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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 2 June 2004

Mercredi 2 juin 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 June 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 juin 2004

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LACHLAN MONTAGUE

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): The best part of my job is meeting the most remarkable people living in Cambridge, North Dumfries and South Kitchener. Lachlan Montague is one of those remarkable people, even though he is a young man of 14. Recently, he served as one of our legislative pages. Lachlan lives with his parents, Margaret and Stephen, and his younger brother, Coulter. Lachlan attends the Temple Baptist Christian Academy in Cambridge, which has sponsored no less than three pages to our Legislature in the past five years.

While many of us at the age of 6, including me, concentrated on childhood playing, Lachlan had already developed a social conscience and was concerned with the well-being of the less fortunate, including homeless families. But recognition of the need by itself is not sufficient without action, and Lachlan devised an inventive program called Kans For Kids. At Halloween for the past eight years, Lachlan, his friends and many supporters have gone door to door to ask for canned goods for the homeless, rather than the usual candy. Last year, the program collected 4,000 pounds of food for the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank.

I pay tribute to Lachlan, his family and the Temple Baptist Christian Academy in Cambridge for a job well done.

AIR QUALITY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I would like to ask for unanimous consent to use this bicycle helmet as a prop. It's Environment Week. Can I have that?

The Speaker: The member for Toronto-Danforth has asked for unanimous consent to wear her helmet as a prop. I presume the member's only asking for herself to wear it at this time? Do I have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Ms Churley: This is probably a first in the Legislature, but I'm wearing this hat as a symbol. What with all the attention being paid to the unpopular Liberal budget and the federal election going on, what we have

failed to notice here is that it's Environment Week in Canada. I wear this helmet as a symbol today. I rode my bike to work in the rain. How many here—put your hands up—either walked, took public transportation or bicycled to work today? Hey, I won't do the negative, but look, that's not bad at all.

It is Environment Week in Canada and it's a good opportunity for us to review where we're at in terms of the environment and air pollution, because this is Clean Air Day. I want to point out that later this afternoon we will be going through clause-by-clause on the government's greenbelt legislation, and I'm shocked to see—I've been waiting anxiously for the Liberal amendments to this greenbelt—guess what? Their amendments actually put more loopholes into the bill.

But what's worse, and why this relates to this being Environment Week, is that there is no amendment in there to deal with one of the biggest problems within this legislation, and that is what's called "leapfrog development." If that development goes ahead, that means we will have even more urban sprawl and people will be living further out. There will be more highways, more cars on the road, which will lead to more smog and bad air.

Happy Environment Week, everybody.

ITALIAN NATIONAL DAY

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): Oh, that's a hard one to follow, Mr Speaker.

On a much more serious note, today it gives me great pleasure to commemorate the anniversary of Italy's Independence Day, a milestone event which took place on June 2, 1946.

Italians throughout the world have joined Italy today in celebrating their national day. We recognize the contribution made by 1.5 million Italo-Canadians residing in our great land; 780,000 of those have chosen to make Ontario their home.

While Italy and Italians take pride in celebrating their national day, they are also proud to be known for their hospitality, flair, cutting-edge design and fabulous cuisine. Let us not forget, however, the many waves of Italian immigrants of early days who sacrificed their lives to build into the foundation of their newly discovered land of opportunity, which we call Canada.

From the first railway workers of the 1800s to the latter-day giant developers, professionals from every field, scientists, artists, restaurateurs, and many of my colleagues who today occupy seats in the Ontario Legis-

lature, Italians have left their distinct hallmark in every riding of our province.

Italians have always been, and are, grateful to Canada, a land that has allowed them to reach for and fulfill their desires and dreams, yet still being able to preserve their passion and zest for life that so distinguishes the Italian culture and tradition.

I know every member of the House wishes the Italian embassy and consular offices in Canada and the people of Italy congratulations. *[Remarks in Italian.]*

AIR QUALITY

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): As we recognize Clean Air Day today, I bring your attention to the fact that actions speak louder than words.

Last week, I had the opportunity to see the results of our Conservative government's \$250-million investment into emission reduction technology at OPG Nanticoke. Meanwhile, the current government continues to point fingers at its favourite pollution scapegoat—coal—threatening coal fire closure while ignoring vehicle emissions, the source of 60% of Ontario's domestically produced smog problem. Apparently, with their stated intention to drop Drive Clean in favour of dirty clean, the Liberals' smoke-free Ontario does not apply to exhaust pipes.

Our government's investment at Nanticoke and Lambton will see nitrogen oxide emissions drop by 12,000 tonnes a year. That's the equivalent of taking 600,000 cars off the road. That's because selective catalytic reduction units, SCRs, are reducing nitrogen oxide emissions by 80% to those units to which they're attached.

The implementation of SCR technology builds on investments of \$1.8 billion in fossil fuel air emission reduction since 1984. Results are clear: In 2000, fossil plants produced 14% more electricity than they did in 1984, but with 60% fewer acid gas emissions.

At Nanticoke specifically, sulphur dioxide levels have dropped by 60% and nitrogen oxide levels by 50%. It will continue to drop with the new SCR technology.

1340

SENIORS' MONTH

Ms Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): I'm very pleased to rise today in recognition of Seniors' Month and to share with this Legislature some of the events and programs that will be held in Etobicoke-Lakeshore during this important month.

On June 4, my office will be having another safe medication seminar, this time with the added component of a medication use review. I would like to extend personal thanks to the Ontario Pharmacists' Association for developing this seminar and working with my office to make sure this ever-popular event continues.

Later in the month, my office will be providing a workshop on the ABCs of fraud that will help protect seniors from dishonest business practices that unfortunately target them.

On June 6, I will be honoured to participate in ceremonies to recognize the 60th anniversary of D-Day, both at Second Street Public School and here at Queen's Park. One of my constituents, Bruce Melanson, was one of 15,000 Canadians who landed on Juno Beach in a bold move to liberate Europe. Bruce travelled overseas with the First Division of the West Nova Scotia Regiment in May 1940, and went on to Juno Beach with the 3rd Division Light ack-ack. He will be attending the ceremonies in France with the Queen and our Prime Minister. I would like to add a personal thank you to Bruce for tirelessly advocating on behalf of veterans since the war.

I hope all of our colleagues will take the time on D-Day anniversary to participate in local ceremonies commemorating those who paid for our present freedoms with their brave efforts, and many with the ultimate sacrifice of their lives.

PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Heaven help us, he's at it again. This morning, when working class families put their radios on, they heard that voice, once again, of Dalton McGuinty whispering sweet promises into their ears. I can only imagine how many radios were abruptly shut off; how many curses, not meant to be heard by children's ears, were thrown at the radio; and I hope not, but how many cars dangerously swerved off highways as they scrambled to turn off that voice.

"That's him. That's him," the taxpayers say, "the guy who is raising our taxes by over \$1,200 a family. That's him. That's the voice of the man who's making grandma pay for her chiropractic care out of her own pocket. That's the man who's broken his word so many times he's making Richard Nixon look honest in comparison."

This morning, that voice, all over again; this is the man, Dalton McGuinty's voice, who is going to damage so many ears. The poor listeners, they're going to long for the less abrasive sounds of Wolfman Jack. You know we've heard that voice on the radio before. We heard those promises. "I'm not going to raise your taxes." We hear every morning, on the Bill Carroll show on CFRB, "Middle-class families will not see their taxes go up by one penny." I say, on behalf of the listeners on the radio this morning, Dalton McGuinty, we don't believe a word you say any more.

MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): Yesterday in this Legislature, in a question to the Premier, the member for Oak Ridges accused me of a number of things. He noted that while on an open-line phone show in Belleville—and as an aside, the radio has asked that it be corrected that their call letters are CJBQ, not CJO—he accused me of indicating to the callers that I would bring their concerns regarding the budget to Queen's Park.

Indeed, as an individual with only one eye, I did express concern about the delisting of optometrists. I

plead guilty to that. I will never apologize for being the voice of my constituents in Queen's Park. I believe Premier McGuinty expects nothing less of our caucus.

The member for Oak Ridges, in his supplementary question, stated, "Certainly Mr Parsons said there will be public meetings and that he will personally undertake in those public hearings to oppose those measures." At that point, I indicated it was not true.

I have subsequently had the opportunity to review the tape of the CJBQ phone-in show. I am pleased to report that I did not in fact make that or any similar statement. I look forward to the member for Oak Ridges acknowledging this and, as a colleague, recommend that he be absolutely confident of the reliability of the information supplied by outside sources.

I am very aware of the legislative process and would not have made that statement, recognizing that members do not in fact appear before a committee hearing. I strongly support the openness of our government, however, and encourage members of the public to make presentations during the committee phase of the budget bill or any other bill.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): This week we commemorate the sacrifices of the generation who won World War II. They've passed the torch to our generation of baby boomers, who will begin to turn 60 in the next few years.

Ontario's government has looked at the needs of an aging population and responded with a budget that addresses those needs. Our first priority for this generation and the next generation of seniors is to ensure access to health care in Ontario. That's why every cent from Ontario's health care premium will be invested in health care.

Healthier seniors mean a growing need for home care and long-term-care programs and facilities. Ontario's budget will help our hospitals free resources from some chronic care patients who might better live and receive treatments in their homes or in long-term-care facilities.

Ontario has responded to today's and tomorrow's seniors with funding for more doctors, more nurses and the ability to provide cardiac procedures, joint replacements, cataract surgeries and MRI or CT scans.

Change in health care in Ontario means that Ontario will see family health teams, better primary care, home care for an additional 95,700 Ontarians by 2007-08, and compassionate end-of-life care for another 6,000 Ontarians.

RED MAPLE READING PROGRAM

Mr Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I rise today to speak about a great program in one of the rural schools in the riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh. Maple Ridge Public School in Dundas county strives to prepare their students for the

challenges they will face in high school. A dedicated staff and high participation of parents allow this school to strive for success.

A distinguishing factor of Maple Ridge is their students' participation in the Red Maple reading program, which is sponsored by the Ontario Library Association. The Red Maple program is offered to youth in grades 7, 8 and 9, where students choose to read a list of 10 outstanding Canadian adult fiction titles. The students must read at least five of the 10 in order to vote for their favourite book, and the voting takes place in late April.

This is an extracurricular program at Maple Ridge and is above and beyond classroom expectations. Thirty-four of Maple Ridge's grade 7 and 8 students read five or more of the 10 novels selected. Four students read all 10 novels within two months: Erin Armstrong, Stephanie Coyne, Hayley Warren and Mike Scheuner deserve congratulations.

As a retired educator, I am proud to be a part of a government that respects and strives for excellence in education. Our 2004 budget, coupled with the recent education funding announcements, will ensure that rural schools will be able to continue to operate at an accelerated level, and programs such as the Red Maple reading program will continue to challenge our students to ensure excellence for all.

I want to commend Maple Ridge on this extraordinary effort in reading, and I hope these students will continue their love for reading throughout their lives.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

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 June 2, 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.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the reforms and modernization committee from the Parliament of Zambia. Please join me in welcoming them here.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to welcome a very prominent farmer of my riding and chairman of the board of Alfred College, campus of Guelph University, Mr Denis Perrault.

The Speaker: As you know, it's not a point of order, but welcome.

MOTIONS

SEXUAL ABUSE OF STUDENTS

MAUVAIS TRAITEMENTS D'ORDRE SEXUEL INFLIGÉS AUX ÉLÈVES

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): Mr Speaker, I understand that there is unanimous consent for government motion 115 to be moved immediately and to be put to a vote after each of the three parties are given five minutes to speak, and that the Legislature will then observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims, following the vote.

1350

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Mr McGuinty has moved for unanimous consent that government motion 115 be moved immediately and be put to a vote after each of the three parties are given five minutes to speak, and that following the vote there will be a moment of silence in memory of the victims. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I move that:

Whereas it is acknowledged that numerous incidents of physical and sexual abuse took place during the 1940s through 1970s at the St John's training school in Uxbridge and the St Joseph's training school in Alfred, which were operated by the Christian Brothers of Toronto and Ottawa and funded by the government of Ontario; and

Whereas it is acknowledged that the abuse suffered by the students at these schools has caused lifelong physical and emotional pain, distress and trauma to the men themselves and to their families and community and that such abuse of children is deplorable and intolerable; and

Whereas the victims bear no responsibility whatsoever for the abuse they suffered; and

Whereas child abuse is a serious social and community problem that must be addressed; and

Whereas the government, supported by the Christian Brothers of Ottawa and the Catholic archdioceses of Ottawa and Toronto, entered into agreements of reconciliation in 1992 and 1994 with the victims to overcome the aftermath of abuse experienced at the schools;

Therefore this House, on behalf of the people of Ontario, apologizes and expresses sincere regret for the harm caused to those boys in the care of St Joseph's and St John's training schools.

The Speaker: Mr McGuinty has moved government notice of motion number 115.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I rise today to bring a measure of closure to an episode in Ontario's history that has shocked and troubled all of us in this House and indeed every caring Ontarian. Over the course of several decades, hundreds of young residents—boys—of St John's training school in Alfred and St Joseph's training school in Uxbridge suffered horrible abuse at the very hands of those entrusted with their care and upbringing. Those schools were funded and overseen by the govern-

ment of Ontario and were operated by the Christian Brothers, an order of the Roman Catholic Church.

Il a été établi sans conteste que bon nombre de ces enfants qui ont fréquenté ces écoles ont été les victimes de négligence et qu'ils ont été les victimes innocentes d'agressions physiques, sexuelles et verbales. Cette violence a laissé bon nombre d'entre eux avec des cicatrices émotionnelles profondes et permanentes.

