available to community groups.

1640

It improves student performance. They talk about the school-based after-hours programs like Guides, Scouts, sports and recreation. It actually improves student performance.

It also encourages physical activity and healthy lifestyle development. That is part and parcel of prevention. We live such a sedentary lifestyle. Our children are more and more sedentary because of the lifestyle that we have. Yet what are we doing? Shutting down or choosing—the government is making choices that are having what I call a detrimental impact on our children in physical activity because not only have they cut the number of phys-ed teachers, they also don't encourage access to the schools, because of the exorbitant fees.

It also provides a cost-effective use of school space. I don't know how much extra it costs to keep a school open if you already have to heat the school. I mean, it's not as if a couple of hours at night is going to cost that much more. The school is functioning. It has to be cleaned anyway. So I don't understand why these prices are increasing as much as they have, while the government idly watches what takes place.

It also prevents crime, because there are activities—whether it's basketball, soccer, volleyball or Girls and Boys Clubs. These are groups where kids come together. It's part and parcel of our society looking after young people.

It also promotes—and I'll just do a couple more—community well-being. This what's interesting, because it actually fits with the government's policy direction, yet they don't act on it. They talk about how access to public space and school facilities helps to advance many of the objectives that the government says that it has. But they say it and just forget to do it. Again, it talks about health promotion, crime prevention and a sport action plan, which would certainly help if we had access to the schools.

I bring this out again because I believe that we're doing a great disservice to the province, to the children and to the people of Ontario, by not having our school spaces accessible, because I believe we've already paid for it with public dollars.

I want to go on and talk about the notion of the actual fiscal plan. I believe that the fiscal plan that the Ontario

government has presented to us is unravelling. I say that it's unravelling because this government is running a deficit. It's running a deficit, according to the TD economist. What they're doing is taking into consideration the sale of assets, but they won't say what they're selling. It's like saying that I'm going to budget my household expenses this year based on how much stuff I can sell. If I have a garage sale, then I can end up paying my bills. That's what they're saying.

I have with me a report by the economist of the TD Bank on the 2003 Ontario budget. It does an analysis. I want to take a look at one of the issues that's extremely important, and that's the federal transfers, and the fact that the federal transfers fill the hole in fiscal 2002-03. This is what this report says: "In the 2002 budget, the Ontario government had booked \$1.8 billion in net proceeds from the planned commercialization of assets." Although it was not identified per se, it says, "Hydro One, the transmission arm of the province's utility system was a likely candidate for privatization. Thus the government's announcement in January 2003 that it would not go ahead with the planned sale left a sizable hole in the books."

Then, this report goes on, "Fortunately for the government, however, help came in the way of a significant injection of federal transfers, notably an additional \$1 billion resulting from the February 2003 accord on health renewal and a \$500-million upward revision as a result of an adjustment to the prior year." It goes on to state, "Coming like manna from heaven, the substantial sum allowed the government to still book a small surplus of \$524 million in the fiscal year 2002-03."

What does this show us? This shows us that the government, according to the TD economist, has taken health dollars—transfers—and filled the hole of those assets that they didn't sell.

I believe that the government has a huge problem. The problem it has with its budget is the fact that the numbers just don't add up. I'm not the one who is saying this. People much better as economists than I am say this. What they have said—and I'll go through this. Again, it concerns me greatly, because fiscal accountability is about making sure that the priorities are there.

What we have is a hole in our education system that is forcing, if you want, less access for groups to our public system, to our schools, therefore hiking fees. Even according to Mike Harris, that's a tax on people, it's just not called a tax. It's called user fees. So those certainly go up.

The government is suggesting—and it's one of its sales points, I guess, with regard to what it's going to promote in the next election—that the education portion of the property tax for seniors is going to be rebated, a very onerous process because you have to apply for it. But that's going to add up to about \$450 million. Where are we going to get that extra money to put into education when we can't afford it?

Not only that, this is the same government that is charging about \$500 per senior if they go into long-term-

care facilities, extra money that it will cost people if they go into long-term care.

I believe it's important that we take a look at the actual fiscal accounting, the way these numbers add up. What does the Dominion Bond Rating Service say? They say that when adjusted for unrealistic assumptions, the budget for 2003-04 actually shows a deficit of \$1.9 billion.

What does the TD bank say? They found that the budget that was presented by the provincial Conservatives is hiding a real deficit of \$2 billion this year. Standard and Poor's, a credit rating agency, report that they have at least a \$1.2-billion deficit, and they criticize inflated asset sales numbers, as it is inconsistent with the stated objectives to take necessary steps to balance the budget.

1650

I am concerned that this budget really is off track. I say that because the Conservatives seem to consistently say, "Do you know what? We really manage our affairs well." That is not the case. The reality hasn't been that, and it's time that their budget is taken and looked at. I wish they would get an audit done of it so they could get an independent person to say, "Do you know what? Our budget is balanced."

By the way, I want you to know and I want the people of Ontario to know that the financial plan that was presented by Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals to the people of Ontario has had two economists and a forensic accountant take a look at our figures independently. It's never been done before. We are not any more into this era whereby you go out and buy your votes just before election time. That's old politics. The people of Ontario are smarter than that. It's time to move on. Let's take some sincere and credible approaches to what the issues are going to be and what the agenda is going to be of people who want to govern this province. No one has ever done that before, and we have.

