



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 29 March 2004

Lundi 29 mars 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 March 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 mars 2004

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CANADIANS
FOR A GENOCIDE MUSEUM

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I rise in the House today to confirm my support of Canadians for a Genocide Museum, a worthy organization that held a reception last week here at Queen's Park. CGM was established to promote inclusive and equitable education on genocide. As their name suggests, CGM is also interested in establishing a federally funded Canadian genocide museum.

This organization came to Queen's Park to raise awareness of genocide. In spite of the fact that genocide has occurred all too commonly throughout human history, it is not included in our school curriculum. Attending the CGM reception was an eye-opening experience. Prior to this reception, I personally was not aware that so many different groups had been affected by genocide. In fact, CGM itself includes membership from 43 non-profit associations, representing 27 ethnocultural Canadian communities.

Representing the PC caucus, I was pleased to speak at this reception and inform the audience of over 100 people that I'll work to ensure that Bill 4 is reintroduced in the Legislature. Sponsored by former PC MPP Bob Wood, Bill 4 would have recognized the week beginning on the fourth Monday in March of each year as Genocide Memorial Week.

I reiterate my personal commitment to making sure that the fine work of Bob Wood is continued so that genocide and its everlasting impacts are never forgotten. History has too often repeated itself with unforgivable acts against various ethnic, racial and religious groups in our society. These acts must be remembered in order for them never to happen again.

HATE CRIMES

Mr Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge): I rise today to speak with some regret about recent hate crimes against the Muslim community in the city of Pickering. Early last Thursday morning, vandals spray-painted graffiti and tried to burn down the Al-Mahdi Islamic Centre. If that was not enough, on Friday, the

very next day, someone left a message on their answering machine, calling the Muslim community "criminal."

The Al-Mahdi centre has been part of the community for more than 10 years, and I am proud to say that the broader community is standing by them at this terrible time. Yesterday, I participated in a gathering at the centre attended by an overflow crowd, with community, government and faith leaders bringing messages of support and hope.

In the aftermath of last week's hate crimes against the Jewish community, it is clear that any cowardly attack against one community is an attack on us all. The actions of a few, inspired by ignorance and hate, have no place in Ontario and no place in Canada. I want to assure the Muslim community that we stand by them at this time.

FABRY DISEASE

Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): On April 25, about 20 Ontarians suffering from Fabry disease, a rare and life-threatening genetic disorder, will no longer have access to the enzyme replacement therapy Fabrazyme. On that date, their compassionate supply ends. Fabrazyme, recently approved by Health Canada, has significantly improved the health, and quality and length of life, of these individuals. Despite the fact that many people have written to the Minister of Health, Mr Smitherman, for funding to continue Fabrazyme, there has been absolutely no response.

Today, I have written to the minister on behalf of these Ontarians, to request that he follow the lead of Alberta and commit that treatment will not be interrupted and that Ontarians receiving the products through compassionate supply will continue to receive coverage. Without this treatment, the lives of Fabry patients are at risk. As the disease progresses, patients develop strokes, heart attacks and kidney failure, and will face premature death.

On behalf of all Ontarians who suffer from Fabry disease, I urge the Minister of Health to end the anxiety and make the commitment today to ensure the continuation of ERT on compassionate grounds until such time that a final decision on approval is made. Please listen to the plea of one patient who writes, "Please help save my life." Minister, will you take immediate action?

CECILIA ZHANG

Mr Tony C. Wong (Markham): It is with a heavy heart that I rise today. This weekend, more than five long

months after she disappeared, Cecilia Zhang's lifeless body was discovered in a Mississauga ravine. Tomorrow would have been the little girl's 10th birthday.

Cecilia, a bright, beautiful, smiling girl, was much beloved by her friends, neighbours and all who knew her. When she was abducted from her North York home in October, her neighbours and her city pulled together, distributing yellow ribbons and missing child posters. Toronto police worked around the clock to find the little girl and bring her kidnappers to justice. Generous Torontonians posted reward money to bring Cecilia home. Her family never gave up hope for her safe return.

Tragically, Cecilia won't be coming home. Our city has had to face too many tragedies in the last few years. Too many of our children have been taken from us.

Earlier today, I met with Cecilia's parents and conveyed condolences on behalf of this Legislature. The family is struggling with the terrible, terrible grief of losing a child, grief that most of us, thankfully, will never have to understand.

I know that I speak on behalf of David Caplan, the MPP for her community, and all members of the House when I say that our thoughts and prayers are with the Zhang family as they begin to cope with their tragic loss.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I'm calling on the McGuinty government to stop construction of a new town on the Niagara Escarpment. Yes, you heard me: a town on the Niagara Escarpment. We're talking about an international treasure, a UNESCO world heritage site. Yet, for the first time since the province began regulating land use on the escarpment in June 1975, the Liberals are about to allow a whole new town to be built. Castle Glen Development Corp is poised to build 1,600 new residential units, plus 300 commercial accommodation units and three golf courses in the town of The Blue Mountains. Three days before their term ended, Conservative appointees to the Niagara Escarpment Commission signed an agreement to allow the new town, and it appears as though the Liberals are going to let it go ahead.

1340

This is scandalous and has to be stopped. The Liberals promised to stop sprawl and protect the environment. They already broke their promise on protecting the Oak Ridges moraine. But if this is allowed to go ahead, it will make their commitment to their new greenbelt legislation awfully hollow.

Environmentalists like the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment and Environmental Defence Canada, among others, have been desperately trying to stop it. Unfortunately, the understanding is that while the new town is subject to an upcoming OMB hearing, the commission's agreement likely means the board will approve it. That leaves no choice but for the Minister of Municipal Affairs to use a minister's zoning order to stop this po-

tentially environmentally devastating development dead in its tracks.

THUNDER BAY REGIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mr Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I rise today to pay tribute and offer my congratulations to the city of Thunder Bay, its residents, the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, the regional hospital foundation and the many residents, businesses and municipalities of northwestern Ontario.

In the mid-1990s, the Health Services Restructuring Commission tried to impose upon the community of Thunder Bay an ill-suited solution for the rationalization of hospital services for Thunder Bay and the surrounding communities. Only after a long, difficult struggle and the efforts of many individuals and community groups did we win the ability to move forward on a new hospital. Community leaders like Don Caddo and Keith Jobbitt, the regional hospital foundation, a city council that endorsed a plebiscite result to levy \$25 million on to the municipal tax base, strong leadership from hospital administration, the hospital boards, and the efforts of hundreds of other volunteers in our communities helped to move this project forward.

The regional health sciences centre opened its doors to patients on February 22, 2004. This regional hospital will have a catchment area larger than all of southern Ontario, approximately the size of France, responsible for a population of approximately 275,000 people. Our region will have contributed in the area of \$54 million to the construction of this new facility, representing something in the order of \$375 per person.

In an area facing some severe economic challenges and an aging and declining population, this contribution and fundraising effort was nothing short of heroic. We recognize that there are significant ongoing challenges regarding health services within northwestern Ontario and we are committed to working toward sustainable solutions that will serve the needs of all the residents of our region.

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Recently, while visiting Sudbury, the Premier suggested the need for a toll on Highway 69. This is a statement coming from the same government that said during the election that there would be no tolls on highways that lack alternative routes.

I, like many of my constituents in the beautiful riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, am left asking some questions. For example, what is the alternative route to Sudbury from Parry Sound? Is the expectation that people who don't want to pay the toll will make their way to Sudbury via North Bay? That doesn't sound like an alternative route to me.

What we have here is not only a serious threat to the well-being of the north but also another broken Liberal

promise. The north has been left out of the benefits of Ontario's economic development for too long. The north did not participate in the economic boom of the late 1990s that southern Ontario enjoyed. It faces many challenges to economic growth.

Highway 69 is a vital link between the north and south, and the more accessible this highway is, the stronger this link will be. Our people rely on it, our businesses rely on it, and the future of our economic development relies on it. A toll on Highway 69 closes the north off once again from economic development and will work against all other northern initiatives of the future. Tolling Highway 69 not only represents backing out of an election promise but represents backing out of the north.

NEW CANADIANS

Ms Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): I recently attended an event in my riding in which a woman leaned over to me and said, "This must be the most enjoyable part of your job." And she was right. In fact, it was one of the most pleasant and meaningful events I have attended in the last six months.

On Friday, February 27, the Salvation Army opened the doors of its new and lovely facility on Winterberry Drive in Stoney Creek to 62 new Canadians and their families. People from 26 different countries gathered to be sworn in as Canadian citizens. They came to Canada for many different reasons, some leaving behind family and friends to pursue an opportunity, some fleeing situations and hardships that are unimaginable to many of us; each person coming for a different reason.

The judge attending was one Judge Frank Hayden. He spoke for about 20 minutes to the assembly. He talked of Canada's natural beauty and its resources, its abundant infrastructure of support, its opportunities. He talked of the tolerance, the freedoms and the rights that we cherish, and he talked about responsibility—the responsibility to uphold and protect all that we hold dear and that we at times take for granted. Then he greeted each new Canadian. Each time his voice held a note of spontaneous delight and genuine delight. He shook each one's hand warmly, asked where they'd come from and how they were faring here, exactly as we would all wish to be greeted upon arriving home.

FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I want to say that Christina Blizzard was right in her column last week on the March 24, in an article entitled "Grin 'n' Bear It: Shafted by Their Federal Cousins, Ontario Grits Put on a Happy Face." In the last federal budget from Ralph Goodale, not one dime of an increase in permanent health care funding for the province of Ontario, no significant tax cuts, and what do we hear from Premier McGuinty? He grins and bears it.

I was on CityTV last week talking about the budget, and Finance Minister Goodale did come forward, and he

said that the Canadian television fund would be fully replenished. Well, it is a matter of setting priorities. I don't think there's going to be dancing in the streets over the Canadian television fund at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital when they want funds to build the brand new hospital. I don't think they're raising a glass in a toast in the Niagara region, waiting since September or October for a promise to deliver ambulance dispatch to Niagara. I don't think there's going to be dancing in the streets in Fort Erie and Port Colborne; they're desperately trying to recruit new doctors when not one dime of federal dollars for a permanent increase in health care funding was part of that budget.

We heard a lot from Premier McGuinty that by playing nice with his federal cousins in Ottawa, Ontario taxpayers would be rewarded. Instead, as Blizzard said, they've been shafted. What do the Liberals do? They put on a happy face. This leadership vacuum in Ontario has left our health care coffers empty.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that on Wednesday, March 24, the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated March 24, 2004, of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MPP SALARY FREEZE ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004 SUR LE GEL DES TRAITEMENTS DES DÉPUTÉS

Mr McGuinty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 42, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act to freeze the salaries of members of the Assembly until the end of fiscal year 2004-2005 / Projet de loi 42, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative en vue de geler les traitements des députés à l'Assemblée jusqu'à la fin de l'exercice 2004-2005.

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

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr Speaker, I will be delivering a more formal statement shortly, but suffice it to say that this bill essentially provides that the salary of a member shall remain as it was on October 2, 2003, the date of the last provincial election, until April 1, 2005.

1350

SANDY'S LAW
(LIQUOR LICENCE AMENDMENT), 2004

LOI SANDY DE 2004
(MODIFICATION DE LA LOI
SUR LES PERMIS D'ALCOOL)

Mr Parsons moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to amend the Liquor Licence Act by requiring signage cautioning pregnant women that the consumption of alcohol while pregnant is the cause of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les permis d'alcool en exigeant que soient placées des affiches avertissant les femmes enceintes que la consommation d'alcool pendant la grossesse cause le syndrome d'alcoolisme fœtal.

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

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): This bill amends the Liquor Licence Act by requiring all premises from which liquor is sold or served to display signs cautioning women who are pregnant or who might be pregnant that the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy is often the cause of fetal alcohol syndrome, which can result in the child being developmentally handicapped or having a reduced lifespan.

The short title of this bill is Sandy's Law, in honour of our son Sandy, who died on January 29 from the effects of fetal alcohol syndrome.

ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
OF ONTARIO ACT, 2004

Mr Peterson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr3, An Act respecting the Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario.

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

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
TRAITEMENTS DES DÉPUTÉS

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I rise to speak to a very important bill I introduced just a few moments ago. This bill is about leading by example. It's about taking responsible action. Most of all, it's about doing the right thing. This bill, if passed, would have the effect of freezing MPPs' pay from the date of the last election, October 2, 2003, until April 1, 2005.

Let me tell you what this bill is intended to do and what it is not intended to do.

L'objectif de ce projet de loi est de démontrer que nous, en tant que députés de l'Assemblée législative, comprenons très bien la situation dans laquelle nous devons donner l'exemple.

The intention of this bill is to demonstrate that we as members of this Legislature understand the context in which we lead. Members will know that this government inherited a deficit of \$5.6 billion, plus additional risk of \$2.2 billion for things such as hospital and children's aid society deficits.

Many of these risks are now materializing. As I've said in the past, this means we must all temper our requests of the public purse and the hard-working Ontarians who finance that purse.

We did not create this context. Still, it is in this context that we must govern our province and it is in this context that we must govern ourselves.

I know that government members support this bill, following a discussion that I can say would have made Ontarians very proud. We're urging all members of this Legislature to support the passage of this bill. This bill is our way, as legislators, of recognizing the fiscal reality facing Ontario.

There are some things that this bill is not, and I believe it's important to put them on the record.

It is not a signal that we are forevermore removing from the Integrity Commissioner the difficult task of setting MPPs' pay. We appreciate the commissioner's work on this matter, but at this time, in this context, we have a responsibility as legislators.

This bill is not a signal that we intend to legislate wage settlements for our partners. We do not. We respect the collective bargaining process.

It is not in any way intended to undervalue the work of MPPs. Just the opposite is true: We believe it is a privilege and indeed a high honour to serve the people of Ontario in this their House.

Mais avec les privilèges et les honneurs viennent les obligations de donner le ton en donnant l'exemple.

With that privilege and honour, I was saying, comes an obligation to lead and to lead by example. We simply cannot ask so many Ontarians to temper their requests and give ourselves a raise of any size at the same time. In today's fiscal context, saying no to a pay hike for MPPs is simply the right thing to do, and this bill, if passed, will do just that.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Responses? Member from Grenville.

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): Close, but no cigar.

It's always difficult to speak to the issue of MPPs' remuneration or benefits, as we all know it's awkward, to say the least. That's one of the reasons why this assembly moved in the last term to remove those kinds of decisions from this place and from politics, if you will, not unlike the federal government, where they have tied salary

increases, I believe, to increases of the Supreme Court justices or one of the levels of the courts; I am not sure which it is. In any event, we know that it has been taken out of the hands of politicians and politics, and for good reason: because we know how difficult it is to stand in our place and discuss this kind of an issue and make a case for any positive change to the remuneration or benefits for members of this assembly. It is difficult, and I certainly know from personal experience of 23-plus years in this place that there is not a lot of political appetite for that kind of conversation, to say the least.

In any event, the Premier and the Liberal government have made a decision. It's not a surprise to us on this side, given the government's alarmist rhetoric and their unwillingness to make a sincere and concerted effort to balance this year's budget. What was a surprise was the Premier's initial support for the Integrity Commissioner's recommendations and then the two weeks-plus it took him to perform another flip-flop.

Tellingly, this is the first time since the October election that Dalton McGuinty has made a decision on spending restraint, and a very modest attempt indeed. This bill is evidence that the governing Liberals have no will, no plan, to deal with the alleged fiscal challenges, which they hide behind each time they defend breaking yet more Liberal promises.

It has now been almost six months since the Liberals were elected, and in six months we have seen nothing but posturing, endless blame games and a complete lack of leadership from the Premier on any issue. In six months, we have seen 20 broken election promises from the Liberals, and counting. There is endless talk from the government benches of fiscal challenges, yet no action.

Taxpayers might well ask, "What does this legislation achieve?" This is a modest cost saving for the government and taxpayers—less than \$300,000 on a \$72-billion budget. This is essentially political window dressing. This is a relatively easy initiative for the government, given the fact that the vast majority of Liberal members have received significant pay increases to recognize their roles as whips, members of cabinet, committee chairs etc. The real test will come in the weeks ahead, when they have to deal with the organizations and the union bosses who supported them in the election and in getting into government. Then we'll see the real test, in terms of their commitment to fiscal responsibility.

1400

I think it's only fair, in the minute left to me—there was a column in the weekend Toronto Star written by Helen Henderson. Ms Henderson repeated and reinforced misperceptions with respect to the remuneration, salaries and benefits of members of this House. I think what's occurred in this place over the past 10 or 11 years should be put on the record.

Under the Rae government, MPPs took a 5% reduction in salary under the social contract. In the first year of the Harris government, members took another reduction of 5%. We did away with committee per diems, tax-free allowances and with the defined benefit pension plan for

members of the Legislature. I think those should all be put on the record, because they're certainly not well recognized by the public.

If anyone is to blame for the situation, it's everyone who is party to the deliberations in the House. We're seeing the reaction from the government members now. That's the reality. Members of this Legislature have shown remarkable restraint, given the economic challenges we've all faced. We've done a good job, and we're continuing to do a good job.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Before the second response—member for Kenora-Rainy River, bear with me a minute—there is a lot of heckling coming from the government side. I'd like to hear—

Interjections.

The Speaker: I don't need an echo from the opposition side either. I'd like to hear the member from Kenora-Rainy River's response.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): It's always useful to be able to recite a little history when events like this happen. I've always believed that MPPs cannot contract out of taking responsibility for their own pay. I have always believed that we should never be allowed to say to the Integrity Commissioner or someone else, "You fix the MPPs' pay," while the salaries of the lowest-paid remain frozen, while the income of those who have to rely on social assistance remains frozen, and while nurses and teachers and ambulance attendants are told something like 2% or less. I've always believed that. But I want all those workers out there to know what the Liberals apparently believed.

Here is a quote from Dwight Duncan, who is now House leader and Minister of Energy. On June 19, 2001, he said: "We think it's unseemly that MPPs should be voting for their own pay increases.... We believe the proper way of dealing with this is to have somebody make an independent and binding decision." That's what Dwight Duncan believed then. But when you're Liberal, you can just change your opinion overnight; it doesn't matter.

Then there's David Ramsey, now Minister of Natural Resources. What did he have to say? "I'm glad, finally, we're having this debate, because for years that I've been here, politicians have gone through the angst of how do you set your own salary. It's very unseemly...." That's what he believed then. Obviously he doesn't believe that now.

And then this quote from the now Premier, Dalton McGuinty, in the Canadian Press on August 6, 2003: "If Ernie Eves wants to ask the Integrity Commissioner to review view MPPs' compensation, we will abide by the commissioner's decision." Or this quote: "Our bottom line is that this issue should be decided by an independent third party—not by politicians looking to score political points...." Who said that? Dalton McGuinty, in the Toronto Star on August 6, 2003. Quote: "I will not interfere with this impartial, objective third party." Who said that? Dalton McGuinty, July 29, 2003.

You know what's nice about being a Liberal? What you said yesterday, if you don't like it tomorrow, you just ignore it.

I want to give some more context. Do you know what the Integrity Commissioner had recommended when Mr McGuinty and all the other Liberals said, "We're fine with this"? He recommended a 25% pay increase. These people were prepared to continue to see a freezing of the minimum wage, a freezing of assistance for those who have to rely upon social assistance. They were prepared to tell nurses and teachers and ambulance paramedics "2% or less," as long as they contracted their own salary out to the Integrity Commissioner, and if he ordered 25% or 20%, they were happy. They were very happy.

