



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 24 November 2003

Lundi 24 novembre 2003

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 24 November 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 24 novembre 2003

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that Mr Eves, the member for the electoral district of Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, is recognized as the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

MEMBERS' ROLL

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has laid upon the table the roll of members elected in the general election of 2003.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LIBERAL CAMPAIGN PROMISES

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Excuses and broken promises. I was shocked this past week when I heard comments from the Minister of Municipal Affairs. When asked why this government was breaking yet another one of their campaign promises, he responded, "Perhaps we were too naive." For the Liberal government to simply plead ignorance as an excuse for not living up to lofty campaign promises is simply unacceptable.

Let's look for a minute at the Liberal promise to balance the provincial budget. One of Mr McGuinty's first actions after being elected was to hire a consultant—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. May I ask that the member make his statement so you can all hear.

Mr Dunlop: —with limited terms of reference in order to try to convince Ontarians that balancing the 2003-04 budget could not be done.

Well, Mr McGuinty's blame-game deficit does not hold water with Ontario taxpayers. Based on our government's balanced budget plan and what the Premier has promised as part of his fiscal agenda, the Liberal government could run as much as a \$3.5-billion surplus. All the Premier and the Minister of Finance have to do is start showing up for work and accepting the responsibility entrusted to them by the voters of Ontario.

Come clean, Mr McGuinty. You could balance the budget if you had the political will. It can be done. But of course it is always easier for a Liberal to break their word

to Ontarians than to show up for work and make tough decisions. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that the mantra of the government is excuses, broken promises and tax hikes.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your election. I am sure you will preside over this House with fairness and impartiality.

The people of Ontario wanted a change. As the first Liberal member ever elected to represent the riding of London-Fanshawe, I am proud to be a part of that change. It's my privilege to serve the people of London-Fanshawe, and I will do this to the very best of my ability.

A society can only be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable members. I am proud to represent a party that is committed to bettering the lives of all Ontarians and that recognizes the government's responsibility to protect those who are most vulnerable, including children and the economically disadvantaged. The Liberal government of Premier McGuinty is committed to accessible public health care, an improved education system in this province, fairer taxation, and to working with people rather than against them.

The commitments that Premier McGuinty and our Liberal government have made will serve my constituents of London-Fanshawe well, as they will everyone in this province. I'm proud to be part of this government.

LIBERAL CAMPAIGN PROMISES

Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): Excuses, broken promises and tax hikes: This is what Ontarians can expect from this Liberal government.

In the eight weeks since this government was elected, they have shattered the record book when it comes to breaking promises. Since October 2, all we have heard from the Liberals is, "Balancing the budget is too hard," or "Perhaps we were too naive," or, my personal favourite, "This is not the job we signed up for."

Let's be clear: Being the government is not easy. It requires strong political will and the ability to make difficult decisions, something we haven't seen in the first few weeks of this government.

Mr McGuinty claimed throughout the campaign that he had \$3 billion of savings in his financial plan. Where

has the money gone? The Minister of Finance has also said that he's going to introduce Liberal tax hikes that will result in half a billion dollars of revenue this year. Where will this money be spent?

Mr McGuinty recently announced that he had sold out to his federal cousins by accepting \$300 million in SARS relief. This is much less—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the member from Kitchener-Waterloo. She has a right to make her statement. Please allow her to do that.

Mrs Witmer: I was talking about SARS relief and selling out to the federal cousins. The \$300 million is far less than the \$500 million offered to our previous health minister. Perhaps Mr McGuinty should stand up to his federal friends on behalf of all Ontarians.

Come on, Premier: no more excuses. Get to work, roll up your sleeves and balance the budget. We demonstrated that it could and can be done.

The Speaker: I will recognize an independent, as someone requested earlier on, but I will rotate first and recognize someone from the government side now.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. It's the government side in the rotation.

1340

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
OF EASTERN ONTARIO

CENTRE HOSPITALIER POUR ENFANTS
DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): It is both a pleasure and privilege for me to stand before the Legislature today and speak about our government's commitment of keeping the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario's pediatric services open. During the election campaign our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, vowed to keep the unit in Ottawa and he has kept that commitment. In the wake of the Tory government's decision last year to consider moving the cardiac surgery program to Toronto, several well-known cardiologists left, based on this threat over CHEO's future. Now I am pleased to see the hiring of 15 additional doctors, a new group of pediatric experts, at CHEO. I wish to commend CHEO's chief of staff and everyone responsible for recruiting highly qualified physicians once again at CHEO.

Je suis fier de la communauté de l'est de l'Ontario qui s'est ralliée en faveur de CHEO. L'appui aux services de chirurgie cardiaque de l'Hôpital pour enfants de l'est de l'Ontario et les imposantes manifestations en sa faveur furent des preuves tangibles de l'attachement de la population envers son hôpital pour enfants.

I was touched by the support at the CHEO rally that we had in Casselman last year. Its success was reflected

by the presence of a well-known strong supporter for our children, Max Keeping from CJOH.

En terminant, j'aimerais réitérer l'engagement de tous nos députés, de notre gouvernement, à garder ce service unique dans l'est de l'Ontario.

LIBERAL CAMPAIGN PROMISES

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): With the holiday season fast approaching, Ontarians can expect a big lump of coal in their stockings in the form of the largest tax hike in the history of our province. Despite the Liberal promise to hold the line on taxes, the Minister of Finance will be introducing billions of dollars in tax hikes in the coming days, at the risk of causing a faltering economy, lost jobs and less money in the wallets of taxpayers.

Ontarians are asking, "Why would the Liberal government do this?" Well, the answer is simple. The Liberals think tax hikes are some sort of magic bean that will make all of their problems go away. They don't want to make the tough decisions that are necessary to balance the provincial books, so they're going to try and buy their way out of debt by hiking taxes, hiking hydro rates and breaking the 200-plus promises they made during the recent election.

We know the budget can be balanced, but the Liberal government won't admit that. Their blame-game deficit provides a convenient excuse to break their promises and to hike taxes. Balancing the budget takes commitment and the political will to make tough decisions, two traits this government appears to be lacking. Instead of whining, pointing fingers and selling out to their federal counterparts, the Premier and the Minister of Finance need to start taking responsibility for their actions, roll up their sleeves and get to work.

The Liberals say they are about change. Well, it's time for Mr McGuinty to change his tune and start standing up for Ontarians. Come on, Dalton. Balance the budget this year. It can be done. Ontarians don't want any more of your excuses.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): Let me say, on behalf of the people of Scarborough, that the Speaker's chair has never looked better, and we're all very proud of you.

I'm pleased to rise today to express my congratulations to all those who were elected and to all those who were re-elected in the recent municipal elections on November 10. This is an exciting and challenging time for municipal representatives across this province and certainly in my home city of Toronto.

I wish our newly elected mayor, David Miller, and his new Toronto council well in meeting their considerable challenges facing our city today. In particular I congratulate Glenn De Baeremaeker, who will be taking my place in ward 38, and Michael Thompson, who will be

taking our colleague Lorenzo Berardinetti's place in ward 37, in my riding of Scarborough Centre. They're both very capable, hard-working individuals and I'm sure they'll do an excellent job.

As we enter a new era of federal, provincial and municipal co-operation, I look forward to working closely with newly elected councillors De Baeremaeker, Thompson and all municipal representatives across the province in serving the needs of our local communities.

LIBERAL CAMPAIGN PROMISES

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): Mr Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate you on your election to the chair.

Halloween may be over, but the Liberal government's tricks are still coming, as Ontarians are treated to a bagful of broken promises. First of these was the blame-game phony deficit. Key to the blame game is a little exercise we're calling "hide the revenue," a trick that would make any self-respecting accountant blush. The latest evidence: \$771 million in federal health money that must be paid out of federal coffers by the end of this fiscal year, yet these dollars are nowhere to be found in the finance minister's expected revenues this year. Why?

Perhaps they're being rolled into next year to pay for subsidized housing, an idea endorsed by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal a few years ago. In 1999, Mr Caplan told the Guelph Mercury, and I quote: "The federal government has given the province \$895 million more than they need for health care. That could be used for housing. That's a big chunk of dough." Yes, \$771 million is a big chunk of dough. Ontarians deserve to know where it is and where it's going.

What about the proceeds of the Teranet sale? Even the Liberals realized this would generate significant revenue. That's why they talked about selling it during the election, until they realized it already had been sold. Teranet was sold for more than \$300 million, yet in the finance minister's books, nearly \$200 million of that revenue is missing. Where is this revenue totalling nearly \$1 billion, or perhaps it would be more precise to ask, where are these dollars going to be spent next year? Ontarians have the right to know. The new government must come clean.

HIGHWAY FUNDING

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): The joint transportation announcement made this past Friday by our government's Minister of Transportation and the federal Minister of Transport exemplifies a new era of co-operation between the provincial and federal governments. By working with his federal counterpart, our Minister of Transportation accomplished a great deal in the short period of time since being sworn in.

The six-laning of Highway 401 between Tilbury and Windsor in my riding of Essex has been a long time coming. This stretch of highway has required improve-

ments for some time, but apparently the previous government could not even reach an internal agreement about the projects, let alone come to an agreement with the federal government.

Because of the previous government's unwillingness to co-operate, Highway 401 users waited far too long for these necessary safety improvements to begin. Rather than simply blaming the federal government for all of our problems, Ontarians have signalled that they want the McGuinty government to work co-operatively with all levels of government.

The announcement made Friday shows us all what can be accomplished when two governments put aside the bickering and finger pointing and work together for a common goal. The residents of my riding will soon see the benefits of this new relationship, and I am confident that this past Friday's announcement is just the first of many to come.

LIBERAL CAMPAIGN PROMISES

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): I too rise today to address the Liberals' bogus deficit—their justification for breaking promises; this government's unwillingness to face the facts and its blatant refusal to do any work on behalf of Ontarians. I want to quote an excerpt from the Toronto Star: "We have until Christmas to demonize the Tories. After that, we can't do it any more." That was a statement made by a Liberal insider to the press.

I'd like to submit to you, Mr Speaker, that since the government has taken office, that has been its primary goal, to demonize the former government, not to get on with the job. Last summer, the then Liberal finance critic announced in committee that his party was under the impression that there was a \$5-billion deficit. That was in June.

In September, the first act of this new Premier was to hire a private consultant at \$1,500 a day, instead of using the acting Provincial Auditor. He did this so he could tell him that if his government did nothing over the remaining six months of the fiscal year, there would indeed be a deficit of some \$5 billion, something they claimed they already knew.

I submit to you, Mr Speaker, that the actions of this government have been nothing more than a cynical ploy to attempt to demonize the past administration. Someone needs to inform the Premier that he needs to stop acting like an opposition member and get on with the work in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I stand here as a New Democrat to say a couple of things in regard to what this government has done in its recent election. I remember sitting here with them in opposition, and I remember the debate of the Liberals when they sat on this side of the House—

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: Well, not with them, but we were at least on the same side of the House. I remember some of the

things that they talked about. For example, I remember their position on hydro. In the last election, if I closed my eyes and I listened, I would sometimes think they were campaigning as New Democrats. What did they say during the election? That they were going to keep the rate cap in place.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: Duncan, you'll get your chance; don't worry, we'll bring it to you. But what ends up in the end? During the election the Liberals said, "We're going to keep the rate cap in place." What have they done since? The rate cap is going to be gone. Our hydro bills are going to go through the roof, because this Liberal administration broke one of the fundamental promises in their campaign document and they're taking the rate cap off.

But it's not finished there. They say, "We don't believe in privatization," depending on what day of the week it is, because we know they flip-flopped so many times when they were Liberals, on this side of the House, that they at least have to keep their tradition when they go on the other side. We've got to hope that they flip-flop and reverse their position again. But the Liberals are now saying they're basically going to allow electricity prices to go to market conditions—a heck of a difference from what I heard the Liberals talk about when they were in opposition, to what I hear them talking about when they're government. It goes to prove that they campaign like New Democrats but they govern like Tories.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent, on behalf of the Queen's Park press gallery, to adjourn for 15 minutes and allow the Premier to keep his commitment to have a 15-minute scrum right now.

The Speaker: I heard a no. Sorry.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT, 2003 LOI DE 2003 SUR LA GESTION RESPONSABLE DES FINANCES

Mr Sorbara moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act respecting fiscal responsibility / Projet de loi 2, Loi concernant la gestion responsable des finances.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those against, say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a 5-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1353 to 1358.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Fonseca, Peter	Patten, Richard
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Peterson, Tim
Bentley, Christopher	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramal, Khalil
Broten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldeep	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Marsales, Judy	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Cordiano, Joseph	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craitor, Kim	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Wong, Tony C.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Parsons, Ernie	

The Speaker: All those who oppose, please rise.

Nays

Annett, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Sterling, Norman W.
Churley, Marilyn	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Eves, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Flaherty, Jim	Murdoch, Bill	
Hampton, Howard	O'Toole, John	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 64; the nays are 28.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Mr Sorbara?

Hon Gregory S. Sorbara (Minister of Finance): It's an honour to introduce our government's second piece of legislation, the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003. It's an important step toward keeping our core commitment to get the province's financial house back in order. We made that commitment because it's the foundation of everything else that Ontarians want us to do. That includes excellence in public education, improving our health care system, strengthening our communities and, obviously, creating a more prosperous economy.

Bill 2 speaks to what is the most important job of our government: strengthening the foundation for change. It is a significant piece of legislation and a large step toward fiscal responsibility in this province.

ANAPHYLACTIC STUDENTS PROTECTION ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ÉLÈVES ANAPHYLACTIQUES

Mr Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students / Loi visant à protéger les élèves anaphylactiques.

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

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those against, say "nay."

I think the ayes have got it. Call in the members; a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1404 to 1409.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): All those who are in favour of this bill, please rise.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Fonseca, Peter	Oraziotti, David
Arnott, Ted	Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Parsons, Ernie
Baird, John R.	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Peters, Steve
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Peterson, Tim
Bentley, Christopher	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jackson, Cameron	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Ramsay, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Kormos, Peter	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldeep	Runciman, Robert W.
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Scott, Laurie
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Smitherman, George
Chudleigh, Ted	Marsales, Judy	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Churley, Marilyn	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Cordiano, Joseph	Mauro, Bill	Tascona, Joseph N.
Craitor, Kim	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Di Cocco, Caroline	Milloy, John	Wong, Tony C.
Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Yakabuski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	Munro, Julia	Zimmer, David
Flaherty, Jim	Murdoch, Bill	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	O'Toole, John	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 91; the nays are 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I appreciate the House's confidence in this bill. The bill requires that every school principal establish a school anaphylactic plan. The plan would, among other things, develop and maintain strategies to reduce the risk of exposure that could result in anaphylactic shock at the school, communicate information about life-threatening allergies, arrange for training, develop emergency procedures for each anaphylactic student, and maintain current information on file. With consent, school staff could administer or supervise the administration of medication that is required to be taken during the school day to save a life. In the event of an emergency involving an anaphylactic student, school staff would be permitted to administer medication without consent. No action for damages resulting from administering medication would be permitted unless the damages were as a result of gross negligence.

This could save a life.

SMOKING IN OPPOSITION LOBBY

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): On a point of privilege arising from today's proceedings, Mr Speaker: Last week we heard some lofty words in the throne speech respecting the dangers of second-hand smoke and cigarette smoking. We have heard other comments today with respect to the increase in the tobacco tax to 74%. I would ask you, Mr Speaker, to look into an incident that occurred in the official opposition lobby today when a member of the executive council—

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): Name the member.

Mr Runciman: —the member for Don Valley East, I believe—came into the opposition lobby smoking, was asked by members of staff to leave the premises and refused to do so. I think that is an affront to all of us and certainly a contradiction of the very lofty statements made by the government. Let's hope they're not hollow words.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you very much for raising the point. I hope the members have heard that and adhere to the policy of the Legislature.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On the same point, Mr Speaker: I implore you to be firm with members about their flagrant violation of the rules around this place. I'm sure I speak for many people who are in recovery and have quit that filthy habit and find the presence of smokers and their smoke to be dangerous, not only to my own health but to the health of—

The Speaker: Thank you very much. I'm sure the member will adhere to the caution raised by the previous member.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on November 24, 25, 26 and 27, 2003, for the purpose of considering government business.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Could I ask the member not to anticipate me.

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

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those against the motion, say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

There will be a 5-minute bell.

The bells rang from 1417 to 1422.

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Fonseca, Peter	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Arnott, Ted	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Ernie

Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	Peters, Steve
Barrett, Toby	Hoy, Pat	Peterson, Tim
Bartolucci, Rick	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Jackson, Cameron	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Rinaldi, Lou
Broten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Runciman, Robert W.
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Scott, Laurie
Bryant, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Marsales, Judy	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Cordiano, Joseph	Matthews, Deborah	Sterling, Norman W.
Craitor, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	Tasca, Joseph N.
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	Meilleur, Madeleine	Watson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	Miller, Norm	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol	Wong, Tony C.
Dunlop, Garfield	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Eves, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Flaherty, Jim	O'Toole, John	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Oraziotti, David	

The Speaker: All those opposed, please rise.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Hampton, Howard	Murdoch, Bill
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 86; the nays are 8.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

MEMBERS' RESPONSES

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Notwithstanding the standing orders, the Premier is about to give a statement, and I would seek unanimous consent to allow the NDP members up to a total of five minutes to respond to the Premier's statement.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): All in favour? Agreed.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

PLAN D'ACTION DU GOUVERNEMENT

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I rise to make a statement about Strengthening the Foundation for Change. That's the title of the throne speech that was delivered by His Honour in this House, and that is what we intend to do. But as this is my first opportunity to speak in this session, I want to acknowledge a few groups and one individual.

