



No. 19

N° 19

ISSN 1180-2987

**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 22 March 2004

Lundi 22 mars 2004

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 22 March 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 22 mars 2004

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COLLEEN ANDERSON

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I rise today to congratulate Colleen Anderson from Sundridge in my beautiful riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, who was recently honoured as the 2004 Rural Woman of the Year. The annual award is presented by the Women's Own Resource Centre to mark International Women's Day in honour of the outstanding women in the Almaguin community.

Colleen Anderson is unquestionably an outstanding member of her community. For more than 40 years she has put in countless hours of volunteer work with many various organizations. Although best known for her extensive involvement in the Strong Agricultural Society both locally and provincially, her commitment to the community does not end there. She has made enormous contributions to the Canadian Cancer Society, where she exhibited her deep care and compassion for others by providing palliative care for the dying while being a key figure in the Lions Club Christmas cheer program, and to her church community. Beyond all this, she collects clothing for the homeless of Toronto, is a lifetime member of the Women's Institute, and continues to work with the agriculturally based 4-H club of Ontario.

Her commitment to volunteering and the depth of her compassion and care for others serve as a model for all of us, and we are privileged to have such a person in our community. For all she has given to those around her, and on behalf of all those who have been inspired by her tireless efforts, I would like to thank Colleen Anderson and congratulate her on being honoured as the 2004 Rural Woman of the Year.

CARDIAC CARE

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Today I would like to call to our Minister of Health's attention a growing health care need in the communities of Essex-Windsor. In an article published in the Windsor Star last week, one of my constituents told his story of having to travel two hours to a distant city in order to receive angioplasty treatment that he required after waiting in a Windsor hospital for a week recovering from a heart attack.

He is only one of many who have had to wait for this procedure because it's unavailable in the area. He, along with other cardiac patients and families of patients, feels that the Windsor area is in need of its own stand-alone angioplasty program to ensure that patients in our communities do not have to wait or travel long distances to access important procedures such as this. The Windsor-Essex area patient base has grown steadily over the years, and we do have the numbers to warrant such a program.

On Friday, I told my constituents that I would always fulfill my duty to advocate for the health care they deserve and promised them that I would bring the need for a stand-alone program to you. I'm confident that the future of health care in our province is bright under our new government, and confident that the minister will continue to bring many positive changes to our health care. Minister, that's why I'm confident that after hearing my constituent's story you'll consider granting the Essex-Windsor area the stand-alone angioplasty program that it deserves.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): Tomorrow we begin second reading on Bill 8, a poorly drafted and fundamentally flawed piece of legislation. However, the government still refuses to commit to additional committee hearings on the bill, despite the fact that the legislation falls far short of addressing the essential concerns of the health providers, such as hospitals, doctors, unions and others. Furthermore, it does nothing to improve public access to medically necessary services or reduce wait times. This has occurred because the minister failed to consult with stakeholders during the drafting of Bill 8, and he also failed to respond to their concerns during the committee deliberations.

The bill still gives the minister sweeping powers and no accountability. The bill still undermines local voluntary community governance of hospitals and shifts more control over hospitals to the health ministry. The bill shifts power to the government to regulate block fees from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. The bill does not make the Health Quality Council independent, as promised in the Liberal election platform document, yet another broken promise.

If the minister is truly interested in improving accessibility and accountability, he will immediately commit to additional hearings on Bill 8. I urge the minister today to make that commitment.

MARSHALL PARK SCHOOL

Ms Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): In February, the Premier and the Minister of Education requested that all members of this Legislature go back to school for one day to visit our classrooms and see our education system first-hand. As our students returned to school from March break and as we returned to the Legislature today, it seemed an appropriate time to report back to you, Mr Speaker, and to the members of this Legislature, about my experience of going back to school in North Bay.

I was lucky enough to visit Marshall Park school on March 11, 2004. Marshall Park is a primary school in the city of North Bay. While at Marshall Park, I visited the grades 4, 5 and 6 classes of Ms Koski and Mr Dufort. We reviewed how a bill is passed into law and what members of provincial Parliament do, and I answered a myriad of questions. I was given lovely cards of thanks by Amanda, Maureen and Jessica, signed by members of their class.

I was also fortunate enough to visit Mrs Clarke's reading recovery class, where I saw first-hand the power of one-on-one teaching. I then visited the senior kindergarten class, where we attempted to count to 100 million billion, and I was given a tour of their class.

I was happy to join the students in skipping at recess and was delighted to have lunch with the staff, the hard-working teachers at Marshall Park.

Marshall Park school is a prime example of the great work our dedicated primary teachers are doing in North Bay and across the province. I would like to thank Nancy Kilgour, principal Gail Jessup and the students of Marshall Park for welcoming me into their school and for making my visit so informative and fun. I recommend to my colleagues here in the Legislature who have not taken the Premier up on his challenge to get out there and visit their schools. You'll be glad you did.

1340

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Well, Ontario, guess what? We have another broken promise. It is with great sadness that I rise in the House today to highlight yet another broken promise by Dalton McGuinty and the Sorbara government. "We will hold the line on small business taxes," otherwise known as Liberal election promise number 99, was officially broken on March 15, 2004. It was on this day that Finance Minister Greg Sorbara announced that municipalities would be given greater flexibility and autonomy in setting their property tax rates. This is actually a code for giving small businesses in Ontario another kick in the teeth.

In response to a pre-election question from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business about closing the gap between business and residential tax rates, McGuinty responded in writing, "Ontario Liberals will uphold this hard cap and I will work with small business to fix the property tax mess." And how can anyone forget the election ads with the now Premier saying, "I will not raise your taxes"?

Our Bill 40 put in place a hard cap that limited how much of a property tax increase businesses had to bear in one year. The decision by the McGuinty government to suspend this hard cap is not only another broken promise but also an attack against small and medium-sized businesses in Ontario.

This government is beginning to sound like a broken record on broken promises. If they continue along this path, three and a half years from now they will go down in history as the one-term McGuinty government.

HATE CRIMES

Mr David Zimmer (Willowdale): Today is International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

On this day 44 years ago, a horrifying event took place in the town of Sharpeville, South Africa. On March 21, 1960, 69 people were participating in peaceful demonstrations against the laws of apartheid. They were massacred. It went down in history as the Sharpeville massacre. Six years later, in 1966, the United Nations set aside this date, March 21, as a day of remembrance. They called upon all nations and all people to renew their commitment to eradicating racial discrimination.

Ontario has long stood as a model for diversity, openness and tolerance. Toronto's citizens come from 169 countries, making it the most multicultural and multiracial city in the world. Sadly, however, even here, we are not immune from racism and intolerance. This past weekend, my riding, Willowdale, and other ridings saw vicious anti-Semitic attacks. At Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery, 27 headstones were toppled, six benches were knocked over and a menorah was struck down. There was \$20,000 in damage. But the real cost cannot be calculated in dollars. It is counted in tears, in sleepless nights, in locked doors and in anxiety.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you. Your time is up.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent for the member to continue his statement? Agreed.

Mr Zimmer: How angry must a person be to destroy 27 grave markers—not simply one or two grave markers, but to spend the time and energy and anger in knocking over 27? How filled with hate a person must be to cause this pain to others.

I know everyone—everyone—in this Legislature wants to end this intolerance. We look forward to a day when racial and religious intolerance will be stamped out in every community, in every town and city, in every part of the world. But we must also do everything we can to eliminate it from here, from our own communities as well, because it still lurks. It lurks in the dark heart and in the evil mind. Our obligation is to be ever vigilant against it.

Interjection.

The Speaker: I thought you were going to request unanimous consent because you had not gone in the routine. Are you asking for unanimous consent?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Yes. My mike isn't on.

The Speaker: The member is asking for unanimous consent to make his statement. Agreed.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James): Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président et cette Assemblée. Je veux amener à l'attention de l'Assemblée un petit problème qu'on a dans la communauté francophone.

Imaginez-vous la surprise des citoyens et des citoyennes de cette province quand ils faisaient application pour avoir le baptistaire. Vous connaissez ce document, le petit baptistaire qu'on utilise pour être capable de demander un passeport, pour avoir des documents officiels de nos gouvernements fédéral et provincial ? Ils ont appris qu'il est impossible, dans la province de l'Ontario aujourd'hui, à cause des changements qui étaient faits au logiciel du bureau responsable des baptistaires, d'avoir nos baptistaires en français. Par exemple, si ton nom a un accent aigu ou un accent grave ou qu'il y a d'autres changements à faire dans le nom, tu ne peux pas avoir ce document en français.

Au-dessus de ce problème, excusez-moi, le gouvernement, ce n'est pas vous. Imaginez-vous, les Libéraux sont sensibles ces jours-ci. Le problème est que le gouvernement précédent avait fait des changements au système logiciel, et quand le changement était fait, il n'y avait pas la capacité dans le ministère pour s'assurer que la Loi des services en français avait été suivie.

Deuxièmement, on appelle cela de l'ouvrage qui n'a pas été fait à l'intérieur du ministère mais à travers des contractuels qui ont été payés par le ministère pour faire cet ouvrage. On demande au gouvernement de s'assurer une fois pour toutes que tous les services qui sont donnés à travers le gouvernement provincial, une fois sortis du gouvernement provincial comme privatisation—qu'il s'ensuit—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): The previous NDP and Conservative governments have left our energy sector a disaster. So imagine my surprise when I heard a conversation that took place last Friday on Metro Morning. These are the folk, the NDP, who used Hydro to buy a rain forest in Costa Rica and they cut our lifeline by cutting a lucrative contract to Manitoba.

The Tories as well squandered a North-American-wide economic boom and failed at the same time to renew our generating capacity, and yet I wonder why. I wonder if it's because Mr Tom Long received over \$2 million in a contract; Mr Paul Rhodes got more than \$800,000; Michael Gourley received more than \$4 million; Leslie Noble received more than \$300,000; and

Jaime Watt received \$800,000. Maybe they were too busy signing contracts to keep our lights on.

But better still, the member from Rainy River has taken up hydro hypocrisy. Throughout the election, and for years, the NDP has been demanding that coal-fired plants in Ontario be closed or converted. They even put it in the 2007 pledge for their platform. They wrote the Ontario Clean Air Alliance as well to close all the plants. It was their promise. At least it was until Mr Hampton, the member for Rainy River, cried to keep the coal plants open. He even said he ran on keeping the coal plants open—unbelievable.

HATE CRIMES

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): I rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to support the sincere and heartfelt remarks made by the member from Willowdale.

There are some matters that are above politics and partisanship, and I know that all members share our sense of revulsion with the recent anti-Semitic attacks in Toronto and Vaughan. While we may disagree on many things in this House, I know we would agree that all citizens of this province have the right to feel safe, secure and welcome in their communities and neighbourhoods.

The despicable and cowardly actions perpetrated against members of our Jewish community are intolerable. We have a responsibility to do everything in our power as a province to combat this type of heinous behaviour.

Noble sentiments and fine-sounding words will not do the job. We need to take concrete actions. I was proud to be a member of a government that established a specially trained team of crown attorneys to prosecute hate crimes. I know that all members would want to build on that initiative, that all members would want the Attorney General of Ontario to prosecute the perpetrators to the full extent of the law and support police efforts to increase security at places of worship.

These recent events remind us that we must never become complacent in our battle against hate crimes.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that on March 9, 2004, the report of the Integrity Commissioner, the Honourable Coulter A. Osborne, regarding the MPP Compensation Reform Act (Arm's Length Process), 2001, was tabled.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I also beg to inform the House that during adjournment, the Clerk re-

ceived the reports on intended appointments dated March 1 and March 8, 2004, from the standing committee on government agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 106(e)9, the reports are deemed to be adopted by the House.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 31, An Act to enact and amend various Acts with respect to the protection of health information / *Projet de loi 31, Loi édictant et modifiant diverses lois en ce qui a trait à la protection des renseignements sur la santé.*

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Pursuant to standing order 72(b), the bill is therefore ordered for second reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

Mr Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice and social policy and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 8, An Act to establish the Ontario Health Quality Council, to enact new legislation concerning health service accessibility and repeal the Health Care Accessibility Act, to provide for accountability in the health service sector, and to amend the Health Insurance Act / *Projet de loi 8, Loi créant le Conseil ontarien de la qualité des services de santé, édictant une nouvelle loi relative à l'accessibilité aux services de santé et abrogeant la Loi sur l'accessibilité aux services de santé, prévoyant l'imputabilité du secteur des services de santé et modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé.*

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Shall the report be received and adopted?

All in favour, say "aye."

All against?

I think the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1353 to 1358.

The Speaker: Mr Flynn has moved adoption of the committee report.

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

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne
Bartolucci, Rick
Bentley, Christopher
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bountrogianni, Marie
Bradley, James J.

Duguid, Brad
Duncan, Dwight
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fonseca, Peter
Gerretsen, John
Gravelle, Michael

Orazietti, David
Parsons, Ernie
Patten, Richard
Peters, Steve
Phillips, Gerry
Pupatello, Sandra

Brotten, Laurel C.
Brown, Michael A.
Brownell, Jim
Bryant, Michael
Cansfield, Donna H.
Caplan, David
Chambers, Mary Anne V.
Colle, Mike
Cordiano, Joseph
Craitor, Kim
Crozier, Bruce
Delaney, Bob
Di Cocco, Caroline
Dombrowsky, Leona

Jeffrey, Linda
Kennedy, Gerard
Kular, Kuldip
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Leal, Jeff
Marsales, Judy
Mauro, Bill
McGuinty, Dalton
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milloy, John
Mitchell, Carol
Mossop, Jennifer F.

Qaadri, Shafiq
Racco, Mario G.
Ramsay, David
Rinaldi, Lou
Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Smith, Monique
Smitherman, George
Sorbara, Greg
Takhar, Harinder S.
Van Bommel, Maria
Watson, Jim
Wilkinson, John
Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Speaker: All those against, please rise.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Dunlop, Garfield
Eves, Ernie
Flaherty, Jim
Hampton, Howard
Hardeman, Ernie

Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Klees, Frank
Kormos, Peter
Marchese, Rosario
Martel, Shelley
Martiniuk, Gerry
Miller, Norm
O'Toole, John

Ouellette, Jerry J.
Runciman, Robert W.
Scott, Laurie
Tascona, Joseph N.
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Yakubuski, John

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 60; the nays are 25.

The Speaker: The motion has been carried and the report shall be received and adopted.

Pursuant to standing order 72(b), the bill is therefore ordered for second reading.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There's a document on our desks entitled Real, Positive Change Gains Momentum. It's going to be delivered by the Premier. I wonder if he could start by changing the size of his envelopes. Look at that. Do you believe that?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'm sure that members who are here sometimes understand what a point of order is all about.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RECALL ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004

SUR LA RÉVOCATION DES DÉPUTÉS

Mr Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the Election Act respecting the recall of Members of the Assembly / *Projet de loi 39, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale en ce qui concerne la révocation des députés de l'Assemblée.*

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

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): By way of comment, this bill amends the Election Act to establish processes by which members of the assembly may be recalled. In addition to being subject to the usual

recall processes, a member who is the Premier and president of the executive council is subject to a province-wide recall process that is similar to the electoral district recall but in which all the qualified voters in the province may participate.

EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDER'S
INSURANCE PROTECTION ACT
(INSURANCE AMENDMENT), 2004

LOI DE 2004 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES FOURNISSEURS DE SERVICES
D'URGENCE (MODIFICATION DE LA LOI
SUR LES ASSURANCES)

Mr Wilkinson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Insurance Act to protect emergency service providers from rate increases to their personal contracts of automobile insurance / Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances visant à protéger les fournisseurs de services d'urgence contre l'augmentation des taux dans leurs contrats d'assurance-automobile personnels.

Interjections.

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): I want to introduce to the members my niece Sarah. This is her first day as a page. She comes from the great riding of Oak Ridges.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I'm going to caution members not to do that again, please.

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

Mr Wilkinson: Speaker, I'm sure you would agree with me that when you call 911, you want the emergency response to be as quick as possible. It came to my attention recently that if in the performance of his or her public duties the driver of an emergency vehicle is involved in a collision, he or she could face an increase in personal automobile insurance premiums.

I believe and I hope all of the members agree that the number one priority of firefighters, paramedics and police should be responding to an emergency just as quickly and safely as possible. They should not fear that performing their duty could cost them and their families increased automobile insurance premiums.

MALTON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH ACT, 2004

Mr Qaadri moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr2, An Act respecting the Malton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): All those in favour? Did I hear a no? All those in favour? Agreed.

Hon Mr Duncan: I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mr Hardeman and Mr Barrett exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr Hardeman assumes ballot item 51 and Mr Barrett assumes ballot item 10; and that, pursuant to standing order 96(g), notice be waived for ballot items 7, 8, 9 and 10.

The Speaker: The government House leader has moved and seeks unanimous consent to put forward a motion—did I hear “dispense”? Dispense.

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

1410

STEPHEN HARPER

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise to seek unanimous consent on a motion of congratulation congratulating Calgary Southwest MP Stephen Harper on his success on being chosen as federal Conservative leader and leader of the official opposition.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): The member has asked for unanimous consent—and did I hear without debate?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Let me just hear: Do I have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Without debate.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

PLAN D'ACTION DU GOUVERNEMENT

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Welcome back.

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It's good to be back, and it is my distinct pleasure to welcome all the members back to this House.

With each new session, we're given the honour and the distinct privilege of serving the people of Ontario.

Notre gouvernement s'est engagé à faire oeuvre commune pour bâtir une province plus solide qui offre à tous et à toutes une qualité de vie plus élevée.

I was saying, Speaker, that our government is committed to working together to build a stronger province with a higher quality of life for all.

Last fall, we were elected to deliver real, positive change.

Soon after taking office, we took action on our commitment by introducing a progressive legislative agenda in this House. We stopped the previous government's irresponsible tax giveaways to corporations and private schools, and we passed legislation to ensure responsible electricity pricing. The rate freeze—the one that cost taxpayers \$862 million so far—is about to be lifted.

During the last session, we introduced several other pieces of legislation that are still before this House. If passed, they will help to continue our agenda for real, positive change in a number of important areas.

For example, we introduced the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act. This bill will ban pay-your-way-to-the-front-of-the-line health care in Ontario. It will improve accountability. During this session, we'll continue seeking advice on ways to improve this bill as it moves through the House. We've also introduced legislation to ensure that patient privacy is protected.

To help to protect green space and build clean, vibrant communities, we introduced legislation that will discourage urban sprawl. We've also introduced a bill that will give municipalities more control over their own growth, and just last week, as part of our plan to work with our municipal partners as we grow strong communities together, we announced our intention to give municipalities the tools they need to ease the pressure on residential property taxes.

Our government has also acted on its commitment to ensure greater accountability right across the broader public sector. We've introduced legislation that would give the Provincial Auditor sweeping new powers to perform value-for-money audits of hospitals, school boards, universities, colleges and other transfer partners. Our legislation would also open crown-controlled corporations like OPG and Hydro One to review by the Provincial Auditor. We have already taken important action to open OPG, Hydro One and their subsidiaries to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act.

I'm proud to say as well that our government will continue moving forward with the legislation we introduced that would eliminate the waste of taxpayer dollars on partisan, self-promotional government advertising. Since taking office, we have put a complete stop to this practice. This legislation will ensure this waste of taxpayer dollars never happens again.

We've also introduced legislation that would require cabinet ministers to attend two thirds of question periods in this House. I can assure this House, and members opposite of course, that our cabinet is more than ready to meet this commitment.

During this session, our government will work with members to move forward on these and other important initiatives, and we will do so at all times in a manner that respects this institution and the people we have the privilege of serving. We'll continue to consult with people inside and outside this House to improve our legislation.

But our work is just beginning. Notre programme de vrais changements positifs est sur sa lancée. Our agenda for real, positive change is gaining momentum.

Our government is preparing legislation that would, if passed, provide up to eight weeks of job-protected leave for those taking care of seriously ill family members.

We're going to address something that has gone unaddressed for far too long, and that is the issue of school bus safety. We believe that we must do everything possible to ensure that our children arrive at their schools safe and sound. It is a fundamental trust that parents place in our public education system. We will introduce legislation shortly to help meet this commitment.