David Hall is a principal of Vista Economics, an economic consulting firm. He served as economist and senior economist at the Bank of Montreal from 1994 to 1999. He specializes in government fiscal analysis. This is what he said: "I have been asked by your officials to prepare revenue and expenditure projections for the province of Ontario under the Ontario Liberal Party's proposed program. These projections are attached to this letter." He also says, "I believe that these projections are prudent and reasonable based on the best currently available information and economic forecasts." He signed his name to this. You have to have your numbers right before they will do that, because their personal, professional integrity is on the line.

There is also another one. I say this because I believe that the people of Ontario deserve credible analyses of these numbers that are consistently thrown out. There is a whole list of areas whereby the Conservatives have not even costed out what it is that they are doing in this budget.

We have John Marmer. He is a chartered accountant, a CGA and CFE. He is one of Canada's leading forensic accountants. This is what he said.

"Dear Sir:

"You asked me to review the estimated incremental cost of the proposals of the Ontario Liberal Party as set out in its platform.

"I conducted a detailed, line-by-line review with your staff. To do this, I spent about 70 hours. Their reports set out their best estimate of the incremental costs. I agree both with their methodology and the costs determined as a result of the application of that methodology. Any of the concerns I had are dealt with in their report." He goes on, and he signed his name on it as well.

Why am I bringing this up? I am bringing this up because of what happens before an election, unfortunately, and it has happened too many times in too many years by all parties. There is this notion that you have to go out and you have to promise people everything and anything that they want to hear.

We understand one thing. We cannot afford these tax cuts that the Conservatives are promising in their budget. They say that they are going to rebuild and help out with health care, they're going to put more money into education, they're going to put more money into the environment; they're going to do everything, plus give \$3 billion or \$4 billion worth of tax cuts. They can't. It's not possible, because the dollars just aren't there.

I looked at one of the papers, and in the business section—David Crane wrote this—it talked about the fact that we need to reinvent cities to compete. One of the areas this government has failed miserably in is the whole notion of looking at the habitat of our communities and how all the sections, such as education and our schools, and all the other sectors interconnect. They keep taking pieces out, and it unravels a lot of other things as we're trying to develop programs. This is what this writer talked about. This comes from a report that came out of the Task Force on Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Progress; it's their last report. I think it's partly funded by the Ontario Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation.

This report says: "Results from this year's surveys clearly illustrate the flaws in Ontario's education policy—it is not based on coherent educational objectives, funding is insufficient and funding is not distributed fairly across this province."

It says here that only 32% of schools report a full- or part-time physical education teacher, despite the importance of physical education as an essential part of education. It also says that only 41% of schools report a full- or part-time music teacher, despite the importance of music, and only 10% of schools report a full-time librarian, while another 48% report a part-time librarian.

What does this mean? It means that the notion that this actually saves money is penny wise and pound foolish. The cost to our health care system, because of people's sedentary lifestyles, youth diabetes and all of this, is incredible. Yet here we are, cutting the programs and

cutting access to schools that are actually going to encourage healthy lifestyles. I say this because these are the choices—it is also a lack of vision, it's absolutely clear—in the budget and in the priorities this government has chosen in the budget.

We want to talk about affordable and responsible government and good government as well. When I say this, one of the things that astounds me most is that the whole notion of transparency and how government does its job and the development of good government is something that doesn't seem to be understood at all here. We have more secrecy. We had the electricity sector blanketed in 1997 by this cloak of secrecy. You cannot, even under freedom of information, access any of the bills or any of the information.

1700

We also have something else. There are public bodies in this province. I had a chance to present a private member's bill that actually passed second reading; I think it was by accident, because the Conservatives weren't all in the House. But nonetheless, it passed second reading and went to committee. This bill is about transparency. What it does—it's like an open meeting act; public bodies have to conduct their business in the open. Members of a public body who go in camera and make decisions behind closed doors inappropriately would be fined. There's no such law here, and yet the government voted against it.

The member from Kingston brought in a private member's bill to change the audit act. We needed to change the powers of the auditor so he could investigate and analyze the finances, let's say, of hospitals, colleges and universities or school boards, because right now there's no independent scrutiny of these bodies. Yet the government voted against it. This is important legislation that—

Interjection: They haven't voted against it, but they haven't called it.

Ms Di Cocco: They haven't called it; they're just sitting on it.

These are important pieces of legislation. Why? Because they improve the way we do business. That's what good government is. Good government isn't just about spin and spending millions of dollars trying to tell the public how great a job you're doing. Good government is about putting forward accurate numbers when it comes to your budget. All we have is the spin that this government has balanced its budget, when in fact it hasn't. We have a government that isn't committed to open access to the electricity industry—publicly owned Ontario Power Generation Inc—or to bringing forward better legislation to make sure that public bodies do their business in the open. It concerns me greatly, because in the end we're all here to make government work better.

This is the same government that put in a \$21-billion debt in the best economic times this province has ever seen. They brought it down a bit last year, but in 1995, you were at \$90 billion—that was the provincial debt—and today it's \$112 billion. The members across the way

don't like to hear that, but it's a 23% increase in the debt during the best economic times we've seen in this province.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I'm pleased to rise and commend the member for Sarnia-Lambton for outlining some of the major problems that I think not just opposition members but reasonable people would have with the budget of this government. Again, just to set the stage, the member spent a fair bit of time talking about the fact that there really isn't a balanced budget, and as the next speaker in rotation, I intend to make those same arguments and to underline the fact that for all your talk—you have a lot of power over there—you can't make something so just because you say it. The fact of the matter is that you do not have a balanced budget and, more importantly, the budget that's already gone by, where we can look at actual and not projected numbers, proves you didn't have a balanced budget last year either.