What we're seeing today is not a statement of principle from the Liberal government. It couldn't be that, because two weeks ago, when the Integrity Commissioner announced 2.7%, they said, "That's fine." No, what happened is this: The light went on. They realized that if they accepted 2.7%, all those hard-working people out there, who in many cases have had to do with 0% in some years or 1% when the inflation rate was running at 2%, were going to come back and say, "OK; 3%—we take you up on that. Three percent this year, 3% last year."

This isn't about a high-minded principle. This is again about a Liberal party and a Liberal government that, if it suits them, will change their promise tomorrow, which leads me to ask the question, did you guys think about anything that you said before the election? We knew there was going to be a deficit. The now Chair of Management Board said there was a risk of at least a \$5-billion deficit. The now Minister Of Community Safety said there was a \$5-billion deficit. The Fraser Institute said there was at least a \$4.5-billion deficit.

You just change your mind whenever you feel like it. That's why this isn't going to work. People see through it.

VISITORS

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to welcome the mayor of Hamilton, Mr Larry Di Ianni, who's in the gallery.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I'd also like to welcome you too, and I was about to do that. Thank you very much.

Could I ask members also to welcome L'Atrium School from Amersfoort, Netherlands? The school specializes in English-language and bilingual studies. A group of 13 students from Holland and 10 students from Vaughan Secondary School, I understand, are here with us today. Would you all join me in welcoming them?

Just so that I can more or less coordinate everything, those who would wish to have anyone recognized could pass it to me and, at this time, I will do the recognition. I appreciate that very much.

CECILIA ZHANG

Hon David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am rising to seek unanimous consent as a result of the incredibly sad news of the discovery of little Cecilia Zhang's body over the course of the weekend. Our hearts go out to the family of this wonderful and special child, and I request, respectfully, unanimous consent for a moment of silence to remember this very short and precious life and to offer our thoughts and prayers to the Zhang family.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Do I have unanimous consent for a moment of silence, recognizing that? At this time, we ask members to rise, and people in the gallery to do so too.

The House observed a moment's silence.

1410

ORAL QUESTIONS

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): My question is for my good friend the Premier and it concerns the ethical standards he sets for his administration. Premier, I want to ask you a simple question: Do you feel that removing the Ontario Securities Commission from the jurisdiction of Mr Sorbara is a sufficient response to this scandal?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Yes, I do, I say directly to the member opposite. Again, I'm quite prepared to quote at length from the Integrity Commissioner's letter, but I will spare you that on this particular question. But, absolutely, I think that was the appropriate response, and it happens to be that the Integrity Commissioner agrees with us.

Mr Baird: You say it's sufficient, but in a very public manner on February 26, you stripped your Minister of Finance of his responsibilities for the Ontario Securities Commission. We now learn that under the cover of darkness, behind closed doors, you've also stripped your Minister of Finance of his responsibilities with respect to the Toronto Stock Exchange. If your minister has done nothing wrong, as you have maintained throughout this entire scandal, why did you strip him of responsibility for the Toronto Stock Exchange on March 4, a week after this issue became public?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I say to the member opposite, I understand that you have a continuing interest in this issue, but I honestly feel that under all the circumstances, we have acted in the most appropriate manner, and it happens to be that the Integrity Commissioner agrees with us.

Mr Baird: It was you and your party who promised ethical, open and, most importantly, transparent government. Premier, you've broken all three of those promises to the people of Ontario. We know that on February 26 you stripped your Minister of Finance of his responsi-

bilities for the Ontario Securities Commission. We now learn, more than a week later, that you also stripped him of his responsibilities with respect to the Toronto Stock Exchange. Why did you secretly and behind closed doors, with no notice to the investing public or to the capital markets, strip your Minister of Finance of responsibility for the Toronto Stock Exchange if, as you maintain, he has done absolutely nothing wrong? Would you answer the question, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: It is interesting to note that the member now has a keen and apparently genuine interest in open, ethical and honest government. I would draw to his attention their record with respect to Ontario Hydro. I want to provide the members opposite every assurance that we will not be using OPG or Hydro One as some kind of a personal country club. It is not our intention whatsoever, in any way, shape or form, to hide from the public things that are taking place over at OPG and Hydro One. That's the kind of open, honest and ethical government we're bringing to the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): New question, the member for Nepean-Carleton.

Mr Baird: This is about you, it's about your ethical standards and it's about the way you conduct the business of Ontario.

Premier, it gets worse. Not only a week after this whole scandal became public did you strip the minister of his Ontario Securities Commission responsibilities, but you have also stripped him of his responsibilities with respect to the TSE. But it gets worse. You have not only stripped him of the OSC and the TSE, but you have also stripped him of his responsibilities with respect to the Toronto Futures Exchange, its act and the Commodity Futures Act.

Last week, you said the Integrity Commissioner had ruled that Mr Sorbara had done nothing wrong. You said he was a man of impeccable integrity. You said he had acted responsibly. If that is the case, would you stand in your place, would you address the question and would you tell us why, a week after you stripped him of responsibility for the Ontario Securities Commission, you have stripped him of three more acts and other responsibilities? Would you address the question directly, Premier? Would you stand up and tell us why this order in council of March 4 was done behind closed doors, in secret, under the cover of darkness, and why you didn't report it to the people of Ontario?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Again, this is a matter we've had the opportunity to discuss and indeed to debate at considerable length. This is all part and parcel of the same matter. Nothing has changed. I continue to believe that our Minister of Finance is a person of the utmost integrity who acted appropriately in all the circumstances, and that has been confirmed in writing by the Integrity Commissioner.

Mr Baird: The Premier continues to completely ignore the question. We know that on February 26 he carved off part of the Ministry of Finance with respect to

the Ontario Securities Commission. We know that a week later he carved up responsibilities with respect to the Toronto Stock Exchange. He's also done a further OIC on March 4 with additional responsibilities. I say this very directly to the Premier: The Ministry of Finance is not some sort of Christmas tree that you can carve up day after day to hide the ethical standards of your government. If this Premier continues to take action in this respect, the only thing his Minister of Finance will be responsible for is his own cheque book and a calculator.

Would you do the right thing? Would you stand in your place and admit you've made a mistake? It's still not too late to do the right thing. Would you fire the Minister of Finance until these investigations are complete? Would you do that, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Well, it is passing strange to see the member rising to the defence of the Minister of Finance. He says I should not be removing from him certain responsibilities; they're all part and parcel of the same package. Again, we can spend as much time on this as the member opposite would like, but it's my sense from the people of Ontario that they're very much interested in the upcoming budget, their schools, their health care and the quality of the environment. They're very much interested in a number of other issues. This matter has been addressed time and time again, both by myself and the Integrity Commissioner, and my answers remain the same.

Mr Baird: Premier, you are correct: Your answers remain the same. You continue to stand in your place and stonewall us from answering simple questions about the ethical standards of your administration. The capital markets are entitled to know, the investing public is entitled to know, and taxpayers and voters in the province of Ontario are entitled to know. Why did you wait until March 4, a full week after stripping him of responsibilities for the OSC, to take responsibilities for the Toronto Stock Exchange away from this minister?

I want to ask you another question directly. Did you at any time make any inquiries as to whether the Ministry of Finance, the minister or his political staff intervened in any way, shape or form with the Toronto Stock Exchange and their whole involvement in this affair? Would you address the question directly, Premier? The people of Ontario are entitled to know.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I'm not sure if the fishing season has begun, but I certainly hope the member opposite has obtained the requisite licence.

The long and short of it is this: The Minister of Finance has acted appropriately and responsibly in the circumstances. His behaviour has been approved in every respect by the Integrity Commissioner. I understand that the member opposite has a continuing interest in this. I will continue to provide the same answers. At some point in time, it is my sincere hope that the members opposite will begin to address those issues that weigh heavily on the minds of Ontarians, like their schools, health care and the quality of their environment.

TRANSIT SERVICES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Tomorrow is the 50th anniversary of the Toronto subway system, the TTC. Before the election last year, you and your good friend Paul Martin both said you would give two cents a litre of the provincial gas tax and two cents a litre of the federal gas tax for public transit and municipal transportation. So far, neither of you have delivered.

We understand you're going to make an announcement on transit tomorrow, and my question is this, Premier: Are you going to deliver the two cents a litre of the provincial gas tax or is that going to be another broken promise?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): Let me say that we are keenly interested in developing a good, positive working relationship with our municipalities. We've already made some significant inroads in laying down the groundwork to build on a positive relationship. We look forward to delivering on that particular commitment that the member opposite has raised. The member will know that we specifically said we intend to phase in the two cents of the gas tax over the course of our mandate. We look forward to doing that and look very much forward to making an announcement tomorrow.

1420

Mr Hampton: So we know there won't be two cents a litre tomorrow. But since this government has a record now of breaking promises, I want to be sure there is going to be any new money at all, because in 2001 someone named Mike Harris committed \$100 million a year in new money to the TTC for 10 years. I want to be very specific, Premier. The money that you're going to announce tomorrow: Is it going to be new money in addition to the \$100 million a year, or are you once again trying to take a discredited Conservative program and repackage it and try to pretend it's something new? Will there be any new money and how much, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I can understand the leader of the NDP's eager anticipation for this good news we'll be putting out tomorrow. Let me just say this: We are working in a way that has not been witnessed in this province for 10 or 11 years now. We are working with the federal government and our municipal partners to ensure that they find themselves, at the end of day, on a sustainable footing so they can support their own particular responsibilities. We intend to ensure, tomorrow and beyond that, that the city of Toronto in particular has its needs met when it comes to ensuring that it can provide its own citizens with good-quality public transportation.

AUTISM SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Premier. Premier, before the election you promised to extend IBI treatment to autistic children over the age of six. You said specifically, "I also believe that the lack of

government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six." Then on Friday your Minister of Children and Youth Services delivered a severe blow to Ontario families by announcing that your government now refuses to extend IBI funding to autistic children over the age of six. Premier, why are you breaking your promise to these families?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): I know that the minister who worked very hard on this issue is anxious to speak to this.

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question and I'd like to acknowledge her tenacity and her recognition of this issue. I know she cares a great deal.

We have worked very hard in my ministry to bring out the best possible plan based on research, based on best practices, for children and families with autism. It is a four-point plan. We will double the transition coordinators so that children going to school will have more services, as well as increase the services and the training of people in the schools. We will put \$10 million for more therapy for preschool children because the researchers have told us that if they receive the IBI therapy at the preschool level, transition throughout the rest of their lives will be easier. We will also increase capacity at the university and college level, and, starting next year, have 200 more therapists a year. As well, we will evaluate what we do to see if we can generalize this approach for children with other special needs who are also out there suffering.

Ms Martel: The question to the Premier was, why is your government breaking a specific promise that you made to extend IBI treatment to autistic children over the age of six? That's the type of discrimination that the Conservatives promised and that is the discrimination you promised to end if elected.

I've got families in the gallery today—Norrah Whitney, Luke Burrows, Gail Geller, Sandy Velaconja, Tammi Starr, Elli Carey. All of their children were receiving government-funded IBI and were cut off at the age of six. All of them saw their children making tremendous gains at age five and age six—gains like starting to communicate, beginning to speak, starting to focus, beginning to express their needs and their wants and their desires, beginning to interact with their peers, starting to respond to instruction and even beginning to read and count—all after the age that your so-called experts said IBI wouldn't work. Tell Luke Burrows, today age eight, why your government is going to continue to discriminate against him and deny him the medically necessary IBI treatment that he needs. Tell him today.

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: I thank the member opposite for the question. What the experts are saying is, if we provide the appropriate supports in the school system for children who receive the proper therapy at the preschool level, the children will continue to prosper and

grow. These “so-called experts,” as you call them, are Gordon Floyd, the executive director of Children’s Mental Health Ontario, who says, “I am in complete support”—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): She’s reading the briefing notes from the Tories, Speaker. Tell her to draft new ones.

The Speaker: If you could draft yourself by not responding, maybe you would be able to hear what she’s saying. Could I ask the members of the third party to allow the minister to respond? Thank you.

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: The executive director of Children’s Mental Health Ontario has endorsed this program and says: “I am in support of this program. The minister clearly understands the challenges facing children, youth and their families living with autism.” Peter Szatmari, world-renowned autism expert and acting director of the Offord Centre for Child Studies: “It is a significant and positive step in the right direction.”

I do acknowledge, member opposite, that one of the challenges is at the preschool level. Many of the children did not receive the IBI therapy. That is why we are increasing capacity, so those children at the preschool level can receive the therapy so they can have proper transition to the school system.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Why did you lie to these parents?

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Ms Martel: Shame on all of you. Shame on all of you for denying—

The Speaker: I ask the member to restrain herself and to withdraw the comment she made.

Ms Martel: No, Speaker, I will not withdraw.

The Speaker: New question.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): My question is for the Premier. Usually in this province, the Minister of Finance has responsibility for market integrity and investor protection through the Toronto Stock Exchange. This was true until the Premier and others signed this order in council on March 4, stripping the Minister of Finance of his responsibility for the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The difficulty here is that the shares in Royal continued to trade during a period of more than 60 days from the time the Minister of Finance was informed of the investigation, on December 22. In fact, on December 19, more than 2.6 million shares traded hands, according to the Globe and Mail Report on Business, seven times the average.

The Minister of Finance—his ministry—was informed on December 22. On that day, the Ontario Securities Commission informed Royal—I’m sorry, the OSC informed them—that they should issue a public notice. They didn’t do that. They appealed to the TSE, which permitted them not to disclose. The shares continued to

trade for more than two months. During that time, the Minister of Finance knew about the investigation, but investors in the province of Ontario—who are outside investors, not insiders—did not know about it. And what happened to the stock price? It rose during that period of time, during that secret period of time, to over \$17 by the end of the day on February 24.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Question.

Mr Flaherty: Then disclosure happened that night, on February 24, and the investors lost 20% overnight. These are the outside investors. Do you agree now, Premier—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I’m going to ask that members stop when I ask them to, or I will not allow the answer. You continue to make speeches.

I don’t know whom you asked the question to, because you went on with this.

Mr Flaherty: The Premier.

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I refer the matter to the Chair of the Management Board.

Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The reason I’m responding, of course, and I think it’s very important that the public understand this, is that the Premier assigned responsibility to me for all the legislation affecting securities regulation in Ontario. Naturally, the Toronto Stock Exchange would fall under that.

1430

I will simply repeat what the Integrity Commissioner said, having examined this matter thoroughly. He said that the Minister of Finance acted perfectly properly. It would have been totally inappropriate for the Minister of Finance to make a disclosure that he was aware of an investigation until either the securities commission or the company itself made that public. So the Integrity Commissioner has said the Minister of Finance acted entirely properly. In fact, he followed exactly the right procedure. Secondly, the Premier has assigned to me, as I think the public would expect and frankly I think the opposition would, responsibility for all legislation affecting securities regulation in the province of Ontario, including the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Mr Flaherty: The Chair of Management Board clearly has his facts wrong. He doesn’t realize that there was a separate order in council done a week or so later, after the OIC and after the letter to the Integrity Commissioner. This is the hidden OIC. This is the realization, Premier, that you and the Lieutenant Governor in Council had on March 4, after the Globe and Mail in the Report on Business published news about the stock trading transactions and the responsibility for the TSE. After that you went, “Oops, we’d better take away this and take away that.”

I say to you, Premier, if you decided on March 4 that it was inappropriate for the Minister of Finance to be regulating the TSE, it was inappropriate on December 22. It was a failure to protect investors in the province of Ontario for a period of time of more than 60 days.

Premier, are you going to apply the Gagliano standard here, or are you going to raise the standard of parliamentary democracy and ministerial responsibility?

Hon Mr Phillips: I say to the public of Ontario, firstly, the Integrity Commissioner examined this matter in considerable detail and said the minister acted properly. I would also say, and I'm somewhat surprised that the official opposition doesn't realize, that the appropriate thing to do is exactly what the Premier did. He assigned to me the responsibility for administering all of the securities regulations and legislation in the province of Ontario. It would have been absurd, frankly, to say, "Minister Phillips, you have responsibility for the securities commission but not for the rest of the securities legislation."

The Premier acted entirely properly and, as I say, the Integrity Commissioner has said the Minister of Finance acted properly. The Premier did exactly the right thing in assigning responsibility for all securities legislation to myself.

TUITION

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Students in Ottawa are telling me that they are worried about the affordability of their post-secondary education. I particularly heard from students in law and in medicine who have been saddled with tuition fees that have spiralled out of control thanks to the former government's policy on releasing and deregulating these particular programs and, of course, the underfunding generally speaking.

According to Stats Canada, post-secondary tuition fees have increased by over 131%. That's the largest increase in all of Canada. So, Minister, I want to ask you, can you confirm today whether the freeze that the McGuinty government announced in fact is truly coming to pass for college and university students, and would this freeze include deregulated programs like law and medicine?

Hon Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I want to thank my colleague the member for Ottawa Centre for that question. I have actually been dying to tell the House that we are unwavering. That commitment was made in November in the throne speech, and I am happy to say that the Premier and my colleagues have been entirely behind adhering to that commitment. I am happy to tell the member and the people of Ottawa Centre, and in fact all of the people of Ontario, who I know are very interested in this particular item, that we are committed to the freeze of tuition fees at the regulated and deregulated level.

Mr Patten: Thank you for confirming that. I know that many students throughout the province—not just in Ottawa, where I speak to students from the two universities that I have in my riding. But I'm sure you know that it's not only students, it's also the institutions knowing that if we have a freeze, they will in fact need some compensation so that they will not be hampered and will not be continuing with the underfunding that

they have received from the previous government. So I ask you, will our government be providing our colleges and universities with compensation for this freeze?

Hon Mrs Chambers: I'm happy to respond to my colleague from Ottawa Centre. I'm also happy to say that, yes, there is good news on the way. We are committed to guiding principles that speak to accessibility, affordability and high quality education at the post-secondary level. We will not follow the kind of trends that the previous governments followed. We will not undermine post-secondary education. Everyone has told us that quality requires compensation for the freeze. There is good news on the way. I am looking forward to making that announcement in detail very shortly.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Premier. It relates to his Minister of Finance. I wonder if the Premier fully understands what the role is of the chair of the audit committee of a public company. If he does, we have to wonder why he ever appointed Greg Sorbara as Minister of Finance for this province.

I refer to an October 24 report in the National Post. It speaks very clearly to the fact that Royal Group "admitted that it was in compliance with only about half of the Toronto Stock Exchange's guidelines for corporate governance." That same article makes reference to the fact that your Minister of Finance was chair of the audit committee, who ultimately had responsibility for ensuring compliance with these kinds of regulations.

Can the Premier tell me today, tell the House today, how he can continue to have confidence in Mr Sorbara as the Minister of Finance when he did the kind of job that he's reported to have done at Royal Group, who were offside with more than half of the governance regulations for the Toronto Stock Exchange? Is that the reason that he stripped him of those responsibilities?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Let me just say that I completely reject the innuendo and scurrilous allegations found within the confines of that question. If the member opposite has self-deputized himself as an adjunct member of the RCMP, then perhaps he should inform the House.

But as far as I am concerned, as far as the Integrity Commissioner is concerned—well, why don't I quote again from the letter. He says specifically, "I see no violation of the Members' Integrity Act ... rising out of the judgment call that you made on this issue.... I do not think that you were in a position of conflict."

Again, we believe the matter has been addressed.

Mr Klees: From the very beginning, we were not suggesting that Mr Sorbara is offside with the Integrity Act, and that is precisely why the Premier continues to return to that famous letter. We're talking about parliamentary convention. We're talking about standards of ethics for ministers of the crown. That's what we are talking about here.

