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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 27 November 2003**

**Jeudi 27 novembre 2003**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 27 November 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 27 novembre 2003

*The House met at 1845.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LA GESTION  
RESPONSABLE DES FINANCES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 26, 2003, on the motion for second reading of Bill 2, An Act respecting fiscal responsibility / Projet de loi 2, Loi concernant la gestion responsable des finances.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Brad Duguid):** When last we left off on the debate, the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka had the floor, with five minutes left in his speech. Is the member here?

The member from Parry Sound-Muskoka not being present at this time, further debate?

**Mr Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** It's a pleasure to rise today and join in the debate on this bill. I have to say it's been an interesting experience for me the past few weeks. The past few days in this House have been extremely interesting.

As you know, I come from a background of municipal politics, where they tend to do things a little differently. Regional councils tend to deal with problems in a little different way. What I'm finding is that there seems to be a lot of finger pointing and blaming going on. I know that any time we would deal with an issue like that at regional council or at local council, we tended to forget whose fault it was or we tended to forget whom to blame and we'd get to work on dealing with the problem. The training I've had in my 18 years at regional council in Halton and in the town of Oakville is that you can't run a deficit. It's not an option. That led us to having some of the healthiest budgets and some of the healthiest credit ratings in Ontario. You can't say that about the province, unfortunately, with the mess that it's in today.

When you look at the expenditures of the province, interest on the debt today is the third-highest expense of all the expenses. Health care and education are the only two that precede that. It seems to me we should be taking a different approach to this than I've seen taken to date by the opposition parties, and that is that the election has taken place and the people have spoken. The former auditor has reported back, I think in a very honest and open way, and told us that we do have a deficit. We've

got a projected deficit by the year-end of \$5.6 billion. It's a structural deficit. We could do nothing. We could leave it alone, and it'll climb to \$7.7 billion next year. Leave it alone for another year, and it'll climb to \$8.6 billion.

What I found that people responded to during the election, and what I find they're still responding to today, is the concept that, "I expect you, as my elected official, to treat the province's budget the same way that I treat my family's budget, the same way that I treat my business." If you take that approach toward the province's budget, if we all treat this money as if it's our own, I think we'll start to come up with a little different approach. Our leader, Premier McGuinty, has said that we are a party that wants to live within its means, and I agree with that. It's the way I was raised. You live within your means, you pay your bills on time and you try, as much as you can, to keep out of debt.

That's what, in my opinion, Bill 2 is all about. It's doing what the average hard-working Ontario family would do if somebody messed up their own family finances. They'd react in exactly the same way. I think we'd all take a look at the problem we were in and realize that we have to get ourselves back to a balanced budget. That's our intent. That's what we went out to the electorate with during the election, and I was quite proud to do that.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the private school tax credit. It seems to me that if you take a philosophical approach to that, I could support it. It would make some sense. It seems to me there are a lot of things out there that I could also support. The fact is, the province's finances are in such a state that we simply can't afford it at this time. I can live with that.

**1850**

I also think that we have to understand that it's time to move forward and that corporate tax cuts, as healthy as they may be at certain times, work. Tax cuts in general work, up to a point. Where the argument may come in between the three parties is at what point do they stop working and become counterproductive. In my opinion, we have reached the point where tax cuts are being counterproductive to the lifestyle of this province. We are in a competitive position currently, and I see no reason for us to make any further cuts.

I was also quite pleased when I was out campaigning during the election to talk with seniors. I have a lot of seniors in my riding in the town of Oakville. We talked about the seniors' property tax credit. When I was knocking on doors, at first I thought that there would be a lot of support for that property tax rebate and we'd get

into an awful lot of arguments about it at the front doors, but I found that that didn't take place. People understood that where they wanted the money placed was in proper public education for their children, for their grandchildren, and they wanted it placed into health care. Instead, I came to this place hoping that we'd be able to talk about improvements to our health care system, which we're doing, and hoping that we'd be able to talk about improvements to our educational system, which I hope to be doing soon. What I didn't plan on getting into was a blame game over the size of the deficit.

I thought our Premier made the right move, I thought he made an intelligent move, when he asked for an independent audit. So it wasn't just employees of the party who were looking at the size of the deficit; it was somebody who, I think, is very well respected around this place. He came back and he gave us the figure of \$5.6 billion. It seems to me that now we're starting to go back and somebody was saying, "Somebody knew that it was \$5 billion. I thought it was going to be \$3 billion. I thought it was going to be \$4 billion." The only information that I had going into the election was that at some point in the spring when the budget was introduced at the Magna plant, outside independent financial agencies suspected that the province was going to run about a \$2-billion deficit. That was the last information that I was able to avail myself of. I understand our plan and our platform was based upon that, and I was quite prepared to live with that. I think we had a plan to deal with that.

I believe that by taking the responsible approach that is contained in this bill to bring the deficit under control, the election promises that seem to be generating an awful lot of publicity in the media today will be lived up to. We could continue to spend, as I said earlier. We could run high deficits next year and the year after, but I think the approach we're taking, the approach that's being proposed in this bill, is a responsible approach. As I said earlier, it's an approach that I think I'd take in my own business if I found myself in this situation; it's an approach I'd take in my own family.

I will be supporting the bill, obviously. There are a number of reasons why I think we should move quickly on this bill, and that's why I'm glad it's been introduced. I'm glad that we came back. I'm glad the House began to sit before the end of the year—that may have surprised some people.

Bill 2 is a key element in our plan to manage the province's finances in a fiscally responsible manner, for a change. What we intend to do specifically is increase the general corporate income tax rate to 14% and the manufacturing and processing tax rate to 12%. We plan to maintain the small business tax rate at 5.5% for 2004 and subsequent years. We're also going to increase the small business threshold to \$400,000, effective January 1, 2004.

What we will cancel effective January 1, 2004, is further increases in the threshold for the first tier of the surtax to the level for the second tier, which would have been effective January 1, 2004. We will cancel the first

and second personal income tax rate reductions, maintaining the lower rate of 6.05% and the middle rate at 9.15%.

Clearly we must do something. We need to do it quickly. The fiscal situation we've inherited is a mess. We have to clean up that mess. The people of this province, in my opinion, expect us to, and I think we're up to the job. We have to get our fiscal house in order so that we can start to deliver on some of the positive changes that I think people were so excited about on October 2. We know we want smaller class sizes in this province; we know we want shorter waiting times for health care. I know definitely in the town of Oakville, the environment is a huge issue that people expect us to deal with in a positive way.

Our tax rates have to remain competitive, and I don't think anybody is suggesting that they do otherwise, at least not in this party. We didn't create the mess; the Conservative government did. We will clean up the mess.

Our commitment still is to make public education a priority, and cancelling the tax credit is a major step in our plan to tackle that \$5.6-billion deficit, again, that we inherited. We still want to promote excellence in learning for all Ontario schools and cancel the tax break for exclusive private schools.

As the election was held in September of this year, I was able to talk to a lot of people in Oakville, a lot of electors in Oakville who have children who attend private schools. There are quite a lot of private schools in my riding. There again, the same way I felt when I was talking to the seniors, when I was telling them straight up at the doors, giving them the straight goods, that I would not be supporting a property tax credit—the same response from many private school parents, saying, "I understand. I'd like the tax credit if you could give it to me, but I understand there's bigger and higher priorities in this province today, and that's what I want you to pay attention to."

We've been clear for many months that cancelling this tax credit would be a priority. This isn't something we're surprising people with. I am getting some letters on the issue. I'm responding to those letters in the same way that we addressed during the campaign; that is, honest and upfront, telling them we were quite clear in our election platform that we would not extend the private school tax credit. At all-candidates meetings when this issue was raised, I would say it was almost unanimous—as government, our job is to invest in quality public education. That's where they want the money spent. You have to think that even though these parents have paid their fees, they would still not have received the tax credit for this year.

