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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 19 May 2004

Mercredi 19 mai 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 May 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 19 mai 2004

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEALTH CARE

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):

Provincial Liberals have betrayed us, not only with their regressive two-tier health tax—remember the McGuinty promise of no new taxes?—but also with their regressive two-tier delisting of vital health services. OHIP will no longer pay for working families to visit optometrists, chiropractors or physiotherapists as of this fall. This is a brazen and blatant betrayal. Optometrists, chiropractors, physiotherapists and their patients have been brutally betrayed by a Liberal government that has turned its back on preventative eye care and has sentenced people to live with back and muscular pain if they can't afford access to health. I believe that's called two-tier health care.

Clearly this flies in the face of promoting preventative community-based primary health care services, and this is a bald-faced betrayal. These health professionals and their patients question why this government, a government supposedly committed to universally accessible health care, would now bring in this regressive two-tier privatization of eye care, chiropractic and physio services. They wonder how it could be that this government would ask them to pay more for health through tax premiums and yet receive fewer services. We know the health minister declares war. He has now laid down the gauntlet on optometrists, chiropractors, physiotherapists and their patients. Who's next?

Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I rise today to inform the House that after yesterday's budget announcement, I spoke with my sister, Anna Johnston. Anna works for the Rouge Valley Health System as a medical lab technologist. Since 1995, she has seen a steady deterioration of the health care system in terms of the quality of service, employee morale and patient satisfaction.

Anna and I believe that yesterday's budget announcement represents a watershed in addressing the number one priority for Ontarians. Yesterday's announcement for health care is long overdue. Patients welcome the change. Anna and her colleagues welcome the change in the way that government deals with health care in Ontario. They welcome 36,000 more heart procedures, nine new MRI

and CT scans, 8,000 full-time jobs for nurses, and home care for over 95,000 Ontarians.

Our government's commitment to improving health care will mean better delivery of primary care, long-term care, cancer care and home care to patients. Health care workers like my sister Anna, who's a bit older than I, but I won't give her age, and other thousands of nurses and nurse practitioners are deeply satisfied. These improvements will enhance employee morale and patient satisfaction. All this will mean overall improvement to health care, Ontario's number one priority.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): When I saw the smirk on Dalton McGuinty's face last night, when he spoke about his broken-promises budget, I was reminded of that Jim Carey and Jennifer Tilly film, *Liar Liar*. You might remember from that film that it had a tag line beneath lead actor Carey's smug, grinning picture that said—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. Order. Let us not start that. Would you mind withdrawing that? It's an indirect way of trying to do something. Could you withdraw that comment.

Mr Hudak: I'll withdraw the title of the film. The plot, as everybody knows, is about an fast-talking attorney and habitual Pinocchio. Does it sound familiar? If they made a sequel to that film, no doubt about it, the main character could easily be played by Dalton McGuinty. While that Carey movie was a harmless comedy, the damage Dalton McGuinty has wrought upon working-class Ontarians—

The Speaker: Order. I'm sorry, but would your colleague mind putting away those props?

Mr Hudak: The damage Dalton McGuinty has wrought from his broken promises are far more dangerous, and potentially catastrophic, to middle-class families in Ontario. I cannot imagine a working family in Port Colborne or Dunnville being able to swallow what amounts to a \$1,200 per home tax from the 50 tax hikes and fee increases in this budget, which is absolutely merciless.

MARKHAM DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Mr Tony C. Wong (Markham): Today I rise to acknowledge Markham District High School's 50th anniversary reunion. Over the past weekend I had the opportunity to attend some of the high school celebra-

tions, which drew more than 2,000 former staff and students. The anniversary marks 50 years of the school at its present location, but MDHS has been in existence for 145 years.

Former students and teachers came from across Canada and from far-off places like Holland, Texas, Saudi Arabia, and Australia. Although the majority of participants at the celebrations attended the school in the 1970s and 1980s, the event was open to anyone who had ever attended the school. One very special guest was 98-year-old Faye Hoover Reesor. She attended Markham District High School in the early 1920s, making her the oldest former MDHS student at the reunion.

The many festivities, planned by a 12-member committee, spanned the course of three days and included a golf tournament, a pub night at designated pubs for each decade, a staff brunch, a variety show, nostalgia rooms, a dinner and dance at the Markham Fairgrounds and an ecumenical church service. Judging by the overwhelming number of attendees, the reunion was a huge success, and one that reconnected old friends and teachers. Congratulations to Markham District High School on its successful 50th-anniversary reunion.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I just wanted to review briefly the budget funding announcements they have made for education. I want to say that yes, they have announced \$400 million in increases for salaries, maintenance, building repairs, school renewal and all ongoing operations. I would add that that's similar to the increase that was projected in the 2003 budget by the Tories. Yes, they added \$250 million in new funding to implement a cap on class sizes and assist schools in meeting targets for success in province-wide testing. They have done that. Yes, they've added \$133 million as a fund to deal with issues of literacy. But I've got to tell you, there was not one cent announced connected to the recommendations made by Dr Mordechai Rozanski—not one cent.

So what do we have? No announcement on the \$375 million for maintenance of school buildings and backlog, no announcement on the \$675 million in catch-up funding recommended by Dr Rozanski, no announcement of the \$20 million in the transportation costs, the \$48 million in new funding for English as a second language, the \$20 million for special ed in secondary schools, and the approximately \$300 million to cover inflationary costs for 2004-05 is pretty well what will be covered by the \$400-million announcement. Not one cent for Dr Rozanski in this budget.

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ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): Yesterday this government tabled its first budget, a document which carefully laid out the McGuinty government's commitment to restoring the essential services that have suffered

under years of irresponsible tax cuts and chronic underfunding. The Honourable Greg Sorbara presented a clear and comprehensive plan, one that will deliver on the change that Ontarians asked for. It also reinforces our commitment to co-operation rather than confrontation, as was the case with the Harris-Eves government, when dealing with our partners and stakeholders.

One such example is our commitment to municipalities. We promised a new deal for our local partners, and we have delivered. But don't just take my word for it. Just this morning I had the distinct pleasure of meeting with Her Worship Mayor Hazel McCallion at a post-budget breakfast, an opportunity to hear first-hand the reaction of key community stakeholders, including that of Her Worship. She, in her own words, endorses our budget's direction, which has restored funding to essential services. She went on to say, "The citizens are picking up the tab for tax cuts that the previous government made, because you can't cut taxes without cutting services."

There are always tough decisions and choices to be made when balancing the needs and wants of citizens with the very real fiscal constraints that all levels of government are facing. Partisan politics be what they may, Mayor Hazel has spoken.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): Since the budget was presented, my office in Lanark-Carleton has been overrun by calls and e-mails from constituents who feel they are under attack by the McGuinty government. They are screaming mad because the Premier has broken the very clear promises he made just seven months ago and adopted the disastrous tax-and-spend approach of Bob Rae's NDP government of the early 1990s.

The bottom line: The budget is all about higher taxes and reduced health care services for working families. Imagine the substantial changes faced by the average working family living in the Ottawa Valley. They are struggling day to day just to get by in the face of skyrocketing gasoline prices, rising hydro rates and increasing auto insurance premiums.

This morning they awoke to headlines informing them they are now faced with a new provincial health tax that will cost hundreds of dollars a year. For example, a family with two kids and a combined income of \$60,000 will pay \$600 a year under the new health tax. For this family, that's a provincial income tax hike of 26%. What do they get for this new tax? Less service for more dollars. That's right, the Liberal government is collecting more money from you while it delists the basic health care services many residents rely upon. For most Ontarians, OHIP will no longer cover the cost of optometry exams, chiropractic services and physiotherapy services.

Dalton McGuinty pledged to balance the budget, hold the line on taxes and expand health care services, not reduce them.

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): This morning, along with the members for Eglinton-Lawrence, St Paul's and York Centre, I had the opportunity to meet with an assortment of constituents and community stakeholders from our central Toronto ridings to talk about yesterday's budget. I am happy to announce that these constituents get it. They understand that our government—

Interjections.

Ms Wynne: Here's what they get: They get that our government is committed to choosing the responsible path. They told us clearly that they appreciate our decision to move forward in a way that will improve their public services while putting our finances in order. One of the things they were most impressed with was our emphasis on community delivery of health care. Our constituents know this new emphasis will bring care closer to them and make that care more affordable for them.

One of my constituents, Peter Yue, executive director of the Flemingdon Health Centre said, "After years of neglect, we are pleased that the government has recognized the important role that community health centres play in the health delivery system and are hopeful that this budget signals the beginning of improved funding for this sector."

That's exactly what we're doing. Yesterday's announcements on funding for community health centres, family health teams, home care and immunization highlight our recognition of the need to move health care into the community. For my riding, this is very good news.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): Yesterday's tabling of the McGuinty Liberals' first budget was a day of emotions. There was bitterness and anger over the betrayal of public trust and the unrepentant admission by the finance minister that centrepiece promises of the Liberal election platform—no tax increases and a balanced budget—were being tossed out like the trash they proved to be.

I experienced those emotions too, but the overriding emotion for me was sadness, sadness that so many of my legislative colleagues were defeated on the basis of false promises, sadness that hard-working men and women in my riding, many of whom voted Liberal, were caught by this deceit and now will pay the penalty.

The average income in my riding of Leeds-Grenville is under \$40,000. In Brockville, it's \$41,000; in North Grenville, \$43,000; in Prescott, \$34,000; and in Gananoque, \$36,000.

For many of these households, these new taxes add up to about \$1,000 a year. This, combined with increased fees on basic services and the delisting of health care services, will make all Ontarians poorer, especially low-income families.

By and large, these are good people who work hard to make ends meet, to stretch a dollar, and now, as a result

of this McGuinty Liberal betrayal called a budget, they will have to dig deeper into their pockets to fund a Liberal government that was elected on a platform of falsehoods. We should all feel sad.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Tony C. Wong (Markham): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

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 title of which is amended to read

"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 Spectrum Disorder / *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 occasionne l'ensemble des troubles causés par l'alcoolisation fœtale.*"

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

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated May 19, 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.

CHRIS GARRETT

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Tomorrow is the funeral of Cobourg Police Constable Chris Garrett. I seek unanimous consent of this House that our flags fly at half-mast for the funeral.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Do we have unanimous consent, as requested by the member from Brant? Agreed.

1350

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Ernie Eves (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier, and I refer him to page 70 of yesterday's budget. Would you mind explaining to the people of Ontario, Mr Premier—because your finance officials in the lock-up yesterday, quite frankly, couldn't—how revenue for the province of Ontario is \$68,250,000,000 on March 31 and then, when you wake up on April 1 of this past year, the income goes automatically to \$78,360,000,000? This is not an April Fool's joke; I wish it were. Can you explain where that extra \$10.2 billion is coming from over the space of one day?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I'm sure that the Minister of Finance, upon his arrival shortly, will speak to some of the technical details. But I can tell you this: We are so proud that we are now going to have the ability to make absolutely essential investments in health care.

I'm talking about reducing waiting times in a dramatic way. We're talking about 36,000 cardiac care treatments that we otherwise could not have done; some 9,000 additional cataract surgeries; some 2,300 additional joint replacements. We're hiring 8,000 new full-time nurses, we're creating 150 family health teams, and that is just the beginning.

Mr Eves: That's all very interesting, but it has nothing to do with the \$10 billion and where it's coming from. It's quite obvious the Premier is unable to answer the question. Hopefully, the Minister of Finance can, because his officials yesterday weren't able to answer the question.

"Families are already paying for health care with their taxes. Pay more for health care, pay twice for health care, but get less health care—that's the Tory plan. It's certainly not the Liberal plan." Mr Premier, this is your quote from January 25, 2002. What happened yesterday?