That same National Post article makes reference to the fact that Royal Group "spiralled out of control" as to

compensation for its executives. “And as audit committee chairman, it’s a mess Mr Sorbara is, in part, responsible for.” This is the same individual who is in the process of drafting a budget for the province of Ontario. Is he going to do the same for Ontario as he did for Royal Group?

I would ask you, based on the kind of history that your Minister of Finance has as the chair of the audit committee of a corporation that is now under criminal investigation, do you have that same confidence that this man will bring in a credible budget for the province of Ontario?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Yes, I do.

1440

PROPERTY TAXATION

IMPÔTS FONCIERS

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Ma question s’adresse au ministre des Finances. Minister, many constituents of mine have been contacting my office regarding the reclassification of their property assessment. More specifically, maple syrup producers were told that new rules would permit MPAC to reclassify small maple syrup producers from agricultural to industrial. This change would likely put family-operated maple syrup producers out of business, thus weakening an important part of a Canadian heritage, our ever-so-popular maple syrup.

On behalf of rural Ontarians—more specifically, the good constituents of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell—can you please tell the House what is being done for maple syrup producers in Ontario who still fear the possible reclassification.

L’hon. Greg Sorbara (ministre des Finances): Je suis très content de répondre aux demandes de mon collègue de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell.

I should say first of all that I want to publicly thank my parliamentary assistant, Mike Colle, who accepted our colleague’s invitation to come to the riding and hear very specifically the concerns of those who own and produce that wonderful spring syrup called maple syrup.

On March 10, we made an announcement that took some immediate steps in response to what we felt was the inappropriate classification and assessment of maple syrup bushes. We have suspended any further classification. We’ve invited those who have already been reclassified to make an appeal of those classifications. We are bringing the parties together to develop new criteria to make sure that in future the classification and the assessment are appropriate.

Mr Lalonde: Thank you, Minister, for reassuring maple syrup producers, and a special thanks to your PA, Mike Colle, for taking the time to listen to my constituents. It is clear to me that the McGuinty government is listening by working with Ontarians.

Minister, trailer park owners are also concerned that they are assessed for each individual camper and trailer in their park on a yearly basis even though some of these trailer parks are open only five to six months a year.

Ceci étant dit, serait-il possible que le ministre des Finances étudie la possibilité que les—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. I’m having difficulty hearing for the shouting matches that are going across here and I’d like to hear the member. May he proceed, then, and I ask for co-operation on both sides.

M. Lalonde: Merci, monsieur le Président. Je vais répéter ma question.

Ceci étant dit, serait-il possible que le ministre des Finances étudie la possibilité que les évaluations foncières futures reflètent la réalité que certains terrains de camping ne sont pas ouverts à l’année longue?

Hon Mr Sorbara: I would love to be able to blame all the problems I inherited as Minister of Finance on the previous administration, and in this case I can, because they allowed the retroactive assessment and taxation of trailer parks over the past—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Sorbara: I don’t think they want to hear this, sir.

Over their cacophony, let’s summarize what we did. We have suspended the assessments. We have said that the assessments will apply for the first time in this taxation year, and we are taking steps to make sure that those assessments are fair, that they’re done in a timely fashion and that they’re done in advance so that the owners of these lands can pass on appropriate costs to the users of the trailers who place their trailers on these lands. I think that’s progress.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Premier. Before the election, you crowned yourself as the education Premier. You said that kids couldn’t wait for safer schools, more textbooks or help in the classroom, and parents agreed.

People for Education recently announced that unless you keep your promise and put more money into education right away, we will see a bigger crisis under the Liberals than we saw under the Conservatives. The Toronto Parent Network says that students are starting this school year with less. Premier, will you put \$1.5 billion in education now, or will you break your promise to parents and children of this province?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I want to thank the member for his question. It’s with a great deal of pride that I can remind him not only of the fabulous work being done by the Minister of Education but of some of the initiatives we have already taken. We have cancelled the private school tax credit—which, by the way, this member and his party voted against. In addition, we’ve invested \$112 million in literacy and numeracy programs for those children who are most at risk. We restored local democracy in Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton. There is a

lengthy list. I look forward to a supplementary from the member.

Mr Marchese: You said you were the education prince. You said you would match Rozanski and do better. Above and beyond, you guys said, "We need \$1.5 billion to match Rozanski." But last week in the finance committee Liberals MPPs voted down \$1 billion for education. Now you will have us believe that \$112 million will solve the problem. Look, \$1.5 billion is what parents are asking for; \$1.5 billion is what schools need. Kids can't wait. When you were in opposition you and your minister used to say that kids couldn't wait for the extra money. Are you now saying they can?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I appreciate the elevation to some kind of royalty. Let me provide the member opposite every possible assurance that over the ensuing four years our children in their public schools will find themselves in a significantly better position, whether we're talking about test scores, class size or the morale of those people who earn their living day in and day out teaching inside our schools. At the end of the day, the people of Ontario will be blessed with a public education system which inspires the confidence not only of parents but the teachers who earn their living there every day.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): My question is to the Premier. What process have you put in place to immediately be informed should your finance minister, his actions or his decisions as a member of the board or chair of the audit committee of the Royal Group come under investigation by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, the RCMP or the Ontario Securities Commission?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): We want a hydro question.

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Ask about hydro.

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I can understand why the members opposite are reluctant to ask about hydro, for example.

I will assure him again that I have taken a good deal of time to look at this matter. I believe that I have acted responsibly, as did the Minister of Finance, and that has been confirmed by the Integrity Commissioner.

Mr Hudak: Premier, let's be frank. Other than your morning newspaper clipping service, you've made no effort whatsoever to stay on top of the developing scandal or new revelations concerning your finance minister or the criminal investigations into the Royal Group. Your finance minister himself had a self-imposed, self-determined blackout period on telling you what was up. If it wasn't for the morning newspapers, you never would have known. Your approach to maintaining the integrity of the position of finance minister in your cabinet is to firmly shut your eyes and cover your ears.

It's time to show leadership, to open your eyes. I ask you to put a process in place today and sign a letter to the

Integrity Commissioner, Justice Coulter Osborne, that the moment the finance minister, his actions or decisions as a member of that company come under investigation by any of the three agencies, you would know immediately and the Legislative Assembly would know immediately. We need to maintain the integrity of the position of finance minister in this House. Will you sign the letter, Premier?

1450

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member is critical of the Minister of Finance for failing to disclose that he had been made aware of the OSC investigation. I want to remind the member of the specific treatment of that particular issue by the Integrity Commissioner. He said: "Put bluntly, it would have been manifestly wrong for you to involve yourself or your ministry in any aspect of the OSC's investigation of Royal, or in any OSC investigation. In particular it would have been wrong for you to have taken it upon yourself to disclose, or to cause the disclosure of the OSC/Royal investigation." The minister did the right thing in the circumstances. I believe that is what he did, as did the Integrity Commissioner.

IMMUNIZATION

Mr Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North): I rise to ask a question of the Honopurable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Immunization is widely considered to be a cost-effective health intervention for improving health, reducing suffering and preventing premature deaths—something I can speak to personally, having vaccinated thousands of children over the past decade and a half.

Several months ago, the Provincial Auditor expressed concern about immunization levels in Ontario, noting that some 15% of children in this province had not received all required immunizations by the age of seven. I know our government is taking a more proactive and preventive approach to health care than previous governments and that we are also being more co-operative. What are we doing to ensure that our children are protected from preventable diseases?

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): This government has identified the challenge of making Ontarians the healthiest Canadians. To do that, we need to invest more of our resources in community-based services and in preventive measures like immunization.

It's right to say that the Provincial Auditor has commented on Ontario's immunization and suggested there is more we can do. This party and this government agree. We made immunization a centrepiece of our campaign platform, and I'm pleased to say to the honourable member that as a result of recent funding announcements from the federal government, I feel a good deal of assurance that we're going to be able to move forward quickly to offer our kids the necessary protection that immunization offers.

Mr Qadri: A supplementary question to the Minister of Health: What specific illnesses can children across the

province expect to be immunized against in our new immunization program?

Hon Mr Smitherman: The immunizations we've committed to and intend to offer in addition to those that already exist are two: for forms of meningitis and for chicken pox. To put this in layperson's terms, someone told me that the efficiencies of these vaccines will have an impact for our kids similar to the introduction of mandatory child seats. I think that makes the point rather well. This is an appropriate protection that we should offer to all the children in our society, and therefore we will.

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): I have a question for the Premier. During the election campaign, and subsequently in the throne speech as well, you talked about a democratic deficit. You made certain commitments in your election platform that you were going to encourage greater participation on the part of backbenchers in the decisions and business of the Assembly. I have to say that the early signals are not very positive.

Last week at the government agencies committee, a unanimous consent motion was made to call the new vice-chair of the Ontario Securities Commission before the committee for review. That was turned down by the government members of the committee. You've appointed a government member as chair of that committee.

The member for Toronto-Danforth has a resolution coming before general government this week, calling on the Minister of Finance to appear before that committee and explain his activities and the actions surrounding the Royal Group Technologies issue.

Premier, I'm asking what the position of your government members will be in terms of approaching that issue. Will you allow the committee to review that matter?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I know the member is not suggesting that I should somehow interfere in this process.

What I can say with respect to democratic renewal is that we have a minister who has been working very hard to inspire greater confidence in the people of Ontario. We have, in fact, established a Democratic Renewal Secretariat, which is positively revolutionary. We have already introduced legislation that is going to require cabinet ministers to attend at least two thirds of question periods in this House. Beyond that, we have broadened the powers of the Provincial Auditor, who was constrained under the auspices of the previous government. We have done much with respect to democratic renewal, and we look forward to doing so much more.

Mr Runciman: Our party attempted during the fall session to try to work with the government House leader with respect to a programming motion to make this place work better. We respected the position taken by the government in terms of trying to improve the matters around this House.

When I posed this question over a week ago, we were all also concerned by the government House leader's reaction, which was quite comparable to the Premier's: not committing to the review, even though the Minister of Finance has said he was willing to appear. It seems like a lot of rhetoric. The chief whip for the government, Mr Levac, has been quoted as being taken to the woodshed for his comments to a local paper criticizing the Ontario gaming commission. He said he forgot he was now a member of the government and he should have checked with his minister first before commenting.

This is not new business; this is business as usual. We're looking for a change, an improvement in terms of the role of backbenchers and the processes around this place. Is the Premier going to be true to his word and meet his commitment with respect to the people of Ontario, enabling members to have a greater role in the business of this place?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Let me take the opportunity to say how proud I am of every single member of our caucus and how I impose on them a heavy responsibility to represent the views of their constituents. At the end of the day, with respect to the Minister of Finance and as to whether or not any particular committee is going to address any particular issue, that is up to the members who sit on that committee.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Most recently, Ontario's rural municipal leaders met in Toronto at the fifth annual combined Rural Ontario Municipal Association and Ontario Good Roads Association conference, a conference designed to bring together over 1,200 municipally elected officials and staff to discuss common issues.

At this conference, it struck me that many municipalities, including the municipality of North Dundas, which is in my riding, had concerns about the cost of water testing. In North Dundas, for example, this community now spends \$1.2 million yearly to meet the new provincial requirements, with two thirds of the remedial costs being funded by the federal and provincial governments. This means that the municipality's share exceeds half a million dollars in a community of just 12,000 citizens.

Our government is committed to providing Ontarians with safe, reliable drinking water and upholding the recommendations of the O'Connor report. However, in doing so, many smaller municipalities are struggling with financial and social implications, as outlined in the recommendations the representatives from North Dundas provided to you, Minister, at the ROMA-OGRA conference. Minister, what will our government do in order to aid these smaller municipalities in ensuring they have safe, reliable drinking water?

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): The member from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh has asked a very important question. At the

ROMA conference, I had the opportunity to meet with over 40 municipalities that came to me on a variety of environmental issues. Most definitely, many of them are concerned about their ability as municipalities to provide safe drinking water in some of their community facilities. I was able at that time to restate this government's commitment to safe drinking water in Ontario and that we will be implementing all of the Walkerton inquiry recommendations.

Mr Brownell: Minister, I need not remind you how important it is that we heed the concerns of the smaller rural townships of Ontario in terms of financial and social burdens the new water testing legislation may impose.

I am happy to hear that our government is committed to providing all Ontarians with safe, reliable drinking water and that we will work with Ontario municipalities to ensure they may deliver it to their residents. The township of North Dundas thanks the minister for taking these recommendations under consideration and look forward to the ministry's response. Minister, as you take these recommendations under consideration, can you please update the House as to the progress of implementing the recommendations from Justice O'Connor's report?

1500

Hon Mrs Dombrowsky: I want to perhaps finish the first thought, that this government is also committed, as are municipalities. Our goal is to ensure that water out of all of the taps in Ontario is safe. They provided to us some of the areas where they are having a challenge in accomplishing this. My ministry is committed to reviewing the issues they have brought to our attention and hopefully working with them so that we can arrive at a solution that will enable them to do exactly what they want and what this government wants.

Our commitment to implement all of the Walkerton recommendations is firm and steadfast. I am happy to report that at the present time 35 recommendations have been implemented; another 49 are being implemented through legislation such as the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Nutrient Management Act and the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act; and, finally, our source protection initiative that is underway—the implementation committee, the technical experts committee, as well as the white paper that is out there where Ontarians are providing us with their input on how we can best protect water sources in Ontario—will enable us to meet another 37 recommendations from the Walkerton report.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Premier and it's about the promise of democracy that you made to the people of the city of Kawartha Lakes. You will see in the gallery today that many of them are here to hear your answer.

Before the election, you told them that you support local democracy. You promised them that if they voted in a referendum to de-amalgamate, you would honour that

referendum. You said, "We believe that the best solutions are local solutions and that local residents should have the right to decide on the future of their municipality." Well, Mr Premier, on November 10, the people voted on that future. They voted against their amalgamated city and in favour of returning to their pre-existing local government. But you, sir, have changed your mind. You have said no to de-amalgamation, but more importantly and more tragically, you have said no to democracy. Tell the people of Victoria county here today and those watching on television, why have you broken your promise to them?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Minister of Municipal Affairs has much to say on this.

Hon John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): I thank the member for his question and I also welcome the people of Kawartha Lakes who are here today. As I indicated to the council, both when I met with them here in Toronto and later, when I went to Kawartha Lakes on February 18, our primary responsibility is to make sure that our municipalities in Ontario are financially sustainable. I will quote from a letter I gave to the council and an open letter that I wrote to the citizens as well: "It is my responsibility to help ensure that all of Ontario's municipalities are viable, financially sustainable and capable of delivering the services the public deserves. I have reason to believe that a number of the former 16 lower-tier municipalities would experience significant financial challenges, given the present-day roles and responsibilities." I made it quite clear to the council that we are always willing to look at new and innovative methods of delivering services to the people of this province.

Mr Prue: Minister, the people of Ontario expect their government to respect democracy, first and foremost, even when you might not like the result and even when you think it might cost more money. Before the election you said, "Local residents should have the right to decide on the future of their municipality." In your platform, on which you were elected, you said, "We will put an end to dictated municipal amalgamations," and that the only amalgamations you would support would be those approved by a binding local referendum. You also said, "Democracy is rarely convenient and tidy," and that "at its heart, it means that people must have a say in how they are governed and on the future of their communities." Now you've turned your back on these lofty words and you have broken your promise with respect to the will of the people of Kawartha Lakes.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Question.

Mr Prue: I ask you again not about whether this is saving money, but why you have broken your promise. Why have you broken the democratic will of the people of that city?

Hon Mr Gerretsen: Let me repeat once again for the member and for the people of Kawartha Lakes: As I stated in my letter quite categorically, I remain open to considering a proposal from the duly elected council of Kawartha Lakes—who are just as democratically elected

as the referendum that you spoke to—that would meet the reasonable criteria of property tax fairness to all residents and assure fiscal sustainability of all resulting communities.

We are always willing to look at new ways of delivering services to the people of this province so that they can get both the provincial government and the locally elected governments they deserve and demand.

The Speaker: New question.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I'm going to resist jumping into that fray on amalgamation.

I want to come back to a very serious issue where the people of Ontario and their elected representatives are entitled to a specific answer from the Premier. Premier, I have two OICs bearing your signature, dated February 26 and March 4. I asked you earlier in question period if you felt that removing Minister Sorbara from his responsibilities at the OSC was sufficient. You stood in your place and smugly said it was. I want to know why you took another week to remove the Minister of Finance from another central agency in this scandal. Would you stand and specifically address that question?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): This is all part and parcel of the same package, I say again. The Minister of Finance has assumed his responsibilities in a most capable manner. We're very much looking forward to the presentation of his first budget. I can assure you, the member opposite, and the people of Ontario that he will continue to act in a responsible manner as a person of the utmost integrity.

Mr Baird: Premier, you've got the big job. You have the corner office. You have the car and driver. One of the responsibilities that comes with the job is that you come into this place and answer questions to the people of the province of Ontario. What we are seeing is the end of responsible government in the province, where you don't feel a responsibility to answer or to account for any action on the ethical lapses in your government.

Premier, I want to come back to the question that my colleague from Erie-Lincoln asked you. You won't know specifically if your Minister of Finance is under criminal investigation. You won't know if his actions are being reviewed by OSC and Revenue Canada today. So I want to ask you a specific question—and I'd like a page, if I could. Will you sign a letter to the Integrity Commissioner, Justice Coulter Osborne, asking him to contact these three agencies and to inform you and this assembly if in fact the scope of their investigations has changed? Will you do that, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Thank you very much. I appreciate the offer but, no, I will not sign this letter. The matter has been addressed, both by myself and by the Integrity Commissioner. As far as I'm concerned, the matter has been dealt with.

GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): My question is for the Chair of Management Board. The previous government replaced many civil service functions with outside consultants and in many cases those consultants were expensive and of questionable value to the taxpayers of Ontario. Mr Minister, I'd like to know, in light of the previous government's exhaustive spending on outside consultants—which for the most part provided no benefit to the taxpayers of Ontario—what you are doing to reduce the amount spent on outside consultants by this government.

Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The public should be aware that over a four-year period the previous government took outside consulting spending from \$250 million a year to \$660 million a year, a 250% increase. We've tightened the rules on consulting contracts and we've tightened the way these things are priced. Obviously we look in every case to see if our own public service can do this job. We've moved in three significant areas to try and reduce that \$660 million dramatically so the taxpayers will see value for their money.

1510

Ms Wynne: This is a particular area of irritation among my constituents. I'm just wondering if the minister can provide us with some specific examples and details of how he is moving toward eliminating this wasteful cost.

Hon Mr Phillips: Again, I remind the public that the \$660 million of outside spending on consultants was up 250% over a four-year period. Among the things we did: We insist now on contracts having a fixed price rather than these open-ended per diems. We simply will not allow this running on of open-ended per diems. There has to be a start and a finish to consulting projects.

We insist on a request for proposal; that Ontario taxpayers get the best possible per diems, what's called the favoured client price.

We also obviously look at, "Does it make sense for this to be done outside?" We've looked now at three specific examples where consulting work was done outside where it could be done within the public service dramatically cheaper—30% to 40% cheaper—and we've moved on those three specific projects. As soon as we took office, we began looking at how we can dramatically reduce that \$660 million, and we will.