It has been established beyond dispute that many of the children attending these schools were neglected and were the innocent victims of physical, sexual and verbal abuse that left many deep and abiding emotional scars. Many of these victims have been unable to form productive adult relationships or fully participate in the life of their community. Many are saddled with feelings of guilt, inadequacy, fear and embarrassment, and many former victims have tried to ease their pain through self-destructive behaviour. In short, hundreds of lives were seriously damaged at the very moment when the sheer wonder of life should have been just revealing itself to these children.

As the Premier of Ontario, it is my duty and responsibility to apologize unreservedly today for the neglect and abuse suffered by the children in these schools many years ago. I say directly to the victims: You were failed when you needed us most, and for that your government is, and always will be, very sorry.

I want to congratulate the victims for the courage they have shown in surviving the abuse, rebuilding their lives, raising awareness of what they endured and fighting for justice to be fully done.

It is my hope that these words and the unanimous agreement of this House with these words will represent the final chapter in our determination to do what is right and what is just for the children of Alfred and Uxbridge.

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): Very briefly, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I believe the Premier has eloquently echoed the apology given on behalf of the government of Ontario by former Attorney General Charles Harnick in 1996. Residential school abuse is a tragedy, and we fully support this apology on behalf of the government and the people of Ontario.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): On behalf of New Democrats, I want to confirm that we will be supporting the motion. This has been a very long time coming.

Let me say, as Attorney General at the time when Mr McCann and others courageously came forward in the early 1990s, I know personally of the anguish, the torture that many of these victims expressed, and their desire to have an alternative dispute resolution system, one which would have the Premier of the province apologize directly for what has happened. As I said, this has been a long time coming. The victims have been very patient in waiting this long.

People, especially children, in the care of the province or institutions funded or sanctioned by the province have a right to expect that their government will treat them in a

moral and ethical way. What happened at St John's and St Joseph's training schools was a horrible violation of that trust. It was a nightmare in which those charged with caring for children became violent abusers. It is the responsibility of all of us to ensure nothing remotely like this ever happens again.

What this motion does acknowledge is that we still have an obligation to those who suffered, to those who have suffered all their lives because of this abuse. The victims still carry the physical and emotional pain, the distress and trauma of the abuse they suffered. An apology cannot undo the wrong that was done, but it was very clearly part of the agreement with the victims because the victims felt it would be meaningful and important.

I therefore join with members of this House in expressing our sincere and deep apologies for the events that took place at St John's and St Joe's. I want to recognize again the courage, the incredible courage of those who came forward.

The Speaker: Mr McGuinty has moved government notice of motion 115. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Would all members and guests please rise to observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims.

The House observed a moment's silence.

1400

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr Ernie Eves (Leader of the Opposition): To the Premier: On April 24 of this year, you told Graham Richardson on Focus Ontario, "Well, what we said all along—I'm very clear about this—is that we are not going to be raising taxes." What happened between April 24 and May 18, when your Treasurer introduced the budget and in fact raised taxes quite a bit?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I know that the Leader of the Opposition must be as frustrated as the people of Ontario are about the fact that there was this \$5.6-billion deficit hidden from us for such an extended period of time. What we decided to do, of course, was to make some very difficult decisions, but one of the most important things we have decided to do is to introduce a new law in Ontario that will prevent those kinds of shenanigans from ever being foisted on the people of Ontario again. The Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act will require that the state of public accounts be made available and public to the people of Ontario before an election. That will never, ever happen again because of our law.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Supplementary from the member for Erie-Lincoln.

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Premier, this is a very serious matter. Your 32 broken promises, promises

that you committed to during the campaign and have already broken in seven months, are bad enough.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'm just going to ask for special co-operation today before the member starts speaking. There is a lot of shouting going on.

Mr Hudak: The 32 broken promises alone in seven months are bad enough. Do we have the now-Premier of the province, in office, saying one thing—that taxes were not going up—when he knew full well that the Ministry of Finance was working on plans to bring in the biggest tax increase on middle-class families in the province of Ontario? Premier, when did you know that taxes were going up? Why did you tell people they were not, when you knew full well that they were going to? Did you say something that you knew was not the case or are you simply incompetent?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I appreciate the enthusiasm with which the question is put. The member opposite raises the notion of increased costs for families. I want to tell you about some of the other aspects of this budget. By providing free immunizations to children against deadly diseases, we are saving the average family \$600 per child. Our two-year tuition freeze will save an arts student at the University of Toronto \$318; the tuition freeze for a new medical student will save \$1,960. With our proposed changes to the Tenant Protection Act, a family in a two-bedroom apartment in Toronto could save up to \$250. By exempting intergenerational transfers of family farms from the land transfer tax, we are saving working farming families an average of \$2,500. Our budget goes a long way to make up for eight and a half lost years of downloading responsibilities, not only on to municipalities but on the families. We're here for families.

Mr Hudak: The Premier is obviously avoiding a very serious matter. We are not talking about the word of the Leader of the Opposition when you're in opposition. That is bad enough—the broken promises. We're talking about what you have done to the trust the taxpayers have in the Office of the Premier of Ontario. We're talking about the word of the Premier of Ontario, who said on April 24 that taxes were not going up, when I say he knew full well that taxes were going up through the roof. Either you scrambled at the last minute on the back of a napkin to put that tax hike together, in which case you're incompetent, or you said with full knowledge on Focus Ontario that taxes were not going up, when you knew damned well they were going up big time. Which are you: incompetent, or are you telling stories?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I want to begin by assuring the member that the sound system is in fact working and there is no need for him to go over the top.

Since the member is so moved by his commitment to the people of Ontario, then on behalf of 12 million Ontarians, I will ask the member opposite to submit to the treasury a cheque for \$9,000 for saddling the people of Ontario with a \$5.6-billion deficit.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. May I beseech the members again to co-operate so we can have a good question

period. The shouting across is not helpful. I would very much appreciate that. We started off very wrong today.

Second question, the leader of the official opposition.

Mr Eves: The Prime Minister, Mr Martin, was quoted very recently in a Vancouver radio station interview as saying, "I would never stay in office if I did not keep my promises." In all fairness, I don't expect you to live up to commitments that you didn't make during the campaign, but I do expect you to live up to the commitment you made with the taxpayers' protection pledge when you said that if you raised taxes for any reason whatsoever—there was no contingency, no equivocating—you would hold a referendum before you did so. Will you live up to your word and hold the referendum that you said you would hold if you raised taxes for any reason whatsoever?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I know the leader of the official opposition is very concerned about honouring the Taxpayer Protection Act. I want to remind him of the vote that was taken in this House on June 27, 2002. At that particular time, as the government actively conspired to break the law—the Taxpayer Protection Act—it turns out that that particular vote was supported by Mr Baird, Mr Chudleigh, Mr Dunlop, Mr Eves, Mr Hardeman, Mr Hudak, Mr Jackson, Mr Klees, Mr Miller, Mr Runciman, Mr Sterling, Mr Wilson and Ms Witmer. All voted to break the Taxpayer Protection Act. So the leader has no standing, moral or otherwise, when it comes to lecturing us about doing the right thing on behalf of the people of Ontario.

The Speaker: Supplementary, the member for Nepean-Carleton.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): My supplementary is to the Premier. Premier, this is about your word. This is about the confidence—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The Minister of Community and Social Services, order. In some respects, it's very unfair when the government keeps on shouting, because there are questions that members would like to ask. The third party also would like to ask their questions. I'm going to ask you all again to co-operate. I presume you could pass a motion not to have question period today.

The member from Nepean-Carleton.

Mr Baird: Premier, when you sit down across the table with business people wanting to invest in Ontario, when you sit down with the federal government to negotiate a deal, it will all be about your word and the ability of others to trust you.

On April 24, five weeks ago, you said to Graham Richardson on Focus Ontario that you wouldn't raise taxes. You broke your promise to working families, and with the help, the support and the encouragement of David Herle, Paul Martin's campaign manager, you broke your word to raise taxes. Will you not stand in your place, inform the people of Ontario and tell them how much you paid Paul Martin's campaign manager to help you break your promise? How much did you pay Paul Martin's campaign manager to raise taxes on work-

ing families? Will you tell us before we vote on June 28, or are you going to pull the same trick and the same stunt you did in Hamilton East?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Notwithstanding his wishes to the contrary, this is not Parliament Hill. The member is not representing a federal constituency. This is Queen's Park.

Let me tell you what it is Ontarians are concerned about. They're concerned about the state of their health care. I think one of the things they're going to be asking themselves, as more and more are made aware of the contents of our budget, is why the member opposite and the members of the opposition are opposed to 36,000 additional cardiac procedures, 2,300 more joint replacements, nine new MRI and CT sites, 9,000 more cataract surgeries, and home care for close to 100,000 more Ontarians? The question Ontarians are having today, the one that weighs heavily on their minds, is how could anybody on that side of the House be opposed to investing in better health care for Ontario families?

1410

Mr Baird: Premier, you've become the poster child for political cynicism in Canada. There has never been a politician anywhere in the Dominion who has broken such a clear promise made to the people of Ontario. You've broken your word. You've lost the moral high ground. Premier, you can't be trusted.

If you're proud of your budget, as you've been crowing around the province, if you're so proud of your budget that you've begun to use taxpayers' and tax-creditable political donations to spin the people of Ontario, will you stand in your place and say that you will keep your word, that you will keep the faith, and that you will allow the people of Ontario to vote on this budget you're so proud of? Will you do that, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: There are a few questions to which I believe the answers are very clear. Number one: Did we make some difficult decisions in this budget? You bet we did. Number two: Did the former government hide a \$5.6-billion deficit from the people of Ontario? Yes, they did.

Let me tell you that I will put my name, my word and my integrity on the line any day when it comes to standing up for the defence of Ontario families and doing what I think is the right thing to do when it comes to investing in their health care and their education. This budget is not designed to support our political imperatives; it's designed to help Ontario families, and we will not back off, ever, from doing the right thing for Ontario.

The Speaker: New question? The leader of the third party.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. With each passing day, the outcry against your budget and your unfair and regressive middle-income tax grab grows louder and louder. Ontarians are furious that a single mom with an income of \$30,000 a year will see her provincial income tax increase by 24%, while someone with an income of \$200,000 a year will see their provincial income tax increase by only 3%.

Ontarians have always been willing to pay for investments in health care and education, but what they want to know, Premier, is simply this: You could have closed the employer health tax loophole.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I will start naming members now if this continues, because it seems to me I have no control over question period these days.

The leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: The question is, Premier, you could have closed the employer health tax loophole. You could have restored corporate taxes to the level they were at in 1998, when all corporations were making healthy profits. You could have said to the people who got a 35% tax reduction from the Conservatives, those with incomes over \$100,000 a year, "It's time for you to contribute again." Instead, you went after modest- and middle-income working families and you whacked them to the tune of \$2 billion. Why did you go after working families, Premier? Why did you side with the rich and powerful?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Again, it's passing strange that the leader of the third party, who is now telling us that we should be taxing corporations, did not side with us when we rolled back corporate tax cuts. I'm just wondering where he stands today. Earlier on, he was a champion of free enterprise on behalf of corporations, when today apparently he is not.

Here are some of the facts connected with our new premium: A single parent making \$30,000 per year with \$3,000 in child care expenses will pay a premium of \$300. A person making \$250,000 has an overall average tax rate of 39.9% in Ontario, including \$11,410 just in Ontario surtaxes. We think that what we put in place is progressive and fair.

Mr Hampton: This has to be the all-time newsmaker. The Premier says that for a single-parent mom, it's OK to increase her provincial income tax by 24%. Meanwhile, for somebody who has an income of \$200,000, you just increase his income tax by 3%, and it's fair. Boy, this really has to make news. Maybe you can explain this one: A family with a \$50,000 income will be paying \$16,000 more in income tax, while that individual who has a \$200,000 income will pay 3% more.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): It's 16%.

Mr Hampton: So 16% versus 3%. Maybe you can explain that one, Premier. Maybe you can explain to the people of Ontario how that's fair.

Hon Mr McGuinty: It doesn't hurt to inject a little bit of truth into this debate. Just so we understand, an individual with a taxable income up to \$20,000 doesn't pay anything by way of a premium. If you're earning by way of taxable income \$21,000, then your premium for 2005 will be \$60. If you're earning \$48,500, then your premium for 2005—again, that's taxable income—will be \$575. Just so we understand—we don't take this lightly. We are imposing an additional burden on families, no doubt about that. We're not denying that. But we've done so in a way that is reasonable, responsible

and progressive, notwithstanding the member opposite's contentions to the contrary.

Mr Hampton: I'll inject a little truth into your statements. Here's your tables: He has an income—he's a teacher—of \$50,000 a year. He pays \$600. His wife, who is a nurse, has an income of \$52,000 a year. She pays \$600. That works out to \$1,200 a year from your tables, if you want to know the truth. Meanwhile, while you're whacking working families to the tune of \$2 billion a year, the banks—oh, God, they need a tax break—are going to get a \$1-billion tax break from you. Explain that to the people of Ontario. Why are the banks getting a \$1-billion tax reduction thanks to Dalton McGuinty, while working families get whacked an extra \$2 billion? Explain that fairness.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I understand that it serves the leader of the third party's purposes to be creative when it comes to his presentation of the consequences of our budget, but we feel a responsibility to tell people what's happening specifically as a result of the budget. Again, in addition to the member—he doesn't seem to be prepared to accept that the maximum that an individual can pay would be \$900. I don't know how he could come up with \$16,000.

Again, there are other aspects to the budget, too. I indicated earlier that a family, as a result of these free immunizations, will save \$600 per child. We're helping low- and middle-income seniors by giving them a break on their property taxes to the tune of up to \$125. For example, our contribution to the TTC helped avert a fare hike of 25 cents per ride, saving regular TTC users \$100 annually. So there's lots of good news in this budget for Ontario families.