Our government will also make important announcements designed to keep our economy strong and competitive, because when our businesses grow and prosper, it means jobs and opportunity for families throughout the province.

Speaking of growth, we embrace our responsibility to bring forward a plan that will ensure Ontarians have a lasting, reliable supply of clean and affordable electricity.

We are committed to acting on the priorities that we ran on and that Ontarians voted for. Over the past several months, we have been consulting with Ontarians to hear about the priorities and results that they expect from their government. We were open and honest about the fiscal challenges facing our province: a \$5.6-billion deficit and another \$2.2 billion in risks. They gave their best advice on how we can deliver the change Ontario needs to be strong, healthy and prosperous.

When we asked people about meeting the goal of healthy Ontarians and a healthy Ontario, they shared their experiences and their expectations. When we asked for ideas on better student achievement, we heard from people who care deeply about excellence in their public schools. When we asked about improving the quality of life in Ontario, people spoke passionately about the clean, safe communities they want and deserve. When we asked about how Ontario could have better workers for better jobs in an innovative economy, they talked about making the most of Ontario's single most precious resource, its people. When we asked about more active citizens contributing to a stronger democracy, one thing was clear: People want government to work better for them.

We're listening, and we're going to take still more action. We're going to keep delivering the real, positive change that Ontarians want, need and deserve. We're going to use people's ideas to help guide our budget-making in this year and over the course of the next four years. We're seizing the opportunity to focus government resources on the priorities that matter most to Ontarians.

We're going to work with our partners to achieve real, measurable results.

The people of Ontario will see progress in education when they see higher test scores in literacy and numeracy; smaller classes in the early years; fewer students dropping out of high school; more students going beyond high school to an apprenticeship, university or college; and more qualified new Canadians working in their chosen trades and professions.

In health care, we'll achieve the results that Ontarians want and need. I'm talking about things like shorter waiting times for cardiac care, cancer care and hip replacements; improved access to care in the community, outside of hospitals and other institutional settings; and healthier living for all of us, but especially for our children, with less obesity, less smoking and more physical activity.

I recently attended one of the budget town hall meetings held by our government, and so have many of the members here today. The people of Ontario understand the nature of the challenges facing our province. They know that change is not going to happen on all fronts all at once.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I'm having difficulty hearing the Premier. Premier, you may continue, please.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I was saying that the people of Ontario understand the challenges facing our province. They know that change is not going to happen on all fronts all at once. They are prepared to work with us to make progress on their most important priorities.

1420

Mais elle comptera sur son gouvernement pour manifester du leadership pour ainsi avoir un but commun. But people will look to government, their government, for leadership, for a sense of common purpose. That means that our ideas must be bold, our minds must be open and our resolve to make change happen must be strong. This is the kind of leadership our government intends to provide during this session and over the course of the next four years.

Someone once said that what matters most in each and every age are the ideals that inspire our efforts and the integrity of those efforts. Here are our ideals. We can have an Ontario that knows prosperity and purpose, an Ontario that is both competitive and compassionate, an Ontario that is the envy of the world, with a quality of life that is second to none.

Mr Ernie Eves (Leader of the Opposition): The government has been elected now for almost six months. They have been sworn in for five and a half months, and they have worked all of 32 days in five and a half months. Then the Premier has the unmitigated gall to come into the House today, having actually worked about one month of the five and a half that he has been the Premier of the province, and wring his hands about things that he can't do anything about.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Could you stop the clock, please? The opposition had the courtesy of listening to

the Premier to some extent. Leader of the official opposition.

Mr Eves: Before October 2, the Premier had every answer to every problem in the province. He could eliminate cancer waiting lists just like that. He could balance the books just like that. He could do all kinds of things. Once elected, it appears as if he can't do anything. There's a lot of hand-wringing in this statement. I don't know why you would even bother to read this statement, quite frankly.

Talking about consultation, you have consulted. You had all the answers. Why don't you just implement the plan you gave to the people of the province of Ontario last September? What's wrong with that plan? Or did you never intend to implement it in the first place?

With respect to the future of medicare in the province, he might want to make the commitment today that after second reading, Bill 8 will go out for public hearings yet again. With the 199 amendments that will have to be made to the bill, you won't even be able to recognize it when it is done at the end of the day.

Talking about tax benefits to companies and individuals, our economy has to be competitive on an individual basis, on a corporation basis, and especially on a small business corporation basis. So far, what you have done is raise taxes for the small business community, you're giving municipalities the ability to raise property taxes on their businesses again, you're going to eliminate tax credits for research, innovation and development, and yet you talk about providing leadership and letting the province go ahead.

To date, you have broken at least 19 of your 251 campaign promises. We could go on and on and rhyme them all off, but some of the most important ones, of course, are that we will:

Not add a cent to the debt. I wonder if the Premier can stand in his place today and say that during the four- or five-year term—it's supposed to be four years—he's not going to add a cent to the debt of the province.

Cap hydro rates at 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour until 2006.

Respect MPPs and democracy, with elections every four years. Where is that piece of legislation? That wouldn't take any more than five minutes to draft.

Stop all 6,600 houses on the Oak Ridges moraine. He only broke that promise 5,700 times.

Cancel the P3 hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa. You're going ahead with them.

A public inquiry into meat inspection—not done.

"I won't raise your taxes"—raising everybody's taxes all over the province.

Reduce auto insurance rates by 20%. You've allowed auto insurance companies to raise rates for an additional six months. And that's the basis upon which you're starting. All you had to do was implement the three regulations that were already passed and in place and they would have been zapped as of July 22, but you let them go till January 23.

Provide two cents of provincial gas tax for municipal transit.

Hold an election every four years like clockwork. Again, it's a five-minute bill.

Interjection.

Mr Eves: "It's coming"? You've had five and a half months. It's a five-and-a-half-minute solution.

Make Ontario's chief medical officer of health an independent officer of the Legislature.

Govern with honesty and integrity. We'll feed you a few of your own quotes during question period about honesty and integrity and transparency in government.

Respect the outcome of the Kawartha Lakes referendum on amalgamation. How come we haven't done that?

Provide mental health care. The Liberal government defeated a committee amendment to recognize the promotion of mental health in Bill 8, and the government majority defeated that. So much for mental health.

Provide autism treatment beyond the age of six. You're now going to court to prevent parents of autistic children from getting the relief they deserve.

We could just have rhymed off the 19 promises you've broken so far and the rest of the 251 to come.

The Speaker: Before I ask for the next response, could I get a bit of order in the House and stop this shouting across.

The next response, the member from Kenora-Rainy River.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I remember when the now Premier said, "Choose change." I remember when he said, "A Liberal government would deliver energetic, responsible government," that it would "put the public good and ordinary Ontarians ahead of private interests and political cronies."

I remember when the people of Ontario said they weren't interested in any more toll highways such as the 407; when people voted against P3 private hospitals, private MRIs, private CAT scans; when people said they weren't interested in private hydro; when they weren't interested in privatizing the LCBO, TFO or TVOntario. I remember when people said they wanted to see two cents a litre of the gas tax go to municipalities so they could provide for public transit and highways and 8,000 nurses and implement the Rozanski report—put \$3 billion back into our schools.

Imagine their surprise when they got a consultation piece from the new government that said, "Well, what do you think about privatizing TFO and TVO? What do you think about privatizing the LCBO? What do you think about more private hydro and, oh, more private toll roads?"

Then people got a look at the so-called "save medicare act," and did they find that it was going to do away with the private P3 hospitals? No. Is it going to do away with private CAT scans? No. Is it going to do away with private MRIs? No. Is it going to end the privatization and cutthroat bidding of our home care system? No.

Imagine when they heard the Premier musing about doing away with the universality of the Ontario prescription drug benefit program, something that Ernie Eves and Mike Harris wouldn't even consider.

This hasn't been change; this has been an attempt to take the discredited program of the previous government, repackage it and somehow sell it in another way to the people of Ontario.

Just last week, we heard the Premier's good friend and soulmate, John Manley, come and tell us that the Liberal vision of hydroelectricity for Ontario is "all nuclear all the time," and then he said, you know, many of these should be private, privately run nuke stations. I look over at the Conservatives, and I say to myself, "My God, they're even stealing your hydro policy now." All nuclear, all the time, and make it private. You guys are accomplishing more out of office than you did in office, because Dalton's going to do it for you.

1430

The problem, though, is that the real issues remain. In communities in my riding, municipal daycares are being shut down. Do you know why? They're being shut down because a government that said that they were going to put more money into qualified, quality, regulated child care—it hasn't happened. So municipality after municipality is being forced to shut down child care. The Premier says, oh, you're going to bring in legislation that will allow people to take time off work to deal with situations where someone in the family is grieving. It's more basic than that, Premier. The very daycares that allow parents to go to work are being shut down and you're the government that's allowing it to happen.

Across the province, we see young people who are trained as nurses who are now looking at working—in Ontario? No, they're looking at working in Texas, in California, in Manitoba, in British Columbia, in Alberta. Why? Because the promise to hire 8,000 new nurses doesn't seem to be there. It doesn't seem to be there, and these people can't wait around much longer. They've got to make decisions.

Then there's the case of a city like Toronto, which has had to come forward and say that the public transit system is on the verge of collapse. They're wondering where that two cents a litre is.

So forgive me if I say that the government that promised change seems to be delivering more of the same old, tired program that people voted against. New Democrats, though, are not going to let you get away with it.

HATE CRIMES

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): It's my understanding that there is a request by the Premier.

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I understand that there's unanimous consent for the following motion to be moved and be put to a vote after each of the three parties are given five minutes to speak. The motion reads as follows:

As representatives of the people of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly condemns the recent acts of anti-Semitism and expresses its continuing support for the government of Ontario's long-standing zero tolerance policy toward hate crimes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent that the Premier put forward this motion? Do I have unanimous consent on that? Agreed.

Hon Mr McGuinty: Just before beginning, if I might, I'd like to acknowledge in the gallery the presence of representatives of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Ed Morgan and Bernie Farber; representing B'nai Brith, Mr Frank Diamond and Ms Ruth Klein; and representing the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, Mr Hershell Ezrin.

The Speaker: Move the motion now that you've had unanimous consent to move that motion. Just for the procedural nature of this, move that motion now.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I move the motion as follows:

As representatives of the people of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly condemns the recent acts of anti-Semitism and expresses its continuing support for the government of Ontario's long-standing zero tolerance policy toward hate crimes.

I want to begin by thanking all members for granting unanimous consent to speak on this important matter because, in a very real sense, it would be tempting to say no; tempting to say that if we speak out, we only give these cowardly hatemongers the attention they crave, and that would only encourage them. It can be tempting to remain silent in the hope that that would make the ugliness go away. But to remain silent would be wrong, because while hate may crave attention, the fact is that it feeds off silence, it depends on indifference and it festers in the darkness. That's why hate so often comes in the night, when things are quiet and we're sleeping, when it's dark.

Hatred is the stuff of cowards, and cowards like to work under cover of darkness. It's up to the rest of us to stand up, to speak up here and now, in the light of day. It is up to us to express our outrage at the expressions of hate that have occurred in this, our province.

We know from history that silence would be tragically wrong. This occurred to me this week as I gazed at a photo on the front page of the newspaper, a photo of a door, a woman and a man. What struck me most was not the ugly scrawl written on the door, but the strength written on the face of that woman. The story below identified her as Maria Leib, an 81-year-old Ontarian and Canadian who was forced from her Romanian home during the Holocaust.

I thought to myself that she could have remained silent; she could have remained behind her door. But there she was, on the front page, arms crossed, looking the camera in the eye. There she was, speaking out, standing up to hate. She told a reporter that she wanted her door cleaned up. "I want it erased," she said. "I never want to see it again." We can erase hate if we speak up. We can check its spread by expressing our outrage. We can watch it wither under the light cast by courage.

I've often said that none of us is as strong or as smart as all of us. It is equally true that an attack on any one of us is an attack on all of us, so all of us must stand up and speak out. Let every Ontarian express outrage at the

expressions of hate that have marred this community, let every Ontarian repeat that our land is a place of acceptance, tolerance and love, and let every Ontarian echo Maria Leib's words when speaking of the stain of hatred. She said, "I want it erased. I never want to see it again."

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Ernie Eves (Leader of the Opposition): I am pleased to support the Premier's motion introduced in this Legislature this afternoon. I am saddened like all Ontarians and revolted by the actions that made its introduction necessary.

The anti-Semitic attacks that we have seen in Vaughan and Toronto last week and over the weekend represent an attack on the fundamental rights of all citizens in our society to live in a safe and secure home, community, province and country. They are an attack on the very principles of equality and tolerance that are fundamental to who we are as a Canadian society. They indeed are an attack on freedoms and liberties and on the democratic principles that we all hold so dear.

These actions and attitudes have no place anywhere in the world, especially not in the great province of Ontario and the great country of Canada. They must be condemned in the strongest and most forceful way, and those perpetrators of these hateful crimes must be prosecuted in the strongest, most effective way possible.

Members of this House, of all parties, have always supported efforts by whatever government to eradicate hate crimes in Ontario. The government has established a specially trained group of crown prosecutors to tackle hate crime, to work with other crowns and police officers on hate crime. I think that we must continue to be vigilant, to support prosecutors and law enforcement officers and encourage the strongest sentences for all hate crimes, especially to increase security at places of worship.

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In a letter last week to the Canadian Jewish Congress, we certainly expressed our support for the Jewish community and for law enforcement officers and prosecutors in their efforts to bring these offenders to justice. I wish to recognize the fact that B'nai Brith has been a leader in this as well.

I want all members of the House, and indeed all members of our society, to join with the Jewish community in a solidarity rally this Wednesday. All members, I'm sure, will support all efforts to eliminate this cancer and this activity from our society. By standing up and being counted today, we will ensure a better tomorrow for future generations of Ontarians and Canadians to come.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I'm pleased to add my support to this motion. I'm sure that all members of this House feel, as I do, that it's not enough just to condemn these acts of anti-Semitism, but that it is indeed up to this Legislature to ensure that there are actions taken against those who have perpetrated this horrendous crime to ensure there are consequences to this kind of action.

Our country has always been known as a civil society. What we are seeing today is very uncivil, and it threatens the very fabric of our society. People have come from every corner of the world to this land, because they believe there is freedom here to worship, regardless of culture, regardless of creed, regardless of religion. It is that freedom that has been such an attraction to people from around the world to this country. Let us never lose that, and let us know, as a Legislature, that whatever steps need to be taken, we will take to ensure there are true and known consequences for the kind of actions we've seen.

I want to thank and recognize the response of the Toronto city police and York Regional Police. We want to ensure that they will have our absolute support in whatever steps they feel need to be taken to prosecute.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): On behalf of New Democrats, I want to say a few words about the resolution and a few words about the wider situation.

First of all, to the Jewish community, New Democrats want you to know that we share your vision of a free, open and tolerant Ontario. We will not tolerate anti-Semitism, racism or discrimination of any kind. We condemn the terrible acts of anti-Semitic violence perpetrated against Ontario's Jewish community in the past few days. We hurt for the men and women who survived the Holocaust and sought safe haven in our province, only to be confronted with ugly, cowardly, contemptible anti-Semitism here.

We must speak out. We must confront this, and we must be constant in the confrontation of this. We cannot be silent even for a second. And there are real, practical steps we must take.

Many police services now have hate crime units: police officers who are specifically designated to look into these issues, investigate them and seek prosecution of them. When we see incidents such as we have seen over the past few days, it tells us that we must redouble our efforts on this front, that we need more specially designated hate crime units within our active police services, so that those who perpetrate these acts will know there is a greater likelihood that they will be found out. I would advocate strongly: We must act now to increase the number of officers who are designated specifically to deal with these cowardly issues.

Second, we need in this province, we need within the public service of Ontario, an anti-discrimination secretariat whose job it is to work with school boards, colleges and universities, municipalities and public bodies across the province to ensure that we are providing education, that when children go to school, they understand how ugly, how awful, how terrible any act of racism, any act of discrimination of this type is. This is not a costly issue. This would not cost a great deal of money. It would be a direct way, a direct step in taking this on. I believe that there are school boards, colleges, universities and community organizations across the province who are prepared to enlist in this battle immediately, but leadership must be shown. That leadership must take the form of an

anti-discrimination secretariat that says boldly and bluntly, "We recognize that these cowardly acts exist and, as a province, we're prepared to take it on and to take it on directly. We're prepared to work with all of those organizations across the province who feel the same way."

I suspect the vast majority of Ontarians are prepared to enlist in this struggle today. So I say to the Premier, I say to members of the government, I say to all of the members of the Legislature: These are two steps that would not take a lot of policy debate, they are two steps that would not take a great deal of money, but they are real, practical steps which would send a very clear signal, an unmistakable signal. They are very clear steps which could have broad, positive repercussions across the province almost immediately.

I thank all members for taking part, for participating in this, but the time for action is now. There are real, positive, practical steps that we can take now, and I encourage all of us to do that.

The Speaker: Mr McGuinty has moved that, as representatives of the people of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly condemns the recent acts of anti-Semitism and expresses its continuing support for the government of Ontario's long-standing zero tolerance policy toward hate crimes.

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Just before we get to oral questions, I would first like to draw your attention to the following special guests in the Speaker's gallery: the Honourable Dr Paul Robertson, Minister of Development of Jamaica, and Vivia Betton, Consul General of Jamaica. I would like all members to welcome them here.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Ernie Eves (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier of the province. Premier, I would like to ask you today about the open, honest and transparent higher standard of government that your government referred to in its throne speech. I would like to talk to you in particular about the potential conflict situation with respect to the Minister of Finance. I would like to ask you a very simple and direct question: At any time has the Minister of Finance offered, or have you requested, his resignation?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Let me thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and take this opportunity at the outset to say that I have the greatest confidence in our Minister of Finance and to also state that our Minister of

Finance is not only a man of ability, but also a man of integrity, a man of honesty and a man who has acted appropriately in all circumstances. It is my hope that at some point in time the Leader of the Opposition will come to see this for what it actually is. If the Leader of the Opposition does not have any confidence in my opinion and judgment on this matter, then I would refer him to the Integrity Commissioner and a letter he offered in connection with this matter.

1450

Mr Eves: The mere fact that the Premier won't answer a very simple question with a yes or a no certainly has to tell a lot of people a lot of things; otherwise, he could very simply stand in his place on a supplementary and give us a simple yes or no to that question.

I would like to ask a further question with respect to this matter, Mr Premier. On February 18 this year, cabinet approved an order in council approving a new vice-chair of the Ontario Securities Commission. Did the Minister of Finance declare a potential conflict in this appointment and remove himself from deliberation with respect to this appointment?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition will want to make reference to the Integrity Commissioner's letter of March 8, which, although it was delivered to the Minister of Finance in confidence, was made public. I want to emphasize that the letter was made public notwithstanding the fact that it was delivered to the minister in confidence. His conclusion is as follows: "When your conduct is assessed in its appropriate context, given the narrow range of available alternatives, I do not think that you were in a position of conflict as a result of not taking the remedial action that you took on February 25, 2004, earlier." I believe that ends the matter.

Mr Eves: Two very simple, direct, matter-of-fact questions, and two answers that tend to obfuscate and avoid answering the questions.

Premier, you stated on several occasions that when cabinet ministers find themselves under a cloud, they should relinquish their responsibilities in the interim, pending the outcome of any investigation. You yourself stood in your place in this House last June 17 and said to me, "You cannot fob this matter over to the Integrity Commissioner. It's about you, your judgment and your standards." I couldn't have said it better myself, Mr Premier. That's exactly what this is about. It's not a matter to be fobbed over to the Integrity Commissioner, whether somebody technically breached a section of the Members' Integrity Act.