PETITIONS

LANDFILL

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the county of Simcoe proposes to construct a landfill at site 41 in the township of Tiny; and

“Whereas the county of Simcoe has received, over a period of time, the necessary approvals from the Ministry of the Environment to design and construct a landfill at site 41; and

“Whereas, as part of the landfill planning process, peer reviews of site 41 identified over 200 recommendations for improvements to design, most of which are related to potential groundwater contamination; and

“Whereas the Minister of the Environment has on numerous occasions stated her passion for clean and safe water and the need for water source protection; and

“Whereas the Minister of the Environment has indicated her intention to introduce legislation on source water protection, which is a final and key recommendation to be implemented by Justice Dennis O’Connor’s report on the Walkerton inquiry; and

“Whereas the Minister of the Environment has announced expert panels that will make recommendations to the minister on water source protection legislation; and

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment will now be responsible for policing nutrient management; and

“Whereas the citizens of Ontario will be expecting a standing committee of the Legislature to hold province-wide public hearings on water source protection legislation;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario and the Ministry of the Environment to immediately place a moratorium on the development of site 41 until the water source protection legislation is implemented in Ontario. We believe the legislation will definitely affect the design of site 41 and the nearby water sources.”

I’ll sign my name too.

IMMIGRANTS’ SKILLS

Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

“Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, professional and managerial talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their county of origin; and

“Whereas Ontario, its businesses, its people and its institutions badly need the professional, managerial and technical skills that many newcomers to Canada have and want to use;

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

“That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the other institutions and agencies of and within the government of Ontario, undertake specific and proactive measures to

work with the bodies regulating access to Ontario’s professions, trades and other occupations in order that newcomers to Canada gain fair, timely and cost-effective access to certification and other measures that facilitate the entry or re-entry of skilled workers and professionals trained outside Canada into the Canadian workforce.”

I affix my signature with those of the others.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s seniors have worked long and hard to build the outstanding quality of life achieved in our province; and

“Whereas seniors’ drug benefits enable older persons to live healthier lives and avoid more extensive care in hospitals and nursing homes; and

“Whereas, in addition to their taxes, many seniors already contribute toward their prescription drugs through deductibles and dispensing fees; and

“Whereas many seniors on fixed pensions already face higher costs through property taxes” and now their electricity bills;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not eliminate or reduce the provincial drug benefits provided to seniors.”

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

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Michael Prue, the New Democratic Party member from Beaches-East York, has asked me to present this petition. I do so with great pleasure. It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

“Whereas in the interest of true democracy the Minister of Municipal Affairs put the following question to the voters of the city of Kawartha Lakes: ‘Are you in favour of a return to the previous municipal model of government with an upper-tier and 16 lower-tier municipalities?’; and

“Whereas the voters, by a clear majority on a provincially mandated ballot, answered in the affirmative;

“The undersigned demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario act to respect the will of the people as expressed in a democratic vote, and restore the former municipal structure as stated in the minister’s question.”

That is signed by thousands of persons. I have signed it as well. What riding are you from, Mark?

Interjection: Brampton Centre.

Mr Kormos: Mark from Brampton Centre is going to deliver this to the clerks’ table. Thank you kindly.

ONTARIO POWER GENERATION AND HYDRO ONE

Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition to present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I have signed it as well and agree with it. It reads as follows:

“Whereas lucrative contracts totalling \$5.6 million were awarded for various jobs at Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation by the previous Conservative government;

“Whereas these contracts were awarded not based on the principles of merit but on the practice of patronage;

“Whereas the amount of money paid out in these contracts to these friends of the Conservative Party was excessive and explains why Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation are in such poor fiscal shape;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to order a public inquiry into how these contracts were awarded and what measures can be taken to ensure such abuse of the public purse doesn't reoccur.”

Michael from—

Interjection: York South-Weston.

Mr Berardinetti: —York South-Weston will deliver the petition.

AUTISM SERVICES

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I am pleased to rise today and present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“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) funding; 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.”

I've got over 800 signatures here. I affix my signature.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): A petition to the Ontario government:

“We, the undersigned residents of Ontario and Canada, draw the attention of this House to the following:

“Whereas the Canadian beef cattle, dairy, goat and sheep industries are in a state of crisis due to the BSE problem;

“Whereas the aid package to the industry is inadequate as it does not deal with the extremely low prices nor the imminent collapse of key sectors of the rural economic community;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Canada and Ontario, urge the federal government to work with the province and their counterpart, the United States of America, to reopen the border to Canadian cattle now and to develop a long-term solution—an economic relief package—that is fair and recognizes the essential nature of these industries to Canada and Ontario.

“Furthermore, we urge the provincial agriculture minister to call on the federal government to work with the provinces to enable this crisis to come to a timely conclusion.”

I will put my name on this one. Victor, you are from?

Interjection: Scarborough-Rouge River.

1520

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): “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.”

It's signed by several hundred people in my riding of Simcoe-Grey, and I too have affixed my signature.

HOG INDUSTRY

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition from concerned citizens of the village of Curran.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, as citizens of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, are opposing the industrial hog factories planned for the area within the Nation municipality, of Pendleton, Ste-Rose-de-Prescott and St Albert.

“Whereas similar hog factories are not permitted in Quebec;

“Whereas farms are an essential component of our rural communities and must be protected; ...

“Whereas Ontario is still addressing environmental laws and health issues associated with industrial hog factories and the spraying of pig manure;

“Whereas the South Nation River water pollution concerns are not yet resolved;

“Whereas an environmental assessment of aquifers and groundwater has not been done; ...

“Whereas waste/sewage from pigs potentially endanger the water supply and soil;

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

“To ensure the safety of the citizens of Glengarry and united counties of Prescott-Russell will be protected against the known dangers associated with industrial hog factories....

“We also ask that no further industrial hog factories be allowed in our area before environmental health studies are completed.

“We ask that hog factories be designated as industries and not as agricultural.”

I gladly sign this petition.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I have a petition from my constituents in Parry Sound-Muskoka.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the community of Yearley, Ontario, within the electoral district of Parry Sound-Muskoka experiences frequent and prolonged power outages; and

“Whereas the power outages have become a health and safety issue to the residents of the community and the students who visit the outdoor education centre;

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

“That the Minister of Energy instruct Hydro One to conduct an investigation of the distribution and feeder lines that serve Yearley and take the necessary steps to ensure reliable energy through ongoing forestry maintenance and required line improvements.”

I agree with this, and I attach my signature.

LANDFILL

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): “Whereas the county of Simcoe proposes to construct a landfill at site 41 in the township of Tiny; and

“Whereas the county of Simcoe has received, over a period of time, the necessary approvals from the Ministry of the Environment to design and construct a landfill at site 41; and

“Whereas as part of the landfill planning process, peer reviews of site 41 identified over 200 recommendations for improvements to the design, most of which are related to potential groundwater contamination; and

“Whereas the Minister of the Environment has on numerous occasions stated her passion for clean and safe water and the need for water source protection; and

“Whereas the Minister of the Environment has indicated her intention to introduce legislation on water source protection, which is a final and key recommendation to be implemented under Justice Dennis O’Connor’s report on the Walkerton inquiry; and

“Whereas the Minister of the Environment has announced expert panels that will make recommendations to the minister on water source protection legislation; and

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment will now be responsible for policing nutrient management; and

“Whereas the citizens of Ontario will be expecting a standing committee of the Legislature to hold province-wide public hearings on water source protection legislation;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario and the Ministry of the Environment to immediately place a moratorium on the development of Site 41 until the water source protection legislation is implemented in Ontario. We believe the legislation will definitely affect the design of Site 41 and the nearby water sources.”

I’ll sign my name to that too.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned residents of Ontario and Canada, draw the attention of the House to the following:

“Whereas the Canadian beef cattle, dairy, goat and sheep industries are in a state of crisis due to the BSE problem;

“Whereas the aid package to the industry is inadequate as it does not deal with the extremely low prices nor the imminent collapse of key sectors of the rural economic community;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Canada and Ontario, urge the federal government to work with their counterparts in the United States of America to reopen the border to Canadian cattle now and develop a long-term solution and an economic relief package that is fair and recognizes the essential nature of these industries to Canada and Ontario.

“Furthermore, we urge the provincial agriculture minister to call on the federal government to work with the provinces to enable this crisis to come to a timely conclusion.”

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

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

“Whereas the Liberal government has said in their election platform that they were committed to improving the Ontario drug benefit program for seniors and are now

considering delisting drugs and imposing user fees on seniors;

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

“To halt the consideration of imposing an income test, delisting drugs for coverage under the Ontario drug benefit plan or putting in place user fees for seniors, and to maintain the present Ontario drug benefit plan for seniors to cover medication.”

I support this and I affix my signature.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I have another petition from constituents of Parry Sound-Muskoka. It says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas liability insurance is a necessary coverage;

“Whereas the rising cost of liability insurance is of great concern;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to review liability insurance rates and take steps to ensure reasonable rates, now and in the future.”

I support this and attach my signature.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INTERIM SUPPLY

CRÉDITS PROVISOIRES

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I move that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing April 1, 2004, and ending June 30, 2004, such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation for the 2004-05 fiscal year following the voting of supply.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Mr Sorbara has moved government notice of motion 16. Mr Sorbara?

Hon Mr Sorbara: It's my pleasure to begin the debate on interim supply this afternoon. As you know—*Applause.*

Hon Mr Sorbara: I hear the sound of just two hands clapping, but that's enough.

I note that my parliamentary assistant will be speaking on this motion as well. Just to set the interim supply motion in some context, sir: As you know, all of the money that we raise through our various taxation mechanisms, and, more important, the way in which we spend those funds is done by the authority of this Parliament. The motion on interim supply is one of the mechanisms under which this Parliament votes the appropriation, payment of funds through the consolidated revenue fund to all of the various agencies and individuals that look to us for support. That's what's called interim supply.

This interim supply motion is dealing with the period from the beginning of the new fiscal year on the first day

of April until the end of June—a three-month period. You might ask, “Why are we dealing with a three-month period?” The answer is really quite simple: because during that period, sometime in the middle of May, later on in the springtime, I will have the honour of presenting our government's first budget in this Legislature. I know the whip is looking forward to that, as am I, as is the province, as are we all. With the budget, the budget papers are presented and the bills and the supply motions that will cover that fiscal year are presented.

1530

I want to spend my time in this interim supply debate talking about some of the work we have done on this side of the House and in government in preparation for that budget. Specifically, I want to talk about the opportunity I had over the course of the past six weeks to participate in pre-budget consultations that took me into 10 different communities in 14 separate consultations with the people of Ontario. This is first time I've done this. It's the first time that a Liberal government has done this in 13 years.

I should say, before we set out, that I was a little bit apprehensive because of the amount of time and the commitment involved, not just on my part—I'm here to give my time to this kind of exercise—but to the various people in the ministry who organized these consultations. We were in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Ottawa, and we had a marvellous consultation, en français, in Casselman, and we were in Windsor, Stratford, Brampton and Vaughan. We had number of consultations in Toronto. The thing that moved me was the extent to which ordinary men and women across this province gave of their time to come and engage in that process.

I have to tell you that, as I said, going in I was somewhat reluctant. It is perhaps the most important thing I've done as Minister of Finance in the several months that I've occupied and had these responsibilities. In every single one of those consultations a new theme was identified, a new reminder about the way in which we need to be concerned, and not just with the major issues of fiscal balance and figuring out a way to live within our means. That's very important and it was part of consultations.

For example, let me tell you about our consultations in Thunder Bay. To be reminded about the extent to which the northern part of this province has been excluded from the economic growth that inspired the southern part of the province really does focus one's attention; to hear individual after individual stand up during the three hours that we were together to say that somehow the north had been left out, that in northern Ontario there's no concern about property assessments going up and building new highways and roads, that the concern is, “Our children are leaving us. The opportunities are not here”—all of us from the ministry had an opportunity to hear that firsthand. It focuses one's attention, and one realizes that one has to respond to those needs in presenting a budget.

We were in Stratford. It was a wonderful afternoon in what I describe as the entertainment capital of North America because of that wonderful festival. We were reminded over and over again that the circumstances of

small municipalities have been ignored over the past eight years by the demands to repave roads, repair bridges and maintain health care services handed down to them in that great Who Does What exercise are all burdens that are quite significant. In Stratford we had the opportunity to hear from Ontario's great agricultural communities. If you had any doubt about the special circumstances of Ontario farmers and of those who grow the food that feeds all 12 million of us, then you wouldn't have any doubt after you participated in that pre-budget consultation.

We continued that discussion in Casselman, when my friend for Perth-Middlesex helped organize that—I see him sitting over here and I want to thank him publicly for making that pre-budget consultation in his riding so successful. I was with the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell in Casselman, the first time ever that this government held this sort of ministerial pre-budget consultation in French. Perhaps for some that's not a significant event, but for me and my ministry, and for the francophonie de la province de l'Ontario, c'était une occasion très importante.

J'étais très fier d'être le ministre qui a commencé le processus de consulter la population de l'Ontario au moins une fois en français, et nous le faisons encore une fois.

I'll never forget the farmer who said to me, "I have framed a cheque I recently received for the sale of one of my cattle." The cheque was in the amount of 16 cents. This really focuses how severely mad cow disease has decimated an industry. I know that my colleague in Ottawa the finance minister took some initiatives to deal in part with the impact of mad cow disease on agriculture, but more certainly needs to be done.

Of course the consultations around the greater Toronto area reminded me—as if I needed reminding—of the great burden of responsibility we have to start to build a new generation of infrastructure, whether in transportation or affordable housing or water mains or sewers, all that sort of stuff, the foundations upon which the next generation of economic growth will be based in this part of the province, which is growing so rapidly.

In Ottawa I heard one individual stand up and say, "Mr Sorbara, while you are considering all of the big issues of balancing and taxation, do not forget that the most vulnerable in this province are looking to you and your budget for some gesture, some small reflection that you understand the plight of our province's most vulnerable and that you will be responding."

It was a marvellous opportunity, and I can assure the people, through these remarks and during the course of this debate, that the material that was brought to us and the time those individuals who participated gave to those consultations will be reflected. As I said at the close of almost every meeting, it is my hope that the individuals who participated will be able to see the issues they brought to the consultation reflected when we present the budget.

But in the meantime, we need to do some work here. We need to ensure that we can pay our bills in a timely

fashion. That is why we are bringing forward this interim supply motion. It gives me great pleasure to speak to it and to express my hope that all members will support interim supply when comes to time to vote.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I am very pleased to join in the debate following the Minister of Finance with respect to this interim supply motion. It is a very important issue, obviously, in terms of the finances of the House.

I want to speak on couple of matters, because this is a debate where we can discuss a number of areas. One is that I am very pleased about a letter I received from the Minister of Transportation just last week with respect to GO Transit. As everyone knows, GO Transit is something the city of Barrie and the town of Innisfil have been after for many years, since it was taken away from them through budgetary measures by the NDP government in 1992. We've been diligently working to get it back into our area.

I want to read the letter from the minister with respect to this issue, because I asked him about the status of GO Transit rail service from Bradford to Barrie. He reported, "I have met with His Worship Robert Hamilton, mayor of Barrie, and several city staff members to discuss the GO Transit extension to Barrie. I indicated to the mayor that the government is committed to the project and that issues such as cost-sharing will need to be resolved in the near term."

I would just move away from the text. It is very good to know that the government of the day is committed to this project, because it is a very important project.

"As you are aware, consistent with the approach for all municipalities serviced by GO Transit, there is a requirement for the municipality to contribute one third of the costs for service expansion.

"The property appraisal for the rail corridor from Bradford to Barrie, owned by Barrie, has been completed and will be sent to Barrie shortly. This appraisal was deemed necessary to allow for a fair and accurate evaluation of the corridor.

"One of the important next steps is to determine how Barrie wants to proceed in resolving its financial contribution. One option would be for the city to transfer its ownership of the corridor to GO Transit."

1540

I move away from the text again. As I understand it, GO Transit is in the process of doing an environmental assessment as we speak. Also, I know that the city of Barrie has identified, in conjunction with GO Transit, a location for the GO Transit service.

Back to the text. He says, "Alternatively, Barrie could retain the corridor and develop an access-lease agreement with GO Transit to use it.

"MTO officials are now finalizing a Canada strategic infrastructure fund agreement with the federal government that includes funding for the GO Transit expansion to Barrie.

"Thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention."

I want to thank the Minister of Transportation for showing, I would say, prudence and also some leadership in dealing with this particular issue. It is an important issue in my riding. Back in 1996, CN, in their plans to get out of the rail service, were going to be taking up the tracks, but we, as the government of the day, were able to work with the city of Barrie and contribute \$2 million toward the \$3.1-million purchase price of the track and maintain those lines. It's important for the area and for transportation in general that you have GO Transit service up to the city of Barrie because of the tremendous population growth in the area. It'll allow Highway 400 pressures to be relaxed. There are also environmental concerns. It's just better urban planning to have GO Transit come to a community that's growing as much as the city of Barrie is and the respective communities all the way up there.

Another issue I want to deal with is the announcement by the government last week with respect to funding for autistic children. As we know, we had questions today by the member from Sudbury with respect to the announcement. In essence, the announcement made by the government was to increase funding for the IBI program as it currently exists, treatment for children up to the age of six. There was no commitment to funding for children six and older, notwithstanding that the Premier made a commitment during the election that there would be funding for those children over the age of six.

That's a petition I've been presenting in the Legislature for the last couple of weeks, or since the Legislature has been open, with respect to the Premier living up to the commitment, because he was quoted as saying on this issue, "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." That was a quote from him last session during the fall, but he did make a commitment during the election last year to fund IBI for children over the age of six. Now we find, based on the announcement made last week by the minister for children, that they're not going to live up to that commitment.

There's an article about this today in the Barrie Examiner. The headline is, "Family Confused by Autism Plan." It says, "This is not going to help our kids today." There's a picture of a mother, Donna Currie, playing with her autistic son Joshua, age five, "who has been waiting for treatment for two years."

This issue obviously is very important, and it's important for two reasons: first, because of the waiting list that exists for children six and under, which has impacted young children like Joshua with respect to this issue, but also, because of the government's position that they will not fund or provide IBI treatment for children over the age of six, it certainly leaves a lot of parents in fear about what's going to happen.

Looking at this particular news release, she states, "Next year, Joshua goes to school full-time and the plan is to take him out of class three afternoons per week for the one-on-one therapy with the worker. Right now the

education system won't accommodate the worker in school."

We don't have the Minister of Education here today, but the Minister of Education says a lot of things and doesn't follow up on any of them, as far as I know. Last week I was talking about getting a meeting with the Prince of Wales school with respect to the statement he made about closing schools. I have yet to get a date from him with respect to a meeting with the Minister of Education.

But here we have a situation where it looks like we've got children slipping through the cracks. We have a Minister of Children who is supposed to look after autistic children, and we have a Minister of Education who is dealing with no support plan for autistic children at all. So they're not only falling through the cracks but it seems to be that one ministry is not talking to another ministry. We've got waiting lists with respect to children six and under, and we don't have an education system that is set up to help these children.

The announcement last week was, "Ontario is spending an extra \$120 million over the next three years to fund autism treatments and increase the number of therapists, but the move Friday was criticized as falling short of meeting the needs of kids with the learning disability.

"Last year, the province spent about \$41 million on autism, including special intensive behavioural intervention treatment for kids under six."

That's the situation in my home riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. The Toronto Star reported, "Autism Aid Cap Stays at Age 6; Liberals Double Program Funding but Older Children Still Face Cut-off."

