



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Fourth Session, 37th Parliament

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de l'Ontario

Quatrième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 25 June 2003

Mercredi 25 juin 2003

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 June 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 juin 2003

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): The quality of a government can be judged by the priorities that it puts on spending taxpayers' dollars. Every day, this government faces the question, do we spend the money on seniors or do we spend it on partisan ads? Should we spend the money on textbooks or should we spend it on partisan ads? Should we take some of the taxpayers' dollars and spend them on affordable housing or should we spend them on partisan ads? Should we use the money to give ODSP recipients their first increase in 12 years or should we spend it on partisan ads?

What about a citizen on ODSP who requires a special diet to maintain their health and indeed to stay alive? Should we spend the money on that or should we spend it on steak dinners for ourselves?

I would like to tell you about a constituent, not of mine but of another member, who requires a very special diet for pancreatic enzymes. She knows she needs it, her doctor knows she needs it, and in fact ODSP knows she needs it. ODSP has indicated that because of this diet she requires to stay alive, they will give her \$250 a month for this special diet. The difficulty is that the diet costs \$410 a month.

I need advice, I guess, from the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Should she not eat on weekends? Should she eat the first half of the month and not the second half? Or perhaps the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services should look at the budget and say it is worth \$160 to keep a citizen of Ontario alive, and should fund the diet at the rate she needs to stay alive.

SENIORS' MONTH

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): It is my honour, on the occasion of Seniors' Month, to celebrate and pay tribute to the people who built Ontario into the great province it is today.

Seniors are living longer, healthier lives than ever before. It is time that we cast aside all stereotypes of retirement as a quiet time in a rocking chair. Today,

seniors are contributing more hours of community service than they did while working and raising their families. Annually, seniors volunteer the highest number of hours of any age group.

Many seniors pursue sports and leisure activities to keep fit and enjoy the company of others. On June 20, when I attended the awards ceremony of the Mississauga Seniors' Games, I talked with amazing seniors who swim or play tennis every day.

Seniors are also making an effort to stay healthy. There was an excellent turnout for the Healthy Living Expo, sponsored by the Mississauga Board of Chinese Professionals and Businesses, which launched Seniors' Month in Mississauga.

Our government wants to help seniors remain in their homes as long as possible by reimbursing the education portion of their property tax. The many seniors living on reduced retirement incomes will welcome this tax relief, which will occur when Bill 43 is passed into law.

To all our seniors we say, you are setting wonderful examples as you continue to share, care, teach and lead in so many ways. Thank you for creating communities and a living environment that are the envy of the world. You will always be our heroes.

INSURANCE RATES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Martin Beaudry writes in the Insurance Journal, "Auto insurers put the brakes on risk in Ontario." He reports, "Capacity is down, insurers are refusing new business, and those lucky enough to be insured are at risk of losing their coverage should anything happen."

Jim Thomson of the Timmins-based brokerage BMT Insurance says, "We are at a crisis now where people can come in off the street and I don't have a market for them."

The article goes on to say, "Insurers are using 'predatory' practices to clean up their book of business. They are culling their databases to identify people they want to get rid of. What they do is send a letter 45 days prior to your renewal, and they don't tell the broker. If you don't complete that form and send it back to them, you are automatically cancelled."

I have a memo to the brokers of a major insurer that is headed, "Reasons for Declination." This list gives brokers instruction on 89 reasons to decline new and renewal business. Not one reason is given why they should be insured.

Whatever happened to company loyalty—loyalty to both brokers and the insured? What is the Ernie Eves government doing to assure that companies don't just dump loyal brokers and insureds? What's the Ernie Eves government doing about insurance? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): And the government should adopt public auto insurance. That would deal with the issue. We New Democrats are moving in that direction.

I want to bring to the attention of the House something that is a disaster beginning to happen across this province, and it's in the area of addiction services. It turns out that we haven't seen an increase in the budget for addiction services over the last 10 years, other than a 2% increase last year.

As a result of the funding shortfall on the part of this provincial government, we now have situations such as we have in Smooth Rock Falls, where the Cochrane detox centre is having to close its doors for one month in order to balance their budget this September. They're in a situation of having to say, "We will take no new intakes for the month of September in order to balance our annual budget." I say to the government that we need to deal with this, and we need to deal with it fast.

In talking to people in addiction services, it turns out it's not just the Cochrane detox centre that's in that situation; we have detox centres across the province that are facing similar kinds of situations because of inadequate funding of addiction services on the part of this government.

Further to that, La Maison Arc-En-Ciel in Opatatika, which has not had an increase in its budget in a number of years, other than that 2%, is facing similar crises.

We're calling on this government to do the right thing and fund addiction services to the degree they need to provide these important services to the people of Ontario.

1340

HIGHWAY 410

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): On Monday, I was pleased to take part in a very special announcement in my riding of Brampton Centre with Premier Eves, Minister of Transportation Frank Klees, Peel Regional Chair Emil Kolb, Brampton Mayor Susan Fennell and my colleagues Tony Clement and Raminder Gill.

Finally, after years of delays and bureaucratic stalling, the residents of Brampton are getting the news they've been waiting for: the extension of Highway 205—sorry, that's actually Highway 410. We call it 205 because it was only half completed by the NDP. This is great news for Brampton, as it will reduce gridlock and improve traffic safety in Brampton-Caledon, as well as attract new investments and new opportunities. How important is this

project? The 410 carries over 100,000 commuters a day and nearly \$325 million worth of goods.

This is a good partnership, supported by the region of Peel and the city of Brampton to better serve the citizens of Ontario. Taxpayers expect governments to work together, and this is a prime example of how it did.

I want to thank all for their hard work in making this promise a reality: Transportation Minister Frank Klees for cutting through the red tape and giving final approval to the project; former Minister Sterling, who moved the yardsticks on this project forward; and Mr John Pappain, a man who was instrumental in the negotiations with landowners that made Monday's announcement possible.

Thank you to Metrus and the Brampton Board of Trade for their leadership and pressure to bring this matter to the forefront. I thank you all, for the residents of Brampton.

BSE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): The Minister of Agriculture just doesn't get it. The magnitude and diversity of our beef industry demands broad consultation to deal with the BSE crisis.

The minister claims to be working with the OCA. Well, the OCA wrote the minister last Friday, "We are requesting that your ministry take the lead in forming an oversight committee that will not only work toward the betterment of the current program but also take a proactive approach." They ask for inclusion of representatives from the Ontario Livestock Dealers' Association, the Ontario Livestock Auction Markets Association, the veal and sheep associations and the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. These voices must be heard and listened to.

Ross McCall, president of the livestock dealers, says, "They just don't understand the magnitude of the problem and what it could blow into. The minister doesn't realize the importance and urgency of getting money into producers' hands."

Len Gamble is the owner of Brussels Livestock, in the minister's own riding. He markets over 170,000 head per year. He says, "The minister should be listening to the grassroots of the industry and the everyday farm public to find out what is going on. That's just not happening."

Our exporters and our dairy industry have been virtually ignored by this ministry. The minister must sit down and meet with these people immediately.

I'm calling on the minister once again to do what it takes to save the industry—the entire industry. Forty per cent is a minimum contribution to the program. The province has the ability to enhance and expand the program, and if that's what it takes, the minister should show some leadership and get on with it and get behind the ruminant industry in this province.

PHARMACARE

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): The Ontario government allows, through legislation, the ability for

pharmacists to waive the \$2 copay for Ontario drug benefit recipients. The government encourages discounting of pharmacy fees, yet the same provincial government has not granted an increase to their professional dispensing fee in over 13 years.

In order to compete, many pharmacists have waived their patient copay. Others have chosen to use loyalty programs like the Shoppers Drug Mart Optimum card, which provides value to their customers. Loyalty programs provide valuable benefits to consumers and patients and have done so in this province since 1999.

Every province but Quebec allows the public to collect loyalty points on the full value of a prescription—a significant benefit, particularly to low-income earners. However, on June 16 this year, the Ontario College of Pharmacists reversed this policy, prohibiting the awarding of loyalty bonus points or air miles on prescriptions, prescription services and professional services related to pharmacy in Ontario. This policy now discriminates against pharmacists', seniors' and consumers' best interests.

Loyalty and bonus points should be treated in the same way that the government is treating the waiving or charging of the copay. This should be a business decision by pharmacists for their consumers. I call on the Minister of Consumer and Business Services to end this discriminatory practice in Ontario. This decision to prohibit loyalty and bonus programs in this province is a bad deal for pharmacies and a very bad deal for Ontario consumers.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): It's been one crisis after another for Ernie Eves and his government. He's had a full year of sitting in the big chair and he still doesn't know how to manage the province of Ontario. He still doesn't have any ideas about how to fix our hospitals or crumbling schools or dirty air, other than to turn off your barbecue.

Ernie Eves thinks it's more important to play golf in Arizona than to deal with the SARS crisis. Ernie Eves thinks it's okay for ministers to funnel expenses through private corporations. He also seems to think it's okay for cabinet ministers to tell ever-changing stories about their European junkets. This is the same Ernie Eves who is starving our public health system of dollars so they can't combat the West Nile virus effectively. This is the same Ernie Eves who tried to secretly give a sports camp in his own riding a \$700,000 retroactive tax break. This is the same Ernie Eves who has left the province on the verge of energy blackouts.

Let me read what the Toronto Star has to say about this government: "Clearly, the Conservatives, first under Mike Harris and now under Ernie Eves, are spending more time in their second term helping their friends, their own ridings and individuals and private companies who have donated to Tory coffers than they are in managing the affairs of this province. All are signs of an arrogant,

tired regime that has run out of fresh ideas and has fallen into the morass of pork-barrel politics at its worst."

Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have fresh ideas to fix our hospitals, our schools, and clean up the air we breathe and the water we drink. We're tired of Tory pork-barrelling. We need a change. Dalton McGuinty will bring about that change and will work for the people of Ontario.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): Community safety continues to be a priority of our government. Ontario residents not only have the right to be safe but also to feel safe in their communities.

I was pleased to be a part of a cheque presentation to the York region police on Monday. York region police have been given \$1,323,999 to pay for police officers, to fund anti-drinking and driving campaigns and to fight youth crime. This includes \$1.2 million given to the community policing program to cover the cost of 79 new front-line officers. They also received \$20,500 to pay for the overtime of police officers working on the Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere, RIDE, program, which operates in York region year-round. We gave \$15,250 to the youth crime and violence enforcement program. The Partners Against Crime also received a \$19,000 grant.

Under the terms of the community policing partnership program, eligible police services received provincial cost-share funding up to \$30,000 annually from the province to pay the salary, benefits and overtime of officers hired under the program. Currently, 998 of the original 1,000 officers allocated are on active duty in police services throughout the province. Since 1996, we have doubled RIDE grants to \$1.2 million per year as part of a five-year enhancement program. Reducing crime, getting drunk drivers off the roads and offering better options to young people to steer them away from crime are tangible programs that will make a difference in York region and in my riding of York North.

MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today I laid upon the table the individual members' expenditures for the fiscal year 2002-03. I believe that members will find copies inside their desks if they wish to review them.

VISITORS

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: As a former warden of the great county of Simcoe, currently the chairman of the ex-wardens' association, I'm really pleased to have our former warden, our ex-wardens, our current warden, His Worship George MacDonald, their spouses and friends here, visiting us from the beautiful county of Simcoe

today. I'd ask that you please give them a warm round of applause.

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

1350

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to introduce the House to members who are here today from the police foundation. There are 15 young people who are studying to be police and law enforcement officers. They are here to study our Legislature with their instructor, Mr John Papadakis. I welcome them to the Legislature.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: One of our pages, Brittany Shaw, from my riding, has done a very good job here. I know everybody has been impressed with what she has done. I would like everyone here to welcome with me today her mother Rita Shaw, her father Steve Shaw and her brother Derek Shaw in the gallery.

MEMBER FOR STORMONT-
DUNDAS-CHARLOTTENBURGH

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There is one other former warden of a county who is in the Legislature today. He's actually on the floor of the Legislature. This will possibly be his last day in this House as a member.

John Cleary has represented his constituents since 1987 with great distinction, a very long career in his community, a number of volunteer activities. He's been a friend and colleague to members on this side of the House since 1987. He was elected in 1987, re-elected in 1990, 1995 and 1999. The people of Cornwall and the surrounding region owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude. Those of us in the Liberal Party salute his outstanding achievements as a member in his work in his community and here at the Legislature.

I think I speak on behalf of all members when we say to you, John, thank you for your distinguished service to your community, your province and your country. Our best wishes go to you and your family as you enter a new stage of life.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to join with the House leader in saluting Mr Cleary, their member for Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh. Mr Cleary has served here at Queen's Park. He has served his community and he has served his party, but he has also served this chamber. He has done it with dignity, he has done it with grace and he has done it with a sincerity and integrity that are beyond question and beyond reproach.

I want John and his community to know that it's not just his Liberal colleagues at Queen's Park who appreciate his presence for so many years; indeed, it's every member of this chamber. His courage in addressing issues that others wouldn't address singles him out. That alone, at the very least, singles Mr Cleary out as an

exceptional member, and the quiet but effective manner with which he gets things done.

So I want this chamber, Mr Cleary and his community to know that New Democrats regret his leaving. New Democrats also appreciate and understand the opportunities that creates for New Democrats. We will do our best, but his tenure here at Queen's Park is one of which Mr Cleary and his community can be very proud. Our personal relationships with Mr Cleary will always be the subject matter of fond memories. Our respect and regard for Mr Cleary will, I believe, carry on long after he leaves this chamber and moves to yet another stage of his life, which I'm sure will be as busy and fully occupied as his years here at Queen's Park.

We salute you, Mr Cleary. We wish you well and look forward to seeing what you're going to be doing with a little bit more free time in this next stage of your life. I want you to know that you can go back home with great pride in your own right for good service, integrous service, courageous service and effective service.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, Government House Leader): I'd like to briefly join my two colleagues and the House leaders from both parties on behalf of my caucus and the government to thank John for the tremendous contribution that he's made to Ontario, particularly to eastern Ontario. John is quiet but incredibly effective. There are two members of provincial Parliament whom he's defeated over the years. I think there are only a handful of members in this place who can say they defeated not one member but two.

He's someone who has worked hard and forcefully brought forward the interests of his constituents. He doesn't get up and rant and rave in the House like all of us on both sides of the House do, but he regularly comes up to you after question period with a letter directly bringing forward the concerns of a constituent. The people of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh have had a quiet but effective and hard-working man on their community's side for the past 16 years. I'd like to join all members, particularly being a neighbouring constituency, in thanking him on behalf of not just the people of Cornwall and Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh but in fact people from all over eastern Ontario and the province. Congratulations.

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know you're probably in the same boat that I'm in. You're leaving too, and I guess we have many regrets.

I know in my four terms here at Queen's Park I've made great friends with members on all sides of the House. I know that every member, no matter what party you belong to, you come here to make Ontario a better place to live and to represent your constituents.

I've been elected, municipally and provincially, non-stop since 1971. I know that I've never promised anyone anything. I've always told them what I thought should be done and I worked to that goal.

When I first ran for municipal council and was past warden—I think I have some good friends behind me here somewhere. I was the warden in 1983. When I first ran, my oldest daughter had just become a teenager. Now she's a grandmother. That tells you something.

I know my family feels that I put my constituents ahead of the family sometimes. Anyway, that's just the way it was.

I would like to also thank my colleague from the Liberal party, Mr Duncan, for his kind remarks, and my colleagues Mr Kormos and John Baird.

I know that it wasn't easy to quit, but the family put on a 50th wedding anniversary for us last year, and they told me that was it. They said if I decided to run again, they were all going to work against me.

Anyway, to get back to what Peter said: you know, Peter, we had your party representing our area for some 15 years before I came along. I happened to beat a Conservative who was in there in a minority government. But anyway, they've had their turn there.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): John, is it our turn again?

Mr Cleary: I don't know.

I just want to also say that I've had great constituency staff and riding association volunteers. They're the ones that make the member, because they're the ones that bring things forward.

Anyway, I wish every member of the Legislature well. I know you're all here for the same goal, and I hope you can achieve your wishes. I guess that it's time for me to sit down and say thank you.

Applause.

1400

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO HERITAGE AMENDMENT ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE PATRIMOINE DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Tsubouchi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 124, An Act to amend the Ontario Heritage Act / Projet de loi 124, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario.

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

The Chair for a short explanation?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): It will be in ministers' statements.

ITALIAN HERITAGE DAY ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LE JOUR DU PATRIMOINE ITALIEN

Mr Agostino moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 125, An Act to make December 12 Italian Heritage Day / Projet de loi 125, Loi visant à faire du 12 décembre le Jour du patrimoine italien.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Today, over 700,000 people of Italian descent thrive and live in Ontario. Some have been established since the first major wave arrived in the late 1880s, and some are recent immigrants. Ontario citizens of Italian descent continue to make a significant contribution to the cultural and economic growth of Ontario and Canada.

On December 12, 1901, the world-renowned Nobel Prize physicist Guglielmo Marconi received in St John's, Newfoundland, the first transatlantic wireless signal from his transmission station in Cornwall, England. This was one of the most important developments in human history, allowing communication across much greater distances and permitting people anywhere in the world to communicate with each other. Marconi's efforts were the precursor of radio, the Internet and other communications tools that are present in our everyday lives. The efforts of Mr Marconi should be recognized through Italian Heritage Day here in Ontario.

ELECTRONIC WASTE PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ DES PRODUCTEURS DE DÉCHETS ÉLECTRONIQUES

Ms Churley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 126, An Act to ensure that the producers of electronic equipment retain responsibility when their products become waste / Projet de loi 126, Loi visant à assurer que les producteurs de matériel électronique sont toujours responsables lorsque leurs produits deviennent des déchets.

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

The member for a short statement?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I apologize, Speaker; I sent a copy of the second environmental bill, which I'll be introducing later.