The first—always first—is the people of Ontario. I want to thank them for the privilege they have bestowed upon us. To be asked to govern by Ontarians is a responsibility we take very seriously.

The second group I want to acknowledge is the members of this House. To be sent here by our communities is an honour that I know we all cherish. Congratulations to all of you.

Finally, I congratulate our new Speaker. I believe I speak today for all members of the House—and that may prove to be a rare occurrence—when I say how confident I am that you will do a tremendous job.

Our new government's job is to deliver real, positive change and to strengthen the foundation for even more profound change in the future. That's what our throne speech is all about. Our new government believes strongly that we can have excellence for all in public education, with lower class sizes and higher student achievement; we can deliver the health care we need, with more nurses, family doctors and hospital beds; we can grow strong communities that are safe, livable and clean; and we can change how government works so that government works for the people of Ontario. These are our commitments to the people of Ontario, and we are keeping them.

Already, we are delivering real, positive change. We have acted to stop new applications for auto insurance rate hikes. We've restored local democracy to our schools. We have taken planned private hospitals and ensured they are publicly owned and publicly operated. We have forged a new, constructive relationship with other governments. Our positive approach has brought positive results on SARS funding, on health care funding and on highway construction. Of course, we've only just begun. As the throne speech attests, we have an ambitious agenda ahead of us.

In education, we plan to tackle bullying, making our schools safer, and we plan to introduce character education. We will ask this House to debate and pass legislation to express our rock-solid commitment to public education by cancelling the previous government's tax giveaway to private schools.

In health care, we plan to introduce more accountability for health care dollars. We're going to take steps to give the medical officer of health greater independence, and we will move to curb tobacco use among our youth. We will introduce legislation that shows our rock-solid commitment to universal medicare. Our legislation will, if passed, stop the previous government's creeping privatization of health care by making two-tier, pay-your-way-to-the-front-of-the-line health care illegal in the province of Ontario.

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To build a stronger economy and a stronger workforce, we will freeze tuition for two years, improve access to trades and professions, introduce legislation to end the previous government's legislated 60-hour work-week, and bring forward a plan to ensure stable and reliable electricity.

We will act to ban the waste of taxpayers' dollars on partisan political advertising.

Pour renforcer nos collectivités, nous avons prévu la création d'une ceinture verte permanente dans la région du Golden Horseshoe, l'interdiction du rejet de boues toxiques non traitées, la protection de notre eau potable et de nos ressources en eau douce, ainsi que des mesures pour faire cesser l'étalement urbain.

Il s'agit sans doute d'un programme ambitieux. Il est ambitieux parce que nous sommes ambitieux pour la population de l'Ontario et que celle-ci attend beaucoup de son nouveau gouvernement.

The people of Ontario understand, as do we, that to keep the breadth of our commitments we must keep one of our core commitments. We must get the province's fiscal house in order. We made that commitment because it is the foundation on which all of our commitments are based. More importantly, it is the foundation on which our schools and hospitals and communities, and indeed our families, operate. These are the things that matter most to Ontarians, because they strengthen their families and bolster their future.

We will keep that commitment not simply because we understand the value of a dollar, but because we understand the values of Ontarians. We will do it in a way that is in keeping with their values: not on the backs of the most vulnerable among us, but by drawing upon the strength of all of us working together.

Ontarians are doing their job. Our economy is strong. But as Mr Peters told us in his independent report, the budgetary position of the province is weak, weaker than anyone anticipated. We did not create the \$5.6-billion Tory deficit, but we will eliminate it, working with Ontarians. We must eliminate it, because it threatens the public services Ontarians have now, it threatens all that we want for Ontario, and it's in the way of delivering all the real, positive changes Ontarians chose on October 2.

We've got a job to do and we're going to do it—in the right way, for the right reasons, for the best people: the men, women and children of Ontario, whom we are all privileged to serve. We will not paper over this problem with money we do not have, we will not try to make it disappear with accounting tricks, and we will never sit on our hands and do nothing. What we will do in this session, what we will always do, is deliver real, positive change and strengthen the foundation for even more profound change in the future. We will fulfill the mandate we all share: to make this province the envy of the world once again.

Mr Ernie Eves (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of this Legislative Assembly. I think it marks a very significant day in the history of this province.

Not too long ago, the people of this province knew that when political leaders went out and campaigned, they could rely upon them to deliver after an election what they promised before an election. Our government changed that in 1995. Unfortunately, the government of

the day doesn't seem to be able to get that message. They made 231 promises, by a very conservative account, during the course of the election campaign, and all we've heard since then is what promises they cannot deliver on. They're even taking credit, in the statement the Premier just read, for actions that were taken by the previous government.

For example, "We have acted to stop new applications for auto insurance rate hikes." Too bad that was already done on July 2 of this year. All they had to do was leave in place the regulations that were there. I understand that either they already have undone or they have plans to undo one of the three regulations that were passed to give effect to a reduction in auto insurance rates. By the way, during the campaign, Mr Premier, you promised to reduce—not to freeze—auto insurance rates by 20%. When are you going to deliver on that promise, not to freeze them where they are today—20% higher—but to deliver on your 20% reduction?

It looks like P3 hospitals still live in the province of Ontario, despite the fact that the Premier and his party campaigned against them. The only difference is that these P3 hospitals are going to cost more than the other hospitals were going to cost.

They talk about the Canada Health Act, that they're going to introduce some bogus, phony piece of legislation that's going to try to indicate that they're protecting the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario always have been protected by the Canada Health Act. Nothing this government does or doesn't do is going to change that. But I look forward to seeing what they're going to do with respect to their principles around X-ray clinics, kidney dialysis clinics, MRIs and other services that have been delivered by the private sector under the envelope of the Canada Health Act for many years and decades in the province of Ontario. I gather that, being true to their principles, they're going to turf all of those, and the people of Ontario will be in a great dilemma; or they're going to have to go back on their principles. Of course, that wouldn't be a big surprise, as we are seeing.

They talk about making schools safer. Coming from a party that voted against the Safe Schools Act, that's a little hard to take. What steps have they taken in their 33 days in office to actually reduce the deficit number this year? We all understand that there's a challenge. It's not every year we're going to have two bouts of SARS, a blackout, mad cow and West Nile. Speaking of the latter, we look forward to comparing your record on West Nile to our record on West Nile this past year. I'm looking forward to that.

In your platform, the Premier indicated that he knew what the numbers were this year. He accepted this year's numbers. He said that he could find an instant \$2 billion in savings and that he'd still have a \$1-billion surplus. So where is that \$3 billion that you knew was there when people voted for you on October 2?

With all due respect, we look forward to having a constructive role and actually making the government

live up to every one of its 231 campaign promises. Sooner would be better, rather than later.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I took great interest in the economic facts mentioned by the Premier in his statement. This is the Premier who looked taxpayers in the eye in all those television commercials and said, "I won't raise your taxes." Well, we read this book today, and he's raising taxes on our small businesses, the job-creation engine of the Ontario economy. He's raising taxes on senior citizens, when this former government wanted to make it easier for them to stay in their own homes. He's raising taxes on young working families, people who wanted to realize the dream of home ownership. But today, with the introduction of this bill, that dream is extinguished.

He's raising taxes on tobacco to 74%, and all that those of us on this side of the House can say is, if that was good to do today, why wasn't it good enough to talk about on election day? But we know there are two agendas: There is one agenda that they presented to get votes on election day and there's another agenda that they're presenting on the floor of the Legislature here at Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I'll now recognize the member from the independents, Mr Hampton.

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Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Speaker, to be sure, I am a New Democrat, and I am the leader of the New Democrats.

Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your election as Speaker, although, as you know, we wanted you to have some opposition in that vote so you would have greater currency. We wanted you to win the vote. Nonetheless, we wish you well.

I want to say a few words to the Premier. Premier, I know that your media advisers told you today that you had to stand up and give the values speech, so you've given the values speech. But the reality is, you now have to govern. The reality is that even before you are into your first question period, your government already has a record. The record is that you've already broken dozens of promises before your first question period.

I just want to provide some reality check to the image speech that you were told to give. The reality check is this: Your government wants to pretend that suddenly there is a deficit. But, Premier, I was in the estimates committee with your then finance critic, now Chair of Management Board, and I've got the transcript, page 22. In this questioning of the then Finance Minister, Mr Phillips raises a number of issues. He says there's a \$2.2-billion revenue problem because of asset sales. There's \$700 million of in-year savings that hasn't been found. There's \$620 million of lower-than-expected revenue because of a failure of economic growth. He then says there's \$770 million of money which should come from the federal government for health care which isn't coming. Then he says there's an \$800-million SARS problem. At the end of that, your then finance critic

added it up and said, "My, it looks like there's a \$5-billion-plus deficit." That was your finance critic.

On June 3, six months ago, notwithstanding his admission that the previous government was headed for a \$5-billion-plus deficit, you and your candidates went out and promised over 231 big spending commitments. You promised that you would lower the tolls on 407. You promised you would keep the hydro rate cap. You promised that you would save the Oak Ridges moraine from housing. You promised that auto insurance premiums would be reduced. You promised 8,000 new nurses. You promised money for schools, knowing there was a \$5-billion-plus deficit already.

Now is the time when you'll be questioned on this. I just want to note that. I just want to note—

Interjections.

Mr Hampton: I must have struck a nerve. Sorry.

The Speaker: When the Premier was making his presentation, I think they gave him the courtesy that everybody could hear. I'm having difficulty now hearing Mr Hampton.

Mr Hampton: I just want to say that the Premier, in his speech, referred to character education in our schools. I would say, Premier, that your government needs to set an example. Don't make promises you can't keep. Don't make promises knowing you won't be able to keep them, because you already knew of a \$5-billion deficit. Your finance critic knew about it. Everybody who was in the estimates committee that day knew about it. Heck, even the Fraser Institute knew about it. It was widely known. So my advice: If you now want to talk about character education, don't make promises you can't keep. Tell the truth. That's what people want to hear. Tell the truth.

The Speaker: Mr Hampton, you know that your comment was not proper. Would you mind withdrawing that, please.

Mr Hampton: Speaker, I'm speaking prospectively, into the future—

The Speaker: I ask you again.

Mr Hampton: I withdraw.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Mr Speaker, I have two points of order. The first is brief and I make it in goodwill, acknowledging that there are many new members here, and that is for the Speaker to note the maxim that a member must never refer to another member by name, but by electoral district or ministry; that is, the member for Kenora-Rainy River, or in the case of ministries—

Interjection: The Chair of Management Board.

Mr Kormos: —the Chair of Management Board. One does not, of course, refer to each other by name. I do not refer to Ms Churley—

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): NDP.

Mr Kormos: Ms Churley-NDP, nor do I refer to the Liberal member from a particular riding—from Mani-

toulin etc—or to the Conservative member. I refer to the member and their riding, or I refer to the minister.

I raise that point of order, Speaker, knowing that you would want to assist all members, especially the new members of this assembly, in refraining from what is an entirely inappropriate practice, but one which all persons here, even with some experience, slip into by not appropriately referring to a member. That's my first point of order.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, member for Niagara Centre. As we know, we just came through an election and quite a number of members here are new. And to memorize all that—I think it is well taken and that we should try our best to refer to individuals by their ridings. Therefore, your point is well taken. I hope that no one did it in any way to disgrace or deface the order of Parliament itself.

MEMBERS' SEATING

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I indicated to you on Thursday that we would be raising this point of order. I want to tell you at the onset that I was very carefully considering whether this was more appropriately a point of privilege or a point of order. I submit to you that it is more properly a point of order, albeit a novel one, and one that I'm not aware of having been dealt with in this chamber before. The point is with respect to the seating of members in this chamber.

I put to you firstly, Speaker—and I can tell you that I anticipate over the course of the next weeks, perhaps months, making frequent references to this excerpt from Griffith and Ryle on Parliament: Functions, Practice and Procedures, Second Edition, London, Sweet and Maxwell, 2003. This is a very important premise, a very important premise, that I quote: "It is worth re-emphasizing that any assessment of the achievement of the Parliament must start from the clear recognition ... that Parliament does not govern the country but is the forum for the public debate and criticism of the policies and acts of government. Parliament's achievement, therefore, must be measured by its success in providing such a forum and in exercising such criticism."

First, addressing what I believe is axiomatic but warrants brief reference, Speaker, is your authority over seating arrangements. I submit to you that it is the Speaker in this Legislature who determines seating arrangements. I make reference first to the well-known and very recent work by Robert Marleau and co-author Montpetit, House of Commons Procedure and Practice, page 183. I quote again: "Members are allocated their seats and desks in the House under the authority of the Speaker but on the advice of the whips of the recognized parties ... following negotiations...."

"Members representing the governing party traditionally occupy those seats to the right of the Chair, with the Prime Minister and other ministers seated in the front rows. Private members, otherwise known as back-benchers, representing the governing party are custom-

arily seated according to their seniority or length of service in the House within their caucus. If the number of members representing the governing party exceeds the number of desks on the right side, the overflow, or 'rump,' of government members occupies those seats across the aisle. This section may, at the discretion of the Speaker, be near the chair or at the far end of the chamber."

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Of course, Marleau, being the authoritative author that he is, with his incredible experience, footnotes that.

I'm going to get to what I call the bifurcated or split rump in just a minute.

Beauchesne: another Canadian authority, and I refer to Beauchesne's Rules and Forms of the House of Commons of Canada, 6th edition, page 36. I want you to note that this is the latest edition, published in 1989, prior to subsequent rulings by the Speaker of the federal House, including rulings in 1994 by Speaker Parent and of course the well-known ruling of 2001, with which everyone is familiar. That is, "Members are allocated desks in the chamber by the Speaker on the advice of party whips who, in turn, have the concurrence of their leaders. By custom, the centre of the first two rows of desks on the Speaker's right are reserved for ministers. The front row on the Speaker's left is reserved for the leading members of the opposition parties. Each opposition party is allocated a proportionate number of front desks as they have elected members in the House."

Page 37 deals with the rump: "If the majority party has more members than there are desks on the Speaker's right, then the remaining government members occupy desks across the aisle. This section may, at the discretion of the Speaker, be near the chair or at the far end of the chamber and is commonly referred to as the rump." Marleau, Beauchesne.

Erskine May, the British authority—and of course everyone in this chamber is familiar with Erskine May. We have to note that in Westminster, in the British Parliament, which has hundreds of members and nowhere near enough accommodations—there are the benches, of course—there are no assigned seats for private members, or what we colloquially call back-benchers. I am referring to Erskine May, 1997, 22nd edition, page 178: "In the Commons no place is allotted to any member," as I just indicated, "but by custom the front bench, on the right hand of the chair, called the treasury bench or government front bench, is appropriated for the members of the administration. The front bench on the opposite side, though other members occasionally sit there, is reserved by convention for the leading members of the opposition."

Now take us to Griffith and Ryle once again. I quoted from Griffith and Ryle as part of the preface. Once again, Griffith and Ryle, Sweet and Maxwell, published 2003. Erskine May has not had new editions in some considerable length of time, but not for as long as Bourinot, and I'm going to get to Bourinot in 1916 in just a minute. Griffith and Ryle, page 196: "To the right of the Speaker

sit ministers on the front bench, and behind and around them the backbenchers of the government party. To the Speaker's left are the opposition front-bench spokesmen and their supporters. Below the gangway ... on the opposition side there are also benches for members of smaller parties such as the Liberal Democrats, and the Scottish, Welsh and Ulster parties." Once again, "smaller parties," not necessarily recognized parties for the purpose of funding, under the standing orders and rules of the British Parliament—notwithstanding that, still opposition parties.

Australia—I refer to the work *House of Representatives Practice*, 3rd edition, edited by L. M. Barlin, published 1997, page 83:

"In many respects the functioning of the House is based on the clear-cut division between government and opposition; that is, the opposing political parties, and the working arrangements and conduct of business reflect this. An obvious recognition of this historical development is the seating arrangement in the House with government members sitting to the right of the Speaker's chair and opposition members to the left."

Bourinot, last edition, 1916, published by Canada Law Book Co here in Toronto, a Canadian authority and one of the best-established Canadian authorities—Bourinot, the 4th edition, page 156—this is 1916 and this illustrates how long this practice has been in existence, this tradition, this convention, in fact, as Marleau would speak of it, an order, by virtue of the common law, by virtue of practice.

"The members of the two houses are provided with seats and desks, to which is affixed a card with the name of the member to whom it has been allotted. The members of the privy council and the members supporting the administration of the day occupy places to the right of the Speaker, as far as they can be accommodated, and the members of the opposition to the left."

I had occasion to take a look at seating plans going back to the early part of the last century, indeed going so far back that the gallery on this side was referred to as the "ladies' gallery," while the gallery on this side was referred to as the "public gallery," which I suppose, in a sad way, reflected some of the unfortunate values of the time.

But let me take you through this, because this deals with the bifurcated rump. Marleau makes reference to the bifurcated rump as having occurred in the federal Parliament. Marleau notes that there were several occasions in the 35th Parliament when the overflow of government members sat to the immediate left of the Speaker, and that is to say at the end of the chamber closest to the Speaker, but, I say to you, not in such a way as to interrupt or form a wall or a barrier between other opposition members.

During the 24th Parliament, 1958 to 1962, the overflow of government members sat to the left of the Speaker at the far end of the chamber. During the 33rd Parliament, 1984 to 1988, when there were 211 government members, the overflow of government members

was situated both immediately to the left of the chair—closest to you, Speaker—and at the far end of the left side of the chamber.