Hon Mr McGuinty: We're making some tough choices but I can assure you they are the right choices. Let me tell you what it is that the people of Ontario are going to benefit from as a result of this new premium. And we don't do this lightly. We understand this places a burden on Ontario families. We understand that, but we also understand it is absolutely essential that we start to make upfront investments in our health care system so it'll be there for our families and their children, and their children after that.

I say again, here are some of the things we're going to do with this new premium: 36,000 more cardiac care treatments, 9,000 more cataract surgeries, 2,300 more hip and joint replacements, 8,000 more nurses, 150 more family health teams, nine new MRIs and CTs, 95,700

more Ontarians will receive the home care they need, and the list goes on and on.

Mr Eves: A 3.4% increase for nurses won't hire a single new nurse in Ontario.

"If at some time in the future we think it's important to raise taxes, I have continuing faith in the collective wisdom of the people of this province and I'll put it before them. We can have a referendum," Mr McGuinty said." What date is the referendum, Mr Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: We've had the most extensive pre-budget consultation exercise ever in the history of this province. There's a time to listen, there's a time to learn, and there's a time to lead. Now is the time to lead. We're moving forward on health care. We're moving forward on education. We're moving forward on our plan to help our most vulnerable. We're moving forward to ensure that we put this province on a prosperous and sustainable footing when it comes to public services and the economy. We are leading when it comes to the matter of this province.

TAXATION

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): Premier, yesterday you did what you promised not to do: You raised taxes on working families, on working men and women. In doing so, Premier, you're breaking the law. That is what families in Nepean-Carleton and across Ontario are saying: You are breaking your word and you are breaking the law.

Before you asked working men and women and families in Ontario to pay more, I have a specific question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. Could I get a chance to listen to the member from Nepean-Carleton? A lot of shouting is coming from the other side.

Mr Baird: Before you asked working families in Ontario to pay more in taxes, I have a specific question for you: Did you do anything to get the federal Liberals and Paul Martin to restore the funding cuts implemented since he first became finance minister?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): I am not sure what the gist of that question was, but let me say this: Prior to the last election, we put together the most comprehensive financial plan ever put before the Ontario public by any party. We had it approved and endorsed by the chief economist at Scotiabank, a former senior economist for the Bank of Montreal, and a forensic accountant who spent over 70 hours poring over our numbers.

The members opposite said that the budget was balanced. We anticipated a \$2-billion deficit. It turns out, sadly, we grossly underestimated. The biggest mistake that we made and that our experts made was to rely on the figures put forward by the previous government. We will make sure that does not happen again. We are going to change the law in Ontario so that at the time of the

next election and every one after that, we'll be very clear, very transparent and very open with respect to the state of our budget.

Mr Baird: Premier, that sounds like the great opening day, the first day of the referendum for Ontario, where they get to decide whether they believe this Liberal drivel. The bottom line is, you are committing highway robbery in Ontario, and Ontario voters know that Paul Martin is driving the getaway car. You see, on Paul Martin's first day as finance minister, the federal government was spending 18 cents on the dollar; 18 cents of every dollar was paid for by the federal government. But when Paul Martin left the finance department, it was down to 11 cents. So I want to ask you, Premier, will you get on the phone and tell Paul Martin to restore the cuts to health care and return health care spending to 18 cents on the dollar immediately? Will you do that, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: You know, and I say this with all sincerity, I wish the member opposite would focus on his responsibilities that have to do with provincial affairs and the responsibilities that come with his having a seat in this Legislature.

Let me say that I was hoping somehow that the debate would be joined today. Let me say this by way of contrast: We are not pretending that we are offering easy leadership to the people of Ontario. We are offering them challenging leadership, and we are challenging them to work together so that we can improve our health care system. We are challenging them to work together so we can make essential investments in our public education system. We are challenging them to do what they know in their heart of hearts is the right thing when it comes to our most vulnerable. That's the kind of leadership that we are bringing to this Legislature and, more importantly, to the people of Ontario.

Mr Baird: Premier, I'll tell you what the official opposition is challenging you on. We're challenging you on your integrity to keep your word to the people of Ontario. You participated in an event on September 11, 2003, where you promised Ontario working families that you would have a referendum before—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Member for Nepean-Carleton.

Mr Baird: You promised—

Interjections.

The Speaker: It doesn't mean, when I get up, that as soon as I stop talking, you should start talking. I should only be hearing from one member. The member for Nepean-Carleton, final supplementary.

1400

Mr Baird: We're challenging you to live up to your commitment to the people of Ontario, to conduct a referendum. Premier, it won't cost a dime. We could combine it with the federal election, Elections Canada could do it, and it would be free. Premier, if you won't call a referendum and allow Ontario voters their say, they are going to have their say on June 28 when they go to the polls and defeat Paul Martin, the real health care villain in the province of Ontario. Will you call a refer-

endum? Will you give the people of Ontario a real voice, just as you promised to do? I'm challenging you to keep your word.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I hope the member opposite is registered in Ontario as a lobbyist on behalf of his federal counterparts, because apparently he is devoting all of his time and energies to supporting their cause.

When it comes to this budget and our political fortunes, I am hopeful that the people of Ontario will see it the way that we do, and this is the right thing to do for us as well as the next generation. I can tell you one thing: We are looking forward to running at the time of the next election, and running hard, on behalf of our ideas and the people of Ontario, but we will not run away from our responsibility to do the right thing for the people of Ontario as it's framed in this budget.

The Speaker: New question.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. I would like to hear the member from Kenora-Rainy River.

HEALTH PREMIUMS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Before the election you said that a health care tax would be a bad idea. I can quote you: "Tory leadership candidates Ernie Eves and Chris Stockwell may want to raise taxes by charging families an additional \$1,000 a year for health care. I do not," said Dalton McGuinty. Then we see your budget. Under your budget, a working family where both wage earners make just \$49,000 a year is now going to be paying a staggering \$1,200 in new taxes. This is clearly an attack on the wallets of modest-income and middle-income working families. Premier, after this, why should any Ontarian believe anything you promise?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): You know, I honestly thought that the leader of the NDP would have been supportive of our efforts to make the essential investments in health care that will serve all the people of Ontario. I honestly thought we would have received his support in that regard.

I have said this, as has the Minister of Finance: We understand that this places a burden on families. This is not an easy thing to do, and it's not a step that we take lightly, but the upside outweighs the negatives. For example, this morning I did an event that had to do with vaccinations. In Ontario at present, we are not funding chickenpox, meningitis vaccinations or pneumococcal disease vaccinations. For a family with a single child, that would be \$600 alone for one child. If you have two kids, we are going to pick up the cost now for \$1,200. We are doing things in this budget that will greatly advance the interests of Ontario families when it comes to the quality of care they are going to receive.

Mr Hampton: The question was, why should anyone believe Mr McGuinty when before the election he says that there should not be health care taxes, that they are

wrong, and then we see the budget and who does he go after? He goes after low-income families, modest-income families, middle-income families, working families and says to them, "You pay an extra \$1,200 a year."

Here is something else Dalton McGuinty said before the election: "Families are already paying for health care with their taxes. Pay more for health care, pay twice for health care, but get less for health care—that's the Tory plan." Now we look at Mr McGuinty's budget. People pay for health care through their taxes. Now they pay the new health care premium. But if you need to go to a chiropractor, that is cut. If you need to go to a physio-therapist, that is cut.

The Speaker: Question.

Mr Hampton: Mr McGuinty, can you tell me a difference between your health care policy and the Conservative health care policy you used to criticize?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member opposite knows that we ran to improve our health care system and that we're making an historic level of investment in our health care system. We're being straight with the people of Ontario: We cannot do this on our own; we need their help to invest in their health care system. We're not apologizing for bringing that kind of leadership to the province of Ontario. We're telling the people of Ontario that we are going to work as hard as we can to improve the quality of the services they will now receive. I'm talking about shorter waits, more nurses, more doctors, and more nurses and doctors working together in family health teams. We're talking about substantial investments in home care and long-term care—that's the kind of thing.

I say to the member opposite that we had a choice to make, there's no doubt about it. We could have cut health care services, we could have fired nurses, we could have shut down hospital beds. We chose to do the opposite, and to that end we're enlisting the people of Ontario in this cause to improve their health care.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): New question.

Mr Hampton: Premier, you did have a choice to make. Under the Conservatives, individuals with incomes over \$100,000 a year got a 35% tax cut. You could have gone to them and said, "Now it's your turn to contribute to health care." Under the Conservatives, the largest corporations got a \$600-million tax loophole in the employer health tax. You could have gone to them and said, "You got the tax cuts. Now it's your time to make the contribution to health care." You had a choice. You went after modest- and middle-income working families. Why should they believe any promise you make from now on?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I want to remind the member opposite that he voted against our legislation to roll back the corporate tax cuts. I want to remind him of that. The NDP simply hasn't evolved when it comes to public policy, to put the kindest spin on it. They continue to believe that the only thing wrong with the province of Ontario is the rich.

When it comes to our health care system, we've made a choice. We've said this health care system belongs to

all of us and those who can afford to do so must make a contribution. This is a progressive Ontario health premium. Unlike the other one, it is not a flat tax. It exempts those earning less than \$20,000. We think it is transparent, fair and essential, and we're proud of it.

Mr Hampton: Premier, let me tell you just how unbalanced, how unfair, how regressive your new health tax is. Under your new health tax, a millionaire who has an income of \$2 million a year will pay \$900, but a family where the husband makes \$49,000 and the wife makes \$49,000 will pay \$1,200. That's the kind of tax policy that, when the Conservatives brought it in, you used to shoot up to the ceiling and say, "This is unfair. This is an attack on working families."

Why should any working family in this province believe anything you say any more, when you've gone after them with such a vengeance and left your corporate friends and your high-income friends to enjoy the tax cuts they got under the Conservatives? Why should anyone believe you anymore with your record?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Again, I say the member and I obviously have a different view on this. He thinks that somehow we could just get all the money we need from those earning over \$1 million. I have a different approach. I think this health care system belongs to all of us. We're exempting those who earn less than \$20,000. We think that is fair. Let's not lose sight of the benefits this will bring to all of us. In the matter of long-term care alone, because of this premium, we'll make an investment that will create another 3,760 beds, seniors will be entitled to at least two baths a week, we'll be hiring 600 more nurses, we'll have more inspections, we'll have an RN on site on a 24/7 basis. All that and so much more is going to be available to us as a result of this premium.

1410

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): A question to the Premier: Your own budget document shows that you will see increased revenue from federal health transfers and your new health care user fee totalling \$2.6 billion. Your health care budget is slated to increase by \$2.1 billion. You are half a billion dollars short. Premier, you're breaking two promises. Why are you renegeing on your promise to dedicate those funds to health care?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): Speaker, the Minister of Finance.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): As is typical, my friend gets up in question period and tells half the story. The fact is, we are making increases in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care of almost \$2.2 billion this year. At the same time, the new Ontario health premium will raise, in this year, about \$1.6 billion. So the health premium doesn't match this year. But, if he wants the policy, I'll give it to him clearly. I'll repeat what I said yesterday. Every single cent of the Ontario health premium will go to health care. It will help us this

year give services to 167,000 individuals who today do not have a family doctor. It will help provide 3,760 new long-term-care beds. It will, by 2007-08, result in 36,000 new cardiac procedures.

Mr Hudak: Sir, quite frankly, I don't believe a word you say any more. The Premier made two distinct promises. He said increases in transfers from the federal government, the CHST, would go to health care. He promised that every penny from your new user fee would go into health care. This is beside the fact that the Premier, instead of increased health care funding—the patients of chiropractors, physiotherapists and optometrists are paying now out of their own pockets in a bizarre twist to two-tier health care.