This bill requires producers of electronic equipment to implement a program for ensuring environmentally sound collection, treatment, recovery and final disposition of discarded and obsolete electronic equipment. Landfilling and incineration of electronic wastes are prohibited. I'm bringing this bill forward because there's been an explosion of electronic equipment going into our

landfills, and it is creating a lot of hazards to our water and land.

INVESTMENT TRUST
UNITHOLDERS PROTECTION
FROM LIABILITY ACT, 2003
LOI DE 2003 SUR L'IMMUNITÉ
DES DÉTENTEURS D'UNITÉS
DE SOCIÉTÉS DE PLACEMENT

Mr Hastings moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to protect unitholders in investment trusts from liability / Projet de loi 127, Loi prévoyant l'immunité des détenteurs d'unités de sociétés de placement.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): The purpose of this bill is to protect unitholders in investment and royalty trusts from liability in their capacity as unitholders.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND THE
ENVIRONMENT BRANCH ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LA DIRECTION
DE LA SANTÉ DES ENFANTS
ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

Ms Churley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 128, An Act to establish the Children's Health and the Environment Branch of the Ministry of the Environment / Projet de loi 128, Loi créant la Direction de la santé des enfants et de l'environnement au sein du ministère de l'Environnement.

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

The member for a short statement?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): The children of Ontario have a right to a clean and safe environment. As children grow and develop, they are particularly vulnerable to environmental hazards, so I believe there should be an ongoing means by which children are protected from those hazards, to ensure that they grow up healthy. What this bill will do is require the Ministry of the Environment to establish a children's health and environment branch by January 1, 2004.

1410

VISITORS

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Beside my colleague Tony Ruprecht in the west members' gallery is Dermot Lynch, who is the business representative of district council 46 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Workers. Welcome, Mr Lynch.

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to welcome seniors from across the province who are here to witness the vote on Bill 43, the seniors' tax credit bill.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to take a moment to introduce four students of democracy from the Free Flamborough group, who have arrived here today. Welcome.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to introduce some members in the gallery who are here to witness the vote on Bill 53, the equity in education tax credit. I will start with the Thornhill constituents: Frank Dimant, who is the executive director of B'nai Brith; Larry Zeifman, who is a parent of children in the education system; and Rabbi Israel Janowski, also a Thornhill resident.

The others here today: Rochelle Wilner, president of B'nai Brith; Pearl Gladman, director of communications for the community action committee; Anita Bromberg, legal counsel for B'nai Brith; Carla Lancit, editor of the Jewish Tribune; Aaron Blumenfeld; Corrine Korzen, who is our candidate for the Eglinton-Lawrence riding; and Robert Samery, who is chair of the Jewish Parents for Equality in Education Funding.

I'd like everyone to join me in welcoming them here today.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): I'm delighted to speak today as the Minister of Culture. The Ernie Eves government values and is committed to conserving Ontario's heritage for the enjoyment and benefit of present and future generations.

This is the first government since the introduction of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1975 to bring forward substantive amendments to the act. Ontario has the oldest heritage legislation in Canada, but is the only province that does not have the legislative tools to recognize and protect properties of provincial significance.

The current statute is not strong or flexible enough. It promotes subjectivity of application. It is also out of step with land use planning legislation, resulting in conflicting and inconsistent ground rules for property owners. A stronger Ontario Heritage Act would provide more tools and more flexibility to protect local and provincial heritage and would make Ontario one of the leading jurisdictions in heritage conservation.

We made some changes to the act through last fall's Government Efficiency Act. After holding extensive con-

sultations led by my parliamentary assistant, Julia Munro, we heard that stakeholders supported these amendments and welcomed the opportunity to make additional changes.

We listened to our stakeholders, and the changes we are introducing today are based upon what we heard. The following amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act are consistent with this government's Smart Growth initiative, making responsible choices that allow us to maintain a high quality of life while our communities grow.

For example, the powers to designate provincially significant built heritage: sometimes a building is of provincial or national importance and is at risk and the province has no authority to intervene to protect it. All other provinces have this power. Like the minister's zoning orders under the Planning Act, this power would be used sparingly and as a last resort.

Standards and guidelines for identifying and protecting provincially owned heritage property that is deemed provincially significant: my ministry would develop these standards and guidelines in consultation with affected ministries and agencies. We would take into consideration their capacity to implement them. For example, the standards and guidelines could be phased in.

Increased protection for significant marine heritage sites: this amendment builds on the important work undertaken by my colleague Toby Barrett to protect marine heritage. We would be regulating access without a licence to about a dozen of the most fragile marine heritage sites such as those containing human remains—for example, the 1812 warships Hamilton and Scourge.

Standard designation criteria and other improvements to the municipal designation process: we would develop the designation criteria in consultation with other ministries, municipalities, developers and heritage stakeholders. Standard criteria would help ensure quality control and consistency in designations while allowing municipalities to interpret and apply the criteria as appropriate to address local needs.

Measures to streamline and strengthen the protection of heritage conservation districts: for example, we would require districts to have a plan in place to help ensure better and more consistent management of changes in the district.

Updated and streamlined agency provisions for the Ontario Heritage Foundation and Conservation Review Board: the name of the Ontario Heritage Foundation would be changed to the Ontario Heritage Trust to better reflect its mandate to hold heritage properties in trust for all Ontarians. We would also update the Conservation Review Board powers to make them consistent with those of other regulatory tribunals.

These amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act would help build strong communities by promoting civic pride, cultural tourism and local economic development. Most of all, our government's commitment to the preservation of our province's heritage would improve the quality of life for all people in Ontario.

On a personal note, I might say that some of these things come to us in all of our communities. For exam-

ple, in my community of Markham, a designated property, a historical property called the Wideman house, was destroyed overnight. That caused great outrage, not only in me but also in members of my community, as it was considered a cost of doing business.

We have a responsibility to protect our heritage sites for future generations. Once we lose them, we lose that opportunity. This is our opportunity, so I hope that all members of this House, including the opposition parties, will support this bill, because I think it will be to the benefit of our children and our grandchildren.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Responses?

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): Although we all know that for eight long, dark years we have had absolutely no movement and no progress when it comes to culture and heritage in Ontario, on the eve before the House is to rise, we now have a bill before us with some amendments. I have to say it's clear by the actions of Mike Harris as Premier and then Ernie Eves as Premier that the Conservatives unfortunately have portrayed a level of indifference and have also rendered the cultural and heritage community in this province irrelevant and treated them with irrelevance. I say this because it is the cultural ministry that was decimated more than the environment ministry. That is where the priorities of the government are. So as much as I have a great deal of respect for the minister, unfortunately he belongs to a government that has shown no leadership and no understanding of the value of heritage and culture in Ontario.

Just as late as about a month ago, the Ontario Historical Society had to take the government to court to protect some cemeteries and burial sites. This is the second time. They had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars fighting the government to protect a historical site. That was just a month ago. So you'll have to excuse me if I do not applaud, the day before the House is to rise, a movement to protect our heritage.

I have to say that the Ontario Liberals understand that we need a new Ontario Heritage Act. This was known for many, many years, and yet eight years have gone by and nothing has been done. Do you know what the difference in values is? This is fundamentally the difference between the Conservatives and the Liberals: that we understand that the legacies, the tradition and the history that give us a sense of belonging and pride in the place we live must be protected. I don't understand why now, on the second-last day before the House is to rise, we are supposed to believe they mean what they say, because nothing has been done in action.

1420

I have to also say there's enough tinkering and enough tweaking. Ontario needs fundamental change. We need fundamental change in values of heritage and culture that are going to make our cities vibrant and give communities vitality. What have we done over the last eight years? I hear it from all types of groups and organizations: they have been cut back, they have stopped giving their programs, and schools teach less and less

Ontario history. That goes fundamentally to the heart of the values of who we are as a society.

We're still fighting for the first Parliament building. There is still no secure protection for cemeteries and burial grounds. Again I say, the current government has no credibility on this file: eight years of regressive erosion and lots of our built heritage torn down. It is offensive to the community that the day before the Legislature is to rise, we have a bill before us with little or no chance of passing.

I have to say again that the people of Ontario are not fooled by these tactics. That's all they are. The heritage community has told me they've had no ear of the government, very little dialogue. At the very least, the government that is in power today has shown disrespect and disregard for the heritage and cultural community in the province of Ontario.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): This is one of the first cultural initiatives presented in this place that I can remember in a long time, and I have to say that it falls very, very short of our expectations and, I assume, very short of the expectations of the heritage community.

Minister, you say in your presentation that you are committed to conserving Ontario's heritage. You also say it's the only province that does not have the legislative tools to recognize and protect properties of provincial significance. You make it appear that through this bill you will be protecting heritage sites. But in my cursory review, unless I'm wrong, there is nothing here that will prevent a single heritage building from being demolished. There is no power for municipalities to say no to demolitions. That's one of the requests I made in the bill I presented here quite some time ago. Unless municipalities have the power to say no to the demolition of our heritage sites, I'm not sure what this bill does to preserve our heritage buildings, although you claim, incidentally and by way of suggestion, that you will be able to protect our heritage buildings. You will not be able to do it.

You also give no incentives to the owners of heritage properties to preserve them, which was another request I made in the bill I presented, as a way of encouraging people who own heritage sites to preserve them. We believe they need incentives, and there's nothing in your bill that does that for the preservation of our buildings through the incentives you could give those owners so we could save buildings.

There's also nothing here that will save the first Parliament. Minister, it has been two years that people like me and my friends from Toronto-Danforth and particularly from Beaches-East York have been lobbying you and the previous minister to save the site of our first Parliament. I was looking forward to your making this announcement today. That's what I thought our brief chat yesterday was all about. But it wasn't about that at all. I was optimistic, believing you were finally going to save our first Parliament, which is a significant heritage to Ontario, to Ontarians, to our history of politics and Parliament. I was convinced that's what you had in mind

when you introduced this today, but it wasn't to be. I believed, Minister, that you on many occasions said this is a vitally important site, but you do nothing to stop it from being covered up by a Porsche dealership. Yes, I'm disappointed. Yes, you have presented, dare I say, some good things here today.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): You haven't even read it.

Mr Marchese: I haven't read it? On the brief cursory review of your bill, there are some good things, I say to you, Minister, but unless demolition can be prevented and incentives made available, I'm sorry; we won't be able to protect our heritage. We just won't be able to do it.

Some good things: provincial power to designate provincially significant heritage. That's OK, but it does not prevent demolition of our heritage buildings. Do you know what it does? It allows him or you, the government, to designate a building, it holds it for six months and then the private sector can tear it down.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: That's wrong.

Mr Marchese: Sorry, Minister. That power doesn't prevent demolition. It only allows you, and not the city, to designate, which is good. Allowing yourself the power to designate is OK, but you have to give yourself or the city the power to demolish heritage sites.

The minister of post-secondary education will tell me outside why I am wrong, but show me in your bill where you do that.

Standard designation criteria: this could provide needed guidance and predictability, though it may mean a property that should be designated is not. That's possible, if the criteria are too restrictive.

So, yes, there are some positive things that the heritage community will, by and large, support. But if you don't give the city the power to prevent demolition and give heritage owners the incentives, we will not be able to protect our heritage; we just won't.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent for second and third reading of the Ontario Heritage Act without further debate.

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

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: New Democrats want to help the Premier out today, so we're asking unanimous consent for a motion of solemn prayer, harnessing public power, to solve a serious problem. We want to do what the Premier suggested and pray that there won't be blackouts or brownouts as a result of the blind faith the Conservatives and Liberals place on hydro privatization and deregulation. Let's all get down on our knees and pray. Is there unanimous consent?

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

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 Em-

ployment Standards Act, so that workers can have a long weekend on July 1, just like members of this Legislature.

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

VISITORS

Ms Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I'm happy to introduce in the members' gallery today a former member from this House from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Mr Dan Waters.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm asking for unanimous consent that Ontario's third smog day of the summer of 2003 is named Smog Day Eves.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Hon David Young (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I thought other members of this Legislative Assembly would like to know what you undoubtedly know. There are three honoured guests in your gallery today. They are: Zul Kassamali, who is the president of the Multicultural Alliance for Seniors and Aging; with him is Gerry Funston, who is a Toronto resident and a very well-respected former publishing executive; last, but by no means least, a very dear and old friend of mine, Sid Gladstone, who is a distinguished veteran of the Air Force and is currently very involved in a very important project, the Dominion memory project. I'm thrilled that they're here to join us today from Willowdale.

DEFERRED VOTES

ONTARIO HOME PROPERTY
TAX RELIEF FOR SENIORS ACT, 2003
LOI DE 2003 SUR L'ALLÈGEMENT
DE L'IMPÔT FONCIER RÉSIDENTIEL
POUR LES PERSONNES ÂGÉES
DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

The division bells rang from 1430 to 1435.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Ouellette, Jerry J.

Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Eves, Ernie	McDonald, AL	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Murdoch, Bill	Young, David

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Boyer, Claudette	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Kennedy, Gerard	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George
Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton	Sorbara, Greg

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 51; the nays are 36.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

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

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

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

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

The division bells rang from 1439 to 1444.

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

Ayes

Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Mushinski, Marilyn
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Newman, Dan
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	O'Toole, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Robert W.
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Sampson, Rob
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
DeFaria, Carl	Kwinter, Monte	Sterling, Norman W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary

Ecker, Janet
Elliott, Brenda
Eves, Ernie
Galt, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve
Gill, Raminder
Guzzo, Garry J.
Hardeman, Ernie

Martiniuk, Gerry
Maves, Bart
Mazzilli, Frank
McDonald, AL
Miller, Norm
Molinari, Tina R.
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill

Tascona, Joseph N.
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, David

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic
Bisson, Gilles
Bountrogianni, Marie
Boyer, Claudette
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Michael A.
Bryant, Michael
Churley, Marilyn
Cleary, John C.
Colle, Mike
Cordiano, Joseph
Crozier, Bruce

Di Cocco, Caroline
Duncan, Dwight
Gerretsen, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hampton, Howard
Hoy, Pat
Kennedy, Gerard
Kormos, Peter
Levac, David
Marchese, Rosario
Martel, Shelley
McGuinty, Dalton

McLeod, Lyn
McMeekin, Ted
Patten, Richard
Peters, Steve
Phillips, Gerry
Prue, Michael
Pupatello, Sandra
Ramsay, David
Ruprecht, Tony
Sergio, Mario
Smitherman, George
Sorbara, Greg

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The eyes are 51; the nays are 36.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Today we've had yet more confirmation, as if it were needed, that there exists a very real possibility of brownouts or blackouts this summer. Yesterday I criticized your government for failing to inform Ontarians about how to better conserve electricity in their homes and businesses. Today I want to talk about your failure to prepare for the real possibility of a blackout or brownout. I don't want Ontarians to panic, but I do want them to be prepared. If the power goes out, people aren't going to be able to turn on their TVs or radios to find out what they should be doing. Shut-ins who use cordless phones or whose telephones are plugged into answering machines won't be able to call for help. Given the very real possibility of blackouts or brownouts, tell us: why hasn't your government started sharing any information with Ontarians about what they should do in case we have a blackout or a brownout?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): We have been sharing information on the Ministry of Energy Web site with respect to things the average Ontarian can do to help conserve energy, especially during very hot days and peak demand periods. There are a number of things, as I talked about

yesterday, that the average Ontarian can do to help us during these extremely intense and hot days.

1450

Mr McGuinty: What I'm talking about today is emergency planning. We're hoping it does not happen, but there's a real possibility it will: power might go out. I think we've got a responsibility to tell Ontarians what they should do in that eventuality.

If the power goes out, what happens to people in elevators? I think we need to tell them about that. Food and medicine that has to be refrigerated may spoil, and there are things they can do to help prevent that from happening. Traffic signals will go out of service, and I think it's important that we remind Ontarians what the law is on that. You can't buy gasoline for your car, because gas pumps rely on electricity. If we don't start providing people with information now, 911 could be jammed because people may not know they should not call there except in the case of a real emergency.

Given the very real threat, Premier, isn't it time you started educating the public on what to do, just in case the power goes out?

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the official opposition and the leader of the third party were in this Legislature about a year ago today, fearmongering about exactly the same issue. They weren't right then, and they aren't right now.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, if you have information you're not sharing with us, then I'd ask you to do that now, because based on all the objective information we have received, there exists the very real possibility of a blackout or a brownout this summer. Your Minister of Energy tells us he cannot guarantee us that we will not have a blackout. You yourself said yesterday that you were looking to divine intervention to ensure that we do not have a blackout or a brownout this summer. It's not the time for panic, nor is it the time for denial.

Should people who rely on electric pumps for well water buy some bottled water? I think maybe we should be telling them that. We should be telling parents with newborn babies that maybe they should consider buying ready-to-use formula. What about seniors on oxygen? Should they purchase backup canisters and let utilities know their special needs? I think they should.

When computers are down and televisions and radios aren't working, I think it's important that you tell people now rather than wait until then to give them the best possible advice on how to prepare for the real possibility that we'll have a blackout or a brownout this summer.

Hon Mr Eves: There is not a very real possibility. There's always the chance, when you have very hot weather—which obviously the province of Ontario doesn't control—that you have to import power more than you would. We are taking steps to bring on-line 2,500 more megawatts of power this summer than last summer. We already have an additional 800 megawatts on-line that weren't on-line last summer. By the time those additional 2,500 come on, we will have 11% more supply this summer than we had last summer.

Having said that, I happen to have more faith in the integrity and responsibility of the average Ontario citizen than you obviously do. I think the average Ontarian will do the right thing to conserve energy and help the province over this difficult period of a few hot days in a row.

Most people are fairly objective about this. Some people, I guess for political reasons, fearmonger about this. If you want to talk about who imported power and who didn't, I can get into that discussion in your next question.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My question is to the Premier. Once again, we have another example of your government giving a special kind of deal to one of your friends. This time, it's the co-chair of your single largest fundraising event—that would be the Premier's dinner—and that fundraiser is Jim Ginou. I'm talking about the Ontario Place food service contract he gave to Cara Foods.