Interjection: Bifurcated.

Mr Kormos: Bifurcated rump, a split rump—effectively splitting the overflow of government members to bookend those members of the opposition parties. Now, please, sir, I didn't author the name "rump" and so I don't use that in any way that is disparaging to the members supporting the government who find themselves in the rump.

Look what happened in 1949. In 1949, we had a bifurcated or split rump for the first time that I'm aware of here in the province of Ontario. The Conservative government had a rump which occupied the place in the House farthest away from the Speaker. The CCF—the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation—sat to the Speaker's left, on the opposition benches. Next to them sat the Liberal Party, including one Liberal-Labour member, identified as such in the seating plan. I just mention that as an interesting observation: a Liberal-Labour member—not a member of the Liberal Party, but a member of the Liberal-Labour Party. Then even two Labour-Progressive members—and those people who are students of the history of this great place will recall Joe Salsberg and A.A. MacLeod—sat to the immediate left of the third party. So you see, in 1949 we had a rump that sat at the far end. We had three groups of opposition members, with two members identified on the seating plan as Labour-Progressive, but nonetheless to the immediate left of the third party.

1500

What I'm suggesting to you is that the documentation demonstrates that the seating plan that has been convention has been one of the official opposition; to their immediate left, the third party; and then to their immediate left, descendingly, other opposition parties or even groups of opposition members.

In 1951, a very similar scenario. We haven't reached the split rump yet. In 1951, once again, two Labour-Progressives with a Tory rump at the far end of the chamber, CCF, Liberal, including the Liberal-Labour member sitting with the Liberal caucus—most interesting—and identified as Liberal-Labour on the seating plan.

In 1952, the first split rump, as mentioned, in the federal Parliament occurring the one time. Understand why that happened. In that respect, Roderick Lewis's book *The House Was My Home*, published in 1987—and I know that everyone here has read this. If new members haven't read it—I'm serious—I urge it upon you. Lewis explained that there were three split rumps of three successive Parliaments in the early 1950s.

On page 11, he writes, "Of course there have been a number of occasions when the government was supported by a very large majority when a section on the opposition side had to be allotted to members of the government party, such a section being commonly called a rump. While members of the government party of

course do not like sitting on the opposite side it does not present the same difficulties for them as it would for opposition members being seated on the government side.” Lewis clearly makes note of the problematic and truly unprecedented phenomenon of opposition members—he uses the language very clearly—in effect being seated on the government side. “The most unusual arrangement arose during the Parliament of 1951 to 1955.” He goes on to explain. What had happened is that Premiers and official opposition leaders had historically sat at the Speaker’s right but close to the Speaker. Premier Leslie Frost thought the imagery of being surrounded by his backbenchers was more dramatic, and Premier Leslie Frost moved the Premier’s chair to the centre of the government benches.

Lewis indicates on page 12, “As has been stated Mr Frost had moved his seat to the approximate location of the Premier’s seat in the present House with the Leader of the Opposition opposite so that the 10 members of the opposition were grouped in a small section surrounding the opposition leader and there were two blocks of government members, one to the left and one to the right of the opposition.”

We’ve got that in 1951, as I showed you. We’ve got it in 1952, once again. Here we have but two CCFers not sent off into the nether lands, but located where convention and tradition indicate they should be in their appropriate position to the left of the next-largest opposition party.

To 1953: a bifurcated split rump, once again the Liberals being the official opposition, including one identified Liberal-Labour Party member, two CCFers, and once again Joe Salsberg, Labour-Progressive, not off to another part of this chamber, but following that succession of opposition party, third-party and then increasingly smaller numbers.

In 1955, the last bifurcated rump, but three CCFers sitting to the immediate left of the official opposition with the split rump so as to not interrupt the opposition benches.

In 1960, no need for a split rump, but once again five CCFers, not with a rump separating the two groups of opposition members but the five CCFers being in their appropriate, historical, traditional and conventional role to the immediate left of the Liberal official opposition.

In 1964, 27th Parliament, same scenario.

In 1968, 28th Parliament, same scenario.

In 1971, 29th Parliament, same scenario.

In 1975 there was no rump.

In 1977, 31st Parliament, no rump.

In 1981, no rump.

Indeed, the next rump was in 1987, and the last rump prior to this government, 1987 through 1990, and once again, as has been indicated in parliaments throughout the British Commonwealth, the rump is at one end or the other. In 1987, with that majority government, the rump found itself at the far end of the chamber and not separating the two groups of opposition members.

Speaker, I put to you that it is clear that this matter of seating is within your authority. You are the final word on where members sit.

I want to indicate to you that the Clerk’s office advised me on two successive days, first on November 17 and then on November 18, of proposed seating plans which had the Liberal rump in this unconventional, untraditional and unprecedented place. I wrote to the Clerk on November 18 expressing our concerns about separating two opposition groups by a government rump and indeed endorsing either the split rump of 52 to 55 or in fact calling for convention to be complied with.

In wrapping up, this isn’t just a matter of convention, and convention alone. Convention is important in this institution; not to say there isn’t evolution, of course not, but convention and tradition are important. Convention and precedent have the power of standing orders, but there are some practical reasons for this.

Quite frankly, Speaker, you know as a result of your considerable tenure and experience here that from time to time opposition parties are required to collaborate. I recall one occasion where, although the third party was sitting as the third party, it was a member of the official opposition who, during a very contentious debate, stood firm in his seat and remained there through the night. And there was significant collaboration, as you may recall, Speaker, between the third party and the official opposition.

There are other occasions when, because of the common role—and that’s what gets back to my first reference to Griffith and Ryle in that the design of this place is not for the government to govern. The government doesn’t govern out of Parliament. Rather, Parliament is a forum where government is tested. I put to you—I don’t want to be any lengthier than I have to—that this compels your intervention, that you ought to restore the Liberal rump to their appropriate position, to their historical position, and that would be either on one end or the other.

1510

You see, this isn’t about where my colleagues and I sit; it’s about where the rump sits. The rump belongs on one end or the other. That’s clear. There is no precedent to the contrary—or on both, but never, ever occupying the left of the Speaker, space traditionally reserved for opposition members. You’ve seen opposition members amounting to one, Joe Salsberg, Labour-Progressive, who was accorded the position in reference to the Conservative rump of the day, which put the Conservative rump in their appropriate place, and that was at this extreme end.

I put to you that you have the jurisdiction, that you have to exercise that jurisdiction, and that you have to rectify, with respect, this unfortunate oversight.

At this point, I’ll leave it at no more than that. I don’t think I should engage in any stronger language, because I’m prepared to acknowledge that it was but an oversight, because I can’t for the life of me imagine government House leaders or whips so malicious as to want to display, dare I say it, contempt for parliamentary tradi-

tion and convention, nor so malicious as to want to interfere with the respective roles and the sometimes mutual collaborative roles that opposition members, although they may not belong to the same party, engage in.

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to give our caucus's support to the point of order brought forward by the member from Niagara Centre. We believe there is a case to be made for the Speaker to consider this point of order for the very simple reason that the seating arrangement appears to stand against long-standing parliamentary convention in Ontario.

The standing orders that govern this place do not specifically lay out rules with regard to the seating of MPPs in the House. However, section 1(c) of the standing orders provides for this type of situation, namely issues dealing with House business that are not provided for in the standing orders.

I'll quote briefly from that section: "In all contingencies not provided for in the standing orders the question shall be decided by the Speaker or Chair, and in making the ruling the Speaker or Chair shall base the decision on the democratic rights of members referred to in clause (b). In doing so the Speaker shall have regard to any applicable usages and precedents of the Legislature and parliamentary tradition."

Based on a survey of the Ontario Legislative Assembly seating plans for the last 75 years, the current seating arrangement stands alone as the only time that members of the government caucus are sitting between, indeed splitting, the opposition benches.

Some 76 years ago, the Legislature of the day saw 83 government members elected; 55 sat on the traditional government side, while 17 sat in the opposition, furthest from the Speaker. The Liberals, Progressives, United Farmers and Labour sat as a group on the opposition side.

In 1947, with 90 members elected to the House, the seating plan shows that 45 of 66 government members were seated on the government side and 21 on the opposition side, furthest from the Speaker. The remaining opposition members—the Liberals, CCF, Liberal-Labour, Labour-Progressives, one independent—were seated as a bloc, separate from the government members.

In 1989, the governing Liberals housed 76 MPPs on the government side, with an additional 18 on the opposition side, again furthest from the Speaker. As you may recall, the opposition members sat as a bloc.

In 1995, when our party elected 82 members, 70 sat on the government side, while the remaining 12 sat as a bloc furthest from the Speaker's chair.

Mr Speaker, we're looking to you to consider the seating plans for the last 75 years as an example, indeed a standard of parliamentary tradition in Ontario, when making your decision. Note a few brief examples from other jurisdictions. The current seating plan from Alberta's Legislature shows the tradition of housing government members apart from opposition members when there's a need for an overflow caucus of government

members on the opposition side. In Alberta, the opposition Liberals and NDP are located beside each other, while government members housed on the opposition side sit beside the opposition members.

The bottom line is that both here and in other assemblies constituted under British parliamentary tradition, the opposition benches sit as a bloc of members elected to hold the government of the day to account without regard to their status as a duly recognized party.

We would once again, Mr Speaker, respectfully ask you to consider this case carefully in light of established parliamentary convention in this province.

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I want to respond to the point of order briefly, if I may.

First of all, the member from Welland-Thorold did reference Montpetit and Marleau, but he neglected one very significant paragraph; he seemed to overlook it. Allow me to read that. This is under the section dealing with assignment of seats in the House.

"Those members who do not have a party designation or who represent a party not recognized by the House are seated subject to the discretion of the Speaker in whatever seats are remaining. These members typically occupy the desks to the left of the Speaker along the back rows, often but not necessarily near the end of the chamber. The Speaker allocates the seats for these members pursuant to their seniority as elected members, while at the same time retaining a degree of latitude in determining these arrangements."

You'll recall, Mr Speaker—we are dealing with a separate situation here—that in this House in 1999, the then Conservative government, with the unanimous support of the House, defined what a party is in the standing orders. That's under section 2:

"For the purpose of these standing orders, "recognized party" means a party caucus of eight or more members of the Legislative Assembly."

In the last House, in the brief time I have been here, independent members have been seated in that corner, in that corner, and the Speaker's chair is in that corner. That has been the tradition of the place.

I think it's also important to note that former Speaker Carr, in the lead-up to the reconvening of the House, was aware of the proposed seating plan now in place and, to our knowledge, raised no concerns about it.

There is no difference in where the seven members at the end are seated from where they were in the last House. The history of the place, the tradition of this place, has been in fact that independents tend to be along the back row, according to precedent; that is according to Montpetit and Marleau. In the corners here we've had various independent members in the brief time that I've served in this Legislature.

I'd ask Mr Speaker, in contemplating this, that he take into account, if not this arrangement, then what normally happens with the seating of the independent members as such. It's quite clear in the precedents established in Montpetit and Marleau. The members who are concerned

about this are basically seated in the same spot they were before. This does not, in our view, in any way infringe on the right of any member of this Parliament to participate, whether they sit there, there or there. In fact, in Ottawa, one can recall in very recent history the overflow government members seated indeed very close to the Speaker's left on the opposition side. There is some latitude to the Speaker, but the Speaker must account for all facts, including traditionally where we place independent members in this House in terms of seating.

With that, and recognizing the time, I would conclude by saying that the participation of all members, regardless of where they are seated, is guaranteed by you through the standing orders that are agreed to by this House. Accordingly, we trust that regardless of whether a member sits in this seat or at the far end of the House, he or she will have an equal opportunity to represent his or her constituents. The seating arrangement as contemplated now does not, in our view, infringe upon the rights of any individual members to represent the best interests of their constituents or this province.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): On the same point?

Mr Kormos: If I may in brief reply, I am rather amazed at the comments by the government House leader. Yes, I've read all of Marleau and Montpetit several times and, you see, those little numbers refer to footnotes. When the little numbers appear at the end of a sentence, you have to read the footnote. The footnote, of course, is the ruling by Speaker Parent on June 16, 1994, in response to—

1520

The Speaker: Member, let's clear up a point. Are we going to have a debate of this now? You've put your case, and I think you made some excellent points. I also think that the member from Leeds-Grenville made some very, very good points and, of course, the House leader. If you would allow me, instead of having a debate about that today, to take those concerns and get back to you as soon as possible, I would really appreciate that.

Mr Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. I do refer you to the ruling of Speaker Parent, though, of June 14, 1994, because it clearly gave nine New Democrats bloc seating, not in back rows.

The Speaker: And if there is additional information you do have, I am quite open that we can meet each other and do this at a time so I can come back with a ruling that is satisfying to all.

Mr Runciman: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Given the very expensive media training that new members of cabinet have gone through and that at least one—the member for Ottawa West-Nepean, I think—bought a new suit for this occasion, I would ask for unanimous consent that we extend question period for the full hour.

The Speaker: The member has asked that question period be extended for the full hour. Do I hear unanimous consent for that? I heard a no.

ORAL QUESTIONS

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr Ernie Eves (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): Mr Premier, you said on October 17 this year in a speech to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, "We sent out a very clear signal, it's been out there for a very long time now: We're committed to putting genuine protections to the Oak Ridges moraine, and we've said we're not going to allow the construction of those 6,600 homes." Is that a principle you still believe in?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and look forward to a number of exchanges in the ensuing months.

Our responsibility in this and all matters is to bring a responsible approach to dealing with these issues. We have made the very best of a bad situation. We have expanded the corridor and the wildlife routes, we have protected more of the sensitive lands around Philips Lake, which we've brought into public ownership, and we have managed to reduce by 900 the number of housing units on the lands. The other thing I should say is that we will take the necessary steps to ensure that no other government can enter into this kind of deal again.

Mr Eves: Speaking of Philips Lake, I didn't know you could skate on it yet.

Your Minister of Municipal Affairs said on Friday when he was questioned about this, "Perhaps we were too naive." This was out there for some 16 months before you made your speech to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. You were talked to about this, you were warned about this, you are a lawyer by trade. Are you really asking the people of Ontario to now believe that for 16 months and all through the election campaign you promised that you would put a definitive end to this, and then all of a sudden, mysteriously, between October 17 and last Friday, you finally realized after 16 months that you were wrong and you were naive and you couldn't do it. Is that what you're asking us to believe?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I want to assure the people of Ontario that we fought as hard as we could to turn your deal around and to protect environmentally sensitive lands. That's exactly what we did.

We're also, as I said earlier, going to take the necessary steps to ensure that this kind of a deal cannot be entered into. Beyond that, we're going to lend permanent protection to the Golden Horseshoe greenbelt, which will protect hundreds of thousands of acres in perpetuity.

Mr Eves: To the Premier again: Then, last Friday, on November 21, not only did you renege on your commitment about the moraine; you didn't even have the common decency to attend yourself. You, by coincidence, arranged three other events around the province of Ontario. You had been in government for 30 days. Are you asking the people of Ontario to believe that not once in those 30 days could those other three commitments

have been dealt with, which would have enabled you personally to attend at the moraine announcement and make it yourself? Are you asking us, the 12 million people in the province of Ontario, to believe that this was just a coincidence?

You know, the Premier has been quoted as saying, "This is not exactly the job your new government applied for." I think the question people of Ontario have to be asking themselves today is, "Are you up to the job?"

Hon Mr McGuinty: I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition would be interested in learning more about what we intend to do to ensure that we are providing better protection to environmentally sensitive land in Ontario.

We're going to introduce significant new planning reforms to protect the public interest and prevent deals like the ones you just got into in Richmond Hill.

We're going to introduce fundamental reforms to the way land use planning processes are done in Ontario to give people a real and meaningful voice in the way their communities grow and prosper.

What we intend to do, to repeat, is to ensure that this kind of a deal is never, ever entered into by their government again.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): New question.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I would like to first of all take the opportunity to thank the minister for acknowledging in a very public way at his most recent press conference that when our leader, Ernie Eves, was issuing warnings to the opposition and to Mr McGuinty that cancelling or even threatening to cancel the Oak Ridges moraine agreement would cost the taxpayers billions of dollars, according to the new Minister of Municipal Affairs, he was indeed speaking the truth.

Now I would like to ask the new minister to speak the truth as well. Will he admit in this House today that, contrary to what his leader is saying, that there will never be another deal like this, he indeed, acting on behalf of this new government, entered into precisely the same kind of deal with developers and he extended this deal by some hundreds of acres in exchange for saving 50 acres? Will he today disclose to this House precisely how much this new deal that he has made will cost the taxpayers of Ontario?

Hon John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs, minister responsible for seniors): In response to the member opposite, let me just say this: The exchange that took place—we're basically exchanging the most ecologically sensitive lands in the Oak Ridges moraine, to the extent that there will be 50 more acres of parkland around the two kettle lakes that will be protected for generations to come. The developers will also contribute \$3.5 million toward the development of that park. As a result of what has happened, sir, you know that the wildlife corridor of the moraine will be widened to a much greater extent than it currently is. You should also know that as far as the land exchange in Pickering is concerned, we will fully consult with the city of Pickering

and the region of Durham to make sure that the political leadership of those communities is totally involved in the land exchange that will take place.

1530

Mr Klees: It's very obvious to me that the minister was not involved at all in negotiating this deal, because he has no concept of what's in the deal. The fact of the matter is that when the facts come out in this province, he has exchanged some 40 acres of land for some 800 acres in Pickering. I'd like to know how he can justify that when they are unable to meet any of their commitments relating to health and education in this province because of a supposed, bogus deficit. Yet he has single-handedly sold off literally hundreds of millions of dollars of provincially owned lands to do a bad deal for the people of Ontario. How can he justify it, and will he table that deal in the House today?