Given the size of the deficit that we've inherited from the previous government, it's imperative that we move sooner rather than later on this ill-advised tax credit, and that's why we're sitting. That's why, I believe, the House was brought back so quickly.

The savings that we generate will help us to fulfill our commitments to the people of Ontario. Public education

is clearly a priority for this government. As Minister Sorbara has told the House already, "We have a plan to make public education the best education."

Going back to the seniors: By doing this now, by making this change now and cancelling the seniors' property tax credit, we will save \$340 million this fiscal year and \$450 million next fiscal year. That goes a long way to eliminating that \$5.6-billion deficit. Low- and modest-income seniors will continue to be eligible to receive up to a maximum of \$1,000 in credits annually per household under the existing Ontario property and sales tax credits in the Income Tax Act.

To quote our leader, Premier McGuinty, "We need to eliminate the balance of the Tory deficit and implement our plan for real, positive change. This is not an either/or proposition. Ontarians want and deserve better schools. We plan to deliver them. They want and deserve better health care. We plan to deliver that as well. They want a balanced budget."

#### 1900

What we are doing today, I believe, as we debate this bill, is working together to get this job done. This budget needs to be balanced. We had no idea we'd be facing this type of deficit. I still think we're doing the right thing in the approach that the Premier is suggesting.

The Premier also said that the Eves PCs are misleading seniors with a bogus promise of a tax break they will never deliver on. I respect seniors and will improve the services they depend on.

I'd like to talk briefly on the tobacco tax. We all know how important a tool the cost of a product can be, and I really believe that this increase in the tobacco tax will have the intended effect of discouraging harmful tobacco consumption, especially among our youth, who are sensitive to those price increases.

Bill 2 proposes to increase the tobacco tax by \$2.50 per carton of 200 cigarettes. When you think of it, tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death, premature death, disease and disability in Ontario. It is the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in this province—it kills 16,000 people a year, according to Cancer Care Ontario. That's four times more than deaths from car accidents, suicide, homicide and AIDS combined. Treating diseases caused by tobacco costs the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and taxpayers, more than \$1 billion a year.

Our campaign platform paper was very clear, where we stated there's nothing that better prevents people from smoking than increasing the cost of cigarettes. Ontario cigarettes are still cheaper than almost every other province's. We will make cigarettes more expensive to prevent kids from lighting up.

We're just moving, or we're committed to move, to the national average on tobacco tax. This is just the first step in our plan to do that. With this increase, we are moving away from having the lowest cigarette prices in the country. We are bringing prices closer in line with other provinces, and again, with bordering American jurisdictions, but we're doing so in a manner that care-

fully weighs the benefits of using tobacco taxes as a tool to reduce smoking against the risk of tobacco smuggling.

Mr Peters, the former Provincial Auditor, identified in his independent report that Ontario faces a \$5.6-billion deficit, and up to another \$1 billion in risks. I believe that in addressing this, what we're able to do is perform what I think is an admirable move toward a much healthier Ontario, and at the same time we're able to move against that deficit that we know needs to be brought down. It's important, therefore, that we move ahead with the measures contained in this bill to get the province's financial house in order so that we can start to deliver on that positive change the people were so excited about during the election.

Energy conservation and environmental protection are priority areas for this government. Bill 2 also proposes to extend to March 31, 2004, the rebate of the retail sales tax for the purchase of Energy Star-rated refrigerators, dishwashers, clothes washers and freezers. A temporary measure such as this draws attention to the need for consumers to consider conservation in their purchases. Response to the program has been strong so far: more than 180,000 claims since it was introduced. The measures contained in this bill represent the first steps in our plan to restore the province's finances.

Premier McGuinty has also said that in addition to these measures, we will collect from corporations that have not been paying their taxes, again in keeping with the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor; introduce immediate restraints on discretionary spending; put in place a government-wide hiring freeze; eliminate the waste of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on self-promotional government advertising; and reduce what the auditor has described as often wasteful spending on highly paid consultants. We're simply bringing a responsible approach to government.

In our campaign literature we were very clear: Ontario workers and their families already pay enough. We will hold the line on your taxes. Corporate taxes are already competitive in Ontario. By supporting that bill, we will keep them this way.

**Hon Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am very pleased to acknowledge the presence of and introduce Mr Gobind Singh Kanjla, a former minister of the Punjab state government in India and current MLA. I want to welcome him to our beautiful city and this great province of Ontario.

I also would like to acknowledge his two associates, Mr Amar Singh Bhullar, who is the managing editor and publisher of Hamdard Weekly, and Mr Mukand Singh Pandher, the president of Pandher Financial Services. These two associates are from the city of Brampton, which is being very capably represented by my colleague Vic Dhillon.

**The Acting Speaker:** Gentlemen, welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Questions and comments?

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** The member from Oakville made his maiden speech tonight. Of course,

during the maiden speech you get a free ride, so, Mr Flynn, you did well tonight. Of course, in the minute and a half or two minutes allotted to me, I can't nearly have the time to correct all the comments that you made, being very careful how we talk about that.

You started off by talking about the provincial finances being in such a state—the bogus deficit, I thought you were referring to—and I will be happy to have more comments on the bogus deficit later tonight. Obviously the Liberal government wants to be able to spend up to the limit of the deficit: \$5.6 billion. It gives them an added \$5.6 billion to play with in the rest of this fiscal year, and that's what the bogus deficit is all about, and we'll hear more about that as time goes on.

I was glad to hear the member talk about tax cuts. He said tax cuts work. That's refreshing from the Liberal benches. I've never heard that from the Liberal benches. Kevin, you may hear about that later tonight. Somebody may just slip over—the two babysitters here may come over—and have a word with you about talking about tax cuts that work. Yes, they do work. They made Ontario into the economic capital of North America, and they will do that again when we resume those benches over there at some point in the future.

You talked about seniors and how respectful you are of seniors and how kind they were to you. I wonder, member from Oakville, whether they will be as kind when they find out that you're going to take \$2.5 billion out of health care, as was reported on Global News this evening. Of that \$2.5 billion, a lot is going to come out of the seniors drug plan. I'm not sure the seniors will be quite as kind to you the next time an election rolls around when you've cut their health care and drug benefits to that degree.

**The Acting Speaker:** Time is up.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** To the member from Oakville, congratulations. I have no disagreement, or not much disagreement, with your discussion on the substance of the bill, but I wanted to tackle some of the comments you made in your introduction, where you talked about so much finger pointing and blaming people. I'm assuming by that you mean let's move on and let's stop pointing fingers at one another—something like that, more or less, give or take? I want to say to you that the problem with that is that you and all the other Liberal members made a lot of promises during the election. It's very difficult to forget the finger pointing when we engaged in that during the election. While you want to move on, those of us who remember what you said during the election have a hard time saying, "Yes, that's true. Let's forget about it, and let's just move on." It's hard to do that, you see.

You immediately go to the idea, "Now that we have a deficit, we have to treat the deficit in the same way I would treat my house and my business by way of whatever debts and/or loans or deficits I have." I appreciate that. But, you see, the point we make here is that your colleague there, the now Chair of Management Board, was very insightful prior to and during the

election, when he predicted that this former Tory government had a \$5-billion deficit. So we say to you, "risk," which we say was the deficit that Mr Phillips was talking about—in that context, you knew that there was a deficit that you would have to contend with if you got elected. My point to you is that we can't forget that. You made promises in the context of a deficit, and you led people to believe that you could do it and handle it, balance the budget, increase services and not increase any personal taxes. You were wrong, and we've got to point the finger in that regard. We're not going to let you forget, as much as you want to.

**1910**

**Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** It's my pleasure to address some comments from my colleague from Oakville, the neighbouring riding to Mississauga West.

This is a government proud to live within its means, a government that rolled up its sleeves and got to work, a government that is working, a government that is working on behalf of all Ontarians. We're going to work at truly balancing Ontario's books, not by selling assets and revenue streams, not by postponing the day of financial reckoning until another fiscal year when the problem has only gotten worse. Ours is a government that looks at its programs, its services and its labour force as an investment in Ontario's quality of life, and at the men and women who deliver those programs and services as assets to our province. We will not adopt the reflexive, slash-and-burn tactics of the former government.