1420

The Speaker: New question?

Mr Hampton: To the Premier again, these are your tables. I didn't make these up. I didn't create them. Do you recognize this? It's your budget document. These are your tables. An individual with an income of \$50,000 a year pays \$600. Husband pays \$600; wife pays \$600; together they pay \$1,200. And your Minister of Finance, what does he pay? One per cent more. He pays \$900. That's the unfairness of this. That's what's so grossly unfair.

But you didn't answer my question. My question was, while working families are going to get whacked \$2 billion as a result of your budget, can you tell me why those needy, desperate, impoverished banks are going to get a \$1-billion reduction in their taxes?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Here is the information I've just been provided, and I assume it comes from finance. A \$50,000 gross income teacher and a \$52,000 nurse with \$5,000 in child care deductions would pay an Ontario health premium of \$1,050 combined. You're talking \$1,050 combined. That is considerably less than the \$16,000 that the member opposite would have us believe.

Mr Hampton: All right, Premier. Let's have it your way. He has a taxable income of \$50,000 as a teacher. She's a nurse and has a taxable income of \$50,000.

According to your tables, she will pay \$600, he will pay \$600 and together they will pay \$1,200. And all those working families together will pay \$2 billion as a result of your budget. Meanwhile, the desperate, impoverished banks will get a \$1-billion tax reduction. I ask you again, why did you decide to stick it to working families while banks get a \$1-billion tax reduction from your budget, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I'm wondering again, why did the leader of the third party vote with the banks when we put forward a bill in this House to roll back corporate tax cuts? Where was he at that time?

Again, this is a budget that goes a long way to help out struggling families. Immunizations alone will save families \$600 per child. Our two-year tuition freeze will save an arts student at the University of Toronto \$318. A new medical student will save \$1,960.

This budget and this premium are not easy things. We accept that. We understand that. But this investment will enable us to improve the quality of health care that we deliver to all Ontario families.

Mr Hampton: I'm not sure what it is, but maybe the Premier is having difficulty hearing. The question is this: Why should a working family, his taxable income \$50,000 and her taxable income \$50,000—their auto insurance premiums have already gone up 20%, despite your promise, their hydro bill has gone up 20%, despite your promise, the natural gas bill, the driver's licence bill, their property taxes have all gone up. Why are they being hit an extra \$1,200 a year by your budget while those terribly impoverished banks are getting a \$1-billion tax reduction from the Dalton McGuinty government? That's the question. Will you finally answer it, please?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Again, I say to the leader of the third party, why this discovery of religion on the road to Damascus here? Why did he originally vote with the banks? Why did he originally say he would not support our bill to roll back corporate tax cuts? That's what Ontario families are wondering today. Where will he be tomorrow? Yesterday he was with the banks, today he's against them and who knows where he'll be tomorrow.

Our budget and its premium are designed to make absolutely essential investments in health care. I'm talking about everything from 8,000 more full-time nursing positions, 12,000 additional bed lifts, 150 family health teams and home care for 100,000 more Ontarians. This is a heck of a budget when it comes to supporting families.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Premier. I'd like a page to deliver a document to the Premier. I'd like you to listen these statements:

"I don't think we should have delisted optometrists.

"Eye care is health care.

"My hope is that during the debate there'll be an opportunity to reinstate it. This isn't the final deal. It goes to debate and goes to committee.

"I think it's very false savings to delist optometry."

I send that over to you because, you see, Premier, that was not said by an optometrist; that was said by your backbencher the member from Prince Edward-Hastings. He stood in his place earlier today and in fact denied that he said that. That, sir, is a transcript. I would like to know from you, will you in fact agree with your backbencher that you will have public hearings on this budget to give people like your member from Prince Edward-Hastings an opportunity—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): The question has been asked. Premier?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I know the—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'm going to ask the member from Erie-Lincoln—I'm going to warn you this time; the next time I'll be naming you.

Hon Mr McGuinty: The Minister of Health.

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I think we all recognize that there are decisions in the budget that were challenging around some services. In aligning our optometry services in this province with other provinces across the country, we've reached out and done what we can to protect those in our society who are most vulnerable. We've made sure that kids under 20 have access to these services and we've certainly made sure that seniors do.

But we've gone further. We're working with the optometrists to ensure that those people who require these services on a medically necessary basis are going to continue to have the services covered in full by OHIP, as has always been the case.

Like other governments before us, we faced prioritization. We've made significant investments in community-based services, including a very significant investment in family health teams. Family health teams are a place where Ontarians will get their care, including the eye care that they determine.

Mr Klees: This sidestepping of the issue qualifies the member from Prince Edward-Hastings for a position on the front benches of this government. I wonder when he will be promoted as minister.

The issue here is the fact that this government has made a statement and the Premier refuses to answer this question. I'm simply asking for the same thing that his backbencher has asked for, and that is committee hearings on this budget so that members like the member from Prince Edward-Hastings can in fact argue in committee against what he considers to be an irresponsible act on the part of his government. Will the Premier commit to having committee hearings on the budget over the course of the summer? That's the question I'm asking. Please, Premier, will you commit to giving your backbenchers an opportunity to represent their constituents on these issues?

Hon Mr Smitherman: In response to the honourable member's question, I think it would be appropriate to remind him that the initiative we're taking is to ensure that those people who require optometry services on a medically necessary basis will continue to do so. We've

made options and there are choices in this budget. I think the choices we've made—

Interjections.

The Speaker: I'm going to warn the member from Simcoe-Grey, the next outburst across and I'll have to name you.

Hon Mr Smitherman: On the very issue of contrast and choices, it seems interesting to have an intervention finally from the member from Simcoe-Grey who, when he was the Minister of Health in the early days of that government, brought in and stood proudly behind a budget that cut hospital funding by 3.5% and led to the most audacious of statements from a government in the history of this province, and that was that nurses were hula hoops. That's their record on health care.

Mr Klees: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The Premier did not answer the question.

The Speaker: That's not a point of order. New question? The member for Nickel Belt.

1430

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Premier. Premier, your decision to delist eye exams from OHIP makes no sense, but what makes even less sense is the suggestion by the Minister of Health that a patient might need a referral from a family doctor in order to get an OHIP-covered eye exam. A diabetic whose eye care is already being monitored by an optometrist shouldn't have to go to a doctor in order to get a referral to that optometrist. Thousands and thousands of Ontarians don't have a family doctor, so you're going to force them to go to an after-hours clinic or an emergency ward to get a referral to see an optometrist.

Look, optometrists are highly qualified primary care providers. They ensure good, direct access for patients to eye care, and there is no need to impede that access by forcing them to see a doctor to get a referral first. Premier, why don't you just do the right thing and announce that all eye exams will be covered under OHIP?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The Minister of Health.

Hon Mr Smitherman: The member, in her question, makes a point of the fact that too many Ontarians are struggling with access to a family doctor. I wonder why that is, I ask the member of the New Democratic Party and their government, that when they were in government, they cut the number of spots in medical schools that caused the problem of shortages of doctors in this province.

Secondly, she obviously misses the point, which is that these medically necessary services for people with diabetes, as an example, will continue to be covered. But she misses one other important point as well: We have a different plan around family health teams and around the provision of primary care. It is that instead of one silo here and one silo there, which she continues to be a proponent of, we'll bring together interdisciplinary teams of health care providers working in a complementary fashion. It isn't all about a doctor over here and an optometrist over here and a nurse or a nurse practitioner over here and over there. It is about a vision for primary health care.

Ms Martel: May I remind the minister that his plan for family health teams doesn't even include optometrists, so who is he trying to kid? This move is going to do nothing to improve primary health care. In fact, it's going to increase the burden on doctors who are already overworked. It's going to decrease the legitimate role of optometrists in the health care system. It's going to reduce Ontarians' direct access, which they have now, to optometrists because thousands and thousands of people don't have a family doctor and won't be able to get a referral.

Add to that the enormous cost to the health care system when you force people to go to an emergency ward or an after-hours clinic to see a family doctor to get a referral. That's a complete waste of health care dollars. I say to the minister, optometrists are primary health care providers. They have an important role in the system. Patients should have direct access to them, and that access should be paid by OHIP. Reverse your decision.

Hon Mr Smitherman: The longer the honourable member talks, the more she makes my point. Optometrists and other providers ought to be part of a primary health care delivery team, and we're moving forward on a team approach. The honourable member makes a point. She argues with extraordinary vigour for the status quo, but the status quo has been failing. At least a million Ontarians don't have access. What has our government done in our budget? We've made choices in five distinct areas. We've given considerable new funding to drive resources to the community, provide care closer to home, where people need it, and divert traffic flow from our hospitals. That is our plan. It's funded, and it will soon be operational. You will see that there is an opportunity in family health teams to provide—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The government House leader and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal are on the verge of being named. I'm warning them.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Tim Peterson (Mississauga South): My question is for the Minister of Health. It has been estimated by the Canadian Mental Health Association that every year it costs the Canadian economy \$14.4 billion in lost productivity due to mental illness and that one in five people will experience a mental health illness during their lifetime. Due to such staggering figures, what is the government doing and what is it going to do to ensure that those who suffer from mental illness are properly treated?

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm enormously proud of the steps we've taken in our budget to address 12 lost years—two governments of two political stripes that failed over a period of time to make the necessary investments in community-based mental health.

I'm excited that our government's budget includes \$65 million in new spending on community-based mental

health services. This will increase to over \$185 million by the fourth year of our mandate. This increase is the first in 12 years, since before Bob Rae's hair turned grey. It will provide us with the opportunity to better fund case management, crisis response and early intervention to prevent—here again, one more time, the opportunity is there: Invest at the community level, drive resources to the community, closer to home where people need it, and divert traffic flow from our institutions like hospitals. That is our plan. Mental health is one important component—65 million new dollars in 2004-05.

Mr Peterson: Some mental health associations such as the one in Windsor-Essex have a nurse practitioner on-site. According to the Windsor-Essex mental health association, their preliminary findings show that primary care services reduced hospitalizations by 74% and the number of days in hospital by 78%. I would like to know if your ministry supports such programs.

Hon Mr Smitherman: If there's one thing I've got a sense of in the last 45 seconds, it's that we all agree on the incredible importance and amazing versatility of deployment of nurse practitioners in our province. The fact of the matter remains that if we had more of them, we could use them. What has this government done in its budget? It has dramatically enhanced our production line so we'll have more nurse practitioners available in a variety of settings.

To the member's very specific point about the deployment of nurse practitioners in a proactive, community-based way, including in community mental health, we're excited to see the role that nurse practitioners are playing in Windsor-Essex, and I can confirm to the honourable member that nurse practitioners factor in our plans to enhance community health care for people suffering from mental illness.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): My question is for the Premier. I listened to your health minister, and he says you have a plan for this and a plan for that. But the reality is, you had a health plan during the campaign that guaranteed all Ontarians access to health care services based on need, not ability to pay, and you were elected on that plan. That's the reason we weren't elected, because this is what you said. I want you to stand in your place today and tell the 1.2 million patients who visit the chiropractor that you are prepared to reinstate chiropractic services and pay for them under OHIP.

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

1440

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I would acknowledge to the honourable member that there are a lot of people in the province of Ontario who use and feel benefit from chiropractic. There's no argument on our part. I'm someone who has used those services in the past. The decision to

delist these services was a difficult one, but it's about priorities.

The member will obviously know from her three years as the Minister of Health in this province that there is a difference between those services which are therapeutically beneficial and those which are protected by the Canada Health Act and are medically necessary. We had to make a difficult decision because the fact of the matter is clear in our province: There are many medically necessary services that we have not been able to fund adequately, and our government's commitments remain clear there. We chose some priorities; they were difficult. Some difficult decisions were made. But I stand enormously proud of the budget that invests \$2.2 billion—7.3% growth—in the kind of community-based care that we believe is the recipe for the transformation of our health care system to make it sustainable, to the benefit of future generations of Ontarians. That is our fundamental responsibility.

Mrs Witmer: I would remind the Minister of Health that there are about 1.2 million people in this province who have been denied access to chiropractic services. You made a pledge. You said that you were going to provide the service based on need and not on ability to pay.

We have received thousands and thousands of petitions from people who tell us that this is a cost-effective and efficient care that allows them to lead a healthy life and to function. They are telling us that presently you're going to save about \$100 million, but what you are going to do is increase the cost of care because it's going to cost more than \$200 million for these same patients to go to physicians or to hospital emergency rooms or to use drugs. Will you now acknowledge that your plan to delist chiropractic services is not appropriate, and will you reinstate?

Hon Mr Smitherman: I think it's important to acknowledge that in our health care system in this province there are a wide range of therapeutically beneficial services that do not enjoy any benefit from OHIP, and chiropractic now is amongst those. But the fact of the matter is that we had to make choices.

The member talks about primary care. I'm pleased to be able to say that as a result of the priorities and choices that we made, \$100 million saved on chiropractic allows for a \$111-million new investment in primary care in 2004-05; that \$100 million saved from chiropractic allows for an \$80-million new investment in immunizations for our kids; \$100 million saved in chiropractic allows for a direct \$100-million investment in the expansion of community care access centres; \$100 million saved in chiropractic contributes to \$406 million of new money for our long-term-care facilities. It is, at the end of the day, a difficult choice but a priority that we stand behind.

TORONTO POLICE SERVICE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Premier. Premier, the Toronto Police

Services Board is in turmoil, as we all know. Recently two members threw a tantrum and walked out to break quorum to stop a vote they thought they might lose. As you know, one member, Norm Gardner, is under suspension, yet he refuses to resign, leaving the board short one critical member at this time.