Years ago, we raised concerns about your government giving a contract to Cara Foods over another bid. An outside independent consultant described the Cara bid as "about the weakest presentation and weakest effort we have seen in our 14 years in this industry," and he warned that Mr Ginou had ties to Cara Foods.

At the time, the entire cornerstone of the defence for this special deal was that Cara was going to pick up the tab for renovating the facilities at Ontario Place. We found out today that the province had a secret deal with Cara. The secret deal in fact put the taxpayers of Ontario on the hook to repay Cara for those renovations to the tune of \$2.3 million. The question, Premier, is this: how can you justify entering into that contract in the first place, one that was outbid by another bidder, and how can you justify a secret deal that ended up costing Ontario taxpayers \$2.3 million?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Minister of Tourism and Recreation can respond to this.

Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): Back whenever that contract was signed there was a lot of work that had to be done at Ontario Place. That actually saved taxpayers money because the work done was to help some of the food concessions meet some of the needs they had in providing their contract. If we had done as government the settlement that was agreed to, it would have cost us millions of dollars more, so it was a good deal for taxpayers.

Mr McGuinty: I can understand why the Premier doesn't want to deal with this, but I'll return to him nonetheless. Premier, the other bidder, just so you're aware of this, was prepared to pay \$2.7 million more in rent than Cara Foods. Your only defence was that Cara was willing to put in more money for renovations, but your government had already given Cara a secret deal to pay back the cost of those renovations that cost taxpayers \$2.3 million. The contract with Cara Foods cost Ontario

taxpayers \$2.7 million in lost rent to Ontario Place and another \$2.3 million as part of your secret deal. How can you defend a deal entered into by the chair of your single biggest fundraiser, held annually, that ended up costing taxpayers \$5 million?

Hon Mr Coburn: Up until 1995 we were subsidizing Ontario Place to the tune of about \$10 million. That was under the Liberal and NDP reign. When we came in we had to find different ways of managing Ontario Place, and today it is to the tune of about \$500,000, so there have been great strides that we have made. Sometimes when you get a deal that is too good to be true, it is too good to be true. That may be one of the reasons why they didn't accept something that was so outrageously lucrative that it could have never stood the test of time.

Mr McGuinty: You were warned about this deal, not only by us but by an independent, outside consultant. He said with respect to Cara's bid, "It's about the weakest presentation and weakest effort that we have seen in our 14 years in this industry." He specifically warned that Mr Ginou had ties to Cara Foods. You said in defence of this deal that at least Cara was going to pick up the tab for renovations. Cara decided they wanted to get out of the deal. Not only did we lose \$2.7 million that we would have had had we given the deal to the highest bidder, but now we've got to end up paying \$2.3 million to pick up the cost for renovations that you assured us would be paid for by Cara. I ask you again, Premier, how can you justify this deal entered into by the chair of your single biggest annual fundraising event, a deal that cost Ontario taxpayers \$5 million?

Hon Mr Coburn: Whenever the contract was signed, part of the agreement was that work had to be done at Ontario Place. Cara went ahead and did that work at a tremendous saving, rather than have the government do it. Part of the contract that was signed was, if it's not a good deal for both parties, there's an opt-out clause, which Cara exercised. At the end of the day the \$2.3 million was paid. It was a far better deal for the taxpayers than the millions of dollars it would have cost to fix it up had we done it through the government.

I would like to indicate as well that we have a wider variety of food operators down there now that are well received by those who visit Ontario Place, and we've reduced the dependence on the taxpayer by well over \$9 million.

1500

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. We are now told that you have turned to prayer as the answer to the problems your scheme of hydro privatization and deregulation has created. Your government used to say that Ontario had plenty of power, so that unlike California, deregulation would go off without a hitch. That was Jim Wilson, former energy minister, in 2001. He was wrong. Jim Wilson promised overall hydro prices would reduce by

\$3 billion to \$6 billion after privatization and deregulation. Wrong again. Jim Wilson also said that electricity conservation and electricity efficiency strategies were useless, and that's why the Conservative government terminated them. Clearly wrong again.

Premier, have you now turned to prayer because everything that your government said in promoting hydro privatization and deregulation hasn't worked?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, the leader of the third party will know that we have not privatized hydro, either OPG or Hydro One. He knows that for a fact. He stands up and prefaces his question with "Well, now that you've privatized hydro, rates have gone up."

He will also know, having been in Bob Rae's cabinet, that we have imported power for as long as there has been an Ontario Hydro or an OPG or a Hydro One. He knows that in the regular course of business, when there is not enough supply during peak periods in Ontario, we import power from other jurisdictions, such as Quebec, Manitoba, Michigan and New York state. He knows that, he knows it has gone on for decades, yet he stands up in the House and pretends that this is something brand new and it's just happening now in the last few months or years.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Eves: Pardon?

Interjection: Short-term memory loss.

Hon Mr Eves: As a matter of fact, it has been going on for probably 50, 60, 70 years in the province.

Mr Hampton: Premier, don't misunderstand me. Prayer is good. But you said that you had the legal authority to sell off Hydro One and that would be good for consumers. You were wrong again. But don't feel bad; the Liberals agreed with you on that one. You said that selling a minority stake in Hydro One would be a good thing, but then you later admitted that was wrong too. You said that hydro deregulation would promote meaningful competition and bring down prices. Wrong again. You said that temporary hydro rate caps would pay for themselves. In 12 months, you're already \$600 million wrong on that one. You said private power companies would not gouge consumers in the privatized market, but Brascan's outrageous gouging of the people of Wawa proved you wrong there.

As I said, prayer is good, but don't you think it's time to admit that hydro privatization and deregulation hasn't worked the way you thought it would?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, I never said at least three quarters of the things he said. He sort of embellishes the truth and makes—except for maybe the part about the Liberals agreeing with us.

The government of Ontario does not control the weather in the province. Obviously any time there is a peak demand, the province has now, and always has had, to import power from other jurisdictions. What we said was that over a four-year period of time this fund will pay for itself. In the previous four years of time that fund would have had a surplus of \$200 million in it. So the

fact that he says today, after 11 or 12 months, you'd be this much behind is interesting, but this is a four-year plan, not an 11-month plan or a 12-month plan.

If you want to talk about importing power, the highest net importing year of power in the history of the province that I can lay my hands on was the year 1990 when you two people shared that privilege and you were in power with your grandiose schemes for power.

Mr Hampton: Premier, you also said that Pickering A nuclear station would be back in service producing electricity three years ago. Wrong on that one. You then gave four more dates when Pickering A would be back producing electricity. Wrong on all of those. Most recently, you and your energy minister said that Pickering A would be producing electricity by June. Wrong again. You said that Bruce A nuclear station would be back this spring producing electricity. Wrong again. Then you promised that your \$100-million temporary emergency generators would be producing power by June 15. Wrong again.

Premier, prayer is good, but first you must repent. Do you admit hydro privatization hasn't worked and recognize that public power is the answer?

Hon Mr Eves: I'm happy to see that the leader of the third party has another occupation he can fall back on if required. That was actually very good, Howard. That was quite good.

To the leader of the third party, I would say that there are going to be 2,500 more megawatts of power on stream this summer. Even the IMO report which came out recently indicates that when those 2,500 megawatts are up and running, in addition to the 800 that are running this summer and weren't running last summer at Bruce, we are going to have 11% more power in the province. That's going to happen within a matter of a few days or weeks, and when that happens, we are going to have 11% more capacity than we had last year.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Again to the Premier, first you must confess your sins; then you pray.

Premier, this week we have had multiple revelations concerning corporations that gave thousands to the Conservative Party and then got millions in Conservative government contracts. Cara Operations gave thousands of dollars to your party; then they got an Ontario Place contract for \$50 million. Meanwhile, everyone who works at Ontario Place seemed to know it was a bad idea, a bad deal, but they were ignored. Now Ontario taxpayers are on the hook for a further \$2.3 million.

Your pal John Danson's Unauthorized Solutions Inc gave over \$6,000 to the Minister of Health in his leadership bid; then he got a \$1.2-million government contract to promote "healthy lifestyles," even though a nearly identical proposal had already been turned down before the contribution.

A group of private power companies pay your party over \$170,000, then get \$100 million in private power contracts.

Premier, these deals benefit your financial contributors but they don't benefit the public of Ontario. Are the people of Ontario wrong to think that something looks very fishy here?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The leader of the third party sees a skeleton under every single bed, in every single closet. He thinks there is always something subversive going on and there are some secret deals being made somewhere.

I would say to the leader of the third party that on at least two of the three issues that he talked about there were requests for proposals that went out, and they were followed in the ordinary course of business, as far as I am aware.

I wish that we could all be perfect and that nobody would ever go down a road where they might make a mistake, and I know that everything the Bob Rae government did was absolutely perfect. That's why we were spending a million dollars an hour more than we were taking in in revenue when you left office.

Mr Hampton: Premier, no one out there in the public believes that your big corporate contributors don't get favours from your government. No one believes that, because the average Ontarian, no matter how hard he or she works, is not going to get a \$2.3-million deal for walking away from a contract that they made with your government. No matter how hard they work, the average Ontarian is not going to get a \$100-million private power contract, even though the average Ontarian is more than capable of producing the zero megawatts that Toromont and TransCanada have produced so far.

It's time, Premier, to recognize what the public already knows: there are too many big corporate contributions in our political system. If it isn't corrupt, it looks corrupt to them. So I say to you, Premier, and I say to the Liberals: will you end the corporate contributions and union contributions to our political system, so that it becomes a matter of citizen involvement and not who has the most money and who can get the biggest contributions? Will you end this abuse?

1510

Hon Mr Eves: With respect to the generation contracts that have been let, first of all, it's a prudent thing to prepare for that eventuality, something that no previous government ever bothered to do, although perhaps they should have. With respect to those contracts, they were all put through a very proper request for proposal process and were tendered. The appropriate tendering and successful proponent won in every single case.

With respect to the comment he made at the end and the question that he posed, I understand he has a very philosophically different point of view; that is, he believes that everything done in the political process should be paid for 100% by the taxpayers of Ontario. We actually believe that private individuals, unions and com-

panies should be able to donate to the political candidate or party of their choice, and therein lies the difference.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question?

Ms Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Premier. I'd like to talk to you about a company that went through a very proper request for proposal process and was not successful. The name of that company was Unauthorized Solutions. They received a letter from the Ministry of Health telling them, "Thank you, but you did not meet the requirements for this RFP." In the last several days, we have now been reading in the news media about the Minister of Health and his relationship with this company, Unauthorized Solutions.

Given what we now know, that the Minister of Health has in fact benefited from the individual affiliated with Unauthorized Solutions, who does donate and participate in other political parties but has a very significant relationship with the Minister of Health as a fundraiser to his leadership campaign and a significant donor to his leadership—the Minister of Health has now confirmed that his office was in fact involved in getting Unauthorized Solutions a project worth \$1.2 million after the Ministry of Health's office said that regrettably the proposal did not meet the necessary requirements. I'd like to know what you have to say about this matter and what kind of investigation you are now going through with the Minister of Health.

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, I presume the company she's talking about is the one that's run by one John Danson, who came forward with a different proposal than the RFP he lost that actually had some Olympic athletes participating, talking about a very constructive program against smoking for young people in Ontario. There was a certain amount set aside in the Ministry of Health budget for that anti-smoking program. The amount of \$10 million comes to mind, although I'm doing this from memory, so I stand to be corrected. The minister's office and the minister decided to have a pilot project and thought this one was very inventive. It involved Olympic athletes, people that young people in this province might actually listen to, in terms of not smoking in the future. It was acted upon in a pilot project fashion, which has actually been around for many years in this place.

Ms Pupatello: Actually, I think you do a disservice to Olympians by having them participate in a program that doesn't appear to have gone through all the proper steps you just mentioned, which you suggest all these proposals go through. Let me show you the letter from the Minister of Health to this individual, which says they did not meet the requirements. Then we have a letter to St Michael's Hospital saying, "Here's \$1.3 million," for something that apparently the hospital is now on record as saying they had nothing to do with the project; they simply funnelled the funding. Funding was funnelled to St Michael's to Unauthorized Solutions, the same company that did not meet the criteria from the Ministry of Health in the first place. If this is such a wonderful program, you'd think you would have done those Olympians a service to have them participate in a request

for a proposal. Is this some kind of fund available to ministers for their high-end donors or those individuals who participate as fundraisers in their leadership bid, that they all of a sudden take a program that didn't meet ministry requirements, turn it into a pilot project and hand it over without other companies out in Ontario who can equally participate in running a pilot project—

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

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member will know that pilot projects have been used by all three parties in this House when they were in government for various issues. For example, there was a very effective pilot project run through Sunnybrook and Women's College about cochlear ear implants for, I believe, \$1.73 million by the previous Bob Rae government. There were similar ones used by the David Peterson government.

Having said that, she will be quite familiar with John Danson, being the son of Barney Danson, a former Pierre Elliott Trudeau cabinet minister. I'm not going to stand in this House and question his integrity or the Minister of Health's integrity. I will say to her, though, that I had a conversation with the Minister of Health, who is out of province today on business for the Ministry of Health in Washington. He has indicated to me that he is referring this entire matter to the Integrity Commissioner. In case you or anybody else thinks that this wasn't appropriately done, the Integrity Commissioner can rule on this issue.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. First of all, I want to congratulate him on his superb leadership in the fight to get the federal government to come up with its fair share of the costs relating to SARS.

For almost 13 years, I've been privileged to serve in the Ontario Legislature. During this time, I've always considered the elected municipal councillors in my riding to be my colleagues. I've always sought to build strong working relationships with them. We've worked together in the interest of our communities. I've always worked to solve the problems they've brought to my attention.

The government is looking at a policy that would compel municipalities to hold referenda before they can increase property taxes. This proposal is not being well received by our municipal partners and has generated a negative response from a number of municipal councils in my riding of Waterloo-Wellington.

I'm aware that recently the minister had an opportunity in the city of Kitchener to address the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario, LUMCO, a key partner in the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. He spoke to them about the government's property tax referendum proposal. Can the minister advise this House about the policy proposal on municipal referenda and on his work with municipalities on this issue?

Hon David Young (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Protecting the interests of taxpayers is the most important principle this government holds. But the

Ernie Eves government believes that there is indeed more work to be done to protect taxpayers' wallets. I've been proud to work with the member for Waterloo-Wellington as part of the government—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Young: I will say to you, sir, that I am particularly proud that he and I have supported 225 tax cuts for the people of this great province.

Since 1995, not only have we delivered personal tax cuts but we have also lowered taxes on businesses that have helped create well in excess of a million new jobs. I will note that the Liberals voted against each one.

When it comes to delivering the same kind of protection, Premier Eves and I are there. We want to ensure that the same protection exists for taxpayers at the municipal level. In fact, I know there is a lot we can learn from some of our municipal leaders. One example is in Puslinch township. Mayor Brad Whitcombe and his council delivered a tax freeze to their taxpayers this year. That jurisdiction has the lowest tax rate in Wellington county.

Mr Arnott: I want to thank the minister for his response and for his willingness to communicate with our municipal partners. On this issue of property tax referenda, they want their views to be clearly understood. A few days ago, Wellington county council passed a unanimous resolution asking the government to set aside the proposal obligating councils to have property tax referenda before contemplating tax increases. The town of Minto called a special meeting of council and insisted that I attend. We discussed this proposal, and they voiced their disagreement with it. Mayor Wayne Roth of the township of Wilmot and the councils of the township of Centre Wellington, the township of Guelph-Eramosa, the city of Kitchener and the township of Wellington North have all expressed their strong concerns about the referendum issue.

1520

What can the minister tell my municipalities in Waterloo-Wellington in response to the objections they are bringing forward? Will he assure them that their views will be thoroughly considered before any final decisions are made on extending the principle of taxpayer protection to the municipal level of government?

Hon Mr Young: This government has a very firm commitment to protecting taxpayers, and part of that is recognizing that many of the best solutions may well lie in what municipalities already do. We will certainly consider the thoughts and insight of those individuals as we move forward with this policy, and we will.

Governments need to listen to taxpayers. We need to listen to them in order to learn from them, to earn their trust and to seek approval when it comes to taxes. This government understands that. We want municipal governments across the province to understand that as well. In some instances, they do, and in some instances, they don't.

I know that most local politicians are true friends of the taxpayer. They understand, as does this government,

that people demand lower taxes and should have the final say.

Extending the Taxpayer Protection Act that we have provincially to the municipal realm may well be a controversial issue. But I say to you that I know from knocking on doors in Willowdale and across this province that it is something that the people of this province want to see happen, and it is something that this government will deliver.

INSURANCE RATES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I'll go to the Deputy Premier. As you well know, people all across the province of Ontario—car drivers, owners—are being hit with fantastic rate increases. Your government promised to get auto insurance rates under control. That was some 199 days ago. You have yet to deliver on that promise.

But there's another concern in addition to that one, and that is property insurance premiums. Those are going through the roof as well. I'll give you one particular instance here. Gianfranco Belli, a homeowner in Sudbury, tells us that last year he paid \$309-plus taxes for home insurance. This year, it's going to cost him \$649 plus taxes. That's roughly a 125% increase for his home insurance premiums.

We've been focusing a great deal of attention, and quite rightly so, on auto insurance premiums, but what Mr Belli wants to know is, what are you going to do in government to help him and homeowners just like him across the province of Ontario?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition. We certainly recognize that insurance is extremely important to the homeowners in the province of Ontario. Obviously, our number one commitment is to ensure that there continues to be a very strong and vibrant insurance market in Ontario that can capably serve the consumers.

As the Leader of the Opposition knows, the regulator is responsible for monitoring the financial health of the insurance companies and making sure they can fulfill their obligations.

We need to make sure that homeowners are aware of the fact that they should be working with their brokers and their agents to obtain a better understanding of the factors that obviously influence their premiums. They need to do everything that they possibly can. Certainly our government will be doing everything that we can to protect homeowners.