We've moved forward to cancel the tax cuts that would see our province's deficit continue to spiral out of control and see Ontario's working families continue to suffer.

This government takes a planned, careful and deliberate approach to Ontario's finances. We will bring Ontario a budget that is sustainably balanced. This takes two qualities the government uniquely demonstrates: sound planning and a clear vision of the future that Ontarians want.

Ontarians voted to change to a government of men and women who understand their needs, to a government that's working for them and to a government that will take the time to implement changes to Ontario's finances in a responsible and a sustainable manner.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** A couple of congratulations: first of all, to the member from Etobicoke Centre, who's sitting in the Speaker's chair tonight. I don't know if this is a regular position—

**Interjection:** Scarborough.

**Mr Dunlop:** I'm sorry—Scarborough Centre. I want to congratulate you. I don't know if that's your regular position, if you'll be doing this on a regular basis or not, but good luck to you.

I also want to congratulate the member from Oakville for your comments. Congratulations to you too for your election to this office. I'm sure, as a newcomer, you're enjoying these first few weeks like I did in 1999. It is an honour to serve your constituents and to be part of the debate in this House.

I'm really pleased to be able to take part in the Liberal tax-hike bill, which of course is what we refer to as the largest tax increase in the history of the province. I was quite concerned about the member from Mississauga West's comments, when he mentioned the slash-and-burn techniques of the previous government. I tell you, I hope what I heard tonight wasn't true. There are a lot of reports floating around from Liberal insiders who are saying today your next target will be seniors and the drug plan. This, I hope, is not true. I hope it's false information.

The story going out there tonight—we'll probably read about it tomorrow and, no question, Mr Smitherman will have to answer for it next Monday in the Legislature—is the fact that you're trying to cut \$2.5 billion out of the drug benefit plans, which of course directly affects most of our seniors. This is the end of your government, as you know, if you do it. There has been a major attack on seniors in the last week, with the introduction of this act etc, but we'll get lots of time to comment later on the balance of it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Flynn:** I would just like to thank everybody for the kind comments I just received. I'm sure it will probably be the end of it, but thank you. I certainly do take them as sincere. I do come from a different environment; I'll freely admit that. The council environment is, from what I've seen, a little more civil. I think outside of this House people tend to be a lot more friendly to each other, but apparently I'm going to get used to this, and six months from now I'll be hurling insults across the floor as well, apparently. That's what people lead me to believe.

I do appreciate the comments on the bill. It's a difficult bill; we understand that. It's a bill that I think bringing forward at this time takes a lot of courage. We're putting it to the people of Ontario; we're giving them the straight goods. That's what we promised we would do during the election, and we're fulfilling that promise by the introduction of this bill. So once again, I'd like to thank the members for their comments. I did listen to them. I'd like to thank the member from Mississauga West for his supportive comments, and thank you, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak tonight to this bill, the Fiscal Responsibility Act.

I think this bill reflects a significant understanding of the government's position in terms of economic response and response to the situations that they find themselves in. I look back to 1995 when there was a real deficit that was double the amount that is purported today. The response that the previous government had to those circumstances was to look very aggressively at the opportunities that the people of Ontario could provide to bring us into a fiscally responsible and, frankly, a fiscally advantageous, position. It allowed Ontario to lead the G7-G8 countries for several years. It meant that there

were 1.1 million net new jobs in this province. It meant that there were over 600,000 people who were no longer dependent on welfare.

What did we do, and what did we understand? We understood that one of the most important factors in any kind of economic renewal was the need to lower taxes. We understood that the only place that wealth comes from is when there is that economic activity in our community, when all our neighbours have jobs, when they are able to contribute to the economy of their community, and that multiplies across the province. We understood that was the key, because when our neighbours had jobs, when our communities were strong, we were able to put money toward those priority areas such as health and education. So in contrast to what we are looking at today, we embarked on an aggressive policy to reduce corporate income tax, to reduce personal income tax in a responsible, measured way that would mean that the taxpayers of this province would have more money in their pockets. That money then would create the jobs that we have been able to see in the past eight years in this province.

But today, we are looking at a very different situation. We are looking at a government that has in fact taken the initiative to increase corporate income tax. They have then increased those corporate income tax rates back to the 2001 level of 14%.

**1920**

I think it's really important for everyone to understand what the impact is. This bill we are debating means that those corporations in this province that looked forward to a further reduction in the new year—that is, January 2004—down to 11% in fact now are facing a 27% differential. That's the difference between what someone would have been expecting and what they will be receiving. The implications of that are extremely serious. They are very serious. Often people think “only for large corporations,” but that means we are looking at very serious implications for job creation.

I was in my community earlier this week at a volunteer recognition evening, certainly something that is extremely important in the life of every community, and ours was no exception. Afterwards, there were several members of the community who came up to discuss with me the implications of the introduction of this act; their fears of what this kind of initiative would do to the business of our community that provides the jobs in our community, that in turn supports the volunteers. It's those businesses that make the contributions to the silent auctions, to the local fair in prizes and things like that, just to give a very simplistic view, if you like, of that kind of economic spinoff.

But it isn't just my constituents who are concerned about the implications of such a step being contemplated by this government. I draw your attention to an article that appeared yesterday in the National Post. I will look at only a very small part of that, but it is, I think, a demonstration of a view that is more widely held even than those businesses in my community:

“But what may be even more of a burden to the McGuinty government over the long run are the promises his government is keeping. Those are the job-killing and growth-stifling taxes and regulations the government has brought forward as part of its so-called attempt to restore fiscal order.

“The enthusiasm with which the province’s Finance Minister, Greg Sorbara, has endorsed corporate tax increases casts doubt on his grasp of his material. Hints of his detachment from economic reality have been around for weeks. One was his comment that increasing corporate income tax rates from 12.5% to 14%, rather than cutting them to 8%, was essentially a meaningless sideshow. ‘My own sense,’ he says, ‘is that Ontario businesses are fully aware of the impact, which I don’t think is going to be detrimental to the economy in any way.’”

I would simply want to reinforce the point I made that my small business constituents are very much concerned, in the same way this writer is, that in fact it does have very serious implications for the economy as a whole.

Another area that is contained in this bill is the question of the threshold for personal income tax surtax. It was certainly something that we, as members of the previous government, were particularly sensitive to. In each of our budgets, we increased the number of people who would no longer pay provincial income tax, even though they were still on the federal income tax rolls. With each budget, that number had grown successively to \$825,000 who would not pay provincial income tax. This government, in this bill, is creating a situation where we’re going to see a significant number of people remain within that personal income surtax category. In fact, we are looking at almost half a million Ontarians.

I think that is again a demonstration of this government’s failure to understand the sequence of jobs, economic activity and the ability, frankly, of a government to provide services. We only get the money for services from one place, and that’s the taxpayer. We are looking, then, at turning the clock back. We’re not only turning the clock back in relation to the taxes at the corporate level and as well at the personal income surtax level, but we’re also doing it in the area of the equity in education tax credit.

I know that the previous speaker made reference to the fact that in the last election the government party was extremely open about its future for the education tax credit, but I think it’s particularly unfortunate that they would see it necessary to make it retroactive. It’s extraordinary, because in most cases, when any government is looking at making a change, they do not do it retroactively.

It’s also a fallacious argument to talk about this money as something that should be used in public education, simply because these people are taxpayers. They pay for public education through their taxes. They have chosen to take their children into independent or private schools. The idea that Ontario would lag behind in providing some kind of recognition of their financial obligation as

regular taxpayers, I think, is most unfortunate and inappropriate for this government to be stepping forward at this point.

We do lag behind. Most of the provinces of this country recognize the importance of allowing parental choice and do see that there is an opportunity—and quite frankly, an obligation—to provide this kind of support.