The issue here is what your standards are with respect to clouds or potential conflicts hanging over, I would suggest to you, the most senior minister in your government. I ask you, very directly, a third question: Is it appropriate—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I say to the Leader of the Opposition that in my judgment this minister does not have a cloud hanging over him. That is merely confirmed

by the Integrity Commissioner. The finance minister is not the subject of an investigation. He is not the subject of a charge. He has acted appropriately, responsibly and reasonably in the circumstances, in my judgment, and as well, coincidentally, in the judgment of the Integrity Commissioner.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): Back to the Premier. Premier, thus far you have refused to stand in your place and answer a very simple question, so I'm going to come back to it. I'm asking you a direct question on behalf of the people of Ontario: Did Greg Sorbara offer his resignation, yes or no? Stand in your place and give us a direct answer.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I say to the members opposite that at the end of the day I can understand why you would like to devote some attention to this particular matter. But the facts are as follows: The minister is not the subject of any investigation, to the best of our knowledge; he is not the subject of any charge, to the best of our knowledge. In my judgment, he has acted responsibly and reasonably, he has acted as a man of integrity, and this happens to have been confirmed by the Integrity Commissioner, and there ends the matter.

Mr Baird: Premier, you know the truth, I know the truth, we all know the truth that he did offer to resign because he did something wrong.

On March 2 you made a commitment and you made a promise to the people of Ontario. You said, and I quote, "Mr Sorbara and I have agreed that should he become the subject of an investigation, not even a charge, that he will step aside." Do you stand by that solemn pledge, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Yes.

Mr Baird: Premier, in light of that answer, I want to ask you, what specific procedures, as Premier, have you put in place with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with the investigations branch of the Ontario Securities Commission or with Revenue Canada, the federal tax authority? What mechanisms have you put in place to be officially informed if the scope of their investigations changes? Or are you simply going to trust the man who kept you in the dark for 66 days to tell you the truth this time? Which is it, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I'm not sure that the member opposite is intimating what he seems to be intimating. Maybe we should give him the benefit of the doubt. But surely he is not asking us on this side of the House to interfere in any kind of an RCMP investigation, in any kind of investigation being conducted by the Ontario Securities Commission. Surely he is not intimating, surely he is not suggesting, that we should somehow pick up the phone and get involved with whatever might be going on here. I will give him the benefit of the doubt and suggest that that is not what he is suggesting.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Your government over the

last six months has treated Ontario citizens to a record number of broken promises. You told people that they should choose change, yet you seem to have recycled most of the program of the former government. We know the former government's idea of a hydroelectricity future for Ontario was more Bruce nuclear plants, private leases, private companies and huge profits. Now, just last week your good friend and, as I refer to him, your soulmate, John Manley, came forward and said that your government should pursue, yes, more nuclear plants, more private leases with nuclear plants, more profits and more exorbitant hydro bills. Premier, is that the kind of change you were promoting for people or have you changed your mind again?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Let me just take this opportunity to thank Mr Manley for the work he has done and to thank him for the advice he has tendered to this government.

I want to assure you that we remain firm in our resolve to put this province on a sustainable footing when it comes to ensuring that Ontarians, both immediately and in the medium and long term, have access to a lasting supply of affordable, reliable and clean electricity. But speaking of change, something that shocked me was to learn that just a few days ago the member opposite, the one directing the question to me, is now no longer committed to getting rid of coal-fired generation in the province of Ontario. I want to say that we remain, with that one, together with our other promise, firmly resolved to move ahead.

Mr Hampton: Premier, if you're firmly resolved to move ahead with the closure of the coal-fired plants, why have we seen nothing other than hiring a consultant in the first six months? And to top it off, whom did you hire as a consultant? Why, the same consultant the Conservatives used to have. That's all you've done in six months of supposedly closing down the coal-fired stations.

But the question, Premier, was this. We know the direction of the former government. It was to see more Bruce Powers, more public investment—public subsidy—but the profits go to a private company. And John Manley, your good friend and soulmate, lo and behold, what is he recommending for you? More of the same: public investment, private company operates, private company leases, private company makes off with the profits, and people's hydro bills go through the roof. Premier, what is your position? Do you endorse the Manley report—more privatization and more nuclear—or do you reject it? What's your government's position? The people of Ontario need to know.

1500

Hon Mr McGuinty: I want to make it clear that Mr Manley has offered this government advice and we look forward to carefully considering that advice. But I'm also on record—and I'm sure the member opposite knows this—that I believe that we simply cannot proceed with any kind of a progressive, responsible plan to meet Ontario's energy needs into the future without nuclear

generation playing some part of that plan. I just believe that to reject that outright would be to act in a very irresponsible way.

We intend to move forward to ensure that we have more renewable energy being supplied in the province of Ontario. We intend to be very aggressive when it comes to exploiting all of the conservation opportunities. We will do what we can when it comes to nurturing hydroelectric and cogeneration possibilities and the like, but at the end of the day, I remain convinced that we're going to have to consider nuclear as part of our energy future.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Before the election, Premier, you promised to make public health priority number one. In your election platform, you pledged that, "Unlike the Harris-Eves government, we will not turn our back on public health." Yet we now have documents before the Ontario Supreme Court in the case involving West Nile virus where your government says that you have "no responsibility to protect public health."

I seem to remember Walkerton and the disaster there. Have you not learned anything from Walkerton? Have you not learned anything from the SARS crisis that we witnessed? Those were all questions of the protection of public health.

Which is the real position, Premier—the position that you announced before the election, or the position you are taking now where you say you have no responsibility to protect public health?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Attorney General will speak to this.

Hon Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): I say to the member that the particular procedure before the House, the motion before the House, is dealing with the question of whether or not governments held accountable by the Legislature, held accountable by the people, ought to be determining our public health policy, or whether or not we ought to have, through the justice system, the courts determining the future of public health policy.

The specifics of what the policy is, I will gladly refer to the Minister of Health on this. But you know, sir, as a lawyer and former Attorney General, that we want to have Legislatures and governments making decisions about public policy and public health, and we don't want to have these matters determined based upon the evidentiary standards and common law tests—far more restrictive—that are before the courts. I know that you know that, and I know you have fought for that as Attorney General.

Mr Hampton: Like many other people in the province, I can read what you're saying in this statement, and you're saying something much broader. Yes, the lawyers may use the words "protecting public health isn't my

job,” but what your government is saying is something much broader. You are essentially saying that you don’t have to fund those public health units for those mandatory public health protection strategies. You don’t have to take on that responsibility. That statement would make even Ernie Eves and Mike Harris blush. They wouldn’t even take that position. Yes, there is the instant court battle, but your government is trying to say something much broader in this court case, much more serious, something that even Mike Harris and Ernie Eves wouldn’t say. Which is it? Are you about protecting public health or are you about now stepping away and saying to municipalities, “It’s all your responsibility. You take the responsibility”? Which is it?

Hon Mr Bryant: I refer this to the Minister of Health.

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The honourable member, my colleague the Attorney General, well answered the first part of your question. With respect to who has responsibility for protecting public health, this government takes responsibility for its actions.

On that point, I’m very happy to point out to the member that we have taken important strides in that regard. The hiring of Dr Sheela Basrur, a woman of extraordinary accomplishment, as the new chief medical officer of health stands out as a signature appointment.

Shortly we’ll have the opportunity to respond to the excellent work of Dr David Walker, the dean of medical sciences at Queen’s University.

I would say, in terms of our relationship with the municipalities, in terms of those important public health programs that they deliver, that we work with them in partnership; I’m working very hard with them right now. I think if you spoke to them, you’d find that the attitude of this government is remarkably improved from attitudes of past governments and that we look forward to building an even stronger partnership with public health delivery across the province of Ontario and the national level as well.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): My question is for the Premier. I heard you say a few minutes ago in this place that in your view the Minister of Finance has acted appropriately—that was the phrase you used. I’m sure that is your view about recent events.

But I say to you and I ask you this: to think about what you’re suggesting now as we go back. You don’t know, I don’t know and, quite frankly, no one in this House knows whether or not the minister acted appropriately during the period from 1994 to 2004 when he served as a director and the chair of the audit committee. Indeed, there is an investigation going on now by the Ontario Securities Commission, by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, by the Canada Revenue Agency.

That’s the problem, and I’m sure you understand that. The problem is that you may have a Minister of Finance presenting a budget in this place and he may later have

been found to be alleged to have breached various rules by the RCMP, the Ontario Securities Commission and the Canada Revenue Agency. Don’t you see the issue there? That’s what ministerial responsibility—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Premier.

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): Well, it’s apparent to me that the member opposite wants to stretch this far beyond the realm of the reasonable.

Minister Sorbara, in his capacity as Minister of Finance, is accountable to myself and ultimately to the people of Ontario for the actions that he has taken in his capacity as minister, not for something—whatever you happen to be intimating—that might have taken place 20 or 30 years before. This is all about what happened during a particular period of time. I believe that he has acted appropriately, that he has acted responsibly. It so happens that the Integrity Commissioner agrees.

Mr Flaherty: Premier, the minister is not responsible to you, he’s responsible to the people of Ontario and to the crown. He’s not responsible to you. The responsibility is to the people of Ontario.

The people of Canada and the people of Ontario have seen nothing but Liberal scandal for the last few weeks: slush funds in Quebec; scandal in Ontario. Don’t you appreciate that when these kinds of allegations are made—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Flaherty: The standard of ministerial responsibility is high, or it has been high, in Ontario. I want to ask you, given what we saw in Ottawa on Thursday and Friday, when in the course of this scandal with the Minister of Finance did you lower your standard from the British parliamentary standard to the Liberal Gagliano standard?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Speaking of a deliberate effort to reduce the standards of this Legislature, all of that was found within the kind of question that was put by the member opposite.

Let me say again to all and sundry, I have every confidence in our Minister of Finance. I believe that he has acted responsibly, that he has acted appropriately and that he has acted with integrity, and it happens that the Integrity Commissioner confirms that.

1510

HATE CRIMES

Mr Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): My question is to the Attorney General. Last week I was in Israel, and I learned that criminals had defaced private property with hateful anti-Semitic vandalism in our predominantly Jewish neighbourhood in Thornhill. When I arrived from Israel, I found my community in shock from terrible anti-Semitic slurs and swastikas spray-painted on homes and cars—13 of them. This weekend in North York, more cowardly, insidious acts of vandalism took place on Jewish targets such as a synagogue, an education centre and a cemetery.

Many of my neighbours came to Canada to be free from hate and fear. Now, sadly, they are again living in fear. They want to hear and know that our government is on their side. Minister, can you assure my neighbours that our Ontario government will protect them?

Hon Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): The people you are speaking to who are in fear should not be in fear. Every part of the federal, provincial and municipal governments and every member of your community and the Ontario community is standing shoulder to shoulder with the Jewish community at this very moment, and with all those who may be targeted and are targeted for racism.

I went up on Sunday as soon as I heard about what happened at the cemetery and saw stained glass windows smashed at schools. At the synagogue I saw swastikas, and unspeakable words on the schools and on signs, posts knocked over and tombstones knocked over. It was one of the most awful things I've ever seen in my life.

I want you to know, and I want everybody to know, that this government is going to do everything it can to address that particular situation, and everything it can so that people are not living in fear, because they should not live in fear. We will do the investigation and the prosecution to the full extent of the law. People must not live in fear, and we must not let this happen again.

Mr Racco: Minister, I was in Thornhill on Sunday morning, where there were other politicians and some members of the community removing the last writing from the house they left swastikas on, and we did participate in the cleaning up. But while the paint can be removed, its damage stays in the community much longer, as you know. The people of my community want the idiots who did this to be brought to justice.

Yesterday, I spoke with Chief La Barge, who had spoken to Chief Fantino earlier. I understand that the two are putting together a team to deal with this matter. My community wants to feel safe in their homes, as everybody expects to. They want to know that the Ontario government will do everything possible to stop those crimes. What are you, as Attorney General, doing to crack down on hate crimes like we have seen in the last eight days?

Hon Mr Bryant: People need to understand that their government is in action; we're not talking about future proposals. They need to know that things are happening right now. There is, as has been said before, a team of specialized prosecutorial units made up of experts in hate crime law. They are there not only to direct others, but also to assist police officers in questions as these investigations move along.

It is the policy of the crown in this province that we will pursue to the full extent of the law any crime that involves hate toward any identifiable group. We will pursue these crimes as vigorously as possible. That's what we must do. We must send out a general message to the streets, to any people who might want to consider engaging in crimes like this, that they will in fact be held

accountable under law, because that is what a civil society does. We will make sure this doesn't happen again.

GAMING CONTROL

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. You will know that Ontario has worked diligently over the years to ensure that its gambling industry is subject to the highest standards. You will probably also know that one way to achieve that is through a system of international agreements that are entered into with various jurisdictions around the world to ensure that gaming operations exchange information.

Minister, I'd like to ask you a question with regard to an offshore gaming operation on the island of St Kitts: I would like to know whether you can confirm for the House if that jurisdiction has ever entered into such an agreement with Ontario, as that would certainly be a reflection of the kind of operation that is going on there. Of course, your Minister of Finance has had some very intimate knowledge of that particular operation over the years. Can you confirm for this House whether such an agreement exists?

Interjection.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Oak Ridges has just asked a very serious question that he obviously thinks is important to his constituents, and the Minister of Finance made an outrageous comment that I know you'll want to ask him to withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I didn't hear it.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I didn't hear it. If the member felt that he had made—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'm dealing with one aspect of things now. If the member felt that he had made some comment and wants to withdraw it, it is up to him.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): Mr Speaker, if I made a comment that offended the member opposite, I certainly withdraw it.

Mr Baird: He used a four-letter word—

The Speaker: Order.

Minister.

Hon Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd be pleased to look into the matter. I'm not aware of any connection between St Kitts and AGCO or any operation in Ontario but I'd be pleased to get back to the member, hopefully tomorrow.

Mr Klees: Thank you very much, Minister. I look forward to your response. I can share with this House that it's my understanding that some 40 agreements like that do exist with other jurisdictions. These are typically jurisdictions that are willing to provide that kind of information for the purpose of ensuring legitimacy within the industry. I'm sure the minister will know that these regulations, these practices, exist for the purpose of ensuring the highest standards in this industry. So I would

ask the minister to comment on whether it would have been appropriate for that facility to have registered such an agreement with the jurisdiction of Ontario.

Hon Mr Watson: As I said, I'd be pleased to get back on the specific case, but I can tell the honourable member that I have great confidence in the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, which is viewed as a world leader in terms of ensuring standards are at the highest for the gaming industry within Ontario. The AGCO and our ministry are often looked at as world leaders in terms of ensuring that the operations that we're responsible for, through the slots operations in casinos and charity casinos, do meet all international standards.

ONTARIO POWER GENERATION

Mr Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): My question is for the Minister of Energy. People in Oakville have been shocked recently by allegations of impropriety at Hydro One. They were troubled to hear that during the term of the previous PC government, people who were well known to be friends of the government were awarded lucrative, untendered contracts. Minister, can you outline to the people and businesses in my riding what process you plan to use to ensure that contracts are awarded in an open and transparent manner, unlike the previous government's method of dealing with contracts?

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I think it's fair to say that many people throughout Ontario have been asking the very same question. We have come to learn since we came to office that the Tory government were anything but good managers. They left us a \$5.6-billion deficit, and at the same time they were letting untendered contracts out to their friends. They didn't subject them to freedom of information, they didn't allow public access. Five point six million dollars at Hydro One alone, and they kept the lights off when it came to that. That was their legacy.

1520

Let me conclude by saying that all the while they were awarding these friendly agreements that weren't subject to public scrutiny, the electricity sector in this province was falling apart. But the McGuinty government's going to fix it with a proper remedy to make sure we have electricity and lights going forward.

Mr Flynn: My constituents are also disturbed by the fact that during the term of the previous PC government, Ontario Power Generation plunged further and further into debt, while the future electricity needs of the province were all but ignored.

Minister, I know you have heard back from the Electricity Conservation and Supply Task Force, the OPG review committee and hundreds of stakeholders from around the province. Can you outline to the people and businesses in my riding what process you plan to use to ensure that the energy supply for Ontarians is reliable, affordable and secure in both the long and short term?

Hon Mr Duncan: The first step we've already taken is to make sure that, unlike the Conservative government—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. Member from Simcoe North, don't let me call you to order again. You're preventing the minister from responding.

Hon Mr Duncan: The first step we took was to make sure that, unlike the Conservative government, we won't treat Hydro One and OPG like our own private country club; that's ended. Their record on hydroelectricity: no new generation in eight years; a price cap that cost the taxpayers of Ontario \$850 million; no renewable electricity in Ontario; no development under your administration. But all the while they had money for their friends and contacts, people who didn't have to go through a tender, people who would work for a year or two and go off and get all kinds of goodies.

Well, those days are over, thank goodness. This government's bringing change to electricity. We're bringing safe, secure, reliable new supply at an affordable, predictable price for the people they ignored for eight long, painful years.

NURSES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): My question is for the Minister of Health. Before the election, your party promised to create a rewarding environment for nurses and to ease the health care deficit in communities in the province.

Kevin Crigger is a student nurse from Dryden who wants to provide nursing care in his community; his community is underserved. He wanted to access the free tuition program for nurses, so that a portion of his tuition costs will be covered in exchange for him working for a set number of years in an underserved community. Imagine his surprise when last week he learned that the Liberals have quietly scrapped this program and, further, that the government does not have any incentives now in place to either recruit or retain nurses in underserved areas.

My question to you, Minister, is, why are you breaking your promise to nurses and to underserved communities?

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'd like to thank the member for the question and the opportunity to highlight the extent to which, in five short months, we've begun to fulfill our commitments to nurses. Nurses are, at the end of the day, the heart and soul of health care. The foundations of nursing in this province are in pretty rough shape, by any analysis of the statistics.

What have we done? We've undertaken to enhance the percentage of nurses working full time, something that that party, while in government, spent \$400 million talking about and achieving very little. Already, through a recent announcement on February 24, we have created 400 or 500 new, full-time spots for nurses in this province. Second, we acknowledge that the foundations of nursing are challenged from a workplace health and safety standpoint. We've begun to work with the nursing

community in Ontario's hospitals and long-term-care facilities to enhance health and safety standards. They're working in concert with my colleague the Minister of Labour.

With respect to providing opportunities for nurses—and for doctors, for that matter—in underserved communities, our ministry is working very hard on plans that we'll roll out through 2004-05 and beyond that will enhance the capacity of the ministry to help to direct resources to those communities across the breadth of our province which are desperately in need of the resources of great health care workers.

Ms Martel: The question was about the free tuition program for nurses. You see, Kevin Crigger wants to practise his nursing skills and expertise in his underserved community of Dryden. There has been in place a program that would allow him to do that, and he would get a portion of his high tuition costs covered in exchange for a work service program in that community. Your government has quietly cancelled that program. Not only that, but Mr Crigger was further told that the government has no incentive program in place now to either recruit or retain nurses. So it's no small wonder that hundreds of graduating nurses will go to the United States, where they can get some of their tuition covered, instead of staying in Ontario.

The question is very simple, Minister. Your government cancelled this program. Why are you breaking your promises, both to nurses and to underserved communities?

Hon Mr Smitherman: I'm happy to repeat to the honourable member, who clearly didn't hear it the first time, that we've already begun to move on the commitments we made to enhance opportunities for nurses who are graduating from our classes this year. And I repeat what I said in my earlier statement: Our government is in the midst of developing our plans to enhance opportunities for nurses, for doctors and for other health care professionals to work in interdisciplinary approaches in those communities across our province that are currently underserved. I'm very pleased to say that great progress will be made on this very soon.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): My question is to the Premier. In 1996, I was the first minister under the Harris government to step aside when there was any question of ministerial impropriety or impropriety of our staff. I did that. The privacy commissioner made a report, and I was exonerated and came back. Bob Runciman, the Solicitor General, was the second minister, and he did the honourable thing and stepped aside. We offered our resignations to Mr Harris, the Premier of the day. We did the honourable thing. We upheld a parliamentary tradition, and we were both exonerated.

We're bewildered over here why you simply won't ask for the resignation of your finance minister, pending the outcome of several investigations that are going on,

including police investigations. Could that be because Mr Sorbara, as president of the Liberal Party of Ontario, arranged for the purchase of the house you live in in Toronto, a three-quarters-of-a-million-dollar house near Rosedale?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. That is completely out of order.