I will ask you one more time. You have two clear promises. You are half a billion dollars short this fiscal year. Why are you renegeing on your promises to put those two streams into health care?

Hon Mr Sorbara: It simply sounds more like the noise and disrespect that we saw from this party yesterday. I'll give him the figures straight from budget documents delivered yesterday. In total—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Sorbara: I wonder whether he really wants to have an answer. Can we inquire about that?

In this year alone, we will contribute by way of expenditures in the Ministry of Health, in child and youth services, in community and social services, in municipal affairs and in colleges and universities some \$2.36 billion in additional expenditures.

But I want to tell him that we are not here just to quote amounts. What's important to us are the results that we'll bring about: better care for our seniors in long-term care, more hope—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you. New question.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Mental health, particularly children's mental health, has suffered terribly over the last many years. I've been hearing from many workers in the field. We know you're going to be increasing the funding, but they want to know just how much is coming their way.

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): That's a very good question. I'm proud to say that today the McGuinty government has committed to \$25 million in this fiscal year for children's mental health. This is the first such increase in 12 years.

I acknowledge that it will take some time to clean up the Tory mess. They did not invest in children's mental health and it will take some time, but we have had round table discussions across the province. This was a huge issue. Children were waiting for years, not months, for

assessments. This is a very good start in addressing those needs.

Ms Mossop: It sounds very good, Minister, but the question is, will it be enough? I've heard from the workers in the field that a one-time cash infusion is not going to be enough. They want to know that the money is going to there in the long-term. Can you assure us that the money will be there in the long term?

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: Indeed, the system has been so denigrated under the former government that \$25 million is a start, but next year it will go to \$38 million a year. As well, one of the things we have heard from the stakeholders is that it's not only money, but it's the integration of the services: it's working smarter. So we will continue to consult with the psychiatrists, the psychologists, the people working out there, the physicians, to integrate the service. So it's not only more money, but spending it in a smarter way.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, in the budget, you broke probably your two most fundamental promises to the people of Ontario during the election campaign: first of all, that you would not raise taxes, and secondly, that you would balance the budget in the first year. You made another promise during the course of the campaign, which is promise number 14: "We will help our schools develop good citizens through character education."

There are students visiting the Legislature today. I met with students in Whitby this morning. We talked about character issues, the most fundamental issue being broken promises. They asked me, and I ask you, how can it be that a leader seeking office makes solemn, fundamental promises to the people of Ontario, gets elected, and then breaches those promises? Is this your first character lesson, so that—

Interjections.

Mr Flaherty: I can't hear.

Interjection: You're the one who's talking

Mr Flaherty: Because of Ms Papatello, I cannot hear what I'm saying.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. The member for Whitby-Ajax makes a very good point. I'd also like to hear him, but I think your question has been asked.

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I am hopeful that at some point in time, some representative of the party opposite, from the former government, will admit that we find ourselves, as a province, in this mess because of their \$6.2-billion deficit. We made a choice.

The member, in his question, made reference to students. I know there are students in the gallery in front of me and likely some behind us. I say this to students, parents, teachers and all those who are committed to public education: Because of the choices we have made,

we are going to hire 1,000 more teachers. We're going to cap class size from JK to grade 3—we'll phase that in—to 20 students per class. We're going to hire thousands of teachers, who are going to act in a lead capacity in our elementary schools so that we can do a better job when it comes to numeracy and literacy. We are committed to public education, and the choices that we've made will enable us to make the necessary investment.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Let me just caution members about using unparliamentary language. Please, I'd like the decorum to be retained.

Mr Flaherty: The question was about character and the example that you are setting for young people in Ontario, the lack of character that you are showing by breaching promises. You had a choice. The difficult choice you had when you were seeking public office was not to make promises that you knew you could not keep. That's an important part of character that I think most parents teach their children in Ontario—and I hope most teachers communicate to children.

But there's another promise that was made that was broken yesterday, about balanced budget legislation and about the Taxpayer Protection Act that you voted for and that you supported. Your Minister of Finance said yesterday that you'll pay the fine for the first year, for breaking the law. Is your second character lesson, then, to the students of Ontario that it's okay to break the law as long as you pay the fine?

Hon Mr McGuinty: First of all, I hope the member does not injure himself falling off his very high horse. Secondly, if the member is so adamant, if he's so insistent that we respect the law, then I am sure that he and his colleagues who served in the cabinet in the previous government are now going to cross the floor and hand us cheques, as a result of delivering a \$6.2-billion deficit.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I ask the members to come to order. You're all burning question period.

1420

WATER QUALITY

Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Ontarians are very concerned about the integrity of their drinking water. Our world changed dramatically after Walkerton and we have become acutely aware of how important safe drinking water is. Can you tell us what you are doing to ensure that our water is safe to drink?

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I'm very happy to have this opportunity to explain to the members of this House, to the people of Ontario, to the students who are here this afternoon that this government places our environment as a priority. That is reflected in our budget plan and in our commitment to support the programs that I spoke to earlier this week. It is our plan. We have announced a white paper on source water protection and we have included

resources in the Ministry of the Environment's budget to ensure that we can afford to follow through on that initiative. I've also created an advisory council on drinking water quality, and again, this budget ensures that there are dollars there to make sure that council has the resources it needs to protect water quality for all the people of Ontario.

Mrs Van Bommel: You mentioned plans and programs. Could you tell us what type of funding you have allocated for these programs and how you will ensure that this translates into healthier Ontarians?

Hon Mrs Dombrowsky: First of all, I'd like to explain that over half the budget of the Ministry of the Environment is dedicated to water protection. I'm also especially pleased to report to this Legislature that the annual budget for the Ministry of the Environment is returning to the level that it was a decade ago, before it was decimated by the Harris-Eves government.

I would also like to inform the House today that through our operating and capital budget, my ministry has committed \$158 million to protecting water quality in this province. Also, along with other ministries, we have committed an additional \$400 million to support source-to-tap drinking water initiatives. I believe the people of Ontario can be very confident that we are living up to our commitment to protect our environment and ensure that drinking water in Ontario is safe to drink.

HEALTH CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): A question to the Premier: Your decision to cut patient access to health care and privatize health care services is going to cost Ontarians so much more. Low- and modest-income Ontarians can't afford to pay out of pocket for eye exams and for physiotherapy and chiropractic services, and they can't afford to pay for those services out of their own pockets after they are stuck paying your new health tax. Instead, patients who need the services are going to end up in the emergency ward, sicker than ever before, and that's going to cost the whole health care system so much more. My question is, why did you break your promise to Ontarians not to cut health care services or to privatize health care services?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I appreciate the question, but I disagree with the premise. We are making dramatic investments in and improvements to health care. We had to make some difficult choices along the way, but let's be fair about the characterization here. When it comes to physiotherapy, those who are receiving that through long-term care or home care or those who find themselves on ODSP will continue to receive their physiotherapy benefits.

What we're doing is looking for ways, even within the health care system itself—and the member opposite knows that is not an insured service—to better use that money. What we think is a higher priority within the health care context is waiting times for cardiac care,

cancer care and MRI and CT services. We've made that decision. It's not an easy one, but we think and believe it is the right one.

Ms Martel: Premier, the decision you made was to finance your health care investments on the backs of low- and modest-income working families. That's the decision you made, and you could have made a different decision. You could have rolled back the 35% tax cuts for the rich and famous in Ontario, put in place by the Conservatives. You would have got \$1.6 billion from that change. But you're here to protect your wealthy friends, and you're sticking it to low- and modest-income working families through your new health tax hike. You know that modest- and low-income families cannot afford to pay out of their own pockets for eye exams or for chiropractic and physiotherapy care. Why did you break your promise to those low-income families, and why did you break your promise not to privatize health care services?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Again, I reject the premise and the assertions made by my friend opposite. I am working as hard as I can, not only within the province but in the national context, to ensure that medicare can be revitalized and that we continue to support a universally accessible, publicly funded system. I'm working hard on that. So I completely reject the characterization put forward by the member.

What I can do is list again some of the things we are doing for families of all income levels. We're going to ensure that we have 36,000 more cardiac care treatments, 9,000 more cataract surgeries and 2,300 more hip and joint replacements. We're going to hire 8,000 more full-time nurses, establish 150 family health teams and add nine new MRI and CT sites. The list goes on and on, as you well know, Speaker, as a result of earlier references to me today. We are improving health care in a way that it benefits all Ontario families.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Premier. I want to read a headline from Toronto Sun today. It says, "From Fiberals to Bald-faced Liars." That is what—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): You know that those are unparliamentary words. Would you mind withdrawing them?

Mr Klees: I will certainly withdraw that on behalf of the Toronto Sun. They were not my words, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'll give you a moment to withdraw. Let me just say too that many members are lifting up that paper and showing that.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The next time we do that, I will regard that as a demonstration. I would ask you to hand those papers in, in case you are tempted again.

You've got 10 seconds.

1430

Mr Klees: Speaker, I want to apologize on behalf of the Toronto Sun for using that terminology, but the reason it was used is that in this budget this government indeed did what they said they wouldn't do.

Now, to the Premier: In a desperate, cynical and ill-conceived attempt at justifying this budget, the Minister of Finance this morning said on CFRB that if they hadn't done this budget the way it was, he would have had to shut down Sick Kids Hospital and a number of other institutions in this province. Can the Premier justify the Minister of Finance's comments this morning?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'll refer that to the Minister of Finance, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. To the member for Nepean-Carleton passing by with the paper, I think that is showing total disrespect for Parliament.

Minister of Finance.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I want to say to my friend from Oak Ridges, for whom I have a great deal of respect, that to misconstrue and misstate what I said this morning on the radio is simply shocking, so I will just tell him what I said.

The point I made was that the previous administration, when we added up all the accounts, left us with a \$6.2-billion deficit in the last fiscal year. That's the first point. We have managed in the first year of our budgetary term to reduce that deficit to \$2.2 billion.

And I said that I would say to those who propose that we completely eliminate the deficit in this year that in order to do that, if we were to do that, it would be like closing the entire community college system or hospitals like Sick Kids and other—

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr Klees: My point is that that is precisely what the Minister of Finance said. It's an all-time low in trying to justify their broken promises to the people of this province. At the very least, if the government deemed it appropriate that they raise taxes when they said they wouldn't, they would at least have kept within the law, not placed themselves above the law, and had a referendum to get a mandate from the people of Ontario to do so. That is the very least. So, Speaker, I want to put the Premier on notice that I will be tabling a private member's bill in the House that will in fact call on the government to have a referendum to put the mandate on the table.

I would ask the Premier this: Will you allow your caucus members to have a free vote on that private member's bill so that they at least can side with the people of Ontario to keep you from raising yourself above the law of this province? Will you do that?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Just before the Minister of Finance, I want to remind the members that if this continues, I will have a recess until you can calm yourselves down with

these demonstrations. Again, I regard this as a total disrespect for Parliament.

Minister of Finance.

Hon Mr Sorbara: Thank you, sir. This hue and cry from my friend from Oak Ridges is really quite outstanding. This comes from a member of a caucus and a government which over the course of the last three years of their mandate, during which Ontario had real, strong economic growth, raised expenditures in Ontario by an average of 22%, and at the same time allowed revenues to deteriorate so that during that period revenues actually went down by 0.06%. They destroyed the revenue base of this province. They drove the province into deficit. They left us with a horrible mess. We have begun, with our budget, to bring this province back to financial health, and we are all very proud of that.