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: They're starting to react now, Speaker. Let me get a guaranteed Pavlovian reaction here; it happens every time, and I have no doubt it will happen again.

Had Bob Rae been re-elected in 1995, the budget in the province of Ontario would have been balanced before the Tories balanced it.

I see at least one member going this way, and another going, "Sure, sure." It gets that same reaction. It's the truth.

The only difference—and it's a significant one—is that Bob Rae and the NDP did not include \$6 billion to pay for the tax cut. By leaving those revenues in place, we wouldn't have had to cut a single thing. Not that changes still shouldn't have been made, but you wouldn't have had to cut a dime if you didn't want to, and the budget still would have been balanced years before the Tories.

There are a lot of myths about Tory finances; balanced budgets has got to be the lead page.

Hon Doug Galt (Minister without Portfolio): It's just so wonderful to hear these two speakers. They've seen the light. After 10 lost years of spend, tax and borrow, stabbing the people of Ontario with their policies, now they've seen the light about balanced budgets and are concerned about debt. It's just absolutely wonderful.

I heard the member for Sarnia-Lambton whining on about the debt and what was going on. How did we get to good times in Ontario? It wasn't something that the federal government did; I can assure you that. It wasn't something that happened in the US. It wasn't something that happened in BC. I can tell you, if you look at what's happened—a lot of people say, "Oh, it was the good times in the US." No, the good times are not happening in the US. Just have a look, member for Sarnia-Lambton. That is not what's going on. It's been a direct relationship between the tax cuts stimulating the economy and en-

couraging jobs, and some \$16 billion more coming in in revenue. We balanced the budget for four years, and now we've introduced another balanced budget. Are we having some difficulties? Certainly we are. With the tremendous expense of SARS—not surprising. But will your federal cousins do anything about it? Oh, no. They came along with a quarter billion and think that's just wonderful and we should just trot right out and accept it. If they would give a little more than their pittance of 15% or 16% in health care, maybe Ontario would be in an awful lot better shape.

Back in 1977, it was a 50% share with the province. That dwindled down to something like 7% or 8%. It has finally worked its way up a little way. But I can tell you, with a reasonable sharing on health care, they would have to be paying another \$10 billion to get up to that 50%. Then Ontario would be having absolutely no problem supporting the costs of SARS today.

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I am pleased to comment on the member's speech. I know she did a lot of research and had a lot of facts there, and I agree with what she said.

The other thing I want to say is that this government takes a lot of credit for balancing their budgets. Maybe they did, but I wasn't very happy at the way the last budget was handled. Having been here for 16 budgets, I looked forward to seeing my last one in the Legislature. And what did they do? Go off to an auto manufacturing plant. It was pretty discouraging.

They also talk about balancing their budget. If somebody else is paying your bills, it's easy to balance a budget. Download on the municipalities, especially on infrastructure. All this downloading is going to catch up with the government of the day, because somebody, some day, will have to pay for that. I'm talking about roads, streets, sewer and water systems and all the infrastructure. That's something that doesn't go away if you don't keep it up to date year after year. In the long term it costs you a lot of money.

A lot of the municipalities are not very happy now with what the government has introduced. Before they can raise municipal taxes, they're going to have to go to the government and the people before they get permission. Well, municipal governments have emergencies too. And if they have to raise taxes a little bit to pay for some problem they have that pops up from time to time with a road, a bridge, a culvert or some of those things that come up daily and weekly at municipal councils, they like to make a decision and fix it the next day and not have to wait for government.

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Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I was listening intently to the comments from the member from Sarnia-Lambton. I thought there are a couple of things that need to be said.

She spoke about this one a little bit, but I'd like her to clarify and maybe just reflect on this a little bit, and that is in regard to the federal transfers to the province. We have a provincial government that's saying that the fed-

eral government is not stepping up with its share of what they need with the whole issue of SARS. They're saying that the federal government announced \$250 million last week. The provincial government is saying they don't want that because they believe it should be \$1 billion.

I would like the member to reflect back to what happened with the last over \$1 billion that the provincial government got in transfers from the federal government. If you remember, there was the federal-provincial health accord for 2002-03 where the federal government gave us just over \$1 billion, of which the provincial government only spent \$350 million and \$967 million went to paying for the tax cuts, and they wonder why the federal government is leery about coming forward and funding their full share of the SARS crisis? I don't like what the Liberals have done in Ottawa, but I understand it when they look at the provincial government and say, "The last time we gave you bozos over a billion dollars, you pocketed \$967 million directly in your pocket."

The other thing is, the member from across the way said, "Oh, well, you know, the American economy had nothing to do with the rebound of the Ontario economy." My God, let me see if I've got this straight. Mike Harris gives a tax cut and Bill Clinton gets the reward. Have you ever seen an interesting economic theory, that the province of Ontario gave a tax cut in 1995-96 and the American economy rebounded? They just did oodles of money in the American economy, and we benefited. What a silly argument. Of course it has a lot to do with the American economy. The quicker the government understands that, the better they'd be able to do their job.

The Acting Speaker: Response, the member for Sarnia-Lambton.

Ms Di Cocco: I thank the members from Hamilton West and Northumberland and Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh and Timmins-James Bay for their comments.