Hon Mr Gerretsen: Sir, the only bad deal that was made was your deal with the developers. We made that deal much better, to the extent that there will be 50 acres of land added to the parkland. The corridor will be wider so that wildlife can go through the moraine there. You know that to be a fact as well. As a matter of fact, we not only did that, but we will make sure that this kind of situation will never happen again in the future, with the introduction of greenbelt legislation in this House and planning legislation that will in effect give the people of Ontario and the cities and municipalities that are involved a much longer period of time to react to developers' plans that come before them.

Mr Klees: The new minister says he had no choice; we've heard that before from a Liberal. He had a choice, and the choice he had was to honour an existing agreement that, quite frankly, was supported as a fair agreement not only by all stakeholders but by environmental groups such as STORM. They said it was a good deal for the environment, it was a good deal for taxpayers. This minister and his new leader have sold out the taxpayers of this province. Shame on you.

Will you disclose the actual details and confirm for the people of Ontario the hundreds of millions of dollars that you have just sold us down the river on?

Hon Mr Gerretsen: You know that we have made the bad deal that you made a lot better. And if, according to you, the environmental community was all in favour of your deal, they surely ought to be in favour of this deal, because it's so much better, in that more land will be protected as far as the moraine is concerned.

The councils of the town of Pickering and the region of Durham will be fully involved in any land exchange that takes place in that area.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr Eves: A questions to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: You understand that when Minister Hodgson negotiated this deal, he committed to the people of the province that the deal would be submitted to the fairness commissioner, to the Environmental Commissioner and to the Provincial Auditor. Will you please stand up in the House today and confirm that your government will do

exactly the same and that if any of these bodies disagrees with your deal, you will can your deal?

Hon Mr Gerretsen: The fairness commissioner has already agreed to take a look at this deal in exactly the same way they took a look at your bad deal, and I'm sure that the same can be said for the Environmental Commissioner. This deal will be subjected to exactly the same rules and regulations as the deal you made some time ago.

Mr Eves: I see that the Minister of Municipal Affairs again thought he was perhaps too naive last Friday. That's not what you said in a scrum at the event last Friday. You said it would be submitted to the fairness commissioner only; I'm glad to see that you've reconsidered after three days. Are we going to go through this every single day, that you guys make a commitment and three days later you change your mind? Save the Rouge president and Toronto city councillor-elect Glenn De Baeremaeker told Minister Gerretsen that he campaigned for the Liberals during the provincial election because of their position against the development—his words, not mine: "Why did you lie to us?" he said.

Hon Mr Gerretsen: As I've already indicated here in the House today and as I indicated at the press conference that was held last Friday, this deal will be looked at by the fairness commissioner. He's agreed to do that, and we look forward to him doing that.

The Speaker: Just let me caution the members again. I know sometimes we become rather creative about using the words that we have used and I know it's an indirect way of saying something about lying. I hope you would refrain from using that kind of strategy.

The next question is for a government member.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I have a question also for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister, on Friday, November 21, you announced a number of reforms to the planning process in Ontario, namely, reforms to bring more accountability, transparency and public input to the way land use planning decisions are being made across this province—something previous governments appeared to have no interest in doing. What will be done to bring about real and positive change to the planning process in Ontario?

Hon John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs, minister responsible for seniors): I would like to thank the member for his question, as I would like to thank the other members for their questions as well.

Our commitment is to give the people of Ontario a real and meaningless—meaningful voice—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. I thought you all wanted to get question period for one hour, but somehow you are extending it and reducing it in a different way now.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I just want to assure the minister that he's

off to a good start of a meaningless way of doing business in this government.

Hon Mr Gerretsen: Unfortunately, I did slip into thinking about what the former government had done when I said that word "meaningless."

We are all about giving the people of Ontario a meaningful voice in the planning process, and that's going to be done in three ways. Number one, we're going to protect the public interest by preventing developers from forcing unwanted urban expansions. We're going to give municipalities the power and control over that. We're going to give members of the public a stronger voice in the planning decisions that affect our communities by doubling the time frame for allowing municipal review of planning applications.

Mr Flynn: Minister, in the past five years, municipalities in the GTA have spent more than \$20 million fighting OMB decisions. The township of Uxbridge, for example, had to raise property taxes just to pay the legal fees it incurred while fighting a developer at the Ontario Municipal Board.

As you are probably aware, I am a former regional councillor for Halton. As a regional councillor, I was appointed to the GTA task force on Ontario Municipal Board reform, and we submitted a report to the province in March 2003. Minister, will you take seriously the recommendations in the GTA task force report, unlike the previous government, and enable democratically elected municipalities to ensure they have vibrant and healthy communities?

1540

Hon Mr Gerretsen: First of all, let me take this opportunity to congratulate all of the municipal politicians who were elected two or three weeks ago. The task that they will have over the next three years will be daunting, and we all wish them well.

There is absolutely no question that one of the other changes that we're going to make to the planning legislation is to make sure that land use planning decisions will be consistent with provincial policy documents: not just "having regard to," but "will be consistent with."

As Ken Boschoff, the president of AMO, said after this announcement was made last Friday, "Giving councils due credit to make decisions for their communities is an important step in recognizing municipalities as a responsible and accountable order of government elected by their constituents to look after their municipality."

We totally agree with AMO's position on this. We'll be working with them and the other stakeholders to make sure that the new planning process will best suit the people of Ontario, and that's what this is all about.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Theodore Roosevelt once offered the brilliant political advice to speak softly and carry a big stick, but when it comes to carrying out his

Oak Ridges moraine campaign promises Dalton McGuinty speaks loudly but carries a little stick.

The obvious conclusion to their land-swap deal: thousands, and potentially tens of thousands, of new houses are going to be built in the Seaton area.

To the minister, can he guarantee for the House today that two thirds of the land in the Seaton area will be protected from development, as requested by local environmentalists? Can he guarantee that today?

Hon John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs, minister responsible for seniors): We've already given the commitment that over 50% of the land in Seaton that is environmentally sensitive will certainly not be built upon, and we can give that assurance unequivocally.

I can also tell you that the city of Pickering and the region of Durham will be fully consulted and involved in the land exchange program so that they know exactly what's going on and so that what will be built there will be in conformity to the wishes of the city of Pickering and the region of Durham.

Mr Hudak: I'm rather concerned. There was also a consultation with the people of Ontario, and the Liberal Party under Dalton McGuinty clearly indicated in its platform that up to two thirds of the land in Seaton will be protected from development. That's page 19, sir, of your platform. You just said that one half of the land will be preserved. Your campaign commitments, your member for the area, all those who were campaigning in the 905 area, said that two thirds of Seaton will be protected.

Why are you, sir, now in the House saying that only 50% will be protected when you campaigned on two thirds? Is this again, on the heels of the Oak Ridges moraine flip-flip, one more Dalton McGuinty flip-flop when it comes to development for the province of Ontario?

Hon Mr Gerretsen: Sir, as I indicated before, the environmentally sensitive land will be protected. The question I have of you, sir: Would you rather have the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): You're supposed to listen to the answer, and I would appreciate very much if you would give the minister a chance to respond. Minister?

Hon Mr Gerretsen: The city of Pickering and the region of Durham will be fully consulted before the final land exchange takes place to make sure that those municipal governments agree with the steps that the province is going to take in this particular area. Sir, that is the best kind of guarantee and advice that can be given with respect to the land exchange.

TOBACCO SMUGGLING

Mr Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): My question is to the Minister of Finance. As you are aware, my community of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh borders the United States and is in close

proximity to the Quebec border. In the early and mid-1990s our community struggled with increased and evident tobacco smuggling which endangered members of our community as well as enforcement personnel. This blatant disregard for law and order became so serious that the province's hand was forced to lower cigarette taxes in order to curb tobacco smuggling. With our government keeping its commitment to raise taxes to the national average, what are you going to do to ensure we do not find a resurgence of smugglers' alley?

Hon Gregory S. Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I want to begin by congratulating the new member from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh. He succeeds a great, now retired, member of this Parliament, John Cleary. We all remember him well. I want to wish you, sir, the very best of good luck as you take your seat in this House.

You raise a very important question. The fact is that today we introduced a bill that will raise in a significant way tobacco taxes. The balance in dealing with tobacco taxes is to make sure that the additional levy is not so high as to encourage, if I can use that word, an underground economy in tobacco. We think our moderate approach to moving toward the national average in cigarette taxes will do just that. We are going to be extremely vigilant so that we don't make the mistakes that were made in the past when the national government had to actually roll back cigarette taxes in order to dampen that underground economy. We're not going to let that happen.

Mr Brownell: Minister, it is good to hear that you take the smuggling issue seriously. We don't want to return to the problems of the past. I want to stress again that the serious issues of violence stemming from smuggling have turned some people off raising tobacco taxes. People want to see that there is a positive benefit to the policy beyond revenue. Can you tell me what the health impact of an increase in tobacco taxes would be? What is the benefit to the people of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh if there is an increase in the tobacco taxes?

Hon Mr Sorbara: I think it would be best to refer that supplementary to my colleague the Minister of Health.

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I too would like to add my congratulations to the member for Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh on his election, and say that smoking kills, that in the province of Ontario tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death, killing 16,000 citizens a year. Health care expenditures related to tobacco use cost Ontario taxpayers an estimated \$1 billion a year, and diseases caused by tobacco cost the economy an estimated \$2.6 billion each year in lost productivity, as reported by the Addiction Research Foundation. These are all good reasons for Ontarians to stop smoking, but far and away the greatest reason, and the reason that I recommend this piece of legislation to the member from Simcoe North, is because it can prevent young people in the province from taking up this habit which may reduce their life.

OAK RIDGES MORaine

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I'd like to return to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister, your Premier said on October 17, 2003, after the election campaign, "We're not going to allow the construction of those 6,600 homes." Yet on Friday you said, "Perhaps we were too naive without knowing the full implications of the deal at the time." I'd like you to tell the House, the people of Ontario, what specifically did you learn between October 17 and last Friday?

Hon John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs, minister responsible for seniors): What I did learn since that time is that we've got a bigger park, we've got more environmental protection and we've got a thousand fewer homes in that particular area. The moraine has been saved to a much greater extent. That's what we've learned since then. The deal that we have now is a lot better for the people of the Oak Ridges Moraine and for the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario have won as a result of the negotiations that this government, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, took to make sure that the moraine is protected; as well as the greenbelt legislation that will be introduced later on in this session; as well as the Planning Act legislation that we just talked about. We want to make sure that the people and the municipal leaders of Ontario are much more involved in the planning process of this province than they have been.

1550

Mr Baird: I think what the people of Ontario see is another government minister and a part of a government who have broken yet another campaign election promise. You were the party that said you were going to be open; you were the party that said you were going to be transparent. If this is such a good deal for the environment, if it's such a good deal for people in York region, the GTA and the people of Ontario, why won't you immediately table your backroom deal with developers? Are you ashamed to table it today and will you table it today? Yes or no?

Hon Mr Gerretsen: The details with respect to the deal will be known in due course, which is precisely the same argument that was used by your government when you were in office just two or three months ago. What we do know is that the people of Ontario are going to get greater greenbelt legislation and protection. We're going to protect over 600,000 acres of land in this area for conservation purposes. That's what we're going to do. We're going to better the Planning Act in the processes, something that you in your eight years of practice didn't do at all. We're going to make sure that the people of Ontario have a say in the planning of the future of this great province of ours.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question is for the Minister of Children's Services.

Minister, as you're undoubtedly aware, I'm very concerned about the welfare of children. For many years I've seen families living below the poverty level struggle and all too often fail to provide the necessities of life for their children. Our family has fostered children who believe that the definition of wealthy is someone who has three meals a day. For too many, food has become a privilege rather than the right that it actually is. A recently released report on child poverty has a number of alarming statistics that reflect the current state of child poverty still to this day. Not only is it alarming but it's shameful that families who are good, honest people that make up the very fabric of our society are so often caught in a situation that, by its nature, does not enable them to better their position in life.

Since we've seen very little done provincially over the past eight years to assist struggling families and eliminate children from having to live in poverty, how do you plan to assist parents who are trying to be successful and provide the very basic of necessities for their families?

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children's Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I want to thank my colleague for Prince Edward-Hastings for his question. I know that all the members of this House are concerned about the recent findings of the child poverty report. I'd also like to remind members of the House that from 1989 to 1999 child poverty rates in Ontario rose from 11.5% to 16.5%; and from 1995 to 1999 the number of children in low-income families grew by 9% in Ontario. I think it's significant that for the first time in Ontario's history we have a ministry for children, the Ministry of Children's Services. My responsibility is to better integrate all of the programs across all the ministries for children.

In the speech from the throne last week, our government demonstrated its commitment to children by making a real positive difference in the lives of Ontarians by announcing that for the first time in eight years the minimum wage will finally increase, that pregnant women on social assistance will once again get the nutritional supplements they need, and that deadbeat parents who fail to support their children will be held to their family responsibility. The new Ministry of Children's Services is an integral part of the government's plan for real positive change.

Mr Parsons: I would agree that Dalton McGuinty's commitment to children could not be better demonstrated than through the creation of your ministry. My constituency office has received numerous contacts praising our government for this initiative.

Given that it's a new ministry, I would ask that you share with the Legislature what we can expect to see from your newly formed ministry over the coming years.

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: My primary goal is to improve the integration of programs across all ministries.

Building a new ministry will take time. We need time to get it done right, rather than get it down quickly. Our plans will be thoughtful. I refuse to take any action that is impulsive when it comes to the best interests of children.

I will assume responsibility for all children's programs in the Ministry of Community and Social Services, such as Early Years, child care and children with special needs. I will be working closely with my colleague the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to look at the programs in his ministry that affect the early years of children, as well as special treatment programs for children. I will also be working closely with the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to transfer, by the new year, youth justice services for children ages 12 to 17 to the new children's ministry.

We will focus on helping kids get their lives back on track and become contributing members of society. Our government believes that if we invest in young people, the future of Ontario will be limitless.

PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Premier, you've tried to express lately the sentiment that you're surprised that the province has a \$5-billion-plus deficit. But I read the remarks of your then finance critic Gerry Phillips on June 3, six months ago, where he was talking to the then Finance Minister. He says you've got to find \$2.2 billion in asset sales, \$700 million in in-year savings, \$620 million in lost revenue because the economy's not performing, \$770 million in federal health care funding, which may not come, \$800 million in SARS costs. Then he adds it up and says there's a risk of a \$5-billion deficit.

Now I turn to Erik Peters's document, and Erik Peters says \$2.2 billion in asset sales, \$700 million in in-year savings not found, \$620 million because of low economic performance, \$770 million in federal money that may not come, \$800 million in SARS costs. He adds it up and says it's \$5 billion-plus.

After Gerry Phillips said the same thing as Erik Peters, how can a \$5-billion deficit be a surprise to you?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I want to thank the member opposite for his question and I want to assure this member and all members of the Legislature that we will bring a responsible approach to dealing with government finances. That is why we moved so quickly to bring in an outside, independent, objective reviewer of the state of the government's books. We discovered at that point in time, and we made it plain and clear to all the people of Ontario, that the former government, the Tory government, saddled the people of government with a \$5.6-billion deficit.

Mr Hampton: But Premier, what Erik Peters told you is exactly what Gerry Phillips said six months ago, except after Gerry Phillips said it, you and your colleagues engaged in 231 big spending promises.

You were going to retain the hydro rate cap; there was going to be money for 8,000 new nurses; there was going to be money for schools; you were going to lower the tolls on Highway 407. Premier, you had to have known

that you couldn't keep any of those promises. My question is: Knowing, as you knew then, that there was a \$5-billion deficit, because your finance critic told you so, did you ever intend to keep any of those promises?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I want to assure the member opposite and all Ontarians that we will move as quickly as we can to implement our agenda for change. I want to remind the member as well about some of the things we've already moved ahead on.

We've stopped approving auto insurance rate increases—15 minutes after forming the government. We've announced that we will freeze tuition for at least two years. We have removed the supervisors from the Hamilton, Ottawa and Toronto school boards. We have established a new Ministry of Children's Services. We have appointed a Minister of Northern Development who is actually from the north. We have announced today legislation to eliminate the private school tax credit. We have announced legislation to roll back corporate taxes to 2001 levels. We are going to maintain personal income tax rates, and it goes on and on and on. We will implement our agenda for change.

1600

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Member for Oak Ridges, we'll allow one.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Thank you, Speaker. As the member representing the wonderful riding of Oak Ridges, I can't help but place this last question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, because it relates to the Oak Ridges moraine.

I can't think for a minute that the minister would intentionally have tried to mislead the public by leaving the impression—

The Speaker: When we started today I heard about three or four of those kinds of comments. I would ask you to withdraw that comment.

Mr Klees: I'll withdraw that.

The Speaker: Just quickly to your question.

Mr Klees: I can't for a minute believe that there was any intention at all of leaving the impression with the people in this province in his announcement of November 21, where he refers to the creation of a bigger, better park on the Oak Ridges moraine, that this in fact is something that he negotiated on behalf of the people of Ontario. If it is, perhaps he's not aware that there was a 1,360-acre park designation in the original agreement that was negotiated by the former government. Perhaps he has negotiated an additional 1,400 acres, which means that we now have 2,760 acres of parkland. Can the minister clarify for us, did he negotiate a new bargain in the province of Ontario?