Mr Wilson: What's wrong with that?

The Speaker: You're accusing a member of making some arrangements, for which you have no grounds. Will you withdraw it, please?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Will you withdraw the comment?

Mr Wilson: No, Mr Speaker, because what I've said was—

The Speaker: Order. New question.

Mr Wilson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't understand how you can make that ruling. It's public knowledge. I'm repeating media—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'm sure you're familiar with the standing order that no member may impute "false or unavowed motives to another member."

New question.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Mr Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. My community office in Niagara Falls receives many calls on a daily basis from concerned supporters who are either receiving or paying benefits to the Family Responsibility Office. First, Minister, on behalf of my constituents, I want to thank you for taking the time to come down to Niagara Falls and personally handle one of the Family Responsibility round table sessions. The people who participated were extremely pleased, not only to have the opportunity to express their concerns, but also to share with you their ideas on how to improve the FRO. Can you please tell the people of Ontario what your ministry is doing to improve the service at the Family Responsibility Office?

1530

Hon Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I'm very pleased to answer questions about the Family Responsibility Office. In a very few short months we've made some enormous strides in an office that has a tremendous amount of work to do.

As most members in this House know, we in opposition were one of the heaviest critics of this office, and for good reason. It was virtually ignored for years. We have taken the time from the very outset to make some significant changes in the filing system, changes in the document scanning system, and implementing administrative changes to begin to allow people to even get through on the telephone.

I was very pleased to participate in round tables in Ottawa and in Niagara Falls, as the member has mentioned. It has been very fruitful, especially talking to individuals who use the system and tell us that it's important that government play a role in helping to change attitudes about people who must pay support. So I'm very pleased to have that opportunity to work with the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr Craiton: You talked about the initiatives your ministry is taking to address the problems at the Family Responsibility Office. What specific changes can you share with my constituents in Niagara Falls and the people of Ontario on what you count on seeing in the future?

Hon Ms Pupatello: In about seven days we're going to begin with the launch of a pilot project using 200 individuals who use the system and advancing them PIN numbers, for example, so they can use a telephone-enhanced system 24 hours a day. That same PIN number can be used on the Internet so that they can access our office 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and get very pertinent information to their case.

Probably the most significant part of the announcement that we made at the early part of February involves a pre-release of an RFP for a case management computer system so that we can move the Family Responsibility Office to a case management model. May I tell the House that the Provincial Auditor has called for this since 1994 and it was virtually ignored by both the NDP and the Progressive Conservatives. The Liberals will not ignore these families and we are moving quickly in order to help people get the money they deserve.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): I have a question for the Premier. It's an issue that was raised earlier by my leader related to the appointment of Susan Jenah as the vice-chair of the Ontario Securities Commission. Ms Jenah—I hope I have the pronunciation right—replaced Howard Wetston as vice-chair. During his tenure, Mr Wetston rendered judgment on former Premier Peterson's activities as a member of the board of directors. On February 18 this appointment came before the executive council.

We on this side of the House would like to know how that matter was dealt with at the executive council. We know it is the Premier's appointment. Traditionally, certainly in an appointment of this significance, the involvement of the Minister of Finance would be required and his opinion would be asked for. We would like to know if his opinion was asked for, and if not, why not, and did he declare a conflict of interest?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I know the Chair of Management Board wants to speak to this.

Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): In response to the question, I think the public should be aware that Ms Jenah is an individual

of impeccable credentials. The Ontario Securities commissioners examined a whole series of individuals who might be appropriate for the position of vice-chair and Ms Jenah was selected unanimously by the securities commissioners to be appointed to this role. This is a person of impeccable credentials who was recommended by the Ontario Securities Commission unanimously. It came to the cabinet and the cabinet approved that on the strong recommendation of the Ontario Securities Commission for an individual, as I said, with impeccable credentials.

Mr Runciman: We're not talking about Ms Jenah's standards; we're talking about your standards. It appears that this is a banana-republic approach to appointments, appointing a judge who may sit in judgment. You did not answer the question. I clearly asked you, I asked the Premier: Where was the Minister of Finance? Was he sitting in on this? Did he declare a conflict? He knew at the time that an OSC investigation had been undertaken. He knew the potential for this individual to be sitting in judgment of his activities on the board of Royal. Did he or did he not declare a conflict? Is that not a concern to you as the man responsible for OSC? Is that of concern to the Premier of the province, that this individual could sit there while a person was appointed to sit in judgment of the Minister of Finance's activities?

Hon Mr Phillips: Again, I repeat the process that was followed. The Ontario Securities Commission was asked for their recommendations and they unanimously recommended this individual. It was recommended to the Premier to appoint this individual with impeccable credentials. That individual was appointed. I would add to the public that one of the opportunities is for the opposition to call forward these appointments, to review these appointments. I don't believe that they have yet called forward that individual, so I would just say to the public that what we're talking about here is an individual with 10 years of experience, impeccable credentials recommended unanimously by the securities commission and who was appointed to a position for which I think she is eminently qualified after having been unanimously recommended by the securities commission.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): If it's a question you're asking, it is not your turn.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I'm trying.

The Speaker: That's good. Good effort.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, as you know, I am a practising family doctor. It's a job I view as a welcome break from the daily grind of legislative work. Both as an MPP and a family doctor, I am seriously concerned about the eight years of erosion that befell our province's primary health system under the previous government. During those years I saw a larger number of patients and they

had to wait longer to see me. Minister, my question is, what has your ministry done to ensure that this situation improves in the coming years? Will Ontario families enjoy timely access to the community health care providers?

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'd like to thank the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale for his question. I think everybody agrees that enhanced access to primary care physicians and interdisciplinary teams of practitioners is essential for families all across the province of Ontario.

A few points that we have taken to date in our mandate to make the supply all the more ready to serve the needs of our growing population: I have made it clear in my work with Dr Larry Erlick, the head of the Ontario Medical Association, and to our teams currently negotiating a new agreement, that improving the viability of family practice is the number one goal that we all have. Our party's commitment in the last election was to build 100 family health teams across the province of Ontario. We're building on existing reforms in the area of primary care to be able to deliver on these. I'm very pleased that last week, as a result of resources made available through the primary care fund from the federal government—some \$213 million to Ontario over four years—we've introduced 45 projects that will enhance the viability of family practice all across the province of Ontario.

Mr Kular: Residents of my riding will be glad to know that the government has a plan that will allow them to access primary health care providers at all hours of the day. However, Minister, the front-line situation in our health care system needs improvement. Between 2002 and 2003, Ontario hospitals purchased two million hours of services from nursing agencies, sometimes at more than double the cost of employee nurses. Moreover, only 55% of our nurses are full-time employees, and they worked more than 2.7 million hours of overtime. The nurses I have worked with are wonderful, dedicated people, under a tremendous amount of stress. Minister, what have we done to ease the burden and pressure that is all too often placed on our nurses?

1540

Hon Mr Smitherman: In an earlier answer to the member from Nickel Belt, I had the opportunity to say what I am very pleased to say again, which is that nurses are the heart and soul of health care. The state of nursing when we took responsibility for health care in this province was a sorry state indeed. Instead of hiring full-time nurses and offering those opportunities, Ontario's hospitals were far too reliant on overtime and agency nursing.

We are working aggressively with the Ontario Hospital Association and Ontario's hospitals to enhance the opportunities inside hospital environments for nurses, and I am pleased to say, as a result of our funding announcements on February 24, some 400 to 500 new nurses are beginning full-time opportunities for stable employment in Ontario's hospitals.

We've also targeted resources, some \$14 million already, to improve the health and safety conditions for nurses operating in our hospitals. In order to have a better quality, high-performance, high-performing health care system in the province of Ontario, we need to rebuild the foundations—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you.

SPORT FISHING

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): My question is to the Premier. Premier, before the election, you promised to northerners that you were going to have no-limit fishing in northern Ontario. That irresponsible promise is right here on the cover of your northern platform. If you look at it, there's a guy on a boat and he's got six lines in the water, fishing, at the same time.

The guy is saying, "To heck with the fish stocks." The Liberals said, by way of this picture, "Use as many lines as you want when you go fishing." The cover of your northern platform advocates no rules, no conscience, no limits.

Now, true to form, you've broken that promise, another broken promise, because recently an angler in northern Ontario was charged for fishing with four lines in the water. My question simply is this: Why are you charging people for doing something that you advocated on the cover of your northern electoral platform?

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Premier, before you do that, you know that no props are allowed.

Interjections.

The Speaker: How many Speakers are in the House? I caution you on how much you use those props.

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I know the Minister of Natural Resources would like to speak to this.

Hon David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources): This is amazing, that the member from Timmins-James Bay has his best question of the day in bringing this forward, looking at the picture of our platform document, True North. First of all, I would say that our northern colleagues and all the candidates were very proud to run under that platform, True North. As you know from the ONTC announcement that Minister Bartolucci brought forward last week, and I did in Timmins—you were very supportive of that, and I know we'll look for your continued support.

This picture that you refer to: There's an anchor line out there; they're not all fishing lines. If you look at those—stringer lines to hold the fish. I would just say to the member that if he looks very closely, I'm sure the angler in question was using one of the lines to keep his soda pop cool in the water also, and he should be examining that. But I think seriously—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I wanted to hear more.

The Speaker: Maybe he can follow up in the supplementary.

Mr Bisson: Minister, it wasn't soda pop, I'm sure. Mr Speaker, you asked me not to use this prop. I'm just using an election document that the Liberals put out from the previous election. So not for me to call it a prop, but listen, Minister, you talk about this particular fisherman having his anchor. Did you notice that inside that particular—

Interjections.

The Speaker: New question.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I want to return to the Premier. The St Catharines Standard quoted Jennifer Mossop, the Liberal member for Stoney Creek, on February 28 as follows: "Mossop"—

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member was asking a legitimate question. On what basis is he simply told, "Your question is not in order"?

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Let me remind you that I warned the member twice about props and he continued deliberately to show it. If he decided to continue to do that, I had no alternative but to move on. If he wants to get his question in—you follow the procedures of the House.

Member from Nepean—

Mr Hampton: With respect, Speaker, this is an auditor's report. Is it a prop?

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Baird: Could we get the time restored on the clock? Thank you, Speaker.

The St Catharines Standard quoted Jennifer Mossop, the Liberal member for Stoney Creek, on February 28 as follows: "Mossop said the entire Liberal caucus was put through integrity sessions with the party shortly after being elected and before the cabinet was selected." Premier, there are now three investigations going on, including a criminal probe by the RCMP. I want to ask you specifically, before you offered the Minister of Finance the twin responsibilities as the custodian of investor confidence, protecting seniors' pensions, and chief steward of global confidence in our capital market, did he report to you any problems or irregularities with respect to his nine-year involvement with Royal Group Technologies?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to inform you and the member opposite that we went to extraordinary lengths in meetings with all members, prospective cabinet ministers, to ensure they were people of integrity, and if there were any problems, that we might do what had to be done in order to address those. I can assure you that all those members in my cabinet have been subjected to the most rigorous examination and have met the highest standard, and the rest speaks for itself.

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): The Toronto Star reported on January 31—

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Interjections.

The Speaker: You should withdraw the comment that you made. You said that you refuse to.

Mr Wilson: I tried twice to stand up here after—

The Speaker: Let me hear it now, then.

Mr Wilson: Right. So much for democracy. I withdraw the previous question.

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr Wilson: I would like the opportunity, Mr Speaker, to ask that question.

The Speaker: They can have the supplementary now.

Mr Wilson: Mr Speaker, in the Toronto Star of January 31 this year the headline reads, "Premier Gets a House, Courtesy of Party." My point was that Greg Sorbara was president of the Liberal Party of Ontario, who bought the Premier the house.

Secondly, on March 8 the Toronto Star said, "Absent-minded Premier Forgets to Return the Keys."

"McGuinty, who stayed at Finance Minister Greg Sorbara's Palm Beach, Florida, home in January, forgot to return the keys," blah, blah blah.

My question to the Premier is—because we're wondering why he won't ask his minister to resign and do the honourable and parliamentary thing—Mr Premier, are you sure you're not in the pockets, so deep, of Mr Sorbara that you're unable to have clear judgment with respect to the—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: That clearly violates—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Duncan: Standing orders are not—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Duncan: All right. Standing order 23(i) very clearly prohibits imputing motive by one member to the other. If he doesn't withdraw it, he should be removed from the House. You've cut him too much slack.

1550

The Speaker: Are you going to put a question?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I presume you don't want to hear the answer, then. Premier.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I will do my utmost in the most trying circumstances to answer each and every question put to me by the members opposite, but I choose very deliberately not to dignify this question by answering it.

Mr Baird: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to give notice of my dissatisfaction with all of the Premier's answers, and we will be filing the necessary paperwork.

The Speaker: Do the necessary paperwork and let me have it.

PETITIONS

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas smart meter technology, which allows electricity users to read the exact amount of electricity they save by turning off air conditioners, individual lights etc, has been found to reduce users’ hydro bills by 15% to 20%;

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

“That all hydro consumers in Oxford county have the option of using smart meter technology.”

I present this on behalf of a lot of signatories from Oxford county, one of best counties in Ontario.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I received this petition by registered mail. It is addressed to the government of Ontario and it reads as follows:

“We, the undersigned property owners and tenants, strongly oppose the current value assessment system in Ontario. The 2003 current value assessment system is too high and we will show strong resistance. There may be a tax revolt.

“We believe the municipal tax system should reflect the following principles: (1) ability to pay should be a consideration; (2) property taxes should be related to services 100%; (3) homeowners should not be penalized for improving their properties; (4) dependence on the residential property tax to raise provincial and municipal revenues should be reduced; (5) the assessment system should be stable over a long period of time—10 years; (6) assessments should be objective, accurate, consistent, correct, equitable and easily understood—house sf class price; lot sf class price, garage sf class price; and (7) the owner should be authorized to approve the assessment.”

Since I agree with this petition, I am delighted to sign it.

CHILDREN’S NUTRITION

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas recent scientific research has proven there is a link between children’s nutrition and academic performance; and

“Whereas less than 25% of Canadian children eat in accordance with Canada’s food guidelines; and

“Whereas Breakfast for Learning, the Canadian Living Foundation, is the only national non-profit organization solely dedicated to supporting child nutrition programs in Canada; and

“Whereas the need for nutrition programs in schools has more than doubled, resulting in grant requests that far exceed the level of funding received from the Ontario provincial government;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit government support to child nutrition programs by increasing funding to Breakfast for Learning, the Canadian Living Foundation, from \$4.5 million to \$9 million, as requested in their submitted proposal.”

I support the petition.

SUDBURY REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): It is my great pleasure to introduce this petition in the Legislature. It says:

“I agree it’s time. Our community can’t afford to pay more for the construction at the Sudbury Regional Hospital. We have already done more than our fair share. The Liberal government should immediately pay 85% of the cost of construction at the Sudbury Regional Hospital. The time for action is now.”

It’s my pleasure to introduce this petition on behalf of my constituents, and of course I agree with them entirely.

CHILD CARE

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition from hundreds of concerned parents à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario.

“Whereas the caregivers of private day nurseries are limited to a maximum of five children at the same time based on the day nursery act;

“Whereas the schoolchildren need a place before and after school for 90 minutes at a time;

“Whereas the youngest children learn from the older children...;

“Whereas the before- and after-school programs are full and the children are on the waiting list, and do not have anywhere to go because of the limit of five children;

“Whereas the parents will be relieved to have a place for the schoolchildren who have been with the same caregivers for a long time;

“Whereas the caregivers are not part of a union, they also need to work the same as the union public daycare;

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

“That the government of Ontario amend the day nursery act to authorize the caregivers to have a higher number than five children of less than 10 years old.”

I gladly sign this petition.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): I have a petition that’s signed by several hundred people in my riding of Simcoe-Grey. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals by no means campaigned on raising the rates associated with the Ontario drug benefit program; and

“Whereas the majority of seniors, many of which live on a fixed income, cannot meet the expense of higher costs for essential medication; and

“Whereas seniors in Simcoe-Grey and across Ontario should never have to make the choice between eating and filling a prescription;

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

“To cancel any plans to raise costs for prescription drugs for our seniors and to embark on making vital medication more affordable for Ontarians.”

I agree with the several hundred signatures already on this petition and I affix my name to it.

OAK RIDGES MORaine

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

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is an ecological treasure that warrants protection and careful stewardship now and in future generations;

“Whereas the province of Ontario has recognized the importance of the moraine with the passage of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001, to protect natural and water resources, preserve agricultural lands and provide clarity on where development can and cannot occur;

“Whereas the act has resulted in certain limitations on citizens’ use of their property within the moraine;

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

“That the Parliament of Ontario take action to ensure there are no undue restrictions on Oak Ridges moraine residents making minor improvements to their homes and property; and

“That the province of Ontario work together with municipalities and land owners to ensure the interpretation and enforcement of the act continues to fully protect the moraine while also giving residents the right to fair and reasonable enjoyment of their property.”

I’m pleased to support and sign this on behalf of my constituents.

TUITION

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition here that was sent to me by the Canadian Federation of Students, and it’s signed by students from George Brown College. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas average undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario are the second highest in Canada; and

“Whereas average undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario have more than doubled in the past 10 years; and

“Whereas tuition fees for deregulated programs have, in certain cases, doubled and” even “tripled; and

“Whereas Statistics Canada has documented a link between increasing tuition fees and diminishing access to post-secondary education; and

“Whereas four other provincial governments have taken the leadership role by freezing and reducing tuition fees;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Assembly of Ontario to:

“Freeze tuition fees for all programs at their current levels; and

“Take steps to reduce the tuition fees of all graduate programs, post-diploma programs, and professional programs for which tuition fees have been deregulated since 1998.”

I present this to you, Mr Speaker. Thank you very much.

1600

ABORTION

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have a petition signed by good citizens of Cambridge, addressed:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in Parliament assembled:

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, draw the attention of the House to the following:

“That Ontarians are being asked to consider alternate forms of health care delivery due to escalating costs; and

“That 65% of Ontarians surveyed in October 2002 objected to the public funding of abortion on demand; and

“That almost all abortions are done for ‘socio-economic’ reasons in Canada; and

“That the Canada Health Act imposes no duty on provinces to fund any services other than those that are medically necessary; and

“That there are no legal impediments preventing provinces from de-insuring abortion.

“Therefore, your petitioners call on the province of Ontario to enact legislation which will de-insure induced abortion.”

I attach my name thereto.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): It being 4 of the clock, and according to standing order 30(b), I am now required to call for orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 16, 2003, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I am very pleased to join in the debate with respect to the

speech from the throne. I am here today with the member from Durham. I hope he remains here with me to listen to this debate. I know he always does.

I'd just like to say that we're entering the spring session. I can tell you that it's going to be a very interesting session, in terms of the agenda. I'm looking forward to a number of government initiatives. Hopefully, they're going to keep their promises on some of these initiatives. I don't know which ones, but I know that during the break there were a lot of issues that came about with respect to the nuances, I would say, of the Premier in terms of what he was going to do one day versus another day. He was talking about now putting tolls on all the 400 series of highways. He was talking about selling off the LCBO. He was talking about bringing back photo radar, all different measures that I think will probably irritate the voter as opposed to building a consensus in terms of living up to your promises.

But I think the one that really struck the nerve of my constituents in terms of all these musings by the Premier during the break before the spring session began was the Ontario drug benefit program for seniors with respect to the comments that were made about delisting drugs and imposing user fees on seniors and talking about a means test for seniors with respect to drugs. I've got a petition here of close to 500 names that has been building steadily with respect to this particular issue. It's a very serious issue for seniors. And seniors don't like it. They don't think it's fair. I don't think it's fair with respect to having seniors who have paid their taxes, who have an expectation that they're going to be supported by the government with respect to their health care, suddenly read in the paper comments by the government—that never ran on this—that they were going to start to means-test seniors, delist drugs and impose user fees on seniors. I can tell you that the message they're conveying to me is that it just won't wash. Seniors do not want that. We're going to continue to push on this issue in terms of making sure that the government backs down from means-testing seniors with respect to their drugs.