I have to state that this notion that if things went well, "The Conservative government did it all"; if things don't go well, "Well, there are these circumstances"—this notion about transfers: I agree that the federal government has to come to the table. But you know what? We need some clarity. According to the TD economist, those transfers were used to balance your budget last time because you didn't sell your assets. Do you know what? It's about trust. There is an uncertainty about trusting what you would do with the money or the numbers. I'd like to see the Provincial Auditor take a look at those numbers and say, "You know what? This is the money that the feds should give to the province on disaster relief."

Do you know something else? There's this whole notion that we have this debt that they don't want to talk about. Yes, the economy was hot, and it was hot because of the United States economy, but they added \$21 billion to the debt. Nobody should be doing that in good times. They spent a lot of money. Their numbers don't add up and they're running a deficit because I believe they are nearsighted in their approach to this province. The money

that they don't invest—such as \$6 billion in schools that are crumbling, that are not being taken care of, need to be looked after.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Christopherson: I appreciate the opportunity to join the debate. I apologize for the sound of my voice. I've a bit of a throat problem, but it's certainly not going to prevent me from making my points—maybe just not as loudly as usual, which I'm sure will come as a great relief for a lot of them on the other side of the House.

I mentioned earlier the fact that had Bob Rae been re-elected as Premier, he would have brought in a balanced budget years before Mike Harris did, and that's a reality. The numbers are there. The documents can be looked at by anyone who wants to challenge it. I've been raising it for eight years, and not one of them has ever attempted to challenge that as a fact. I'm going to assume that the best they can do is just try to avoid it and dodge it. Even now, they're not quite as outraged as they normally are when I suggest to them the possibility that somebody else, let alone the NDP, could be as—and in this case more—fiscally responsible than they were. Might I say that had that happened, a lot of the damage that's been done over the last eight years to the quality of life for an awful lot of people also wouldn't have happened. We need to take that into account as the public heads into the next election sometime in the next short while.

But it is also a fact that Standard and Poor's and DBRS are two examples of internationally renowned, respected credit rating agencies whose sole purpose is to make a determination on behalf of their clients as to the risks inherent in investments. In this case, we're talking about the purchase of Ontario bonds and how much of a risk that is, in terms of those who are investing what is usually hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars. Both of those agencies—and I invite any member of the government, again in the two-minute responses, to stand up and suggest that this is factually incorrect, that I am saying something that can be proven to be untrue—have declared that last year's budget was not in balance and that this year's proposed budget is not in balance. There's one specific reason, above others, that leads those credit rating agencies and the opposition to reach these conclusions.

Just before I make my next point, Speaker, I neglected to advise the House that I'll be sharing my time with my colleague from Timmins-James Bay.

That issue I referred to, the one thing, is one line item in the budget that ordinarily very few people look at. You can probably count on all your fingers and toes the number of people who would actually want to look up in a budget document, for all the volumes of paper produced, this one line item. That line item is sales and rentals, and it's in the revenue category. Under revenue, where the government would show how much money they're going to bring in through sales tax, other user fees, corporate taxes, things of the like, one of the lines in there is sales and rentals, again normally an obscure figure that really doesn't play any kind of significant role.

But in last year's budget, it had this huge number in there, huge. When you compare it to the year before—I'm going from memory now; I stand to be corrected—I believe it was in the neighbourhood of \$200 million or \$300 million, which is actually pretty close to what the actual was for last year. But it jumped from being a few hundred million to \$2.4 billion, with no explanation, just "Sales and Rentals." One would assume that of all the property the government of Ontario owns, it's not unusual that things would be rented, that things from time to time are sold, and that's what this line does: it gives somewhere in the accounting procedure for this to show.

Where it matters is that the number was so inflated from what it was the previous year that the obvious question of the government was, where are you going to get all that money? What are you going to sell to generate more than \$2 billion to make these books balance? Without a good explanation, for all we know, they tallied up all the revenue and tallied up all their expenditures and were shy about \$2 billion, so they just pumped up and inflated this one number so everything balances out nicely and they can make their proclamation, their proclamation that they have a balanced budget.

We suspected and accused the government of planning to sell Hydro One. If you sold Hydro One for around the figures that people were thinking about, it started to work. If you took that and put it in there and said, "Use that number," what does that do? That starts to fill the gap just about right, between what they had done the year before and this new inflated number. We all know what happened with that plan. Two unions took the government to court and said, "You don't have the legal right to do what you're doing." The judge agreed, and history has been written very differently than former Premier Harris ever imagined vis-à-vis Hydro One.

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That's why the international credit rating agencies were able to take a look at what was projected, which was \$2.4 billion, and the actual. Anyone who does accounting or balancing of budgets, particularly budgets of this nature, will know that the terms "projected" and "actual" are very significant and very straightforward. "Projected" is just what you think things are going to be. "Actual" is what happened, when all was said and done, in terms of the real numbers.

You didn't sell Hydro One, and guess what? They didn't generate \$2.4 billion. They only generated about \$350 million, which was, give or take, the usual number in the range of what you would normally see. You didn't sell Hydro One. You were planning to. That's where you were going to get the extra \$2 billion. You were \$2 billion short there. Through some other manoeuvring, some of which my friend from Timmins-James Bay has alluded to, in terms of federal money that you got—you either reallocated it or it was meant for a number of years and you took it all in one year, to show it as income for one year, to make up for the \$2 billion that wasn't there because you didn't sell Hydro One.