Hon Mr Gerretsen: What was negotiated was that an additional 50 acres of land would be added to the park, which represents the 900 homes that will not be built on the moraine so that the moraine can be better protected and the wildlife corridor will be larger than it was before,

especially in those areas around the two kettle lakes. That is the precise reason why the renegotiations took place and why this new deal, which is a much better deal than the bad deal that your government made, sir, was negotiated on these properties.

The Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 30(b), I'm now required to call orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, government notice of motion number 1.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Mr Speaker, in 15 years, I've never witnessed an occasion where, after the throne speech—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Member from Niagara Centre, is this a point of order? I didn't hear you.

Mr Kormos: On a point of order, Speaker: Once again, I'm shocked: 15 years and I've never witnessed an occasion where the throne speech wasn't debated on the first day the House met after it was read. Did something screw up here? I don't understand.

The Speaker: Government House leader.

Hon Mr Duncan: Seeing that the speech was read twice, sir, we thought we'd move to interim supply today.

Hon Gregory S. Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I move that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing October 1, 2003, and ending March 31, 2004. Such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation for the 2003-04 fiscal year following the voting of supply.

Hon Mr Duncan: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to allow the independent NDP members to have 15% of the time available for debate on the interim supply motion.

The Speaker: Is that the consent of the House? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sorbara: It is truly an honour for me to be beginning the debates in this House and to be doing so on interim supply. I should tell you, sir, that I remember back in 1985, the first year I was a member of this House, being here and hearing words like "interim supply," and what did that mean and how did it apply to the business of government, and my goodness, 18 years later I have an opportunity to be actually bringing forward the motion on interim supply and saying a few words about it.

Because there are a number of newly elected members in the House, particularly in the wonderful Liberal caucus, I might just say a word or two about what interim supply does and why it's such an important motion in the

overall operation of the financial affairs of the province. The standing orders provide that the government and its ministries can spend funds that are approved by this Parliament. Of course it's the very nature of a responsible parliamentary system that all taxes raised and all expenditures made are under the authority of votes that take place in this 103-seat Legislature.

There are a number of ways in which this Legislature approves expenditures of money. You'll remember, sir—I think it was back on March 26 this year in the previous Parliament—that the then government, under Premier Eves, brought forward a special warrant to spend some \$12 billion. That authority, coming from the cabinet, was actually only noted here in Parliament, and that was cabinet agreeing to spend money right through the summer period. It was our indication that the then government was certainly preparing for an election.

So special warrants approved by cabinet can give rise to expenditures, but the most important mechanism for approving expenditures in a global way is the motion on interim supply and, finally, before the end of the year, a supply motion that provides the money for ministries to actually make the necessary expenditures.

It's interesting that we're doing this today, because it was earlier today that I introduced a number of taxation measures that met the commitments we made during the campaign and, much more importantly, are very important first steps in this Legislature by this government to get our financial house in order. If there was one theme that was common in the speech from the throne, it was that we as a government—and the Premier has said it a number of times—are determined to fix the foundation, to ensure that this province is on a sound financial footing.

So today we brought forward a bill to roll back the corporate tax cut that the previous government had put into place. We brought forward a tax measure to keep personal income taxes at the rate that people are currently paying. We brought forward a measure to eliminate the private school tax credit that was the subject of so much debate over the course of the past two or three years and certainly during the election campaign. And we brought forward measures to simply repeal the seniors' education tax credit, a measure that was passed just before this House was dissolved and again was a matter that was subject to debate I think all across the province. So now we return here and we are taking the steps necessary to start to fix the financial fortunes and the financial foundations of this great province.

There was a lot of debate during question period and over the course of the past few days about the Erik Peters report and what he discovered shortly after the election. I think the best way to summarize what he discovered was that the province was not on a sound financial footing. The previous government, that had argued for eight years that they were the great financial managers, that they were the ones who were going to fix government, as they used to say, left office with as large a deficit as we have seen in Ontario for I think certainly the past five or six

years and historically forever, except a couple of years with the New Democratic Party when they were in power from 1990. Everyone remembers Bob Rae's first budget.

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Erik Peters had an independent look and said, "It's not just that there was a bad year because of SARS. It's not just that there was some economic turndown." And if you listened to his comments during his press conference particularly, he said that the previous government really had to use some innovative methods in order to even suggest that there was a balanced budget for the current fiscal year, 2003-04.

During my response to Mr Peters's comments, I described that we had seen, at least in the current fiscal year and over the course of the Conservative government's time in power, two things: mismanagement and misrepresentation.

As we start our turn as the government party in Ontario—

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask your ruling on whether it's fair and appropriate, given your comments before this debate—whether you accept the word "misrepresentation," where one member would accuse other members of misrepresentation and if that would be parliamentary.

The Speaker: I looked up when I heard the word "misrepresentation," and I'll ask him to withdraw that.

Hon Mr Sorbara: Mr Speaker, I am simply quoting words that I used in another venue. We needn't get into that here.

Interjection: He's challenging the Chair.

The Speaker: Would you withdraw the statement?

Hon Mr Sorbara: Yes, I will, sir.

As we start our period of being responsible for the public life of this province—its laws, its expenditures, its policies, its development—I think our commitment is to ensure that we do a better job in that regard. That's why the Premier has said on a number of occasions that it's not quite the job we applied for but it's the job that must be done first if we're going to be in a position to achieve all of our objectives: building stronger communities, expanding the strength of our public education system, creating a better health care system in the province and cleaning up our environment.

One of the expressions that I used during the course of discussions on this same matter is, "You have to play the cards that you're dealt." The cards we've been dealt weren't quite the ones we were expecting, but we're ready to take on that challenge. If I can tell you, sir, the mood I feel when I talk to my colleagues in caucus is that it's kind of an exciting challenge because it demands that we work even harder, it demands that we be even more careful in the way we spend taxpayers' money and it demands, in the end, that we be open and straightforward and give the people of Ontario the straight goods about what we're facing.

So today we brought in some measures in the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003, that fulfill our commitments on taxation measures that we talked about during the

campaign. Today we introduced a bill to raise tobacco taxes. That bill is designed both to reduce the number of smokers in Ontario and to ensure at the same time that we don't encourage a new underground industry in tobacco smuggling and illegal tobacco sales. And today we introduced measures to get rid of a number of tax credits that certainly were not in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

But that is simply a first step. As you heard the Premier say on a variety of occasions, we need to now undertake a very extensive consultation with the people of Ontario as we move forward to our first budget. It's really in our first budget that we will be able to start to lay the new framework and the new structure for a better Ontario in all the areas that we talked about during the campaign.

Meanwhile, it's kind of a tradition in this House during debates on interim supply that you allow a little bit of leeway among speakers, and I know we're going to hear that from members opposite.

I just wanted to take an opportunity, while we're talking under this motion, to say a few words about what happened during the election campaign and how proud we were of the 103 candidates who stood for us during that campaign. I want to put on the record my congratulations to all of them and the 72 of us who succeeded in our ridings.

I also want to say a word about the campaigns of the other two parties in this province—the other two major parties. I'll get in trouble if I don't mention the Green Party. They were there as well with 102 candidates. I thought overall we all served the people fairly well in the election campaign. In the heat of battle, yes, some words one might regret now and again are spoken, but I think we measured up. There is my friend from Trinity-Spadina kind of chuckling. I predicted a different result in his riding, and as a partisan I would have preferred a different result in his riding, but I look forward to his contributions over the course of the next four and a half years or so. But all in, I think we engaged the province in a healthy and strong debate about the future.

It was, I think, for us very encouraging that the options that the Conservative Party, the governing party at the time, was offering the people in the form of both lower taxes and better government services certainly lacked a great deal of support, not to say credibility.

I remember, from the day it was launched, the public power campaign of the New Democratic Party. I think they carried themselves well in that debate, but the results made it relatively clear that simply transferring over to the public sector, to government in one form or another, the re-creation of Ontario Hydro, the new attempt at public auto insurance, wasn't quite what the people were looking for in the next generation of public policy. But the message was carried clearly, and I congratulate the—well, I can't say that, but I want to congratulate the leader of the party for a good campaign, and congratulate the former Premier and his party for the work they did during the campaign.

The results are now in, and we are delighted that we have received such strong electoral support from the people. As we begin to vote supply in this House, to provide the services and pay the bills one by one, as they come into the treasury, I just think it's worth noting that what really happened on October 2 was the celebration once again of our democratic system.

I see the member from Niagara Falls is in the House—**Mr Kormos:** Niagara Centre.

Hon Mr Sorbara:—and we look forward to his remarks. I take it you're speaking on interim supply, I say to my friend.

Just in winding up, sir, I want to congratulate you for your election, and the members who have been elected to this Parliament for their election. I look forward to listening to the comments of a variety of members on interim supply.

I want finally to say how humbled I was when my colleague the Premier asked me to take on responsibilities as Minister of Finance. It's not going to be easy. We are going to have our challenges meeting our responsibilities. But for our part, if we all try to work together in a way that perhaps we haven't before, I think we can meet those challenges and have a marvellous four years here together.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): The member for Nepean-Carleton.

Mr Baird: Mr Speaker, as I said at the outset, you look good in that chair. We haven't seen any motions yet, but it would certainly be a good choice if there was a motion presented with respect to your additional responsibilities.

This is a vote on interim supply, and as the Minister of Finance said, it is a fairly wide-ranging debate where you can talk about issues as they affect the government and as they affect you in your constituency.

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I did want, at the outset of my remarks, to just thank the people of Nepean-Carleton for their strong support on election day and over the past eight years. I was very fortunate to get support not just in Nepean, which I've represented for eight years, but particularly in Carleton, Osgoode, Rideau and Goulbourn townships. I say this to many of the new members of the government: It is perhaps easy to come in on a tide. You truly realize how fortunate and privileged you are to serve your constituents, your neighbours, your friends and your family when the tide goes the other way. I've been very grateful for their support. I wanted to acknowledge that in this, my first speech following the general election.

In my constituency, we talked a lot about important issues with respect to public expenditures, particularly issues in health care and education. We talked a lot about economic development, job creation, growth and taxes, and what it takes to help create an environment that encourages job creation and economic growth. We can't accomplish anything as a province if we leave people behind. We can't accomplish all we need to accomplish if we don't create jobs and allow people to provide for

themselves and their families. That's something that's important. When we do create jobs and bring in more additional revenue, we can support priorities like health care and education.

One thing I said on election night was that I wanted to be a forceful and strong advocate for people in Nepean-Carleton and in Ottawa and eastern Ontario and that I wanted to hold the government of the day accountable but that I also wanted to stand up and agree when the government does some things right.

I was privileged to be at the Royal Ottawa Hospital on Friday, where there was a huge amount of concern that the private arrangement would be cancelled. I was pleased, along with my colleagues on the other side of the House—Mr Lalonde, who's here today, was among all the Ottawa members who were there—to see that project go ahead; I was worried that it wouldn't. My colleagues—Norm Sterling and others—certainly worked hard in recent years to see that proposal come forward. George Langil and his board of volunteers and the entire team at the hospital really put together a good proposal. A huge amount of effort had gone into that. I was pleased to see that go forward.

Small changes were made. The deed for the hospital will be kept in a different safe, and there will be a 100% mortgage in the other safe. Other than those two pieces of paper, it's exactly the same sort of deal that we had envisaged.

The Premier did say that he wanted to end the creep into two-tier medicine. Well, of course, nothing was changed with respect to clinical services. The hotel-type services—who would plow the snow, who would mow the lawn, who would physically build the building—are going to be done by the private sector. The clinical services, the health care services, are all, just as they were under us, going to be provided by the medical team at the hospital.

Someone asked me what the difference was between the deal that Dalton McGuinty announced and our deal. There was a big difference, to be fair. The Liberals' announcement had red letterhead and ours was blue. That was the big difference with it. Some say "po-tay-to"; Dalton says "po-tah-to." Some say "to-may-to"; the Liberals say "to-mah-to"—as long as they don't call the whole thing off. That's about the thrust of the difference at the Royal Ottawa.

Two other important institutions that I'd worked hard on that are important priorities for people whom I speak with and represent are the Ottawa Civic Hospital and the Queensway-Carleton Hospital.

I did hear a terrific amount of interest from Liberal candidates talking about Ottawa being chronically underfunded with respect to the rest of the province on health care. I look forward to the Minister of Finance trying to correct that situation tomorrow afternoon. There's another area where I will stand and forcefully support the government of the day. I didn't think it was terribly underfunded, but every Liberal candidate in the area said it was. This is one of the benefits of having a Premier

from Ottawa, we hope, because there are some of us who are concerned that having a Premier from Ottawa might be like the teacher having their own son or daughter in the class: that they're going to be twice as hard on them. We'll look closely at future health care announcements.

The Queensway-Carleton Hospital is just on the border of the member for Ottawa West-Nepean's riding and my riding. We'll work closely on a non-partisan basis to try to ensure that goes forward.

I was concerned with one of the actions that this government took when they fired the supervisors eight days before their term was up. I say to the member for Trinity-Spadina, that's tough, being fired eight days before your contract is up, but they did it. I want to watch very closely to ensure that the new schools that were promised go forward. Growing communities like Stittsville in my part of the province need a new public elementary school. They need it desperately. Whether people are for or against the actions of trustees, some students and parents have been left as pawns, and that's, simply put, unacceptable.

There is also a growing need for new public elementary schools. The supervisor actually installed a sign at a specific site which he wanted to go forward with, and there's certainly nothing wrong with the board going forward with the construction of three new elementary schools in the growing areas while they conduct their review of optimizing the use of space. I'll support that when they do, if they have to make difficult decisions to close a school. One of the schools they're looking at is the school I voted at on election day in my community. We'll certainly look for a fair and reasonable accommodation on that. That's the voice that the people of Nepean-Carleton wanted me to take to this Legislature, so I would be remiss if I didn't underline those concerns.

I listened with great interest to the Treasurer and to the Premier in recent days talking about how this government is going to do the responsible thing. Doing the responsible thing seems to mean, first and foremost, throwing out any campaign promise that you had made or any promise that you had made in the previous four to eight years. I have to ask myself, if it's not responsible to do it in government, was it any more responsible to make that commitment prior to an election campaign? I'm not going to imply a motive. Some would say the opposition was being reckless. Others, like the Minister of Municipal Affairs, used the word "naive"—his word, not mine. Others would say that perhaps they hadn't put as much thought toward their campaign commitments. Others would suggest another motive: that we would return to the days when politicians made promises to get people's votes and then didn't deliver them on election day.

One of the proudest moments I had as an MPP came in my first term when a woman who had quite actively campaigned against me in the previous campaign, my first election, came up to me and said, "I don't agree with anything that you and Mike Harris are doing, but I'll give you the credit: You're doing what you said you would

do." Mike Harris brought forward an election platform some 12 months before the election campaign began, put forward specifics on what he would do, how he would do it, when he would do it, how he would pay for it. Then he did something remarkable: He kept his promises, where too often what we're seeing is this government abandoning promises.

I see my friend the Minister of Energy. I actually talked to my friend the Minister of Energy and said that that would be a good job to have some six or eight months ago. He didn't share my enthusiasm or appreciate the wisdom of that advice, which I'm sure he now is. Erik Peters presented a report at 4 o'clock. Before 5 o'clock, the Minister of Energy had dumped the Liberal campaign promise to cap electricity rates—within an hour. I thought: Was the caucus involved in that hour? Was there a caucus meeting? Did they have one of these cabinet committees, which all Liberal MPPs sit on? Did they have a chance to voice their opinion? Did the cabinet meet at all? Did anyone meet? Was anyone consulted on breaking a pretty fundamental promise in the Liberals' campaign plan?

People say, "Well, this is just something in a campaign document." I say no; it wasn't. This was something, as the member for Trinity-Spadina knows, as the member for Simcoe North knows, that was in not just the election campaign platform; it's something they voted for, not just on first reading, on second reading and on third reading. They didn't stand up once but twice and three times—every member of the Liberal caucus who showed up, not a single dissenting voice said they would support price caps until 2006—rather, a fixed price is probably the better terminology for it.

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Let's put aside the issue of whether it's a good idea or a bad idea. It was certainly a good idea when you were looking for votes at election time, when you approached that agricultural producer, when you approached that small business person, when you approached that low-income individual, when you approached that working family with six kids. It was good enough to say that you would keep the electricity rate cap then, but less than an hour after a financial report came out, without any consultation to the Liberal caucus, the Liberal cabinet committees or the Liberal cabinet, they changed their mind.

I look in the Peters report. What does he say? He says, first, "I express no opinion on the actual deficit." That's what Erik Peters says. Page 1: "I express no opinion as to what the actual deficit for the year ending March 31 will be." He's expressing no opinion, because he says there's not a deficit. He says there is a projected deficit.

Commitments were made. Chair of Management Board was rather uncomfortable in his chair today, I say to the member for Trinity-Spadina, and very irritable when the leader of the third party—or the independent member for Kenora-Rainy River, lest I offend anyone—said, "What in the Peters report did you not know about? Did you not know that the price cap had gone into a

deficit?"—it did; I've got the scars on my back from Liberal members who used to ask me questions about that. Did they not know about the \$2.2-billion asset sales line? Did they not know that there was an economic impact of SARS or BSE or of the blackout? In fact, is there anything in the Peters report that wasn't known? The answer, simply put, is no. There's nothing in the Peters report whatsoever that would be a surprise to anyone, least of whom the very well-respected Gerry Phillips, whom I do respect; I think he's an honourable member. He's smart. He was one of the more responsible spokesmen for the official opposition in the last Parliament. I've said that before and I'll say it now: I respect Gerry Phillips. I'm not just saying that to be politically trite; I genuinely do. But there is nothing in that Peters report that is a surprise to anyone; absolutely nothing.