CHILDREN'S NUTRITION

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. I've received a number of calls to my office from teachers worried about their students being hungry and not having enough to eat. I'm sure you and everyone else in this House understands that it's pretty tough to learn and get things done on an empty stomach. We have committed a lot to education. Have we committed to helping more children start the day off right by making sure they have a good breakfast?

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Indeed, nutrition programs are very important, not only to help children have a good start and learn in their school day, but also to teach them about nutrition. And to that end, we are increasing our annual spending on breakfast programs by \$4 million a year, from \$4.5 million to \$8.5 million a year.

Mr Hoy: Childhood obesity and diabetes rates are at record high levels. Fostering healthier food choices for our children is a priority. Emphasizing healthy eating and physical activity are equally important for optimal health. What steps have you taken to ensure that our children have the nutrition they need to grow and learn?

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: I believe the Minister of Education would like to answer this.

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): It is very important that this House take its responsibility to make sure that we do everything we can to support parents in their goal to keep their children healthy. We have the first instances of serious disease among young adults in this digital age. It is tougher for them to be able to be active. We are going to have mandatory physical activity back in schools on a daily basis. And, as of this fall, we will be banning junk food in elementary schools to make sure that we have consistency in the hallway corridors with what we are trying to teach in the classrooms and reinforce the tough job that parents have.

Making sure that kids are able to stay healthy is one of our objectives for our province's schools.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): My question is to the Premier. After yesterday's budget, I have to say that I'm disappointed in your government's betrayal of Ontario's working farm families. Not only did you just re-announce previous piecemeal legislative changes that require little or no funding or revenue changes, what you did give in nutrient management was just a drop in the bucket of what will be required. But I was even more surprised when I looked at the budget papers to see that the operating budget for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has been reduced by \$128 million.

Premier, how can you say that you are on the side of working farm family when you remove \$128 million from the OMAF budget to serve your urban agenda? Is this just another time when you are breaking the promise to Ontario's farmers?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): I'll send this to the minister.

Hon Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I can't believe the nerve of that member to stand up—he talks about broken promises. In 1995, his government came to power and said “No cuts to agriculture.” What was one of the first things they did? You cut millions and millions of dollars out of the agricultural industry. You closed offices all across this province.

I think the honourable member, as a former minister, should understand that there are a number of programs; programs change on an annual basis. The healthy futures program that had been implemented by the previous government has run out. There was over \$80 million in BSE funding that was included in that budgetary program. As well, round two of the agricultural policy framework transition money—those dollars are no longer in the budget.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): The member for Nepean-Carleton. You keep shouting across the floor. I'm going to warn you one more time about that. The member for Oxford.

Mr Hardeman: Premier, on December 9, 1999, your agriculture critic, now the minister, stood in this House and said, “Last week the government betrayed the province's farmers.... They have slashed \$8 million from the OMAFRA budget.” Eight million in administrative savings is something I think we can all agree can be done with little effect on the daily life of our family farms.

In your election platform you stated that you would make OMAFRA a lead ministry in the Liberal government. Can you tell me how slashing \$128 million—that's over 20% of the budget—doesn't betray farmers? I think it does. How does slashing 20% of the budget show your support for this ministry and working farms, as you promised you would do?

1440

Hon Mr Peters: Obviously, the member wasn't listening. We made a commitment. We hired 118 meat inspectors in this province. We followed through. Who

fired those meat inspectors? They did. Who made the commitment to help family farms in this province to transfer farm to farm, intergenerationally? We did. Who's bringing forward legislation to help the agricultural community have better access, to use their agricultural membership card at the point of purchase? We're going to do that. Who brought forward \$20 million to help meet the nutrient management requirements? We did. We signed the agricultural policy framework, which is going to bring \$119 million annually—reconfirmed in this budget. Who's going to assist farmers with \$173 million in transition funding? We are. This is a government that is committed to agriculture.

SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

Mr Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): My question is to the Minister of Tourism and Recreation. Sports and recreation are important in maintaining a healthy population and vibrant community. Experts estimate that 57% of Ontarians over the age of 12 are not physically active enough, even though the health benefits of physical activity, such as reduced risks for heart disease and cancer, and extended longevity, are many.

Physical inactivity costs our health care system and our society dearly. Experts estimate that physical inactivity and obesity cost about \$3.5 billion in direct and indirect health-related costs, not to mention the health problems experienced by individuals and their families.

Encouraging Ontarians to get out and enjoy all that Ontario has to offer is one way of helping them get active and healthy. Minister, what is your ministry doing to promote recreation, sports and physical activities in Ontario?

Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): To provide greater access to recreation activities, the ministry has provided over \$2.2 million in recreation development grants that assisted communities across the province to organize recreation and sporting events.

For example, the ministry has provided funding to Parks and Recreation Ontario to enhance the physical activity of several target groups where physical activity is typically low or there are barriers to participation. Some \$40,000 was provided to the city of Ottawa—my friend Norm Sterling will be happy about that—for a project to increase access to recreation programs for children between the ages of five and 14 with complex special needs. They are but two examples of how this government is working with our community partners to ensure that there are many more sport and recreation activities available at the grassroots level, the positive health results of which will be seen, I believe, in the years to come.

Mr Racco: The mayor of Mammola, who is here with us today, will know what physical activity means in his municipality. Minister, we need to encourage our kids to get active from a young age. There are so many sports and activities out there, from baseball and soccer to

gymnastics and dance. Or, what could be more Canadian than hockey and lacrosse?

In my riding of Thornhill, and particularly on Racco Parkway, we have soccer, baseball, a cricket field, every sport you can think of. The question is, what are you doing specifically to encourage youth to become physically active and engage in a healthy lifestyle such as Racco Parkway provides?

Hon Mr Bradley: I have a note on that. That is why my ministry has provided over \$1.1 million to the community sport opportunity fund to get our kids out in the fields, courts and ball diamonds across the province.

This fund has been used to increase the number of children and youth participating in sports, recreation and leisure activities, for instance, in Elgin county. The CSOF was used to develop an after-school recreation program for children in Onondaga, and to introduce a recreation-based, parent-involved program for at-risk preschool youth in Chatham.

Finally, yesterday's budget spoke of a new program in my ministry called Active 2010, which will promote increased participation in sports and physical activity particularly for children, youth and low-income individuals.

My ministry will continue to promote good health in Ontario's youth by strengthening community delivery systems and creating supportive environments for participation in physical activity, sports and recreation.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Premier. Fourteen years ago the Parliament of Canada promised to end child poverty by the year 2000. Before the last election you were advised that ending the child tax benefit clawback was the single best way to end child poverty in Ontario. You promised the Campaign Against Child Poverty that you would do just that. You promised that you would be giving back \$233 a month to a family on social assistance. Yet your budget yesterday gave them \$7.42, which is less than 3% of what you promised. That money is less than you are going to charge them in new taxes, levies and other clawbacks. Do you think that \$7.42 is going to do anything to end child poverty?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): To the minister, Speaker.

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Indeed, we will not claw back the July 1 increase from the federal government for one year, and we are reviewing that clawback for the year. These monies are used for children's programs across the province. We're evaluating those programs. We have heard some good things about them, and we have heard some not-so-good things about them. We don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater—throw them all out. We are evaluating them, and within a year we will have the answer to that question.

Mr Prue: In the letter of July 31, 2003, the Premier wrote: "Second, my team and I oppose the Conservative government's practice of clawing back the national child benefit (NCB), a practice we will end during our first mandate." Other governments have already ended the clawback—Manitoba quite recently—and you promised to follow. But you have broken that promise. Sadly, almost nothing is contained in the social services budget for the next two years. The reality is, I do not believe, nor does anyone studying this believe, you have any intention of ending the national child benefit clawback now or anytime during this mandate. Why have you broken your promise to the poorest children in our province?

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: I'd like to say to the honourable member that we have not broken our promise. We need this year to disentangle which programs are necessary and which aren't. A lot of those are programs that parents have told me they want, if they have the choice. In other parts of the province they have said no; they want the money. We need this year to evaluate those programs. With respect to your comments on social assistance, my colleague Minister Papatello has increased social assistance. To say that we've done nothing is wrong.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I noticed within the fine print of budget papers that it states: "We propose to return the definition of northern Ontario, for the purposes of government policy and program delivery, to what it was before September 2000." Can you clarify for me and my constituents if Muskoka will be considered part of northern Ontario, yes or no?

Hon Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): The simple answer is no.

Mr Miller: Minister, I will tell you that yesterday was a very sad day for the people of Muskoka. It seems like your government might be confusing those who have cottages in Muskoka with those who live and work there.

I would like to share some statistics from the Stats Canada census in 2001. The average family income in the district of Muskoka was in fact over \$10,000 less than the provincial average. I might add, for the information of the minister, that Muskoka's average family income is \$5,500 less than the minister's riding of greater Sudbury. Are you telling me that Muskoka is not in need of the same services offered to the north? According to your logic, Sudbury would be excluded from these services as well. This is wrong and without any social or any economic justification. It is mean-spirited and will have drastic effects on the hard-working families of Muskoka.

Minister, will you stand in your place today and reverse this unfounded and harmful decision?

Hon Mr Bartolucci: No, we won't reverse the decision, and you're right: The people of Muskoka should be upset, because you and your government left this

government with a \$6.2-billion deficit, and we've had to make some tough choices. One of those choices was to redefine northern Ontario, to return to the definition of northern Ontario prior to the year 2000. Let me tell you that the district of Muskoka will receive and have access to the same services as the rest of central and southern Ontario.

1450

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): We have with us today in the members' gallery Mr Bruno Romeo, mayor of Mammola, Italy. Please join me in welcoming him.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I have a petition concerning the privatization of health care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Liberal government has announced in their budget that they are delisting key health services such as routine eye exams, chiropractic and physiotherapy services,

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

"To reverse the delisting of eye exams, chiropractic and physiotherapy services and restore funding for these important and necessary services."

I know the member for York North, Julia Munro, has submitted a similar petition. I affix my signature.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the previous government spent excessive amounts of taxpayers' money on partisan advertising for the supposed purpose of promoting their initiatives; and

"Whereas this advertising took the form of glossy direct mail flyers, television commercials and radio advertisements costing the taxpayer close to half a billion dollars;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support legislation that will make this type of advertising illegal in the province of Ontario."

As I agree with this petition, I affix my signature to it.

HEALTH CARE

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

"Whereas the Liberal government has announced in their budget that they are delisting key health services such as routine eye exams, chiropractic and physiotherapy services,

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

"To reverse the delisting of eye exams, chiropractic and physiotherapy services and restore funding for these important and necessary services."

It's signed by one of the most important members in my community.

PESTICIDES

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): It's a pleasure to present this petition on behalf of many Ontarians, but particularly on behalf of Eireann Oughton, who was one of the authors organizing this petition. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Toronto has recently joined more than 66 other Canadian cities in banning the non-essential use of pesticides on residential property; and

"Whereas pesticides are widely believed to cause cancer in humans; and

"Whereas one in nine Canadian women is expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer during her lifetime; and

"Whereas Rachel Carson, who began public awareness of the effects of pesticides and died of breast cancer, is celebrated on Rachel Carson Day (May 27);

"Therefore we request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario honour the work of Ms Carson and the lives of all Ontarians affected by cancer by passing a law banning non-essential use of pesticides throughout the province.

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

"That it honour the work of Ms Carson and the lives of all Ontarians affected by cancer by passing a law banning non-essential use of pesticides throughout the province."

I support this petition.