Your Minister of Community Safety says Gardner should resign, but he says he doesn't have the authority to do anything about it. Premier, you can do something about it: You can change the law. I ask you today, will you pass special legislation to fire Norm Gardner and replace him with a new provincial appointee?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Speaker, I refer this to the minister.

Hon Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): The member should know that, first of all, what I said was that it would be helpful if Norm Gardner would resign. But you also should know that, notwithstanding that OCCOPS has suspended him for the rest of his term without pay, he has sought judicial review of that decision. As long as that process is in place, I cannot and will not interfere with it.

Ms Churley: Back to the Premier: I don't know what your minister is afraid of here. He's got to go. You can't keep standing behind these excuses. I have been asking you and your minister for some weeks now to help out the Toronto Police Services Board. Now Mayor David Miller says Norm Gardner should resign. He continues to say that he won't. You can't just continue to stand back and watch from the sidelines while this board descends into chaos. You need to live up to your responsibility.

I'm going to tell you again, if you bring in a special bill to replace Norm Gardner, we will give it special quick passage—

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Monday.

Ms Churley: Monday. Yes, bring it back on Monday.

Premier, the choice is yours. I'm going to ask you again to take your responsibility seriously and fire Norm Gardner, or are you going to continue to wash your hands of this?

Hon Mr Kwinter: I find it rather strange that a member of this Legislature is advocating that I should introduce a law to break the law. I can tell you this: Right at the present time there is no intention on behalf of this ministry to break the law.

AIR QUALITY

Mr David Zimmer (Willowdale): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Today marks the sixth anniversary of Clean Air Day. Clean Air Day was proclaimed by the government of Canada to increase public awareness and action on two key environmental priorities: clean air and climate change.

As summer approaches, we are bracing for another summer of smog-filled days. Smog days not only hurt our most vulnerable populations, they also hurt our

economy. The facts are well documented. An Ontario Medical Association report showed that air pollution in Ontario leads to almost 10,000 hospital admissions, 13,000 hospital room visits and 47 million sick days for employees each year. In real dollars this costs Ontario taxpayers and businesses more than \$1 billion annually.

It is imperative that we all be encouraged and we all understand that we are all part of the solution, that we all have a role to play in making Ontario's air cleaner. Minister, what can we do to reduce air pollution? How can we make the air we breathe cleaner?

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I'm very happy to have this opportunity to focus on what is a very important day. It is an opportunity for this government to share with the people of Ontario what they can do in their everyday lives, in their homes, in their places of work across the province to improve air quality.

Of course, the very first thing is that they can be more responsible in terms of how they use energy in their homes, be more efficient, because the more efficient they are, the more they reduce the demand for energy, the less energy that is needed to be produced, and that has an impact on air quality.

One example is, as we come into the summer season, those people who enjoy air conditioning should perhaps just turn the temperature up a little bit. That is going to have an impact on the amount of energy that is used.

Also, another thing I would like to share with the member, particularly in those communities where public transit is available, is that people across the province should avail themselves of public transit and take cars off the roads. They contribute significantly to air pollution.

Mr Zimmer: These are, of course, important steps. They are necessary steps in ensuring we can breathe the air. But it doesn't stop with Ontario; air quality is an issue across North America.

Just today, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation released its annual report, *Taking Stock: North American Pollutant Releases and Transfers in 2001*. It reported that although North American emissions declined by 18%, Canadian emissions rose by 3%.

Minister, what is your ministry doing to ensure that Ontario plays its vital role in reducing emissions, and what is it doing to ensure that we all have clean air?

Hon Mrs Dombrowsky: The report that was released today, I think, even though it reflected events in the year 2001, is a very good reminder to the people of this province why our commitment to cleaner air, the commitment of the McGuinty government, is so very important.

I'm very proud to say that in just eight months, the McGuinty government has done more to improve the environment than the previous eight years. One of the things we've done is, we have committed to close coal-fired plants by the year 2007. I'm also happy that the Ministry of the Environment will be introducing programs to educate Ontarians on how we might conserve energy and develop renewable energy sources.

1450

I recently announced the toughest emissions standards in North America for diesel vehicles. Our government is committed to cleaner air by 2007. I am proud that our government signed an agreement with the federal government to work on climate change. I'm also proud that recently our Premier went to Washington to plead the—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): New question.

MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Ms Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock): My question today is for the Premier. Today, I was shocked to read in the newspaper that one of your own MPPs made a harassing statement when he declared that "there's just too many white people" on our agencies, boards and commissions. I'm not even sure what group he is referring to in that broad term.

The Human Rights Code provides a definition of "harassment." It "means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome." This is a very serious matter. Under the Human Rights Code, "Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status or disability."

Premier, will you be disciplining Mr Qaadri for his comments? Will you ask him for his resignation?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I appreciate the opportunity to speak to a very important matter, and I know that all members in this Legislature understand how important it is to tread lightly in this area so that we will not be seen to fan something that we don't want to fan.

I'll tell you what our intention is. Our intention is to draw on all the talent that is available to us in the province of Ontario. We are looking for competent, qualified people who represent all of Ontario. That is the beginning of the end of our particular focus when it comes to making sure we have the best people doing jobs on behalf of the government.

Ms Scott: Mr Premier, the agencies, boards and commissions of this government ought to try to represent the people from all backgrounds and from all parts of the province. Based on the comments by Mr Qaadri, is it reasonable that white people might believe that their applications to serve on agencies, boards and commissions would not be considered by your government? You need to take decisive action. Will you ask Mr Qaadri to resign?

Hon Mr McGuinty: We are determined to ensure that every Ontarian gets a fair shake. That's all we want to do. The member opposite may not want to hear this. I'm not sure why they could have something against every Ontarian getting a fair shake. We are looking for competent,

qualified people. We want to draw on all the talent available to us. What could be wrong with that?

ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS

Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): My question is to the Premier. The Royal Botanical Gardens says it will have to close on July 31 of this year if you don't come up with \$1.7 million in funding. If that happens, it will be a shocking blow to Hamilton, to the region in that area, to Halton and to our tourism industry for both areas.

On May 6 in this House you said, "We are going to work as hard as we can to ensure that the Royal Botanical Gardens is around for a long, long time." That was during the Hamilton East by-election, Mr Premier. Yet your Minister of Culture says there's no money left in the kitty. Premier, which is it? Are you going to save the RBG or is this yet another broken promise?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I am delighted to welcome the member opposite's assistance when it comes to this matter. There are three parties, as I understand it, who have traditionally provided funding to the RBG. There's the province of Ontario, the city of Hamilton and the region of Halton. Just so we understand, we've been providing less than 23% of the funding. I am convinced—and I maintain this—that if the province, the city of Hamilton, the region of Halton and any private sector supporters come together, we can find some kind of an arrangement whereby we can guarantee the survival of the Royal Botanical Gardens. If the member has any particular positive proposal that she'd like to put on the table so that we can work together, I would be delighted to hear that.

Ms Horwath: Premier, as a matter of fact, I do have a proposal. The RBG is a provincial agency, as you know. That makes it your responsibility, not the responsibility of the city of Hamilton, which is already burdened by the weight of other things like the downloading we are dealing with, as you know. As you also know, you only provide 20% of the operating funding of this facility while the Royal Ontario Museum gets 50% and the Ontario Science Centre gets 54%. Why does Hamilton get the short end of the stick? Why does this attraction not get its fair share of funding? And why are you not keeping your promise to save this beautiful attraction in Ontario?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I know the minister would like to add something.

Hon Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Two weeks ago we met with a member of the board of the RBG and also a politician from the mayor of Hamilton. We are discussing how we can support the RBG but we're still waiting for their financial plan. When we receive their financial plan, our staff will sit together and we'll try to find a solution for the RBG.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. As you know, people with disabilities face numerous barriers. All too often we don't notice how difficult life's daily activities can be for someone else. This is National Access Awareness Week, which helps to remind us that there are over 1.5 million people in this province living with disabilities, people who show incredible courage and strength each and every day.

The last eight years have not been easy for Ontarians with disabilities. I would like to ask the minister what is being done to help National Access Awareness Week reach its goal of bringing Canadians together to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities in community life.

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I would like to thank my colleague for the question and for his work as critic in this area as well, which informed us in developing our platform.

Since becoming Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, with the ODA as part of my responsibility, we have consulted widely across the province, and, again, I'd like to thank my parliamentary assistant, Dr Kular, for his assistance in these consultations. We are committed to strengthening the act by the fall of 2004.

I'd like to take advantage of the fact that it is accessibility week to announce that we committed half a million dollars to enabling change programs two days ago that will make a significant impact on improving accessibility for people with disabilities. One of the projects is that the Canadian Standards Association will develop resources with businesses to assist organizations to improve customer services for people with disabilities, because we intend to engage the private sector much more in fulfilling their obligations to people with disabilities.

Mr Parsons: I'm very pleased to know that a minister in the McGuinty government is marking National Access Awareness Week with such an important funding announcement. However, the fact remains that many disability advocates have pointed to the present ODA and its shortcomings as a vital key to improving accessibility for some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

I had the privilege on Tuesday morning of speaking to a number of representatives of Ontarians with disabilities in Brockville who were dismayed at the lack of consultation that took place with them by the previous government and thrilled with the consultation that has happened by this minister over the past couple of months. For them, the challenge they face every day can be helped and improved by actions of this government. I am so thrilled to have seen the actions that have happened. Their question to me, which I would like to pass on to you, is, when can we expect to see measures introduced to improve the present Ontarians with Disabilities Act?

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: Our commitment and our platform was to come up with a stronger Ontarians with

Disabilities Act within a year of taking office. We will meet that commitment. We're working very hard. We've consulted earnestly across the province and we will extend the rights and responsibilities to other sectors, other than just the public sector. This does take a lot of time, but we're working very quickly and hope to have this done by the fall of 2004.

1500

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for Premier McGuinty. I want to congratulate you on running radio ads eight months after you were elected. Of course, this is the anniversary, eight months today.

Last year at this time, you asked for Chris Stockwell's resignation because he used riding association money as part payment for a working vacation as Minister of Energy. Your claim was that people who donated to the riding association received a tax receipt—a cost to taxpayers. Now, just today, radio ads costing \$100,000 of tax-receiptable funds are being aired across Ontario. In these ads you try to justify the albatross budget health care premium that you have personally hung around the necks of both our Prime Minister and every working family in the province of Ontario. How can you, of all people, the one who criticized Stockwell on the one hand and then on the other hand has run taxpayer-funded, partisan radio ads trying to justify the worst budget in the province of Ontario?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I recall that after the Magna budget this government spent millions of dollars—and I'm talking about glossy householders and radio ads. Not everybody is going to be able to hear that ad, because they are busy, but I thought maybe I would give it to them here now. It says:

"I'm Dalton McGuinty, and I want you to know that every penny of Ontario's new health care premium will go to health care. It'll mean shorter waits for radiation and chemotherapy, nine new MRI sites, home care for 95,000 more Ontarians, meningitis vaccinations for children, 8,000 new full-time nursing positions, and together we're going to build a health care system we can all be proud of."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. A point of order from the member from Simcoe-Grey.

Interjections.

The Speaker: If you rise—I'm going to warn you, and the next time you do that again, I'm going to name you.

The member from Simcoe-Grey.

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): On a point of privilege, I guess, Mr Speaker: I just want you to look into the comments that were made by the member for Etobicoke North, Mr Qadri, in terms of, is it not illegal to ask

anyone for the colour of their skin when they're applying for an—

The Speaker: Order. That's not a point of privilege and not a point of order.

PETITIONS

RECREATIONAL TRAILERS

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“Whereas many owners of seasonal trailers kept at campgrounds have raised their concerns over the impact on property taxes on seasonal trailers and the unfairness of imposing a new tax on persons who use minimum municipal services;

“Whereas this new tax will discourage businesses and tourism opportunities in Ontario and will cause many families to give up their vacation trailers all together;

“Whereas the administration of this tax will require a substantial investment in staff time and resources across the province of Ontario;

“Whereas some representatives of the recreational vehicle industry, campground providers and trailer owners have suggested an alternative sticker or tag system to establish fees for seasonal trailers;

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

“That the Parliament of Ontario immediately abandon the assessment of taxation of recreational trailers used on a seasonal basis in 2004, and that the government of Ontario consult with all stakeholders regarding the development of a fair and reasonable sticker or tag fee that would apply to recreational trailers used on a seasonal basis.”

I affix my name in support.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I've got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas auto insurance rates continue to skyrocket, contrary to the official position of the Liberal government and the insurance industry; and

“Whereas more and more drivers are being cut off by their insurance companies for no valid reason and are being dumped into the Facility Association; and

“Whereas all attempts to regulate the auto insurance industry have failed;

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

“That the Ontario government immediately introduce legislation that would bring to Ontario a public, not-for-profit automobile insurance program similar to the ones currently in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.”

I have affixed my signature as well, and Meghan the page is delivering it to the table.

DISTRICT OF MUSKOKA

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the district of Muskoka is currently designated as part of northern Ontario; and

“Whereas the geography and socio-economic conditions of Muskoka are very similar to the rest of northern Ontario; and

“Whereas the median family income in the district of Muskoka is \$10,000 below the provincial average and \$6,000 below the median family income for greater Sudbury; and

“Whereas removing the district of Muskoka from northern Ontario would adversely affect the hard-working people of Muskoka by restricting access to programs and incentives enjoyed by residents of other northern communities; and

“Whereas the residents of Muskoka should not be confused with those who cottage or vacation in the district; and

“Whereas the federal government of Canada recognizes the district of Muskoka as part of the north; and

“Whereas this is a mean-spirited and politically motivated decision on the part of the McGuinty government;

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

“That the McGuinty government maintain the current definition of northern Ontario for the purposes of government policy and program delivery.”