One has to ask oneself, is there any desire whatsoever for this government to take any responsibility for the financial circumstance in which we find ourselves? It's not the job that they applied for. Those weren't the cards they were expecting to be dealt. Could you imagine if you went to Las Vegas and said, "Oh, I'm sorry, those aren't the cards that I was expecting. Can I get new ones?" It wouldn't happen.

This is the man, this Premier, who went on Studio 2 and said, "Don't worry, Paula Todd. We're budgeting for a \$2-billion deficit. I have an extra billion dollars in a contingency fund to deal with any unexpected costs." There's \$3 billion. Did the Treasurer reduce that projected \$5.6 billion by \$3 billion? No, he hasn't, because an orgy of new spending is just around the corner. They want to be able to grease the skids and pay for breaking other campaign promises, like the one on the Oak Ridges moraine where the Minister of Municipal Affairs was sent out by the Premier and his cabinet up to Richmond Hill—and I feel badly for him; he got beat up bad. He said that his own Premier was naive. No wonder they scheduled three other press conferences in the same hour, hoping that no one would show up for the press conference. I think it's regrettable that they put Mr Gerretsen in that position. But there you have it. So it wasn't responsible to keep their campaign promises.

I say one was either reckless or negligent in making such promises. I think it looks eerily similar to a return of telling one thing to voters to get their votes with no real intention of ever keeping them. That's sad.

I look back at the speech from the throne, and I can only imagine if Mike Harris had told nurses, doctors, police officers, firefighters and community health centres to temper their demands. Can you imagine the comments that would have happened if Mike Harris had told people to temper their demands, when it was Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party who got these people all lathered up? My good friend Hazel McCallion said, "When does the money start to flow?" That was her only question.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Soon.

Mr Baird: No. Hazel has been told, "Temper your request."

Mr Marchese: Later.

Mr Baird: Later.

Mr Marchese: It's coming.

Mr Baird: Four or five years; 10 years. It's just a question of timing.

They did keep their promise on the electricity cap for seven days. They became the government on Thursday. They didn't get rid of it for seven days.

The little children, the little people, the people without a voice, the little people who expected smaller class sizes this year or next year—no. Mike Harris only had one policy when it came to children; that was, summed up, "You leave no child behind." We heard the Minister of Education say we'll leave 5% of children behind. "I know we said a hard class size, but it's not that hard; it's malleable, flexible." So there will be some 23,000 children around the province who will be left out of this class cap. I can only assume that a surprised Premier McGuinty—he was surprised. Did you see him on TV after that? He was surprised, I say to the member for Cambridge, when he learned that his Minister of Education—now, maybe he's been taken out to the woodshed and his views have been changed and corrected; the evil Liberal spin doctors have done a little operation, made an adjustment in his spine.

They said they weren't going to build a whole new school for one person. I was saying that if you were going to do it in the Ottawa public board alone, it was going to mean 200 more portables. But they didn't budget anything for that, so the parents of these little children are being told, "Temper your demands." We didn't make the irresponsible campaign promise. We didn't say one thing to people before the election and another thing after the fact.

Then this line: "This is not the job we applied for." We thought everything was supposed to be rosy. Right, Rosie? Everything was supposed to be rosy. The pastures would be green and everything would be well. That was something. But the Treasurer, the Minister of Finance, says they're up to the challenge. Good news for Ontario: They're up to the challenge. They're not going to do anything on the \$5.6-billion deficit. They've got a whole six months and they're not going to do anything on it, so one has to wonder whether they're up to taking on the challenge.

Then we had this great piece of legislation tabled today. I don't know about you, but I watched these commercials on television. My friend Yak, my good friend John Yakabuski, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke—

Mr Marchese: A hard-working member.

Mr Baird: —a hard-working member whom I had the chance to campaign with, his constituents probably saw all of these television commercials where Dalton McGuinty looked people right in the eye and said, "I'm not going to raise your taxes. I'm not going to raise your taxes." There was no fine print on the end. There was no little asterisk. Perhaps we should have a law like we have for pharmaceutical companies, where they've got to tell

people who have to get their liver tested or have to get their blood work done, “It’s not applicable if you’re pregnant or nursing,” or this or that. But he looked right into the camera and said, “I’m not going to raise your taxes.”

Then today we get a bill, and look what it says. They’re going to raise the general corporate income tax rate. When we’re fighting to get General Motors to put a line in Oshawa, or Ford in Oakville, taxes will be higher. That will be bad for the auto parts sector.

I look at this part here, the Income Tax Act. They’re repealing decreases in the lowest and middle tax rates, repealing tax cuts in the lowest income tax rates. No wonder they’re going to be able to increase welfare rates; no wonder they’re going to be able to increase the minimum wage. They’re going to be taking from the left pocket and putting it in the right pocket. I know some Liberal candidates said, “Oh, no, those are just tax cuts for big corporations.” But right here in the compendium that I received, it says they’re going to be repealing tax cuts “in the lowest and middle tax rate.” They’re going to whack modest-income families, they’re going to whack the middle class, and that’s where they’re going to get the money for their payoffs to the union bosses and others.

1640

They’re going to repeal the equity in education tax credit retroactively—it’s a retroactive tax increase—not by a few days or a few months, or not effective today, the day they tabled the legislation; it’s going to be retroactive 11 months.

I ran into a constituent during the election campaign and I said I would tell this story. He told me it was tremendously important for him and his parents that his parents’ grandchildren be educated in a cultural environment that would respect their family’s religious traditions and obligations; how important it was for him. He said, “You know what, John, we could never have done that unless your government had kept its commitment to fair funding to the Catholic school system.” He happens to be Catholic, so the taxpayers will pay for his child’s education. But to his next-door neighbour, who just wants some equity, who wants to send their child to a Montessori school or Christian school or Jewish parochial school, the answer is no. Some parents and working families were actually counting on this tax credit this year. We learned today that it’s not only being cancelled but—something that’s quite unprecedented—they’re actually retroactively raising taxes by 10 and a half months, almost 11 months. I think that’s outrageous. In committee we’re going to fight to get that changed because it’s wrong. Retroactively raising taxes is not a good idea.

We look at other changes. I said I would say good things when the Liberal government presented their bill that proposes to extend the Retail Sales Tax Act to allow rebates of the provincial tax for appliances that are energy-efficient. They’re going to extend that until March 31. I support that. I think it’s a good idea and I want to congratulate the government for doing one thing right in this bill.

They’re also going to increase tobacco taxes to 74%—a 74% tax. If this was such a good idea, if it’s no problem, why wouldn’t you tell people, “We want taxes on cigarettes to be 74%” before election day? Why wouldn’t you—

Interjection.

Mr Baird: I saw Dalton McGuinty on TV, I say to the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, saying, “I will not raise your taxes.” There was no little asterisk that said “except on tobacco, where I’ll send it up to 74%.” It wasn’t there—maybe for those people who know. It was not in the commercials that you spent \$5 million running. There was nothing in the platform to say, “Hi, I want to raise taxes to 74%.” If it was such a good idea, why wouldn’t they say so before election day? It wasn’t in the TV ads.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: “We got elected,” they say, so they have a mandate to do whatever they want. I would encourage you to have the courage of your convictions, to tell the voters before election day, “Hi, I want to raise your taxes on cigarettes to 74%.” I don’t know of any tax rate that’s at 74%. What Bob Rae found out when he raised taxes on tobacco was that he brought it less money, because as my colleague from the neighbouring constituency—whom I’ve not had the chance to meet yet—has said, there was a huge smuggling activity.

We saw the member for Don Valley East, David Caplan, trying to smoke in the opposition lobby. One of the staffers said, “This affects my health. Get out of here.” He said, “No. They won’t let me smoke over there.” I thought it was a shock. I was shocked. The health and safety of staff on our side of the House—I was glad our House leader Bob Runciman got up on that important point of privilege. If anyone from Mr Caplan’s office or constituency is walking in the opposition lobby, it’s a Caplan-free zone. You’re not allowed to smoke in there.

Mr Kormos: What the heck are they doing in the opposition lobby? They’re not allowed in the opposition lobby.

Mr Baird: They’re not allowed in the opposition lobby, my friend from Niagara Centre says. This is a government—

The Acting Speaker: I would caution the speaker about using personal names. You can refer to the minister or to his riding. Thank you.

Mr Baird: I said Welland-Thorold. I don’t want government members smoking in the opposition lobby.

Mr Kormos: What the heck are they doing in the opposition lobby at all?

Mr Baird: I say to the member for Niagara Centre that this government thinks they are the opposition. They don’t negative-campaign before the election; they negative-campaign after the election. In week one, they whacked the NDP; in week two, they whacked the Tories. I felt badly for the Lieutenant Governor in this place, giving the most partisan speech ever presented by a Lieutenant Governor.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: If the member for Niagara Centre is going to heckle, he could at least take his chair.

Mr Baird: The one thing that's good about this session is that later on today members of this Legislature and those folks watching on TV are going to get to hear from the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, after the next rotation. They'll listen and they'll learn. I can see the member for Hamilton East has shown up to hear the member's speech. He'll learn something. I look forward to hearing his speech and the speeches of other colleagues.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member from Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Marchese: First of all, I want to welcome back the citizens who are watching the parliamentary channel. We're on live. It's 10 to five or a quarter to five. You'll be seeing more of us.

We New Democrats are happy to have the opportunity to engage in this debate.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): What did they do to deserve this?

Mr Marchese: Say that again, Dom?

Mr Agostino: What did they do to deserve seeing more of you?

Mr Marchese: From me, Dominic? You'll hear more from me. Please stick around.

Mr Agostino: It's always a pleasure to listen to you.

Mr Marchese: I'm glad to hear you say that, Dominic.

I want to say first of all, to the Minister of Finance, that I declare myself to be friendly to him, if not a friend of the minister, and anything I might say is not a reflection on him but on the Liberal Party generally. I wanted to have that proviso before I spoke and said something critical. I didn't want people to think that somehow I was critical of the Minister of Finance per se.

I want to say that the status or lack of status we have in this place must have been very hurtful to many of the left-leaning Liberals in that party and to New Democrats who voted for Liberals, thinking maybe they were doing the right thing in supporting them to get rid of the Tories, only to discover that in the process of doing so we might have lost some New Democrats along the way, and having lost some New Democrats would lose our status, the implications of which we are witnessing now.

If it were not for the motion moved by the Liberal House leader to afford us a couple of minutes to have this debate—he's given us 15 minutes, God bless him—we wouldn't be able to speak in this place. Are the Liberals not very nice to allow us today to have a couple of minutes to be able to respond? I say yes. But by not having status, we do not get to participate in the way we did. We do not get the opportunity to respond to ministerial statements as we did. We don't get the opportunity to be adequately participating in committees as we would like or being able to present statements in this House on a regular basis.

There are a lot of things we can't do, including not having any financial support for us to operate as a

political party, meaning no researchers, no ability to outreach, very little ability to communicate by way of flyers or newsletters to the public all over Ontario. It's a big province, three times bigger than Italy. So we lose a lot by not having this status.

I can't imagine how many of those New Democrats who voted for the Liberal Party to get rid of the Tories feel today to have done that dirty deed. I am assuming they are unhappy to have done that and hope they would not vote strategically ever again.

Citizens watching, we have lost a lot by losing two New Democrats and losing status in this place. We hope that through the pressure you've put on the Liberals there is still room to negotiate something fair so that we can represent the 15% of you who voted for us, because that's what this is about: being able to give New Democrats a voice so we can give a voice to those who supported us and to those who didn't support us but need and want to hear New Democratic voices in this Legislative Assembly. So thanks to the Liberal House leader for presenting a motion that allows us to participate.

I want to say, before I attack the Liberals, that I am no friend of the Tory policies, and never have been. While the member from Nepean made some points that I am much in agreement with, what the Tories have left us, and what they have left us for eight years, is nothing to be proud of.

1650

The deficit the Tories left is real. It may not be as the Tories would like it and it might not be the \$5.6 billion that they argue, but I'm telling you, the deficit was big, and it's for real. The reason it's real is because of their income tax cuts, that benefited largely the wealthy Ontarians in this province and benefited the corporations in this province, as a result of which we have lost anywhere from \$11 billion to \$14 billion and our ability as a province to be able to deal with the services that people desperately want to have. So this legacy of the Conservatives is nothing to be proud of. I attacked that as much as Liberals did when they were about here—Dominic, when you were so close to me.

We attacked it in a very similar way—differently here and there, of course, but we attacked it nonetheless, because the policies of the Conservative Party were bad, destructive—economically and socially destructive. We will not be able to regain the income tax losses we've had, largely because the Liberals have made a pledge not to increase taxes.

Here's my attack: I said to the Liberal Party and to the people that I debated, which includes Monsieur Kennedy, the now Minister of Education, and Monsieur Smitherman, who I had occasion to debate on channel 26, counterSpin, I said to both of them, "You can't keep your promises. You simply can't. You know that there is a deficit." Gerry Phillips knew there was a deficit, estimated to be anywhere from \$2 billion to \$4 billion that we were aware of. Given the reality of a deficit that you Liberals knew was there and your promise to increase services anywhere from \$5 billion to \$7 billion, and your

promise not to increase taxes and signing a pledge to that effect, and also saying that you could balance the budget—it was reckless. It was stupid. It could not be kept and we knew it, and we told you. Monsieur Smitherman, the now Minister of Health, literally mocked me on channel 26 when I told him that, and said, “No, we’re going to keep our promises.”

It didn’t take much for them to break that promise. That’s what’s sad: that you knew then you couldn’t do it, but you thought you could get away with it. So you now come into this place—leader, Treasurer and all—saying, “We must act responsibly. These are the cards that we were dealt,” as if they didn’t know what cards they had to give us before the election, “so now we have to act responsibly, carefully, of course, because we simply can’t allow the deficit to accumulate in a very dangerous way. That cannot be permitted by Liberals.”

So it’s sad. It is pitifully sad. We hope that as the government speaks about character education, you will do as our leader said and you will include in that character education, as you send that off to our school board, that politicians must tell the truth all of the time. That ought to be one of the principles that you inject in that character education, because if you do not do that, you perpetuate the problem of mistrust of politicians.

It is so difficult, from now until the next four years, to be able to trust anything you say, given that you’ve broken so many promises. And it’s going to be so difficult for New Democrats to be able to have the fullest of time that it takes to articulate each and every one of those broken promises. It’s for that reason that I must end my remarks in order to give my colleague from Timmins-James Bay the time to be able to participate, if only but a mere six minutes—a mere six minutes, and I’m going over my own time.

Citizens, we will have barely the time to be able to adequately respond. We hope that you’ll continue to pressure the Liberals, saying you want New Democratic voices to be heard. I hope you do that.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): It’s a pleasure to speak to this bill. This has been a very interesting first full day back in the Legislature.

There have been some comments made from members on the two ends of the other side that have been very interesting. The group in the centre has been extremely positive and that’s been good. Some of the comments that have actually come from the members over there amaze me.

We’re hearing some derogatory comments made about the throne speech. I would suggest the throne speech is somewhat different from other throne speeches. It was very open; it was very honest. It included a commitment to consult, and if there was anything that this province suffered from over the last eight years, it was the inability of its citizens to give input into some extremely meaningful decisions that were going to be made. I think the mark of the previous government was a lack of consultation. So to hear that commitment in the throne speech was very encouraging.

There was reference made by an honourable member from the other side to what they believe was inappropriate when the Premier said that we need to temper demands. Well, again, I applaud that. I think it’s a recognition of the situation in Ontario.

I can think back to previous elections, and if we go back to 1995, I don’t believe the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party at that time ran an election platform on closing hospitals. It wasn’t very long after the election that they started to close hospitals, but there was no mention of that in the election platform. There was no mention by the Premier at that time that he was going to fire nurses, and yet we saw 10,000 nurses fired. So the criticism that we have not yet delivered on our promises becomes rather absurd when we look at the promises that were never made that were delivered on.

Everybody wants Ontario fixed. So I find it particularly challenging when it’s a previous government member saying, “Fix it right now,” when they contributed heavily to the problems that exist. We want to fix it now; everybody in Ontario wants us to fix it now. But I would suggest an analogy. We have a five- and a six-year-old at home that, quite frankly, keep me feeling very old most days. I notice that when the two of them go into their bedroom, in about five minutes they can do enough damage in the room that it will take me an hour to an hour and a half to straighten it back up after they’ve been at it. We’re in a similar situation as government. We have got to fix what were unplanned, poorly thought out, ill-conceived, concealed changes that were done to the very fabric of Ontario over the last eight years.

That’s not a great welcome to the new members on the official opposition side, but welcome to the Legislature, and welcome to our own new members. It’s rather an awesome sight to sit here at this end, actually, and look down at the numbers in this room. Very clearly, people in Ontario re—I’ll try that again. I’m an engineer; I do well to speak English as a first language. I won’t even try “repudiated” again, because I probably can’t say it. People in Ontario very clearly wanted to change and felt the direction we were going in was very, very wrong.

I have been told, and I’ve not had the pleasure of experiencing it, that there was an era, an era that lasted many, many years in this Legislature where, although we differed in our beliefs and our philosophies, there was a friendship that could exist outside of the House. We really and truly all have come for the same reason. I believe that. We may have different beliefs about how it should be accomplished, but I really do believe that we have come for the right reason, each and every one of us.