This is certainly not a good day with respect to parents who have children who are dealing with autism. Because the ministry has increased funding, I don't know how that is going to address the waiting lists with respect to children of six and under who need it. From the situation we have with Joshua, we do know that he is going to be going to school. The education system does not provide anything for that, yet the child is going to school.

Certainly this government has not addressed the issue, and they are certainly not living up to their promises. Again they're not living up to their promises with respect to what they said with respect to autistic children over the age of six. It's too bad, not only on a human tragedy basis in terms of not caring about people who have needs which the Liberal government has chosen not to meet, but also because certainly the mark of a society is in dealing with people who really do need care. Here we have a situation with respect to autistic children, and the government does not address that; they decide to sabre-rattle. The Attorney General has still got his troops out there with respect to dealing with children over the age of six in terms of a litigation issue. How it's a litigation issue—I don't know why he would continue to deal with it that way. But that's how they decided to deal with it.

Another issue that I find perplexing, because the Liberals aren't living up to their promise, is something in terms of their own management, how they screwed up

the MPP birth certificate. We have this update. I got my number 9 MPP birth certificate update. I can tell you, I've been a member for nine years, and I have never seen the problems with respect to birth certificates, and we handle them right out of my own office. We did it ourselves for many years, and then they moved it over to the registry office.

Interjections.

Mr Tascona: If I'm going to be allowed to speak, because I guess everyone over on the other side is bored, I'm going to read this number 9 MPP birth certificate update. I really appreciate this. It is talking about operational improvements and the minister's message here. He is very pleased to keep me informed about their progress. I just wish they could solve the problem so I wouldn't have so many problems. I have people phoning me all the time; I have two staff dedicated to dealing with birth certificates. Before the kaffuffle when they took over government here, I didn't have any staff working on it, because everyone went to the registry office. Now all of a sudden the registry office says, "Go see your local MPP because the government has made some changes with respect to this program," and I have to deal with it. The last I read, there was a birth certificate backlog of about 70,000. Now, he is not addressing that.

1550

What he says here is, "The March break peak travel period is now behind us and the ORG is currently processing on average 823 birth certificates per day, up from an average of 734 per day last week." He is talking about the staff working overtime on the processing.

What we have here is a real problem. He says, "Our current call volume has increased by 60% over previous years. The ministry is currently examining ways to improve this service. For now, we suggest people call during off-peak hours to get through to the office more quickly," and he gives the best times to contact the office.

I really appreciate this update. I guess when I get to update number 30, we'll see what's going to be happening with respect to the MPP birth certificate update. I really appreciate that. What I'd like the minister to do is solve the problem and quit putting people out with respect to how to deal with these issues.

I don't have the solutions. All we're trying to do is solve the problem with respect to trying to get people their birth certificates. That's all I can do as a lowly MPP. That's what we are paid to do, and I am pleased to help my constituents, even though it is supposed to be provided out of the registry office in the city of Barrie. Now it has been pushed over to the MPPs to handle this. I really appreciate that update number 9 from the ministry. It's really coming in handy for me, and I know I will use it.

The next topic I want to speak about is, I had a meeting last week with our local branch of the Lung Association with respect to smoking. They asked me to look at this issue because they are distressed. Once again, the Liberal government made a promise during the

campaign—I think this is their list of promises; 231 is the last one I got, but who's counting? I don't know if we're counting the number of promises that have been broken. But the promise that was made in the last election was that they were going to make Ontario 100% smoke-free in public and workplaces. That was the commitment they were going to make. They were saying, "We're going to implement this over a three-year period." Well, we haven't seen anything to date. The Lung Association is concerned whether, first of all, you're going to do it at all, and, second, they're saying, "Why are you waiting?"

I remember being on that side, in terms of the Legislature, listening to you saying, "We're going to do these things with respect to dealing with smoke-free places." I think the program that was in place at the time—the municipalities were working very hard on it. I know the Minister of Agriculture can appreciate that because he was the mayor of St Thomas at one time. I commend the municipalities because I think up to 63% of municipalities were smoke-free. That includes my city of Barrie, and I know the town of Innisfil has moved in that direction. The Liberal opposition of the day made a big issue about that, saying they were going to make it 100%.

All I'm saying is that I'm putting you on notice that the Lung Association isn't too pleased with your timetable. They're a little bit concerned whether you're even going to do it, because it is a very serious issue.

Mr Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): What's the timetable?

Mr Tascona: The timetable is your timetable.

Mr Rinaldi: Where was yours? You didn't have one.

Mr Tascona: Our timetable—I'm probably going to consider it seriously, because they're so upset. I am very upset about it too. I've got a button here. I'm not going to show it here, because that wouldn't be right, but it says, "A 100% smoke-free Simcoe county. The time is now." I totally agree with that. "A 100% smoke-free Ontario. The time is now." I totally agree with that too. I am seriously looking at this issue; I wanted to speak about it today. Maybe it's going to take a private member, a lowly MPP like myself, to get this government focusing on the promises they committed to. Whether they are going to do that is another issue, but I want to put them on notice—and I'm putting them on notice now—that that's a serious issue. The Ontario Lung Association is looking for action.

I also got a letter today from the Ontario action group on tobacco with respect to their concern about the lack of action by this government on a smoke-free Ontario. That's another promise that was made, and I guess we're going to have to see whether they're going to do it. We know today that they didn't live up to their promise with respect to autistic children. Now we're going to find out whether they're going to do anything about a smoke-free Ontario, but I digress.

The next subject I want to touch on—because I know the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the member for Hamilton Mountain, is very in tune today, listening—is the drug benefit program. I don't know where this one

is coming from. I have a lot of respect for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I think he's one of the hardest-working ministers this government has—probably the toughest portfolio. But who is talking to him about this drug benefit program? I got a letter from the minister on this particular issue, and the response that was given—this was about drug coverage for seniors—was basically that no final decisions have yet been made with respect to changes to the disability benefit program. Certainly, I think he's probably been deluged with letters on this particular issue.

During the campaign, of course, which is long forgotten by the Liberal government—in fact, it is probably irrelevant to their thinking process today—they made a commitment that they would make the drug benefit plan better for seniors. What they didn't say was that they were going to decide which seniors the drug plan would be of greater benefit to. All I can say is that I've got petitions galore here with respect to this. Seniors are concerned about a means test, about the delisting of drugs and about the imposing of user fees on seniors.

I want to put the government on notice—I know the Minister of Finance was here at one time, in terms of introducing this, but I want to put him on notice—that this is something they shouldn't be doing. This is not fair to seniors. Certainly they didn't run on a campaign that they were going to means-test seniors or were going to put user fees on seniors or were going to delist drugs for seniors.

In closing, I just want to say that this is an issue this government has to take very seriously—much more seriously than they've taken the birth certificate program. As I said earlier, I've got MPP birth certificate update number nine right here. I'm probably going to get up to number 30 before they ever solve this, but who knows? Who's counting? I got number nine today, and I was very pleased to get it from the minister.

That's all I have to say, and I look forward to further debate.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): We don't have a whole lot of time, because the government, of course, bullied its way through the rules process. But New Democrats aren't going to be cut out of the action, not by a long shot. As a matter of fact, Michael Prue, the finance critic for the New Democratic caucus, is going to be speaking for most of the time allotted to the New Democratic Party caucus here at Queen's Park.

You've noticed the ties, Speaker. You've noticed the ties. Today's tie is stinky cheese. It's a political statement. I want to thank the art students at North Hastings High School in Bancroft, who, before Christmastime, watching television and the debates, said, "What you need, Kormos, is some of these ties with political statements." This one is stinky cheese. Clearly these students are saying there's something stinky going on here—something rotten in the state of Denmark, so to speak. If you saw the one I was wearing last week with all the flames on it, clearly those students were saying this province is going to hell in a handbasket with this government at the helm.

Yesterday I was at a wonderful event at the Lions Club in Welland. We were celebrating the 95th birthday of Matilda Barilla. Let me tell you why it was fascinating: Just five years ago I had been there with her at her 90th birthday and gave her a scroll signed by the Premier of the day, and five years later I gave her a scroll signed by, well, another Premier of the day. She was born in Saskatchewan in 1909, of Hungarian parents, went back to Hungary, came back to Saskatchewan after the First World War, then moved to Welland in 1941 after her husband came there, built the house on Fitch Street and still lives in that house. The house is built like a Saskatchewan farmhouse. Ninety-five-year-old Matilda Barilla is still living on her own.

I said, "Mrs Barilla, you have survived any number of Premiers—countless Premiers, countless governments. I predict that you will be celebrating your 100th birthday five years from now; I will not predict the name of the Premier five years from now. You've enjoyed sufficient diversity up to this point." I suspect Mrs Barilla will continue to. I simply want to acknowledge and congratulate this woman. We were celebrating, of course, decades and generations of hard work and tremendous contribution on her part to this country.

1600

You know, one of the things that a whole lot of folks—of course, her friends, her neighbours and her family are aging too. They're getting on. One of the things that people raised throughout the course of that afternoon at the Lions Club down in Welland—person after person, man, woman, one after the other—was their fear, their trepidation, at the prospect of this government tinkering with the Ontario drug benefit program. Person after person came up to me, as they have at every other event I've been to down in Niagara Centre over the course of weekends and over the course of the three-month vacation the Liberals took within weeks of getting elected, expressing incredible trepidation about the prospect of seniors getting hammered by the government. You know the types of correspondence you've been getting, the types of phone calls, very polite but firm messages from seniors, for instance. The United Senior Citizens of Ontario has organized, among others, a campaign to fight back against any tinkering with the Ontario drug benefit program. You see, seniors like Mrs Barilla—that's why I mentioned Mrs Barilla, 95 years—who raised kids, raised grandchildren, built homes, worked hard, built cities, built a country, deserve more than this government is offering up to them. Senior citizens like those are worried that this government is going to tinker with the Ontario drug benefit program. They point out that seniors don't have the opportunity to work overtime. They don't have employment bonuses, salary bonuses. For many of them, a lifetime of savings, which was a whole lot of money during the course of saving it, over the course of years has turned into not so much money after all.

As a matter of fact, when I was a kid—you'll know this, Ms Mossop—I remember folks used to worry about

not living long enough. Now I talk to more and more senior citizens and, tragically, they're worried about living too long. You know what I mean? They're worried about living too long. What a tragedy that people who work hard all of their lives, who pay for homes usually two and three times over, who raise kids and help raise grandkids and then send them to college and university, have to fear living too long because of increased natural gas prices, increased electricity prices. Come April 1, senior citizens are going to get whacked big time; make no mistake about it.

We're looking at the prospect of yet another group of potential homeless people here in the province of Ontario, people who own homes at risk of being homeless, people who can't afford to live in their own homes any more. I'm not talking about people living in, oh, \$850,000 and million-dollar homes up in Rosedale and places like that. I'm talking about folks living in homes they built with their own hands. When you dug a basement, you didn't call a contractor; you and your partner, two spouses, got out there and shovelled by hand and wheelbarrowed the dirt away and laid the block by hand. I'm old enough to remember witnessing that. Those are the kinds of folks I'm talking about down where I come from, who are afraid of being homeless, who are afraid of living too long, and we see a government that, rather than acknowledging the tremendous contributions that seniors have made to our community, to our province, to this country, is ready to just shoo them away and tell them to wait in line.

New Democrats say no to abandoning seniors. New Democrats say no to abandoning the universality of the Ontario drug benefit program. New Democrats are going to stand up for seniors, are going to stand up with seniors, shoulder to shoulder, as they organize and mobilize and fight back against this or any other government that's going to condemn seniors to even greater poverty, condemn seniors to the risk of being homeless or condemn seniors to early searches for beds in seniors' homes because they can't afford to live in their own. I say that our folks and our grandfolks have worked too hard, too long and for too many generations, building with so much sacrifice—too much sacrifice—building with incredible hardship and hard work, for us to let them down now. New Democrats are going to stand with those seniors and we're going to insist that this government respect those seniors who have contributed so much and who deserve far better.

Mr Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): I have some difficulty understanding the arguments on this. We are asking that the interim supply bill be approved—I wonder if the NDP is against approving those expenditures—so we can take care of our seniors and everyone in our system who needs to receive some assistance.

I believe this issue should be dealt with quickly. We should approve the interim supply bill and make sure we do what we said we were going to do. We understand that there are some challenges the Minister of Finance must address, in particular that the member from Oak

Ridges promised to give \$50 million to public transportation but never delivered. So the Minister of Finance needs this approval today to be able to pay those bills and to provide the services that are needed.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to have the member withdraw an incorrect, false statement that he has just made.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): That's not a point of order.

Mr Racco: Mr Speaker, I would like to make clear to my friend, as he should know, that he was the one who took a fake cheque, publicly took a picture and told the world he was going to give \$50 million to public transportation in the region of York. He never gave the money, months after that, and therefore I think it's important for the record that people know—

Mr Klees: A point of privilege, Mr Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Points of privilege require written notice, as far as I know.

Mr Kormos: Unless it arises at the very moment.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll do the speaking here, member for Niagara Centre. I'll take the advice of the table before I would ever take it from you.

Mr Klees: It arises out of the statement—

The Deputy Speaker: Just take your seat for a moment.

The table has confirmed what the member for Niagara Centre said. So, your point of privilege.

Mr Klees: I would like to thank the table and the member from Niagara Centre.

Speaker, this is very serious, and I'm going to cut some slack to the new member from Thornhill.

The Deputy Speaker: Just get to it quickly, please.

Mr Klees: It's important that he understands. I'm not taking exception to his intent, but he cannot stand in his place and make the kind of reference, implications and inferences as to my intention and my actions as a minister of the crown.

We took actions that made a specific commitment to York region. Those funds were incorporated into the budget of the Ministry of Transportation. For the member to leave the House and the public under the impression that somehow this was, to use his term, a fake gesture on the part of the Minister of Transportation is wrong. It's an affront to me as a member of this Legislature, to me as a member of the government that at the time made that commitment—I would ask the member to withdraw that. I understand his sentiment, but I would ask him to withdraw that.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. I'll ask the member to consider withdrawing, or at least I'll ask the member if he wants to withdraw.

Mr Racco: Mr Speaker, I don't see the need to withdraw. What I said—

The Deputy Speaker: No, we don't need to have it repeated. I would then ask you to carefully choose the way you describe what you saw and how you perceived it so you can in fact get on with the debate.

Mr Racco: I thank you. If you wish me to restate the intent of my statement, I repeat, Mr Speaker, that a

cheque was given to the chair of the region by the member from Oak Ridges, the past member for Thornhill and other politicians, publicly stating that those \$50 million were given for public transportation to the region of York. That cheque was never really given.

The Deputy Speaker: I think the point has been made, so why don't you just move on.

Mr Racco: I just wanted to make sure, Mr Speaker, that the member from Oak Ridges is quite aware of the fact, and I wanted to remind him of that.

Having said that, I wanted to make sure that the House is quite aware that this bill will let us pay the bills for our seniors, for nursing homes, for hospitals, for doctors and for municipalities in need of funding, particularly for public transportation. The Tories, back in the year 2000, removed any assistance for public transportation in Ontario. And today, as the Star did clearly quote, we have a major problem in public transportation because of what the Tories have done, and I would suggest to you that the minister responsible was partly the member from Oak Ridges.

Having said that, though, I also think that we must deal with this supply bill, because we need to pay the bills for social assistance and for the children's aid societies, and therefore I encourage all of us to support the bill.

1610

Mr Klees: Well, I want to thank the member from Thornhill for reconfirming, in three different ways, the \$50-million commitment that I made as Minister of Transportation to the people of York region for public transit. That \$50-million commitment was, in fact, included as a part of the budgeting of the Ministry of Transportation specifically focused on York region. To the member's point, it is now up to this government to ensure that that commitment that I made as the Minister of Transportation is in fact fulfilled so that it doesn't fall into the great pit of the many other broken promises that this government has made, and continues to make, every single day.

I'm pleased to speak to the interim supply bill.

Interjections.

Mr Klees: I seem to have stirred the pot somehow. The member from Thornhill is very upset now. He feels embarrassed, as a matter of fact, that he has given the member from Oak Ridges such incredible play on the parliamentary channel. I'm sure that my constituents appreciate this. In fact, I'd like to invite him to my next fundraising dinner. He can do the introduction and make reference to the many, many commitments that we did make, as the previous government, to public transit.

But we're talking today about the interim supply bill. And yes, the government needs this bill in order to pay the various bills, the various commitments that government has made.

Having said that, I have to say that the people of this province, as they're watching this debate, are, I'm certain, questioning the wisdom of allowing this government to make any decision about allocation of funds anywhere.

Within a very short period of time—and the chief government whip knows, because he's looking at me now with this knowing look saying, "I know we've made a huge mistake as the government." He's not feeling good as a Liberal, although he's consistent as a Liberal. Having made the commitments, as was said earlier, they very quickly forget and then they make the next commitment. They make the commitments with the same dollars.

My son had that problem, when he first started off, with his allowance. He would tell me that he was spending his allowance on this, and a couple of hours later he would say "Dad, I'm going to spend my allowance on this," and before you knew it, he had an allowance deficit.

What we have here now with this government is, in fact, an incredible credibility deficit because what the people of this province have heard over the last number of months is a Premier, members who were running as candidates—they heard them make wonderful promises. I have to admit to members opposite, on occasion I would get up and I'd read the promise of the day, and I would say, "You know, that makes good sense." Now, having been at the table at cabinet and having known the reality of the circumstances that the province faced in terms of the challenges of the year, whether that be SARS, whether that be mad cow disease, whether that be West Nile virus, and whether that be the challenges of an electricity blackout that affected the entire eastern seaboard, we knew that the promises that were being made by this government were impossible to keep.

We have pages here and they've learned right and wrong. And they know that you shouldn't be making a commitment that you can't keep. They know better. I'm sure that even as young people observing the political process, there is a certain cynicism that's creeping in and they're asking themselves, "Well, if it's OK for governments, if it's OK for the leader of a political party, if it's OK for the Premier of a party to break a promise, what does that mean to the rest of us?" What really is it saying about what our society is doing with standards? What is it saying about ethics in government today?

I believe that it's actually a very sad day for Ontario, because although we have the fundamentals in place—and no doubt we'll hear when the Minister of Finance, who should have resigned, stepped aside, frankly, while this investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Ontario Securities Commission and Canada Revenue Agency is taking place and overseeing some of the dealings of the company with which he was affiliated—he really should have stepped aside and allowed someone else to develop that budget.

Nevertheless, he'll stand in his place in this House and will no doubt give the people of this province the details about how strong the fundamentals are in this province. He'll speak to the strength of our economy. He'll speak to the fundamentals that are in place in this economy that have, in fact, contributed to the significant job growth, the significant stability of the Canadian economy. He'll

stand in his place and do that. At the same time, he will claim that there are billions of dollars of deficit and, as a result of that, will not be able to comply, will not be able to deliver the promises that he made to the people of this province. At that point, he slips one more level into that great credibility deficit.

The people of this province know full well that it's one thing to look for excuses and it's yet something else to take on the responsibilities of leadership, to do what has to be done to ensure that the economic affairs of the province are in order. That is why he has the front benches of ministers, so that as the finance minister he can say to the ministers—and if the finance minister isn't prepared to do it, surely the Chair of Management Board would have the responsibility to do so—“Look, there have been extenuating circumstances, unforeseen circumstances, that have put pressure on the province of Ontario, on the finances of the province of Ontario, and I'm giving you your marching orders, ministers. Minister of Finance, go back to your ministry and find a way to deal with some of the challenges that we're facing.”