I think there are two things here that need to be emphasized with regard to this decision: (1) the fact that it demonstrates Ontario is lagging in recognition of this and (2) the fact that, at maximum, this would have provided a recognition of half the cost of providing education through the public system to children of this province. Whether you are arguing on the basis of fairness or whether you are arguing on the basis of actual dollars spent, neither is satisfied by this decision in this act.

The other area that the government decided to repeal was the seniors’ education property tax credit. I know that when I spoke to the voters in my riding, it was very interesting to see the number of younger people—people who certainly would not have benefited from this tax credit personally—who spoke to me about how important it was for them to support this. They saw this as an opportunity for their parents and grandparents to maintain independent living. They saw this as not a huge amount of money but the kind of money that would certainly go a long way for the seniors in the community.

#### 1930

One meeting I attended, which was largely seniors, was quite interesting, because one of the members of this group said to me, “Well, I do think that I want to make a contribution to the welfare of my province in terms of paying taxes.” I was about to respond to that when another lady who was in the group said, “Don’t worry, the government gets your money anyway. When you spend it, it comes back to the government. It provides a job for somebody. It does something good for the economic viability of our community.”

You can imagine that I was rather pleased that she had stepped in ahead of me to respond. I think it demonstrates the fact that people do understand, that it is that economic viability that is at the core of our viability as a province. I think there are a number, not only of my constituents but many people within our community, who understand how important it is.

Again, going to an article that appeared yesterday in the *Globe and Mail*, which refers to the ongoing study looking at how competitive Ontario is, it gives us a demonstration again of the dangerous waters this bill is taking our province into. It says, “Although the statutory corporate tax rate is lower in Ontario than in the United States, the report said, US states allow bigger deductions for depreciation, charge lower capital taxes and provide other tax breaks that reduce the marginal effective rate of taxation, the key measure used by business when making investment or location decisions.”

One of the things that Ontario has often tried to point to is the fact that business would find it advantageous to be in Ontario because of the public service advantages. In

fact, the opposite is true. Businesses would find it disadvantageous for fiscal reasons to operate in Ontario. Even after accounting for health, education, infrastructure and business subsidies, we find that Ontario businesses have a fiscal disadvantage of about 50% compared with their counterparts in the United States.

Many critics tend to look at this and suggest that our only interest is business, but I think more people understand that it is jobs that are the key. It is only when we have a productive, viable and vital community, as my constituents pointed out, that their neighbours are employed. Then we have the money to provide the services of which we are justly proud. I would suggest to you that in looking at the measures that are contained in this bill, we in fact put that vitality in jeopardy.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North):** First of all, I would like to say with respect to the—

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Whoa, whoa, whoa.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is that a point of order?

**Mr Chudleigh:** In the rotation, the NDP should go first.

**Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** Roll the clock back.

**Mr Kormos:** Roll it forward.

**The Acting Speaker:** That wasn't the advice that I had.

The member for Etobicoke North would like to stand down. I recognize the member for Trinity-Spadina. I'll roll back the clock the two minutes.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you, Speaker.

I want to say to the member for York North, you have to help me out. You see, I want to attack the Liberals; that's my job. But when you make that kind of a speech, it makes it complicated for me, you understand, because when you say, for example, that tax cuts were one of the most beautiful things you've ever done, I say that's one of the worst things you've done and the most destructive.

You are defending the most indefensible of economic policies that you have ever done. You have taken anywhere from \$11 billion to \$14 billion out of our economy in a way that has hurt all of our services, including health, education, social services, culture, labour, the Ministry of Natural Resources and anything else you can think of. It's destructive. Please, don't get up and defend something I can't defend. Remember, you and I have to be together to attack them. The government is over there, right? But you've got to make it easier for me. Otherwise it gets very complicated.

You say that wealth comes from tax cuts. Sorry, it doesn't do that. You say as well that your neighbours have created jobs as a result of doing that. I'm sorry, America is not a fine example to choose. We have 43 million Americans who don't have access to health care, and they have the highest level of poverty in the industrialized world. Please. Some 44 states are cutting their services unlike we've ever seen before because of the policies of those income tax and corporate tax cuts.

Bush is going to destroy the world with his \$870-billion tax cuts. He's killing us in the way that you were. So please, I want to attack the Liberals. Let's try to work together on this, OK?

**Mr Qadri:** First of all, to the member from Trinity-Spadina, thank you for the theatrics. I would like to suggest, though, that it is really unbecoming of the NDP as a party, recognized or not, to be lecturing this House about fiscal responsibility.

Second, I'd like to move to my honourable colleague the MPP from York North. It seems, to quote you, as you said, you wish to "turn the clock back." I would suggest to you that the times have changed. Frankly, a number of your remarks suggest to me that you are fighting the previous war and talking about the same tax-cut mantra. I think when the next book by John Ibbitson, a writer for the Globe and Mail, is written, perhaps *Promised Land II*, your government, the Mike Harris-Ernie Eves junta, will actually be credited with being one of the few governments in Ontario to simultaneously create not only a social deficit, which we are having to now extricate ourselves from, but also a financial deficit. That, I think, is a historic first.

The other thing I would like to question very seriously is the level of near-libel that I believe you and some of your colleagues from the Tory party are engaging in—

**The Acting Speaker:** Maybe I can ask the honourable member to withdraw that. That's borderline.

**Mr Qadri:** Sir, I withdraw it.

For them to suggest that Mr Erik Peters, a Provincial Auditor, a respected accountant, had his opinion purchased, which is I think the tenor of what is being said, is really a discredit not only to Erik Peters but also to this Legislative Assembly.

I would submit that there seems to also be a somewhat fuzzy logic coming from the Tories. Half of them talk about the \$5.6-billion deficit as if it doesn't exist; the others seem to think that it does exist and are apologizing for it.

**1940**

**Mr Chudleigh:** The—what was I going to say? I got so caught up on some of the rhetoric there; it was interesting.

My colleague from York North of course talked eloquently about some of the things we had done as a government and some of the things we had accomplished and how they're being undone by the Liberal government.

Some of the comments that were made by the Liberal and NDP members—of course, during the two-minute hits, as they're called, you don't attack the two-minute hits. You support or you attack, whichever your prerogative is, the person who gave the original speech. She talked about the social conscience that created 20,000 long-term-care beds during our eight and a half years in government—20,000 long-term-care beds after a 10-year hiatus. The Peterson government—how many long-term-care beds did they create? Let me think.

**Mr Dunlop:** I think it was zero.

**Mr Chudleigh:** The number was zero. Yes, it was zero. We refurbished a further—

**Hon Mr Bradley:** Twelve hundred.

**Mr Chudleigh:** Twelve hundred beds, did you say? There were 1,200 that were created by the previous provincial government, and they were completed during your term of office. You created zero.

The 16,000 long-term-care beds that were refurbished—oh yes, and then there was the social conscience. There were the 870,000 taxpayers in Ontario who don't pay Ontario taxes any more under our regime. You are bringing back 470,000 taxpayers who previously didn't pay any tax—they will now be paying tax under this Bill 2 that we're debating tonight. That's a sad day for Ontario taxpayers.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** My colleague Mr Marchese said everything that has to be said about tax cuts in his comments, so I'm not going to repeat that.

I'm sure somewhere in her comments Ms Munro talked about the current deficit that the current government's trying to hide behind, as they break one promise after another.

Because it's the first time I'm up tonight, I think that I'm going to just remind people what Mr Kwinter, who's here tonight, had to say, but also Mr Phillips, who was here, and I hope he's coming back.

I have a lot of time for Mr Phillips. He's a long-serving member of this assembly. He was the finance critic for the Liberal Party for many years. I had occasion to serve with him from time to time on the public accounts committee. I had a lot of respect for his insight into budgetary matters.