But when I talk to a former member such as Sean Conway and he recounts how the members interacted and socialized outside of the Legislature, how when we broke for a dinner break that it didn’t matter which caucus room you went to, that you’d go and sit down with a caucus member from another party in dialogue, I felt, “What a wonderful era for the people of Ontario, that that could happen”; that over a very informal coffee or dinner you could chat or whatever. We’ve lost that. Certainly in

my first four years here I never saw it happen. I saw us function as quite distinct parties and I think the people of Ontario lose when that's the case. So it is my hope that we can see a return to working together for the same common cause.

1700

We do that by recognizing that we're servants. None of us individually has power. Any power that we do achieve only happens when more than half of the members in this House agree with us. We need to remember that we were sent here to do what is best for all of Ontario.

I'm thrilled with the throne speech language and the change. Because over the last eight years, I've seen a splitting apart of Ontario. I've seen eight years where teachers were the enemy of Ontario. What a shame that we would be ashamed of our education system, which the rest of the world covets. Teachers were identified as the enemy, and they were not. Nurses were identified as an enemy, and they were not. I think about the language that was used over the last eight years regarding young people, where we talked about boot camps and tougher discipline and zero tolerance and we didn't talk about the 98% of really good young people who do wonderful things for us. I see in the throne speech a return to the fact that we're all equal in this province and work together on it.

It has been very difficult, over the last eight years, to get information to truly assess what the situation was. The official opposition has challenged us on, "You knew this and you knew that." Well, folks, when they were in government they put up every obstacle they could to us in the public getting information. If an MPP over the last eight years requested an item under freedom of information, it was pulled out of the normal stream and funnelled through the Premier's office and delayed for five or six months. There was an obstacle put up to that.

Privatization: we've seen privatization agreements take place over and over. They removed contracts from the public domain and removed the ability of our party, when we were opposition, to get all of the details and facts to know what was coming on. The nerve, to challenge the Minister of Municipal Affairs over an issue that very clearly was done with private deals with developers that were not available to the minister or the Premier or to this party until after the election. No one dreamt that the government at that time looked after their friends as well as these agreements did. The situation was created to prevent there being undoing and unwinding. I applaud the Minister of Municipal Affairs for the accomplishments that he has made that will increase the amount of parkland, that will decrease the number of houses on what is very clearly a very sensitive piece of property that provides clean drinking water to a tremendous number of individuals in Ontario.

We saw the previous government eliminate civil service positions and replace them with high-priced consultants, falling into the private area that again made it very, very difficult for this party and for the people of

Ontario to know the situation. It turns out we had lots and lots of people who were allegedly consultants but in fact were doing regular civil service work, only they were doing it for four or five or 10 times the price that it would have been done for by civil servants. It created the statistic that could be flouted that this government had fewer civil servants, but in fact they were spending more money on private consultants, and in many cases untended private consultants.

Now we have a bill before us, an interim supply bill, to approve to pay civil servants' salaries. What a web has been woven financially, starting with the budget—or I'll say so-called budget, because as we now know it wasn't a budget, presented at Magna, rather than here in the Legislature—and hearing at that time that the previous government took it to the people, when in actual fact, had it been presented here, I see all kinds of space that the public can't be denied coming in. At Magna, there were security guards to make sure the general public didn't go in, again, along the tone of secrecy and lack of consultation that existed over the last eight years.

To this point, the bills have been paid in this province on what's called a warrant. Vast sums of money have been spent by simply having some government ministers at that time sign a document that wasn't open to public scrutiny. We have a tremendous role, as people who will determine how the public's money is spent, and the obligation is that it be spent efficiently.

The throne speech made reference to public consultation starting in January. The previous government did public consultation by invitation only. What a great thing is going to happen out of this, that the people of Ontario will truly be able to give suggestions. Not all wisdom in Ontario rests in this chamber; we have a tremendous resource of people in Ontario who can make meaningful, positive suggestions.

I look forward to what I believe will be a new era of openness, of honesty. The people may not like what they're being told, but they will be told what is true. I believe that people in Ontario are smart and they will understand that we will do what we have committed to do, but given what we inherited from the previous government, there will be some time required to do that. The kids messed up the room and we're going to fix it.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to join in the debate today and I want to start off by thanking the constituents in my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for re-electing me to a third term. I'm very pleased to serve in the House.

I just want to also mention to the member from Prince Edward-Hastings that if he does want to share a meal with us we're certainly pleased to do that. We'll come to look at your caucus any time and see what you're being served—probably better than the opposition members. So I'll take that as an invitation.

Mr Parsons: I'll be there.

Mr Tascona: OK. We'll be looking for you.

I just want to comment on a few things. Certainly in my own riding there are issues. Before the election, the

provincial government had made a commitment to extend GO Transit to the city of Barrie, and where it stands at this moment is that the city of Barrie proper, which owns the rail line from Bradford-West Gwillimbury to Barrie, has not made a final decision with respect to their participation in that GO Transit. With the new council being inaugurated on December 1 and with a number of new members on that council, including the mayor, Rob Hamilton, we would be hoping to see the city of Barrie move in the direction of making sure that GO Transit is something—and the citizens of Barrie, I do know, want it, and that the city of Barrie council will endorse that.

Obviously, with the vast growth that's in my riding, we have great challenges with respect to health care. The Royal Victoria Hospital, which was first built in 1997, needs to be expanded. There was a government commitment with respect to cancer care and for radiation care. Those are things that we're looking to build on in terms of the commitment with respect to health care. I know the governing party now has indicated that they're in full support of improving our health care system. Well, in my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, we need more beds with respect to providing the health care for a rapidly growing area and an area that serves the cottagers who come up almost every day and people go up north to vacation. I would put that to the new government's agenda to make sure that they look after the health care needs, whether it's in a member-held riding or a non-member-held riding, because it's important to serve everyone in this province in terms of providing better health care.

Certainly, long-term-care beds is a major issue throughout the province, but particularly in my riding because of the growth. So I'm pleased to see that the Minister of Health will be coming to my riding on December 5 to open Victoria Village, which is a state-of-the-art facility to serve seniors. He'll be very pleased, because the city of Barrie and the citizens in the surrounding area have worked very hard to make sure that we provide better long-term care for the seniors in our area, especially with seniors who are moving into the area also.

I was pleased to see that the work I did with respect to Georgian College resulted in \$3.5 million going to the college just a few weeks ago with respect to improving their automotive trade centre. It's something that I had worked very hard for before the election with respect to getting that funding of \$3.5 million, to make sure that Georgian College maintains its status as the number one automotive institute in this country. We're very pleased with that because in Simcoe county we have a very vibrant automotive sector, which we want to continue to see grow. We need to provide the skilled trades to men and women, because we have a very state-of-the-art and far-reaching program with respect to skilled trades for women that has proven to be very successful in providing skilled trades throughout the area, because the automotive sector is a very, very important sector in this province. I believe it provides one in six jobs to this province and is integral to our growth.

1710

I want to talk about the issues that have been spoken about by the speakers here today. We've been speaking about a number of issues—finance, the Oak Ridges moraine—but I want to focus on finance matters and point out to the general public what we're dealing with here. The government has a fiscal year which runs from April to March. Currently we're in November. We've heard all these comments about there being a deficit in the finances of the province. The fact of the matter is that our fiscal year ends March 31, 2003.

I want to refer to an article that was in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record written by Bruce Whitestone, who was actually a Liberal candidate back in 1985. This was provided to me by the member from Waterloo-Wellington. There are some very interesting comments about the bogus deficit that we've been talking about here today.

Mr Whitestone states, "In general, history shows that often an incoming administration exaggerates the budget deficit that it inherits, to put the fiscal situation in calamitous terms. Then it can justify its failure to implement part of its program, and later claim that it has reduced the deficit and is more responsible than its predecessor. Thus, at the outset there is a lack of integrity that fuels widespread cynicism. That is the situation here...."

"There is much to be criticized in Peters' report," he states. "Of great significance, almost no one has mentioned the fact that the budget numbers are based entirely on projections based on the first six months of Ontario's fiscal year. Thus, the calculations simply are estimates constructed from only one half-year, a period when several non-recurring events hurt the economy and cost the Ontario treasury a great deal of money: the SARS outbreak, mad cow disease and the blackout. Any economist will state that no one can predict with any authority what revenues will be for the period from November to May, given the extraordinary negative events that adversely affected the Ontario economy earlier this year. The media fail to cite the fact that the so-called \$5.6-billion report merely is a projection put out by an appointee of the Ontario Liberals; it is not a figure engraved in stone." It is a projection.

"In any event, Peters acknowledged that revenues of the Ontario Power Generation, the Lottery and Gaming Corp and the Liquor Control Board were depressed by \$961 million below the original reckoning in Ontario's budget. All but ignored is that the second half of the year will be far more profitable for the LCBO. It has been estimated that roughly 25% of sales and profits are generated in liquor sales in December alone, and the winter season is far more profitable than the summer when alcohol sales predominately are for beer.

"Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that most of the shortfall in this category will be erased by the end of the fiscal year. In addition, the Lottery and Gaming Corp will benefit from a major outlet that is being opened this month in Elora.

“After languishing for most of the year, the economy in the United States has begun to recover, soaring 7.2%, the fastest growth rate since 1984. That incidentally was not predicted, further emphasizing the difficulty faced by anyone making an economic forecast. The stronger growth south of the border will spill over to Ontario.”

Mr Whitestone goes on state: “The former auditor”—who is Mr Peters—“completely ignored the probability that the federal government would make a contribution to health funding. Two days ago Ottawa announced the transfer to Ontario of about \$770 million to health funding. It also is anticipated that there will be an additional \$500 million from the federal government to Queen’s Park for relief from the SARS outbreak.” Now we know that it wasn’t \$500 million; it was \$330 million—not a very good deal.

“The Eves administration has instituted a freeze on hiring that, along with other planned savings, could provide \$800 million, according to Ontario’s finance department.” We know that the Premier to date has indicated that we’re putting on a hiring freeze when we come back to the Legislature. Well, the hiring freeze was already on.

Mr Whitestone goes on to state: “Underlying all the other mistakes, a local MPP, Ted Arnott, has pointed out that, ‘In generating the new projected deficit, Mr Peters (the former Provincial Auditor) has added in Hydro’s debt numbers. This is a departure from past provincial governments of all stripes.

“The Hydro accounts have always been kept separate from the provincial government’s books. Hydro rate-payers have always been on the hook for Hydro debt, not taxpayers.’ Hence, there is no reason why this presently is included as part of Ontario’s deficit except to inflate the total for obvious reasons.

“Earlier this year the Ontario government sold the government’s share of Teranet, claiming that it would provide a gain of about \$300 million, but Peters argued that only \$132 million will be forthcoming. That issue remains unresolved. Even though no additional asset sales had been identified, plans were underway for added sales of government assets. Whether or not they are a legitimate deduction from the budget is very questionable. Probably they are improper.

“Mark Mullins, the director of the Fraser Institute’s Ontario policy studies, said, ‘The government is still playing politics with the deficit numbers.’

“In view of the fact that the budget deficit will be nothing like the \$5.6 billion described by Peters, that comment from a leading think tank seems accurate.”

I would subscribe to that view with respect to the games the government is playing with respect to projections that were put out by the former auditor in terms of what he estimated would happen for the next six months of the fiscal year.

When we talk about our financial situation, let’s be clear. Let’s look at the situation as it will be come March 31, 2004. I can predict—and I’ll make a projection in terms of what’s going to happen—that we’ll see that the

finances of this province have miraculously recovered and the Liberals will take full credit that they made it happen. We know that in 2004 the economy is going to be doing very well. And we know the Liberals and the government have said, “We’re going to do a lot of different things to make sure that we live up to our promises.” It’s going to be interesting what they come out with in the next budget because we know that they have significantly taken measures to raise taxes on Ontario families and employers. This is part of their program. Yet in the election they made a big to-do about signing the taxpayer coalition’s platform statement that there will be no increases in taxes. They’re not only increasing taxes, what they’re doing now is talking about changing the Taxpayer Protection Act; in other words, amending it.

Let’s see what the Liberal government is going to do. They’re going to increase taxes on Ontario employers, stopping job creation and preventing economic growth. What they’re doing is retroactively changing the corporate rules, which affects the confidence in this province with respect to outside investors in terms of what they think this province should be doing.

Business wants a situation where they know what’s going to happen. So what this government is going to do is retroactively change the corporate taxes. That is not very smart when you’re trying to create jobs in this province. They’re also going to cancel the personal tax cut planned for January 1, 2004, and raise personal income taxes by \$900 million. That’s \$900 million that’s taken out of the economy. They will also increase the financial burden on Ontario’s seniors by \$450 million, by taking away the seniors’ education property tax credit. That’s another \$450 million they’re taking out of the economy, which is going to affect us.

They’re also going to punish parents who choose to send their children to independent schools, by cancelling the equity in education tax credit. They will also hike hydro rates on all Ontarians, forcing some to make the choice between warmth and food. I can tell you, having gone through that—and I think the members opposite who were will know that they’re going to have a great time fielding those phone calls starting tomorrow—that even though they made the promise—and this was the election. What do you care about your promises during the election? “We’re Liberals. We can break them. We get re-elected when we break promises. Just look at Jean Chrétien.” So they broke their promise on hydro, and it’s coming forth tomorrow.

But I can tell you it’s going to be interesting how the new members deal with this. I hope they had some input on the decision, because they’re going to take the heat. When they make the decision at the top, it’s the people at the bottom who take the heat. I can tell you that’s not a very good decision to make with respect to what they’re trying to accomplish with respect to families and the people who rely on energy in this province. Get ready to take the heat, because you’re taking away energy from other people who need it.

1720

The other thing the Liberals are doing, besides breaking their promises with respect to the Taxpayer Protection Act and with respect to hydro, which are pretty fundamental promises, is also delaying key education promises. They will not commit to spending education dollars in the classroom, where they belong. I've got a situation right now in my riding at two schools, which are slated to be closed after a review by the Simcoe County District School Board. We've got King Edward Public School and also Prince of Wales Public School. What are we doing here in terms of not putting any more money into the classroom? They're looking at two schools slated to be closed after a review by the district school board. I say they should be looking at these schools and saying, "Should we keep them open? What can we do to keep these inner-city schools?"

Laughter.

Mr Tascona: The members opposite laugh, but I'll tell you this: Inner-city schools are very important in keeping the structure of my riding in place. I will tell you that the inner-city schools not only provide the education the students need in that area, but they also provide the recreational facilities we need in our community.

The members opposite and the government laugh away because they think it's a big joke. Well, it's not a big joke in my riding. I can tell you that I was fighting to keep those schools open even when we were in government. Do you know why? Because it's important to keep inner-city schools in place, and not just because of Toronto. It's not all about Toronto; it's other communities that have inner-city schools. I'll tell you that I'll be fighting for Prince of Wales Public School and King Edward Public School, to keep those schools open, to make sure that—well, we've already sent a letter to the Premier and we've already sent a letter to the Minister of Education. One of the biggest jokes, I'd like to tell you, during the election was that the Minister of Education—he wasn't that when he came up during the campaign—goes up into my area and says to the parents, because we need a new school built up in the area, "Do you want a new school? Bang. I'll get you a new school." I can tell you that we're going to hold him to that promise with respect to being able to create a school just out of magic.

Backing off on education promises is something the people are going to remember. They said they would commit their efforts to appeasing teacher unions and school boards. Well, what about parents? I've got four children in the school system. I want a commitment from that government with respect to me, and I think parents all across this province want to be appeased to make sure their children get a proper education. It's not all about school boards and it's not all about teachers' unions; it's about parents and their children in the school system.

They will hide behind their blame-game deficit and avoid implementing the core promises from their platform. There was no commitment to capping class sizes. We know there's a little bit of a dispute between the minister and the Premier, but we're sure they'll sort that

out. When they'll sort it out, we don't know. There's no commitment to live up to their promise of child care for 75% of children under age 4. These are fundamental commitments to education, they're fundamental commitments to health care, and they say, "We've got a deficit. We can't do anything." Well, they won't have a deficit by next year. Come 2004, everything will be all rectified, because they'll get the money somewhere.

I'm pleased to speak today. Thank you.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): First of all, I want to welcome everybody back to the Legislature, veterans as well as all the new members, because I think it's wonderful to have all this talent and all the new ideas here in the Legislature—

Mr Parsons: And they're better than some of the old members.

Ms Di Cocco: According to my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings, some of the new members are better than some of the old members. But I do want to welcome you. It's really exciting that we have so many new members in this Legislature, and the reason it's exciting is that it brings in fresh ideas. There is a dignity with which I think each one of us is able to represent their constituents here, to be the people's representatives here in the Ontario Legislature.

I have to tell you that being here, in my four years previous to this, it has been a great privilege. There is something that each one of us—sometimes we get caught up with trying to understand what all the protocols are. I know for the new members it's, "What do we do next?" There's a great deal of uncertainty. That will fade with time. You certainly get into the rhythm of the place. You also learn to use the tools of the Legislature to bring the issues of your constituents, because first and foremost we're here because of the people who elected us. We represent their interests here in the Legislature.

I have to also say that I spent four years in opposition and now, being in government, it's a whole different job, basically. One of the exciting things that I'm involved in has to do with democratic renewal. It's exciting because it's about making government work better for people. Government has a tremendous responsibility. It impacts people's individual lives—students, roads, our environment—and good democracy or good government is about continuously improving the way government does its work.

For instance, I hope to see the Audit Act changed so that there is more accountability when it comes to public bodies. Why is that important? Because too many times there isn't that other layer of accountability that's required to make sure public dollars are being spent effectively.