Mr McGuinty: You should know that when constituents phone us, they don't want to talk about a regulator. You should know, as well, that the regulator doesn't regulate property insurance premiums. They're looking after auto insurance premiums. You should know that, at a minimum.

It's not just affecting homeowners. Small businesses are also getting hit. Here's the story of a bowling alley in

Kirkland Lake—the Uptown Bowl. It's owned by Fred and Sonia Lang. Last year, their insurance was \$3,000. They didn't make a single claim. This year, the same coverage would cost over \$7,000. The only way they could afford to pay their insurance was to reduce their coverage and to assume greater personal risk.

I ask you again, when is your government going to start to do something—anything—when it comes to property insurance premiums, either for homeowners or small businesses, across the province?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think it's very important to put it into some perspective. I think we have to recognize the fact that the market has changed. Throughout the world, there are different experiences occurring as a result of insurance. But I want to certainly let the Leader of the Opposition know that we are committed to doing everything that we possibly can to ensure that we have a strong industry. By having a strong industry, we can better protect the homeowners in the province of Ontario.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the minister responsible for seniors, the hard-working and very effective member for Mississauga East, who is going to be in the great riding of Perth-Middlesex this weekend to join the local Portuguese community for the Listowel Festival of the Holy Spirit.

Minister, our government is committed to supporting seniors, and I know you have been working hard on behalf of all Ontarians, including those Portuguese-Canadian seniors you'll meet this weekend. An important part of our commitment is Bill 43, the Ontario Home Property Tax Relief for Seniors Act, which proposes to eliminate the burden of residential education property tax paid by seniors who rent their own homes. If passed, the act would provide \$450 million in benefits for our seniors next year. About 945,000 senior households would each save an average of \$475 per year. Minister, I would like you to stand in your place and tell me what the reception is from seniors.

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I thank my colleague for the question. Ontario's seniors have contributed to the growth and prosperity of Ontario, and yes, our commitment to Ontario's seniors is real. We all know what the Liberals have said. They said no to Ontario's seniors. They said they would roll back the tax relief we passed today. Our government feels our seniors deserve this break. The United Senior Citizens of Ontario, representing approximately 300,000 seniors, support this measure. The Canadian snowbirds support this measure. Ontarians support our seniors. Do you want to know who said no to our seniors? Dalton McGuinty.

Mr Johnson: I thank the honourable member for that response. I know that the roughly 13,500 seniors in my riding of Perth-Middlesex would want me to express their gratitude for the work you do on their behalf. You have also introduced legislation to eliminate mandatory

retirement at age 65 in Ontario. This legislation is great news for older workers in Ontario. Minister, please tell this House why you think it's important to give older workers the right to decide when to retire.

Hon Mr DeFaria: Our government believes seniors should have the right to choose to work past the age of 65 if they so wish. It will put choice back in the hands of individuals. The freedom to choose should belong to everyone, regardless of age. People over 65 are productive and valuable contributors to the Ontario economy, now more than ever before. It's clear that our government feels Ontario's seniors deserve all we can provide. Let's give them the respect they deserve. We on this side say that our seniors are adult enough to decide when they will retire.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, we were amazed and somewhat dismayed to hear that you think barbecues are a major cause of smog, while at the same time denying the role of coal plants as the single biggest contributors to smog. Your solution to deadly smog is to get everybody to stop barbecuing, and the Premier's is to order in Swiss Chalet. Minister, this is a very serious problem. Over 2,000 people are going to die prematurely in Ontario because of smog. You have to stop fiddling around the edges here, fooling people that this is going to solve the problem. Once again I am asking you today, will you commit to taking real action on smog by adopting the NDP's Public Power plan for clean air?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Minister of the Environment): The preamble is cruel, it's untrue and it's just bloody ridiculous, so I'm not answering the question.

Ms Churley: The minister said it. Minister, I'm going to tell you something else you said here: "The private sector asked us to get out of large-scale government conservation programs." He went on to say, "They may have made the odd person feel good, but they had absolutely no effect."

Minister, I'm going to ask you to step outside and you can see the effects of doing nothing about smog. Check out the emergency room on a day like today. Visit a classroom and you can see a number of students using puffers to help them deal with their serious breathing problems.

1530

In the light of the very real health impact of smog, your government's response to date is a cruel joke. Tell us today that you repent, that you didn't mean it when you said that conservation didn't work and that you have not caved in to your buddies in the private sector and you will bring in a strong conservation program, that you now believe in conservation. Tell us that, Minister. Will you repent?

Hon Mr Wilson: That quote comes from a briefing from the NDP-appointed deputy minister and assistant deputy minister, who said, and had the charts to prove, that the NDP's conservation program of maybe free fridges but not free fridges, little stickers everywhere, millions and millions and millions of dollars spent on energy conservation—and what happened to energy? It soared through the roof. Usage went way up exponentially. So it had no effect at all on usage.

And who ran the coal plants full-out every smog day that they were in government? The NDP. Who sold more power out of coal plants to the United States at cut-rate prices? The NDP. Who bought power back at outrageous prices? The NDP.

I don't know how they've got the gall to ask these questions. Your energy conservation program was a fake. It didn't have any effect. John Baird's is going to work a lot better, I can tell you, when he brings it in.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I also have a question for the Minister of the Environment. I'm assuming you've heard of the toxic tar ponds site in Sydney, Nova Scotia, which has become known as the most toxic site in Canada. Ontario is accepting untreated toxic material from the Domtar tank on the Sydney, Nova Scotia, tar ponds. It was scheduled to be trucked into Ontario last winter and is now rescheduled for this summer. Apparently the contaminated soil that caused a lot of people to become sick has already been landfilled, untreated, here in Ontario at Clean Harbors, without notice. Please explain to the residents of Sarnia-Lambton and the people of Ontario why you are allowing the importation of highly toxic waste and then simply landfilling it untreated, a practice outlawed in every other jurisdiction. Why has Ontario become the toxic dumping ground for other jurisdictions under your government's watch?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Minister of the Environment): The waste in question is handled under certificates of approval. No liquid hazardous waste is allowed to be put into a landfill site or into this site—as you've been accusing the government of for quite a long time now—without pre-treatment. The certificates of approval aren't in the hands of politicians; they're in the hands of the directors, the bureaucrats who do this. They have no axe to grind and they have no company to be in favour with. They're there to protect the people of Ontario—and doing a fine good job, I might add.

Ms Di Cocco: I'd suggest that the minister learn exactly what untreated hazardous landfilling of toxic waste means, because that's what is happening, whether you know it or not.

Your government is responsible for developing a gigantic toxic legacy for the future. You are watching the creation of an environmental cesspool by transferring thousands of tonnes of toxic waste from Nova Scotia and

have already landfilled over a million tonnes there. It's coming from jurisdictions other than Ontario, because Ontario has the lowest standards and because it's done on the cheap.

You fast-tracked the environmental assessment process in 1997 and you gave permission for the site to expand. Your lax rules are wrong, irresponsible and a hazard to people's health. You're creating a much larger problem than that now in Sydney, Nova Scotia. How do you answer to those facts?

Hon Mr Wilson: The site in question has an inspector on-site full time from the Ministry of the Environment. They check everything that's going in. They make sure it abides by the laws. This government updated those laws to make sure they were a lot tougher than when the Liberals were in office. I have confidence in our people in the government who are paid to protect the environment. As I said, they have no axe to grind, except to protect the environment for your children and grandchildren and their children and grandchildren.

If the honourable member has some concrete proof that someone's breaking the law, then go to the police or go to the environment police outside of this place or go to the OPP and file a complaint. You've been going on about this for quite a while. I know it's a great political issue, but go talk to the inspector on-site and ask him or her, depending on the day, whether they're doing their job and whether they have the confidence of the people of Ontario.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Highway 205, half of 410: just this past Monday the Premier was in Brampton to announce a major infrastructure investment, the extension of Highway 410.

Brampton's a booming city. We've got a population of over 325,000 people. Many of these people work in Brampton. Many of them commute to Toronto or elsewhere in the GTA. But most of all, these people need to get from where they are to somewhere else at some point. As such, we need an efficient transportation system to meet these growing needs. How is this investment going to help us? How is it going to help Brampton's strong economy and our quality of life?

Hon Frank Klees (Minister of Transportation): I want to thank the member from Brampton Centre for his question. I want to say, first of all, that the member has been a strong advocate for the extension of the 410. No one has spoken as strongly in favour of this project as the member.

I had the privilege of attending with the Premier and area MPPs to make an announcement for a nine-kilometre extension of the 410. Truly Brampton and Peel region, in fact the entire GTA, are rapidly growing. We depend on our transportation system, and not only for the movement of goods. Some trillion dollars' worth of goods are moved on our highways every year; \$325 million

worth of goods are moving across the 410 right now. It's a growing and expanding area. The extension of the 410 is going to improve the quality of life. It'll strengthen the economy. It'll ensure we continue to have the infrastructure in place that we need for a growing economy in this province.

Mr Spina: We know it's important to invest in other modes of transportation to provide choice for our commuters. We have commuters who not only go in and out of Toronto from the suburbs; we also know it's important for jobs and industry in the suburbs for people who come to work outside Toronto, because that's where a lot of jobs are. A reliable and efficient public transit system in Brampton and throughout the GTA gives more people the option to leave their cars at home. Minister, what action is the ministry taking to improve transit in the GTA, and what do you have coming for more attractive commuting options?

Hon Mr Klees: The member refers to the importance of transit, and our government certainly agrees with that. We've invested some \$3.9 billion for transit since 1995. We announced some 645 million in additional dollars for interregional transportation earlier this month. Of that, we allocated some \$73 million last January for GTA municipalities to buy new vehicles to refurbish their transit fleets or extend the life of their existing fleets. This includes some \$7.2 million for Mississauga, Brampton and Peel region. This investment is just part of our 10-year commitment of \$325 million a year—\$3.25 billion over 10 years—to transit in this province. Our challenge now is to bring the federal government to the table to match that \$3.25 billion. Let's have the federal government at the table and we can really do something about transit.

1540

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): My question is to the Deputy Premier. As the legislative session moves toward a close, my community continues to struggle with the fact that your government has yet to allocate promised funding for hospital restructuring. This is an important issue to the well-being of my citizens and our part of eastern Ontario. We have to get immediate action.

The process to develop an effective hospital services initiative has been a strenuous and ongoing procedure in my riding. Through the entire deliberations, however, local officials have demonstrated a commitment to the project that has been developed: a consistent vision for hospital services within the community. Despite this, the directives set forth by the local hospital council have not always received your attention, as they deserve.

In 1998, for example, a health care restructuring committee overturned a local health council directive for hospital development. This decision frustrated the local community and squandered thousands of taxpayers' dollars away. Not to be dismayed, the local community

was determined to see their project go ahead. After a town hall meeting attended by my colleague Lyn McLeod and the president of the medical academy, Dr Foley, in April 2002, the Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph submitted a proposal to the ministry for health and long-term-care consideration.

In March 2003, the ministry announced its intention to support the plan and included the establishment of a community-based corporation to oversee the joint governance of two hospitals.

Deputy Premier, as I stated, the funding has been agreed to in principle—a 30-day period for public consultation—nearly two months ago. I ask you, on behalf of my constituents of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, when will you announce the funding?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I appreciate the very thoughtful question from the member opposite. I know that when I was Minister of Health, he did certainly work hard on behalf of his community. I want to take this opportunity, as you leave this Legislature, to personally extend my congratulations to you for your hard work. I can assure you that the officials at the Ministry of Health are working as hard as they possibly can in order to resolve that situation and provide the appropriate funding.

Mr Cleary: Thank you, Deputy Premier, for your comments. When Minister Clement visited eastern Ontario last February, he was quick to applaud the community efforts which were demonstrated at the Winchester Memorial Hospital in Dundas, the support and the hard work of the dedicated local community. We have that same dedication in the eastern part of the riding, and the people in my community want to get at the restructuring of the hospital services.

The process of hospital restructuring has depended on funding, and the community has waited long enough. I understand that the province has been waging a difficult battle with SARS, and I think we've all supported that. I want to ensure that the health care of my constituents is not compromised and that the wishes of the community are fully granted. The community has lived up to its end of the agreement, and now it's time for the province to step up.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again, I do appreciate, as I said in my first response, the thoughtful manner and the very sincere question that has been asked by the member. I can certainly tell the member that I will personally communicate your concerns to the Minister of Health and personally encourage him to reach a resolution. Obviously that money would flow as would be appropriate in a timely fashion.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): My question is to the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Last Thursday in the Owen Sound Sun Times, Wayne Richardson of Bruce Grey Children's

Services claimed that your ministry is significantly underfunding this agency. I understand that there has been a historical funding inequity for children's mental health in Bruce-Grey. What has your ministry done to fix this problem with Bruce Grey Children's Services?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for the question. He's a fierce champion of his constituents, and we appreciate that.

My ministry recognizes that there have been challenges for this agency, and we have made every effort to address this with Bruce Grey Children's Services. One of the ways we have done this is by increasing the funding to Bruce Grey Children's Services by 50% since the year 2000. In fact, since November 2001, southwest region has received \$1.5 million to support children's mental health services for children up to the age of six. Although these counties constitute only 18% of the children's population in the region, they actually receive 26% of the funding as part of our ministry's efforts to redress historical funding imbalances. I want to assure my colleague that I have made every effort in any announcements from my ministry to include an equity component to make sure that funding is fair all across this province.

I would also like to say to my colleague that this area has, in addition to the 50% new funding, a number of new services that come to this region, such as intensive child and family services.

Mr Murdoch: Thank you for your answer, Madam Minister, but in the article Mr Richardson goes on to say, "The government hasn't made children's mental health a priority until now." I find this an odd statement and feel that you must correct the record on this inaccurate statement.

Hon Mrs Elliott: I too am offended by this inaccurate statement, and I do want to correct the record. In 2003-04, our government will invest over \$400 million in children's mental health. This is a 56% increase from when we took office. In our recent budget, we committed to a children's centre of excellence for mental health at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

We know we need to do more. That is why in The Road Ahead our government has committed to 50 million new dollars for children's mental health over the next three years to ensure that we have the best possible care for vulnerable children. We've been very clear. I would like to note that our opposition across the way have not one word in their campaign document about children's mental health. It speaks to our commitment and to our understanding of how very important it is to provide children's mental health services not only in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound but for children all across Ontario.

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 Dr Richard Hamilton, a great educator from New Jersey, and Dr

George Lewis and Mr Harpal Dhaliwal from Universities123. If we could welcome them, please.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As you know, the constituency of Timmins-James Bay is very far from Queen's Park, but if people could afford to drive here, I'd like to be able to recognize them. There's nobody from Timmins-James Bay, but if there was, I'd welcome them.

1550

PETITIONS

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I'm pleased to be able to rise today and to offer a petition with roughly 3,100 names on it from the Free Flamborough group for the de-amalgamation from Hamilton. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislature Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the citizens of Flamborough had no direct say in the creation of the new supercity of Hamilton; and

"Whereas the government, by regulation and legislation, forced the recent amalgamation against the overwhelming majority of the people of Flamborough; and

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services or reduced costs; and

"Whereas the promise of tax decreases has not been met, with an average increase of 30% since amalgamation, and the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation has already exceeded the promised amount by 88%;

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order, return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Flamborough, and, in so doing, remove the bureaucratic, inefficient, single-tier governance that has been imposed on the residents of Flamborough."

I just noticed the last duly elected mayor of the town of Flamborough. I'm pleased to present this in this, the people's place, today.

VISITORS

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): On a point of order, Speaker: I'd like the members to recognize the members of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance, affectionately known as TOGA, accompanied by the intelligent and charming Minister of Agriculture, Helen Johns. They are having a reception in committee room number 2 in a few moments. We look forward to having a good time with the greenhouse folks,

the largest agriculture sector in the riding of Erie-Lincoln.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Welcome to our Legislature. Of course, that isn't a point of order.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's indeed my pleasure today to read a petition, which I have relentlessly read for the last period of time. It's quite unique.

"Whereas the province of Ontario has delayed the second phase of the equity in education tax credit 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 a 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 credit supports parental choice in education and makes 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...."

In light of the legislation passed here today, I believe this petition has been responded to. I'm pleased to sign it.

SPECIAL SERVICES AT HOME PROGRAM

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I have a petition sent to me by the Special Services At Home Provincial Coalition in the form of individually signed letters.

"Whereas I am a citizen who has a family member/friend with a disability. Living with a disability is a life-long reality. I need to know that this government means what it says about its promise to provide people with disabilities opportunities to live meaningful lives close to their families and in their community. I call on this government to put their philosophy into action, and take leadership in supporting families who care for a child or other family member in their home.

"Whereas the special services at home program is cost-effective and it works. Yet, your ministry spends only 6% of its billion-dollar developmental services budget on special services at home to support 18,500 families. The underfunding of SSAH has created undue stress and hardship for families with members with a disability. Families simply do not have enough support.

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the government to:

"(1) Make special services at home a program of first choice.

"(2) Increase the special services at home budget by \$25 million provincially to help meet the current needs of families.

“(3) Develop a simplified, efficient application process.

“Please tell me what you, Minister Elliott, are going to do to help us.”

That is to be directed to the Minister of Community, Family and Children’s Services, Minister Elliott. I’m very pleased to sign my name to this petition.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I have a petition to the Legislature of the province of Ontario and it’s with regard to land lease communities. It’s signed by about people and it reads as follows:

“Whereas we are being classed as second-class citizens of the province in that we do not have the same rights and privileges as other citizens

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

“We the undersigned homeowners and voters of the province of Ontario, petition the Legislature to amend the Assessment Act, O.Reg. 282/98, to allow us to have assessment notices and municipal tax bills to be sent directly to us instead of to a third party. Amendment is needed immediately before an election is called. Please do not waste the time and money to produce the property assessment and classification review, produced by Marcel Beaubien, MPP.”