So when he was down in the estimates committee on June 3 talking about a \$5-billion risk, which was a \$5-billion deficit, I believed him. Those people who were in the room at the estimates committee that day believed him. I fully believed that he was down in that committee as the Liberal finance critic on behalf of his leader, Dalton McGuinty. His leader, Dalton McGuinty, believed him. The members of the Liberal caucus who were here at the time believed him as well. After all, he's been a long-serving member in this House. He was the finance critic for many, many years. He is held in a lot of esteem from the members of the gallery here. Everybody believed him when he said that there was a \$5-billion deficit.

He wasn't the only one who talked about a \$5-billion deficit. Monte Kwinter, who is here tonight, was reported in the Canadian Press on August 13, 2003, saying the following: "Liberal MPP Monte Kwinter (York Centre) accused the government of hiding the fact it has a growing deficit that could reach \$5 billion." I believed Monte Kwinter too, because he's been a long-standing member.

You can't hide behind this deficit. You knew it was coming. You made promises anyway.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response?

**Mrs Munro:** Thank you very much to the members from Trinity-Spadina, Etobicoke North, Halton and Nickel Belt.

Obviously, in a very brief moment to respond to some of the comments that were made—first of all, I would just say that the dramatic nature in which some of the comments are made is, I think, really quite enjoyable. Most of us have come to appreciate the ability of the member.

The comment was made about previous wars—I think that the member missed the fact that the quotes I used are yesterday's. That is the current thinking. That is the opinion, then, of observers outside this chamber who are looking in and seeing some initiatives that they consider to be very troubling.

Someone referred to the previous auditor. I made no reference to him, either by name or to his work, and I would not do so. So I would want to clarify that there was no comment made that in any way would bring the previous auditor into this discussion.

Finally, I think it is important—the member from Nickel Belt raised the issue around which the current government has hung its legislative hat, and I think she brought forward a most important consideration to that issue.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Mississauga West.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

**The Acting Speaker:** Hold on one second.

I understand the NDP skipped the last round. My apologies. I'll acknowledge the member from Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I'm sure that was just an oversight. It's a lot of pressure being in the chair as a newly elected member, because it takes a while to really understand how this place works, and sometimes doesn't work, but that's another debate.

There are a number of things I want to talk about tonight in this particular debate. I'm going to take my time because there are a couple of things that I think need to be said in this debate right up front.

Number one, I support much of what's inside this bill. I've got to tell you up front that I support many of the things contained in this bill when it comes to the rollback of certain tax cuts that were put in place by the former regime. They are things that I campaigned on, and if I had been a member of the New Democratic government elected in the last election, much of this—not exactly, but much of this is pretty well the same.

I just want to echo what my colleague the member from Trinity-Spadina has mentioned, which is this whole concept that we were led to believe by way of the greater public for a number of years that if we go out and cut taxes, we're going to create all kinds of wealth. There will be all kinds of money rolling into the treasury, jobs will be created, there'll be all kinds of spending out there and it will just be grow, grow, grow that economy. Well, we've learned in Ontario that tax cuts are a disastrous approach to economic development. And never mind when it comes to economic development; they are disastrous when it comes to the treasury.

I mentioned this the other night, and I think we need to put this into some sort of context: We have now in North America around 40 state or provincial jurisdictions that have gone down the road of the tax cut as the panacea for all the economic woes of those particular jurisdictions. What's interesting is that virtually all of them are now in a deficit situation. If you look at the states south of the border that have followed the tax-cut agenda, they are in the same situation that we in Ontario now find ourselves in, where they no longer have the revenue to pay for the basic services that those jurisdictions are responsible to maintain: health care, roads, education and others. So we've got in the United States roughly about 41 or 42 jurisdictions where they followed the tax cut agenda as the way to do things and now find themselves in a deficit situation.

My good friend from Trinity-Spadina, the member from the third party, proud New Democrat that he is, as I am, said, "Look at the United States. Look at the federal government. Mr Bush is the author of probably the largest tax cut in the history of the United States." But when you take a look at the numbers south of the border, I think anybody who is a dispassionate observer will note that we have one heck of a deficit being created in the United States.

However, in saying that, I do have some problems with the way this bill has been titled. It seems that the Liberals are doing exactly what the Tories had done in the previous Parliament. They take the title of a bill in order to advance a political agenda. This particular bill is entitled An Act respecting fiscal responsibility. I'm a little disappointed with the Liberals, because I thought they would have been smarter than the Tories and wouldn't have used names of bills as a way of being able to send out yet another political message. I would have thought they would call this An Act to repeal certain tax decreases that were given previously, or something along that line. Instead, they're trying to spin this around.

I think it's important that we reflect on this bill title, so we can have a bit of a discussion about changing the title. I would, for that purpose, move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour? Opposed? In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1950 to 2020.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 6; the nays are 28.

**The Acting Speaker:** The nays have it. The motion does not pass.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm so disappointed. I thought I was going to have some support on this motion. I thought I was pretty clear. I got support from the NDP, the members of

the third party, who said yes. They agreed with me. In fact, I thought the Tories would have been on side. The way this bill is titled, I thought for sure the Conservatives would be on side with me.

There's a sort of Orwellian doublespeak going on. Remember the Conservative government? Every time they used to print those bills, they put those obnoxious titles on them. I really did believe that the Liberal administration, after they won, would stop that practice, that they would actually call a bill what it should be. My God, can you imagine using the title of a bill for political purposes? It's like advertising. Didn't they promise they would stop all political advertising over there?

Well, here they are. They know that everybody in Ontario is going to run out to get a copy of this bill, right? Because they want to look at which tax cuts they're not going to get. You take a look at this and it says "An Act respecting fiscal responsibility." It's not about fiscal responsibility. Come on, guys. You knew what the deficit numbers were last spring, so don't come to me and all of a sudden say, "Oh, I just became fiscally responsible." It doesn't work that way.

We knew last spring; I knew, certainly. I sat on the estimates committee with Mr Phillips, who sits across the way, the member for—I forget his riding.

**Mr Marchese:** The minister of Management Board.

**Mr Bisson:** Yes, the minister of Management Board, a capable member. I have to say that a lot of us who have served here a while—there are a number of members—are all colleagues. We might be sitting on different sides of the House, we might represent different political parties, but I think there's a certain respect in the House when it comes to long-standing members and the ability for those people not only, quite frankly, to get re-elected—getting elected a second time around is pretty difficult to do in this business—but we begin to respect each other. We say that people like the Management Board minister, Mr Phillips—he is an honourable individual. When he talked about financial issues, I agreed with most of what he was putting forward as far as analysis.

**Mr Marchese:** That's why you make reference to him all the time.

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly. That's why I make reference to him, because he's one of the experts on this issue.

So I sat at the estimates committee, and I listened and observed and participated with Mr Phillips at the time, and it was very clear when he was presented with the numbers by the then Minister of Finance, Janet Ecker, that he was in disagreement, as I was. We looked at the budget numbers and we said, "When you look at the numbers you've got in the budget, they add up to about a \$5-billion deficit." Mr Phillips was very direct about that. So we knew back last spring that there was going to be a deficit this fall.

The political parties went out and put together their political platforms based on what they thought the revenue might be. In fact, we factored those numbers into our platform. We always said, way back when, as we were talking to education groups, groups within the

health care field and others, that there was no way in heck the Liberal Party would be able to hold

Are you OK? We had a member almost fall off the aisle there. Those high heels are getting—they're not that high. You're all right? That's the main thing. I wouldn't want to see you get hurt.

I was just saying that, as parties, we costed our platforms. We went out and looked at what is the revenue going to be, what are the assumptions of where the revenue will be come the end of this fiscal year and into the following year and we all put together a campaign platform. We factored in the numbers at \$5 billion. We pretty well knew what the revenue was and that we would end up with a \$5-billion or \$4.5-billion deficit, so we budgeted accordingly.

The Liberal Party, in the last provincial election, said, "Hey, we're the party of everybody. You want less people in the classroom? It's yours. You want more nurses? Yours too. Who's next? Got it for you too." They just ran around the province saying, "Not a problem. Where's the cash register? Ka-ching," and they just kept on adding up the numbers.