GO TRANSIT SERVICE

Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition from another group of commuters on the Milton line in Mississauga. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the city of Mississauga has, within a generation, grown from a linked collection of suburban and farming communities into Canada's sixth-largest city, and tens of thousands of people daily need to commute into and out of Mississauga in order to do business, educate themselves and their families and enjoy culture and recreation; and

"Whereas gridlock on all roads leading into and out of Mississauga makes peak period road commuting impractical, and commuter rail service on the Milton GO line is

restricted to morning and afternoon service into and out of Toronto; and

"Whereas residents of western Mississauga need to commute to commute, driving along traffic-clogged roads to get to overflowing parking lots at the Meadowvale, Streetsville and Erindale GO train stations;

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

"That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Transportation and highways, instruct GO Transit to allocate sufficient resources from its 2004-05 capital budget to proceed immediately with the acquisition of land and construction of a new GO train station, called Lisgar, at Tenth Line and the rail tracks, to alleviate the parking congestion, and provide better access to GO train service on the Milton line for residents of western Mississauga."

As one of those residents, I'm pleased to affix my signature and ask Natasha to carry it for me.

RETAIL SALES TAX

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'd like to present a petition on behalf of Bob Burke, the director of the St Vincent de Paul community support headquarters in Bowmanville, in my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the sale of used furniture and household wares by charities is currently subject to provincial retail sales tax under the Retail Sales Tax Act; and

"Whereas the collection of RST on used goods sold by charities places an additional burden on the charities collecting the tax and increases the price of the product; and

"Whereas the collection of RST under these circumstances amounts to double taxation because owners of the donated goods have already paid the original retail sales tax; and

"Whereas the federal government does not require charities to pay goods and services tax (GST) on used items donated to charities for resale;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully request the Ontario Legislature to take immediate action to remove the RST from used furniture, housewares and all used goods donated for resale to charitable organizations."

I am pleased to sign this and endorse it on behalf of the most vulnerable people in Ontario, the people who in most cases avail themselves of these opportunities.

PRIMARY CARE

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): "Whereas the community of Peterborough is suffering a crisis in terms of accessibility to health care, brought on by the severe and growing shortage of family physicians; and

"Whereas the community of Peterborough has demonstrated extraordinary, strong local leadership in

developing a proposal for primary care reform which is very innovative and will provide access to primary care for the growing list of more than 20,000 residents in our community without a family physician; and

“Whereas this proposal has been endorsed by the county of Peterborough, the city of Peterborough, the Peterborough County Medical Society, the Peterborough Community Care Access Centre, the Peterborough Regional Health Centre and the Peterborough County-City Health Unit;

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

“To work with representatives of the local community to ensure that all residents of Peterborough have access to an appropriate primary care provider through the timely implementation of the proposed integrated primary care model, as this model provides appropriate and equitable compensation for family physicians while incorporating sufficient interdisciplinary health care providers, community linkages and appropriate administrative, infrastructure and information technology supports to enable health professionals to enjoy a more realistic, healthy work-life balance.”

My own family doctor has signed it and I will affix my signature to it.

HEALTH CARE

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government has plans to delist chiropractic, physiotherapy and optometrist services from OHIP coverage; and

“Whereas 1.2 million people use chiropractic services each year in Ontario and many more, including numerous seniors, use physiotherapy and optometrist services; and

“Whereas these services are an important part of our health care and, if privatized, will not be available to those who cannot afford them;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not delist chiropractic, physiotherapy and optometrist services from OHIP coverage.”

Please stop the two-tier health system.

1500

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North): I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the previous government spent excessive amounts of taxpayers’ money on partisan advertising for the supposed purpose of promoting their initiatives; and

“Whereas this advertising took the form of glossy direct mail flyers, television commercials and radio

advertisements costing the taxpayer close to half a billion dollars;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support legislation that will make this type of advertising illegal in the province of Ontario.”

I’m pleased, Speaker, to affix my signature, and I ask Kristina to deliver it to you forthwith.

RETAIL SALES TAX

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): The petitions keep coming in, and it’s the same issue I’ve already read in with respect to my constituents in the riding of Durham, all who have signed this petition, thousands of them, I might say.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the sale of used furniture and housewares by charities is currently subject to provincial retail sales tax under the Retail Sales Tax Act; and

“Whereas the collection of RST on used goods sold by charities places an additional burden on the charities collecting the tax and increases the price of products; and

“Whereas the collection of RST under these circumstances amounts to double taxation because owners of the donated goods have already paid the original retail sales tax; and

“Whereas the federal government does not require charities to pay goods and services tax (GST) on used items donated to charities for resale;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, request the Ontario Legislature to take immediate action to remove the RST from used furniture, housewares, and all used goods donated for resale to charitable organizations.”

And—Amina?

Interjection: Adrianna.

Mr O’Toole: Adrianna. Pardon me. My glasses don’t work. Adrianna is going to present this petition to the table.

PROPERTY TAXATION

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

“Whereas recreational trailers kept at parks and campgrounds in Ontario are being assessed by the Municipal Property Assessment Corp (MPAC) and are subject to property taxes; and

“Whereas owners of these trailers are seasonal and occasional residents who contribute to the local tourist economy, without requiring significant municipal services; and

“Whereas the added burden of this taxation will make it impossible for many families of modest income to afford their holiday sites at parks and campgrounds;

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

“That these seasonal trailers not be subject to retroactive taxation for the year 2003; and that the tax not

be imposed in 2004; and that no such tax be introduced without consultation with owners of the trailers and trailer parks, municipal governments, businesses, the tourism sector and other stakeholders.”

I'll affix my name to this petition.

WATER QUALITY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I have a different petition, but a very important petition, from the riding of Durham. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the riding of Durham is made up of many small communities such as Hampton, Tyrone, Blackstock, Newtonville, Kendal, Greenbank, Prince Albert, Epsom, and others; and

“Whereas not all citizens live in larger cities such as Toronto, where access to municipal water services is taken for granted; and

“Whereas smaller communities have little, if any, access to municipal water services; and

“Whereas Ontario's smaller villages and hamlets are home to many community buildings such as churches, community halls and arenas; and

“Whereas those responsible for halls,”—mostly volunteers—“churches, arenas and other community facilities take pride in ensuring these buildings have access to the highest quality potable water; and

“Whereas churches, community halls and arenas are at the heart of rural communities and it is important that they remain open to the public, with full services available;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following immediate action:

“That the implementation of regulation 170/03 as it relates to community halls and similar facilities be delayed; and

“That fair and open reviews of the regulation be conducted with respect to its impact on community facilities; and

“That the province of Ontario ensure halls, churches, arenas and other public facilities on private wells comply with water safety standards that are reasonable and appropriate.”

I sign and endorse this on behalf of the riding of Durham.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2004 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 18, 2004, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): The leader of the official opposition.

Mr Ernie Eves (Leader of the Opposition): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd like to say it's a pleasure to rise today and speak about yesterday's budget, but I think I'm sharing the feelings of many Ontarians today. I don't know if “pleasure” is the right word.

There's a certain integrity, I guess, and ability, when you take the people's trust, to be able to deliver on what you promised. I understand that may not always be possible, but I think the intention should always be there.

I don't think there is doubt in anybody's mind that Mr McGuinty planned and said very definitely during the course of last fall's election campaign, “I will not raise taxes on Ontario families.” He was quoted on CFRB as saying, “I won't raise taxes one cent on Ontario families.” They claimed that they had a four-year, fully costed plan that was independently costed by two or three individuals. They claimed that even if the deficit was as high as \$3 billion, they could eliminate it “like that,” to quote them.

They introduced a budget yesterday called The Plan for Change, and really it's all about how they changed their plan. I thought there was a really telling comment in the lock-up scrum by the Minister of Finance yesterday when asked by a particular reporter about why they promised one thing and did another thing after the election. Mr Sorbara responded to the reporter by saying, “It's the realities of the work that we do. It reminds me,” he said, “of a former Prime Minister”—he was referring to Pierre Elliott Trudeau—“who promised not to introduce price and wage controls before the election, and after the election he said,” and I quote Mr Sorbara yesterday, ““Zap, you're frozen.” Well, yesterday was “Zap, you're taxed.”

You know, we've seen this movie before.

Hon John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): Why do you think this province is in such horrible shape?

Mr Eves: We will come to that in a minute, I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We'll come to the magic \$4-billion tax in a minute, the “Puff, the Magic Dragon” tax.

The reality is that this government keeps on saying there was a huge deficit that they inherited, that they couldn't do anything about it, and yet magically they've gone from \$6.1 billion, they claim, last fiscal year, to \$2.2 billion this fiscal year.

How did they do that, Mr Speaker? They have a tax that they call the hydro tax. They claim it will net them \$3.9 billion in this fiscal year, although the reality is that the NUG contracts that they talk about run from now until 2046, and the reality is that it will raise \$200 million a year, not \$4 billion. For this year it won't even raise \$200 million because it was introduced only partway through the fiscal year. They want to take all the money that they will raise over more than the next 20 years and put it on the books of the province for this year, and they claim that that gets the number down to \$2.2 billion. Then, next year they claim they'll get another \$1.5 billion more in revenue on top of the magic \$4 billion that won't

be available to them next year because that will already be counted in this year's books. They don't make any claim as to where they anticipate they'll get that extra \$5.5 billion.

The reality is, Mr Speaker, that they've sort of spun themselves out of control. They've spun this statement that there's a huge deficit that they inherited, and now they're hoisted on their own petard. The reality is that there was not a \$6.2-billion deficit last year. The reality is that it was more in the neighbourhood of \$2.2 billion, the reality is that that exact same \$2.2 billion will still be there this year, and the reality is that the revenue of the province does not go up—I don't know how long many members have been around here, but I've been here for 23 years, and I have never seen the revenue of the province of Ontario go up by \$10.2 billion in one fiscal year. It's impossible.

1510

The reality is they have grossly understated the revenue from last year, and we know a few of the ways they did that. They chose to write off all the coal powered plants in Ontario last year because they claim they're going to deliver on their commitment to close every single one of them down—there won't be one operating in the province by December 31, 2006. So they chose to take that into last year's books. That's about a billion dollars.

They chose not to take into account the fact that they got \$778 million from the federal government in the last fiscal year. In fact, the federal government made a point of saying, "We want it off our books in the last fiscal year and it should go on to the province's books in that fiscal year as well." The Honourable John Manley, the former federal Liberal finance minister, whom this government hired to advise them on Ontario Hydro, told them the \$778 million should go on last year's books. But they don't want last year's books to look good, so they took that billion dollars and moved it to this year's books, as opposed last year's books, despite the fact that the Honourable Mr Manley told them that was incorrect, improper and they shouldn't be doing it.

They did the same thing with the SARS money. They did the same thing with the Teranet money.

When you add all those numbers up, you get to the magic \$4-billion figure. They had to somehow explain away their \$4 billion difference, so they came up with the hydro tax. It's there on March 31, now you see it, and when you wake up on April 1, poof, like Puff the Magic Dragon, it's gone. The \$4 billion has disappeared forever and we'll never have to find it again, not in the next fiscal year or the one after that or the one after that. It's a magic number that has just disappeared off the face of the earth.

The reality is that they have really politically spun themselves out of control. If they had just been up front with the people of Ontario and told them, "The deficit is \$2.2 billion. We have a difference of opinion with the former government. They claim they could have sold assets to balance the books." They have said, I will give them credit for this much, that they're not interested in

doing that, in balancing the books of the province that way, and that's a fair comment. But I think the very least we should do is have an open and frank discussion about what the deficit really was, and what it is as we go forward.