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a petition here that has been signed by people in Stratford, Sudbury and Oshawa, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term care facilities by 15% over three years, or \$3.02 per day in the first year and \$2 in the second year and \$2 in the third year, effective September 1, 2002; and

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

“Whereas this increase is above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario for 2002; and

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

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

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

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

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

“We demand that Premier Eves reduce the 15% increase over three years in accommodation costs to no more than the cost-of-living increase annually and that the provincial government provide adequate funding for nursing and personal care to a level that is at least the average standard for nursing and personal care in those 10 jurisdictions included in the government’s own funded study.”

I agree with the petition, I’ve signed it accordingly, and I’m handing it over to Jenna.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas, prior to the introduction of the tax credit, Ontario parents whose children attended independent schools faced a 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 reintroduce 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.”

I realize that we passed this legislation today, but I thought it important that we still present the petition from the citizens of Ontario. I’m pleased to give it to Sabrina from our home riding of Brampton Centre. But more particularly, we’re Heart Lake people, right?

Interjection: Yes.

Mr Spina: Just north of Vodden.

HOME CARE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a petition here which is addressed to the Ontario Legislature, and I’m filing this on behalf of my colleague Mr Rick Bartolucci from Sudbury. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Manitoulin-Sudbury Community Care Access Centre will be cutting homemaking services to seniors and the disabled effective June 23, 2003; and

“Whereas nursing services, personal support and homemaking services should be of equal importance; and

“Whereas most seniors and the disabled live on fixed incomes and cannot afford to purchase private home-making services; and

“Whereas many seniors and disabled people will be forced to move into institutions once their homemaking is cut off;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Eves government increase the CCAC budget in order to allow them the necessary funds to enable them to continue to provide homemaking services to those who are eligible.”

I agree with the petition and have signed it accordingly, because this is the area where funding really should be insisted upon for our seniors.

1600

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I’ve got hundreds of names here, possibly thousands, on a petition against the continuing actions of supervisors in the Hamilton-Wentworth, Ottawa-Carleton and Toronto district school boards:

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

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

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

“Whereas the district school boards in Hamilton-Wentworth, Ottawa-Carleton and Toronto refused to make further cuts and were summarily replaced with government-appointed supervisors;

“Whereas these supervisors are undermining classroom education for hundreds of thousands of children;

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

I strongly support this petition and affix my signature.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the province of Ontario has delayed the second phase of the equity in education tax credit 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 credit supports parental choice in education and makes independent schools more accessible to all Ontario families—”

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): How long did it take you to write all that?

Mr Spina: It’s all typed out. It’s a legitimate petition, Mr Patten, thank you.

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully request that the government of Ontario reintroduce 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.”

This is signed by Lise Campbell of Callahan Drive and David Campbell of Palmer Court. I realize that this legislation went through today but, nevertheless, we’re presenting the petition from the citizens of Ontario, and I’m so pleased to do so.

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 24, 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): I believe we have unanimous consent for a representative of each of the parties to do up to five minutes in tribute to the imminent retirement of my colleague the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is there consent? It is agreed.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): It is with a mixture of emotions that I rise to say a few words about our friend and colleague Lyn McLeod. On the one hand, I’m paying tribute to someone whom we all respect, and that’s something to feel very good about. On the other hand, if this is indeed Lyn’s final day in the Legislature, then we are losing something precious today, and that’s a sad thing for a great many people. For a start, it’s a sad thing for the people of Thunder Bay. The people in that city and in that region have had 14 years of public service of a quality that I think is unmatched anywhere. The people in that community have been very lucky to have her.

Lyn was the first female party leader in Ontario’s history. As Liberals, we are very proud of that, and I know that in this House we all honour that. These days, thankfully, prominent female politicians are less and less an exception, and that’s a good thing. But it still matters. When I try to tell my daughter that she can be whatever she wants to be as long as she works hard and well, Lyn McLeod is who I point to.

I mentioned that Lyn’s departure is a sad thing for a great many people, and I think I can speak for everyone

in this Legislature when I say we are losing a valued colleague. Lyn transcended the partisan politics that so often characterize this chamber. She didn't really care about putting cabinet ministers on the spot, and she didn't really care about making the government look bad. What she deeply cared about was the people in her riding and the people of this province. Everything she did in this Legislature, everything she said, was about them.

This is obviously a particularly sad day for our party. We're losing a former cabinet minister, obviously a former leader, but most of all, we're going to be seeing a great deal less of a very dear friend. Lyn has always been, as she is today, classy, compassionate, the best kind of friend and colleague you could possibly have. For myself, I'm losing a constant source of wisdom and support.

I want to tell you a story about our transition period—old leader giving way to new. I, of course, was taking over her office, and I'm sure you can imagine how awkward that might have been. Not with Lyn. When I got there, all her stuff was gone. Everything was in order. She'd cleaned it all out. There wasn't a sign that she'd been there, except in the top left-hand drawer of the desk I found one pair of pantyhose. That is the only time that Lyn has ever let me down. What was I going to do with those? My legs are obviously much longer.

The fact that Lyn is leaving politics is bad news for everybody in this province. Yes, she has represented Thunder Bay specifically and she has worked with us particularly, but she worked tirelessly for all the people of Ontario. She has always put the public need first. She's been a leader, a minister and a critic, but more than anything else, she's been an advocate for her constituents and an advocate for this entire province. If everyone in Ontario practised politics the way Lyn McLeod has, this province would be a better place.

So it's only fair that after so many years of service to the people of this province, she is now free to spend some time with her family. I'm pleased to report that that family is growing. I'm happy to tell you that Lyn's daughter Robin has recently given birth to a healthy little girl. I don't think it will take long for little Mia to realize she has one terrific grandmother.

1610

I want to end by saying something on behalf of all of us to our friend Lyn. We're going to miss you a great deal, Lyn. You've been a dear friend, a great supporter and a constant inspiration. I think you embody what public service should be. I could go on and on, but what I really want to say boils down to this: the best of luck to you, Neil, the children, the grandchildren. Thanks to the family for sharing you with us for these many years. On behalf of our party, this Legislature, your constituents and this great province of ours, thank you for all you've brought to us.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): As the party whip for the New Democratic caucus, I'm happy to join here today in saying a few words about Lyn McLeod. I want to echo something Mr McQuinty said at

the very beginning. Lyn has always been one who has brought a certain level-headedness to all the debates she's come into. I've never seen Lyn lose it in the time I've been here, through three elections. She's always kept focused. She's always remembered what her job was as party leader or as a member asking a question, and never made things personal. Sometimes that's something we forget in this business, and that's one of the things I want to thank her for.

I have to say about Lyn, though, that she's got something about the number four. Lyn has been married for 40 years now, she has four children, four grandchildren and she's leaving after four elections. Maybe it's a numeral thing that Lyn is trying to explain to us, that she's hoping for something else to happen with fours. I was wondering to myself, if your favourite number is four and you're going into retirement, what's the other four about? I hope you're able to respond to that a little bit later.

I know, as Dalton indicated earlier, that Lyn became the proud grandparent of her fourth grandchild. You had to see Lyn the day she came into the House. That, to her, and rightfully so, was the biggest thing that was going on in her life. It didn't matter what was going on inside the Legislature. She remembers that at the end of day her family is everything. She was just beaming. You knew something had happened when she walked in the door, and it had to be good news, because she was just beaming with such pride. I remember going down to her and saying, "Lyn, what happened?" I thought it was because she was leaving and she was excited or something. It was all about her fourth grandchild.

I have to say, Lyn, that the first time I met you—you probably don't remember—you were the name on the sign. You see, at Kamiskotia mine, when you were Minister of Natural Resources, you had to sign an order telling people not to go on the abandoned mine site. Back in those days—and I think this was a wise move—they used to put the name of the minister on the signs. My cottage is at Kamiskotia Lake, and every time I went by the old Kamiskotia mine I would see Lyn McLeod's name on that sign as Minister of Natural Resources. One of the stupidest things Bob Rae ever did was to get rid of that rule. Ministers were not allowed under our government to put their names on the signs. For the whole time we were in government and the first term of the Conservatives in government, your name stayed on that sign, for almost 12 years, and I've got to tell you, I'm glad I finally got it down. I just say that in passing. I think it's kind of cute.

I also have to say that a lot of people come to this place and are sometimes a bit beyond themselves when it comes to what they are here for. As a fellow northerner, I've got to say I'm going to miss you because we're only but 10. There are 10 people from northern Ontario between our two caucuses who are here to represent the largest geographical part of this province. We know the challenges we face in northern Ontario, and that's for another debate, but it's been good to have somebody like

Lyn from northern Ontario, albeit not in my party but in the Liberal caucus, because we've been able to say, "It's not just us; it's also Lyn McLeod and other people in northern Ontario who speak to the same issues."

Losing an experienced person on the front benches of the Liberal Party is going to be a loss for northern Ontario. I think we need to acknowledge that because it takes a long time in this business to become really effective in this job.

You have been very effective in your voice, not only for Thunder Bay but for northern Ontario altogether. On behalf of my caucus and the rest of northern Ontario, we want to say that we're going to miss you. Having you help us out in northern Ontario has really been a good thing.

Applause.

Mr Bisson: You can applaud; it's all right, it's fine, it's good.

I also want to say the things you're not going to miss. I know Lyn. Like all of us in northern Ontario, you have to travel down here. I've seen you get on those flights to Thunder Bay when I've had to go up there. That's a long flight you've got to do every week. I'm sure you're not going to miss Air Canada, even though it's a good airline, and I'm sure that you want to give them business because we know they need business these days because of what's going on in the airline. But that's something you're not going to miss.

What you're also not going to miss in this particular job are the long times away from your family. You've been married, as I said at the beginning, for 40 years. You've got your children and grandchildren. One of the demands that is put on all of us in this Legislature is a lot of time from the family in order to devote yourself to your constituents. Your family has been supportive, obviously. They love you a lot and have supported your time in politics. We know this is going to be your chance to go back to your family and your community and to be part of them again and to share them and have them share you as you've not been able to do in your time in politics. We know this going to be your chance to go back to your family and your community and be part of them again and to share them and have them share you as you have not been able to do while you have had this time in politics.

On behalf of all northerners, Lyn, on behalf of the New Democratic caucus and my leader, Howard Hampton, we wish you well. We know this is not adieu; it's only au revoir. Merci.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): It's a pleasure and an honour for me, on behalf of our government, to join with members of the other parties to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of Lyn McLeod, the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan. I first met Lyn when I came here in 1990. I have to tell you, Lyn, that since that time I have certainly developed a tremendous personal respect and admiration for you, your dedication, your hard work, your compassion, your commitment to your constituents and all

the people in the province of Ontario, and your love for your family.

Since 1987, whether as an MPP, a minister or a leader of your party, you have worked tirelessly on behalf of each and every person in this province. In fact, when your leader spoke, I thought to myself that so many of the attributes he gave to you were certainly attributes that I consider when I think of you as well. In all your endeavours, you have certainly earned the admiration, respect and trust of your colleagues on all sides of the House.

Before you came to this Legislature, I knew of you by reputation. You were a highly respected trustee, and you were chair of your local school board. Of course, we had that in common. But it's at the provincial level that Lyn has certainly left a very impressive legacy and mark on the people of this province. When she served as Minister of Colleges and Universities, she was responsible for the creation of Ontario's first French-language college. She also left her mark when she served as Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Energy.

But, you know, it was when Lyn served as the health critic for the Liberal party that I really gained a tremendous amount of insight as to who you are and what you believed in. I can tell you that she fought very hard to ensure that the issues around health care and the concerns of the people in the province of Ontario continued to be a priority for us and for our government. She certainly kept me on my feet a great deal of the time. But she didn't do it for political purposes; she didn't do it for the 30-second sound bite. She asked her questions because she really cared about the people who were involved. She asked her questions in a very thoughtful, meaningful and respectful way. She was truly looking for answers to problems. She was always balanced and measured in her questions. In everything she has done as a member, she has continued to demonstrate that concern, that compassion and that desire to get answers to help the people with whom she works.

In a place where politics plays an important role, I would agree with Mr McGuinty that Lyn has truly always transcended party politics. She always knew when it was time to put the politics aside, and she's always been able to recognize the achievements that were made by individuals in this House, parties in this House and various governments.

I know that many times when I was Minister of Health, rather than bring issues to the floor of this House, Lyn approached me and we were able to quietly find solutions to the problems that faced the people in this province.

You know, Lyn, one of the things that people in this province are going to remember more than anything else is the fact that you were the very first woman to win the leadership of a political party. We are proud of you. You served with distinction for almost four years, between 1992 and 1996. Lyn, in doing so, you raised the bar for all women in the province of Ontario. Your daughters must be so proud of you. By becoming leader of your

party, you have made it easier for other women to follow in your footsteps, and we do appreciate that.

1620

Lyn, in everything you have accomplished, we know that you have been supported by your family. I think that's been pointed out as well. We know that family really has played a big part in your life. I also know from personal experience that being a politician can be tough. You're a politician, you're a mother, you're a wife. It was more difficult for you than for many others. Some of us can go home every night, but you have been commuting for 16 years to Thunder Bay. We appreciate that dedication and commitment.

On behalf of our caucus, I want to recognize and congratulate you and Neil on celebrating your 40th year of marriage this year. Politics sometimes takes people apart, but I know that in your case it has brought you closer, and we certainly are pleased to be able to congratulate you. We want to extend our warmest wishes to you.

As you move into the next chapter of your life we also hope that you're going to get that extra time to spend with your husband, your four daughters, your wonderful grandsons and granddaughters. I know that your family has to be very proud of all that you've accomplished here, Lyn. I know they're going to appreciate the fact that you're going to have more time for them in the future.

Lyn, on behalf of our caucus, as we reflect on your many years of selfless public service and advocacy on behalf of the people of this province, we wish to extend to you our warmest wishes for the future.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I must confess to finding this a nostalgic and difficult moment and rather overwhelming, as much as I appreciate the very generous remarks that have just been made by my leader, by Mr Bisson—who certainly understands the challenges of coming from northern Ontario; the commute, as well as the particular geographical challenges of addressing the riding's needs—and Liz Witmer.

Liz, I thank you for your comments. I want to particularly thank you for a time that you will remember well when you kept a personal promise and you opened your door to truly listen to my constituents. It meant a great deal, and with my respect for you, I add my particular thanks for that occasion.

To Dalton, I won't go on at great length other than to say it's been tremendous working with you. In addition to the fact that I left you a clean office, you've given me the courtesy of having enough confidence to have me hanging around as a former leader for six years. That's been a wonderful experience for me.

I should perhaps have advised people that this is the third time that I've left politics forever. I haven't thought about the number four, Gilles, but I am not planning on making it a fourth time that I leave politics forever. I will break the cycle of fours on this one.

There's a lot that could be said; there's probably much that should be said on an occasion like this. I'm going to refrain because I'm not going to abuse the privilege of having been given a few minutes to respond.

I do want to say that I'm going to miss a lot about this place. It's hard to itemize the things you'll miss, because I think I'll probably come to absorb that, assuming that retirement is imminent. As I've said to my colleagues, I'll feel even stranger after this should we be back here sometime in September.

Assuming that this is my last opportunity to be in the House, I can tell you I'm going to miss the collegiality of working with a caucus, of working with colleagues of the Legislature who share a commitment and see politics as truly public service.

I think I'm going to particularly miss—I know I'm going to miss—the experience of coming to work in an environment where you don't know what's going to happen on any given day. Life outside may seem a little bit dull at times, I suspect. I'm going to miss the chance to advocate for things I really care about, because this is a unique forum that gives us that opportunity on a regular basis.

You're right, Gilles: I will not miss the weekly commute. I'm looking forward to sitting down on a Monday morning to have a cup of coffee instead of catching an airplane.

Mr Bisson: And watching the plane go.

Mrs McLeod: Right over my roof. I suspect the novelty of that will last all of one Monday and I'll be ready to get back to work in some way.

I will very much miss being the representative for Thunder Bay-Atikokan. Mr Bisson has touched on the way we northerners tend to feel. I suppose it's not just a northern thing, Gilles, but I'm very proud of my home and very proud of my region. I feel I've been very privileged to be a northern representative in this Legislature.

When I first came to the Legislature—I'm not going to tell a lot of stories, Mr Speaker, but I couldn't help remembering as Gilles spoke that when I first came I carried around this sort of postcard drawing. I'm not a very good drawer at the best of times, but it was a postcard drawing where I tried to show the province of Ontario on one page so that people would get some idea of the geographic realities of where I came from in northwestern Ontario. One of my earliest political battles was with Ian Scott, trying to convince him, with due respect to my colleagues from Sudbury, that a law administration office in Sudbury simply couldn't deal with the challenges of serving Thunder Bay. I happened to have won that particular fight; I've lost a few of those on the same subject since then. But I truly hope that by being here I've helped to raise awareness of some of the realities of the needs of people in northwestern Ontario.

People talked about my being the first woman leader. My feelings about being a woman in politics are much too complex to even begin to get into today, but I can tell you that at the outset the experience of being the first woman—at that point, the only woman—representative to come from northwestern Ontario was at least as interesting at times as being the first woman leader of a party.

I do have to confess to my constituents back home, now that I'm leaving, that I did not know a lot about

moose tags when I was first elected. I think I've improved my knowledge base on that score since then.

Let me just say, as my colleague John Cleary said a little bit earlier today when he touched on the fact that none of us is here without volunteers, that none of us achieves anything in politics without absolutely tremendous support.

People have touched on my family. I won't go on at length, because I could. My incredible husband, who for 16 years now, believe it or not, has done all of my constituency events on weekends with me, including the millennium anniversary of Poland, which was three hours on a hot Sunday afternoon in Polish—rather, it was on the Ukraine. It was all done in Ukrainian, and there was a football game on television at home at the time. That is real commitment.

My four daughters have not only survived having a mom in politics all of their lives but have become very much involved in political life and very engaged in public issues of the day.