There is also the aspect of enhancing the role of private members. In the Legislative Assembly committee, I believe it was last term, we looked at how to enhance the role of private members. I think it's exciting if we could have, for instance, private members' hour be a place whereby members on all sides of the House could co-sponsor bills and talk about some of the important

issues that impact us and impact people in our ridings. We could use that almost as a collaborative time. There is an opportunity now, in this new era, to make these changes, to bring about changes that make this place work better.

Probably one of the darkest times for me in this Legislature was when we actually took the budget and removed it and had it read in a car parts plant. The whole notion of why we are here—today, for instance, the Minister of Finance is authorizing the payment of salaries of civil servants and other necessary payments pending. Right from the Magna Carta, it was a time that the executive had to bring to the people's representatives how it was going to spend the people's money. That's why we're here. When the government of the day, under Ernie Eves, decided to take the budget and present it to a select group of invited guests, it totally undermined the role of the Legislature.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Are you still crying about that?

The Acting Speaker: The member for Simcoe North, are you in your seat?

1730

Mr Dunlop: My seat is right here.

The Acting Speaker: Then I would suggest you quiet down a bit.

Ms Di Cocco: Each one of us in this place represents people in our riding. It is the responsibility of the executive to bring to the people's representatives how and why it's spending the people's money. That's a fundamental foundation of Parliament. For some reason, because they thought it was going to be a gimmick that was going to get them some brownie points somewhere, they decided to take it out of this place. I have to say that, for me anyway, it was one of the darkest times in this province. To me, it was contempt for this place.

In this new era and with the involvement in democratic renewal, I'm hoping that we can make this place work better, because there's always room for improvement. It's very easy to forget that each one of us as individuals has a tremendous privilege and we have a tremendous amount of, if you want, individual power here in Parliament. We also have an opportunity that sometimes is lost, and I'm thrilled that we're going to develop this democratic renewal secretariat, because it is fundamentally going to change how government works. Can you imagine actually going out there and talking to people about different types of representation instead of first-past-the-post, looking at how we can become more accountable and more transparent and how to change some of the standing orders so that, for instance, we can have our bills going to committee after first reading and then being able to put in amendments, rather than a fait accompli once it comes to the House?

There are other initiatives as well. All of us saw the toll it took on us when the election was about to be called and then not called and about to be called again and then not called.

Mr Parsons: And it cost a lot of public money.

Ms Di Cocco: It cost a lot of money. To have the courage to say, "You know what? We're going to set dates so that we can anticipate and we know when votes are going to be taken across this province"—we will do that, and I believe that's going to improve things. There won't be the games that we've seen in the last year.

One of the other areas that I look forward to—I listened to the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, who is not here right now. When I heard him speak about making sure that schools stay open, I wondered where his voice had been over the last four years, particularly in the last few years, when we've seen all the schools closing, yet that voice wasn't there. Now in opposition he found it again. I think all of us have a responsibility to make sure we always speak in the interests of our constituents and of the people in this province. We now have this new era where government is going to do that. It's about government serving the people and not the other way around, where people have to serve the government.

I look forward to this new session. For the new members, it's going to get better as you move on and get to know what really is going with all the dynamics in here.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): As a New Democrat, I just want to say to the member from Lambton that I'm going to miss having you over here. Speeches will never be the same. We used to have such a good time when you were on this side.

I want to congratulate, as was said, all members who were re-elected and those who were newly elected to this place. It is, quite frankly, quite an honour to be here. I think it doesn't sit on us and really permeate until after you've been here a couple of times. The reality is that some of us are lucky enough to be elected once, and it becomes tougher and tougher as time goes on. So to all of you, I wish you well and I wish you well in the representations that you make for your ridings. I've only got five and a half minutes, so enough of that. I have a couple of things I've got to say.

A pox on both your houses. You rump guys who should be over here and the Liberals come in and say, "Oh my God, we should've had a V8. We forgot all about the deficit. We campaigned in the last election and we said we've got all these promises we want to make and the litany of promises: smaller class sizes, more nurses, more money for health care." I agree with most of that stuff, quite frankly. Then, all of a sudden you get elected and say, "Oh my God, there's a deficit? Where did it come from?" Well, you know, Mr Phillips and I and Howard sat on the estimates committee back last spring. We knew there was going to be \$5.5 billion. So it wasn't a surprise. But this is not my point.

My point is, a pox on both your houses, because now the Liberals are trying to say how upset they are because the Tories have left them a \$5.6-billion deficit and how much of a surprise that was. I remember when the Liberals promised not a balanced budget but a surplus in the 1990 election. Then we opened up the books and the Liberals had left us \$8.5 billion as a deficit. So I say, a

pox on all your houses. The reality is, coming into the Legislature we knew what the numbers were, we knew what the issues were, we knew it was going to be somewhere around \$5 billion—\$4.5 billion, \$5.5 billion—we knew it was going to be about that number.

But I want to get to my last point, because I've only got three minutes and 54 seconds left, and that is the reason we're into this mess in the first place when it comes to the deficit: the tax cuts. That's how we got into this. Mr Bradley and other people who have been around here for a while, Mr—

Hon Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): Wake up.

Mr Bisson: Wake up? I am awake. I was trying to find your last name. I have to go by ridings, as I'm not supposed to mention your name, and that's actually a very good point.

But I say, Mr Speaker—I'm glad you're back in the chair—that the reason we got into this deficit situation is because the government, at a time when the economy started to grow a bit, took away the revenue and basically put us in a position of creating a deficit.

An interesting little fact: If you take a look at the American Congress—the federal American budget—and you look at the state legislatures across the United States, virtually all the states, and the federal government, that have moved on tax cuts are the ones that have deficits. Interestingly enough, where there's a federal government—in this case a federal Liberal government—that decided they weren't going to do tax cuts, what do they have? It's called a surplus. So I say the reason we got into this mess is because the Tories pursued a tax-cut agenda.

The tax-cut agenda, however popular it is to the population on first blush, means you're either going to have to reduce costs in other programs such as health care and education, because the reality is, health care, education and social services are about 75% of the expenditures of this Legislature. If I reduce taxes, I'm going to have to cut from one of those three major programs. Everybody says, "Everybody but me. Cut anybody but me, because I need it. I'm the senior, I'm the student, I'm whatever." Basically, there's not much choice. It's a cut, or you have to run a deficit.

In this particular case, the government chose both of the worst evils, in my view: to run a deficit and hide it, as Tories did well. The reality is, in the last term it was not a balanced budget. We knew that last spring. We can argue about what happened before in the other budgets, and I'll give you credit for those, but I'm saying that the last budget we got, this budget here, 2003-04, was not a balanced budget when it was presented to this House as we unravelled the numbers.

I sat on the estimates committee and I saw the numbers. They were around \$5 billion. So I say the tax-cut agenda has been shown to be, quite frankly, bad economic policy. Look at George Bush. How many trillions does he have now as a deficit? What are the numbers? I'd have to go back and take a look, but it's in

the trillions of dollars. Take a look at the state legislatures across the United States of America. Virtually all that had pursued a tax-cut agenda are in a deficit situation. Ontario, which pursued a tax-cut agenda, is in a deficit situation. Those places that said, "We will hold the line on taxes, we will not increase taxes and we will manage our expenditures," basically ended up in a situation of either balancing their budgets or frankly creating a surplus.

I want to go back to my good friend Mr Harris: "There's only one taxpayer." I always remember what Mr Harris said. When you're giving away taxpayers' money, not to them individually, their pockets, but to the upper-income people of this province, who have you really been trying to placate? Not the average person on the street. I say, a pox on both your houses. This is not the first time it's happened.

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Number two, we're in a situation where we knew there was going to be a deficit this fall. The last part is that tax-cut agendas have been shown to be bad economic policy.

As I stand here as a proud New Democrat in this Legislature with my caucus of seven, I want to say I really appreciated having an opportunity to represent NDP views in this Legislature.

Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): I must say to the last speaker: I know the NDP, and you're no NDPer. Seriously, I'm always glad to hear from my good friend from the north and glad to hear that the pox is still on two other houses, other than his own house. I'd be deeply, deeply disappointed if that were not the case.

I didn't want to mention Conrad Black in my speech today, but I know the members of the Conservative Party must be devastated that their good friend Conrad Black has, shall we say, fallen upon bad times. I remember the lectures that came from his publications that told us of the virtues of continuous tax cuts, which of course have robbed governments in various jurisdictions of their potential revenues. Nobody suggests there should be dramatic tax increases over that period of time. What they said was, "You know something? If you keep cutting these taxes, instead of producing the economic revival you hope for, what actually happens is you end up with lack of revenues." What we have now in Ontario today—and you would know this—is a structural deficit.

I have a little bit of a comparison when I think of—and I know my friends on the government side will not be too critical of me. I'm going to—

Mr Dunlop: Opposition side.

Hon Mr Bradley: Opposition side. I have a hard time with that.

Interjection: They got used to it really quick; you're not.

Hon Mr Bradley: I'm going to the member's riding. He's going to welcome me tomorrow night. I'm looking forward to that.

I hate to draw a comparison between Conrad Black and his financial dealings and this government. But just

as the shareholders of Hollinger corporation are probably astounded at what they have found in recent days, I was astounded when I found the deficit that we are facing in Ontario. Did we know this government was probably not providing all the facts regarding their deficit? Did we think perhaps they were running a deficit of a couple of billion dollars? Yes. But when we had an impartial person, the former auditor of the province of Ontario, look at the books and say, "It's at least a \$5.6-billion deficit," those of us on this side were astounded by those figures. We had the assurances of the former Premier and the former finance minister that indeed all was fine. They said the budget was in fact balanced. Now we have to deal with not only a number of very fine commitments we made to the people of Ontario, but also a further commitment to put our financial house in order first.

I agree with my friend from the north that in fact had we not had all of these tax cuts promised and implemented by this government, we probably would have the revenues to do what he and I and others in the House would like to see done for the people of Ontario.

What I was surprised with—and I wish there were time for these two-minute responses for him. I watched in astonishment as the independents, as they call them over there, as the members who used to be the NDP and are now independents—I still call them the NDP because I'm used to the past—stood and voted against a bill proposed by this government to rescind those tax cuts. In light of my good friend from Timmins-James Bay making his speech today—and I agreed substantially with what he had to say—I was astounded and astonished that the group that is sitting over in that corner at the present time, formerly known as the New Democrats, amongst their own friends and in their hearts still New Democrats, that they stood with the Conservatives to vote against the rescinding of those particular tax measures. That flummoxed me—I think that's the word I'm looking for in this particular case—because I know Conrad Black would have agreed with all of those tax cuts. I used to read editorials in the newspapers that he owned and they would be extolling the virtues of these tax cuts, which were robbing the people of this province of the money to be able to invest in things that people wanted.

Of course, with this interim supply bill and the payments going out, we want to see a strong, progressive education system, a well-funded public education system in this province so that everyone can feel comfortable in it, everyone can believe that they're delivering the best possible education to the people of the province. I want to see post-secondary education appropriately funded and, of course at the same time, the tuition, which the previous government allowed to go up dramatically, at least frozen where it is. I'd love to cut it, but it's very difficult to do that.

I remember a party in this Legislature that used to sit to the far left of the Speaker, which at one time promised to abolish tuition, and when in office, I think the tuition went up 42%. Now, was that because the people known as New Democrats wanted that to happen? No it wasn't,

because they're not mean-spirited people who wanted to raise the tuition of the students. But they found themselves in a fiscal position where they felt they had to do it.

It reminded me of government auto insurance. One of the things I always knew about the old New Democrats was if you said to me, "Tell me two things they stand for," I'd say, "Well, they stand for a lot of things. One thing is public auto insurance, and the first thing they're going to do is implement public auto insurance. The second thing is the sanctity of the collective agreement." I know that the sanctity of the collective agreement was deep in their minds, and then I saw the social contract—I would like to dramatically rip this, but I'm not dramatic any more; I could dramatically go like this—which ripped up every public sector contract in Ontario and said to those folks who had taken part in collective bargaining and had come forward with contracts that they were no good any more.

Did the New Democrats of the day do that because they wanted to? No they didn't. They found themselves in difficult financial circumstances. The present government now finds itself in a far less enviable financial position than we would have hoped when we assumed office. We opened the envelope up and inside the envelope we found the figure of a \$5.6-billion deficit instead of about \$2 billion, which we suspected was probably the case.

Part of that is going to be solved with the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003, if it is passed by this Legislature—because we can never presume ahead of time that something is going to be passed—and it rolls back various of these tax giveaways, and we will go a long way to addressing the problem of lack of appropriate revenues to meet all of the needs. Senior citizens of this province have a lot of needs. Nursing homes have to be improved in terms of the quality and quantity of service they can provide, and that can only be through further funding. School systems need further funding. If we want to bring the classes down to an appropriate size for those youngsters—particularly in grades 1 to 3, but others as well—that will take an investment of funds.

In the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, just to pull one out of a hat—not to flog this one, but to pull it out of a hat—we would love to see some further investments in tourism and in the recovery program for tourism. That's dependent upon having some funds to be able to do so.

Some of the members in the government benches may well reconsider their position, because I well remember some of them who are still here—well, at least one of them is still here—originally, when former Premier Mike Harris said, "Look, we want to cut taxes before we balance the budget." There were four of them and some of them are no longer in the House. One was a former Speaker, Gary Carr, the member for Oakville—I think you can call them by their names when they're no longer in the House. He was one, I recall. My good friend Chris Stockwell was another who cautioned against it. I think my good friend Morley Kells was yet another who did so,

and now the member for Waterloo-Wellington—because I'm not supposed to use his name in here—I think he was the fourth. They all recognized what you can't do, that you can't cut the taxes before you balance the budget. There are a lot of things that you can't do until you get your fiscal house in order, and that's what were telling the people of Ontario.

Most of the people I talk to are reasonable with that. They say, "You know something? We'd love to see all of your commitments implemented tomorrow, but we recognize that the cards you've been dealt are jokers instead of aces and that you have to take a little longer than you would like to implement them. But we know that your heart is in them and that you're committed to those." This interim supply bill, of course, is going to provide for the kind of funding that is needed for the existing services in this province.

With that, Mr Speaker, I will resume my chair. I know that we're likely to come to a vote very soon on this.

The Speaker: Further debate? That's it?

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

All those in favour of the motion, say "aye."

All those against, say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.

The Speaker: Will the members please take their seats.

Mr Sorbara has moved government motion 1. All those in favour, please rise.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Gravelle, Michael	Parsons, Ernie
Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bartolucci, Rick	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Bentley, Christopher	Kennedy, Gerard	Rinaldi, Lou
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Klees, Frank	Sandals, Liz
Bradley, James J.	Kular, Kuldip	Scott, Laurie
Broten, Laurel C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Brown, Michael A.	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Colle, Mike	Marsales, Judy	Sterling, Norman W.
Cordiano, Joseph	Matthews, Deborah	Tascona, Joseph N.
Craitor, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wong, Tony C.
Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dunlop, Garfield	Murdoch, Bill	Yakabuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Speaker: All members who are against, please rise.

Nays

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

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 56; the nays are 6.

The Speaker: The motion is carried.

The House stands adjourned until 6:45 pm.

The House adjourned at 1804.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon / L'hon Leona (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (Ind)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (Ind)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon / L'hon John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	London North Centre / London Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	London West / -Ouest	Bentley, Hon / L'hon Christopher (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouveau de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Takhar, Hon / L'hon Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington- Grey	Eves, Ernie (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Hon / L'hon Steve (L) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (Ind)
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (Ind)
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Brotten, Laurel C. (L)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Hon / L'hon Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon / L'hon Marie (L) Minister of Children's Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration		

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Ottawa-Orléans Ottawa-Vanier	McNeely, Phil (L) Meilleur, Hon / L'hon Madeleine (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Thornhill Thunder Bay-Atikokan Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord Timiskaming-Cochrane	Bartolucci, Hon / L'hon Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Racco, Mario G. (L) Mauro, Bill (L) Gravelle, Michael (L)
Oxford Parkdale-High Park	Hardeman, Ernie (PC) Kennedy, Hon / L'hon Gerard (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Ramsay, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles Bisson, Gilles (Ind) Smitherman, Hon / L'hon George (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parry Sound-Muskoka Perth-Middlesex Peterborough Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge Prince Edward-Hastings Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke Sarnia-Lambton Sault Ste Marie Scarborough Centre / -Centre Scarborough East / -Est	Miller, Norm (PC) Wilkinson, John (L) Leal, Jeff (L) Arthurs, Wayne (L) Parsons, Ernie (L) Yakabuski, John (PC) Di Cocco, Caroline (L) Oraziotti, David (L) Duguid, Brad (L) Chambers, Hon / L'hon Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	Toronto-Danforth Trinity-Spadina Vaughan-King-Aurora Waterloo-Wellington Whitby-Ajax Willowdale Windsor West / -Ouest	Churley, Marilyn (Ind) Marchese, Rosario (Ind) Sorbara, Hon / L'hon Gregory S. (L) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances Arnott, Ted (PC) Flaherty, Jim (PC) Zimmer, David (L)
Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest Scarborough-Agincourt	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L) Phillips, Hon / L'hon Gerry (L) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement	Windsor-St Clair	Pupatello, Hon / L'hon Sandra (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine Duncan, Hon / L'hon Dwight (L) Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Scarborough-Rouge River Simcoe North / -Nord Simcoe-Grey St Catharines	Curling, Hon / L'hon Alvin (L) Speaker / Président Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC) Bradley, Hon / L'hon James J. (L) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Hon / L'hon Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Munro, Julia (PC) Cordiano, Hon / L'hon Joseph (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
St Paul's	Bryant, Hon / L'hon Michael (L) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique	York North / -Nord York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Sergio, Mario (L)
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)	York West / -Ouest	

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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