It can't possibly be that, because you can't possibly go up by \$10.2 billion in one year. Where is that money coming from? I had three different sets of Ministry of Finance officials, with whom I'm well acquainted, having been the finance minister for over five years in this province, and I asked them in the lock-up yesterday to explain it, and not one of them could explain it. You know why? Because it's inexplicable, because it's hidden in the \$4-billion magic treatment tax, the Puff the Magic Dragon tax, the \$4 billion that never existed in last year's budget. That's why they can't explain where it came from or went to.

I look at personal income tax. They say that personal income tax in the last fiscal year was down almost a billion dollars—\$882 million. I had finance officials in and I asked them how they got that number, because I happen to know, being a former finance minister, that the federal government collects your personal income tax. There is no way that this government knows or that any government knows at the provincial level, except for Quebec, which administers its own provincial income tax. They will not know what the number was for the year ending March 31, 2004, until September or October of 2005 at the very earliest, and will probably not really know until about this time in 2006. So they've made that number up.

Hon Mr Gerretsen: Oh, come on.

Mr Eves: Yes, you have made it up. You've made the number up. And when I pressed finance officials yesterday as to where that number came from, he said, "Well, it's just a guess, because the latest number we have from the federal government is the 2002 number." Now, how are we to believe they know what the number was for March 31, 2004, when the latest number they have, by their own admission, from the federal government is March 2002, two years prior to that? But that didn't suit their political spin purpose, so they made one up that was much lower and put it in.

They have created their own \$4-billion problem. To get themselves out of their \$4-billion problem, which they created on paper, they have made it disappear on paper with the magic hydro tax, which won't gain them anywhere close to \$1 billion dollars, let alone \$4 billion in this fiscal year. It will probably be \$150 million that will come into the province of Ontario this year as a result of that hydro tax, but they're claiming and booking \$4 billion upfront.

When you look at other economic indicators for last year in the budgetary documents, on page 70, and you look at things like retail sales tax, it's up almost \$100 million; the employer health tax is up almost \$200 million; and land transfer tax is up \$100 million. Those are indications of how consumers out there are doing, how much money they're making, how much money

they're spending. I can tell you, with those numbers going up every single year, there is no way the provincial income tax went down almost \$1 billion dollars at the same time that all those other numbers were going up. The people wouldn't have had the money to spend \$100 million more on retail sales tax, I can tell you from personal experience, they wouldn't have had \$200 million more to spend on employer health tax, they wouldn't have had \$100 million more to spend on land transfer tax to buy new houses, if they didn't have the income and the money to do it. It's only logical.

It's going to be very interesting when we come to a year from now as to where they're going to find the \$4 billion if they want to continue this political spin in the succeeding budget, because they will have already booked it in this fiscal year, so they wouldn't be able to book it again next year. They've really got themselves a problem, and it's really a problem of politics and of their own making, in my humble opinion.

In addition to the taxpayer protection pledge promise that was obviously not lived up to, I think the just as scary thing to me, and I'm sure to Ontarians as well, is that you have a government whose leader said that families were already paying enough for health care with their taxes. I remember when Chris Stockwell, a leadership candidate in our party in 2002, floated the idea of having increased health care premiums or taxes in the province. This is what Dalton McGuinty said then, on January 25, 2002: "Families are already paying for health care with their taxes. Pay more for health care, pay twice for health care.... That's the Tory plan, but it is certainly not the Liberal plan."

He said they would never do that, they would never introduce a new tax for health care in the province of Ontario, that Ontarians were already paying for that, and it would be unfair of the government to implement a new tax on health care. He was quite correct, it would be unfair, yet that's exactly what was done in yesterday's budget, and all because of a matter of political spin that doesn't suit their political purpose.

Then he we went on to talk about protecting health care and education, talking about how they're the two most important expenditures that government can make, and I understand that and I agree with that. They are the two most important expenditures that a government can make on behalf of the people of Ontario. He said he would never raise taxes to pay for health care and education, "but if at some time in the future we think it's important to raise taxes, I have continuing faith in the collective wisdom of the people of this province, and I'll put it before them. We can have a referendum," McGuinty said.

When asked in the House today about that very commitment the Premier of today made to the people of Ontario, he now refuses to live up to that commitment. In fact, he has decided to raise taxes—his decision. I don't happen to think it's the right one, but his government has gone ahead with that, and now he won't live up to the commitment he made to the people of Ontario, that if, at

some time in the future, any time he did that, he would hold a referendum in the province.

1520

So I think we have some pretty basic problems, fundamental problems, as to how the people of Ontario are going to be able to rely upon anything the government says as it goes forward. They had a four-year plan. That's apparently now been scrapped, the election four-year plan. So now they have a new four-year plan. So what is to make the people of Ontario think they're going to pay any more attention to this four-year plan than they paid to the last four-year plan they had?

The province of Ontario has done very well over the last number of years. Over the last five years, we reduced the debt in this province by some \$5 billion, but over the next four years, we're looking at the debt of the province going up by about \$12 billion.

The budget that was introduced yesterday will raise an additional \$9.7 billion in taxes of one form or another, whether they're called user fees, taxes, cancellation of previous tax credits—and by the way, I do question some of those cancellations of tax credits like, for example, people who pay retail sales tax on motor vehicles that are adjusted to assist disabled people. That's a tax credit that we'd put in; we took the retail sales tax off those vehicles to help disabled people. You know, for the life of me, I don't understand why the government would put that back on. Also tax incentives to employers to improve their workplace, to help disabled people—they've taken those tax incentives away.

You can have a reasonable debate about some of these issues, but I say to my friend the Minister of Finance, I really can't understand those two in particular, as to why the government would remove those tax credits from some of the most—through no fault of their own—needy people in society. Surely we have an obligation as a society to take care of those people.

In the budget that we saw introduced yesterday, we are going to see some \$1.6 billion in this fiscal year raised in a new health tax, and that will net the government over \$2 billion a year in succeeding fiscal years. We saw a \$1.1-billion increase in personal income tax yesterday; we saw the Puff the Magic Dragon \$3.9-billion hydro tax, which will be collected over the next 20 years, but we're going to book it all in this fiscal year; and we see some \$200 million in increased tobacco taxes, taxes on wine, spirits and beer.

In addition to all that, they all add up, if you count the tax credits that are taken away, the user fees that are increased, such as drivers' licences going up 50% and the tax increases. There are really about 50 tax increases in the budget that was introduced yesterday. This \$9.7 billion is on top of the \$4.3 billion that was introduced by the government on January 1 this year.

Let's just talk about health care and education for a moment. I would agree with the Premier that the two most important issues in the province are health care and education. We certainly believe that. They believe that. The reality is that over the last eight years that we were

the government in Ontario, health care spending actually increased about \$11 billion a year. I've heard the Premier say—and I see the Minister of Finance agreeing—that it's not more money we necessarily need; we need to spend it more wisely, people have to be more accountable in the health care system etc.

We've also talked about the education system, and the government has made a commitment to increase education spending by some \$2.1 billion, I believe, over the next four years. The same thing applies there. Over the course of our mandate, education spending went from \$2.9 billion year to, I believe, \$15.3 billion in Ms Ecker's last budget. I think we actually committed—

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): Now you're adding apples and oranges.

Mr Eves: We actually committed more than that, I say to the Minister of Finance, because as he knows, the day after Rozanski tabled his report, we committed some \$640 million immediately, basically for teachers' salaries in the province, as well as an additional \$300 million. So that went up almost a billion dollars, literally within 24 to 48 hours, because we believed in the report from Dr Rozanski. We wouldn't have asked for the report if we didn't believe in it, and we responded to it.

So I don't think it's quite fair for the government of the day to say that we cut health care funding, that we cut education funding, when I'm sure the Minister of Finance knows full well that we dramatically raised health care funding and education funding in the province. You can have a debate as to whether it was enough or not, you can have a debate as to whether it was in the place they'd like to see it spent or not—that's all fair for debate—but the reality is that they were dramatically increased.

Every government in this country has a challenge with respect to increased health care costs. I really believe there has to be a much better, more permanent system of sharing health care costs between the federal government and the provincial governments in this country, because you have more ability at the federal level to pay in terms of surpluses. More and more responsibility is being put in the laps of the provincial governments when you see a federal government that over the years has actually reduced its share of funding to health care, let alone kept up with increased health care costs.

I say to the Minister of Finance opposite, a 4.3% increase in health care funding may sound like a lot of money to people out there, but as I'm sure he well has heard during course of his pre-budget consultations, the health care community will tell you that they consider the cost of living in their sector of the economy to be about 8% or 9% a year. It's a challenge. I understand it's a challenge.

But then we get to some of the more basic promises that the governing party made during the course of the election campaign, like hiring 8,000 more nurses and 1,000 more teachers. In the budget numbers we saw yesterday, actually, all this will enable the government to do is probably keep nurses' salaries in line with the cost of inflation, let alone hire one single new nurse in the

province, and probably keep teachers in line with the cost of inflation—which is about \$340 million a year, as I recall—let alone hire one new teacher in Ontario. So I think it's important to keep all these things in perspective.

Those very people—the front-line health care workers, the nurses in our society, the educators in our classrooms—are going to be hit with this new health tax. They're going to have to make about 1,200 bucks more next year just to break even, because they're going to have to pay about \$600 a year more, and I'm sure the Minister of Finance is aware of that. I'm sure he's also aware that he has the OMA negotiations coming up, and many other things. He's going to have to find money for a lot of different parts of the education and health care sectors.

So it's a real challenge. I understand it's a challenge. I had that challenge for some five years, and I think we met it very well. But I don't think you're going to solve the problem by politically trying to spin a problem that didn't really exist in the first place to explain why you can't deliver 231 campaign promises that you had to have known at the time you made them you couldn't possibly afford to make to the people of Ontario. That's what all this comes down to at the end of the day. You can't make promises, or shouldn't make promises—obviously, you can—that you can't keep. I think that basically is the whole nub of the entire issue around the credibility of the government.

Far be it from me, who's stepping down as leader of my party, to give my friend opposite and the Premier and the government any advice, but I'd just say to you that there was this perception out there before yesterday that this was a government that could not be trusted to keep its word, that they were not doing after an election what they promised to do before an election. You can debate that all you want, but the reality is, I firmly believe that is the perception of the overwhelming majority of Ontarians out there. Unfortunately for the government, I say, in a political sense now, yesterday's budget did nothing but confirm that perception in Ontarians' minds. They have now had solidified in their minds, "We cannot trust this gang at Queen's Park who are currently the governing party to deliver on commitments they make, because they haven't done very well so far."

It's never too late to perhaps rethink your political spin, if that's what this is all about. But at the end of the day, I really have to believe that the government would be better served in the long run, and I know that the people of Ontario would be better served in the long run, by this government being up front with respect to the finances of the province—nobody said it was easy, nobody pretends it's easy—getting down to business and actually dealing with and resolving the issues at hand.

The \$4-billion magic hydro tax, which will take over 20 years to collect but we're booking it all in this year, won't be there next year. Where's that \$4 billion coming from next year? I see we're projecting that revenue next year will be \$79.9 billion, up another \$1.5 billion on top

of the \$4 billion. So we're going to have a \$5.5-billion problem next year, \$5.4 billion if you want to be really technical and add them both together. That's a real challenge.

The reality is that I don't believe that challenge ever existed in the first place. I believe it was political spin that created that challenge. Now they've spun themselves into a wee bit of a problem over there.

1530

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise and respond to the budget presented by the Minister of Finance in this place.

Mr Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): Sit down.

Mr Baird: The member for Etobicoke-whatever can say that I should sit down, but I'm going to speak for my constituents, regardless of what he says, because there are a lot of working families who want to be heard, and they're going to be heard.