But I do think it's probably a good idea to retire as you start getting little grandkids around. My eldest grandson, when he was just a little guy, happened to see me on television one day. I guess it was one of those times when people might not have thought I was quite as non-partisan as you've suggested I have been. Benjamin looked at the television and he said, "That's not Grandma Lyn." I think he would find it a little bit more difficult to accept my role as time goes on.

I lastly want to say a word about the flip side of all that we hear about cynicism about politics and politicians. As leader of our party, I had an opportunity to visit almost every community in the province and to witness the volunteer effort of people in communities across the province. I was always overwhelmed, and I am still overwhelmed, by the sheer commitment of time, talent and resources that people commit just because they believe that what we do here in the Legislature matters. I know that's true not just for my party; it's true for every party. I know, without making too grandiose a statement about it, our very democracy is sustained by that kind of effort. I continue to be humbled by those efforts. I continue to be grateful for them, as I indeed am grateful for the opportunity of having been a member of the Parliament of the province of Ontario. Thank you very much.

1630

The Deputy Speaker: It would seem to me, Lyn, that over the last couple of days we've had the pleasure of giving tribute to three very worthy members. I wouldn't want to make any conclusion from it other than, from my observation, that it must be those with short first names. Yesterday it was Sean and today it's John and Lyn. That's the only conclusion I'll make. You will be truly missed.

Further debate?

Mr Bisson: I continue where my colleague left off yesterday in regard to this particular budget bill. I want to come at this from a northerner's perspective because, as

you know, we just paid tribute to Lyn McLeod in regards to her service in northern Ontario. I just want to come back to some of the issues that are facing us in northern Ontario.

Some of the members may not know this because they might not have read it in the papers. It's not something that was written in the Toronto Star, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Sun or Now magazine. Northern Ontario over the past five years has lost pretty well 10% of its population. That is very, very troubling to all of our communities. You've got communities from north-western to northeastern Ontario who have seen their overall population, on average, diminish by 10%, and that's quite startling. We northerners are concerned because it means that the very fabric of what makes our communities is starting to go away and move south.

We have children, as I do—I've got two girls. Julie, who's 26 and a nurse, now lives here in Toronto and is going back to U of T to become a nurse practitioner, of which we're quite proud. The reality is that she probably won't return to northern Ontario. I have another daughter, Natalie, who is—help me, Natalie—21 or 22. Oh God, a father never knows these things. She's in her second year of university so she must be 21. She's doing both a history and a psychology major. Hopefully, Natalie will stay in Timmins, because she's choosing a profession that will make it a little bit easier for her to stay in northern Ontario and probably go into teaching.

I speak as a parent and as a representative of northern Ontario when I look at our kids leaving northern Ontario in big numbers. It hurts us from the perspective of the family, because we want to know in our retirement years, as we retire in our communities, as would anybody else in this province, that we can have our children and our grandchildren around us as our kids grow up and go away. Unfortunately, in too many of our communities, the kids are leaving and the grandparents are following their children and their grandchildren away from the northern communities into southern Ontario to be able to keep in touch with their families.

The reason for that is very simple: the economy of northern Ontario is hurting. You've heard me and Madame Martel and Monsieur Hampton and Tony Martin and other northern members, Lyn McLeod and others, raise this issue on a number of occasions in the House. We say to the government, you made a fundamental decision in 1995, upon coming to power, that you were going to take a non-interventionist approach to the northern and provincial economy and that you were going to allow market forces to dictate what happens when it comes to economic development around Ontario.

Let me tell you that for Toronto, Hamilton, Oshawa and the bigger centres in southern Ontario there are certain dynamics, and no matter what a government does, there will be economic development. Just by the very nature of the large population in those areas, the large infrastructure, the amount of capital that's available in places like Toronto and others, the economy is going to keep on going no matter what a government does. But in

remoter communities in places like northern Ontario, it's a much different thing. If you're in the town of Opasatika or Sioux Lookout, how do you attract economic development into those communities? You're lucky if you've got a highway that comes into your community. I represent communities in my riding, as does my leader, Howard Hampton, that don't even have highways. They're only serviced by way of air, and sometimes by barge if conditions are right. How do you attract economic development in those communities if the government is not playing an activist role to help the economies of those communities develop?

We all know that without economic development there isn't the kind of renewal you need to keep your economy going. As businesses go on in years, businesspeople retire. Maybe the product they are selling is no longer in vogue. It might be a mine and the minerals are depleted. For a number of issues, some of those places close down in the natural cycle of things, and you need to have something come in and take their place. If there's one thing I can be extremely critical of this government about, it is their entire approach to economic development in northern Ontario. I want to tell you as a northerner that what you are doing by way of your non-interventionist approach is really—there's no other way of putting it—hurting northern Ontario and northern families.

We in the New Democratic Party have presented a number of issues in our Public Power platform that deal with those particular issues we have to deal with. For example, one of the very fundamental things for northern Ontario is energy. Our leader, Howard Hampton, has led the charge over the last year and a half, pointing out the folly of the government's approach to energy policies in the province by way of opening up the market, deregulating and trying to privatize our hydro industry. As a result of that, we have all kinds of effects in northern Ontario.

I come from the city of Timmins. The largest electricity consumer in the province is Falconbridge in the city of Timmins. Last summer, when you first opened the market, I was getting phone calls in the month of August and the later part of July, where Falconbridge was on the phone with me, or the union through CAW, saying, "Energy prices are peaking. We are having to shut the plant down today, because we cannot afford to operate with these hydro rates." They would have to shut the plant down at the last second and hope and wait until the electricity prices came back down, and once the prices came back down restart the plant again, only to see them spike once more. It was this constant cycle of turning things on and off that was a money-losing venture for Falconbridge.

As a result—and I'm not saying it's the only issue but it's one of the key issues—Falconbridge has decided not to operate this summer. They are saying that for a period of three months this summer they are going to be shutting down part of their operation at the metallurgical site and

laying off some 285 workers on a temporary basis and 85 workers on a permanent basis.

I want to give some credit to the union, CAW, and management on this one. They've managed to absorb some of the temporary layoffs by displacing the contractors and allowing the workers who work at Kidd Creek under CAW contract to do some of the jobs those contractors were doing. But I want to point out that the net effect is the contractors and their families aren't going to have jobs, and we're losing over 300 jobs this summer from just one employer because of energy prices in northern Ontario.

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The sawmill in Cochrane—partly because of the American dollar; I'm not going to say for a second that it's all hydro, but hydro is a big part of it—is having to look at their bottom line. They're saying, "We've got this trade war with the United States where they're unjustly penalizing us by way of tariff. We've got an American dollar that's basically going down, which pushes the Canadian dollar up, and as a result, things are pretty tight." I talk to these companies, and they're telling me that one of the big costs of doing business in those types of operations is electricity. With electricity prices going up as they have, it's just making the decision whether to close their operation, on a temporary or permanent basis, much easier.

Tony Martin and I went through Sault Ste Marie about two weeks ago when we started our northern tour. We went to communities like Wawa, where employers like River Gold, a mining operator in Wawa, told us that because energy prices were 75% higher in Wawa because of the company that's there, they ended up being unable to invest \$200 million of what would be exploration dollars next year to firm up new reserves for the mine to continue.

Now, some people in southern Ontario will say, "Well, it didn't displace any jobs." Let me tell you what this does. A mine is a finite ore body. You must spend money in exploration and development to bring on new sites within the mine in order to keep the tonnage up and operate your mill. If you're not spending money each and every year on exploration, it's the beginning of the end. You know that the mine is going to close in a fairly short period of time.

How do I know that? I come out of the mining industry. I worked at the Pamour group and I worked for Noranda. I worked at McIntyre, Delnite, and a number of other mining properties in our communities. One of the ways that I knew my employer was going to close is they stopped spending money on exploration. As a result, about five years later, the place closed down. The point I make to you is that every dollar that an employer has to spend on higher energy costs is affecting jobs, immediately or later, within the mining industry.

We went to Dubreuilville. We talked to the mill manager, Dave—I forget his last name—community leaders, the mayor and the people with the IWA, the International Woodworkers of America. They were very

categorical in what they had to say. They said, "A 75% increase in energy prices is leading to 280 jobs being lost in that community." As we went into White River, it was the same story. The entire mill is shutting down for six months to a year.

I come back to my first point. Northern Ontario is losing jobs, and I would argue that one of the reasons we're seeing job losses is this government's energy policies, but it's also because this government has no economic development policies when it comes to assisting northern Ontario communities.

We in the New Democratic Party of Ontario, through the leadership of our leader, Howard Hampton, have put forward in our public policy document, our platform document called Public Power, a number of initiatives that would help stimulate growth in northern Ontario. One of the very first things that we would do on forming a government is stop the deregulation and privatization of Ontario hydro and stabilize the rates once more, so that not only industrial users, but commercial and civic users are able to pay a better price for hydro than they're paying now.

In fact, I was on the telephone today with a gentleman who bought a hotel in the city of Timmins. As a result of your high energy prices, his bill went to \$51,000 in the month of January, and he had similar bills for February and March. Ontario Hydro is now telling him that they're shutting off his power as of tomorrow. So all of the workers in that hotel in Timmins are going to be without a job if we don't find a resolution to this by tomorrow morning. My staff and I have been on the phone pretty well most of the day talking to hydro officials, trying to come up with some sort of solution. But that's the net effect of what you're doing. That particular operation probably employs about 20 people. That's another 20 jobs in our city. The list goes on and on with regard to what you guys are doing.

As I said at the very beginning, the government has to have an interventionist role when it comes to economic development in northern Ontario. That's why we propose in our platform document, Public Power, to utilize the Ontario heritage fund the way it was supposed to be used in the first place: to give loans to businesses in northern Ontario and assist them to finance themselves toward the expansion or the creation of new opportunities in northern Ontario that create jobs.

As it is now, and most northerners will know this, if you're trying to get money for a commercial loan in northern Ontario, you can't get it. The banks won't give it to you. Why? Because of their monetary policies, banks have decided that when it comes to commercial property they will not make loans in northern Ontario because of the out-migration. So somebody has got to step up to the plate and assist existing businesses and assist those trying to start businesses in northern Ontario to capitalize themselves when they're trying to set up a project.

One of the things we're saying is that we would take the \$60 million a year, plus the \$260 million that they

haven't spent in the heritage fund up to now, and we would immediately make that available to businesses in northern Ontario to secure loans with banks in order to get projects off the ground across our communities in northern Ontario.

We would make sure we have a good transportation infrastructure, because that's one of the keys. Ontario Northland has to remain within public hands. We need to make sure Ontario Northland is there providing very good, affordable rates for transportation of goods that are being transported in and out of northern Ontario.

Quite frankly, I believe that in southern Ontario, Ontarians don't think for two seconds about total subsidization of transportation for industry in southern Ontario by way of Highway 400, 401 and others. I wouldn't argue for total subsidization for Ontario Northland customers, but we need to do something to bring their transportation costs down so they don't become a stumbling factor in keeping operations in northern Ontario. I know, in talking to a number of customers—industrial users—along the ONR, that they're saying, "The rates are one of the issues that are making us look at doing some of our operations in southern Ontario or elsewhere."

I say to this government: a failing grade on economic development in northern Ontario. We will take the reins, if you're not prepared to, in order to deal with the very pressing issues of northern Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Hon Doug Galt (Minister without Portfolio): I was interested in listening to the member from Timmins-James Bay. With all we've been hearing lately about smog and the concern about coal-burning plants and the concern about the environment that comes from the third party, I was sure they would be talking about some of the recommendations that came from the select committee on alternative fuels and some of the things that are in this bill, such as a 10-year property tax holiday for new facilities that generate electricity from natural gas, alternative or renewable sources. I was sure they would have been on to something like that, and complimenting the government, because the member for Toronto-Danforth sat on that select committee. Some of these were her ideas, and even if they weren't her ideas, she certainly supported them very enthusiastically.

I thought he would have been talking about the immediate 100% corporate income tax write-off for investments by businesses in qualifying energy-efficient equipment. I was sure he would want to talk about some of these things that would encourage consumers to use alternate fuels and thereby improve the environment. I'm disappointed that they missed some of those items.

They also missed a year's retail sales tax rebate to purchasers of certain new energy-efficient household appliances, which will help conserve electricity. I was sure that point would have been brought in; as well, the five-year retail sales tax rebate to individuals who purchase qualifying solar energy systems.

These are all things that would have minimal pollution. Some of it may have a little bit of pollution in the construction of it; there may be a little bit of visual pollution. But it's a long way from the coal-fired plants they're so concerned about. I was sure they would have been commenting on some of the tax savings that are in this particular bill.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): When the member for Timmins-James Bay was speaking earlier this afternoon in tribute to Lyn McLeod, he made reference to the fact that as northern members we share a lot of common interests and tend to be fighting for the same issues and, quite frankly, regardless of political parties, it really is the case. I think that was reflected very much in the remarks he just made. I was checking them off as he was speaking and nodding very much in agreement. I wish I had more time to comment.

Certainly in reference to the northern Ontario heritage fund, I think it has become almost farcical how it is now being used by the government basically as a means to fund programs and services that may be very, very valuable but should be coming from the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. It's awful what has happened.

The heritage fund in its original form was extremely valuable in helping businesses in the north. A different understanding is needed in terms of what's needed in the north. He articulated that very, very well. That's one of the things that we intend to do as well. It's wonderful to have support for an MRI in any community in the north, but it should be coming from the Ministry of Health budget, as opposed to the northern Ontario heritage fund.

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When one looks at the reality in terms of population loss we've seen in the north, we do need to have a government that understands the economic development needs of the north. This government has failed abysmally. I just spent earlier this week travelling from Thunder Bay up to Nakina for a wonderful graduation ceremony. The road between Geraldton and Nakina is, frankly, in such horrid shape that it's truly frightening for every resident there. The infrastructure needs must be improved, there's no question about that. We have to recognize that if we want to really, really attract people to the north, there needs to be a road structure that at least is treated the same way as it is here in southern Ontario. I'm running out of time, but I thank the member for his comments. I thought they were spot-on. We certainly have to continue to fight to make sure this government or the new government better understands what our needs are.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I want to reinforce some of the comments that were made by my colleague from Timmins-James Bay. We're dealing with a budget bill, which is a bill that should deal with government initiatives. If the government cared at all about what's happening in northern Ontario, the initiative we would be dealing with here today is the cancellation of hydro privatization and deregulation.

The fact of the matter is, hydro privatization and deregulation is a job killer in northern Ontario. That is a fact. Let me repeat some of the numbers that my colleague read into the record to reinforce how true this is. In his community of Timmins-James Bay, 300 people attached to Falconbridge are going to lose their jobs; they're going to be laid off for at least 13 weeks. Another 85 people have received permanent layoff notices, so they and their families are affected. As a result of what's happening in Cochrane at the sawmill, a hundred jobs are being lost. In Dubreuilville, 340 jobs are being lost. In White River, the entire mill is being shut down: 285 jobs. Tembec in Kirkland Lake is being affected. I don't have those job numbers; I believe it's over 100. In Thunder Bay you've got 400 workers who have been laid off from Buchanan's Northern Wood and Great West Timber mills. That's just what we're dealing with right now. And because of the report that was put out by the Independent Market Operator, we know that things are going to get a whole lot hotter and a whole lot worse, because the government doesn't have energy reserves to deal with the hot weather this summer. Hydro privatization and deregulation is killing jobs in northern Ontario. People are losing their livelihoods. Communities are at risk. If this government wanted to do anything important today, they would announce cancellation of Hydro deregulation and privatization.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'm happy to be involved in debating Bill 41, An Act to implement Budget measures. The people in my riding of Thornhill are very pleased with the way this government spends the money that we take from our taxpayers. Like any individual who works and has bills and expenses, it's important that you pay for what you can afford, that you don't spend more than the money you take in. This government is made up of fiscal responsibility. We have implemented over 225 tax cuts. There are 17 tax cuts in this budget. We have had five balanced budgets and we've paid \$5 billion toward the debt. That's what responsibility is all about: being able to put more money into the pockets of the taxpayers, providing an environment in Ontario that creates more jobs. The economy is booming. It allows us to invest in the priority areas such as health care and education.

From my riding of Thornhill, there were several people here today applauding the government on our initiative on the education tax credit, because there are a lot of people in the province who choose to send their children to a school other than the one that's publicly funded by the government. I was pleased to see that we also had some support from the opposition, from those who believe it's important that parents have choice.

Besides money and investments in Ontario, one very important thing we've done through the Ministry of Health is to implement Telehealth. The number for that is 1-866-797-0000. I had the opportunity of taking advantage of this not too long ago, and it's an excellent way to provide service for people and get fewer people in the emergency rooms.

The Deputy Speaker: Response?

Mr Bisson: A way to get fewer people in the emergency rooms? Where I come from, we'd be happy to have even a first-aid station. Telehealth: come and talk to some of the communities I represent where there are inadequate health services because they don't even have a hospital.

The northern members who spoke—Mr Gravelle and Ms Martel—get it. I'm not going to take any time with what they're saying. It's clear the government doesn't get it. The government's response is, "Look at us. We've done—

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): What did you guys do for the north?

Mr Bisson: Listen to this guy, Mr Beaubien. Don't even waste time with him.

When it comes to the government, their line is, "Look at us. We've done eight years of tax cuts and corporate tax cuts and look how good it's working." We've lost 10% of our population over the last five years when we've had those tax cuts, so obviously that's not working for northern Ontario.

Furthermore, a corporate tax cut implies that the company is making some money. A tax cut doesn't work for a corporation unless they're profitable. Most of these outfits are closing down or laying off. They're not making any money. You guys don't get it.

Hydro prices are putting businesses out of work. I'm dealing with a small business in my riding right now that is going to lay off about 20 people by the end of this week because they couldn't afford to pay the exorbitant rates of hydro that they were charged because of your bungled deregulation. This person is sitting back and saying, "What am I going to do? I either don't pay my payroll, at which point I lose my employees, or I don't pay my hydro, at which point Hydro shuts off my power and I'm out of business anyway." Here we are scrambling to try to do something to keep that business afloat. There's absolutely no program, no policy to assist them.