I have some 300 signatures here, and I affix mine to support it.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Because social assistance rates were slashed by 21.6% in 1995, and with the increase in the cost of living, that cut is worth about 34.4% today; and

“Because current social assistance rates do not allow recipients to meet their cost of living; and

“Because the people of Ontario deserve an adequate standard of living and are guaranteed such by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and

“Because the jury at the inquest into the death of Kimberly Rogers recommended that social assistance rates be reviewed so that they reflect the actual costs of living;

“We demand that the Ontario government immediately increase the shelter portion of Ontario Works and Ontario disability support program benefits to the

average Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp rent levels and index social assistance to the cost of living.”

I agree with the petitioners. I have affixed my signature to this.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

“That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the other institutions and agencies of and within the government of Ontario, undertake specific and proactive measures to work with the bodies regulating access to Ontario’s professions, trades and other occupations in order that newcomers to Canada gain fair, timely and cost-effective access to certification and other measures that facilitate the entry or re-entry of skilled workers and professionals trained outside Canada into the Canadian workforce.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): It’s my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of constituents of the riding of Durham. Louise Lalande and Gay Ayotte are just two.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas gasoline prices have continued to increase at alarming rates in recent months; and

“Whereas the high and unstable gas prices across Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship to Ontario’s drivers while also impacting the Ontario economy in key sectors, such as tourism and transportation;

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

“That the provincial government consider an immediate gas price freeze for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate; and

“That the Dalton McGuinty provincial government petition the federal Liberal government to step up to the plate and lower gas prices by removing the GST on gasoline products and fix the federal Competition Act to

ensure consumers are protected and that the market operates in a fair and transparent manner.”

I’m pleased to sign this in support of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

1510

GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition I’m going to present today and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas former Premier Mike Harris received \$18,000 in consulting fees from Ontario Hydro;

“Whereas he did this consulting work less than a year after he resigned his position as Premier of Ontario;

“Whereas this contract is just another example of the Conservative country club created by the previous government at Ontario Hydro and Ontario Power Generation;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to order former Premier Mike Harris to pay back the taxpayers of Ontario by returning the consultant fees he received from Ontario Hydro.”

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

NANTICOKE GENERATING STATION

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): “Whereas OPG (Ontario Power Generation) Nanticoke has been threatened with closure; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has recently invested \$250 million into the development and application of selective catalytic reduction at Nanticoke and Lambton that will reduce 80% of nitrous oxide emissions, and the use of low sulphur coal has reduced sulphur dioxide by 60% since the early 1980s; and

“Whereas on a megawatt-to-megawatt basis, the Nanticoke station is far cleaner than the vast majority of the over 200 coal-fired stations in the United States, and emissions from the US account for more than 50% of the smog in Ontario; and

“Whereas Nanticoke supplies up to 20% of the energy produced in Ontario every year and is therefore a scapegoat for emissions concerns; and

“Whereas the McGuinty-Liberal closure of coal-fired plants would stick taxpayers with a \$6-billion bill and have a significant impact on local economies;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario support the 600 workers of the OPG Nanticoke generating facility by continuing efforts aimed at reducing emissions while maintaining power production at Nanticoke.”

TAXATION

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Hands Off Our Wallets

“Whereas the Liberal Premier McGuinty promised as part of his election platform that he would not raise taxes; and;

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal budget on May 18 imposes an increase of income tax ranging from \$300 to \$900 per person, in addition to a \$3.9-billion electricity rate hike; and

“Whereas false promises of Liberal Premier McGuinty adversely affect the trust between Ontarians and their elected representatives;

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

“We petition that the Liberal Premier keep his promise and agree not to impose higher taxes.”

I set my name thereto.

TTC RIGHT-OF-WAY

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I keep getting petitions regarding the St Clair Avenue West TTC right-of-way, and the petition reads as follows:

“Whereas an environmental assessment (EA) is underway on St Clair Avenue West to study potential transit improvements, including the possibility of installing a dedicated TTC right-of-way;

“Whereas the consultation process so far has been in bad faith, top-down and rushed, which has disappointed and angered the local community almost entirely, and not been up to any acceptable public standards;...

“Whereas a dedicated right-of-way would restrict left-turn access to neighbourhood streets north and south of St Clair, and a barrier down the centre of St Clair would force the vast majority of residents to make U-turns and go further out of their way just to get home or go to work;

“Whereas a dedicated ROW would force significantly more traffic on to our local streets;

“Whereas safety must be a high priority for any alternative selected and, according to ambulance and fire department staff, they don’t like to work with right-of-ways;

“Whereas a ROW would lead to the reduction or elimination of on-street parking on St Clair Avenue West;

“Whereas traffic bottlenecks at certain intersections and underpasses are already terrible, and certain chronically problematic intersections and underpasses could not stand to lose one of their existing two lanes;...

“Whereas there is no guarantee that a dedicated ROW will improve transit service substantially, as the number of streetcars serving the street will actually be reduced;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, strongly urge the Minister of the Environment to order a full environmental assessment on St Clair Avenue West, one that genuinely consults and takes into consideration the views and opinions of the local community.”

Since I agree, I affix my signature to this petition.

LANDFILL

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to sign my name to that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Petitions. The member from Davenport.

Interjections.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): Thank you very much. I like the Conservative backbenchers. They’re just great today.

I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas the so-called ‘Tenant Protection Act’ of the defeated Harris-Eves Tories has allowed landlords to increase rents well above the rate of inflation for new and old tenants alike;

“Whereas the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal created by this act regularly awards major and permanent additional rent increases to landlords to pay for required one-time improvements and temporary increases in utility costs;

“Whereas the same act has given landlords wide-ranging powers to evict tenants;

“Whereas before last October’s election Premier McGuinty promised ‘real protection for tenants at all times’;

“Whereas our own MPP, Liberal Tony Ruprecht, called for a rent rollback ... at a public event in June 2003;

“We, the undersigned, residents of Doversquare Apartments in Toronto, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately scrap the guidelines and above-guideline increases for 2004, as an elementary gesture of goodwill towards tenants, who voted massively against the Tories in last October’s election.

“To shut down the notoriously pro-landlord Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.

“To abrogate the Tory ‘Tenant Protection Act’ and to draw up new landlord-tenant legislation in consultation with tenants and housing rights campaigners.”

I present this to you, Mr Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004

SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 1, 2004, on the motion for second reading of Bill 83, An Act to implement Budget measures / Projet de loi 83, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures budgétaires.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): The member for—boy it’s been a week that I’ve been away. You’ve changed your—

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Beaches-East York.

The Deputy Speaker: Beaches-East York. Thank you.

Interjection: You’ve changed your seating arrangement.

Mr Prue: Changed the seat, and all things look a little different these days.

It is again a delight to be here to finish my speech. I understand I have some 20 minutes left of my one-hour speech. I want to tell you, though, that it is indeed a difficult speech to make for one hour and to stay on point. I’m going to attempt to do that again, to talk exactly about the budget. The budget is a very long and complex document and the arguments contained within it can be long and complex too.

In fact, when I went last night to a reception held in this august building, one of the members who works for the Liberal Party came up to me—not a member of this House, but a person who is employed by the Liberal Party—and told me quite incredulously, “I listened to your speech for the first 40 minutes of it and you said

many good things that are contained in the budget, and yet you don’t support us.” I think I have to answer him—and I hope he’s watching again—as to the reason why.

1520

Yes, there are good provisions in this budget. Nobody in the New Democratic Party will deny even for a moment that the hospitals need more money. We will not deny for a moment that the schools need more money. We will not deny for a moment that it is a good thing that children are given inoculations, because children need to be protected from pneumococcal disease and any number of other things. We will not deny that this government is attempting to redress some of the wrongs that have happened in this province over the last number of years.

All of that will require money; no one will deny that. I will salute for the little bit—I know that’ll wind up in a Liberal brochure somewhere. I will salute them for trying to solve the problems that this province has encountered over the last number of years. The problem for New Democrats is not that you are trying to redress the problems; the problem we have with your budget is, quite frankly, how you are going to get the money to pay for that. We believe you are getting the money on the backs of the working poor, we believe you are getting the money on the backs of senior citizens, and we believe that you are getting money from people whose taxes you promised not to raise. That is the problem we have and that’s what I want to deal with, primarily, over the balance of the 18 minutes that are left to me.

As I was speaking the other day, I went through a whole list of problems that we see, everything from the tax on the working poor, the centrepiece of the budget, being the new health tax. We talked about the choices the Liberals would have.

We talked about the rising cost of licences and fees that the poor, and primarily poorer income earners, are going to have to bear in disproportionate amounts.

We talked about the delisting of tertiary health costs, everything from chiropractic services to optometrists to physiotherapy.

We talked about the child benefit clawback and how the money that was promised to those very poor people is not going to be forthcoming.

We talked about the inadequacy of the 3% welfare increase. Although we welcome any increase at all, as I’m sure those very poor people do, that is simply not adequate given the amount of money they have lost over the years, with a 21% reduction some nine or 10 years ago, compounded by an inflation rate of some 13% since that time. That 3% hardly cuts it.

We talked about the child care provisions. There was really no new money for child care, as was included in the Liberals’ election promises.

We talked about the sleight of hand of the \$3.9 billion that has been moved from the province to the OPG and Hydro debt. That’s probably where it belongs, but that took \$3.9 billion out of the deficit so that the deficit, which would have been \$6 billion, miraculously appears now to be \$2.2 billion.

We talked about the four-year fiscal framework and how the money is simply not going to be there.

We talked about education and the capping of class sizes, which is going to eat more than half of the new budgeted monies, monies which Rozanski himself did not recommend.

We finished off the other day by talking about the little kernel that was thrown out at the last minute by the finance minister on continuing to look at the potential privatization of the LCBO. Although he says he's not going that way, he has left the door open, which we think is very sad.

Last but not least, we talked about municipalities, the 2% of the gas tax and the one cent that is coming this year, which is a good thing. We will say right out that that is a good thing. We were also talking about how the infrastructure monies are not adequate.

That takes me, with the 15 minutes left, to several other items which I think need to be dealt with in this speech. The first is housing. If there is one element in this budget that has been neglected, that has been left out, that has been short-shrifted, it is the entire area of the housing portfolio. The Liberals promised that they would build 20,000 units of affordable housing. The Liberals promised, prior to election day, that they would build 6,000 units of supportive housing, primarily for people who had substance abuse and/or psychiatric problems, those people who make up the overwhelming majority of those we call homeless in this province, to help get them off the street.

If you look at the budget, quite sadly, there is very little money here: depending on how you read it, \$18 million in money, or \$13 million, because \$5 million of it has already been spent. I want to tell you, it is impossible to build the number of units that the Liberals promised, and the number of units that we know we need in this province, with the \$13 million.

In the city of Toronto alone, there are 65,000 to 70,000 families on the list for affordable housing, who can wait up to 14 years to get the housing for them and their children, often only to find that the children have grown, have left home, and that they're no longer eligible. We know that people wait literally for years and years, living in squalor. They could really help themselves, their families, their children, their education, their lifestyle, if only they could get into clean, affordable housing.

We have a government here today that promised, while they were in opposition, that they would abide by, and work with, their federal Liberal cousins in Ottawa. Those same federal Liberal cousins have given \$67 million to Ontario. But that has to be matched, it has to be matching funds, and we see in this budget that those matching funds are not forthcoming. If they were, if there was another \$50 million in this budget for something I think almost everyone would agree we need—affordable housing for our poor, for our destitute, for those who are homeless on the streets—then quite frankly that would be matched by federal dollars to the tune that there would be

\$134 million. That would be enough to build a lot of housing.

As it exists now, with \$13 million this government can build 520 units of affordable housing. That is it—520 units. That is on a matched dollar-by-dollar basis. If it were only up to them, and if there were no federal contribution, you would be looking at 260 units across the length and breadth of this great province. That is woefully inadequate.

Another thing that is in the budget, or not in the budget, to be more correct, is the whole provision for shelter allowances. This government campaigned on one of their 231 recommendations to institute immediately a provision for shelter allowances so that the working poor could afford the rents that were charged, particularly in the large cities of Ottawa, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Windsor and Thunder Bay. Those are nowhere to be seen. It is totally not mentioned and it is, I suggest, a huge failing in the housing portfolio. There are some 12 to 14 ministries that we know are not going to get any increase at all, including this one—ministries that need the money, ministries that cannot operate without the money and ministries that are going to see in the next year their actual source of revenues dry up, their workers disbanded and the provisions that people rely on in this province completely obliterated.

We have the whole problem, too, of child care. We've seen that they have finally been willing to pass on federal dollars for child care which have been sitting there for a long time and have not been spent. We know that those monies in part have been freed up, but certainly not enough of them, and that there is still some \$130 million sitting in a kitty, which the federal government has promised and delivered, and which this provincial government has refused to spend in the area for which it has been earmarked.

The Liberals' own plans that they put forward in the last election have come to naught.

1530

We know from this bill that there are other problems. It was only yesterday that, in still reading this budget bill—because it is voluminous and there is so much in it—we discovered that there is a provision that within municipalities, new businesses will be forced to pay higher taxes than existing businesses when they move into a business district within a city.

What that means in my own municipality of Toronto, in my own riding of Beaches-East York, is that when a person decides to set up a new business and moves into that new business, they will not have the opportunity the older businesses have to have their tax increases phased in over a number of years, but they will immediately have to pay the higher and new tax as it exists at the time the business is opened.