I guess we're going to have to wait until the budget comes out, depending on who's going to deliver the budget, whether it's the current Minister of Finance or some other individual, depending on what happens with respect to the issues of the day. But that is a serious issue, and it's not one that this government should take lightly. They never ran on imposing a means test on seniors. They didn't run on any issue that was going to detrimentally and negatively impact on the quality of life or the quality of health care provided to seniors. It's an important issue.

I have elderly parents, and I can tell you that they rely on health care. The older they get, obviously they rely on the community care access centres, they rely on the fundamental system of making their health what it should be. To now talk about cutting back on drugs and means testing of drugs for seniors, I can tell you, I didn't see any of that in the speech from the throne. I didn't see it in the Liberal agenda, in terms of when they were running, that they were going to go after seniors.

But it seems that they're going after a lot of things, let alone breaking their promises in terms of what they've done with hydro. When people get their hydro bills this month from their local utilities or Hydro One, they're going to have what we call shock from their bill. There's going to be sticker shock, I can tell you, from what's going to happen with respect to that hydro—the 9% that the government has allowed the hydro utilities to put on their bill. Then we know, come April 1, we're going to move into the Liberal agenda or formula for hydro prices, which is going to be another impact on consumers with respect to what they're going to pay.

The Liberals can talk about what was going on with how hydro was handled and whatever; the bottom line is, if this government had run on the platform that they were going to do what they did to hydro on the second day after they were elected, they wouldn't have been elected; not a chance. If they'd come out with a program saying that, "We're going to make sure that you pay for hydro based on this particular formula" that they have come up with that they think is fair—and they're going to put all that on their books too, in terms of trying to achieve a balanced budget on the backs of all the consumers here. They basically broke their word with respect to hydro. That's what we're going to find happens in this particular budget.

They've also broken their word with respect to a lot of other issues, in particular IBI funding. The Premier made a commitment. This is another petition I have that I've been collecting in my riding. We're close to 1,000 names with respect to this particular issue. I want to read it. It says:

"Whereas our new Premier, Dalton McGuinty, and his Liberal government made a campaign commitment to expand funding for valued therapy for autistic children; and

"Whereas the families of autistic children continue to call upon the province to extend funding to children six years and older, who will benefit from intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) treatment; and

"Whereas the new Premier has admitted, 'We simply don't have enough people right now with the skills to help those children under six, let alone those over the age of six'; and

"Whereas the Liberal Premier, Dalton McGuinty, described the current cut-off age as unfair and discriminatory;

"We, the undersigned, petition the" Legislative Assembly "of Ontario to force the government to live up to its promise and extend funding to children six and older who will benefit from intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) treatment."

What has happened with this is, the Premier made a promise during the election that he was going to address this issue. What he has done is nothing. What he has done is made sure that the court action that is denying the benefits to these parents—and there are a number of autistic children in my riding where the parents have taken the government to court, and the government

continues to resist, the government continues to fight the parents of these autistic children with respect to IBI funding, whereas the Premier made a written commitment to these parents during the election that he was going to do something about it. Well, I didn't see anything about it in the speech from the throne. I guess we're going to have to wait to see if anything is going to happen in the budget with respect to helping children who require IBI treatment and to help their parents with respect to this disability.

So there's another campaign promise on the backs of the citizens of this province, of children who need the assistance. They need to know that the government actually cares about them. It's all right to care for people and say you're going to do things during the election, like hydro. "We're going to freeze hydro prices. We're not going to do anything to hydro. We're not going to do anything to seniors. We're going to make their lives better." Then you come out and say, "We're going to put a means test on seniors and also autistic children." You don't take advantage of people who are in need and then don't live up to your commitment. It's not right.

1610

Another area that was initiated by our government with respect to the nutrition program in schools is another one where I have a petition going, because we need more money from the education ministry. I know the Minister of Education has made a lot of talk about how he is going to improve the education system and how he is going to look after education. Well, here's a good example of doing nothing.

I presented this petition in the House today with respect to the importance of Breakfast for Learning, run by the Canadian Living Foundation. The need for nutrition programs has more than doubled in this province, resulting in grant requests that far exceed the level of funding from this government. What they're looking for is an increase in the funding from \$4.5 million to \$9 million. I think it's important because what we're looking at is a very fundamental issue here in terms of making sure there's a link between nutrition and academic performance. Recent scientific research has shown that there is a link. We're looking for this government to look after children and the education system, as they promised during the campaign, and make sure that what we have here is a government that will look into the nutritional needs of our students.

The Minister of Education is really a peculiar cat. He came into my riding during the election and met with a number of constituents in the kitchen of one individual, dealing with the issue of getting a new school in Georgian Glen. In his comments in the paper—I've sent it over to the minister; he's got a copy of his comments in the paper—he is basically saying, "You want a new school at Georgian Glen? As soon as we get elected, you're going to get one. No problem." Everybody who knows how schools are built knows that that is an unfabricated basis for a statement. The fact of the matter is, he has done nothing. I've been after his office to ask,

"What are you going to do about this?" I've gone to the Simcoe county public board to ask them what they're going to do about this school. They say it's in the planning stage.

This minister, when he came into the riding during the campaign to help his little compatriot get elected against me, said, "We're going to get you a school right away." Well, we haven't seen that school. That's the integrity of this Minister of Education, coming in and basically making a comment that he had no intention, up to this point, of even committing to or fulfilling.

The most recent issue I'm dealing with him on is his comment saying, "We're going to stop school closures," which he made last year. There's another one that, when you read between the lines, he's saying one thing, and then what is he doing? He basically has come out and said, "That doesn't apply to schools that are currently under the process." Well, what is he talking about when he says there are no more school closings? I'm dealing with one in my riding right now—Prince of Wales school. We've been trying to get a meeting with him for weeks and weeks. People from the school are saying, "What is your intention with respect to this school? Can we have a meeting?" We deal with the scheduler, and the scheduler says, "We'll get back to you." We haven't been able to get a meeting with the Minister of Education at all, let alone the consideration of trying to at least listen to the concerns of the parents and students from Prince of Wales school.

This Minister of Education is a peculiar cat. He really likes to talk it up but he doesn't do anything about it. I'm calling him out today, saying, where's the school in Georgian Glen? Where is our meeting with Prince of Wales, the school you said wouldn't be closed, which is in fact being reviewed by the Simcoe board for closure? Obviously he doesn't follow up on what he says in the press in terms of what commitments he makes.

We're dealing with a Minister of Education who obviously doesn't know what he's talking about, because he doesn't fulfill what he says he's going to do. I've got a real problem with what he promised during the election with respect to a new school in Georgian Glen—we need that school—and also Prince of Wales school, which we don't need closed either, even though he says no schools will be closed.

There are some major issues here. The government said during the campaign, "We're going to improve health care." They made the same nonsense comment in the throne speech about how they're going to strengthen "the foundation for change." I don't know what change they're talking about.

In my riding, we have a need for a regional cancer care centre, which was committed to by the government I belonged to. At this point, I'd like to know where it is in the planning stage. We had basically been approved for it. Where is it going? We can't get a response to my satisfaction from the Minister of Health with respect to what they are doing about cancer care. We need that treatment. We can't have everybody coming down to

Princess Margaret or Sunnybrook in Toronto. We need to have access closer to home.

I know the member from Simcoe North and the member from Simcoe West would share that. It's important that we get radiation treatment in our ridings and in Simcoe county. Where is that in this "foundation for change"? We're not seeing that. Is it because we are in a rural area that all of a sudden you forget about what's going on north of Highway 7, or you forget what's happening if it's not in the southwest of this province?

We have needs, and we need to get this government to commit to the health care changes we have in Simcoe county, one of fastest-growing areas of this province. Also, there's a need for expansion of the Royal Victoria Hospital. Without question there is a need for that because of growth. It should be on the agenda of this government to make sure they're going to make health care even better.

They talk about reducing waiting lines and making health care more accessible. Yet when they get in, they bring in Bill 8, which essentially is going to make sure they get rid of the boards of directors of hospitals. What they're also talking about is that they don't want to have a hospital-based system. They want to move away from the hospital-based system and into community care. If that's going to happen, they have to make some fundamental changes with respect to the supply-and-demand side of our health care system. It's not going to work, because people go to the hospital for their needs, and that's not going to change.

There are some major things that need to be done by this government that they have backed away from since the campaign.

In my own riding, we're still waiting for GO Transit. I understand that the talks between GO Transit, the city of Barrie and the Ministry of Transportation are ongoing. We want to make sure that happens. We need GO Transit up in my area. It was committed to and promised by our government—the Conservative government—when we were elected, and a change in government should not change the fundamental plans, which were sound business plans, to bring GO Transit to Barrie.

I hope the minister is aware of that, along with the other issues of expanding Highway 400 and providing other routes to make sure the pressure on Highway 400, and also up to Highway 11, is alleviated, because growth is not going to stop. Simcoe county is an attractive area, in terms of the growth we need up there, and the commuters who are going up there, plus vacationers, put pressure on Highway 400.

There are a lot of issues within my riding. They're talking about "strengthening the foundation for change." That's fine and dandy. The bottom line is, when you make a promise during an election, you should keep that promise. You shouldn't be breaking promises, and you should not be gerrymandering through your own elected members to the detriment of other members who are not of the same party stripe.

I can tell you that where there are needs in this province with respect to dealing with health care, education

and social services, along with transportation, this government has to get serious that they're a government for all the people all the time. They can't just pick and choose. They've got a lot of elected members from the city of Toronto and surrounding GTA areas. They've got to get serious about representing everybody, and they have to look at the business case scenario to make sure that happens.

I have to say, on this spring agenda, that we're looking at initiatives from this government that are obviously going to impact a lot of different areas. All I can say is that the promises they've made and didn't commit to have detrimentally impacted the quality of life of a lot of citizens in this province, be it autistic children and their parents, be it seniors who are going to have their drugs taken away from them, be it education programs or not providing sufficient money for the nutrition program, and now the public is going to find out the hydro prices. They're going to have bill shock when they see the prices come out, because the Liberal government, in their own will, decided, "We can get elected by conning the people that we're not going to do anything to hydro," and then they got in and within two days they changed the whole hydroelectric system.

It's going to be a detriment on the backs of consumers. They're going to see it, and see a slowdown in the economy and a loss of jobs because of that knee-jerk reaction with respect to hydro. You're going to see a slowdown in the economy from this budget, in terms of the number of issues they're going to take. There are going to be all kinds of sin taxes and measures to put blocks in front of the construction industry. I fully expect them to make sure that home building in this province grinds to a halt. Even though we have low interest rates and peak demand, I think this government is going to make sure they find an urban sprawl agenda that will kill the housing construction industry and make sure we move into a recession. That's where we're headed with the policies of this government.

1620

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Speaker, I was in the last election like you. I was out there pounding on doors, walking up and down streets and going to Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire and the post office engaging in dialogue with the citizens of this province. The member makes a good point in his speech: I specifically remember a number of campaign commitments being given in the last provincial election. For example, I remember knocking on doors and people saying, "We need to rehire those 8,000 nurses that the Conservatives fired in previous terms." I remember saying, "Hey, we're promising that," and they said, "The Liberals are going to do it." I remember knocking on doors in the education community, and people said, "The Rozanski report now. We need money invested back in the classrooms so our kids are able to get the very best education." I said, "It's in our platform."

Excuse me. Can I use my election platform in the Legislature? I'm going to have to get a ruling on that, but that's for another debate.

I said, "Here it is. It's in our platform." They said, "It's in the Liberal platform too. We're going to vote for them." Fortunately in my riding—and I want to thank all the voters in Timmins-James Bay—they didn't buy it. The majority of voters said: "We know what Liberals are like. Liberals go out and campaign, and they sound like New Democrats." They say "Rozanski now!" They say, "Hire the nurses back." They say, "Do what has to be done in the Oak Ridges moraine; yes to public power; no to nuclear power." That's what the Liberals said in the election. They sounded just like New Democrats.

But a funny thing happens when Liberals get elected to government. You saw it with Jean Chrétien and you're seeing it with Dalton McGuinty, and God forbid that we see it with Paul Martin: Liberals campaign like New Democrats, but they act like Conservatives once they get elected, and they pale. I tell you, Ernie Eves and Mike Harris are frustrated now because they wouldn't have been able to do half of what these Tories are now doing in the Liberal caucus.

Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): In the speech from the throne, Lieutenant Governor Bartleman spoke of Ontario's parliamentary tradition that allows for a peaceful and orderly transition from an old government to a new government. We were reminded of the words that are carved in this chamber: integrity, industry and intelligence. I believe it's an extraordinary privilege that each of us has been given by our constituents. Ontarians can do anything they choose when they work hard, dream hard and build together.

The suggestion has been made that we backed away. Yet here we are, the speech from the throne read not once but twice—I think one member actually referred to this as an abuse of the parliamentary system and another considered it silly. We also debated whether to debate the throne speech. The most remarkable event in all this is that no one can remember this having taken place previously.

We haven't backed away from anything. We still dealt with the \$850-billion problem that was borne by the taxpayers of this province, and that's not going to continue to happen. Ontarians chose change to do our business better, wiser, more openly and more transparently. They chose change within a fiscal framework that is responsible: Spend the dollars, spend them wisely, but only when you have your house in order.

Government is about leadership, and the people of Ontario chose wisely when they gave that leadership to Mr McGuinty. Our plans are clearly articulated in the throne speech and, for example, we have in fact said to all of our seniors that you will remain at the 750-kilowatt price. We must move ahead. A sense of urgency exists with regard to fiscal issues. Let's remember to do it with integrity, with industry and with intelligence.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'm pleased to rise this afternoon and make a few comments on my

colleague from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford's speech from the throne. It's fitting that we were debating this on a day when Mr McGuinty was talking about his statement, made earlier today, called Real, Positive Change Gains Momentum. I would say it's anything but that.

I'd like to pick up on something Mr Tascona mentioned about the Minister of Education. He came into our riding a couple of times, one time on a visit to a school with the candidate; that was prior to the election and they claimed it was an educational type of visit, but of course it was an election campaign visit. Second of all, on his promise and the promise of the Liberal Party to our riding, they handed out brochures, did radio ads and handed out information at the all-candidates' meetings suggesting that the funding formula wasn't working. So I am already amazed. If the funding formula wasn't working, why haven't they changed the funding formula? When they said the funding formula wasn't working, they said that the students in the county of Simcoe, with its two school boards, were being underfunded by \$1,000 a student. The fact of the matter is, during the election they used Muskoka chairs at a school and tried to compare Simcoe county to Muskoka, asking for \$1,000 more per student, saying that if they were elected, they would give \$1,000 more to the students in Simcoe county. That's \$75 million.

Our school boards are looking for that \$75 million. We expect that the Liberal government under Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education, who is not here today, but who I believe should come up with that kind of funding—he's the one who sat here and criticized our government's funding formula, that it wasn't working. We in Simcoe county are looking for the \$75 million he committed to during the election campaign and made promises about. We are expecting that.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford has two minutes in summary.

Mr Tascona: I'm really pleased to respond to the comments. The member from Timmins-James Bay made the comment with respect to campaign commitments, and he's right. There was a commitment with respect to a number of areas, which the government has, I would say, backed away from. The member from Etobicoke Centre said, "We haven't backed away from anything." Come on. Where have we been since October? They've been backing away every day from commitments.

They're not hiring nurses; they're not bringing in new doctors. They changed the hydro program. They also raised taxes. They said they wouldn't raise taxes. Of course they raised taxes, and they also did it retroactively, which is probably unprecedented in the history of this province.

The member for Simcoe North goes back to that peculiar cat, the Minister of Education, who comes into ridings, makes promises and does nothing. Yes, we need that money for our boards of education. He harped on for four years about the underfunded funding formula for education. We need \$75 million to make sure we are treated equally across this province with respect to

education in Simcoe county. We'll have to wait and see if it happens in the budget, but I know from my own experience with him, I can't get a meeting with him to discuss school closures in my riding. Also, he comes in and promises a new elementary school at Georgian Glen. You can't get a meeting with him; you can't even get him to respond about it. It's a waste of time with respect to how the Minister of Education approaches education. He says one thing and doesn't do anything.

On the speech from the throne, I just want to say, whether you read it once, twice or 10 times, who cares? This government isn't living up to its promises.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Timmins-James Bay.

1630

Mr Bisson: Mr Speaker, you'll remember the last time we were in debate I had to move adjournment in order to allow the official opposition to be able to do their leadoff, and I hadn't actually started my speech. I would ask for consent for that now.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Timmins-James Bay has asked for unanimous consent so that he can speak, although he did very briefly once have the floor. Do I have unanimous consent? Thank you.

Mr Bisson: It was a very brief speech. It was, "I move adjournment of the debate." But I won't do that this time.

Just for the record to show it, as we know, the rotation is that the government does their speech. Then you have to move adjournment of the debate in order to allow the Tories to do theirs the next time around. That's what that was all about.

Mr Speaker, I'm so pleased to be here with you tonight—this afternoon. Tonight is not a night sitting; it's an afternoon sitting.

A throne speech is what defines what a government intends to do over the next little while, while this particular session is active. As you know, the government at one point could decide to prorogue the House while it's in its mandate, in order to start a new agenda, and that has happened from time to time. So this particular government just got elected on October 2, 2003, and they brought their throne speech to this Legislature. This is our opportunity to comment on that throne speech.

I just want to say up front that there are many things in the Liberal platform and within the throne speech that I agree with.

For example, I know that the government in the last election ran on cancelling P3s; those are private hospitals. The former government, the Conservatives, had decided they were going to privatize certain hospitals and they called them P3s. We and the Liberals, in opposition, didn't like that and were in opposition to it. We thought it was a good idea to cancel those particular ones.

For example, I agreed with the position that my caucus and the Liberal caucus took when it came to development on the Oak Ridges moraine, and it was also contained in that throne speech.

For example, I agreed with the Liberals when it came to the position they finally took—it was changed a num-

ber of times, by the way—on electricity in this province, where in the last election they had said that there should not be any private development of electricity in Ontario. I agreed with them. The Liberals back then, in opposition, under the leadership of their then-opposition leader Mr McGuinty, were opposed to the privatization of electricity, and I agreed with that position. It was good to finally see the Liberals join New Democrats in that particular fight.

I agreed with the Liberals when they said no to nukes. We stood in this House in the last Parliament and, I'm telling you, every Parliament since I've been here—and this is my fourth one. How many times have the Liberals and New Democrats stood in this House and said, "What a fiasco. The Tories built Darlington and we're still paying for it. It was way over budget?" I forget the exact numbers now. Help me out, if somebody could. I think it was supposed to come in at \$3 billion and it ended up coming in at \$11 billion or \$12 billion. It wasn't off 100%, it wasn't off 200%; it was off by a whole bunch. We and the Liberals said at the time that that was a stupid thing, that they shouldn't have moved forward with nuclear energy at Darlington. It was going to cost a lot of money. That particular technology is only viable if the government subsidizes it entirely. It's a very expensive way to produce electricity.

As I said, I find myself in a bit of an odd position. When the Liberals were in opposition I agreed with a number of positions that they took. But my problem is that their actions since the election are totally opposite to what they said prior to the campaign, when they were in this Legislature in the previous Parliament, during the campaign and even to a certain extent what they put inside their own throne speech. I want to go through some of that.

I said earlier, in a rotation to responses to questions and comments to my good colleague in the Conservative caucus, that Liberals have a bit of a habit. They love talking like New Democrats before an election and during an election. They love the NDP. I really believe that most progressive Liberals are actually New Democrats, but they figure the only way they can attain power is to run with the Liberals, with the rest of the right-wingers in that caucus. I've just got to say you really sound like New Democrats when you're in opposition. You sounded like New Democrats when you were out campaigning.

I have to say that my leader, Howard Hampton, the leader of the New Democratic Party caucus, said today that that government of Dalton McGuinty's, the Liberal government of today, is quite frankly pretty far right-wing. I think they're doing things that are further right than even Ernie Eves would have tried.