We said, "It don't add up. The Liberals are going to make all these promises to you in the coming election, and during the election the same thing, they're going to make all these promises. But at the end of the day, if they get elected, you can't trust them. They're going to try to say they're going to do something for everybody, but once they get elected, the numbers don't add up."

As much as I support much of what's in this bill, I have a real problem with the premise, what this bill is all about, which is saying, "Oops, we're surprised." I don't believe anybody was surprised around this place unless they weren't paying attention to the budget process last year. We knew there was a problem.

Why did the government try to take the budget off-site to the Magna International plant? They didn't want the public scrutiny back in April, so it was a pretty clear alarm bell. If the Conservative government under Ernie Eves was unwilling to bring his budget to the Legislature, there must be a reason. We were speculating back then, because we thought he was going to have a deficit and he was trying to have an off-site budget so he didn't have to have it scrutinized in the Legislature, and then he'd call a spring election. Well, SARS happened, the Magna budget thing backfired on him, and they had to bring the House back last spring. So it's pretty clear. We knew, as most other people knew, that there was going to be a deficit in this particular year, and I think nobody should be surprised at what goes on.

I say again, I support much of the initiative within this bill. I support the reduction—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** Well, I think the corporate tax cuts had to be taken away.

This is what I'm saying. Where I have a problem and why I voted against this at first reading is because the premise of this bill is like, "Oops, I didn't know." I'm saying on the basis of, "Oops, you didn't know," I'm

going to be a party to a Liberal conspiracy or a government conspiracy to try to say they were surprised. I'm not going to support that. I support the concept of what's in the bill, but I have a little bit of a problem trying to buy into the argument that it was a surprise.

One of the things I would ask for is that the government actually change the title of this bill. If the government is prepared to change the title of the bill, I'd be pretty willing—

**Interjection:** To the "Oops, we made a mistake" bill?

**Mr Bisson:** Well, no. If "Oops, we made a mistake" was the title, well, OK, I'd probably support it. That's the test.

**Mr Kormos:** The Fibber McGuinty bill.

**Mr Bisson:** The Fibber McGuinty bill. That has a ring to it. I'll try that.

I just say to my good friends across the way, if there was a change of title of the bill, I'd probably support you, because much of what's in this bill I can support.

I want to come back to one of the points I made earlier, and that is this whole concept that giving corporate tax cuts is going to generate jobs, wealth and revenue because everybody is spending money.

**Mr Kormos:** It will for the Conrad Blacks of this world.

**Mr Bisson:** How did you know I was going to go there?

**Mr Kormos:** To Tubby Black?

**Mr Bisson:** I was going to talk about Mr Conrad Black. Is Mr Tubby his nickname? OK.

I have enormous respect for my friend the member for St Catharines—Niagara Falls, I guess it is—Mr Bradley. He has sat in this Legislature longer than I. He's a very well-spoken member, researches his stuff before he speaks. I've always enjoyed his speeches in the House, and I would say our ideological approach to politics is somewhat similar. I really enjoy having him speak here on this side of the House. I was just noting the other day that the first chance he got to talk about Conrad Black, he was up on his feet. I just thought, "One thing you can always count on about Jim is a bit of consistency when it comes to his main themes." But I agree with Mr Bradley, the member from—Niagara Falls?

**Hon Mr Bradley:** St Catharines.

**Mr Bisson:** The member from St Catharines, thank you.

I agree with the member from St Catharines. What you saw Conrad Black do is almost what this government—the Tories—tried to do when it comes to what they did with revenue. Conrad Black, quite frankly, should be locked up for what he did. The claim to fame of this guy, the way he built his fortune, was—remember the Dominion store? Do you remember the Dominion store situation? He robbed the pension plan—elderly people, who could ill afford to be in retirement as it was because they were measly pensions. This guy went out and took money from the Dominion store employees and the people on retirement, and he got a knighthood for it. Where I

come from, if anybody pilfers a corner store, they throw them in jail.

**Interjection:** Boot camp.

**Mr Bisson:** Never mind boot camp. Well, in Tory Ontario it would be boot camp. It would be a lesser threshold. But where I come from, I've got to tell you, if somebody is out in the corner store trying to steal a nickel candy, they're going to basically throw them in jail. There's no tolerance.

**Mr Kormos:** What about George Radwanski? Does he go to jail too?

**Mr Bisson:** That's another story.

**Mr Kormos:** He should.

**Mr Bisson:** It's my six minutes, all right?

**Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** Don't heckle our own member.

**Mr Bisson:** I'll let you go on that one. I just make the point that there seems to be a—what's the word I'm looking for?

**Ms Martel:** A double standard.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you very much. There seems to be a double standard in how we treat people when it comes to breaking the law. On the one side, you get the working poor, the person who is disadvantaged or even the working class, who, for whatever stupid reason—and I don't condone anybody stealing. They're trying to put food on the table sometimes or they're pathological about it. Whatever it is, whatever the reason, they go out and steal \$1,000 or they steal \$10,000, and they get the full weight of the law put on them. I think we've all seen within our constituencies that when those kinds of things happen, there's no second thought to throwing the book at these people. But you get Conrad Black, who basically pilfered the pensions of the workers at the former Dominion, and the guy got a knighthood. I say to myself, there's something wrong, there's something absolutely wrong in our system when there's that kind of doublespeak, when there's that—

**Mr Chudleigh:** But they're investigating it, right?

**Mr Bisson:** I was just wondering. The point is, why wasn't he investigated? I think it was Tories—were the Tories in government when that happened or was it the Liberals?

**Mr Kormos:** The Dominion store—

**Mr Bisson:** Yes, it was a long time ago. Anyway, that was my point on that.

I say that when it comes to what the previous government did when it comes to tax cuts, it's a little bit like that. The argument they make is that if you do the corporate tax cut, it's going to create confidence in the economy because corporations will do more investment, and then at the end of the day it will create more wealth within the economy. What we've seen is completely the opposite. The books of Ontario are not balanced any more, and one of the reasons for that is the actual tax cut.

I want to put this proposal to my Liberal friends in the government again, and specifically to the Chair of Management Board. I really want you to reconsider the idea of renaming this bill. This bill should not be called An

Act respecting fiscal responsibility; it should be—oops, I can't say “lied.” I take it back.

**Mr Kormos:** “Oops, I stepped in it.”

**Mr Bisson:** “Oops, I just stepped in it” bill or “Oops, I was wrong” bill. You do some kind of change away from that and then I would be prepared to vote for your bill.

To give you an opportunity to reflect on that, I would move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

Opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 2035 to 2105.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Members, please take your seats. Order.

Mr Bisson has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour of the motion?

**Mr Kormos:** No, no, they haven't taken their seats.

**The Acting Speaker:** They're moving quickly, with proper protocol. Members, order.

Mr Bisson has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 6; the nays are 27.

**The Acting Speaker:** The motion is lost.

The member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** I really want to thank my colleagues who voted with me, all six of you. I just think that was fantastic.

I'm really disappointed that the government didn't take me up on my offer. I thought I was making a reasonable request. I was saying to the government, “If you want to have my support, I'm prepared to support this bill, but I want the title of the bill changed.” This has got to be the “Oops” bill or something. If you're going to do the kind of stuff that the Tories used to do—you accused them of partisan political advertising and then campaigned in the last election to say, “That's wrong. We've got to stop partisan political advertising. We're going to be different.” I want to see in your practice that you actually are different. But I look at the title of this bill and I say you guys are doing the same thing that the Tories did when it came to making the changes.

C'est un très bon point, parce que si on regarde, c'est le même titre en anglais qu'en français. On a la situation où le gouvernement dit une affaire durant la campagne électorale et fait l'affaire complètement différente une fois élu ici à l'Assemblée comme gouvernement.

Moi, je me rappelle très bien le gouvernement conservateur qui rentrait ici journée après journée, introduisait un projet de loi et, en donnant le projet de loi, nous disait, « Écoutez, dans le titre de la loi, on va donner une publicité », et quand on regardait la manière dans laquelle les projets de loi étaient intitulés, la manière dans laquelle ils étaient décrits, c'était des publications.