That is why Standard and Poor's and DBRS have said that last year's budget was not balanced. Their number, as to what they think the budget is out by, comes up pretty close to \$2 billion, which means the reality is that you ran a deficit of somewhere between \$1 billion and \$2 billion—not that that's a huge amount of money in the context of the budget we have in the province of Ontario. But it's not balanced, and you've made an awful lot of noise about it being balanced. It wasn't.

What's maddening is that many of them will still stand up and just pretend that that fact doesn't exist. They'll stand up and talk about this year's balanced budget. I forget what number they're bragging about. Somebody hold up a number for me. Is it four or five that you're bragging about this time?

Mr Bob Wood (London West): Five.

Mr Christopherson: They're saying, "Five balanced budgets." But the reality is they didn't have a balanced budget last year and they're not going to have a balanced budget this year. That's why a deficit of \$1 billion to \$2 billion is significant: because it does not reflect the reality. It doesn't reflect what you say it is.

Having spent eight years watching this government, I have no doubt that from now right through to the election, the only thing you're going to hear from a Tory incumbent or candidate is that they brought in five consecutive balanced budgets, even though the fact of the matter is it didn't happen.

Mr Wood: It did happen.

Mr Christopherson: I hear one of my friends across the way saying, "It did happen." You're going to have a two-minute opportunity, I would hope, although the clock—that would be a shame, if it ran out, because I really would like to hear what you would say in the face of what the international credit rating agencies say.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Give him time now.

Mr Christopherson: No, I won't give him my time now.

Mr Wood: I'd just say they are wrong.

Mr Christopherson: Oh, they're wrong—of course. I forgot that one. I forgot about that one. That's always there in their vest. They pull that out whenever they're stuck: "They're wrong." It's always that the municipalities are wrong, the school boards are wrong, doctors are wrong, everybody's wrong. I completely forgot. How could I forget that argument? How could I forget that argument, that you never make mistakes and you're never wrong and that if you actually get caught in a corner where you're about to be found out, you always have, "They're wrong"?

Listen, I remember sitting over there not too far from where the Minister of Agriculture is currently sitting, and I can remember the leader of the third party, then Mike Harris, going on and on—putting me to shame actually in terms of going on—about the importance of what the international credit rating agencies said about us; that it was paramount, it was everything. But what I don't remember, I say to my friend from London West, is him

ever saying that they were incompetent or that they were wrong on a single fact that they talked about when they made reference to Ontario. Now, it serves your purpose to say they're wrong. Come along, come along. That is so lame for you to say they're wrong. That's like saying that all those who are criticizing the education system are wrong. You do that. You say that they're wrong. But the reality is that if you talk to the average citizen, their life experience in terms of their kids and their education is very different. Municipalities and public health units—it's always them.

The bottom line is that they do not have a balanced budget this year and they did not have a balanced budget last year. The reason they've put this figure in here, this \$2.2 billion, is that they're still hoping to make some major asset sales. The way things are shaping up, all they have to do is hold to this Houdini-like position, that somehow this unbalanced budget is actually balanced because the rest of the world is wrong, and then get through the election. Then this year's budget actuals will be after the election, and, as we say in politics, "That's a problem they'd like to be re-elected to have." The fact is—and it is a fact—they do not have a balanced budget. Quite frankly, shame on them for saying so.

I will say this: there is one tax measure in here that I actually support. It's a shame it's wrapped up in so many other things that are giveaways, just giveaways to your friends. I'm going to comment on that as time unfolds. But I do happen to believe that the 10% reduction in the capital tax and the ultimate elimination is actually a good move. If you take a look at what's happening in other jurisdictions, if you take a look at the principles of taxation, vis-à-vis corporate investment and business investment, I think it's fair to say that we needed to make a move in this regard—the feds have already done it—and this is one of those things that as a stand-alone item is actually a good move. It breaks my heart to admit that, but there you are. If I'm going to ask you to be completely forthright, then I'd better be myself. The fact is that I do think that one measure is correct. But that's pretty much it. I don't have a whole lot of faith or support in much else that's in this entire budget.

I've already condemned the government in another speech for what they did in terms of where they read the budget and what I think that means and its implications for this place and the people of Ontario.

This is the government that made a great deal of noise about the fact that because they cut taxes so severely from 1995 on, the revenue numbers went up. By cutting taxes—the proof was there in the budget actuals, if you look at the budget actuals after they made the cuts—the revenue numbers were up so significantly that the government claimed—

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: I'm making your case. Heckle me when I'm attacking it, not when I'm making it at least. Think about it.

The fact of the matter is that they were maintaining that whenever they cut taxes it increases revenue because

that stimulates investment, investment creates jobs, jobs then create taxpayers, and therefore your revenues go up. I see all the learned economists in the Tory benches nodding in agreement, because of course this is the mantra. It's right beside the glass of Kool-Aid. There's a little card that says that: "Cut taxes; revenue goes up. Drink Kool-Aid."

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They were able to make the case. I have to tell you, it was just terribly, terribly frustrating on this side of the House for those four or five years when that was happening, because you did have the numbers. You had the numbers. We could argue all we wanted about why the numbers were the way they were; it's pretty hard to make that stick when it was so easy for you to just point to the actuals and say, "All of that's just theory and rhetoric. There are the numbers; there's the reality."