Therefore, a restaurant opening up diametrically across the street from an existing restaurant will expect, and must expect, that the taxes they will pay on that commercial development will be higher than their competitor's. What that means, quite frankly, is that business-

people, people trying new enterprises, small enterprises, family enterprises, will be forced to pay the higher rate. It will doom them in a competitive way against the people with whom they're doing business, and I would think it is patently unfair and it does not make good economic or budget sense of this government. We should be encouraging people to open new businesses, not discouraging them by forcing them to pay higher taxes than their competitors. And should this budget go out to committee and should we hear deputations, clearly this is a provision the government should look at.

We want—we need—new business in this province, particularly small business. We want our cities, our towns, our countryside, our tourist areas, to be vibrant and competitive. We want new restaurants. We want new stores. We want new services. And in order to get those, we have to encourage the people willing to take the risks to put up their financial monies, and give them the same provisions as existing services. If we do not do that, we cannot expect them to come, we cannot expect them to invest and, quite frankly, we cannot expect that our tourism industry will increase and get back to its pre-SARS days.

We see the problem as well about the delisting. Yesterday there was quite a kerfuffle in this House when my colleague the member from Toronto-Danforth asked a question about the delisting of drugs. I would just like to go over for the record exactly what section 20 of the bill says. Section 20 of the bill allows for the minister, and the minister alone—not the cabinet, not the Lieutenant Governor in Council, no person other than the minister—to delist drugs. He or she is now the only person who is allowed to do so and, in doing that, we look to—well, we're hoping that the minister is very sensitive on this. But we are very afraid on this side of the House of this particular provision because the drugs that can be delisted can be delisted notwithstanding the provisions of, I believe it's section 23 of the act. But they can be delisted for any reason whatsoever that the minister deems appropriate.

We also looked yesterday at another provision, which had heretofore escaped our attention, and that is under the Tenant Protection Act. I have to say that this government has some of the best bald-faced luck in the history of any government of this province. You are blessed—totally, completely blessed—with a situation in which vacancy rates in the province of Ontario are going up and, in part, in some places, where rents have actually declined modestly, and I would say very modestly, \$5 to \$10. We're not talking very much, but at least modestly in the last year or so in places such as Toronto. It has not declined in any way near that in other cities like Ottawa or Hamilton or Kitchener, but we do see \$5 to \$10 rate reductions in the city of Toronto.

Having said that, the reason in part for this decline is that the number of people who are doubling up in rental units has reached an all-time high. There was a reception here last night put on by the rental housing providers in the legislative dining room. I think many of the members

may have attended it, and some of those people came to me and attributed the increase in rental units that are now for rent to the fact that people are doubling up.

People who used to be able to afford a rent of \$500 or \$600, and there are no units available to do that any more, are finding they are required to have roommates. They're renting a two-bedroom unit at \$1,000 or \$1,100, and that is why some of the rental units, the one-bedroom units that were once fully booked, are now finding their way on to the rental market. That, in and of itself, is probably the major criterion for the number of units that remain vacant in many of our cities here today.

Notwithstanding that, this government has not spent the amount of money, as I alluded earlier, on new housing. Quite frankly, housing is needed at the lower end of the scale, for people who can only afford \$400 to \$500 or \$600 a month for rent. That is really where the new housing is needed. This government has sufficient monies only for 260 units, 520 if they are co-funded, and they have promised 20,000 units, plus \$100 million for shelter allowances, which unfortunately did not find its way into the budget as well.

To conclude, and it's been a rather long hour, we think some of the provisions of this budget are laudatory. We particularly think the money being spent on our schools and our hospitals is necessary. We believe immunization of children is something that is long overdue, particularly for meningococcal diseases, and would salute the government's action.

But we cannot and will not be supporting this bill, because we consider it to be regressive. It is not what is being done; it is how the money is being spent to make the possible happen. We believe it is unfair to working families. We believe that working families, senior citizens, those on limited income, are being forced to pay disproportionate amounts of their limited income toward a budget, while other people who are much better off—corporations that make billions of dollars, like the banks in this province—get off relatively scot-free.

A corporation like the Bank of Montreal, which made \$602 million in the last three months in this province and in this country, pays absolutely nothing toward the health care premium. In fact, it's even worse than that, because the provisions of this budget allow that there be a tax reduction, if not immediately, at least phased in between now and the year 2012, that will let the banks pay less and less, while ordinary citizens on limited incomes, on fixed incomes will be forced to pay more and more.

Not only will they have to pay for their share of the health levy, they'll have to pay more money for licence fees, fees for birth certificates, fishing licences and 50 or so other government services. They will have to do that at a time when hospital provisions and doctors' provisions are delisted: physiotherapy, optometrists and the like.

They will have to do that while the child clawback does not give any kind of money that was promised to them. The money that is put forward by the federal government would give \$2,800 a year to a family with

two children and they're being asked to accept, by this government, \$89, about 3% of what the federal government makes available to this province.

They're going to have to pay all of that extra money, if they have children in school, to see the provisions of the Rozanski report not followed, because Rozanski recommended some \$2 billion in improvements that were necessary to bring the schools up to par, to the way they were in the early 1990s. Although this government did put forward \$850 million, only \$430 million of it is going toward those recommendations Mr Rozanski made in his quite brilliant report earlier this year.

The rest of the money goes also for a laudable goal, of reducing class sizes, but it is something that is being undertaken too soon, before the major problems have been solved. We ask that this budget bill go out to committee. We think the people of Ontario will have a lot to say. I would welcome it if this government would have the intestinal fortitude to hear what the people actually have to say, and take this from city to city to listen on how to make it better.

Thank you very much.

1540

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? The member for—these seat changes aren't helpful to me—Etobicoke North.

Mr Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North): I would like to, first of all, commend and actually quote some of the remarks from the MPP for Beaches-East York. He said, quite rightly, "some of the provisions of this budget are" quite "laudatory,... we ... salute the government's action." I would also like to forewarn him that they may likely appear on a brochure or two, time going forward.

Having said that, a lot of details have been floated around: billions here, hundreds of millions, thousands of individuals covered and so on.

I want, for a moment, to take it down to the level of one particular individual who had one particular problem. A constituent of mine in Etobicoke North came to see me, an individual, unfortunately, who was suffering from kidney failure because of long-standing diabetes. Of course, this is a life-threatening condition for which dialysis, or kind of the plugging into a hospital machine for three hours at a time, two to three times a week, is required to sustain life. This individual was unable to access this particular service within my own riding and had to go elsewhere at considerable time, suffering, expense and, really, challenge.

With this particular budget, among all the flurry of numbers, one of the things that we are going to do is allow individuals such as this fellow, and something on the order of maybe 15,000 to 20,000 more kidney failure patients, to actually access 500,000 sessions of dialysis on an annual basis. This is just one small but very meaningful example or application of where the health care premium dollar is going to be spent judiciously, with results and with overall benefit to the province of Ontario.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It's my pleasure to offer comments on the comments made by the

member for Beaches-East York on the budget motion. He talked about taxes, and in this budget there are some 50 tax increases. I think that's worth noting, in light of the fact that the Premier did sign a very public document saying he wouldn't increase taxes. In fact, we have this one huge tax increase, the new health premium, which is going to be a very significant burden on working families.

For the people of the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, there was a bit of a surprise on page 96 of the budget paper. In the very back of the budget paper there's one line and it says, "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."

This, in my mind, is a mean-spirited and partisan move on the part of the government. It's mean-spirited because it's going to adversely affect the people of Muskoka, and it's partisan because, I think, if I was a Liberal member of Parliament, the government would not have made this move. When you look at the bare facts, when you look at Statistics Canada from 2001 and you look at the median family income for the area that the Minister of Northern and Development and Mines represents, what does it say? It says median family income, all census families: \$56,165. If you look at the median family income, the same stats from Statistics Canada 2001 for Muskoka: \$50,713—some \$6,000 less for the Muskoka area.

It's quite obvious from these statistics that there are no socio-economic justifications. People in Muskoka have a right to know why the government is making this move. They have a right to have some consultation happen with the government, a government that says it's open and honest and is trying to be transparent about things. I think they deserve to have some consultation and an explanation for why the government is making this mean-spirited, partisan move.

Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I'm very pleased to rise and comment on the very specific and articulate comments made by my colleague for Beaches-East York. I can tell you, as I listened to the things he's had to say, that a lot of it resonated with me. It resonated with me particularly because many of the issues that he raised in terms of his criticism of this budget came up before the budget had even been tabled by the government, and they came up in the by-election in Hamilton East. He was there with me, I'm pleased to say, knocking on doors in Hamilton East and talking to members of the Hamilton East riding. They talked about a lot of concerns he has raised in his opportunity to debate this budget, this bill. What they talked about was a fear and a concern that the working people of this province were going to be unjustly burdened with fixing some of the problems we have. In fact, my colleague has outlined just how much this budget is about injustice for people who are unable to afford the kind of tax hikes that were foisted on them and the fact that the budget is short on fairness and high on unfairness.

It's really quite interesting to listen, from my perspective, being the most recently elected person to this Legislature, to people who are analyzing this bill and bringing to light all of the concerns that I most recently heard on the doorstep. I want to laud him and his very methodical review of the issues that are of concern to working families, low-income families and, quite frankly, communities at large from one end of this province to the other. He's done an excellent job. I believe the government needs to sit up and take notice and in fact take this bill out to the people of Ontario and have full debate from one end of this province to the other.

The Deputy Speaker: Further questions and comments? The member for Lambton—

Mrs Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): How about Huron-Bruce?

The Deputy Speaker: Just hang on and I will find you. It's a tough day. Huron-Bruce.

Mrs Mitchell: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think it's because we changed seats.

It is certainly my pleasure to rise this afternoon and support the budget as presented. It is so important to our rural communities: health care, education and building strong communities. Coming from a rural area, we have been through some very difficult times. Revenue neutrality through all the downloading was especially difficult for our rural municipalities. It has caused great hardships in all of our schools and our health care facilities.

One thing I would like to focus on for just one moment is talking about primary care for the citizens of Ontario. This is especially important in rural communities. We have within our communities generations of families who do not have family doctors. The formula that has been applied throughout Ontario for numerous years does not work. We need to look at how we provide health care in a different way.

I celebrate the primary care reform. It is long overdue. This plan will meet the needs of our rural communities. I can tell you that this is one of the issues I have heard repeatedly within my riding: doctor shortages. "What are we going to do?" This will move the agenda forward to meet the health care needs of my communities, so I am very much in support.

We need new directions, and we will achieve that through this budget. Health care, education, building strong communities—it's long overdue. I celebrate the budget that moves this forward. I know that within my communities, it is strongly supported.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Beaches-East York has two minutes to reply.

Mr Prue: I thank very much the members for Etobicoke North, Parry Sound-Muskoka, Hamilton East and Huron-Bruce for their comments.

I'd like to deal a little bit with each one of them, at least one sentence or so that they had to say.

Interjection.

Mr Prue: I did. I said Hamilton East.

To the member for Etobicoke North, I thank him for his comments. I try as always to be very balanced. I try to

say good things and bad things, because everything is not black and white in this House, despite what often happens here. There are provisions of this budget that are good, but I want to tell you that I have no doubt whatsoever in my mind that my comment will some day end up on a Liberal brochure. It has already happened before in Hamilton East, and it will again, I am sure, in Etobicoke North, when the need arises.

The second thing is, I have to tell you that I agree wholeheartedly with the comments of the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka about that wonderful riding. It is in fact a part of northern Ontario. It should remain a part of northern Ontario. I'm not sure exactly how this budget bill fits into that, but I did see quite recently that it has been moved to southern Ontario and, therefore, will lose some of the stature, some of the money it gets. Quite frankly, it is not a rich riding. It is a riding that is well deserved of its northern orientation.

1550

To my new colleague from Hamilton East, her comments were spot-on. I had not spent a lot of time in Hamilton East, I have to tell you quite bluntly, before the by-election, but having gone to that riding, it is quite clear it is a riding that must be among the poorest ridings in this province. It is a riding of many poor and working-class people who struggle to get by. Quite frankly, I can understand how many of them feel about this budget and about the potential of paying more in taxes for health care.

Last but not least, to the member from Huron-Bruce—

Interjection: Time's up.

Mr Prue: My time is up. Your comments on the family doctors were well taken, and I hope the money is directed in that direction.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I just want to say at the outset that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Pat Riley, basketball coach extraordinaire, was asked a couple of years ago by a media person to speculate on how he thought his team was going to do this year. He said to the media person who was interviewing him, "Let me answer your question by asking you a question." Dave Levac will be interested in this because he's a basketball fan. "If you take a fresh orange and you put it in a vice and under enough pressure, what do you get? The media person said, "Well, that's easy, coach. You get fresh-squeezed orange juice," and he said, "That's your answer." With that, he turned and walked away. The media guy scratched his head and said, "Coach, before you go," he said, "Come on back. I've got to tell you, I'm pretty clever, but I didn't quite understand what you meant." He said, "Well, it's simple. The first rule in life is, if you take any individual or team and put them under enough pressure, you very soon find out what they're made of. You find out what's inside."

I want to add to that: If you put enough pressure on a new government, you soon find out what's inside as well.

I want to talk a little bit about what's inside, about the values that I think were an important part of our budget and behind our budget.

We believe, as Liberals, that public service is an obligation, not an option. We believe that strong public services are an obligation we all bear together in this House, not an option.

It's not the member from Hamilton East's health care system, the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot's health care system or Mr Prue's health care system. The health care system we have belongs to all of us, and we have to stand together with respect to ensuring a strong, vibrant public service in this province. That's our obligation and that's our trust, and that's a value that we on this side of the House hold very dear. I think it was Martin Luther King who said that politics is basically about two things: It's about the values that you would hold self-evident on a good day being translated into social policy, and it's about the kinds of decisions we make about the distribution of goods and services and opportunities.