For example, Ernie Eves finally came to the conclusion that the opening of the market was a stupid thing to do. They tried to open the market a couple years ago and electricity prices went through the roof. Ernie Eves went, "Whoa, whoa, we've got to stop this," so they somewhat closed the market. They didn't quite close it,

they subsidized it. They closed the market and subsidized the private sector.

I remember the position we as New Democrats took when Ernie Eves decided to subsidize the price of electricity. We said, "All you're doing is trying to hide your privatization of electricity, because nobody wants to build nukes or any other kind of power generation in this province at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. What you're doing is subsidizing the price of electricity in order to attract investment by the private sector." Why should we in government use taxpayers' dollars to subsidize something that the private sector can't do itself at a better rate than the province can? The Liberals agreed with that prior to the election but when they got to power, it became quite different.

I was very surprised to see—I shouldn't say I was surprised. I wish I had been surprised, but I wasn't. Mr Manley, Mr McGuinty's good friend—he was Deputy Prime Minister, wasn't he, and finance minister—has been hired by the government in order to give recommendations to the government on electricity policy in this province. Mr Manley—surprise, surprise—came back and said, "Nukes now, nukes all the time, and just nukes all the way."

I just have to say to the members of the assembly, this is not the first debate we've had on nukes. We had that debate back in the 1970s and early 1980s when it came to the creation of Darlington. New Democrats stood in the House then and said it was a bad idea, because nowhere in the free world or behind what used to be termed the Iron Curtain is there any electricity development in the nuclear sector that's done entirely by the private sector, unsubsidized by the public taxpayer. For example, if you look where they're building nuclear power today, there are about 20 nukes being built in China, entirely paid for by the state. If you take a look in France, where there's nuclear power being built, again, you've got basically the state of France, by way of their taxpayers, subsidizing the cost of building nuclear power. It happens to be their energy policy. They happen to believe in nuclear power.

The point I make is, there is nobody in the private sector who is going to come to Ontario to build a nuclear plant at the cost of electricity we've got today, unless you do one of two things: You raise the price of electricity to the point of making it a good investment for them, or, conversely, you subsidize it.

That's what the Tories did, and I thought that was a dumb deal. They said, "We're going to fix Bruce nuclear, and the way to fix Bruce nuclear is quite simply to sign a long-term agreement"—I think it's 18 years—"with a private sector consortium that came from Britain in order to run Bruce nuclear. We, the province of Ontario, which has paid for the entire capital construction cost of Bruce nuclear, won't make them pay for that. We'll just get them to pay us for part of that and then they're going to run it for 18 years, and at the end of 18 years, all decommissioning costs will fall to the taxpayer." Who wouldn't jump at that deal if you had the money? What a sweet deal. The public sector builds it, we sell it for 10

cents on the dollar to the private sector and they run it for 18 years. Of course they can make money because it's entirely subsidized by the taxpayer to the tune of probably around 80% to 90%. Then we take the entire decommissioning cost. You don't have to be a nuclear scientist to figure this one out. Decommissioning costs of a nuclear plant are just as expensive as the construction of one. Why would we do that?

Mr Manley comes back and basically says to us that the way to solve Ontario's energy problems is not only to rebuild the reactors that we now have at Pickering and Darlington—and we know how expensive that was for the ones they tried to build. It was supposed to be how much? Some \$1 billion or \$1.5 billion was supposed to be the cost to retube Pickering A; it ended up being \$3 billion. They were way over cost. So we already know our experience as little as three years ago. They have not been able to contain the cost of retubing existing reactors. But Mr Manley comes forward and says, "I think the answer is to retube the ones we've got, rebuild them." We know that's going to be a huge amount of money. Not only are we going to rebuild the ones we have, we're going to build new ones. So \$30 billion to \$40 billion is what is being proposed as the public sector investment to build Darlington, Pickering and new nukes in the province of Ontario. It doesn't make any sense.

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The only way the private sector is ever going to get into that game is if we subsidize them and that's basically what the government is saying it's prepared to do. I'm saying I don't think we should spend \$30 billion to \$40 billion on this particular project. If we've got \$30 billion or \$40 billion to spend on energy in the province of Ontario, imagine what we can do with other projects that are far greener and far more sustainable over the longer period than a nuclear plant. A nuclear plant is about 20 to 25 years. Then you have to spend a whole bunch of money to retube the reactor. At least if we said we're going to go out and take a look at existing hydroelectric power in the province of Ontario, maybe it's a question of rebuilding some of the dams we have now, like at Niagara or on the Mattagami River or on the Abitibi or others, where we're able to redo the generators that we have now in order to produce more electricity. It's very doable. In fact, there are a lot of First Nations people up in my area who would love the opportunity to get involved in that. To the north, the Moose Cree along with Fort Albany and others are interested in doing a project on the Mattagami River because they understand there will be some economic benefit for them. So why don't we look at that?

Imagine \$30 billion. It wouldn't come close to \$30 billion. It wouldn't even come close to \$1 billion to be able to generate some electricity. Imagine if we were to invest some of that \$30 billion to \$40 billion in alternative energy sources. Look at Denmark. I think 10% of their total generating stock is now generated by wind turbines; 10% is pretty huge when you think about it. The real spin-off for Denmark is that they've developed an

industry in Denmark. They're now in the position where they manufacture some of the best wind generators in Europe and they're in the position now to export that particular equipment to other parts of the world. So people around the world are looking at what Denmark is doing and saying, "Hey, I wouldn't mind buying some of those particular wind turbines." They've created a whole industry: R&D, engineering, construction, installation, monitoring, repairing all of those particular generating facilities. Imagine what we can do there.

Look at run-of-the-river projects where you're able to take advantage of the currents in a river without having to build a dam. There's all kinds of technology to be developed in that, not to say what we could do in conservation. Imagine if the province of Ontario said we want to become the North American—let's be bold; the world—leader when it comes to energy conservation so that we come forward with new devices by which we're able to save on the consumption of electricity that people have to use—everything from better appliances in our homes to better equipment in our industry. There's all kinds of stuff that we can do with \$30 billion to \$40 billion that would have a net economic spin-off that would be far more positive in our economy than what is purported by building nukes.

I just say to the government, beware, we've been down this road before. We did it when we built Darlington. It was way over cost. We told you at the time—Stephen Lewis, the then-leader of the New Democratic Party, stood in this House and said, "Be careful. You're going to build that thing and it's going to end up costing you far more money than you can afford." As a result, we have a huge deficit at Ontario Hydro—now at OPG—that we've had to pay because of the over cost in the building of Darlington. I say to the government, it's not a very sound policy.

I just come back to the original comment I was making, which is that you never promised to do this in the first place. I listened in the last election. I listened carefully to what the Conservatives and Liberals had to say in the last election. Nowhere did the Liberals ever say they were going to build nuclear power in the province of Ontario or retool Darlington and Bruce. In fact, they said quite the opposite. So I say the government broke a promise. They broke one of the most basic promises that you can make to the people of Ontario.

What's interesting is, not even the Conservatives ran on that. My good friend John Baird, the Minister of Energy at the time, understood politically how negatively it would be seen by Ontario voters in the election of 2003 if his party, the Conservative Party, ran on the building of new nuclear plants in the province of Ontario. They would have had a hard time even selling the retooling of existing plants because of what had happened to Pickering.

I say to the Liberals across the way, the reality is you're more bold than the Tories ever were. The Tories didn't want to go there. I say to the members across the way, I remember: on se promenait dans le comté de

Timmins-Baie James, je me rappelle très bien. On s'en va à Smooth Rock Falls, on s'en va à Kapuskasing, Opatatika, Moonbeam, Hearst, dans toutes ces communautés-là, et quand on cogne aux portes, une des grosses préoccupations pour la communauté francophone est l'éducation. On écoutait très clairement le discours qu'on avait à la porte avec les électeurs dans ces communautés. Par exemple, à Opatatika eux autres avaient passé à travers un épisode où ils ont bien proche fermé l'école, la seule école à Opatatika.

Donne un peu de crédit au ministère de l'Éducation dans le temps de M^{me} Elizabeth Witmer, qui nous a donné 50 000 \$ pour garder cette école-là ouverte. On a fait tout notre ouvrage à la communauté pour nous assurer que l'argent était là pour la commission scolaire, et la commission scolaire a fait sa part. Mais le point que je fais est que, quand on parlait aux électeurs, ils nous disaient, « Écoute, l'éducation, c'est la clef. »

On a besoin de s'assurer que nos jeunes, et spécialement dans une communauté comme Opatatika, aient la meilleure éducation possible pour qu'eux autres soient capables d'apprendre, soient capables de se développer comme jeunes pour avoir un appétit pour l'éducation, afin de pouvoir se présenter éventuellement au postsecondaire, soit au collège ou à l'université pour devenir des citoyens de notre société avec une valeur ajoutée.

Je me rappelle ce débat, parce que je veux vous dire que j'ai gagné pour la première fois pour les néo-démocrates une histoire de néo-démocrates dans la communauté de Hearst. Hearst, d'habitude, est une communauté qui a voté libéral. J'ai toujours bien été là, mais je n'ai jamais gagné. Puis, un des enjeux qu'on avait dans cette communauté, je me rappelle bien, était la question de l'investissement dans l'éducation. Je me rappelle certains électeurs, quand je cognais aux portes, qui disaient, « Monsieur Bisson, on vous aime bien. Vous faites un bon ouvrage, mais les libéraux vont être le gouvernement. Eux autres vont investir, comme M. Rozanski a fait la recommandation que l'investissement nécessaire pour l'éducation va être fait. »

Moi, je disais à mes électeurs à Hearst, « Écoute, les libéraux dans une élection font toujours la même affaire. Ça se promène autour, ça fait des promesses qu'ils vont faire comme les néo-démocrates, mais une fois élus ils deviennent des conservateurs. Faites-moi confiance. Vous allez voir. » Et, chanceux pour moi, il y avait assez de personnes qui ont fait confiance à moi à Hearst. J'ai gagné non seulement le comté mais aussi la communauté de Hearst, et je leur suis très reconnaissant.

Mais ce qui est intéressant, ce que j'avais dit aux citoyens de Hearst est exactement ce qui est arrivé. Les citoyens de Hearst, je pense, commencent à voir. Justement je m'en allais là vendredi, samedi, et j'avais des appointments avec du monde de Hearst, aussi de Kap et de Smooth Rock Falls. Deux de ces appointments étaient sur la question de l'éducation. Puis le monde commence à réaliser, parce que je parlais justement à un électeur à Hearst qui a dit : « Écoute, Gilles, je n'ai pas

voté pour toi, je veux te le dire. Je pense que t'es un bon gars puis que tu travailles fort pour notre communauté. J'ai voté libéral, mais je commence d'être un peu inquiet.» Il m'a demandé, «Pourra-t-on se rencontrer»—c'est un enseignant à Hearst—«pour se parler un peu de ce qui se passe en éducation, parce que moi, je m'attendais à ce que le gouvernement soit pour faire les investissements en éducation tels qu'ils ont promis lors des élections, puis on n'en voit pas. Ça me préoccupe beaucoup.» J'ai dit : «Il n'y a pas de problème. On va se rencontrer.» Justement, on va se rencontrer samedi.

Ce qui est arrivé est exactement ça : le gouvernement n'a pas gardé son engagement vis-à-vis de l'investissement dans l'éducation qu'ils ont promis dans la dernière élection. Là, on se trouve dans une situation un peu drôle où le gouvernement à ce point-ci non seulement n'a pas gardé son engagement, mais on a le premier ministre, M. Dalton McGuinty, qui se promène autour en disant, «Il faut baisser nos attentes. Écoute, les attentes des électeurs, tout a changé depuis les élections. Il faut baisser vos attentes parce que nous autres, on veut être responsables. On veut travailler bien pour tous les citoyens de la province.»

Je ne rappelle pas ce discours-là avant les élections. Ce n'est pas cela qu'il a dit. Il a dit carrément qu'il était pour augmenter le financement de l'éducation; il n'a pas dit, «Baisser vos attentes.» Là, on attend. Il va avoir un budget au mois d'avril où le ministre des Finances, M. Sorbara, va bien donner l'engagement du gouvernement dans la prochaine année fiscale faisant affaire avec ce qu'ils vont investir dans l'éducation.

Je peux croire que, quand on regarde le document qui va être ici dans cette Assemblée au mois d'avril après le budget, vous n'allez voir la promesse électorale que les libéraux ont faite nulle part dedans, parce qu'à la fin de la journée c'est tel que j'ai dit tout à l'heure.

Mes amis libéraux, c'est du bon monde. Je ne veux pas dire que c'est du méchant monde. J'ai de bons amis dans le caucus libéral, comme M. Bartolucci et d'autres que je trouve sont des gens honorables. Mais il faut dire que ça parle comme les néo-démocrates durant une élection, et quand ça vient à gouverner, ils sont comme des conservateurs.

Je dis qu'on a besoin de se méfier de ce type d'approche-là. Je pense qu'une affaire que le monde veut avoir, c'est un gouvernement qui dit une affaire durant une élection et, une fois qu'ils sont élus, restent avec les engagements qu'ils ont faits.

1650

It has been a great pleasure in the 20 minutes that I've had to be able to speak to this particular throne speech. I just want to say again to my good friends in the Liberal caucus that this is not anything personally against you. I think you're all honourable members, like all members in this House. But I urge you to go to your caucus meeting tomorrow morning, Tuesday, and say to Dalton McGuinty and the rest of the cabinet: "Listen, you guys ran an election platform. You promised to fund Rozanski"—as Rozanski had indicated in his report—"and you

promised to bring back the 8,000 nurses. You promised not to do private hospitals, P3s. You promised not to go to private hydro but to stay within public. You never campaigned on building nuclear reactors. You promised to solve the auto insurance problem"—and the list goes on—"and you're breaking those promises."

I say to you now—because I know well, and I've been there; I was in the government caucus and I know how this goes—you're going to be marked for what you do in the first year in office. If you guys don't get control of your agenda soon and start keeping some of your commitments, it's going to be a one-term government. Believe me, I've been there. So, to my good friends across the way, I look forward to your comments.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments.

Mr Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): Thank you, the member for Timmins-James Bay, for your comments regarding the throne speech, a throne speech that I was very proud of when it was presented here in the House, proud to have had the opportunity before Christmas, this past Christmas, to have as part of my maiden speech here in the House. I stand here today, proud to make further comments on that throne speech.

I have to say it frustrates me, probably just as much as it frustrated the member from Guelph-Wellington when on December 9 she stood up here referring to the debate on the throne speech. Here we are at this time, still working with this throne speech. As my honourable seat partner commented today, this should have been done, this should have been completed so we could move on.

We will keep our promises; we will. We are taking a fiscally responsible attitude, and we will continue to take a fiscally responsible attitude, to what we are doing here in the House.

Regarding the throne speech, a few comments: As a retired educator, I'd just like to say that with schools we've done many things to restore local democracy at the school board level. We have introduced and said that we will replace the unproductive teacher testing programs with new programs that will encourage teacher excellence, and that will be done. Educators have told me that they're proud we stood and made that very clear in this House, to help them as they worked to deliver the very best in education. I'm proud of that fact too, being a retired educator, that I can work with our government to do that. That's just one aspect. I imagine there will be other members speaking on different aspects of the throne speech.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I was watching the debate in my office, and I have to pay some respect to the member from Timmins-James Bay for his rather accurate portrayal of the turnabout with the current government and their promises being quite different during, before and after the election. I think his account of the issue facing them, certainly on the energy file, is most telling. I think his reference to Mr Manley as "the kissing cousin of the Premier" is a pretty accurate portrayal because, really, if you read Manley's report, he's pretty much following a course that had been set out for some time.

Just today, I was in the midst of reading an article from the Post by Theresa Tedesco. It outlines, I think quite accurately, some of the challenges. The real dilemma here, as was pointed out by the member from Timmins-James Bay, is not just the contradiction of their promises and their delivery. The unfreezing of the rate, I think there's some traction for that. I think even looking at our own policy, there was some recognition that the rates really did reflect for some time the amount of risk to the government going forward, but over a longer period of time it may have made sense, provided you had adequacy of supply. That was really the issue.

But in Theresa's report here, she says, "... the \$9-billion-plus Darlington nuclear plant. After much angst, the Liberals went ahead with the project"—this is back in 1990, when you faced the same question—"a smart move considering that the much-maligned plant is the undisputed workhouse of the province's nuclear energy supply." Of course, that Darlington plant is in my riding. But the dilemma that I put to those viewing today is this: If the government of Ontario—that is, the people of Ontario—is going to be the only shareholder, who is going to speak for the shareholder?

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): It's always a pleasure to listen to my colleague the member from Timmins-James Bay, because we know that members from northern Ontario face a number of unique challenges due to geography and certainly different economic situations up there. I'm pleased we have a Minister of Northern Development and Mines who has taken the task on very seriously, a man who's going to be doing a great job in northern Ontario. I have full confidence, after four years, that this minister is going to change the face of northern Ontario and that the member from Timmins-James Bay will be very pleased and very supportive of some of the initiatives.

But my friend talks about Ontario Hydro, and I want to talk about it with the NDP legacy on Ontario Hydro. We all remember when they were buying rain forests down in Costa Rica. That was a wonderful investment of public funds from the province of Ontario—rain forests in Costa Rica.

We also know that when they were in power, the former Liberal government—David Peterson—had negotiated a deal with the province of Manitoba called the Manitoba lifeline. The government of the day, the Liberal government, had it all set out that in the early 1990s—when the NDP came to power—that lifeline would be in place to provide additional electricity in Ontario. Lo and behold, the NDP came to power and cancelled the Manitoba lifeline deal. Just think if we had that power today within our grid system that the NDP had quickly abandoned. That was a serious mistake that they made, and the province of Ontario is still paying for that.

But we look to the future. My colleague from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh outlaid the Liberal plan, I think, in our throne speech. It's going to be an opportunity over four years. We'll meet all our commit-

ments in our election platform, and that will change the face of Ontario in a very positive way.

We've already started. During the short time between the government being sworn in and the Christmas recess, we moved on a number of significant things. We took money and invested it back into the education system. It's all very positive.

The Deputy Speaker: The member from Timmins-James Bay has two minutes.

Mr Bisson: First of all, I've got to put my glasses on now. I can't see without these things.

The member from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh says, "You know, we Liberals are going to be fiscally responsible." Where was the fiscal responsibility when you drafted up your campaign platform? We, as New Democrats, said, Conservatives said and the Canadian Taxpayers Federation said, along with the C.D. Howe Institute, that what you had inside your election platform was unfundable, that the way you had it set up, you had not balanced your commitments in the platform and that in fact you couldn't deliver on them. That was the point we were trying to make in the election. So talk to me now about you being fiscally responsible? Where were you when you drafted up the platform? It wasn't there. You guys basically couldn't make the numbers add up.

To the member from Scarborough Southwest, I just say, listen, you've got to go to that caucus meeting tomorrow morning and you've got to say, "Cabinet, Premier, we've got to keep our commitments. If we don't, we're going to get turfed out." The only thing you've got to get re-elected with is what this government does, because you're not going to do it on your own. I hate to tell you, once you're elected in this place—look at the stats—most people elected in the first term don't come back. The only way you come back is by way of another sweep, and if you keep on going the way you are now, you're going to get swept out.

So I'm saying, just a little word of advice, because I like my Liberal friends. I want to get to know them a little bit better—not too well, just for Peter to know.

Mr Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): Quit sucking up.

Mr Bisson: All right, I won't suck up any more.

But I just say to my friends across the way, you've got to go inside that Liberal caucus meeting tomorrow and you've got to say, "Premier, keep your commitments. We ran on a number of campaign promises. People said they wanted us to do them. They voted for us. We sounded like New Democrats in the last election. By God, it's about time we act like them once we get elected."

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

1700

Mrs Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): It is a privilege to address the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I will be sharing my time with the honourable member from Perth-Middlesex.

The people of our province look to us for leadership and direction. I am pleased to be a part—

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You have to stop the clock on my point of order, please, to

help my friend out. I need a ruling from you. I was told earlier by the Speaker of the House that I wasn't allowed to hold up a document in front of the Legislature, and this—

The Deputy Speaker: You don't have a point of order. Please take your seat. You don't have a point of order. Could you please continue.