Fair enough. You can appreciate how frustrating that was on this side, but that's what you had going for you. I raise this not because I want to fill the government with all kinds of pride in terms of what they've accomplished for themselves over the years; I raise it because this is the same government that was so convinced that balanced budgets and cutting taxes were a guaranteed formula for success—again, because of all those arguments they had, and the actuals and everything else. Because they had all those arguments for it, they brought in the Taxpayer Protection Act, I believe is what they called it. What that said was that you couldn't raise taxes without going to the people, and you couldn't bring in an unbalanced budget.

What's interesting is that within a couple of years of that law being enacted—to great fanfare, by the way, because they made the argument, "Look what we did, and now we're going to pass this law so nobody can unravel the wonderful things that we've done. We've really got things fixed here in Ontario. Aren't we wonderful?" Of course, meanwhile our health care system was going into crisis, our education system was going into crisis, the ability of municipal government to provide the services that you were continuing to heap on them was going into crisis, but nonetheless, from this high, lofty perch, you were pontificating that the magic answer was in this bill that guaranteed no other government could come along and undo what you did.

Then the stock market on the NASDAQ side burst. Things were already starting to slow down. As that was starting to gain downward momentum, of course we had September 11, which was not, as some might like to lead people to believe, the main or only reason for the economic downturn that continued into the new millennium. But it played a role; no doubt about it.

The result of that was that your revenues were falling. There were losses that corporations were taking. There were jobs being lost—good jobs. Your revenue projections showed that the money you were expecting to receive because of this never-ending buoyant economy, led by the United States, stopped. It stopped, and you were in trouble. We had a new finance minister; we had a new Premier.

If you're in a situation as the government where you've got this balanced budget and you've got all these tax cuts doing all that investment stuff and the job creation stuff and things are just humming along wonderfully, if you run into this huge problem where you're going to have a revenue loss and you're not going to take in as much money as you were planning, it would seem to me that if you've got such a surefire formula for increasing revenues in the province, ie, cut taxes, what you would do is maybe double the amount of tax cuts that you had planned for that coming fiscal year. That way, you could make up for the revenue that wasn't coming in elsewhere, because of course this absolutely surefire, guaranteed formula for raising revenue was right there at hand. In fact, you had even entrenched in law that nobody could undo this, because it was definitely the end of history, at least the end of economic history.

So we waited for some announcement that would indicate that, sure enough, they were going to use the surefire, true-blue formula for raising more money. Instead, what did we see? We saw the Minister of Finance stand in her place and announce that all the tax cuts that had been planned for that year's budget were cancelled. Cancelled. Heresy, blasphemy. How could anybody on the government side stand up and say such things? Somebody had surely taken over the finance minister's body and was speaking words that were not hers and not those of the Tory brain trust. Something has to have gone seriously wrong here, because the minister said she had to cancel all the magical tax cuts that do all these great economic things—surefire, no matter what—because they couldn't afford it. Now, wait a minute. It's the opposition that has been arguing that a tax cut is a cost to the taxpayer no differently than an MRI; it's still an expenditure when you do the books.

The finance minister ran out of rhetoric, because they ran out of US economic steam. Don't forget, they told us they'd do all these magical things by themselves. They didn't need the US; they didn't need the Canadian federal government. All they needed was themselves; they did everything. It's amazing: they made an income tax cut here in Ontario and all of a sudden a worker down in Wisconsin felt comfortable buying a new car. That's how powerful they are.

Suddenly, all that was gone, and what we were left with was a minister standing up talking the language that most of us talk every day; that is, if you're not expecting to bring in as much money next year as you thought, then you're likely going to have to cut the money you were planning to spend or you're going to be in trouble.

The alternative, of course, would have been to run a deficit, which ultimately you did anyway. So, get this, you had to pass a law—I still find it amazing that you got away with this without headlines in every newspaper for weeks on end. I find it just so amazing, given all the things you folks have said in the past leading up to that moment. You had to pass a law that let you out of the Taxpayer Protection Act. Remember, that's the one I referred to that you put in place to guarantee that your

surefire magical formula for raising revenue in the province of Ontario could never again be changed by some wild-spending Liberal or New Democrat.

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): That's right.

Mr Christopherson: That's the one you had to bring in.

I don't remember your speech on that. I'll have to check Hansard. I don't think there were a lot of speeches on that. But it did happen; it really did.

There was a law brought in that let the government off the hook for the protections they said they put in there for the public. This is within two years—it might even have been just a year. But within two years, this is what happened: they had to use their majority to pass a law to let themselves out of their own legislation that they said they brought in to protect the public from all of us. It's mind-boggling, absolutely mind-boggling. That's what happened.

I still don't know how you got away with that one. I give you full marks for having done it; I do. As somebody leaving this place and not running again provincially, I've got no axe to grind. I just say I am amazed you got away with it. You never should have. You should have been finished right then and there, because you put so much—how many of you on the government side have in the Hansard speeches ad nauseam guaranteeing, "Tax cuts increase revenue"? How many of you? And yet there you were, being whipped by your chief whip to come in and vote yourselves out of the boondoggle that you created.