That said, you know, it wasn't a perfect budget, but we came to power as a new government under less-than-perfect circumstances, and I think everyone would acknowledge that. That's important because that talks to another one of our values: the value of wanting to be consultative, the value of wanting to be inclusive, the value of wanting to be collaborative with Ontarians, to take everything that's right with Ontario, and that's our people, and use that giftedness to fix everything that's wrong with Ontario. So that was another value and it ties in with respect, it ties in with listening, and it ties in with, on balance, trying to find the best way to move forward under very, very difficult situations.

Now, I have to tell you, I was home for constituency week, and it was, to be frank, the week from hell. We got a lot of calls. A lot of people were upset. We got called names in some cases, although about a third of the e-mails and calls we got were very, very positive.

But it reminded me of a story that I want to share with the House—a true story, by the way. When my youngest girl, Whitney, was six, she wanted desperately to go to Disney World. She wanted to go on the ride—I think they call it Space Mountain. Some of you have probably been on Space Mountain. She was all excited about it. She went to school and she drew pictures of this ride at Disney World, Space Mountain, and she said, “Teacher, teacher, in four weeks my dad's taking me to Disney World and we're going to go on Space Mountain.” “Teacher, in two weeks we're going to Space Mountain.” “Teacher, tomorrow, my daddy's taking me to Disney World and we're going to go on Space Mountain.”

Well, I have to tell you, we got to Disney World and we got in line for the ride. We were from about here to the member from up Ottawa way away when the sign came up saying, “Sorry, ride closed for maintenance.” So I said to my wife, Barb, “Look, honey, I want to check this out.” So I did. I went up to the ride master and said, “Look, you've got a really disappointed little girl here

from Canada.” He said, “Look, I'm sorry, sir. The simple truth of the matter is this ride's broken and it's dangerous, and if your daughter were to go on this ride we couldn't accept responsibility for what happens to her.”

Well, you know what? If I can push this, when we came to government we discovered that the situation in Ontario was a lot like Space Mountain, a lot like that broken ride. I want to tell you, as a responsible parent, I would no sooner have stuck my daughter on an unsafe ride than I would stick any one of our seniors or our disabled or any one of the other people in desperate need of stronger public services into a situation where we're not responding positively and trying to do the right thing.

So our budget worked very much in terms of—

Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): That was sweet.

Mr McMeekin: What's that? It was sweet, yes. Thank you. It's a true story too. By the way, as a footnote, four years later we returned to Disney World and we rode on Space Mountain 10 times in a row, and she was the happiest little girl in the world.

Interjection.

Mr McMeekin: Maybe that's prophetic, member from Brant. I think he's picked that up.

I made a number of observations on behalf of my constituents directly to the finance minister that I'd like to share.

I reminded him that no one's ever taxed their way to prosperity and that we need to be about the process of restoring prosperity and public confidence. He worked very, very hard at that.

I suggested to him that what gets measured gets done and that I was very, very concerned that a lot of what we do in government and in public service doesn't get measured, that we need accountability mechanisms and specific, measurable objectives. He responded to that.

I talked about the need, on behalf of my constituents, for a diversified set of health care options, and pointed out that hospital beds cost \$800 a day, long-term care \$117 and three hours of good, quality home care, as the member for Hamilton East knows, only \$50. Yet we've got it sort of backwards. We're letting home care go down the tubes. We responded to that with specific, measurable, identifiable, important initiatives in home care.

I talked to him about the need for a new deal for cities, and I said we need to be bold. It's not enough just to talk about a couple of cents of gas tax; we need to be talking about a permanent commitment of sustainable funding, maybe a cent of the PST or GST in partnership with the federal government down the road, but I acknowledged that that's probably for a future term. I said, “Why don't you look at some kind of Ontario-municipal infrastructure financing authority where we can leverage money to get things done,” and he did that.

I talked about the most insidious problem that we have in Ontario, and that's the growing gap between the richest of us and the rest of us, the need to close that. And you know, I have to confess I don't think we necessarily

went far enough, but given the circumstances, forward is better than standing still or reverse. So I think we need to look at that again, but we're moving forward.

1600

I talked about the need to emphasize partnership, working with people, bringing people to the table, that the measure of effective public policy isn't how many people you exclude from the table but how many you can include and how you can take their ideas.

I talked about some new sources of revenue that I was pleased to see the minister embrace, although he didn't embrace all of them, and I'll continue to work on that.

I noted that I was concerned about some potential delistings. In fact, I would have loved to have seen the audiology put back in, but that wasn't to be. But do you know what? If circumstances change federally and there's actually the \$3 billion that at least one party is talking about delivering to the provinces, and we get a good hunk of that, perhaps we can revisit that issue.

In closing, I just want to say that our values are very different from the values of the previous government. We moved away from the wrecking ball politics to trying to build a stronger, more vibrant Ontario. We're doing that by telling people the truth, not just what we think they want to hear, and we're doing that every day and in a way that—it's a major restoration project, I've got to tell you—in the long term, we're going to be accountable to the people of Ontario and we're going to restore the strong public services they have come historically to rely on.

Ms Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak in support of the budget. I know that sometimes when I speak to people in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, or even to some of my colleagues in this room, when we talk about budget and numbers and spreadsheets, our eyes glaze over. But a budget is really about how it will affect each of our lives.

I know the people in the community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore all asked ourselves, will our kids' education improve? Will the schools be at peace? Will our hospitals be there when we need them? Will our public transit be better or worse? Will the air be clean? Will the water be safe to drink? Will our province's fiscal house be in order, because that's the foundation on which we can build all of these things?

I'm proud to stand in support of the budget today, because our first budget, this government's first budget, answers those questions, each and every one of them, with a resounding yes. Yes, our kids' education will improve. Yes, our health care will be there. Yes, our water will be there. Yes, our air will be clean.

This budget followed the most comprehensive public consultations ever conducted by an Ontario government. In the winter of 2004, our government was at a critical turning point. We had arrived in office in October 2003 and had inherited a large structural deficit, which was projected, even after we rolled back the tax cuts and tax credits given by the previous government, to average in excess of \$4.5 billion per year, with off-book debt consisting of \$2.2 billion.

We knew what we wanted to achieve, what our election mandate was, but how were we going to get there? How fast were we going to go?

To help us answer these questions, we undertook the most ambitious consultation ever undertaken. We spoke to experts, stakeholders, public servants and citizens, and that process provided us with information and resulted in a public document called Trust and Balance. Trust and balance have been the touchstones of how we have chosen to proceed. These consultations formed the basis of our first budget, The Plan for Change, that closely represents the priorities Ontarians identified for us during those consultations.

Our plan is very clear. Ontario must be a leader in economic growth, public services and quality of life. Our budget is the first step in a four-year plan to return Ontario to a position of leadership, a position it once enjoyed. We are committed to balancing the budget in this four-year plan.

Importantly, our plan delivers needed, necessary, urgent change in health care. Ontarians told us, and the people in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, my riding, told me, that health care was their major priority. We listened and we have acted in this first budget.

The improvement and the transformation that we will see in the health care system have only been made possible by the health care premium that is being implemented, based on income. With families with an income level of \$21,000, and we don't take for granted the request that we are making to citizens across this province to contribute to the transformation of our health care system, you're being asked to contribute \$60 a year. If you make more, if you make \$200,000 a year, you are being asked to contribute \$900 a year, in addition to the percentage of your income that you already contribute to that.

For that, we are committed to transforming our health care system. We have also committed that every single cent we receive from the premiums will be reinvested back into health, direct health care, front-line programs and new services.

I know sometimes those things seem distant and absent. I want to tell Ontarians, and the people in my riding, what that will mean for them. What will we use that money for? Some 36,000 new cardiac procedures by the year 2007-08—no longer will you have to wait on a long waiting list; 2,300 joint replacements by 2007-08; nine new MRI and CT sites; 9,000 cataract surgeries per year; \$600 million to support and reform primary care by 2004-05—as the Minister of Health said today, driving money back into our communities; giving \$14 million for community health centres, two of which I have in Etobicoke-Lakeshore—LAMP and Stonegate; providing home care for an additional 95,700 Ontarians by 2007-08; providing end-of-life care for 6,000 Ontarians in their homes by 2007-08; community-based mental health services for an additional 78,600 Ontarians; free immunizations for children across this province, and the list goes on; an immediate increase in public health of \$273 million, growing to \$469 million by 2007-08.

Those examples will change the way we deal with health care in this province and will provide each of us an opportunity to lead healthier lives.

We also know that it is a priority for those people in Etobicoke-Lakeshore and across the province that we reinvest in public education. In this budget, we are committed over the next four years to investing an additional \$2.6 billion in our schools. This is an increase of more than \$1,100 per student over the next four years, with a \$200-million investment that will leverage an additional \$2.1 billion in capital funding to fix our crumbling schools. This investment is a great first start and it's going to help kids get the start they need in our schools; and funding our major commitments to reduce class sizes in JK to grade 3 to 20, funding training spaces for 1,000 new teachers in 2005-06 and making sure that there are head teachers in every single school to deal with literacy and numeracy.

We're committed to not simply throwing money at the system. We will be monitoring those results. That is also part of the transformation that this budget brings to education and health care. We're going to monitor results. We're going to look for results. We're not going to brag about the money we are spending; rather, we are going to come to you in four years and tell you what we have achieved with your hard-earned tax dollars. That's what you expect of us and that's what we're committed to. This is the beginning of results-based planning, looking at results instead of expenditures. We need to make sure that we spend tax dollars wisely, and we're committed to that.

Surely everyone in this room knows that a budget is difficult and there are difficult decisions to be made. But I want to highlight just a few more areas that I am proud of in this budget. They are the very things that I was told to do when I came to Queen's Park. People voted for a Liberal government and they supported me because they wanted to see investments in our community and social services. We've given a 3% increase for ODSP and Ontario Works. We've given \$7 million to parents through the national child benefits supplement, ending the clawback. We're putting money into children's mental health programs—\$25 million. That will very much assist communities in this province dealing with those most difficult issues. We're creating an additional 4,000 daycare spaces across the province.

I want to talk for a moment about what this budget means to seniors. The month we're in, June, is Seniors' Month. This budget talks about a proposed increase to the property tax credit of \$125 for seniors with low and moderately low incomes.

Restoring long-term-care standards: What does that mean in practical terms? That means two baths a week and a registered nurse on duty at all times. We are going to have 2,000 new long-term care staff, and 600 of them will be nurses. That's what this budget means to people in this province, to people in my community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

1610

I want to talk about a couple more areas. We were sent here to make sure that our communities would be safe and strong. This budget commits money to public transit—that is something we were sent here to do—with one cent coming this October, 1.5 cents in October 2005, and two cents in October 2006.

This budget also deals with the issue of internationally trained professionals to make sure that those folks who come to our province are given an opportunity to succeed.

When I made my first speech in this Legislature, I talked about the principles that I would be guided by as a member of the provincial Parliament. I told this House that I would be guided by a principle taught to me by one of the mentors in my life, and that is to do what is right, not what is easy.

This budget was not easy. It's a difficult decision. We're going to turn this province around. We're going to transform education and health care. We are going to reinvest in those public services because that is the right thing to do. That's why we've been sent here. This budget is the first step along that path, and we look forward to making sure that this plan comes into implementation in the next four years.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Yakabuski: I want to respond to the comments from the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot and also the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore talked about the need to reinvigorate the health care system and about the great consultative process that they went through before they came up with this budget. I'd like to know who, at any one of these consultative processes or meetings, brought forth the idea of charging working families in this province health care premiums. Where did that come up in this process?

They're saying they're going to have this many new cardiac procedures as a result of this government. They're going to need those cardiac procedures because you've raised the collective blood pressure of people in this province to such a level that they're going to be in need of cardiac help.

This budget is the bottom. Where it has really bottomed out is in trust. Dalton McGuinty said last fall repeatedly, he said it again in January, he even said it to Graham Richardson in April: "I won't raise your taxes." A blatant broken promise, and that's what has the collective blood pressure of the people of this province rising to unprecedented levels.

They don't believe they can trust the Premier of the province of Ontario, yet they're stuck with him for the next three years because he won't go by the referendum law that he said he'd go by—a referendum if he's going raise their taxes. So where does that put them for the next three years? They're on a dead-end street.

Ms Horwath: I'm pleased to respond to the comments by my former colleague on regional council, the member

for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, as well as the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

I have to tell you that it was pretty startling for me to hear some of the comments, particularly by the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, having served with him on regional council in the city of Hamilton—he as the chair, while I was vice-chair, in the area of social services and public health. He knows very well the effect of this budget on people in the Hamilton area, particularly Hamilton East. In fact, he was indicating to me earlier across the House that he quite understands that the people in the riding I represent are some of the lowest-income people in all of Ontario. It becomes even more disturbing, then, to hear that there's a pride, a sense of accomplishment, understanding that these very people are the ones who are going to be hurt the most by this budget and that it is these people who are being asked to pay more out of their pockets for services like chiropractic, optometrists and things like that, things that people cannot afford.

It's funny, because I can recall fighting with him on the same side on issues of maintaining a proper level of home care funding in the city of Hamilton, and I can recall watching as previous governments took away funding for things like dental care and watching the poor people in our community have rotting teeth. I'm afraid that we're going to have people in the city of Hamilton who are going to be walking our streets unable to see because they won't be able to afford vision care. That, quite frankly, is unacceptable.

It's also interesting to hear that there are people who think that the right thing to do—as was mentioned by the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, and perhaps it's right for her riding—is to actually charge people who are least able to pay for the services. The right thing is that the people who should be paying are the ones who have the means to pay. That's not what this budget is about. It's about the opposite.