Mrs Mitchell: I am pleased to be a part of a government which is meeting the challenge. Huron-Bruce is a rural riding and agriculture is the major contributor to our economy. The single case of BSE in Alberta has hit our farmers, truckers, implement dealers and all the economy very hard. It has placed great stress on our social fabric.

We have moved decisively with the federal government on the crisis. The complete solution, however, does not lie in our hands. It is up to the government of the United States to open the border and to recognize that we have a secure livestock business.

Huron and Bruce have provided leadership in the past. Jack Riddell was Minister of Agriculture for four years. His strong voice for agriculture was heard throughout the province, and it came from a lifetime experience in agriculture. He actively represented the farmers and the people of Huron county.

Murray Gaunt was a long-serving member who still works on behalf of agriculture. He was the voice of agriculture on CKNX radio for decades. His work for the Ontario heritage agriculture museum is most notable.

Murray Elston was another MPP who served the people of Huron-Bruce as Minister of Health and Chair of Management Board. He certainly demonstrated leadership, and he continues to work for the people of Ontario in his new capacity as president of the Canadian Nuclear Association. He will provide needed insight into the search for solutions to our energy shortage.

My two immediate predecessors worked for agriculture in our province: Paul Klopp as parliamentary assistant and Helen Johns as minister. Helen served Premier Eves in many other capacities.

Agriculture is our major industry, but the Bruce nuclear plant near Kincardine is meeting Ontario's energy needs. Fifteen per cent of Ontario's needs are supplied by Bruce Power. The management of Bruce Power has shown confidence in Ontario by proposing to expand its facility in Bruce county.

During the recess, the Minister of Energy toured the plant to experience first hand Bruce Power's commitment to our nuclear industry. A reliable and stable source of electricity is essential, and Bruce Power employs 3,000 highly skilled people. The ownership is unique. It's a partnership which includes the Ontario municipal employees retirement system, the Power Workers' Union, the Society of Energy Professionals, Cameco Corp and TransCanada Corp.

My roots are firmly in rural Ontario. I was born in Goderich township and have lived all of my life in Huron-Bruce. I know the difficulties and rewards of owning and running one's own business. I had stores in Clinton and Bayfield for over a decade. I left retailing to enter politics in the town of Clinton.

Main Street is hurting. When farmers are successful, the retailers on Main Street benefit. The BSE crisis has compounded the problems facing retailing in rural Ontario. It has created many more empty storefronts. Big-box stores, plus the Internet, have created a threat to the survival of our Main Streets. And it's more than money that is leaving our communities. It often diminishes local support and leadership, which the small retailer provides.

Prior to my election in October, I was in municipal politics for over 11 years. I served as warden for Huron county for two terms. During those two terms, I dealt with the downloading by the province. It has brought municipal government into new areas of service delivery, such as ambulance and water quality. It was the municipal governments which first faced the problems which large livestock operations created. Liquid manure and its impact on the environment became an issue which local township councils had to deal with. It was in Huron county that the first bylaw which introduced the concept of nutrient management was passed. The council of the township of Grey in Huron county passed its first bylaw in 1996. After that, townships like Ashfield went on to refine the bylaw. The impediment which the township councils faced remained, and that was enforcement.

I am very pleased to be a part of a government that acts. Legislation without regulation is pointless. Under the leadership of the Minister of Agriculture, the Nutrient Management Act, with regulations, was passed in our first session. The uncertainty which farmers faced, plus the feeling of helplessness which the township councils faced, has been ended.

Water and food safety is of paramount importance. Watershed source protection is the next step. This government has embarked on a consultation process on water source protection. We are working with our partners in municipal government and the conservation authorities to ensure safe drinking water. The public demands safe food, and agriculture, to be successful, must have the public's confidence. This government, on assuming office, took immediate steps to reaffirm the public's confidence in the meat inspection system. Mr Justice Roland Haines of the Superior Court of Justice is conducting an inquiry into meat regulation and inspections.

I am pleased to be a part of a government which moved swiftly to ensure proper meat inspection. The immediate hiring of 118 full-time meat inspectors not only reassures the public but also underlines the fact that Ontario's food products are safe. Our farmers depend on their reputation as producers of safe and nutritious food.

The provinces have spent a great deal of time negotiating with the federal department of agriculture's support program. Again, I am pleased that this government has acted decisively. Ontario has signed the agricultural policy framework.

Agriculture and energy are areas where Huron-Bruce leads, but we do know how to relax in Huron and Bruce. We possess a long stretch of sandy beaches on Lake Huron. Our small towns offer live theatre for evening

entertainment. Farm tours, hiking, hunting and fishing, and boating are all very memorable holidays which one can experience in Huron and Bruce counties. Tourism has become a growing part of our economy, and people who vacation here often retire here. The percentage of seniors living in the riding is higher than the Canadian average. We have a great place for people who want to get out of the fast lane, and it's a wonderful place for a holiday and to retire.

Health care is a major concern for our older residents. People want a fully funded public health care system. In Huron-Bruce, the health care system has been under a great deal of stress for the last 10 years. New demands and new technology have shown us that we cannot continue as in the past. Our system must serve the needs of our citizens. It is not enough to just merely shuffle the players. It is not enough to keep putting money into the system. Our whole philosophy of health care must be re-examined.

In Huron-Bruce, we are some distance from large hospitals. Our small population is spread over a very large geographic area. Time and distance can be our enemies. Partnerships certainly have been formed to provide modern services most efficiently.

It is a challenge to attract and keep health care workers. We do have a wonderful lifestyle and great scenery, but often that is not enough to attract young professionals. A great deal of time and energy is spent recruiting and not focusing on resolving health care issues.

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I am pleased to be part of a government that will maintain our publicly funded, fully accessible health care system. Our legacy, the measure of the Legislature's success, will be resolved by our commitment to health care.

The education system is the factor that makes Ontario competitive, and to compete globally we must have a well-educated workforce. I know about the state of the education system. As the mother of two daughters, I know the crisis that has engulfed the education system in Ontario. In Huron-Bruce the cost of busing is a major expense for our school boards. Our young people are our most valued asset, and it's up to us to see that our children receive an education that meets their ability.

We face many challenges. Let's be up to the task of meeting them. It's a privilege to be a member of the Legislature and to speak today. Thank you.

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): First, I'd like to commend my friend the member for Huron-Bruce on her maiden speech. With adjoining ridings, we share a bond of geography, and today we share a bond of history as we rise to share with members our pride in our ridings and what has motivated us to seek to represent our constituents.

As I begin, I want to thank the good people of Perth-Middlesex for entrusting me to be their voice in this place for the next four years. Perth-Middlesex is the largest riding in the beautiful southwest of Ontario,

encompassing all of Perth county and the vast majority of Middlesex county, which lies west, north and east of the great city of London. My riding is blessed with an abundance of fine soil and good farmers. By far the largest industry is agri-food, the second largest industry in Ontario—a fact often forgotten. The automotive manufacturing sector is the second driver of the local economy. And I'd be remiss if I did not shamelessly promote the Stratford Festival, now in its 52nd season. A few blocks from my house is the finest repertory theatre in North America and one of the three leading theatres of Shakespeare in the world. Thus, tourism is the third key component of what generates economic wealth for my constituents.

I have an abiding love of democracy, and I recall the night in November of 1998 when I stood before over a thousand fellow Liberals and addressed them at my first nomination meeting. I said that night, "Friends, isn't democracy a wonderful thing, that we can all freely join a political party, attend this meeting unencumbered, listen to candidates offering different talents and cast a secret ballot as our part of a fair election?" Most people in the world do not enjoy such liberty. Indeed, isn't democracy a wonderful thing? A short six months later, while conceding to my political predecessor on the evening of June 3, 1999, I opened my concession speech with that same line, "Friends, isn't democracy a wonderful thing?" I truly believe in the wonders of democracy, whether as the victor or the vanquished, though I can report that victory is much sweeter.

To be the sole occupant of this seat in this beautiful chamber is due to the help and encouragement of so many people. I want to acknowledge my parents, Joan and Wilf Wilkinson. As luck would have it, they are here today in the members' gallery. I tell people that it was my father who told me what to fight for and who to fight, but it was my mother who taught me how to fight, which is to win.

I grew up in the wonderful town of Trenton, within a loving family, surrounded by my three brothers, Bill, Peter and Stephen. The four Wilkinson boys learned a lesson from our parents that has marked us all of our lives. It is the simple belief that if you have been blessed, you must be thankful and share your God-given talents with your community. In regard to politics, I have a special bond with my brother Peter. He too is here at Queen's Park, serving as chief of staff to our remarkable Minister of Finance, the member for Vaughan-King-Aurora. If the truth be told, even on our darkest days there is nowhere else my brother and I would rather be.

The little-known secret of each and every member is the steep price that our immediate families pay for us to take our seats here. Though my wife and I have decided as a couple to keep our family life separate from my political life, today is an exceptional day and I want to say thank you in public to Loretta, Alexandra, Liam and Breen for their love and understanding of my exquisite political obsession.

We all know that to be here is the result of countless hours of volunteer labour, coupled with the generous

donations of your supporters. No man is an island; no politician is one either. Rather, I liken an elected politician to the tree in the very middle of a forest, a forest of supporters. There are too many trees within my forest to mention each one, but each of you know how very grateful I am for always being there at my side as we journey together.

The other unsung supporter with whom I have the greatest of friendships is my business partner, Jeff Keller. Without the sacrifices that he has made on my behalf so I could pursue my political calling, I simply would not be here. In turn, without the hard work of the staff at our firm of Wilkinson and Keller, neither of us could live our dreams.

Each of us comes to this place with a motivation. For me, my first hint of a calling to the life of politics happened during the 1995 election. I watched the introduction of the politics of deliberate division into the province which I love. In my opinion, to serve as an MPP one is a public servant. To serve the public requires a willingness to serve all of the public, not just the parts that we are comfortable with. To practise the politics of division is to enter into an exercise of cynically picking enemies, to strategically gain friends for political advantage.

When I call the fire department, do the firefighters, among the bravest of our public servants, get to pick and choose whether to come to my house? No. They come. When a drunk arrives in the middle of the night at the hospital inebriated, belligerent and bellicose, do the doctors, the nurses and the hospital workers, those most noble of our public servants, get to pick and choose whether to care for that individual? No. They treat him. Does a teacher, our most trusted public servant, get to pick and choose only the brightest and most well-adjusted students to teach? No. They teach all who enter into their classroom. So I say that neither should we as MPPs get to pick and choose which of our constituents we wish to serve. Our job is not about serving just the taxpayers or just those who share our political beliefs, but rather, we are called to serve each and every constituent. It has always struck me as reprehensible how a person can serve effectively in this hall of the people if they've been elected on the basis of picking one's enemies to choose one's friends.

This revulsion led me to seek the wise counsel of my brother Peter, the political brother in the family, for he had worked here at Queen's Park in the late 1980s. He introduced me to a man who would become my most trusted mentor. Sean Conway, who served with distinction for 28 years in this place, agreed to meet with me. I thought I wanted to become politically active as a campaign manager. It was Sean who planted the notion that I had the characteristics of a candidate for our party. There's no greater accolade that a person can bestow upon me than to compare me to the finest orator that this House has produced in the modern era. It was Sean who, in turn, introduced me to our newly minted leader, Dalton McGuinty. A moment in one's life can be truly fateful. I

can testify that this meeting was one of those moments. The man who would become Premier has that rare leadership quality to inspire others to join his cause. His honesty about the challenges of balancing one's family life and political life will always guide me in whatever I do here. If it were not for the warmth of Terri McGuinty, I do not think that my wife would have ever agreed to allow me to join her husband in our common obsession of public service.

I want to pay tribute to the members who went before me, but given that the time is short, in closing, I wish to commend to Hansard what I said that evening in November of 1998. It sums up what I, and those who voted for me, hold to be most true. There is an alternative to a world of political extremism. We will share with our neighbours the simple truth that the world is neither black nor white. Rather, we know the world is full of colours, that we are all a lot closer to the centre than to the extreme. We are not about convincing people to look either left or right, but to look up. We have followed a bright Rhodes scholar down the path to the left and we have followed a golf pro down the path to the right. I say we must instead follow an honest and decent family man down the road we used to travel together, the road down the middle of the path where most people want to be. Why? Because on that road no one asks whether you belong to a union or own a business, whether you're a man or a woman. No one notices the colour of your skin or where you worship. People do not deny you passage on this road, no matter what your sexual orientation or whether you are able-bodied or not. Young or old, healthy or sick, all are invited to travel this road together. Yes, we must work to maintain that road, to keep it safe, to carry those who fall behind due to poor health and to teach our children the lessons they need to learn along the road.

1720

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr O'Toole: It's an honour to stand and recognize the two members from the government party: the member for Huron-Bruce, who replaced Helen Johns who also served this place well in her time, as well as the member for Perth-Middlesex, who replaced Bert Johnson who also served this place well. I believe they both served their communities well, as I expect the new members will.

I have to rise on this occasion, because the member from Perth-Middlesex mentioned in passing the Shakespearean theatre in Stratford, and tends to portray himself as somewhat of an actor. Certainly I would agree with him in that description. But to compare himself to Sean Conway is just absurd. I'm quite affronted that Sean would give you any reason to believe that. In all good sense, really, I find it striking common that all of us who come to represent our ridings come with a variety of experiences, but also with a great passion and love for public service in the communities we represent.

So I commend both members for bringing a form of eloquence to this place, as well as participating in what I

guess we'd refer to as their maiden speeches. It does bring back memories of my own maiden speech, which was on much similar sentiments.

The member from Perth-Middlesex—I listened quite astutely—mentioned the road ahead, which happens to have been the name of our election document. I would prefer to think that your position on an election platform document would be the road not taken: two roads diverging in the woods and you chose the road not taken. In fact it's called the road of broken promises, as our member Garfield Dunlop has often said.

To end on a positive note, I commend both members. I wish them well in serving their constituents from the backbenches, where they're well placed.

Mr Bisson: I want to commend the two members from the government caucus on their maiden speeches. I thought they were kind of interesting and good to listen to.

I say to the member for Perth-Middlesex that he makes himself out to be a bit of an actor because he comes from Perth-Middlesex, the home of Stratford. I know, because I come from Timmins. I saw that member, I saw him well. He was at Cedar Meadows, if I remember correctly, at committee time. I saw him, as Mr Colle—I forget your riding name—and others saw. This man has talent. He can sing for his supper. I saw him sing.

Interjection: He's not as good a singer as O'Toole.

Mr Bisson: He's not as good a singer as O'Toole. That I didn't know. He whistles. We'll get there later.

The member from Perth-Middlesex sang. I heard him, and others heard him that night at Cedar Meadows. I've got to say he's got a pretty good voice. We only hope you don't have to sing too often for your supper around here. This place can be very vicious every four years. I wish you well in your time here and that you don't have to sing for your supper any time soon.

I say to the members, all kidding aside, that it is indeed an honour the first time you stand in this place, and I know this is not the first time, but this is your throne speech opportunity. This is a very prestigious place to be. It's a very small club. As we well know, there is a whole bunch of people from all parties, and some independents, who would give their left arm to be in this Legislature today. For those of us lucky enough to get here, never mind once but a couple more times after, we realize how truly lucky we are. If we remember your comment in your speech at the very beginning, I think they are good words of wisdom for all members: At the end of the day, this place is about the public and about being able to serve the people who have elected us to be here. No matter if you're a New Democrat, a Liberal or a Conservative, we all do that with honour and we all do that with respect to the voters.

Ms Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): I'd like to congratulate my colleagues from Huron-Bruce and Perth-Middlesex on their wonderful maiden speeches—very inspiring stuff. I have an affinity for both of these ridings, as I drive through one to get to the other, where I have a home. As Ms Mitchell said, I, too, hope to retire there one day, if indeed I have retirement to look forward to.

I want to return to the remarks of our colleagues from the other parties, the big question of why, in less than five months, we have not fulfilled all our goals and all our promises. Well, you can all mouth this and say it along with me, because you have all heard it so many times now: We have a \$5.6-billion deficit, courtesy of our predecessors. I don't remember the Tories campaigning on that little tidbit. I don't recall that during the September election campaign.

What's even worse than that is the state of our public services at this point. We are in a situation where we have inefficient, expensive, cumbersome structures that we've been locked into, that we now have to creatively get ourselves out of in order to get ourselves out of this financial mess and start fulfilling our promises and our goals, which we will do.

It's going to take one of two things: It will take a lot of money to do it or a lot of time. We don't have a lot of money—we don't have much money at all, again thanks to our predecessors—but we have time. The people of Ontario understand that it will take time. They're very reasonable about that. The only people who don't understand that are people who are trying to score a cheap headline.

We will do it because it must be done. We will end the spend-deficit-cut cycle that plagues governments in many parts of the world, this one included. We will create and build sustainable, reliable public services delivered by an accountable government. We will do it because it must be done, because it's the right thing to do.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I rise to congratulate as well the members from Huron-Bruce and Perth-Middlesex on their maiden speeches. It has been some time—in fact, 1995, a long time ago—since I made mine here and much has happened since. This is a very different province. Speaker, you will recall in 1995 businesses were leaving Ontario. This place was collapsing. There were the highest rates of unemployment ever in the history of this province. People knew that serious, fundamental changes had to be brought to this province. I was pleased, and still am very proud, to have been part of the government that brought those fundamental changes to this province that put us back into a position of leading the Canadian economy and restoring jobs—over a million new jobs created over that period of time.

I listen with interest now to my colleagues in the House. I wish them well. I know they are well-intentioned, and they come here, as we all do, to serve the public. I listened to my good friend from Perth-Middlesex refer to that path, that road, that middle of the road that the Liberals supposedly are now on. Unfortunately, his leader is stumbling all over that road. It was clearly set out in an election platform. However, obviously they have lost the map, because they have not arrived at one destination that they intended to get to. What we have to do now as members of the opposition is hold their feet to the fire. I'm hopeful that they will at least be able to find one destination on that road map. The time will come, however, in three and a half years,

when the people of this province, I believe, will say, “No, thank you, we don’t want the road less travelled; we want the road we know will take us where we need to go.”

Thank you, Speaker. It’s a pleasure to welcome these folks to this place, and I look forward to working with them in the next three and a half years.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Perth-Middlesex has two minutes in summary.

Mr Wilkinson: On behalf of my colleague the member from Huron-Bruce, I want to thank the members who commented on our maiden speeches, particularly the members for Durham and Timmins-James Bay, both of whom I serve with on the finance committee; my fellow caucus mate the member for Stoney Creek; and also the member for Oak Ridges, the member of my niece, who started today. With all due respect, I can hardly agree with the member for Oak Ridges. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to actually see you in opposition. I just want you to know that.

I was surprised that the member for Durham—I didn’t know he could sing—took my comments to mean that somehow our party had lost its way. I want to reiterate that the vast majority of the people in Ontario want a government that sees itself going down the middle of the road and not being mired in the ditches.

1730

I found it fascinating when I was going around this province with the finance committee to discover from an accounting point of view—because I’m a certified financial planner—that we have never really run a true surplus in this province; that we had debts at the hospitals, debts at the children’s aid society, debts at the school boards; that we had infrastructure deficits at our colleges, our universities, at our schools. There was just a lot of accounting to move that debt out, because we had a law that says we can’t run a debt. We just shove it around and give it to everybody else so they can borrow that money at higher interest rates. My God, how crazy is that from a fiscal point of view?

I just want to say again on behalf of my colleague the member from Huron-Bruce that we are very happy to be here to serve in our government and to serve our leader and his unerring sense of where we’re going as a province. We’re all going to get there together. Some may take a little bit longer to get there than others, but we down the centre are moving forward.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): First, I’d like to take a moment to welcome all the members back to the new session of this Parliament. I hope they spent the winter productively, touring their ridings and this province, finding out what the people in this province want of this government and of this House.