Every minister has the responsibility, then, through a program review, to go back to their various budgets and say, “Where do we find efficiencies? Where do we find savings?” So that at the end of the day, no different than people in this place who have had business experience—and those who are watching who have businesses know that you have to go back to the drawing board. You have to go back to the books and say, “You know, we can't make this expenditure today, this year. We have to defer certain projects to the following fiscal year.” We do that because it is the fiscal and practical thing to do in order to meet our responsibilities as good fiscal managers. This Minister of Finance has failed to do that. He has failed to live up to the commitment of being fiscally responsible. This Premier has failed to live up to the responsibilities to act in a responsible way.

I believe that as the people of this province see debate relating to interim supply, as they watch this government over the ensuing number of weeks and months, they will draw the conclusion that there was a lot of wishful thinking, very little credibility and a huge deficit of leadership in the political party in this provincial government.

There is an answer. Coming out of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, we have provided a dissenting report that is available to people. They can read it and see how it should and could have been done. It's still not too late. The Minister of Finance should read it. It really should be required reading for every member of the government. Then, let's get together and do this right.

1620

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): We are here today to talk about interim supply. I can't think of anything that we would stand up here and talk about that could possibly be less controversial. Here we have a government, as any government, that needs to raise the funds in order to pay the bills in a time before the budget

is presented. That's what this is all about. Of course the government needs to do this and of course we need to debate it. But I think this goes a little bit beyond interim supply; this goes to the whole heart of where this government is going to go in the interim period between today, when this is being debated and they are asking for funds in which to pay the bills, and budget day, when the whole crunch comes down.

It was my privilege and my honour to be part of the finance committee travelling this province in the very cold months of January and February, going to municipalities across this province, to the north, to eastern Ontario, to southwestern Ontario, and here in Toronto, to hear from a great many people. In fact, I believe we heard over 150 deputations in the period of some three weeks. We heard people on a broad range of where they thought this budget should go, what this government should be doing and how the money should be spent. With very few exceptions, almost all of those 150 people talked about the needs. They talked about the social deficit in this province. They talked about the neglect that had happened through many long years in Ontario and were, with hope in their eyes, asking this government to please do something.

We had students who came and talked about the sad plight of their schools. We had teachers who talked about the same plight, and principals, we had superintendents and we had school boards. They told us a great many things which I believe all of us already knew, that our schools in many locations are crumbling, that the schools have leaky roofs, that the schools don't have enough textbook or computers. They told us about the sad state of children there who simply do not have enough money to participate in many of the programs that were once offered for nothing, and for which they are now being charged. They asked the committee to please make sure that the necessary funds were there in order that the school system that at one time was considered the pride and joy, the jewel of Ontario, be restored. They pointed to Rozanski and the many recommendations that he made to the previous government, recommendations that they believe, and I think everyone believes, need to be carried out as expeditiously as possible.

We had one deputant who talked at great length about her children, and she brought them with her to show and tell us exactly what is happening with the neglect in the schools. I believe her son was in grade 8. She told us point blank that her son started school in the year that the previous government was first elected, and that throughout his eight years in the public school system he had seen the neglect of that system. He had always been without those things which she felt were necessary for him to have a good education. Then she pointed out a very real truism: If what is to be accomplished by this government is going to take the full four years of the mandate, her son is going to be finished grade 12. If it takes the full four years, he will never have seen a school system which existed before and which we hope one day to have again. He will never have experienced it in his

entire school life, where there were books and there were computers and there were librarians and there were school monitors and there were opportunities for after-school education and drama clubs and the like. All of those things are missing from his school now, and if it takes four years, they will be missing for his entire school life.

We heard people from the north with their very real problems that are experienced due to distance, due to lack of funding, due to lack of education, the lack of jobs. I have to tell you that the most poignant person who came to talk to us had something to say that I think shocked all members of the committee—certainly me from Toronto, who had never understood in a universal program, or one that I thought was universal, where all children of immigrant groups who do not have English or French as a first language are entitled to ESL training—we take it as a given in southern Ontario that children who come to our school system, who do not speak English or French as a first language, are entitled to have training so that they can catch up with their peers and will know the language of instruction. We learned, quite sadly, that children in the north don't have that same experience. Yes, if children are from an immigrant family and they do not speak English or French, it is provided. But if they are First Canadians and speak Ojibway or Cree and come to the school without knowing any English or French at all, there is no money for them.

We learned, and I think that is very sad in this day and age, that this is still happening in Ontario. We have an obligation to those children to spend the monies, if only now—I don't know why it was never done before; it was absolute news to me—within the school system to make sure that our First Nations children are on an equal footing, at least on an equal footing, with new immigrant children and that they have an opportunity, to their full potential, to learn Canada's official languages—one of the two—and to be able, in the language of instruction, to understand. As the deputant told us, what invariably happens is that they come before us, they find out that they do not understand the language, they start to become behaviour problems, they fall behind in the school work, and the next thing you know they are out of school, too often even before they are 12 years of age. We need, as a province, to ensure that there is an equal opportunity for all of our children, particularly those in the north, and I would put special emphasis on our First Nations, who have not been treated terribly well since Confederation.

We heard about the plight of the poor and how monies were needed for them. We heard about the very difficult times they were all having, whether they were on Ontario Works or on ODSP payments, that they had not had a raise in nine years—nine years of absolutely the same money while everything else has gone up due to inflation, nine years of having an apartment at \$900 a month when you only receive \$930 on ODSP, nine years of seeing that you don't have enough food and that you need to go to the food banks.

They had very simple suggestions to the committee that I hope the committee and the minister will look at,

after we are finished with interim supply, that this government can do what the government of Newfoundland has done and other governments are considering across the country: that they not claw back the federal payments that are given in good faith by the federal government to our very poorest people, that they not claw them back but in fact allow them to keep those monies so that their children, at least, can have a start in life, so that their children, at least, will not know hunger, so their children, at least, can have shoes on to go to school. It was very poignant and very telling how important that is and how that must be included in the upcoming budget.

We have heard the plight of the hospitals, how P3s are not working and how they're costing so much money. We heard from daycare advocates that there has been no real additional daycare provided in this province in many years, how the staff who work there are underpaid and overworked, and that the waiting lists continue to grow, particularly in our cities.

We heard from universities and colleges that they are straining without the necessary funds and from the students who are forced to pay higher and higher levels of tuition. Although those tuition fees may be frozen by this government, they are at record high levels and are not sustainable in the long term.

We heard about seniors who felt very sad, having trusted this government and having thought that they would be protected by this government, when the Premier floated the idea of charging them for much of their bills related to medical expenses and to prescription drugs; how they felt betrayed, in fact, by what was being suggested.

We heard from our civil service, the wonderful civil service in this province, who for many years have laboured under somewhat difficult circumstances, who have not had adequate raises and who have seen their numbers reduced, time and time again, to the point that they are often having very difficult problems with delivering the services that we expect of them and which the citizens of this province need.

1630

I think today we saw what their answer is going to be, with the motion by the Premier to freeze the salaries of MPPs. I do not believe that this is done in a vacuum. This is done to show the civil service that we in fact will not be getting an increase, and in all likelihood they will not as well. I think that's a very sad day for the men and women who were hoping for so much more from this government, having given sometimes their entire professional and adult lives in the service of this province.

All of these problems and many more must be addressed, but it comes down to the final conundrum that this government, that this finance minister, that this party is going to have: How do you do all the important things that need to be done when you have a revenue shortfall? How do you do that when you inherit a \$5.6-billion debt?

We heard from most of those deputants and they told you something that I don't believe you wanted to hear: If you don't have the money, you have to go out and find it.

If that means raising taxes, they told you, then go out and raise the taxes. If that means cutting back on consultants, go out and cut the consultants. If that means raising whatever other forms you need, go out and do it, but do not make additional cuts in order to balance the books. The reality is that the Liberals made 231 promises: 230 on this side that are going to cost some money and one on the other side that says, "I'm not going to raise your taxes." It seems pretty obvious to me, and at least to all of those 150 deputants, where you need to go. You can either break the 230—and you're doing a pretty good job at that, I have to tell you; you're up to about 35, as best I can count—or you can break the one. That's going to be the finance minister's statement in a couple of weeks or a month from now. We're all looking forward to where he goes.

In the immediate future we have interim supply, and we know that the workers have to be paid. We know that the bills have to be paid. We know that the programs have to be funded. We know that the budget will bring all that into perspective in four or five weeks. But I ask the government and the government members in that period to be forthright. I ask you to be honest. I ask you to think that when you promised 230 separate programs in the lead-up to the election, you consider seriously that you must, as politicians, honour them.

You cannot stand here today, I would say with all respect to the Premier, who promised the people of Victoria county that if they held a referendum and voted, he would honour that, and then tell them they're not going to do it because it costs more money. That is not the way people expect their government leaders, their elected representatives, to behave. We are asking that this party, that this government, believe in democracy. We are asking you to fulfill the promises you made to the people of Ontario. We are asking you to do what is right, not what is expedient and not what costs less. If you do what is right, we will applaud you. If you do what is wrong, if you go back on your word, then we will not. The people will judge, not only in this budget but in three or four years from now, whether or not you can be trusted again. I hope you're good for your word. We're all watching.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I'm pleased to speak to the bill. There are some things in life that surprise you as you go through. I've sat here and listened to concerns from the official opposition about the way Premier McGuinty is dealing with the financial deficit, and that astounds me. We've fostered a lot of interesting children over the years. There was a young man once who took a brand-new bike and completely dismantled it. But as I put it together, he did not have the nerve to say, "You're not putting it together fast enough. You're not putting it back together right." He knew in his mind he'd taken the bike apart and that he had the responsibility for it, and he said to himself that he would give me the freedom to put it together.

This is the crew that took the finances of the province apart. Actually, I suspect you're relieved that you weren't

re-elected, because you made promises that you knew you couldn't keep. You gave away money in the last month of the election that you knew you couldn't deliver on.

They have also, Mr Speaker, had the nerve to say, "Well, the Liberals knew the financial situation." Listen, the previous government repeatedly said, "You know, we may be nasty to civil servants, we may have hurt schoolchildren, we may have talked derogatorily and offensively about individuals on welfare, but we're good money managers. Are we ever good money managers. We look after the finances of the province like it's our business." Maybe that's why you're there, because you didn't survive in business; I don't know. But the line that you used all the time, opposition members, was, "We're good money managers."

Well, the veil has been lifted on that one. Had we known during the election that the deficit was going to be \$5.6 billion plus other debts for children's aid societies and hospitals, you can rest assured we'd have shared that with the public. If we're guilty of anything, it was guilty of believing some of the statements that you made publicly. We won't do that again. I don't think the public will do that again either. The statements that you made—you knew better. You knew what the finances were. You knew what the revenues were.

Yes, you can balance the budget even with that deficit. It's easy to balance the budget. You simply take money away from people in hospitals, you take money away from schoolchildren, you take money away from single parents, you take money away from water testing and you take money away from nuclear plants. It's easy to balance the budget if you don't care about the effect it has on the citizens.

The previous government, now the opposition, speaks at times as if taxes are inherently wrong and spending money is fundamentally wrong; reduce the number of civil servants. Yes, we collect money, and it goes to civil servants—civil servants like firefighters and police officers and public health nurses and teachers. That's where the money goes. It doesn't go into a vacuum and disappear.

The public made it very clear last fall that they want the services. If you don't have your health, folks, you don't have anything. We watched for eight years as our hospitals were being run into the ground with financial crises to where I believe there was a period less than a year ago when some of the Toronto area hospitals were saying they were unable to meet payroll. We have seen the current Minister of Health do more for health care in the last five months than was done in the last eight years. I applaud Minister Smitherman for that.

We saw promises made. One of the great illusions presented over the past eight years was that the Premier kept all of his promises. The priority with the previous government was tax cuts to corporations, but they reached the point where even they knew that was a sham. They knew that if their employees weren't healthy, if they couldn't attract employees to a community because

there wasn't a doctor available, then they weren't going to succeed. Corporations succeed and companies succeed when they have healthy employees who enjoy what they're doing for their job. I repeatedly found, when I talked to companies considering coming to Ontario, that the question wasn't the tax rate. The number one question was, "Can I get a family doctor for the employees?"

Actually, I can't lay all the blame on the Progressive Conservative government for that one, because I believe it was the previous NDP government that slashed the number of training positions for new doctors. Now we're paying the price, because you don't crank up and turn out a new doctor in a year or two. We are still living with that legacy from what is now the third party.

When you talk about a budget, you're really talking about the program for the government; you're talking about the services that they deliver expressed in dollars. We have seen the false savings that took place. We have seen the wrong priorities happen over the previous two governments. Now we're seeing a government that is methodically saying, "If it took eight or 13 years to break, it's not going to get fixed in the first five months, folks." You did more damage in the 13 years than can be fixed in five months. You know that. It's easy to criticize from that side, but you're criticizing us for trying to deal with a situation that you created. I have a little bit of a problem with the ethics of that.

1640

Now, if we look at how the money was spent in the past—because the issue today, the issue we're debating now, is interim supply: saying the government needs some money to pay for essential services. If that is the situation and you want to criticize, let's look at how some of the spending took place in the past.

You gave away money to corporations while our hospitals absolutely suffered. There was an article in the *Toronto Star*—that's the local Tory newspaper—that condemned the condition of the schools in the Toronto area. Those schools didn't go downhill in five months, folks; those schools took 10 years, 13 years to go downhill. The challenge for us is the find the money, because the money that should have gone into fixing those schools was given away to corporations, was given in tax credits, tax benefits and reduced taxes to the people who needed it the least.

Surely, from the election last fall, in knocking on doors—if you knocked on doors, that may have been risky, because you would have had to identify yourself as a Progressive Conservative candidate, so you may have been better to do just material drops or literature drops. But supposing you knocked on the doors and identified yourself—

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Or phone calls.

Mr Parsons: Or phone calls. Phone calls are good; you don't have to look people in the eye with phone calls. I never actually used phone calls; I did the knocking on doors, as I know my colleagues did. But you had to have knocked on doors of homes where you knew they were struggling, absolutely struggling. They weren't

going to benefit from any of the major tax cuts, but they were being hurt by the user fees that were insidiously being applied to lower-income and average working families, in fact.

For all of your fiscal management, it's easy to spend freely and do your tax cuts when you do it and borrow money. The Harris-Eves government borrowed \$21 billion. That number is so large it's hard to understand, I think, for the average person. They borrowed \$21 billion, which generates a cost of, I believe, \$1.6 billion a year in interest, just to service that \$21 billion.

Mrs Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): What a waste of money.

Mr Parsons: It's a waste of money that should go into hospitals, should go into schools, should go to seniors. But no, it was done so they could give out—was it \$200 that every house got? They mailed every house \$200 because the province was so flush with cash. It turned out it was borrowed money, folks. It was borrowed money.

I can't believe, actually, some of the comments I've heard over the past hour or so when I think about the games that were played to give away other people's money, knowing that our children are going to be stuck to pay that debt back and to suffer the effects of what happened over it—government ads.

You know, one of the neatest things I heard—our government, the Dalton McGuinty government, introduced a bill to raise the minimum wage for the first time in eight years. Do you know what I heard from that side? "It's not enough." The raise wasn't enough. But this is a party that campaigned on a platform—

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Who said that?

Interjections.

Mr Parsons: There are too many for me to run through. Excuse me; I have the floor. I know you want to listen to me, and you're proving very distracting.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Parsons: Thank you, Speaker.

There were statements made on that side that it was not enough. I find that unbelievable.

Interjection: John Baird said it.

Mr Parsons: No, it wasn't from that side. That side said it also. I believe it was in the front row.

Interjection.

Mr Parsons: Yes, there are witnesses. We'll check Hansard after, but I know I heard it. He said it was not enough money. He threw his hands up, even. Now we're narrowing in on the member—the one who throws up his hands a lot. Mind you—no, I won't say that; I won't go there. The criticism was that it wasn't enough when in fact there had been no increase given on it.

When our Premier stood up last fall and very quickly moved to end the waste on partisan government ads, again there was criticism. But that \$250 million—and that's an astounding amount, the \$250 million the previous government spent on ads to tell people what a great job they were doing. Here's the secret: If you do a great job, you don't have to buy ads to tell people you're

doing a great job, but if you're not doing a great job, people aren't stupid. The people of Ontario are very intelligent, and when they saw your ads, they said, "Why do they have to buy an ad to tell me the opposite of what I know?"

For someone reading the ads you mailed around on great health care, who doesn't have a family doctor or who goes to the emergency department and has a bed out in the hallway, that ad doesn't ring very well. You literally wasted money that would have better gone into health care and education.

Good money managers? Let's just say 407. You gave away 407, gave them a contract that gives them a licence to print money in many ways. Then you simply took that little quick windfall profit to help you balance the budget for that minute or that day or that year. That's shameful.

You know, I don't think the public minds spending if they get good value for it. I know they don't. The public wants to believe that tax money that is spent is being used for services they and their families require. They learned very quickly, in the latter part of last year, that that money wasn't being spent wisely. In fact, far too much of that money was being spent on friends.

I can assure you that the money that is being collected and used for this interim supply bill is going to be used where it belongs: It is being used to deliver essential services to the people of Ontario. They should be very pleased, and they can be assured that they're getting value for the dollar on the expenditures that will happen as a result of this bill, if it is passed.

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm pleased to rise to give some thoughts on behalf of the folks of Erie-Lincoln with respect to the supply motion before the House, and to comment on some of the issues related to the debate before the House.

I appreciate the member's comments. I think he's taking his marching orders well from the Premier's office. There's no doubt about the strategy of this government—they complained about a negative campaign—it's a negative government. The one thing they've been consistent with in their messages is running down the opposition parties. I guess the philosophy of their attacks on the opposition parties is that they want to make sure they win the next election by default, because there's certainly no agenda to brag about in the first half year of the McGuinty government. Almost the entire content from across the floor is continued criticism.

That's a fine aspect of a debate when the only thing you really concentrate on, the only thing you've been consistent on in your messages, is going after the former Conservative government, going after the third party, trying to marginalize the role the NDP plays in this House, throwing them way into the corner, defying parliamentary tradition.

The only reason for that, I think, is that they know they have little to boast about in leadership, little to boast about in accomplishment, little to boast about in agenda in six months. So all they've got left is to run a negative government and hope to win a war of attrition.

Let's look at the record of this government in the past six months. It is hard, aside from the negative tone, to find a message they have been consistent about. Albeit their message in the campaign was to increase spending substantially in a number of areas, the reality they're communicating today is something quite the opposite. A government that campaigned on holding the line on taxes brought in the single biggest tax hike in the history of the province. They made Bob Rae look like a piker. What was the value of this increase, again?

Mr Dunlop: It was \$4.2 billion.

Mr Hudak: It was \$4.2 billion. I swear I remember the then-Leader of the Opposition, Dalton McGuinty, saying, "I will not raise your taxes." The first bill, symbolic in the Legislature, was a \$4.2-billion tax hike.

To date, in fact, we've found 20 major campaign promises already broken, and that's in six months. Who knows what the list is going to be over time? Every day we're finding more campaign promises broken on a regular basis.

1650

Auto insurance comes to mind as well. I remember a commitment to enable the rates of my constituents to be cut by up to 20% within 90 days of taking office. Constituents continue to come to my office complaining about their increases. I think they've given up on Liberals keeping any of their key campaign promises, so they've asked us as opposition members to fight back and push for some justice on that file, among others.