J'ai toujours pensé que ça n'était pas la bonne affaire. On s'est plaint, mais le gouvernement a continué le pratique.

Je m'attendais à ce que le Parti libéral, une fois devenu le gouvernement, soit différent. Puis ils ne sont pas différents. C'est ça vraiment qui m'achale. Franchement, mesdames et messieurs, j'avais pensé que les libéraux auraient été différents. Mais on trouve qu'ils ne sont pas différents. Les libéraux, les conservateurs, c'est la même affaire. Pile ou face, pas de différence. Rien n'a changé.

So I say to the government, you can't go out to tell the people in the election one thing and then come here and do completely the opposite, and that's exactly what they're doing. I'm going to say it again: I voted against first reading of this bill for that reason. I support the intention of the bill, but I have a real problem when the government is trying to use the title of the bill as a way to do partisan political advertising at the cost of the taxpayers, by way of publicizing on the title of the bill a bit of Orwellian doublespeak and partisan political advertising.

The Liberals ran with a platform. I looked at the platform, and the platform said clearly that they were going to abolish all partisan political advertising. Then they got elected. Then they went to one of the first press conferences and said, quite frankly, they were going to stop all partisan political advertising. Well, I don't believe them any more. Liberals say one thing during the campaign, and then they flip-flop and say something completely different.

I've just got to say a Liberal is a Tory as a Tory is a Liberal. No difference. Merci, Monsieur le Président.

2110

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Hon Mr Bradley:** I want all the professors watching tonight who have taken up the cause of the New Democratic Party in this House to see what the New Democratic Party is doing tonight. They have, by some convention, now managed to get 20% of the speaking time. One in every five speakers seems to have been a New Democrat. We have seven people in the House who are independents who call themselves New Democrats, yet, when given the opportunity to speak in the House, decide to adjourn the debate, first of all, for a half-hour, then they decide they're going to adjourn the House for another half-hour. So a member who I like hearing speak from time to time, the member for Timmins-James Bay—I like hearing some of his speeches—instead of delivering a speech, engages in procedural silliness, and I—

**Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** Wasting time.

**Hon Mr Bradley:** Wasting the time of this Parliament. So I'm going to tell Professor MacDermid. Professor MacDermid of York University has done some excellent work, and there's a coalition of professors and others out there who have tried to make a compelling case for our friends, who call themselves New Democrats, participating in the House. If they're watching

tonight, I want them to see what our friends in the New Democratic Party have done. They've wasted their time. They don't want to speak. They want to block the Conservatives from speaking. I want to hear the member from Halton. I'm not likely going to agree, but I want to hear what he has to say. I want to hear the speeches of the independents who are sitting over there. But instead of using their time productively, I say to the professors, these people are simply wasting the time of the House, and it's a ruination of democracy.

**Mr Chudleigh:** It was interesting listening to the member from the third party—can I call you the third party?

**Mr Bisson:** Yes you can.

**Mr Chudleigh:** That's almost like calling you NDPs. It's hard to make comments on a speech when most of the time was taken up with ringing bells. The bells that rang here were seasonal.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Ted, you're not in government any more.

**Mr Chudleigh:** You guys are shooting over here. I'm being heckled by the NDP, for those people at home who are watching, and they think that I should be shooting this way as opposed to that way, which is probably appropriate.

But ringing bells were interesting. The comments the speaker made about political advertising: of course, the Liberals said that was exactly what they were not going to do, and they're doing it in subtle ways with the titles of their bills. As we go through this session of Parliament and this Legislature, as we get into the one-year, the two-year and the three-year, as we get closer and closer to that wonderful date of the next election, when the people of Ontario can once again express their opinion as to what kind of job they think the government is doing, it'll be very interesting to see how that political advertising unfolds into the future. I'm sure that all the Hansard comments made by Liberal members in the last few days will be remembered by those of us who are destined to bring the truth to the people of Ontario, and we look forward to that opportunity.

**Mr Kormos:** I listened carefully to Mr Bisson's speech, to my good friend the New Democratic Party member for Timmins-James Bay, and I listened to the commentary provided from time to time by the NDP leader here at Queen's Park, Howard Hampton from Kenora-Rainy River. Howard was querying as to when the ads by the Liberals will first start appearing on the airwaves. I suspect that in view of the fact that the Liberals weren't here more than 24 hours before they voted themselves a three-month holiday—the months of January, February and March. Catch this, Speaker: These guys are here no more than 24 hours and they vote themselves a three-month vacation. I suspect you might well see some of that advertising during those three months when the Liberals are scurrying off to rich friends' haciendas in countries where passports are required to get to and out. I suspect that the advertising will first start appearing while these people are scurrying

off like pigs at the trough, ear-deep, muzzles in there, oinking and porking away—porcine abuse, exploitation of taxpayers' dollars.

Down where I come from, I've got working women and men who work darn hard. None of them can vote themselves a three-month holiday after only one day on the job. The Liberal porkers vote themselves a three-month holiday after—

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Point of order.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker, but I'm not finished, you understand?

**The Speaker:** You're OK now?

**Mr Kormos:** Oh, yeah.

**The Speaker:** Good. Point of order, the member from York West.

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** Mr Speaker, for a member to rise in the last hour—they've called not to sit in this House and call for a three-month holiday—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I didn't hear the point of order. Could you say it again for me, please?

**Mr Sergio:** I'm glad to repeat it, Mr Speaker. Within the last hour, the members of the third party called to adjourn the House twice, which meant that for one hour we couldn't work. So when they rise in the House and say we're going on a three-month holiday, it's an offence to members of this House.

**The Speaker:** It's not a point of order.

**Mr Kormos:** Hey, I lost 20 seconds. Is that fair? The guy rises on a bogus point of order because he wouldn't know a rule if it bit him on the butt, and he takes away my 20 seconds?

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Hon Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** Comments? Yes.

Do you know what? This is very interesting. It's an interesting discussion. I thought I heard the member for Niagara Centre talk about the fact that we're going to give ourselves a three-month holiday. I don't know about him, but I know that none of the cabinet ministers and none of our members will be on a holiday at all. I know he says that because when he was a minister, he had time to pose in the Sun as a Sunshine Boy. Sure, he had a lot of time to do that. He posed as a Sunshine Boy. When he was a minister, he took the time to do that. None of us will be doing that, I assure you.

**The Speaker:** Would you direct your comments to the Speaker?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I know it's Thursday. I know that everyone would like to leave. Minister, would you direct your comments to the Chair, please?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Could I ask the members of the NDP to just be quiet a bit.

**Hon Mr Cordiano:** I understand the New Democrats—

**Mr Kormos:** Point of order.

**Hon Mr Cordiano:** No point of order. Don't even recognize them, Mr Speaker. They've had more than their fair share of time. It's my two minutes to rebut.

**The Speaker:** Point of order.

**Mr Kormos:** Speaker, could you please remind the television audience that this is live and not a rerun?

**The Speaker:** I can't hear the point of order.

As a matter of fact, it's even better when you stand here and don't hear anything.

You had a point of order, member from Niagara Centre?

**Mr Kormos:** Yes, Speaker, if I may.

**Hon Mr Cordiano:** He never has a point of order; he's always out of order.

2120

**Mr Kormos:** Do I have to listen to that when I'm trying to make my point, Speaker? Very briefly, Speaker: would it not be appropriate for the Speaker to remind the viewing audience that this is live and not the rerun that they often see during the course of the broadcast?

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

Minister?

**Hon Mr Cordiano:** I do believe I had at least a minute left, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Your time is up, Minister. I'm sorry.

Member, you have two minutes for your comments.

**Mr Bisson:** I thank the member for St Catharines, from the Liberal party, who says that this is not partisan political advertising. Quite frankly, that's exactly what it is. I just thank the member for St Catharines for his contribution, although he is a Liberal.