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It would be interesting, I say to anyone running against a Tory incumbent, to take a look at some of those speeches in the Hansards. I can remember sitting back, thinking, "I'm not so sure some of those people really know what they're talking about." But, boy, they had a great time with the flight of rhetoric, going on about the fact that tax cuts equal increased revenue over and over. Yet when it was time to prove it, when you didn't have the benefit of the US economy generating all that demand, which increased our demand for products and services, without that, you couldn't make it work. Check the Hansards, anyone who is interested, and you'll find that both opposition parties, certainly the NDP, were arguing that this formula is working—but not for the reasons you're saying. If the US economy ever stops, you're going to be looking for a seat, just like musical chairs. The music stops and you're going to want a seat and there won't be one, and there wasn't. You had the embarrassment—in fact, I think they did most of that debate in the evenings. Gee, why would you do that?

I want to move on to the Ontario Home Property Tax Relief for Seniors Act, which I know the government members are going to be touting on the campaign trail. We've already seen some of the ads; they would be the ones with some of our American neighbours in them pretending to be Ontario neighbours. But aside from that, the ads are saying—I only saw one or two of them—

something like, "I want a government that thinks like me, at least the way I would think if I was Canadian." That was the way the ads went on and that's what the government is going to run on.

They're going to talk about their great passion in caring for seniors. They're going to make it sound like they're the first government that ever came along and thought, "If you want to help seniors, one way to do it that is entirely legitimate is to take a look at continuing costs in their lives in an area where you can reasonably state that they've paid their bit, and now we'll give them a little bit of relief, in particular to low- and modest-income people." You'd think they were the first ones that ever thought of that.

The law that's being amended here by Bill 41 is Bob Rae's law, brought in in 1992. It was the Ontario tax credit and it included benefits for seniors, not just in the education portion of their property tax but also sales tax. The significant difference was that it was a targeted benefit for low- and modest-income seniors, the thinking being that if you want to help seniors and you're going to spend some money, that money has to come from somewhere else—or you're going to have to raise a tax somewhere, but that money has to come from somewhere, and dollars are precious. "So let's target it so we can do the maximum amount and do the least amount of disruption to other existing services, or keep to a very small amount or not at all any kind of tax increase to pay for it," the biggest benefit being that you could put more money into those areas because it is targeted.

I don't recall, in the 11 years since, getting a single phone call from anybody saying, "Hey, I made a million dollars last year and I paid \$30,000 in property taxes. I want to get a bit of that back too. You gave it to the seniors." I didn't get that phone call. Maybe it went somewhere else; maybe it went to the Tories. Obviously at the end of the day it did, but I didn't get it.

People thought that was a reasonable approach, that it was progressive and that it helped a segment of our society that, quite frankly, everybody would like to help. And what have you done? First of all, you originally promised that you were going to give everybody a 10% reduction. You threw that out the window. You threw out the Ontario tax credit, and now you've brought in this Ontario Home Property Tax Relief For Seniors Act, but it's uncapped. That means that Frank Stronach, a guy who has so much power and influence in Ontario that the Premier took his budget to his place to read it out—I guess so Frank wouldn't have to spend the time and effort to come down here. Frank was lucky enough to have the Premier come and read the budget of Ontario at his place. And now, because this tax credit is uncapped, I believe the figure is—I stand to be corrected—about \$20,000 a year he'll get back because he's a senior and we all want to help seniors.

It's funny, though. Most of us are far more concerned about low-, moderate- and middle-income seniors, which is the reality for most people, one of those categories. Frank Stronach doesn't need any help from anybody in

this place, or anywhere else for that matter. We haven't even begun to talk about the corporate tax cuts that are going to benefit him, which he makes in the salary that he gets from Magna Corp. The personal tax cuts he benefits from are, I think, millions and millions of dollars. You wonder why Frank Stronach and others of that class—upper class, rich class, call it what you want. But you wonder why people in that world are quite prepared to support this government, no matter what. Because most of the no-matter-whats are the stuff that hurt us. The stuff that really matters to them is the numbers. Now how can you give Frank a little bit of help, the government would say to themselves. Here's 20 grand. Do you really think Frank Stronach needs 20 grand from the people who work at—

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: Do you think he needs 20 grand from the people of Hamilton who work at Stelco? This is obscene, it really is. The notion that you would do something more for seniors is a good one, and I think everyone would support that. But to allow somebody who lives in a multi-million dollar mansion with a multi million dollar annual income to receive tax credits for their property tax is obscene. There are far too many needs in this province for you to spend money in an area like that. And he's probably not the biggest example; there are probably others. I realize that if you add up all these individual people it doesn't amount to a huge amount of money in terms of the overall scheme of things, but that really isn't the point. We can have a great philosophical debate about the merits of a corporate tax cut that benefits Mr Stronach. We can have a philosophical debate about the merits of the personal income tax system, and I suspect that we could have a really good debate about that too. But I think it is absolutely indefensible that you bring in a program that has for a heading, "Ontario home property tax relief for seniors." Somebody like Frank Stronach will get back more than \$20,000 a year. He doesn't need tax relief.

Seniors living in poverty—there were studies in Hamilton and I'm sure they're in other communities too. You know how over the years there had been a marked improvement, and there was, and I give full credit to governments past here and at the federal level, which, over the last four, five or six decades have made it a priority to deal with the fact that in the 1940s and 1950s for a lot of people, far too many people, retirement was a sentence to poverty. There were horror stories coming out. Over the years, government has done things about that. We were really turning the corner on that. I'm not saying that all seniors were suddenly living in the lap of luxury, not by any stretch. There was still a lot of serious hurt out there. But it was a lot less than it had been, and the trend line was good. It was going in the right direction. It was showing more and more seniors rising comfortably above the poverty line. That's now changing again. There's a recent report from the social planning and research council in Hamilton that showed that the trend line is starting to turn the other way.