April 1 will be a very interesting day as well. To my colleague from the Prince Edward county area, the Prince Edward-Hastings riding—he talked about my colleague from Nepean-Carleton on the minimum wage increase. I think if the member here complained about the minimum wage increase, it was simply to assert that you need a much bigger increase for people on minimum wage to make up for the punishing tax hikes already brought in by this government.

We had an initiative to take many low-income workers off the tax rolls altogether. That was eliminated in that \$4.2-billion tax hike bill that Dalton McGuinty brought in as his first bill. Low-income individuals will be paying higher income taxes than they would have otherwise. If they're driving, if they have the opportunity to pay for auto insurance, they're not getting the 20% rate reduction they had been promised.

We're seeing now a lifting of the hydro rates, despite another solemn campaign promise to maintain the rate cap of 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour—one of the first bills, again, to eliminate that cap. So now low-income families are not only not getting the tax breaks, they're going to be hit with higher auto insurance and they're being hit with higher hydro.

Despite the protestations when they were on this side of the House with respect to natural gas prices and consumer protection for natural gas, lo and behold, last week we learned of a punishing hit in gas rates of, I think, 10% or more impacting working families in Ontario. So come April 1, April Fool's Day, a major

impact on the budgets, on the pocketbooks of average Ontarians, let alone being a senior in Ontario.

We had legislation in place, an initiative under way to help seniors. If you're a senior on a fixed income, trying to make ends meet at the end of each and every individual month is difficult enough and it's difficult enough now that hydro rates are going up, it's difficult now that the Liberals are allowing gas price increases to go through. It's hard enough for seniors trying to drive and facing higher auto insurance premiums, but on top of that, the indignity of stripping away the seniors' property tax cut, which would have brought an average savings, I think, of between \$400 and \$500 per senior household—to some individuals, maybe that's not a lot; to a lot of seniors on fixed incomes, that's a substantial sum of money.

On top of that, despite a campaign promise—I'm tired of saying that phrase—to hold the line and actually improve the Ontario drug benefit program, now we see ideas floated at town halls across the province and in the newspaper to substantially increase fees in the Ontario drug benefit program, to take some seniors off the Ontario drug benefit program altogether, again in contrast with what was said in opposition and in contrast to what was declared in the campaign.

No wonder you're seeing so many petitions on this side of the Legislature on behalf of seniors. We launched one in my office just two weeks ago. We launched it in Black Creek Leisure Homes in Stevensville, at Portal Village in Port Colborne and in Beamsville. We'll do one in Dunnville shortly—sort of four corners of the riding. The response from seniors has been absolutely overwhelming because, faced with these increasingly burdensome attacks on their pocketbooks, to suffer the potential loss of access to drugs—if they had voted for the Liberals, if they had voted to keep the drug benefit program the same or improved, they are sorely disappointed and responding, I think, with great frustration, great cynicism and, to some extent, great anger at the initiatives of this government.

Surrounding this issue, of course, of supply and helping to support government ministries is the current standing of the finance minister with the ongoing criminal investigations by the RCMP, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and the Ontario Securities Commission into the Royal Group. The finance minister, of course, had been the chair of the audit committee and, I think, a member of the board since its founding. I would be surprised if an investigation into the Royal Group did not involve an investigation into the decisions or actions of members of the board.

We have asked the Premier time and time again, including most recently in the Legislature today, to set a high level, a high standard—this is the first issue that's arisen on his judgment about the role of his cabinet ministers—to at least keep apprised, so he would know immediately and could inform the Legislature the second those investigations go to the finance minister, his decisions on the board or his actions. He refuses to do so.

I think the ability to put this budget forward clearly and cleanly, under the cloud of the scandal currently surrounding Premier McGuinty's leadership with respect to the finance minister's standing in his cabinet, is going to be extremely difficult to actually manage to do.

There were revelations today by my colleague the member for Nepean-Carleton about an order in council approved secretly, in darkness. There was no press conference, no announcement from the leader, no indication, until detective work was done and brought forward by the member, that more exchanges had taken place, that more responsibilities were removed from the finance minister's portfolio. As the member said, what is going to be left aside from his own calculator and his own pocketbook for him to do as more and more responsibilities are stripped away? The finance minister has no purview over the TSE, the Ontario Securities Commission—

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): The Commodity Futures Advisory Board.

Mr Hudak: —and the Commodity Futures Advisory Board. You wonder ultimately what's not going to be stripped away from the finance minister, and the ability to put forward—

Mr Baird: It's an incredibly shrinking ministry.

Mr Hudak: My colleague said, "It's an incredibly shrinking ministry," probably for a question later on this week.

The ability to have credibility in the upcoming budget or even the supply motion, given the current low level of standards the Premier has set for the conduct of his cabinet ministers, is in great jeopardy.

Mr Baird: But it's not convenient at this time. Sometimes ethics aren't convenient.

Mr Hudak: The member says that ethics sometimes aren't convenient. I remember as a minister in the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves cabinets, we had a number of ministers who upheld the highest level of integrity in stepping aside if there was any question about their conduct, their staff's conduct or conduct within a ministry until the investigation was complete. Sampson, Runciman and Wilson all returned to their cabinet portfolios. I would expect the same standard, if not higher, for the minister opposite—

Mr Baird: No, it's lower. It's not very convenient.

Mr Hudak: The member says that whether it's convenient, whether it's because of the close—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Nepean-Carleton, besides heckling, isn't in his seat.

Mr Hudak: He's giving me good material, though, Mr Speaker.

Whether it's out of convenience, whether it's because of a close personal friendship between the two individuals, I do worry about the low standards, this ethical limbo dance that the Premier has brought forward and what it means to decisions and the integrity of the other cabinet ministers who are sitting across the table.

Those are my comments with respect to the supply motion. I know I have other colleagues who want to

address this issue. I'm pleased to bring some issues forward that I'm hearing about in the beautiful riding of Erie-Lincoln.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I am here talking on behalf of the minister and our Ministry of Finance on interim supply. In simple terms, it's just a bill that allows the government of Ontario to pay the bills, to pay the salaries of all of Ontario's workers, the civil servants, the Ontario Provincial Police, the nurses in hospitals all across Ontario and the countless number of civil servants who are in every ministry, who deal with providing services to the people of Ontario. Some of them are very significant, as I said, in terms of the OPP officers. Then there are the very vital people who work for the Ministry of Transportation, who work providing immunization programs at the Ministry of Health, all of our public servants who work in long-term care, all of our civil servants who work in providing OHIP coverage. This also provides money that goes to all of our officials who work at providing a university education or a college education in the community colleges, keeping our water clean and potable in this province, ensuring that our lakes and rivers and our marvellous provincial parks are taken care of. These are things we take for granted; these are front-line services that Ontarians depend upon. These are front-line services that have to be improved, and we're working on improving them. As we proceed through our mandate, we're going to not only provide them with the basic resources to provide the front-line services, but I hope that we can expand some of these services, because we know the need there is for the expansion of services.

1700

We as a government know that in many ways there were about eight years of a lack of attention, we'll call it, that took place in many of our public services. If you look at our roads, if you look at our urban transit, if you look at the condition of our hospitals, if you look at the condition of our colleges, elementary schools and high schools, you'll see that there has been an erosion of the quality of the buildings and also the quality of the service to be delivered in education, in health, in public transit and right across the spectrum. It took many years for this deterioration and rot to set in, and there's no way it's going to take weeks or months to fix it. And we're going to have to fix it. There's a lot of work to be done to repair the infrastructure damage because, sad to say, in a period of economic growth which we witnessed over the last eight or 10 years, the previous government didn't take care of basics. They essentially blew an amazing opportunity to fix the infrastructure of this province. That's not to say everything they did was wrong, but they essentially didn't do the basic work of keeping track of what the needs were in our hospitals, our schools and our communities, from water filtration plants to sewage systems. Those were basic needs that weren't being met.

We have an infrastructure deficit of \$60 billion, never mind the financial deficit we hear about year to year of \$5.6 billion, which the previous government still denies.

They still think they're at the Magna auto plant in this fairytale world where numbers aren't numbers. They still think there is no deficit. Not one of them on the former government side admits that there's a deficit facing this government. They said that everything was balanced, and they kept on saying it right to the last day. We knew coming into government that there were some problems with their promises and assertions, but we never thought the depth of the infrastructure imbalance was this enormous. It's daunting.

I think the most daunting thing for our government is going to be dealing with the hydro disaster. If you talk about responsibility and not taking care of basics, if you look at the history of what went on at OPG and Hydro One, never mind the secret lucrative contracts to their friends—

Interjection: Untendered.

Mr Colle: Untendered—but just the fact that they spent billions of dollars, they spent eight years allowing one of the premier hydroelectric power systems in the west to deteriorate into a basket case. That is what we're faced with, never mind the daunting challenge we have with the fiscal deficit we face. We are going to need enormous amounts of capital to essentially stabilize our hydroelectric system. There's no easy answer, as you saw in the Manley report. There are no quick fixes. It's something that is going to take an enormous amount of commitment and sacrifice by all Ontarians to get straightened out.

The other thing that's very daunting is that, next to health care and education, the biggest portion of the tax dollars we pay out is to service a ballooning provincial debt. So with the dollars we give out as a province, in taxes collected, we have to pay for health care, which is enormous, 40-odd per cent—and education. Next comes paying interest on the debt. So through the most reasonably good years over the last decade, the previous government let the debt balloon up to about \$140 billion from the 1990s. We have been very clear in saying that—

Interjections.

Mr Colle: I know the Conservative opposition doesn't like to hear the fact that they hid this from the people of Ontario. They hid the deficit. They ballooned the debt to \$140 billion. Talk about irresponsibility. We are going to deal with that, but we can't be expected to deal with it in six or seven months. We're not going to be reckless, like the previous government in their approach of saying, "We're going to cut services across the board in health care and education, and then we're going to give tax cuts to everybody." That policy of cutting services and cutting taxes has been proven to be a dismal, utter failure.

All over the world, Ontario is now a shining example of what not to do economically as a government, that if you cut taxes irresponsibly and if you cut services, you know what the result is: one of the highest debts in the western world that we now have; an infrastructure deficit that's out of control; services that have been decimated; and our schools and hospitals, which are in worse shape than they were 10 years ago. So when you proceed on

that approach of tax cuts and service cuts, you end up in the situation we find Ontario in. They essentially ruined an opportunity to invest in basic infrastructure services, to invest in our schools and our hospitals. And the living proof is if you talk to parents who have their children in schools with deteriorating buildings, the closure of schools, the hospitals that had backed up emergency rooms, the nursing homes that didn't have enough facilities to care for our elderly. If you look at our cities, they were totally abandoned. Public transit—this was the only jurisdiction in the civilized world that didn't fund public transit.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Nepean-Carleton is not in his seat, so I'll ask him to refrain from speaking out.

Mr Colle: I know, Mr Speaker, they just don't want to hear the sad legacy of economic failure, debt, deficit and service cuts that is their legacy. It's a hallmark of shame. They left us with a hallmark of shame. They brought this wonderful province to its knees by their gross incompetence, secret deal-making and lack of appreciation for the social needs and the infrastructure needs of this province. That's the legacy of Mike Harris, Ernie Eves and the Conservative cabal that ran this province to the ground. That's why it's our job to not do what they did but to look ahead with new ideas, innovation, listen to people, as we have done, and make this province reach its potential for the people of Ontario and learn by the mistakes of the previous Tory cabal, which is the laughingstock of governments and pundits all over the world for what they did to this province. Shame on them. We will not repeat their mistakes.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair now recognizes the member from Nepean-Carleton.

Mr Baird: Thank you, Speaker. I was pleased to take your advice and come over here so I could say a few words. You are always helpful in giving suggestions.

I listened with great interest to the speech by our colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence. We had a bad election campaign over here, but we had one good day during the election campaign; it was when he made a little announcement at a supermarket, or was it an open-air market?

Mr Hudak: There were a lot of fruits and vegetables there.

Mr Baird: They were selling fruits and vegetables, and some young Ontarian had come out to buy some apples and had a little run-in with the member opposite. I think that was just about the only good day we had in the campaign.

Mr Hudak: The best day of the campaign.

Mr Baird: Indeed.

Interjection.

1710

Mr Baird: Exactly, McIntosh or Granny Smith or what have you.

Mr Hudak: By Ontarians.

Mr Baird: By a concerned Ontarian, a child, a young person wanting to get involved in the political process, going to ask a question.

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): A friendly dialogue.

Mr Baird: A friendly dialogue, the member for Peterborough says. That's correct.

I'm pleased to have a chance to briefly—and I should say to those watching on television, stay tuned, Garfield Dunlop, the member for Simcoe North, is coming up next, so don't adjust your set.

Mr Hudak: Prime time.

Mr Baird: Prime time. He really doesn't want to go on until at least a quarter after 5, when he has a bigger viewing audience. I don't blame him.

I listened to the member for Eglinton-Lawrence. He talked about how important this interim supply bill is. I wondered why he always voted against interim supply and why all the Liberals didn't want to pay teachers, didn't want to pay hospitals, didn't want to pay public servants. But they seem to have changed their minds. That's what the campaign was all about: Choose change. But they changed their minds. They said they would keep the electricity cap on; they changed their minds.

Dalton McGuinty ran \$4 million worth of TV ads, looked into people's eyes on their television screens in their living rooms and promised he wouldn't raise taxes.

Mr Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): He didn't.

Mr Baird: I checked that. I didn't see any asterisks; I didn't see any fine print like in the pharmaceutical ads. If you were a small business person, he'd put your taxes back to 2001 levels. He said he wouldn't raise taxes.

Mr Ramal: We don't raise taxes. Everybody has to pay fair taxes.

Mr Baird: I don't believe you. I don't believe you. Dalton McGuinty could have been brave and said, like Walter Mondale or Michael Dukakis or Bill Clinton, "I'm going to raise your taxes." But he looked everyone in the face and said, "I won't raise your taxes," and he didn't, unless you were a small business person, unless you were a senior citizen, unless you were like some of the parents who send their children to the Metcalfe Christian school, some of whom are making \$35,000 or \$40,000 a year, where, in a mean-spirited and vindictive fashion, he made the tax increase retroactive.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: If I have the choice to agree with Lou Rinaldi or B'nai Brith, I'll go with B'nai Brith 10 times out of 10. If I go to the Canadian Jewish Congress, who spoke at the hearings, or to representatives of the Islamic community, who said it was nasty and mean-spirited, that's where my sympathies would lie, because raising taxes retroactively is just bad economic policy.

Dalton McGuinty didn't like my policy of focusing autism programs on young children under the age of six. He and his members vilified me and Mike Harris and Ernie Eves for not extending it to children over the age over six, and they promised they would do it. They looked in the eyes of these parents with disabled children and promised they would do it, and now they're not

keeping that promise. They're blatantly breaking faith with the public.

I talked to Norrah Whitney, who was in the gallery today. I talked to her out in the hall and she said, "I found it was easier dealing with the Conservative government, because at least they were honest." That's exactly what the mother of a disabled child said to me in the hallway: "At least with you guys, I knew where you stood and that you would give us an honest answer." I never lied to any parents of disabled children.

Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): And you never helped them.

Mr Baird: I never helped them? I tell you that when I became minister there wasn't a dime being spent on preschool autism, not a single dime. We put in \$20 million in the first year and doubled it to \$40 million in the third year. And I never lied to any parents of disabled children. I never lied to parents of disabled children.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Can we cool the temperature down just a bit? I think the member from Nepean-Carleton may be using some words that are bordering on being unparliamentary. So just help me and be a little more careful, please.

Mr Baird: Mr Speaker, I'm here to help, and I'm pleased, as a member of Parliament, that Shelley Martel and John Baird can go anywhere in this province and say we've never lied to parents of autistic children. They may not always have liked what I had to say, but at least I was honest with them and didn't promise people things to get their votes only then not to deliver. That's the kind of action which puts politicians in low esteem in the province, when people say one thing when they're trolling for votes during an election campaign and another after they put their hand on the Bible, get the car and driver and move into the big corner office. I tell you, Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal team will not be able to make any promises in the next election campaign, because no one will believe them. No one will believe them. I look forward to that next election campaign and to see what they'll say around the province of Ontario on these issues, because the credibility is zero, nothing; no credibility.

The member for Nickel Belt, Shelley Martel, will tell you that the lawyers from the Ontario government in the autism case against these parents are nastier and meaner than anyone Mike Harris ever had in a courtroom. That truth will get out. They are acting in a more vicious and more demanding way than we ever would have fought these parents of autistic children.

I will give the remaining time to my friend from Simcoe North. I know the member for Erie-Lincoln, the member for Oshawa, the member for Simcoe North as well as all the NDP members are very proud of the fact that we never lied to any parents of autistic children.

Mr Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak on this interim supply bill. When I arrived in the House as a rookie MPP back in late October, I had

absolutely no idea yet how government worked with regard to the paying of bills and whatnot, but it didn't take me long to find out. I did discover that it was necessary for the government to send money to municipalities, to hospitals, to school boards so that they can support those important people who deliver the programs. It's important that we pay social assistance benefits to those in need. It's also important that we pay the salaries of those dedicated members of the public service who move this province. So when I look at the interim supply bill, I have no trouble in supporting it, and supporting the Minister of Finance as he stood here today and told us how important it was. We have schools, nursing homes, hospitals, doctors, social assistance recipients, children's aid societies and the supplier of government services. Just as an example, what I need in my office, we have to pay those bills; therefore, it's important to have this interim supply bill put through.

I would like to reflect a little bit on ideas from my riding that hinge on interim supply. First of all, regarding our hospitals—and I do want to say that it was a delight on March 16 for the Minister of Health to come to my riding to lend support, and yes, the support required at the Winchester hospital to get that project moving along, to support those people in that rural part of the riding who have raised over \$13 million as their part of a \$15-million campaign. He came to the riding to say, yes, our government supports, with dollars, the next step, and that is to go to design for the addition to that hospital. I was delighted. And without interim supply, we wouldn't be able to do such things.

I was also delighted to hear the debate earlier—and there was cross-debate over here—regarding a cheque. I would like to move to the hospital situation in Cornwall, the large urban area of my riding. We did, just on January 1 this year, finally get the governance part of our hospital situation resolved, where we did bring together two acute care facilities into one governance. We do now have a new CEO and a board for the Cornwall Community Hospital. However, I remember that last year, before the election, even before it was determined by the people of Ontario that they wanted a Liberal government in place, when the former Minister of Health came to the riding and informed those people who had gathered at the former Hôtel Dieu site that the cheque was in his back pocket with regard to funding the hospital restructuring in Cornwall.

1720

Well, that cheque wasn't in the back pocket, and I am still working with the Minister of Finance to move this project along so that, hopefully, by September 2005 we will be able to have the shovels in the ground to add to a facility that we will be renovating. Yes, we will be renovating that old hospital site built in the 1950s, but we will also be adding some very critical infrastructure to the former Hôtel Dieu site, which is now going to be the acute care of the Cornwall Community Hospital. I'm delighted about that. But to say that the cheque was in the pocket—now, I'm talking about interim supply. If that

cheque was in the pocket, that should have been produced, and it wasn't.

They were talking about when you have prime time. I guess this is prime time. But I'm speaking to those people who have worked so hard in my riding in the rural area to raise the funds, in my urban area now, where they're going to go out on a fundraising campaign to raise their share of the funds for this hospital project.

There are other issues in the riding too. I look at schools. I retired from education in 2000 and had a couple of years to reflect on my time, my 32½ years in the school system. I do know the situation and the conditions the schools were in, late in my career. I know, with a wife who was in health care, the situations of hospitals. I was there. I know what the situations were like in the municipality; I was the reeve for the township of South Stormont and, previous to that, the township of Cornwall. I know what the former Tory government did. We had massive loads to absorb in municipalities with regard to the downloading of responsibilities.