I would also remind him that he professes he's upset that we are working by the rules. I remember Jim Bradley when he was in opposition to the NDP government and to the Conservative government, when he was House leader, before Dalton McGuinty demoted him, and I remember that he was the most obstructionist House leader in opposition that I have seen around here, next to Elie Martel, Dave Cooke and Peter Kormos.

**Mr Kormos:** Everything I know I learned from him. A lot of the things I know I learned from Jim.

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly. We've watched very carefully as Mr Bradley, the member from St Catharines, the now minister—

**Hon Mr Cordiano:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Speaking to the seriousness of the debate, I remember the days in which the NDP was regarded as serious in dealing with the debate of the day and sticking to the point.

**The Speaker:** That's a good point, but it's not a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** To the member from Halton, I also wonder: You talked about fixed election dates. You were saying that in four years we're going to have an election. I wonder when it's going to be. A campaign promise by the Liberal government: "We're going to have fixed election dates." I look forward to asking the question to the government when that fixed election date is going to be set. When are they going to do it?

To the member from Niagara Centre, what can I say? It's always a pleasure.

I say to the rest of the members of this assembly, I support generally what's in this bill, but I really have a problem with your title because it is doublespeak—nothing but partisan political advertising in the title.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member from Timmins-James Bay for his comments and his response.

Further debate?

*Applause.*

**Mr Chudleigh:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that applause. It's certainly the spirit of Christmas brought about by the ringing of the bells by the third party. We look forward to the coming Christmas. It's certainly a wonderful time of year.

I was disappointed that the third party rang the bells for an hour, because that changed the clock, and in the rules of the Legislature, my time in front of you this evening went from 20 minutes to 10 minutes. So they stole that time from me.

In the normal course of rotation, it would normally be the Liberals' turn to speak to this bill, but on a bill like this, a bill that raises the taxes of Ontarians more than any other bill at any other time in the history of Ontario, the government fails to put up a speaker. They don't want it discussed. I can well understand why. The record bill for raising taxes prior to this bill rests with the Liberals. In 1989, their tax bill increased taxes \$2.2 billion. The third-place record belongs to the NDP. They raised taxes \$1.9 billion under Bob Rae in 1993.

This bill, Bill 2, the Fiscal Responsibility Act—that's a bit of a misnomer—raises taxes in excess of \$4 billion. That's a lot of money, whether you put a B or an M in it—\$4 million or \$4 billion. That's a lot of money. I don't know how many piles of \$20 bills that is, but it's a huge amount of money, and that is what this bill is—raising the taxes. They're taking that money out of corporate pockets, individual taxpayers' pockets. They're taking it out of pockets of people who today don't pay taxes in Ontario because their income is so low they fall below the threshold of paying taxes. Yet this bill will put 470,000 Ontarians—

**Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** You don't know what you're talking about.

**Mr Chudleigh:** That's 470,000 Ontarians, Gerry. Check it out, Gerry. It's true. You should check your people. I know you don't want to do that. You're not a mean-spirited person who would raise taxes among Ontario's poorest people just before Christmas. I know you wouldn't want to do that, and yet that is what your government is doing.

**The Speaker:** Will the member from Halton direct his comments through the chair.

**Mr Chudleigh:** Mr Speaker, you should have a chat with Gerry, because I know he doesn't want to do that.

I go back to September 11, 2001. That was a day of infamy. It really changed our world. But on September 11, 2003, there was a quote: "I promise to abide by the

Taxpayer Protection Act." Who said that? None other than the now-Premier of this province, Dalton McGuinty. My goodness. I'm afraid that Bill 2 moves away from that promise. What do you call that? It's hard to express my concerns about that particular comment here in this House.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Chudleigh:** Yes, it's difficult, but it is a promise that is, at the very least, broken.

On November 21, our Premier was quoted in the Ottawa Citizen again. He said, "We're going to have to do something about the balanced budget legislation." The balanced budget legislation means that you can't run a deficit. Like every other person in Ontario, whether it be a family, whether it be a corporation, whether it be a small business, they know they can't run deficits. They know they have to pay their bills. They know they have to be responsible. But on November 21, Dalton said: "We're going to have to do something about the balanced budget legislation. It's having at present, in its existing form, a perverse effect on governments."

"Perverse" means corrupt—a corrupt effect. It's corrupt to balance budgets in Ontario. That's the Liberal way: It's corrupt. Can you imagine that a Premier of this province would say it's corrupt, a perverse effect on the government of Ontario? It's unnatural, it's aborting the normal course of business? It's unbelievable that a Premier of this province could make such a comment.

Of course, the Liberals express a great deal of surprise. "Surprise. We've got a \$4.6-billion deficit. Surprise." My goodness. All they had to do is talk to Gerry Phillips, the member from Scarborough-Agincourt. He knew all about it. He knew.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Chudleigh:** No, he didn't use the word "deficit," in fairness to my good friend Mr Phillips. He commented that we have a—what was the word you used?

**Hon Mr Bradley:** Risk.

**Mr Chudleigh:** Risk. We have a risk of running \$5 billion—there's \$5 billion at risk.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Chudleigh:** Well, if you've got \$5 billion at risk, Gerry, where would it come from? It would come out of a deficit, wouldn't it? Say it quickly and it just about means the same thing.

The guys out there who are listening to this, when they have to reach into their pockets and pay the \$4 billion-plus in increased taxes, when they have to reach into their pockets and take their hard-earned money, when they get up at 5 o'clock in the morning to get on the job site at 6, when they have to do that and reach into their pockets and pay those extra taxes, Gerry, I expected more.

I could go through the bogus deficit. For some time we could go through the bogus deficit.

October 23 is another date—I think that was the date. Yes, that's the date you fellows were sworn in and all the cabinet was sworn in. And boy, there were some glorious things said that day. There were glorious things said that

day. The Premier stood up in this House on that day, and he was talking to the taxpayers. It was a passionate speech. It was a good speech. It was a wonderful speech. He said that his government will work just as hard as the people of Ontario will work. "We will not blame others," he said. He said that. "We will not blame others. We will roll up our sleeves and we will get the job done."

That doesn't seem to be what's happening in the province of Ontario, because since this House has come back, I have heard nothing else from that side of the House and from a few leftovers over here. It's everybody else's fault except the Premier's, and that's exactly what he said he wouldn't do. And every one of the cabinet ministers who has spoken before this House has said the same thing. We're here and we're in this situation because of a bogus deficit that you manufactured, and when you manu-

facture that bogus deficit, you're blaming others. You're taking no responsibility yourselves. It's been a sad day for Ontario.

Mr Speaker, I'm sure you want to bring this to a close. I think I have—

**The Speaker:** Don't tempt me.

**Mr Chudleigh:** Oh, you're going to let me run the clock.

I'm going to make one more point. The other thing the Premier said is, "We will live within our means." What he meant was, he will live beyond his means—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Just remember how generous I was at this time.

It seems to be after 9:30 of the clock. The House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 2132.*

## ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
6A	197	2	34-35	<b>Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):</b> I have a petition with respect to the small business tax relief and I wish to

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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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

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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.

## CONTENTS

**Thursday 27 November 2003**

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003,**

*Bill 2, Mr Sorbara*

Mr Flynn .....	219, 223
Mr Chudleigh .....	221, 225, 230, 232
Mr Marchese .....	222, 225
Mr Delaney .....	222
Mr Dunlop .....	222
Mrs Munro .....	223, 226
Mr Qaadri .....	225
Ms Martel .....	226
Mr Bisson .....	226, 231
Mr Bradley .....	230
Mr Kormos .....	230
Mr Cordiano .....	231
Debate deemed adjourned .....	233

<b>Erratum</b> .....	233
----------------------	-----

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Jeudi 27 novembre 2003**

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

#### **Loi de 2003 sur la gestion responsable des finances, projet de loi 2,**

*M. Sorbara*

M. Bisson .....	229
Débat présumé ajourné .....	233