I’d also like to congratulate the new leader of the new Conservative Party, Mr Stephen Harper, who was successful on the weekend in becoming the first leader of the new Conservative Party. I’m looking forward to the next federal election campaign, when we can hold the

Liberal government in Ottawa accountable for the mess they’re creating in this country.

We want to speak on the throne speech today. We heard the Premier speak today about—what did he title it?—Real Positive Change Gains Momentum. In their election platform they talked about “Choose change.” Then their throne speech was supposed to resemble that platform. Well, it didn’t resemble that platform in too many ways. The actual bills they’ve brought forth don’t even resemble the throne speech. I don’t know where we’re going to get to in the next session, but time will tell.

The honourable member from Timmins-James Bay was admonished for holding up what was considered to be a prop today, which was a part of the Liberals’ election platform. I didn’t get a real close look at that, but I think instead of saying “choose change,” maybe what that platform should say is “loose change,” because that’s all that’s going to be left in the pockets of the taxpayers of this province when this government is done with them. As a matter of fact, I recall a constituent of mine saying to me, “John, I voted Liberal. I’ve always voted Liberal, I didn’t vote for you, but I’ve got to tell you, I am so angry with this government. The only thing McGuinty is going to leave in my pockets is lint.”

We have seen evidence of it all over the place. They promised no tax increases; we’ve got tax increases. Now we’ve got tax increases on top of tax increases. Now they’re going to the municipalities, saying, “We’re going to lift the freeze on business taxes.” Do you know what an increase on business taxes is going to do to small business in this province? I know what it’s going to do to small business in my riding. It’s a burden they simply can’t bear at this time.

This government doesn’t seem to care what goes on in rural Ontario. Do you know that when the Lieutenant Governor read that throne speech, the word “deficit” was mentioned 12 times? The word “rural” was not mentioned once. As a rural member, I am appalled at the lack of focus of this government on rural issues in this province. We’ve already seen examples of their willingness to ignore rural issues. I see it in my riding all the time. We’ve got situations in my riding with respect to sawmills, for example, that are being attacked by the Ministry of the Environment because they’ve got a pile of sawdust on their property. The Ministry of the Environment, with their consultants and engineers and all kinds of people with letters behind their names that I don’t even know, comes up to these sawmill operators and says, “That pile of sawdust is an environmental hazard. You’ve got to drill these test wells. It could cost you. You’ve got to get a consultant in, you’ve got to drill these test wells and do some testing. It could cost you \$50,000; it could cost you \$70,000.” This sawdust pile might have been sitting in that yard for 80 to 90 years, yet the ministry is going in there, saying, “You’ve got to prove to us that you don’t have a problem.”

This is what’s happening in rural Ontario, and right now it’s happening only in my riding, Renfrew-

Nipissing-Pembroke. I've got sawmill operators who are considering cessation of business because they simply can't afford to deal with these kinds of expenses. I've raised this matter with the Minister of the Environment on at least four occasions. I must say, she has not even acknowledged a single letter of mine on that subject, and I find that deplorable.

Now, getting back to the government—we'll get off sawmills for a moment, but we will come back to it—and their deficit, they go on and on and on about this deficit. They've inflated the deficit, they've relied on new numbers, everything they can do to change the numbers. Inflating the deficit—we just saw an example of how this government inflates. Instead of bringing a business envelope into the House today, they brought one that could hold the plans for my house. That's how this government inflates. They inflate envelopes, they inflate the deficit. I don't know what's coming from them next.

I want to talk about some other issues in my riding. Not only do we have the sawmill issue, but we have infrastructure issues: small municipalities that have been given provincially mandated orders to upgrade their water treatment plants.

Mr Bisson: Who did that?

Mr Yakabuski: I wasn't here, Mister. To the honourable member from James Bay, I wasn't here, but I can tell you there was a plan to fund those things. Now what's happening is that these upgrades are running over budget, and the government is not offering financial assistance to those municipalities that are in need of extra funding to continue with these or to pay for upgrades that have already been done. The municipalities have done it on their own ticket and have gone into debt to do so.

I can talk about the municipality of Laurentian Hills for one, a very small municipality with only a couple of thousand residents. They're left with a bill in the neighbourhood of \$700,000 to handle on their own at this point. They simply don't have the wherewithal to do it.

The town of Renfrew's estimates for their water treatment plant went from originally in the \$3-million to \$4-million range to up to \$10 million. They're simply not able to handle that additional burden.

This government had all kinds of promises. It went to the people in this province and convinced them that it was going to be able to deliver everything and make everybody happy. It has failed in almost every regard to keep those promises. It campaigned on no new taxes, "We will not raise your taxes." We've seen those taxes rise, and we're seeing them rise more. We're reaching a situation in this province where it's going to be back like those dark days between 1990 and 1995, when jobs were leaving the province because people couldn't afford to do business in this province.

The overall tax burden in this province, in spite of what this government would have you believe, is far too high. The federal government even understands that, that if we're going to remain competitive globally, we have to reduce those taxes. So what is their answer? The finance minister goes to Ottawa and says, "Well, we're going to allow you to raise the municipal taxes on business."

Business already pays more than its fair share of the municipal taxes in this province. Small businesses and ma-and-pa operations can't afford to be saddled with those additional tax burdens that this government is loading on them at this time.

1740

Let's talk about another issue here where the government clearly doesn't recognize the needs and the problems in rural Ontario. We'll talk about the spring bear hunt. The current Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines campaigned on seeing that bear hunt reinstated.

Mr Bisson: Yes, I remember.

Mr Yakabuski: Oh, yes. Then they talk about how this government shows that it cares about rural people, and cares about the north because we've got two northern ministers in cabinet. But they're toothless tigers—

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): You guys had sheep in there.

Mr Yakabuski:—because everything they want, the government pays no attention to them. Does the government listen to its own Minister of Natural Resources? Does the government listen to its own minister? No. "Out with the spring bear hunt. We're not going to reinstate it." But we've got problems with bears in Renfrew county.

Would the member from Eglinton come up to my county in the fall and sleep out in my backyard if he's not afraid of the bears? We've got problems. And what is the minister's answer? "Oh, we're going to put in a toll-free number." Well, I hope when you've got your cell phone in a no-service area and that bear is in your backyard, you can get a hold of that toll-free number. That's not going to be much of an answer when a bear is chasing you down the path.

What we're seeing increasingly is that this government, with eight cabinet ministers from the GTA, is controlled by Toronto.

Mr Colle: That's not true. It's Mississauga that controls it.

Mr Yakabuski: Yes, I am sad to say, that's the truth. It's controlled by Toronto. So my poor residents up in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, like the reeve of Madawaska Valley, John Hildebrandt, who recently had a fellow from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Dr Terry Quinney, speak to them about the spring bear hunt and how the justification for not reinstating it simply isn't there and that the ministry did not even read its own reports—but because they're not listening to the rural people and they're not listening to their own Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Northern Development and Mines, they don't want the spring bear hunt. They won't bring it back, because Toronto doesn't want it. Toronto doesn't have a bear problem, but we have one in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Mr Leal: Mike cancelled it. Wasn't he a bear hunter?

Mr Yakabuski: I don't recall that. The member from Peterborough seems to have a better grasp of the Legislature. Was he here then? I don't know. I wasn't here.

That's what government is all about—
Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: There are too many bears in here, so just simmer down a little bit.

Mr Yakabuski: —and when something isn't right, it's got to be changed.

We talked about sawmills; now let's talk about nutrient management, on which I heard the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture speak earlier, about how it's such a great thing, this nutrient management legislation. But her ministry turned it over to the environment ministry. Well, you hand something like nutrient management over to the environment ministry and they're just going to be out there looking to nail somebody, because that's what they do. Our poor farmers, in the wake of BSE, can't afford to be implementing nutrient management plans up in Renfrew county or in any other rural county at this time. But this government stands up there because it wants to make sure that the headlines in Toronto are favourable to them: "Oh, we're going to make sure that Ontarians have the cleanest drinking water in the world." We already have that, but now we're going to spend billions of dollars to put rural people out of business, rural farmers out of business and rural small business people out of business. That's what we're going to do with overregulation.

Interjection.

Mr Yakabuski: Have you been to South Carolina?

Mr Leal: You and I were down there the same week. I didn't bump into you, though.

Mr Yakabuski: No, I didn't. You were on the fairway.

So what are we going to do with nutrient management? The government says, "We're not going to force it on you until we can assist you with the funding." Well, we need better criteria, we need clearer direction than that. That leaves the farm community with too many open, unanswered questions.

So we need to know what's going to happen with nutrient management. It was a terrible thing this government did to the farmers of this province, to hand that file back to the Ministry of the Environment. When our party was the government, it recognized the concerns of farmers and it gave that file to the agriculture ministry because it understands farmers.

This new government campaigned on continuing with the hydro rates capped at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. It broke that promise. It's a litany of broken promises. That's all we're going to get from this government.

Mr Leal: Did you read the O'Connor report? Did you miss the O'Connor report, John?

Mr Yakabuski: I can't speak to you right now, Jeff. I'm on the clock.

I raised the issue in this House some time ago about septage spreading, and the minister jumped up and was so proud that she was going to ban the spreading of septage on fields immediately.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): What's septage?

Mr Yakabuski: You'll have to ask the honourable member from Peterborough. He knows everything.

You were going to ban that immediately. Now we don't have a timetable. I've got a press release from the warden of Renfrew county here, wanting to know just when we can expect it. The county warden, Bob Sweet, says he wants the province to treat rural ratepayers fairly. Now he can't seem to get any answers from the ministry as to when we can expect these changes to be implemented. It's just vague responses: "Well, you know, maybe here, maybe now, maybe then, maybe never." We need to be able to plan in rural Ontario when legislation that affects us is going to be enacted.

It costs about \$700 to empty a septic tank and have that stuff hauled to a treatment facility. We don't have the facilities in rural Ontario to treat septage that is currently extracted from septic systems on people's property. In fact, there are about 27,000 homes in my riding alone that rely on a septic system to deal with their waste. So when governments enact legislation that affects a particular group more than others, the general principal is that the government is also going to be there to assist those stakeholders in the implementation and the carrying out of that new legislation. But they've offered no assistance. In fact, the minister almost scoffed when I suggested it, like we didn't know that it's currently the responsibility of homeowners to deal with their septage. Of course we know that. But we also know that when people get hit with a bill like that, there are going to be people finding ways of getting around that new legislation and dealing with it, perhaps, in ways they shouldn't. That is something of concern if we're trying to ensure that water is the paramount concern here.

Mr O'Toole: As he takes a drink.

Mr Yakabuski: Water, your honour, water.

This government is the first government in my memory, perhaps the first government since Confederation, that does not even have a minister responsible for rural affairs. It doesn't care enough about rural people in this province to even have a minister who holds the responsibility for rural affairs, and that, my friends, should be a real concern to every rural member, regardless of the side of the House they sit on, and to every citizen of a rural riding in this province.

1750

We recently got some changes to some MPAC regulations. The government was forced to make some changes, not because they were interested in rural concerns, but because the pressure brought to bear on them by rural people, rural stakeholders, campground owners and campground leaseholders in this province was too much for them to stand up to, but it was the people who forced the change on this government. Otherwise, on their own, we'd be seeing those tax changes still in place.

So I'm just wondering where we can expect this government to be down the road. It doesn't keep its promises. It goes in different directions. It talked about cancelling P3s. What do we have? We have basically a

P3 by another name at the Royal Ottawa Hospital and the William Osler Health Centre in Brampton.

I want to talk a little bit about some of this government's first forays into new bills. The health minister brought in Bill 8 back in the fall, and within a day he had to bring in Bill 31 because Bill 8 was so fundamentally mixed up and flawed that he needed a second bill just to get it to the committee stage. Even at the committee stage this Bill 8 is so full of holes and so full of weaknesses that it's just being ravaged by the stakeholders in this province.

I have a letter here from the Arnprior and District Memorial Hospital wondering where this government is going with Bill 8 with respect to hospital boards. One of the most important things about hospital boards is that they bring volunteers and they bring the ability to raise funds in small communities. This government wants to render those boards irrelevant. That is something that is going to hurt rural hospitals tremendously. This party is not going to stand here and allow it to happen.

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Questions and comments?

Mr Bisson: I've got to say it has to be tough being a Conservative these days in this House. I listened to my good friend from Renfrew-Nipissing, whom I like a lot, actually—he's quite a decent fellow.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: On the bear hunt, I'm sorry, but I remember. You weren't here, but it was Mike Harris who cancelled it. Bad enough that the Liberals didn't reverse it, but for you to criticize the Liberals on the bear hunt—my God, talk about toothless tigers.

Then, I'm listening to the good member—and this is a real big issue, and I agree with you—in regard to the new municipal water rates. Some of you who are newly elected, I would think you've all been contacted by your municipalities in regard to your water rates. Municipalities don't have the money to enact them. I want to remind you, toothless tiger over there, the bear with all the teeth, it was the Tories who did that, the Conservatives, you know. You guys brought in those regulations after Walkerton and then never funded the municipalities. But I might be wrong, because I distinctly heard the member, my good friend the member from Renfrew-Nipissing, say that the Tories had a funding plan to make sure municipalities got the money to put the regs in place. Now, I don't remember that. I hope you clarify that point in your response. I know municipalities across my riding, like Fauquier and Smooth Rock Falls—all of them—have been knocking at the door of the government for the last two years and no dollars have fallen from heaven.

I come back to the point that you must be pretty frustrated, as a Conservative, that the Liberals are having more political success than you did as a Conservative government moving forward an agenda that, quite frankly, is pretty right-wing. I understand your frustration, and my heart feels for you, but at the end of the day, hmm.

Mrs Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): I listened to the comments from the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke with a great deal of interest. I'd like to offer a few comments.

His comments on Bill 8 were really interesting because, having been somebody who hung around this Legislature a lot as a representative of school boards, one of the really frustrating things was the occasions on which a major piece of legislation would drop and nobody had any hearings. There was no attempt to consult. There was nothing we could do.

Mr Tascona: You were talking to me. We had a meeting.

Mrs Sandals: But did you listen?

We did things differently. Bill 8 was tabled. We have had weeks and weeks of hearings, and we listened to what the public said. That's what the public wants. It wants a government that listens. All of us who have constituency offices know that most of the calls that you get in your constituency office are from people with problems, people with complaints.

Do you know what happened in my constituency office last week? We got a call, totally voluntary, from somebody who was representing the nurses. Do you know what she wanted to say? She wanted to say thank you. This is the first time in eight and a half years that anybody has listened to nurses. This is the first time that anybody has—

Mr O'Toole: Oh, baloney. Where have they been? That's absolute bunk.

Mrs Sandals: I'm telling you what the nurses said. I didn't make this up. This is the first time that anybody has listened. That nurse didn't have to call, but she called and said, "Thank you for listening."

Mr Murdoch: I first want to tell you, Mr Speaker, is that I met many of your ratepayers in Cuba in the last couple of weeks and they were talking about you. I just wanted to mention that to you.

I also want to thank our speaker from Renfrew on bringing out many of the deficiencies that are happening with this Liberal government that we have today. Many of the promises that they've broken—I understand, and the member from Timmins mentioned how it's frustrating. It's not frustrating to be here. If there's any frustration, it's trying to see the next promise that the Liberals are going to break. That's frustrating. The member from Timmins talks about us being frustrated. Well, he was in that NDP government that put us in debt that we're still trying to get out of.

One of the things that is a problem is this fabricated \$5.6-billion deficit that the Liberals think they have. They've created this, if there's any deficit at all. They started about six months ago and did nothing to correct it. If they didn't correct it, I guess we will find out when the budget comes as to what they've done.

I'd like to talk a bit too about the bear hunt. Yes, it was Mike Harris who cancelled the bear hunt. Yes, I was upset about it, and yes, a lot of the members here were. It was wrong then, and it's wrong now.

This is what happens. The government can complain about things that we did wrong; they get to be the government, and then it's their job to change those things. Unfortunately, that's one of the things that the Liberals haven't changed. You had a chance to do it—even the minister wanted to do it—but here we're back again to this old type of governing from the Premier's office. We had that; certainly the NDP had that.

Hon David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): You had that?

Mr Murdoch: Yes, we did. I won't disagree with you there.

But I heard a government go out there day after day after day and say that this wouldn't happen with them. What happened? You got in to government and you're no better. You're doing the same thing. Everything's coming out of the Premier's office. He tells you when to jump, and you say, "How high, sir?" Same thing with the bear hunt. The minister wanted to change that, and you wouldn't let him.

Mr Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): I'm glad the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound brought up the bear hunt. We have a great bear out in Mississauga, and that bear is named Hazel McCallion. For eight straight terms, that great bear has been elected. That great bear has been elected—

Mr Colle: She's a grizzly.

Mr Fonseca: She is a grizzly. That great bear has been elected because she listens to the people. She knows what the people want. During this election, she came out and said, "It's not about taxes; it's about services, what you represent as a government and what you're giving back to the people." Well, the previous government decided that it would dismantle education, dismantle health care, not provide more energy that was needed for this province. This government instead has taken a different direction, a direction of leadership by listening to the people, by consulting with the people of Ontario and prioritizing where we're going, and by setting up and actually creating a health care system.

The previous government didn't want a system. The previous government actually was so ashamed to say they were government. They didn't want to be government. The previous government was about dismantling, breaking things up. We are about building, creating bridges, not burning bridges. We are about bringing an education system what it needs, looking after the needs

of the people of Ontario, not a government that is without a vision, a slash-and-burn government. Shame on the previous government. We are a government that is listening to the people, here to create for the people and leading Ontario to prosperity.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has two minutes in summary.

Mr Yakabuski: I'd like to thank my colleagues from Timmins-James Bay, Guelph-Wellington, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and Mississauga East for their responses and comments. They talked about different things, but as usual they just danced around, except for my colleague from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who went right to the meat of the matter, as he always does. The member for Mississauga East talked about the education plans of the new government. Yes, we got the promise of a 20-per-classroom limit in the primary grades. We're still waiting for that, and we're still waiting for those nurses. Do you know what else we're waiting for? We're waiting for police officers.

One of the big problems we've got in Toronto right now is crime and illegal guns. This government wants to just dance around that issue. You're not going to solve the issue of crime in Toronto if you're not willing to put more policemen on the street. In his motion today, the Premier talked about standing up and being counted and facing the cowards. Well, that's what we've got to do in Toronto: face those cowards who are committing these crimes with guns. Stop supporting your federal bosses on the long gun registry and put some money into police on the street in Toronto, where these crimes could be prevented.

Right now they're dancing all around the issue. They don't want to face it, but they know the only way to prevent crime is to have more people out there who can prevent crime. We've got to stop handcuffing the police in Toronto and let them do their job. But I can tell that this government is not going to do it. They don't want to face the true problems. They'll dance around that problem just like they dance around all these other problems. But they're not going to be able to dance around the legacy of broken promises for much longer.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm pleased to see so much spirit at the end of the day, but alas, it's past 6 of the clock. This House is adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1802.

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Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie
Caplan, Hon / L'hon David (L)	Don Valley East / -Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint
Chambers, Hon / L'hon Mary Anne V. (L)	Scarborough East / -Est	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
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Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Peter (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Gerretsen, Hon / L'hon John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
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Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	Chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
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Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London Centre-Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires

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McGuinty, Hon / L'hon Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / -Sud	Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for seniors / adjoint parlementaire au ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa-Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon / L'hon Madeleine (L)	Ottawa-Vanier	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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Milloy, John (L)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron-Bruce	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Food / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Mossop, Jennifer F.(L)	Stoney Creek	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Culture
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / -Nord	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
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Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward-Hastings	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Éducation
Peters, Hon / L'hon Steve (L)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Peterson, Tim (L)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs
Phillips, Hon / L'hon Gerry (L)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
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Racco, Mario G. (L)	Thornhill	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London-Fanshawe	
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Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Renouveau de l'infrastructure publique
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	
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Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph-Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Smith, Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Smitherman, Hon / L'hon George (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Hon / L'hon Greg (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	
Takhar, Hon / L'hon Harinder S. (L)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
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Wilkinson, John (L)	Perth-Middlesex	
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Wong, Tony C. (L)	Markham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / -Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
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