The people in Ontario most importantly care about integrity in government. They care about election campaigns. They like to participate in election campaigns. They like to watch them and follow them. They want to watch and listen to the promises candidates make. They want a party that will keep its word.

One of the proudest days I had was after the first budget was presented in 1996. Someone came up to me and said, "I want to tell you, I disagree with everything your government is doing, but at least you're doing what you said you would do. You campaigned on a difficult platform and you're keeping your word." When we were re-elected in 1999, it was in large measure because we had kept our word, because we had kept our promises, because people could trust us that when we said something, we would deliver, with respect to balanced budgets, tax increases and spending.

The people in Ontario were so frustrated, so cynical, that after ten years of 66 tax increases and big-spending government, they went so far as to say, "We want each candidate who's running for office to sign a pledge that you'll vote for a bill called the Taxpayer Protection Act, and another one called the Balanced Budget Act." It wasn't enough just to promise it. They wanted you to sign on the dotted line and specifically promise to introduce and support a bill that would do X, Y and Z.

We passed that law in this House in 1999. I can remember New Democrats being in here speaking against it, saying many of the lines the government is now saying, but every Liberal MPP who showed up for the vote stood in favour of that bill. They said they would live up to it. They said they would honour their pledge. They said they would keep the faith.

In the last election campaign, the taxpayers federation wasn't satisfied with the bill that was now the law of the land. They went to candidates again, and they said, "We want you to sign a pledge saying you'll support the bill you voted for so there's no ambiguity, no ifs, ands or buts, so it is crystal clear what you're agreeing to do."

With great fanfare, on September 11—another disaster of a day of September 11—Dalton McGuinty signed the

taxpayers' protection pledge, promising, in what amounts to 50 short words, that he would keep the faith with the bill he voted for, that he would balance the budget, that he would not raise taxes, that he would keep spending under control. He also specifically promised that he would have a referendum, that he would let the people decide about any tax increase, should circumstances change.

We wonder why people are cynical about politics and politicians. We wonder why people think they can't trust politicians. It's because of actions like the one taken by Dalton McGuinty and Greg Sorbara, where they promised something they couldn't deliver. I saw a poll out the other day which said that 54% of people have come to the conclusion that Dalton McGuinty deliberately signed that pledge knowing that he couldn't keep it, which is outrageous.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Was that 56% or 54%?

Mr Baird: It's 54%. Unfortunately, I think they're right. I'll tell you, working families in Ontario are angry and they are frustrated. You should hear the calls reported from my constituency office in Bells Corners, the calls coming into talk radio, and to CFRA radio in particular. The host had the Minister of Finance on his show this morning.

Interjection: What did he say?

Mr Baird: He said, "Good morning, Minister. Hello. Minister, I respect you for the office you hold and the fact that you put your name forward for election, but, sir, I think you're a"—blank.

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): What does it rhyme with?

Mr Baird: "Fire." That the host of a large, well-respected show, a well-respected citizen, Steve Madely, would say that to the Minister of Finance shows how low the political discourse has been brought by Dalton McGuinty and this gang, the Liberals. He said that was unparliamentary, actually, and Steve said that he wasn't a parliamentarian. This was related to me by one listener, my mother.

What have they raised in taxes? They're raising income taxes. There is no health care premium in this budget; it's an income tax increase. Anyone who says it's a health care premium is not being truthful. It is an income tax hike. It's a hike in your income tax. The sneakiest part of this initiative is that on your pay stub it's going to be lumped in with your income tax, so it won't even be up front on people's pay stubs how much they're paying. It won't even mention health at all. People who saw question period saw the member for Erie-Lincoln. He seriously questioned whether the money's even going to go to health. The bottom line is that people don't trust this government to do what they say they will do. They don't trust you.

I watched on television last night as every single major network in Ontario replayed those Liberal campaign ads where Dalton McGuinty looked right into the TV camera and said, "I won't raise your taxes." One

network—the CBC, of all things—ran a clip of Dalton McGuinty with a big smile signing the taxpayer protection pledge, with the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore standing over one shoulder and the Chair of Management Board, Gerry Phillips, standing at the other. What did Gerry Phillips used to do? He used to sit right here. He was the finance critic for the official opposition. Gerry Phillips, in committee in June, said that there was a \$5-billion rift to the financial picture of the province of Ontario. There is no doubt that in dealing with one, two bouts of SARS, there's no doubt that in dealing with mad cow, there's no doubt that in dealing with the biggest electricity blackout in North America, it was a challenging fiscal year. There is no doubt.

People have said to me, "You know, you're always complaining against the government. Why don't you propose what you would have done?" I've said, "That's what Ernie Eves and I did last November." In an unprecedented way we presented a 17-page plan on how this government could balance the books. They didn't do anything, because they were more concerned with vilifying the former Conservative government than they were about rolling up their sleeves and getting to work to deal with the financial challenges that this province faces. That is outrageous.

We also looked at the financial picture after year-end. We said, "Well, didn't you, from the Tory budget, budget \$770 million of revenue from the health care money that the Premier got from the Prime Minister?" "Well, Erik Peters said, 'You can't count on getting that.'" Well, guess what? We got it. Jean Chrétien kept his word and honoured that \$770-million commitment, the one commitment that he made on his way out the door. He honoured his word on that one.

What about the \$331 million for SARS that came in to this government? This government settled for 30 cents on the dollar. That's a billion dollars of new revenue that you could have put right against that financial risk, and the deficit is down from \$5.6 billion to \$4.6 billion, like that.

1540

This government raised taxes, the biggest tax increase in Ontario history. Effective January 1, the fix was in, and in three months alone they brought in almost \$1 billion of new revenue. So what's that now? We're down from \$5.6 billion to \$3.6 billion.

What has this government done in its first seven months in office? Some of my colleagues say they did nothing, that they took a vacation. I say half of them did. The other half engaged in what cannot be called anything less than an orgy of new government spending, \$3 billion of new spending—spending like drunken sailors. I was telling the member for Lanark-Carleton that this gang is spending like drunken sailors, and do you know what he said? Norm Sterling said to me: "John, drunken sailors spend their own money, not other people's money."

Let's get back to the issue. We've got \$1 billion from health, \$1 billion from new taxes, and now we have \$3 billion of new spending. That's \$5 billion. Then the Min-

ister of Finance talked about the verified and certified financial plan. All these well-respected people were saying there's a \$2-billion contingency fund in Dalton McGuinty's plan. It was certified and verified. You get to \$2 billion—my goodness, we have over \$1 billion surplus, and that doesn't count the increased corporate tax revenue that you brought in. But no, they don't want a balanced budget. This is the first government who claimed to run a clean campaign before the election, and run a negative campaign after the election. That's outrageous.

We get this new payroll tax, this new health care tax, that's going to be collected through income. It's an income tax; let's just face it. It's going to hit families badly. Members of the NDP were saying that this is the first ever income tax where the more you make, the less you pay. The president of Canada Steamship Lines, if he actually paid taxes in Canada, would have loved that tax. But, of course, the president of Canada Steamship Lines, along with the rest of Paul Martin's empire, don't pay taxes in Canada because they can't afford to; they pay them in other countries.

What else did they raise taxes on? Spirits, Ontario wines—what a terrible effect that's going to have on the farmers in the member for Erie-Lincoln's riding—beer and coolers. I say to the members for Brant-Haldimand and Oxford, they're raising taxes again on tobacco—eight months. I could probably live with a tobacco tax increase. But, of course, they're going to put the money into cancer care, into cancer research, into palliative care, into smoking cessation or helping tobacco farmers realign, something these two members have fought so hard for. There's no commitment on that at all—none. It's a tax grab, pure and simple. There's no commitment to put that money to cancer care, cancer treatment or to help agriculture and farmers readjust to the new reality, and that is disgraceful.

The really big one, from the calls that the constituency office and I are getting, is the 50% increase in the driver's licence fee. The effect that's going to have on northern Ontario residents, whom the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka represents—would the last one out of northern Ontario please turn out the lights after this government's through with northern Ontario—and a lot of young people is incredible.

We looked at their social assistance policies. The reality is that a social assistance recipient would have made more money with John Baird as the minister in real terms than they do with Sandra Pupatello as the minister. That's the reality: a significant cut. They're breaking their promise on that. They were going to get rid of the clawback of the national child benefit. They'll do that on anything on a go-forward basis, but what they've clawed back they're going to keep. I can understand why a family on Ontario Works may have disagreed with the Conservative policy, but at least we were honest before voters went to the polls.

They're getting rid of the tough anti-fraud measures. What's happening on social assistance? I said to folks:

“Let’s look up the welfare rolls.” How many people have fallen off welfare? There are a lot more people working. The Minister of Economic Development has been bragging about new jobs. How many people have left the welfare rolls? None, and as a matter of fact there are 11,000 more people on welfare since Dalton McGuinty became Premier, and they put the green light to welfare fraud and said it’s acceptable and something that they would tolerate. I’ll tell you, there was no acceptance and there was no tolerance for welfare fraud under our government. The money went for those who were truly needy, not to those who were greedy.

You look at this budget’s commitment to hospitals. When I think of hospitals, as I know all members do in their communities—I know the member for Lanark-Carleton and I are concerned about the Queensway-Carleton Hospital, the Ottawa Hospital, the Kemptville hospital, the Winchester hospital, the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital and the Almonte hospital.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): The animal hospital.

Mr Baird: It’s not “animal” hospital, I say to the member for Ottawa Centre. This is serious. According to the Ontario Hospital Association, this budget is only funding 50% of inflation. At the Queensway-Carleton Hospital they don’t negotiate the contract with the Ontario Nurses’ Association; that’s done provincially. The reality is, unless this government backs down, hospitals across Ontario are going to have to do one of two things: There are going to be longer waiting lists or there is going to be reduction in services. There’s going to be reduction of nurses and reduction of other health care providers. That’s the legacy of this government despite \$9 billion more in spending compared to last year’s budget. We’re tremendously concerned about that and we will be talking to our folks in the hospitals, as I know all of our members will be doing.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke of the \$4-billion hole in the budget. I want to take a moment to explain to people how serious this is. Back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Liberal and NDP governments of the day entered into contracts with the private sector to generate electricity, about 1,700 megawatts of hydro. They didn’t do a very good job negotiating these agreements and were paying eight cents a kilowatt hour. When the old Ontario Hydro was broken up, the liability for these contracts went to the government, to the province of Ontario. This government is taking that debt, that liability of these contracts at eight-cent power, and is sending it over to the Ontario Energy Board, and it’s going to stick it on consumers: on residential customers, on farm operators, on industrial and commercial operators.

Last year they lost about \$240 million because they signed bad deals. I wasn’t in the cabinet that signed them, but I look to members opposite. Maybe they could provide some explanation.

They put these contracts over to the Ontario Energy Board and they’re going save about \$240 million. OK, you save \$240 million by downloading it on to working

families, so you’re going to get a \$240-million win. Then the Leader of the Opposition says, “No, look at the budget act.” They’re going to put all \$3.9 billion as revenue even though not a single dollar changed hands. That’s Enron-style accounting. That’s what they did at Enron, and they went to jail at Enron.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: The member for Leeds-Grenville said, “Royal Group Technologies.” That type of accounting may work at Royal Group Technologies, but we’re not going let this government get away with that sort of accounting scam with taxpaying Ontarians. It’s outrageous. It’s a \$4-billion hole. You could put a whole Mack truck factory through it: \$4 billion, and not a single dollar changed hands. The audit committee and the board of Royal Group Technologies may have turned a blind eye to things, but we’re not going to do that here in this House. We’re going to hold the government of the day accountable for what is nothing short of an accounting scam.