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If that was going to be your argument for eliminating our Ontario tax credit, fine. We all know the politics of things. Go for it. If you were going to do something to address that trend line that's now going the wrong way, I'd be saying some very different things here right now. Probably what I'd be doing is just ignoring the whole thing. That's usually what we do if you do something good: we ignore it; we talk about the things that are bad.

But to use seniors in this way—

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Shameful.

Mr Christopherson: I think I hear my friend from Kingston and the Islands saying “shameful.” It is. It's very shameful.

All you had to do to change this whole dynamic was cap it. I mean, even a cap of \$10,000, some thousands of dollars—most seniors, by your numbers, are going to get between \$400 and \$500 a year. A lot of seniors in Hamilton West will appreciate that. They can put that money to good use. Things are getting tough. But I've got to tell you, talk of the difference between a senior in my riding getting \$500 and what that means to them, versus \$20,000 every year for a multi-millionaire—the interesting thing is that the program they're eliminating is already capped. It already does that. They could've changed the name and put their own spin on it. They could have increased the amount and said, “We're doing so much more than the NDP did.” They could do that if they want to. But at least keep it targeted so that there's consistency with the goal and the objective. The goal and objective was to increase the quality of life for seniors. Mr Stronach needs no help from Premier Eves or anybody else in government to improve his quality of life, thank you very much.

We still don't have all the money for education. I'm going to shift into another subject. Rozanski made it clear that upwards of \$2 billion was needed. I'll acknowledge you immediately announced—within a few days, I believe—\$670 million. What we were hoping to hear in this budget was that you were going to accept the criticisms and advice of Mr Rozanski and immediately move to bring the numbers up to par. Even as it is, with these numbers, if they're phased in, we're still going to fall behind, because they don't take into account the falling behind every year that's taking place right now.

The government doesn't listen too much to opposition members. I'd like to read into the record an article by David Crane, who will be familiar to a lot of people. He writes in the *Toronto Star*, but because the *Hamilton Spectator* is owned by them, it was run in the *Hamilton Spectator* today.

He makes reference to the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity. I know that ministers of the crown will be familiar with it, if not indeed the backbenchers, because you fund it. This is your agency, and it's headed up by Roger Martin, who's the dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, just across the way here.

Hon Mr Runciman: He's a good guy.

Mr Christopherson: I hear the Honourable Mr Runciman saying “good guy.” I'll bet he is. I would think he's probably a very smart guy too.

That report said this about the school system, in commenting on the fact that our primary and secondary education funding has fallen from sixth place in 1992-93 to 14th in 1998-99—the smart guy that Mr Runciman likes—this may be “a worrying signal that an important contributor to our competitiveness and prosperity, especially in our metro areas, is at some risk.”

I live in a metro area, a lot of the members here do. Prosperity is supposed to be an priority for you. Certainly you talk a lot about competitiveness. We on the opposition benches have been making the argument for years that the benefit that we have competitively, by and large, in addition to our resources and the immediate access to those resources, is the value added that our workforce brings. They're healthy, they're skilled and they're reliable.

The school system has done that for us. The school system, in many ways, is much like the hydro system: having reliable power available at cost. There are key reasons why the United Nations chose Canada as the best country in the world to live in for five years in a row. Ontario is the economic engine of this nation and the biggest province within this nation too, so a lot of that credit has to go to Ontario, but, I've got to tell you, not from the sort of things you've done. That is the benefit of years of investment in our school system: primary, secondary, post-secondary, technical school, universities; our resources; our transportation networks in terms of rail and roads but also water; the availability of reliable power at cost. There are some very key reasons why we have the standard of living that we have and that we've enjoyed the prosperity that we have over the years. Education is one of those key components.

This report that you funded, headed up by someone that the Minister of Public Safety and Security says is a good guy, says that this is “a worrying signal that an important contributor to our competitiveness and prosperity, especially in our metro areas, is at some risk.”

Why aren't you responding to that? The report also said this: “Results from this year's surveys clearly illustrate the flaws in Ontario's education policy. It is not based on coherent educational objectives. Funding is insufficient and funding is not distributed fairly across the province.” Isn't that interesting? One of the cornerstones of why you brought in your whole new funding formula was because you said you wanted to equalize it across the province. You said, “Why should there be a difference between the amount of money spent on someone's education in Toronto and somebody's in Thunder Bay?” We said to you there are very good reasons why.

Isn't this something? “Funding is not based on coherent educational objectives.” That's what he said about your policy. It's not based on coherent educational objectives. “Funding is insufficient and funding is not distributed fairly across the province.”

I would say, respectfully, that's about as objective an opinion from an expert as you're going to get, especially since you paid for it. Why aren't you acting like this is important? Why doesn't this budget act like this is important? Why doesn't this budget address these issues: the crisis that exists in our education system?

I think some of you are going to be pretty shocked when you starting going out on the hustings and you start going to debates in the coming election. I've got to tell

some of you that I'm not sure what worlds you've been looking at. These comments are a lot more reflective of the reality I see in Hamilton than what you say in the House.

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

The House adjourned at 1800.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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 civiles, 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)	Timmins-Baie James	Smitherman, George (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	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)	Whitby-Ajax	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)	Willowdale	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Windsor-St Clair	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York North / -Nord	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York West / -Ouest	
		Mississauga West / -Ouest	Vacant

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

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

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