In schools, we were crying for textbooks. We were crying to get rid of those portables. We were so interested in providing the best for our students. I would like to say, yes, we will move on. We're having a tough time right now, but we will move on and we will provide the best for our students. The Minister of Education has already made some commitments and some announcements, very positive to our schools. In our hospitals, we will do the same.

With municipalities, just today I stood up and asked a question of the Minister of the Environment regarding the water testing in our rural areas. A great load has been put on these rural communities by the results of Walkerton and the Justice O'Connor report and by what has had to be picked up from the Tory government, the former government.

So we have to look at that. We have to see ways in which we can resolve problems—municipal, provincial. We have to work with them. As a former council member, I am willing, ready and prepared to assist our municipalities. It was a delight to be able to organize, through the minister's office, down at the Royal York a few short weeks ago, the chance for the council for North Dundas township and some other council members to meet with the minister to let her know that, yes, there are some major problems with regard to these downloaded services and the water testing.

I would also like to say that in our schools, in higher education, we have said—we have made a promise, and we will work on that promise—that we are going to look at higher education, apprenticeship programs and the needs of our community colleges. In my riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, the only facility of post-secondary education is St Lawrence College. I have been looking and working, and discovering that St Lawrence College in Cornwall, with their president, Volker Thomsen, have some very creative and outstanding ideas to increase attendance at their college, to

increase programs at their college and to increase the profile of their college.

Just last week, I was able to meet with the member for Etobicoke Center, my seatmate, to ask her if she would come down to my riding to meet with the CEO, Mr Pat Finucan at the college, and the president, Mr Thomsen, to look at an idea they have for alternative energy and the chance to educate in alternative energy. She gave that promise that, yes, she would come down. I'm working with her on that. There are wonderful ideas out there in our province, and we must work with our colleges. We must promote, and that is what we will do.

But, as my good friend and colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings said previously, we inherited a \$5.6-billion deficit. The honourable member did indicate that he didn't have an idea before the election, before all those promises and before we set up a platform, that there would be that deficit. As a rookie who had no idea I would be running but threw my hat in the ring, got the nomination and won the election, I certainly had no idea of the \$5.6 billion.

But I'm going to tell you we will overcome the problems associated with the \$5.6 billion. We will work diligently. We will work as a team. We will overcome that, and I can say that we will move on with our platform promises. Let it be very clear that we as Liberals, we as the government, have great, great responsibilities and great, great problems. These problems have come out time and time again in our pre-budget consultations. They certainly came out last week in the pre-budget round table that I hosted. I look forward to taking the ideas that have been presented to me, moving them to the Minister of Finance and using those ideas as we create a budget that will be an important budget for all Ontarians. We will cover hospitals, we will cover schools and we will cover agriculture.

Mr Dunlop: It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and make a few comments. It has been an interesting afternoon, listening to all the rhetoric in this room.

The first thing I wanted to say is that this has been a very difficult day for me as a father and a grandfather of three young girls. I want to pay tribute once again to Cecilia Zhang and her family. I had a sick feeling in the last 24 hours, when I first heard about this. I want to put that on the record, because it has been a rough day for me just thinking about that family.

I want to talk a little bit about interim supply. I do want to leave a few minutes for my colleague behind me, Laurie Scott.

I'll be supporting the interim supply bill, unlike the Liberals. I believe when we were in power, they did not support the interim supply motions. I think that our civil servants do deserve to be paid, and they obviously need the funding fairly quickly.

As I heard the comments today from the government—on Friday of this week, it will be six months that they've been in power, and six months later they're still trying to demonize the former government, trying to blame us for everything. Why don't you just get on and

do your job? You're now the government. Get on and do your job. You've had six months and nothing has been done except demonizing—not only our government, but you're going back as far as the NDP now. Let's get on and do the job.

The fact of the matter is, there are so many things that were so positive in the last eight years in particular. I'm going to mention a few just in my riding. I'm going to talk about a \$25-million addition to Georgian College. I'm going to talk about an \$80-million expansion of our hospital in Orillia—20 years it was in the making; it's under construction today. The towers are up. They're working.

1730

There are 12 schools in my riding that had additions put on them—12 rural schools. You're talking about closing schools all over the place and I hear all these horror stories that the Liberals keep talking about; my schools are in fantastic condition, most of them. I've got 12 schools that have new additions. I've got two new schools, two new Catholic schools, in Victoria Harbour and Penetanguishene. I've got a new dialysis unit going in at Penetang and Midland.

Someone picked on former minister Klees a little while ago—I think it was the member from Thornhill. He talked about some negative things Mr Klees was doing. I think about Highway 93 under construction; I think about the expansion of Atherley road out in my riding, which is a key road in moving people to the casino.

Now I hear—strictly members of the government—you're talking about adding more casinos. You're talking about adding more casinos in an already saturated market. I can't believe you would even consider doing it. That's how you would impact rural Ontario: by adding more casinos.

Our casino, Casino Rama, with a new hotel, employs 4,000 people. Do you know what? That casino is the largest employer of aboriginals in our province—in our country, in fact. This government, this new government, is talking about reviewing it, probably adding more casinos. That will hurt rural Ontario. The only casino in rural Ontario, and you may, in fact, have a negative impact on it.

Let's talk about some of these broken promises: Drive Clean. I never read about that in your platform. I looked all through the platform, all 147 pages of nothing. I looked at 147 pages; I couldn't find the words "Drive Clean" being brought up. Here we are, talking about eliminating that program. A government that talks about eliminating smog, closing down—another election promise—all the coal generation by 2007. Keep a close eye on that one; I don't think that's going to happen. They're going to get rid of it. At the same hand, they're going to hurt all these small business people by shutting down the Drive Clean program and hurting emissions control in our province. It simply doesn't make sense.

I never read anything about road tolls either. I have Highway 400 and Highway 11 running right through my riding, as they do Mr Miller's riding. Now you're talking

about putting road tolls on. I never heard Bartolucci yapping about that in the last four years. All he did was talk about getting the highway built stronger and stronger, getting more money put into roads. Now he's talking about tolling them, and he will not respond to the question. We're going to keep asking him that. All we want to know is, will there be road tolls on Highway 69 and Highway 400, or Highway 11, or will there not be? Obviously, I think there will be, and Minister Bartolucci would not respond to it the other day.

There are a number of things we can talk about. I'm going to spend a few more seconds on one item, and that's under water quality. We had three programs in our government's time under water quality: the provincial water protection fund, SuperBuild option one and SuperBuild option two—all money that went into water and sewer projects. I'm looking very, very carefully at your budget to see just how much money you're going to put into water.

For example, site 41 in my riding has had previous approvals. Now we're bringing out source protection legislation. I want to see the Minister of the Environment come forward and say that she will not grandfather those old projects, that she'll proceed with the new legislation surrounding landfill sites. What that means to me is looking at landfill sites with the new legislation, the source protection legislation, that she brags about bringing forward—not allowing the Adams Mine to go ahead, not allowing site 41 to go ahead, but actually listening to what she said in her promises and actually listening to the advisory panel.

There are lots of other things that I could talk about here today—mad cow disease. Mr Sorbara, the Minister of Finance, talked about the negative impact of mad cow disease. He said "six months," along with his buddy Martin—best friends with Mr Martin. Nothing has happened. In six months, nothing has happened. You have not opened the borders.

Mr Colle: A billion dollars was given. Where were you?

Mr Dunlop: Mr Colle, you should know what you're talking about. The first thing is to get the border open. Don't worry about handing out—the farmers don't want handouts; they want the border open so they can look after the transfer of their products.

I don't have a lot more time. I do want to take a couple of minutes and let Laurie Scott say a few words. I do appreciate the opportunity to get under their skin once again.

Ms Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock): Thank you to my colleague from Simcoe North.

I want to talk on a few priorities that the government has promised to address, one of them being health care—more full-time nursing positions, more doctor recruitment and more nurse practitioners. The past government had a great start in a lot of these areas. We need to do more.

I know in my area I want to commend the community doctor recruitment groups, especially in Kinmount, where they have just recruited a new doctor to their area;

also the groups of the city of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton Highlands Health Services; the hospital in Lindsay, Ross Memorial Hospital, for all their work in doctor recruitment in advancing the medical, professional and access at home with new expansions at the Ross Memorial Hospital, Minden hospital and the Haliburton hospitals.

I have a large number of seniors in my riding, and I'm going to hold up—just a slight prop—hundreds of letters I have from seniors about the Ontario drug plan and the discrimination that may come with that and the concerns they have. A lot of the seniors are on fixed incomes—low incomes—and they're not going to be able to afford the drugs. I want to make sure that the government is listening to their concerns.

I want to touch on education for a few minutes. I'm going to tell a story about a boundary dispute right now with the Simcoe County District School Board and the Trillium Lakelands District School Board in which we're hoping that the Liberals will implement the Rozanski report for increased transportation for rural areas, because we have Carden and Dalton community members whose children are going to have to be bused long distances instead of being able to go, which they've done for decades, over to Simcoe county schools, which are closer and have more of their community of interest. I want to bring up that issue. We'll be approaching, and have approached, the Minister of Education for an answer for these families. It needs to be addressed immediately so that children should have a choice. It's a sad thing when students aren't able to choose the school they want to attend and that's close to their communities.

My colleague mentioned the impact and the crisis involved with agriculture. We want to make sure that agriculture has supports. MPAC we thank for cancelling the retroactivity for the trailer parks and the cancelling of the reclassification for the maple syrup bushes. We want you to continue to work with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I have people with hatcheries and horse farms in my riding who have approached me about the reclassifications. We hope that the government will look at that.

Interjections.

Ms Scott: I'm not blaming; I'm asking you to address it, that they will look at the classifications and give the agricultural community a fair break, which they need.

I've met with several municipalities. They're looking for the gas tax rebate. I want to comment that it is the 50th anniversary of the TTC. Premier Leslie Frost was the Premier at that time. He came from my riding. He took the first ride on the system.

Mrs Sandals: I'm very pleased to be able to speak on the motion for interim supply. It's been an interesting debate, but what we must realize is that this is the motion that allows us to transfer money to hospitals, to boards of education, to universities, colleges, family and children's services, and to pay for all those services that we have within government—in my own ministry, the Ontario Provincial Police and the correctional services. All of

these people are working very, very hard on our behalf. It is important that we manage our money wisely in that area.

One of the areas where I'm very pleased about the way we're going to manage our money is the area of services for autistic children. A number of members have commented on that. The member for Nepean-Carleton pointed out, quite correctly, that it was under his ministry that we started the IBI therapy program, the behavioural intervention therapy for preschoolers, and that was a good thing to do. But the problem is that the previous government has in fact not supplied enough IBI services for preschool children. What has happened is that because the Conservative government did not supply enough services for preschoolers, we have a waiting list of hundreds of children in this province who never receive the service at all. They get to be six years old and they're still on the waiting list. Because of the previous government's mismanagement, they never receive any service at all.

1740

What are we going to do about that? We're going to do a number of things about that. First of all we're going to make sure that there is training available so that we can have a lot more therapists trained. That will help us get at the core problem, which is providing more service to preschoolers. All the literature tells us that while IBI therapy may have some positive benefits for older children, it is shown by the research to have most effect if we can get to those children early. So by training more therapists, we will be able to service those children at a younger age, when it can be most effective.

The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford talked about therapy for school-aged children, and he made a very interesting comment. I'm not sure he realized that he made an interesting comment, but he did actually make an interesting comment. He talked about the fact that he had a constituent, and in order to have IBI therapy, that child had to be removed from class three afternoons a week. In fact, that's actually the point. One of the problems with using IBI therapy with school-aged children is that the very children who need school-age intervention the most are actually being removed from the classroom. That doesn't make sense.

We're taking a different approach. We're going to make sure that the people who work with children in the classroom—the teachers, the education consultants, the education assistants who are actually in the classroom—receive the training so they can help the children in the classroom. We don't want a model where you have to withdraw children from the classroom to provide therapy. We want a model where we can actually serve the child in the classroom, and we're going to do that.

For that and a host of other reasons, we are going to show that we can manage money much more effectively than the previous government, and with this interim supply motion we will be able to get on with the business of doing that.

I'm going to share my time with my colleague from Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Ms Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): I'm pleased to have a few moments to talk about the interim supply motion, a motion that ensures that government expenditures can be paid in respect of public services, those commitments made by the public service and of the public service. I think so often we spend time in this Legislature talking about the fact that we have a lot of work to do in turning the ship of government around and fixing up the fixer-upper that we inherited from the last government. But I want to spend the few minutes that I have talking about those individuals in our nursing homes, in our hospitals, in our municipalities, in our children's aid societies and in our schools who do the good work each and every day and meet the commitments of the government.

I had an opportunity over the last several weeks to do a lot of visiting in my community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore. I had the opportunity to visit Islington Junior and Middle School and read to a grade 3 class, and the question they asked me was, "What is government?" When I put the question back to the children, they referred to me, "Well, government is our schools, our hospitals, our public services, our libraries." The grade 3 class at Islington Junior and Middle School understood that issue.

Last week I had another opportunity to attend at schools in my ridings. I spent the day at St Leo Catholic School and Bishop Allen Academy, where I spent time in grades 2, 7, 9, 10 and 12. Again, the kids in those schools understood the issues and struggles we have to do on behalf of the province to make sure that we reinvest the funds in their education system.

With grades 9, 10 and 12, we had a very interesting opportunity to conduct a budget town hall. The budget town hall session we did with the students really exemplified a great dialogue, the fact that the students in our province understand what government is and the need for government to reinvest and put money into these public services that we need.

In response to a request from the Minister of Health that we all attend the long-term-care facilities in our ridings, I attended all four in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, and I want to take a moment to recognize those that are doing caring, compassionate work in our community.

When I attended the long-term-care facilities, a lot of the individuals who are dedicated and working hard to protect and take care of those in need in our society indicated that so often all they get is criticism. From the floor of the Legislature, I'd like to acknowledge the good work and the exceptional circumstances that we found when we attended unannounced in all four long-term-care facilities in Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Last, I want to talk for a few minutes about health care and the fact that health care providers in Etobicoke-Lakeshore are trying to provide innovative health care. We've got a new women's clinic coming at the Trillium

hospital, and our Stonegate and LAMP community health centres are also working hard to ensure that individuals in Etobicoke-Lakeshore are well cared for.

When I talk about why we need to pass the interim supply motion, it's important that we not lose sight of the individuals who are working hard each and every day to deliver the government services that we talk about in this Legislature. Those who are out on the front lines are pleased to have a government that truly believes in public education and public health care, ensuring that we meet the commitments and continue to fix the mess we've inherited, but most importantly, that we acknowledge the good work they do on our behalf each and every day.

The Speaker: Mr Sorbara has moved government motion 16. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those against?

I think the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1747 to 1757.

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

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Ernie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Bountroggianni, Marie	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Hudak, Tim	Peterson, Tim
Broten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Racco, Mario G.
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Ramal, Khalil
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Smith, Monique
Cordiano, Joseph	Mauro, Bill	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Sorbara, Greg
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Di Cocco, Caroline	Meilleur, Madeleine	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Wilkinson, John
Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dunlop, Garfield	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David
Eves, Ernie	Mossop, Jennifer F.	

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

Nays

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

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 62; the nays are 7.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being 6 of the clock, the House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

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

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

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

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

Continued from overleaf

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 29 mars 2004

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 2004 sur le gel des traitements des députés , projet de loi 42, <i>M. McGuinty</i> Adoptée.....	1049
Loi Sandy de 2004 (modification de la Loi sur les permis d'alcool) , projet de loi 43, <i>M. Parsons</i> Adoptée.....	1050

DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Traitements des députés M. McGuinty.....	1050
--	------

QUESTIONS ORALES

Impôts fonciers M. Lalonde.....	1057
M. Sorbara.....	1057

MOTIONS ÉMANANT DU GOUVERNEMENT

Crédits provisoires , avis de motion numéro 16 émanant du gouvernement, <i>M. Sorbara</i> M. Sorbara.....	1066
Adoptée.....	1084

CONTENTS

Monday 29 March 2004

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Canadians for a Genocide Museum	
Mr Dunlop	1047
Hate crimes	
Mr Arthurs	1047
Fabry disease	
Mrs Witmer	1047
Cecilia Zhang	
Mr Wong	1047
Land use planning	
Ms Churley	1048
Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre	
Mr Mauro	1048
Highway tolls	
Mr Miller	1048
New Canadians	
Ms Mossop	1049
Federal budget	
Mr Hudak	1049

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

Standing committee on government agencies	
The Speaker	1049
Report deemed adopted	1049

FIRST READINGS

MPP Salary Freeze Act, 2004,	
Bill 42, <i>Mr McGuinty</i>	
Agreed to	1049
Mr McGuinty	1049
Sandy's Law (Liquor Licence Amendment), 2004, Bill 43,	
<i>Mr Parsons</i>	
Agreed to	1050
Mr Parsons	1050
Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario Act, 2004,	
Bill Pr3, <i>Mr Peterson</i>	
Agreed to	1050

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Members' compensation	
Mr McGuinty	1050
Mr Runciman	1050
Mr Hampton	1051

ORAL QUESTIONS

Conflict of interest	
Mr Baird	1052, 1053, 1061
Mr McGuinty	1052, 1053, 1056 1058, 1061
Mr Flaherty	1055
Mr Phillips	1055
Mr Klees	1056
Mr Hudak	1058
Transit services	
Mr Hampton	1054
Mr McGuinty	1054
Autism services	
Ms Martel	1054
Mrs Bountrogianni	1054
Tuition	
Mr Patten	1056
Mrs Chambers	1056
Property taxation	
Mr Lalonde	1057
Mr Sorbara	1057
Education funding	
Mr Marchese	1057
Mr McGuinty	1057
Immunization	
Mr Qaadri	1058
Mr Smitherman	1058
Democratic renewal	
Mr Runciman	1059
Mr McGuinty	1059
Water quality	
Mr Brownell	1059
Mrs Dombrowsky	1059
Municipal restructuring	
Mr Prue	1060
Mr Gerretsen	1060
Government consultants	
Ms Wynne	1061
Mr Phillips	1061

PETITIONS

Landfill	
Mr Dunlop	1061, 1064
Immigrants' skills	
Mr Delaney	1062
Ontario drug benefit program	
Mr O'Toole	1062
Mr Wilson	1063
Mr Tascona	1064
Municipal restructuring	
Mr Kormos	1062

Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One

Mr Berardinetti	1063
Autism services	
Mr Tascona	1063
Assistance to farmers	
Mr Leal	1063, 1064
Hog industry	
Mr Lalonde	1063
Electricity supply	
Mr Miller	1064
Liability insurance	
Mr Miller	1065

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Interim supply, government notice of motion number 16, <i>Mr Sorbara</i>	
Mr Sorbara	1065
Mr Tascona	1066
Mr Kormos	1069
Mr Racco	1070
Mr Klees	1071
Mr Prue	1072
Mr Parsons	1074
Mr Hudak	1076
Mr Colle	1078
Mr Baird	1079
Mr Brownell	1080
Mr Dunlop	1082
Ms Scott	1082
Mrs Sandals	1083
Ms Broten	1084
Agreed to	1084

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors	
Mrs Bountrogianni	1052
The Speaker	1052
Cecilia Zhang	
Mr Caplan	1052

Continued overleaf