I say to those members of the press gallery who may be watching, they’re counting on your not being able to understand this, they’re counting on your not being able to follow this argument, and I say to you, don’t let them get away with it. After Enron and Worldcom and all the scams south of the border, we shouldn’t allow them to get away with this.

1550

Mr Runciman: It’s a shell game.

Mr Baird: “It’s a shell game,” the member for Leeds-Grenville says.

As I said earlier, Dalton McGuinty promised to have a referendum. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance said, “Well, you know what? We’re going to break that promise. It costs too much money. That \$40 million or \$50 million for a referendum would be better spent on health care.” Well, you know what? I’ve got an idea. We could hold a referendum for free. It wouldn’t cost anything. We could just ask Jean-Pierre Kingsley, the head of Elections Canada, “Could we piggyback with your federal election on June 28?” I’m prepared to personally lead the fundraising campaign to buy the paper for the ballots.

Interjections.

Mr Baird: The member for Erie-Lincoln says we can use the photocopier in his office to help print them—and the member for Oxford—so that we can do this thing at no cost to Mr Sorbara’s bottom line.

But all of a sudden, they didn’t want to do it; they don’t like the idea. When the Toronto Star—that blue-bannered newspaper, I say to my friends up on the third floor—approached Mr Sorbara outside this place, he said that he had already answered the question and he ran away. Mr Ferguson came up to me and said, “Did he answer that question?” I said, “You’ve been here for six months. Have you not noticed they never answer any question? Not a single question.

It’s gotten so bad that I had to introduce a private member’s bill on behalf of the people of Nepean-Carle-

ton to bring in a \$500 fine, to fine these people when they don't answer questions. Somehow they think you get the corner office, the car and driver, all the bells and whistles, but you don't have to answer questions. They're not accountable to anyone at question period. We certainly can't call this "answer period" with this gang.

I am hearing from people in my constituency office—a woman from Manotick, who operates a chiropractic clinic, whom I met with on Saturday, and she wants to know why Dalton McGuinty is cutting chiropractic funding. She operates a small clinic in Manotick. She said, "They promised no spending cuts to health care." I said, "We'll have to wait for the budget." And it turns out her fears were justified.

I was in the office of an optometrist in Bells Corners the other day, and they've got a petition on the counter because they heard this government might be doing that. Of course, these people said we were fearmongering in recent weeks when this was suggested, and now they're doing that too. It's the same with physiotherapy, which is a concern to two constituents who called this morning from Stittsville and Osgoode.

Let's be very clear about what they're doing, what Dalton McGuinty is doing, I say to the people over at the Hepburn Block who are watching this in the minister's office, to Jason, to Rick and everyone: You're bringing in two-tier health care. You're bringing in user fees and two-tier health care, and the people of Ontario are angry and they want revenge. They want this government to hold the referendum and to be held accountable.

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): Nobody's watching.

Mr Baird: The member for Perth-Middlesex says nobody's watching. Well, I'll tell you, my constituents sent me here to fight for them, and you're going to be watching their anger when you go home during constituency week.

I say to those people watching, next week is constituency week. This place will close down business. If you live in the constituency of a Liberal MPP, get on the phone and say you want a meeting with them. Say you want to talk to them. If they won't give it to you, show up at their office on Tuesday morning at 9 o'clock and tell them to keep their promises. Tell them to keep their word. Tell them to keep their trust with the people of Ontario. You'll have the opportunity to do that next week.

What other tax increases did they bring in? The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the workplace accessibility tax incentive to help small businesses and medium-sized employers make accommodations for a disabled person. They got rid of that. Why? There's no justification.

The workplace child care tax incentive: They got rid of that. The graduate transitions tax credit: They got rid of that. The educational technology tax incentive: They're getting rid of that too, with no explanation. The Ontario home ownership savings plan to help working families who are struggling to save to buy their own

home—the dream of home ownership. That's a double whammy for young working families: First they got hit in December with the news that they would not allow mortgage interest deductibility, and now they're being hit with the end of the Ontario home ownership savings plan.

I say to the limousine Liberals over there that when I first bought a home, the forerunner of this plan was a big help to me in terms of closing costs. A thousand dollars or \$2,000 may be nothing to this group of limousine Liberals, but it's a lot to working families in Ontario. Another concern I have is the Ontario research employee—

Mr Eves: Richard Patten wishes he was a limousine Liberal.

Mr Baird: I like Richard Patten.

The Ontario research employee stock option credit: Mr Patten, the member for Ottawa Centre, will want to know about this one. This was an initiative brought in after the Leader of the Opposition, when he was Minister of Finance, doubled the number of spots at Ontario universities for high-tech and engineering and computer science. Carleton University particularly benefited from that program. The member for Lanark-Carleton pushed for that, because he's got a lot of constituents in Kanata who are employed in that area, as did I in south Nepean.

Interjections.

Mr Baird: Well, after they graduated, they started to leave the province because of high taxation levels. So we brought in the Ontario research employee stock option credit so that these young, talented men and women would stay in Canada, and if an engineer emigrated from Pakistan or India and decided to work in an Ontario-based company, they would have a reason to stay here and not go south of the border because of the more attractive tax rates.

It's gone, a terrible loss for research and development. And that's not just going to hurt us in the greater Ottawa area. It's going to hurt us in Markham; it's going to hurt us in the technology triangle—Cambridge-Kitchener-Waterloo.

Let's look at another one for research and development, the employer health tax exemption for stock option benefits paid to employees of research-intensive companies: the same objective for that one, but they're getting rid of it. I'll tell you, if we lose one bright research mind from this province as a result of it, it won't be worth the cost, because in Ottawa—in Nepean-Carleton, where I'm from, and in Lanark-Carleton—we don't attract a lot of big businesses, but we sure are great at creating new businesses that grow. Small businesses start off with two to five employees, and the next thing you know, they have a million dollars in revenue, and the next thing you know, over \$100 million in revenue. This is going to do huge damage to those new companies, with no explanation as to why they're getting rid of these tax credits, and that's a tremendous concern.

I want to end by pointing to the real villain in this budget. His name is not on the cover. He's not an MPP.

He's not even an Ontario taxpayer. The reason for Ontario's fiscal challenges, the reason for our health care woes, rests with one person. Do you want to know his name?

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Give his initials first.

Mr Baird: PM. PM the PM. Paul Martin, the Prime Minister, is the architect of health care cuts in the province of Ontario. When Brian Mulroney left office, they were paying 18 cents on the dollar for health care. The province had to pay 82 cents, and the federal government paid 18 cents. By the time Paul Martin was fired as finance minister by the previous Prime Minister, health care spending had gone as low as 11 cents on the dollar, and we wonder why we have a challenge in the fiscal problems of Ontario and why we have a problem with health care in Ontario.

Interjections.

1600

Mr Baird: The member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot talks about tax points. I want to give Jean Chrétien a lot of credit for giving the tax points. He gave us lots of tax points for health care, and I give him full credit. He did that in 1978 when he was the finance minister, and Marc Lalonde and Alan MacEachen took it all back in the 1980s. They took back every single tax point they gave for health care. They cut federal taxes, the province moved in, and when no one was looking they raised taxes back to where they were. You can check the budgets of Alan MacEachen and Marc Lalonde in the early 1980s. In those budgets they took back the tax points Jean Chrétien gave as finance minister in 1978, and that's the truth.

The real villain, so when people watching at home are asking: Dalton McGuinty is committing highway robbery and it's Paul Martin who's driving the getaway car. If raising taxes for health care was a crime, Paul Martin could be an indicted co-conspirator. People in Ontario will render a verdict for his cuts.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): Wait until June 28.

Mr Baird: The member for Dundas says, "Wait until June 28." I'm going to particularly watch his riding on the evening of June 28, I'm going to particularly watch his riding on that night, because we've got a great Conservative candidate there.

People in Nepean-Carleton want a referendum on this tax increase. Working families in Ontario want a referendum on this tax increase. If they don't get a referendum on this tax increase, there's going to be a referendum on June 28 in Ontario, and those 101 Liberal Dalmatians who voted to cut health care for 10 or 11 years in Ontario will have the wrath of voters because of these tax increases. Paul Martin had a choice. He could fund \$2 billion to the boondoggle that is the gun registry; somehow they can register cows for a dollar a cow, but they wasted \$2 billion on the gun registry. They had the

billion dollars for the HRDC boondoggle. They had money for that and not for health care. The people of Ontario are going to hold them accountable. They had money to send \$100 million to Groupaction in Quebec and Liberal-friendly polling firms. Criminal charges are pending. Kingston was the birthplace of the federal Conservative Party in—

Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: the member for Nepean-Carleton has drifted so far off topic that he's on the wrong level of government.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I caution the member to keep to the point.

Mr Baird: I can understand they wouldn't want me talk about the \$100 million that was stolen from our hospitals and went to Liberal advertising firms in Montreal, stolen right out of the operating rooms of the province of Ontario. There is an important opportunity for voters in Ontario at the next federal election to hold this government accountable. There are a lot of jobs that were lost because of this Liberal government. I'll summarize.

The member for Lanark-Carleton is here. Like me, he was preparing his income tax lately. What did it say on the tax form when you had to mail your cheque in? Did you send it to Ontario, to Sault Ste Marie? No. You used to have to send it to Sault Ste Marie. In eastern Ontario now, they fired a whole bunch of people in Ottawa, in Nepean-Carleton, to send our taxes to Shawinigan. With the help of people like David Pratt, they did it. Voters will have the opportunity to pass judgment on this government.

People in Nepean-Carleton, people throughout Ontario, want a referendum. We are going to fight for that referendum. We are going to want the people of Ontario to demand that Dalton McGuinty keep his promise, that he respect his word, that he honour the trust that people in Ontario gave to him on October 2. We're not going to give up without a fight. You can expect the biggest fight in this Legislature over taxes in a generation.

We are here as the voice of working families in Ontario. We will not let you declare war on the middle class. We will fight, and we will fight you tooth and nail to ensure that working families don't have to share this burden of your government.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Hon Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I move adjournment of the House.

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

This House stands adjourned until 10 am tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1605.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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	Prue, Michael (ND)		Marsales, Judy (L)
Beaches-East York /		Hamilton West /	
Beaches-York-Est		Hamilton-Ouest	
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Springdale		Addington	
Brampton Centre /	Jeffrey, Linda (L)		
Brampton-Centre		Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga /	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND)
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Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston et les îles	
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)		Milloy, John (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)		
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)		
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)		
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)		
Don Valley East /	Caplan, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	Kitchener Centre /	
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		Kitchener-Waterloo	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
		Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
		Lanark-Carleton	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
		Leeds-Grenville	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley West /	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London North Centre /	
Don Valley-Ouest		London-Centre-Nord	
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Eves, Ernie (PC) Leader of the opposition / chef de l'opposition	London West /	Bentley, Hon / L'hon Christopher (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
		London-Ouest	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Markham	Takhar, Hon / L'hon Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
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		Mississauga-Centre	
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga East /	
Essex		Mississauga-Est	
		Mississauga South /	Peterson, Tim (L)
		Mississauga-Sud	
		Mississauga West /	Delaney, Bob (L)
		Mississauga-Ouest	
		Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
		Niagara Centre /	Kormos, Peter (ND)
		Niagara-Centre	
		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)

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Ottawa South / Ottawa-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	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon / L'hon Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
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	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (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-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Hon / L'hon Gerard (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	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
Perth-Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Hon / L'hon Greg (L) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	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
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-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 Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	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 East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon / L'hon Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon / L'hon Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Hon / L'hon Gerry (L) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement	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
Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Hon / L'hon Alvin (L) Speaker / Président	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
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.

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