I say to the government, you missed the point. In economies like northern Ontario, you have to have an interventionist approach. You have to have a heritage fund that loans money to businesses that are in need, loans that are repayable. What you guys have done up until now has led to the depopulation of northern Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): It's certainly my pleasure to add my voice to the discussion about the Right Choices Act, 2003, and how our government's economic plan continues, I believe, to support Ontario taxpayers and businesses. Without strong businesses, we're not going to be able to help our taxpaying communities.

Mr Beaubien: That certainly includes the businesses in northern Ontario.

Ms Mushinski: It does indeed. I agree with you, my honourable friend from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. It certainly does include those businesses in the north.

Since our government took office in 1995, this province has made remarkable gains in jobs and economic prosperity. We know that jobs are created when the economy grows. The economy grows when Ontarians have more money to spend and more money to invest. The best and the fairest way to make sure Ontarians have that money is to not tax it away in the first place. Now does that sound like a familiar story? For eight years, 225 tax cuts; 65 tax increases in the 10 lost years for both the NDP and the Liberal governments, and we lost 10,000 jobs as a result of it.

1700

You see, governments do not create wealth and prosperity; people do. It is government's role to create the right conditions for Ontario's citizens and businesses to flourish. Tax cuts are central to our plan for promoting prosperity. How many times do we have to say that? The Right Choices Act takes further steps to ensure that this successful economic plan continues.

Our experience over the last eight years has been that tax reductions have led to more and more revenue, not less.

Interjection: No, no; tax, tax, tax—

Ms Mushinski: I can remember Mr Philips, the education critic—I know I was heckling him a little bit last Thursday but it was really hard not to. This was the same individual who kept saying, "Tax cuts will never work. You'll drive away jobs and you'll do this and you'll do that." In the meantime, this was the guy who represented a government that brought in 34 or 35 tax increases, including the infamous commercial concentration tax. I was on Scarborough council. I can remember all the members of council, the Liberal members of council, no less—one is actually running in Scarborough right now—were absolutely outraged that this Liberal government would be putting this kind of tax in the most commercially vibrant area of the country, which was Metropolitan Toronto at the time. They were going to put on this job-killing tax, and guess what? That's exactly what they achieved.

The government's agenda of tax cuts and sound economic and fiscal management has benefited the people of this province. I keep hearing all this doom and gloom across the way about what dreadful policies have led to lost opportunities and jobs in the north. I can honestly tell you that my constituents in the great riding of Scarborough Centre would tell you differently. In fact, our ranking in a recent Statistics Canada survey of household spending reflects Ontario's rising incomes and the fact that more people are working. Since 1995, the average after-tax family income in the province has risen by nearly 17%. Ontario has created more than one million net new jobs, which account for 46.8% of the country's economic growth. Almost 50% of the country's economic growth has happened right here in Ontario. Ontario's economy is the largest in the country, and family incomes in this province are the highest in Canada.

Perhaps the most important reason that Ontario's economy continues to be one of the strongest in North America is consumer confidence. Almost 85% of our gross domestic product growth during the last six years has come from domestic spending. I think this is critical, because Ontarians are spending and Ontarians are investing. Healthy consumer spending has spurred economic growth over the past two years, and it's supported by reduced taxes and low interest rates. Rising employment and higher after-tax incomes are expected to sustain consumer spending during 2003-04.

From the second quarter of 1996, when Ontario income tax cuts began, Ontario's real disposable income increased—get this—by 22.8%, significantly stronger than the 18.7% pace for the rest of Canada.

Interjection.

Ms Mushinski: Why, as my good friend from Sarnia-Lambton says? Because of tax cuts. During the same period, Ontario real consumption increased by 28.2%, again ahead of the 22.1% recorded in the rest of Canada. Where are the most jobs being created? Right here in Ontario. Real consumption rose 3.3% in 2002, led by strong sales of furniture, appliances and autos. Real consumer spending growth is projected to be 3.4% in 2003 and 3.5% in 2004. I should state that these are conservative projections, supported by gains in real disposable income of 3.5% in 2003 and 4.5% in 2004.

The healthy financial position of Ontario families will underpin sustained growth in consumer spending. A growing economy and tax cuts have raised the real average family after-tax income by 17% since 1995 to \$62,062.

Furthermore, from 1996 to 1998, this government cut Ontario's personal income rate—again, something that is very often conveniently forgotten, especially by the Liberals on that side—by more than 30%. Of course, we know they don't believe in tax cuts. They believe in raising taxes, and certainly all the commitments they have made going into a possible provincial election would indicate they're going to have to raise taxes again.

I am pleased to say that the Ernie Eves government is phasing in a further 20% personal income tax cut. Why? Again, because we know that tax cuts create jobs. This year, no other province in Canada charges lower rates of personal income tax than Ontario on most taxpayers earning less than \$60,000. Personal income tax cuts are one of the Eves government's pro-growth plans to promote economic development and financial security, which, as we have witnessed, allows us to make further investments in our priorities. We know what those priorities are—the sacred social programs of this country: health care and education.

The Right Choices Act proposes to reduce taxes further for taxpayers with low to moderate incomes. Indeed, the 2003 budget's proposal to enrich the Ontario tax reduction program would increase to 700,000 the number of people no longer paying Ontario income tax as a result of our government's personal income tax cuts

since 1995—700,000 people. Again, for some reason the federal Liberals continue to tax this low-income group.

Since we started cutting taxes, our tax revenues have increased by \$16 billion. Let me take a moment to tell this House how our economic plan has worked successfully since 1995. We've gone from a potential \$11.3-billion deficit to five consecutive balanced budgets. With the 2002-03 surplus of \$524 million, we have achieved our target to reduce debt by \$5 billion from 1998-99 levels. What's more, Ontario has received nine credit-rating improvements, including four upgrades to its long-term rating.

Interjection.

Ms Mushinski: Well, Mr Phillips certainly hasn't been reading the same financial forecasts we have.

Interjection.

Ms Mushinski: Since our election in 1995—this is my way of trying to put on the record my official heckles from last Thursday, Mr Speaker—more than one million net new jobs have been created for Ontarians, over 80% of them full time.

I can see that my colleagues on the government benches totally agree with everything I'm saying, because they're having so much fun there.

1710

Not surprisingly, given the strong job creation, more than 600,000 Ontarians have escaped social assistance since 1995. As I've often said, the best social program in this country is a job. Our economy has not only sustained growth, but it's also rebounded faster and stronger than our G7 trading partners, including, I might add, the United States of America. Our strong economy, fuelled by lower taxes, allows us to continue—

Mr Duncan: Let's hear it for Paul Martin.

Ms Mushinski: Yes, Paul Martin finally got it too, by the way—to invest more in health care, education, economic development and support for our small and medium-sized businesses, many of which we know, of course, prosper and grow in the north of Ontario.

The Right Choices Act will provide further tax relief to business by reducing the capital tax by 10% on January 1, 2004, and businesses that do not pay their taxes in a timely fashion will face serious consequences under the bill's proposals.

The bill also proposes a number of amendments that would encourage investment, particularly in small and medium-sized businesses, which we know are the engines that drive our economy.

The market conditions that are needed to support strong business investment are in place. Within this supportive economic environment, businesses of all sizes across a wide range of industries have contributed significantly to strong job growth in the province since 1995.

The Ernie Eves government understands that building a business environment that supports investment, job growth and prosperity requires strategic sector investments, support for innovation, strong capital markets and aggressive skills development, something I know the

Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities strongly supports and advocates.

That's why our 2003 budget proposes significant new measures that would give growing firms improved access to venture capital.

These are very important measures that I want to talk about.

First, we are proposing changes to the labour-sponsored investment funds program. This program is a significant source of venture capital for small and medium-sized businesses, having invested \$385 million in Ontario businesses last year.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent to move third reading of Bill 45.

The Deputy Speaker: The member seeks unanimous consent to move third reading of Bill 45. Is there consent? Agreed? I heard a no.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Ottawa West-Nepean asked for unanimous consent: third reading of Bill 45, An Act to establish a commission to inquire into the investigations by police forces of complaints of sexual abuse against minors in the Cornwall area. Is it agreed? I hear a no.

Ms Mushinski: I was speaking about venture capital and saying that small and medium-sized businesses invested \$385 million in Ontario businesses last year. What we're proposing would provide further support for companies that are having some difficulty raising venture capital by giving labour-sponsored investment funds greater flexibility in the investments they can make. The changes would allow labour-sponsored investment funds to invest up to 25% of their annual stock investments in companies listed on a stock exchange, up from the current 15%. It would also expand the definition of a small business to include businesses with \$6 million in assets. The Ontario government will also work with the federal government to increase the allowable maximum investment in a company. Changes to the community small business investment funds program are also being proposed through this bill.

As I mentioned earlier, we're proposing to reduce tax rates by 10% on January 1, 2004, and we intend to eliminate the capital tax by the time the federal government eliminates its capital tax. We believe that these measures would go a long way in further supporting our small and medium-sized businesses in the province. As well, we are proposing improvements to the Ontario business research institute tax credit. Our government has committed \$625 million over the next five years to support large-scale investments in strategic sectors, including the auto sector.

The Right Choices Act proposes a number of initiatives supporting economic prosperity by providing tax relief to individuals, cutting taxes and encouraging investment. The Ernie Eves government believes that it is essential that we carry on with our plan to support individuals and businesses in Ontario through balanced

budgets, lower taxes and competitive tax rates for business.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): There is one thing that's been made very clear to the people of Ontario over the last eight years of the Mike Harris-Ernie Eves revolution. A lot of people have been hurt by all these promises and this revolution. The revolution's call is always, "Tax cuts will solve everything. With tax cuts we'll have better health care—tax cuts, tax cuts."

We know there's a price to pay, and it's in service cuts. Tax cuts mean health care cuts mean education cuts and cuts to city services, because the money that goes to the top 1% in tax cuts has to come from somewhere. It comes from service cuts. For eight years we've seen non-stop cuts to our services. Ask people in the municipalities, "Are your streets any cleaner? Is your garbage picked up more?" and they'll all tell you, "Our parks are dirty, the weeds are long and the potholes are deeper." People get lost in potholes, they're so big in some parts of Toronto. They've downloaded those on to the municipalities, and basically you pay for those tax cuts in service cuts. You get less health service and then you have to pay for services out of your own pocket.

Interjection.

Mr Colle: The member from James Bay knows that you have to pay for those service cuts out of your own pocket.

In Toronto we've got Boys and Girls Clubs paying \$10,000 a year to play soccer on a soccer field at the local school. You have to pay \$3,000, \$4,000 or \$5,000 to play basketball on a school court. So you pay for these tax cuts through more user fees to use your own school gym. Then you pay more user fees for drugs, and then you can't even get even get into the hospitals because they're lined up right around the corner because emergencies have been closed down. That's what they mean by tax cuts: they mean service cuts.

1720

Ms Martel: I have heard during the course of the debate government members making reference to the government's balanced budget. I thought I would read this into the record from someone who normally would be fairly supportive of the government agenda. This comes from a column done by Christina Blizzard this morning. It says the following:

"Iraqi Information Minister Award: To Finance Minister Janet Ecker. Despite \$1 billion in SARS' costs, despite a drop in retail sales, despite the fact she has to find more than \$2 billion in 'sales and rentals,' and another \$700 million in savings, Ecker maintains the budget is still balanced. Yep, and there are no Americans in Baghdad."

I thought that was a pretty interesting comment to make about the budget, because I've heard government members, indeed I've heard Madam Ecker, on more than one occasion try to maintain that in fact the current budget is balanced. As we deal with a budget bill today, I

thought it was important to put that comment on the record—just how unbalanced the budget really is.

I also heard the current member talk about how some of the initiatives were going to promote prosperity in northern Ontario. I guess she didn't hear me talking about the job losses from killer hydro deregulation and privatization that are occurring right now in northern Ontario: 300 jobs in Timmins, layoffs for 13 weeks, 85 permanent; 100 jobs lost in Cochrane; 340 lost in Dubreuilville; 285 in White River; 400 in North Bay.

That's sure a sign of prosperity. Maybe the member should get out of Toronto and come to northern Ontario, come to some of these communities and try to give her dog-and-pony show around prosperity. Maybe she should talk to some of the workers who are losing their jobs and see what they have to say about this government's agenda.

Mr Beaubien: It's a pleasure for me to make a few comments on the speech of my colleague from Scarborough Centre. I would like to address some of the comments the members across have talked about concerning northern Ontario. They seem to assume this government doesn't care about northern Ontario. I think that's a fallacy.

If we look at what is happening in rural Ontario, there is no doubt we are facing some challenges in rural Ontario. You can talk about 200 jobs in Dubreuilville, and that's sad. There's no doubt it does have a tremendous impact on a small community. But I look at my own community of Sarnia-Lambton between 1989 and 1994—I don't remember who was in power at that time—and we lost 6,000 jobs.

This government is about tax cuts. There's no doubt about that, because we believe that the average Joe Q. Public can spend their dollars much more wisely than any government can. That's why, when we're talking about northern Ontario, this government saw fit to declare the entire northern part of Ontario an enterprise zone. There's no doubt that in the past number of years we have relied in northern Ontario on primary resources—the wood and mining industries—but we never put any value-added to the products. I think that, having an enterprise zone in northern Ontario, there are an awful lot of innovative and creative people in northern Ontario who will be able, with some financial assistance through lower taxes and with their creative minds, to add some value-added to the lumber and mining products.

As I said, this government is about tax cuts. There's no doubt we have to look at the record of the past eight years. We have created over a million new jobs in the province. If we look at the previous 10 years—let's concentrate on the previous five years—there were, net, 10,000 lost jobs in Ontario. Why was that? Because they saw fit to put more taxes on people, even the 5% tax that you dared to put on insurance premiums. Can you tell me why a government would tax insurance premiums?

Mr Duncan: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to my colleague from Scarborough Centre,

whom I hold in the deepest of affection but couldn't disagree with more.

First of all, this is a government that has added more to the debt than any government than the Bob Rae government. They've added a net debt of approximately \$16 billion because they were cutting taxes when they were running a deficit. It doesn't add up. It's like paying a dividend when you make no profit.

Second, we have a deficit in this year's budget. We know that, the Toronto Dominion Bank knows that, the bond rating agencies know that, and that deficit is growing. That deficit, by our estimates, will come in somewhere around \$4 billion. Right now, by the government's own reckoning, there's \$2 billion in asset sales, assets which the government won't identify. There's another component of, I believe, \$700 million which is contingent on federal growth in revenues of some 6%. We know today from the federal finance minister that federal growth revenue projections are not going to meet their own expectations of 3.2%.

Finally, when I hear this government take credit for the prosperity of this province, I say "Phooey." What has led to our prosperity is productive workers, men and women in every part of this province who build cars efficiently, who build—

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just wondered whether the word "phooey" is considered parliamentary.

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

Mr Duncan: Don't take credit for something you didn't do. Give the working men and women of this province the credit for being the most efficient, productive, confident people in the world. That's what led to our prosperity. You just happened to be along for the ride.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Scarborough Centre has two minutes to reply.

Ms Mushinski: I'm very pleased to see that my speech elicited so many interesting responses from the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, the member from Nickel Belt, my esteemed colleague from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and the member from Windsor-St Clair, for whom, of course, I have a great deal of respect.

I know I can say to the member for Eglinton-Lawrence—he talks about doom and gloom and cuts in services. He needs to be reminded of the fact that when we took office in 1995 the annual health care budget was, I think, \$14.5 billion, give or take a couple of hundred thousand dollars. I can tell you that now, in the year 2003, that same annual budget is \$28 billion. So I would suggest to you, sir, that there has hardly been a significant cut in service; there has been a substantial increase in service, including putting in an MRI and renal dialysis into my local hospital—something that we had begged for from that government over there and your government for nine years and never got.

I would also remind him of the fact that it was the Toronto District School Board that actually destroyed, took down, dismantled every single playground in schoolyards on school property in Metropolitan Toronto,

only to have to spend \$150 million to re-erect all of those playgrounds. Why? Because they didn't read the small print. That's the kind of record we have from the local school board.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate.

Mr Colle: Today we're discussing the budget motion or bill by the Conservative government. I look over to my left and I see the member from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh and I just call him the member from Harrison's Corners. I guess Mr Guzzo has probably been to Harrison's Corners. It's just a suburb of Cornwall. I used to know a pretty good hockey player from there by the name of Macmillan. I think you're related to the Macmillans. These are real Ontarians. They don't necessarily all come from the big cities; they also come from the little communities like Harrison's Corners. They know what this government has done over the last eight years.

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They know that all this talk about tax cuts and tax cuts really ends up benefiting people maybe on Bay Street, people maybe on Rideau Street, but it doesn't really help the people in Harrison's Corners. They're still paying more for their property taxes. The snowplow hardly comes by any more. The local fire and police services don't have the resources they had before. That's what the people in Harrison's Corners know. They know the truth about all the spin-doctoring that goes on here at Queen's Park and Bay Street, where they hire these consultants. They paid the consultants, I think, \$600 million here last year—\$600 million to spin doctors and all these high-paid, three-piece consultants who don't help the people in Cornwall, don't help the people in Kemptville, don't help the people in Swansea or in my community of Eglinton-Lawrence in north Toronto.

That's what these tax cuts have done. For the most part, over eight years they've meant conflict, cuts, revolution, turnover to real people.

Look at our hospitals. I remember this guy, Duncan Sinclair, here in Toronto. He was the guru that Mike Harris had. This guy, Duncan Sinclair, was going to turn the health care system upside down and fix it. They don't talk about Duncan Sinclair any more because he was a disaster. He ended up costing the health care system billions of dollars, closed emergencies. We lost six emergency departments in Toronto. We could sure use them now. We lost 10 hospitals in the greater Toronto area from this guy, Duncan Sinclair. Did it save us any money? It didn't, because Mike Harris and Duncan Sinclair brought back the people they fired and paid them money when they brought them back as consultants after they fired them. That's where the money went in the revolution: changing things around without really posing any solutions. On the Liberal side we're looking for solutions, not revolution. We've had eight years of revolution based on this tax cut mantra, which basically, as I said before, means service cuts.

This government is now saying they're going to find \$500 million to take out of public schools to give to the

private schools. They say they're going to find another \$400 million or \$500 million to give seniors a tax cut. They're going to find \$700 million, they promise, on mortgages. There's no free lunch in Ontario. Where are they going to get this over \$2 billion in promises? Where is it going to come from?

I tell you where it's going to come from if they ever have the chance—and a lot of people are saying, "Not this time, Ernie," because they know that the money would come from services to real people. It would come from their hospital services. It would come from more user fees. It would certainly come from more cuts in municipal services and more downloading on to municipalities. Maybe now you get garbage pickup once a week. The way we're going, this government would probably download more things to the point where we would have garbage picked up once a month. The municipalities can't even afford to pick up garbage more than once a week, yet the property taxes are probably more than they were before the revolution started. What good is the revolution if you're paying more property taxes—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Colle: Mr Speaker, I can't. They're shouting.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Eglinton-Lawrence.

Mr Colle: I appreciate the call to order.

This Ernie Eves—I should say it's actually Jim Flaherty's platform that Ernie Eves has copied, because he ran on a different platform for leader. He said that everything Jim Flaherty asked for was stupid. Now he's got all of Jim Flaherty's promises. Maybe Jim Flaherty should basically run the campaign, for God's sake; they're his ideas. I just think that this government is promising all these billions of dollars, and on top of it, the astonishing thing is that the people of Ontario have been told, "Oh, by the way, we're also going to sell \$2.2 billion in public assets."

It's like the 407 that they sold before the last election. Sold? They gave it away to the Spanish consortium there. They said, "We're going to sell," but they're not telling the people of Ontario what they're going to sell. They have to somehow sell something. They could sell the LCBO; they could sell TVOntario; they could sell parkland—basically anything to make up a \$2.2-billion promise to balance their budget this year.

What are they going to sell? We've asked the Minister of Finance, Janet Ecker, time and time again, "What are you going to sell?" She said, "I'm not telling." She's refusing to tell the people of Ontario, who own these assets, which ones she's going to sell, because she knows she's probably got something up her sleeve, like another Highway 407 giveaway that she wants to give away. That's why she isn't telling. If she had something tangible that people would agree to, she'd be telling you. Yet in this budget they're not telling you what they're going to see. I think the people of Ontario should be outraged and should be asking the Minister of Finance and Minister Flaherty or Premier Eves what they're

going to sell. It belongs to the people of Ontario. We have the right to know.

They also say they're going to make another \$800 million in cuts to balance the budget too. That's \$3 billion in this budget. We have no idea what they're going to cut—and that's a lot of cuts. You can rest assured that when they're going to cut \$800 million in this budget, you know where it's going to come from: health care, education—your classrooms—and environmental protection.

In this budget, they refuse to disclose what they're going to cut to make this hypothetical budget balanced, because it isn't right now. There's a \$2.2-billion sale of assets they're not telling you about, and there's also over \$800 million in proposed cuts that they won't tell you about. It's just astonishing that they won't reveal this in the budget. If these things make sense, they would be in here. Obviously they're not in the budget because they make no fiscal sense and they make no sense to the people of Ontario, or they would be revealing them. They're not in here. I challenge the members across the way to tell me what they're going to sell and what they're going to cut. I'd like to hear that today from the members opposite and from any minister who dares to tell us what they plan to sell off in Ontario.

We can also understand that in this province there are still so many people who have not benefited from the eight years of revolution. If you look at people who are working at minimum wage—their minimum wage has been frozen for 10 years—they have not benefited from this revolution. In Toronto, we have 65,000 people, mostly seniors, waiting on a list to get affordable housing. Provincial governments going back to Bill Davis used to build affordable housing for seniors in Ontario. The Mike Harris-Ernie Eves government got out of building affordable housing for seniors. Therefore, seniors in Ontario right now are unable to live in good housing after a lifetime of work. They're living in basement apartments and in very high-rent apartments. They don't have any help in this budget in terms of finding housing for people whose pension is very meagre and they just want a one-bedroom or bachelor apartment to live in. There are 65,000 people in the city of Toronto waiting on a list. Do you know how long that list is? At the rate we're going, they estimate it will take 10 years of waiting to house any of those people on the waiting list—65,000 forgotten people who just want a bachelor apartment or a one-bedroom apartment. There's nothing to help those ordinary citizens of Ontario in this budget.

Also, when we look at relief for people, in the city of Toronto for instance, in the Liberal series of commitments, we've said we would help cities like Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton by having two cents of every litre of gas tax—the provincial government collects 14 cents' tax on every litre of gas that is sold. We're saying we would take two of the 14 cents and give it to municipalities so they can fund basic public transportation. That is a dedicated amount of money that would hopefully be

matched by the federal government so we could have up to \$600 million or \$700 million to help pay for transit.

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In the province today, there is essentially no operating funding for transit. Previous provincial governments, before the Mike Harris government, used to give up to 50% of the day-to-day operating cost of transit. Fifty cents on the dollar used to come from the province; now it's zero for operating. On the capital side—I remember Bill Davis just said two weeks ago that they used to pay 75% of capital. So if they wanted to buy new buses, subways or new OC transit stops in Ottawa, 75% would come from the province. Now all we get are these pre-election promises of transit expenditures, when for the last eight years “transit” was a four-letter word for the Conservative government. They never mentioned public transit. They did nothing but cut it and starve it. But now, on the eve of an election, they start talking about transit. Before, they said, “We don't need to fund transit; we're out of the transit business.” They downloaded transit on to the municipalities, on property taxes. That download means you get less public transit and you get more smog and more gridlock. So after eight years of this revolution we have—never mind service cuts, never mind hospital closures, never mind the beating up of teachers, never mind the closing of schools—wall-to-wall gridlock.

I dare anyone to go up to the 401 or the QEW today. Try to get up the 400; it's wall-to-wall gridlock because, in this budget and in previous budgets of the Conservative government, there is no commitment to having a transportation plan for the next five or 10 years. There's no plan; everybody's on their own. They don't have a plan to move people in cars and by transit, because they've never funded anything except on an ad hoc basis. They make an announcement, and it's all done on the spur of the moment, as ministers of transportation have changed every six months.

There's no plan for transportation in the GTA. Imagine, Speaker, you've got six million people in the greater Toronto area and there's no transportation plan, and you wonder why it's to wall-to-wall traffic going at probably five kilometres per hour on the 401 as we speak. About the only highway you can travel on in this province where there are not cars is the 416 going up to Ottawa. That's about the only place where there are no cars. But that's probably the only highway we've opened in the last eight years. In the greater Toronto area, where there are six million people—excuse me, we've got one highway, the 407, which the public paid for, and then the government sold it off in a fire sale in 1999. Premier Eves sold it off for \$3 billion. It's now valued at \$12 billion. That's one highway that was built, but it was sold off.

If you look at the transportation infrastructure, if you look at the social infrastructure, there are all kinds of good organizations in this province that are providing help for seniors. I've got two great organizations in my riding of Eglinton-Lawrence, called POINT, People and Organizations in North Toronto, and SPRINT—they

deliver meals on wheels. But they're constantly asking this government for simple money so that seniors can stay in their homes and get a meal, get driven to doctors' services and provide some housing assistance. These organizations are starved and can't get money. Ninety per cent of their salary costs are nonexistent because they're volunteer organizations. Volunteer organizations that provide good services for the people in our cities and towns are starved for money, yet this Conservative government has a windfall every year of \$4 billion in gaming revenues from all the casinos and all the slot machines—\$4 billion without any work by any government member. They just collect \$4 billion a year. Where does this \$4 billion go? Every year they get this \$4 billion from the casinos and the slot machines, yet we can't give seniors' organizations money to help seniors; we can't fix potholes in our cities; we've got weeds growing along the highways; garbage never gets picked up; our cities can't put in sewers because of all the downloading.

Hospitals—I'll tell you about a hospital just on the edge of my riding: Northwestern Hospital. Mike Harris and Ernie Eves closed the hospital in 1997. They said they were going to build a new hospital up at Humber River, up the street on Weston Road. That was in 1997. They were going to expand the hospital. I'll tell you what happened. Northwestern Hospital is still closed and the Humber River hospital has not been expanded, so where are the people of west Toronto going to get their medical services? One hospital is closed and the other one, the Humber River site, is crammed in the middle of Church Street, a back street, and you can't get at it.

We were promised a new hospital in 1997 by Duncan Sinclair, Mike Harris and Ernie Eves. These are the same whiz kids who told us—the member from Harrison's Corners and the member from Ottawa know too—that it was a good idea to fire the nurses. Remember Mike Harris saying that they were like Hula Hoop workers? You don't need nurses in the new Ontario. The revolution says that we don't need nurses in our revolution, so Mike Harris, Ernie Eves and the Conservatives all clapped. "Fire the nurses, fire more than 10,000," they said. They were happy. Remember them all smiling when Mike Harris compared them to Hula Hoop workers? That was the revolution.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Boy, that was clever, wasn't it?

Mr Colle: That was one of the most clever manoeuvres in the revolution of Mike Harris, to fire 10,000 nurses and to now beg for them to come back. Meanwhile they've all left for the States or they've retired and they're fed up.

It's the same with teachers. The cowboy from Mississauga, who is now in Oklahoma, said, "I'm going to fix this education system." He sure fixed it. You ask the people of Ontario if our schools are better. He created a crisis that we still have today—eight years of crisis and conflict in our schools, and this government's budget tells us they're now going to take another \$500 million

out of our public schools and give it to private schools. Talk about crisis; it's a government of crises. They love crises; they love conflict. They're not like the Bill Davis Tories we used to know who had some sense of plan, who treated everybody fairly most of the time. This is a government of cowboys. They change their minds from day to day, from week to week.

They used to say that amalgamation was going to save all kinds of money. Ask the people in the Kawarthas; ask anybody anywhere. These megacities: they love big government and they know that big government means more bureaucracy, less democracy, and that's what we have. The revolution has meant less democracy, more taxes for the ordinary person, more service cuts, and that's what this budget continues to promise. So don't believe it. Remember where this budget was delivered: at Frank Stronach's feet at Magna up in Brampton. How can you believe it if you live in Harrison's Corners? It was delivered up there at Magna in Brampton. Don't believe it; I know you don't.

Mr Guzzo: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would request unanimous consent of the House to move third reading of Bill 45.

Mr Smitherman: Doug Galt said no. The government House leader said no. The member for Northumberland said no.

The Deputy Speaker: The member will either take his seat or stop.

The member for Ottawa West-Nepean has asked for unanimous consent for third reading of Bill 45. Agreed? I heard a no.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to pass third reading of my bill, Bill 2.

The Deputy Speaker: Agreed? I heard a no.

Comments and questions?

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Ms Martel: I just want to pick up on something the member finished with, which is amalgamation, because our community was one of those that had a forced amalgamation courtesy of this government as well. I can tell you that it has been nothing but a painful experience and a huge debt. None of the seven municipalities before the process had a debt, and when we finished with amalgamation we had \$32 million worth of debt. The province came through with about a third of that as part of their cost to fund the transition. So it's no wonder that the government stopped after Sudbury, because there were no savings to be had. Many of the outlying communities now risk the loss of very important community services: pools, libraries, community centres etc, because the municipality just can't afford to fund it all. It has been a complete disaster.

I know if the member had had more time he would have talked about job losses in northern Ontario. I know this is important to him, and I know he would have, so let me just repeat one more time—because we're dealing with budget measures this afternoon—how much hydro privatization and deregulation has been a job killer in

northern Ontario and how this budget bill the government brings forward today does nothing to respond to that. Here are the numbers again: 300 workers in Falconbridge will be laid off for 13 weeks because of hydro prices; 85 additional people at Falconbridge are losing their jobs permanently; 100 people affected by the layoffs in Cochrane because the sawmill can't afford hydro prices; 340 jobs lost in Dubreuilville; 285 jobs lost in White River; 100 jobs in Kirkland Lake at Tembec; another 400 jobs in Thunder Bay—all related to the high cost of hydro because of this government's hydro privatization and deregulation scheme. It has been a complete disaster. The government should be here today cancelling it.

Ms Mushinski: I actually was going to comment on what the member for Eglinton-Lawrence has said, particularly with respect to hospitals. I keep hearing this mantra, I guess it is, especially from the Liberals, about health care. In terms of health care, as I said earlier, just look at the spending budget on health care. Notwithstanding the fact that when the Canada Health Act was first established there was a relationship between the provinces and the federal government of 50% shared funding—that has now gone down from 50% to about 16% or 17%, give or take half a per cent, and that 17% is the federal share, by the way; the rest is the provincial share—I can recall vividly that when I was a member of Scarborough council and was also on my local hospital board, we begged and pleaded for nine lost years of Liberal government and then NDP government for renal dialysis, because over 400 patients were being shipped either downtown or out to Oshawa. They had to spend almost as long getting to their renal dialysis as they did getting their renal dialysis. We now have renal dialysis in our hospital that services over 800 patients in Scarborough. That's the record of this government.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I'm pleased to pick up on the comments of my honourable colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence. Like him, I know that you don't have to be from Harrisons Corners to recognize it's not good practice to burn storm windows for heat. People at Harrisons Corners also know that most reasonable people shouldn't be making promises they know they can't keep, that they should be going out of their way to tell the truth, not just what they think people want to hear. In that context, I want to make a couple of comments.

Everyone wants a tax cut. I was mayor of the only municipality in Ontario that actually lowered local taxes without gutting services six years in a row, and that was tough.

Interjection.

Mr McMeekin: There may have been one there too. Since your forced amalgamation took place, after you promised it wouldn't happen without the consent of the people, we've had three consecutive years in my beloved Flamborough of double-digit tax increases. I know you are going to blame the municipality for that, and maybe they share part of that blame, but I've got to tell you, this system isn't working very well.

You make tax cuts when you can afford to make tax cuts without gutting services and when doing so helps to reduce the gap between the richest of us and the rest of us, and your tax cuts don't do that.

We've seen a legacy of difficulties that my friend from Eglinton-Lawrence enumerated, but I would add to them. In my area we've seen the visiting homemakers' association go bankrupt. We've seen the seniors' activity management program shut down. We've seen precious rural schools closed on a whim. We've seen downloading that was supposed to be revenue-neutral penalize my new city of Hamilton by \$114 million—just not fair. It doesn't make sense, let alone common sense.

Mr Bisson: I know that if the member, Mr Colle, had longer, he would have talked about northern Ontario. He would have talked about the devastation of jobs that happens in northern Ontario because of this government's privatization and deregulation, and hydro fiasco. He would have talked about communities like Thunder Bay, which has lost 400 jobs because of the electricity policies of this government. He would have talked about White River, which lost almost 300 jobs as of last Friday, where the only employer in town has basically shut their doors for a period of six months, a year or maybe indefinitely according to the discussions we've had with the community and the mill. He would have talked about Dubreuilville, where another 300-plus jobs have been lost because of 75% increases to hydro because they happen to be within Great Lakes Power's jurisdiction, one of the highest rates in Ontario.

He would have talked about Cochrane. His good friend Mr Ramsay represents the community of Cochrane and Cochrane has lost over 100 jobs at Tembec. He would have talked about Kirkland Lake, another community where Tembec has shut down a mill, maybe not indefinitely but certainly it's been on a temporary basis for the last four months, where we've lost over 100 jobs.

He would have talked about Timmins. It's a place he knows and loves because he tells me all the time he wants to come to Timmins. He knows Shania Twain comes from Timmins and understands that, although she's a great attribute to the city of Timmins, Falconbridge is the jobs for the city of Timmins, and we've lost over 300 jobs at Falconbridge over a 13-week period this summer because the company can't afford to pay high energy costs, and a further 85 jobs have been lost overall. And the list goes on.

I would certainly hope that when we come back to this Parliament after the next election, we change the rules of the House to give people like Mr Colle more time to speak so they can raise the kinds of issues my friend and I have raised now.

The hydro policies of the government are job killers in northern Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Eglinton-Lawrence has two minutes to reply.

Mr Colle: I was just about to get to northern Ontario. I think there's a little bit of northern Ontario in all cities

in Ontario because we're all really small towns within big cities.

In all small communities in Ontario this government has let down the average person. If you talk to someone who's driving a Mercedes or someone who's got a 10,000-square-foot home in Brampton, they're happy with this government because they're getting cheques from the government. They're working and they're worried about where they're going to take their vacation. But people in Leamington, Timmins, Harrisons Corners and Carlyle are sick and tired of paying all these bills: the hydro bill, the gas bill, the insurance bill, the property tax bill.

I've always said to my friends on the other side, and to my friend from Scarborough Centre, I never hear the Conservatives using the "a" word any more. Remember they used to use the "a" word all the time? Amalgamation was going to be the lifesaver. I know the

member from Nickel Belt talked about amalgamation and what it did to Sudbury. In Toronto, we're \$1.3 billion in debt thanks to the "a" word they gave us, but they don't talk about the "a" word any more, because they're not going to amalgamate Brampton and Mississauga, and they're not going to amalgamate Newmarket and Richmond Hill, because they know amalgamation is the biggest boondoggle this government ever brought in. It means higher taxes, fewer services, less democracy.

You'll never hear my friend from Brampton use the "a" word. I dare my friend from Scarborough to stand up on her feet the next time she speaks and defend the amalgamation disaster. Was Scarborough better then or now? Answer that question.

The Deputy Speaker: It being almost 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 am tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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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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McMeekin, Bill Murdoch, Wayne Wettlaufer
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