Mr John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): I want to congratulate my colleagues on their speeches, but I want to raise the issues that were brought forward by my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. When you juxtapose the two Liberal speeches and his speech, you find an interesting parallel there. On the one hand, we had two of our members speak eloquently about the types of services that are going to be provided by this budget and the reason we have health premiums. Yet on the other side all we heard was: "Taxes are wrong. We need to cut taxes. We need to balance the budget."

Today we've seen the true face of the Conservative Party. We've seen a party that's against immunization for our children. We've seen a party that's against investing more in terms of home care. We've seen a party that is quite content to have long lineups in terms of joint replacement surgery, in terms of people who need a cardiac bypass.

This is the agenda of the Conservative Party. It's interesting that they never want to talk about the substance of the budget. The reason the members of the

Conservative Party don't want to talk about it is because they know that after eight years of neglect the types of services that Ontarians demand are going to require some investment. You're not going to be able to take money out of thin air. They want to continue cutting—cutting taxes, cutting programs—so that our institutions can crumble. Do you know what their answer to it was in the election? "Let's build more private schools and let's introduce two-tier health care," because at the end of the day no one in Ontario who can afford it is going to want to go to our public schools or a health care system under a Tory government.

We've come in and we are reversing that trend. Is it going to take revenues? Yes, it is. That's an honest truth, that's an honest fact, and we're going forward and asking Ontarians to help invest in the future of this province. What Ontarians have said to me and to all the members is, "It ain't popular, but do you know what? If we have to do it, we're going to do it."

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's always a pleasure to rise. Again, I'd like to speak on Bill 38 and make some comments here as well, because there's no question that I enjoyed the comments from the member from Kitchener Centre. But I have to point out to him that some of the working families do like something in their pockets. I don't know if you understand what's actually happening out there to your party and to your federal Liberals, but there's an anchor around Paul Martin's neck—I don't know if you know that or not—and it's called Dalton McGuinty. He has basically destroyed the federal government, a guy who came in last year, Mr Paul Martin, with 51% of the support and now this anchor named McGuinty is around his neck.

Has anybody seen the Toronto Sun today? Mr Speaker, you've probably had an opportunity to see it. But the anchor is right there: Dalton McGuinty—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Simcoe North, please put the paper down.

Mr Dunlop: Sorry. But the fact of the matter is, Mr Speaker, he is an anchor.

People hate this budget. You can talk all you want about the few little positive things that are in it. The negative things are that you're taking money out of people's pockets. It's as plain and simple as that. When you're taking \$1,200 from an average family in Ontario, that's money they're not going to spend on a car or maybe on a vacation for tourism or possibly a new kitchen stove or refrigerator. That money's gone, and that's going to cost jobs. I know you don't understand it. You've never understood it. You think that if you keep raising taxes like you did the last time in David Peterson's government, that's the way to go. But you drive the economy into recession. That's what this bill is going to do. That's why we will do everything we can to stop it. We will never support any one part of this particular bill because of that.

This has become an anchor around the citizens of Ontario. Worst of all, in this unbelievable election going on, we've seen an amazing change here because some of

the same people who are providing information and guidance to Paul Martin are now providing information and guidance to Dalton McGuinty, the anchor around Paul Martin's and the citizens of Ontario's necks.

1620

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot has two minutes to reply.

Mr McMeekin: I want to thank my good friends from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Kitchener Centre, Simcoe North, and particularly my good friend from Hamilton East.

Friends can tell each other the truth, not just what they want to hear, and I always appreciate that. The simple truth is, we found ourselves in one hell of a condition when we came into government. We did what we knew was right. We went back and consulted with Ontarians, because we want to spend dollars wisely and we want to be accountable.

We had some choices to make. We chose to shorten wait times for cancer and cardiac care, for joint replacement and cataract surgery and for MRI and CAT scans. We chose to hire 8,000 more full-time nurses and provide home care for an additional 95,000 Ontarians. We decided to add 3,700 more long-term-care beds and 150 new community-based, multidisciplinary health care centres that will provide 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week care.

In conclusion, our new government has made decisions based on a core set of values: values we shared during the election campaign, and values we know, from our post-election consultation with Ontarians all across this great province and our 63,000 civil servants—for the first time in Ontario history, actually asking our civil servants what they thought and what advice they could give us. We know that the values we're talking about are reflected across this province. Our values do this simple thing: They declare that we're in this together and that we need to look out for each other's kids and take care of each other when someone's sick. Why? Because we value and support one another in this great province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Yakabuski: The Liberal members have referred a couple of times in their addresses to "the truth." There is an old saying that the truth is the first casualty in war. Apparently it's the first casualty after the election of a Liberal government as well, because they just haven't come clean and they haven't stuck to their promises.

I want to commend the members of the Liberal party on the other side of the House for the stiff upper lip and the resolve they've shown in defending this document that is basically worthless, and the spin they've tried to put on it. A story in the Toronto Star—a great paper, by the way—was telling about how they were instructing the Liberals how to behave with regard to dealing with the public furor with respect to this budget and how to respond to the anger out there. So they were getting their spin lessons.

There's also an old saying that baloney is baloney, no matter how you slice it. So that's what they've got to deal with here. They haven't got much to work with. They called this an historic budget, one of the most important budgets in the history of Ontario. That's something they did get right, because this could go down as the first provincial budget in history that will actually spell the demise of a federal government. We're seeing more evidence to that effect every day: that this budget is the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back with regard to Paul Martin's government.

My colleague from Simcoe North talked about an anchor. An anchor can be a good thing and it can be a bad thing. Sometimes we refer to an anchor as something that you hitch your boat to in times of trouble so that you'll be safe during the storm. We've had anchors such as that, like Mike Harris, who went to the people and told them exactly what he was going to do and he did just that. He did just that. Then you've got an anchor like the Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty; an anchor that is holding the good ship Liberal at the dock of despair. It can't even get off its moorings to get its election plan going, because there is the Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, sinking the ship before it gets out of the dock.

Interjection.

Mr Yakabuski: We'll get one of those, too.

We have Liberal members who want to distance themselves from this budget, at least at times, and then, when they get reined in by the powers that be—the whip and the leader—they get back in line. I just want to talk to you about a couple of them here. The member for Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh said he wasn't happy with the budget. "I'm not happy with certain things in the budget," he said, "but it's a good budget. We had some difficult choices to make." The member from Ottawa-Orléans called the budget brutal.

The member from Niagara Falls demanded that McGuinty restore coverage for the health care services he slashed. The Minister of Children and Youth Services will be fighting to lower those health care premiums. They're not happy with that budget over there either. They're not happy, because they're getting it in spades in their ridings about what this is doing to working Ontarians in the province. They're getting it in boxcar letters. People are saying, "You told us you would do this and you told us you would do that, but you told us you wouldn't raise our taxes and you told us you wouldn't run a deficit."

Premier McGuinty had a meeting with the Ottawa Citizen editorial board in September, and they asked him point-blank, "What will you do?" because he said in that meeting that the Tories are lying about a \$2-billion deficit. I withdraw that; I'm sorry. Certainly Tories wouldn't be doing that anyway. That's what the Premier said. He used the word to the Ottawa Citizen editorial board.

They asked him, "Well, if that is the case, will this change what you plan to do, Mr McGuinty?" "No, no. We will have to work within our means. We must live

within our means. We have to show an example. So we will not be raising taxes, and we will not run a deficit." The day before that he had signed the taxpayer protection pledge, in which he guaranteed to the people of Ontario that he would abide by the terms of that pledge.

People are just livid out there. They're walking around saying, "Have we been hoodwinked. Have we been duped." I was walking on Spadina this morning. I went by this office building and there was a sign on it. It said, "Don't use this door." I looked at that sign and I said, "Now, that's a very definitive sign. I can't be confused by that. It's not saying, 'We'd really like if you would use the other door,' or 'We have a suggestion that this is not a good door to use.'" It was definitive: "Don't use this door."

That's how definitive Dalton McGuinty was last fall: "I won't raise your taxes. I will balance the budget. I won't run a deficit." He was definitive, but then, all of a sudden, he got wishy-washy and willy-nilly and he's all over the map. He's saying one thing and doing another. I'll tell you, the people of Ontario don't like that kind of behaviour. They believe that someone should be good for their word. If you're not good for your word, you're not much good.

Interjections.

Mr Yakabuski: They're going on and they're going on. Paul Martin out there—well, I tell you, talk about a fish out of water. He really enjoyed being the finance minister, I think about eight years ago, but now that he's the Prime Minister campaigning for re-election and he's got the weight of Dalton McGuinty on his shoulders, he is not a happy camper—not at all.

But the anger out there is about the broken promises. Where are we going to end up with this insatiable addiction to taxes that this government has? They're addicted to taxes. Do you know what? They won't be changing their tune, and where is that going to put us in four years? What is that going to do to the Ontario economy? Because when there's a problem and they've got a revenue situation, their answer is going to be, "We've got to solve that by taking more money out of the pockets of hard-working Ontarians." It's not going to work. Those pockets are getting bled dry. There's nothing left there.

1630

So they're going to, again, tax them more. More people will be out of work. More people will have no money to spend. They're saying it's a little bit of an OHIP premium. What do you tell somebody when their property taxes have gone up, their income taxes have gone up, their insurance rates have gone up, their hydro rates have gone up, all as a result of this government? And now you're going to tell them, "You've got to dig deeper again, because we're charging you for health care, but in the meantime, we're going to delist some of those services that you need so badly." What does that say to the people?

You know what they feel like? I'm going to draw a little analogy. Here's a little story for you, folks. It's like

a man who is courting his intended for months. He's telling her all kinds of things, how it's going to be, life for them together. She's listening and absorbing that, and she's enjoying it.

On October 2, he popped the question to her, and she said yes. He presented her with a beautiful diamond engagement ring. There was only one catch: The following month, that darned ring was on her Visa bill. That's what Dalton McGuinty is doing to the people of the province of Ontario. He's made all kinds of promises and he's making them pay, and pay through the teeth. That is absolutely wrong.

Dalton McGuinty and Paul Martin—you know, Paul Martin is going around saying, "I promise I won't break my promises." It's so ludicrous as to be almost incredible. He's promising now not to break his promises because the credibility of the Liberal Party has been so shattered by Premier McGuinty and Greg Sorbara that the Prime Minister actually has to go and say, "I promise I won't break my promises."

The Deputy Speaker: One second. I'd like to have a little quiet over on this side. Some aren't even in their seats. So please, bear with us and listen to the speaker. Thank you.

Mr Yakabuski: Paul Martin is going on and saying that he believes in integrity in government: "Integrity is important to us." When Paul Martin and Dalton McGuinty say they believe in integrity, to me that's like Liz Taylor saying, "I believe in 'till death do us part.'" So now they've made all their promises, they've presented the budget, and the people of Ontario are very upset.

I want to talk a little bit about promises. The member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot spoke a little earlier about taking his kids to Disney World. Well, I have children too, and I don't know how many times my children have said to me, "Dad, will you do this? You've got to promise me. You have to promise me you'll do this or you've got to promise me you'll do that or you'll get me this or you'll take me there." I've always said to them, "Look, I can't promise you, but I'm going to do my best, because promises are meant to be kept." I hope—I really do, for the sake of the McGuinty children—that he has taken a different approach to keeping promises to his kids than he has to the people of the province of Ontario.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about some of the real effects of this budget. I have a letter from a lady in Deep River in my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke:

"I am writing and begging you to please reconsider our need of the chiropractic service. I visit the chiropractic service twice a week because I need it badly. Without it, I feel I would be in a wheelchair and unable to do anything. I see so many people who visit the chiropractor and get so much help. Now I hear that our visits are not going to be covered.

"I'm asking you and the government to really reconsider this, as so many people will lose so much. For myself, I've tried physiotherapy, pills, all kinds of visits

to hospital, plus two months of therapy in Ottawa, and I had to return to chiropractic care, as none of the other treatments worked or helped at all.

“So please reconsider this and let us keep our OHIP for partial coverage of our costs to visit the chiropractor.

“For the good of myself and all others who really need it.”

These are the kinds of things, the kind of pain this budget is inflicting on the people of Ontario. Hard-working families who need these services are being told, “I’m sorry, but we’re cutting back,” families who are already paying the extra bills this government has brought on by some of its measures. Over \$9 billion is the net effect of this budget, out of the pockets of hard-working Ontarians.

An editorial in the Pembroke Daily Observer—I’ve got to flip through some papers here to find some stuff. Do you know what they call this? If you’re doing an interview on radio and there’s a time when nothing’s happening, they call that dead air. For the first seven months of this government, that’s pretty well what we got from it: dead air. It was doing nothing. The first meaningful thing it did was to present this budget, which basically was like taking a baseball bat to the people of Ontario, knocking them unconscious and then emptying their pockets while they were out.

I have to put my glasses on for this one: “As if breaking 250 election promises wasn’t bad enough, this bunch proceeds to tell us it’s for our own good when they put their grubby hands out for \$9 billion in new taxes. And make no mistake, all these fees and premiums are nothing more than taxes from the government that was elected on a promise of no new taxes.”

Now he tells us, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty is now among those casting a sceptical eye at Paul Martin. Oh yes, he’s now saying that Paul Martin’s promises were just delivered in the heat of a campaign and they really don’t mean anything. People don’t really listen to those promises, he’s sort of insinuating at this point. Well, they certainly listened to his promises last September.

There are some parts of this budget that, if delivered properly, will have some benefits. But the net effect of this budget is an unmitigated disaster because of the pain being inflicted on the people of Ontario.

I have travelled the riding extensively since then. I was at the Normandy 60th anniversary that they celebrated in Cobden last Saturday, and I’m going to tell you that veterans, seniors, who served their country are so disgusted by what this government has done to seniors with this budget. I’m just as unhappy. How do you tell people who’ve put their lives on the line so that we would be able to have elections in this country—you’re now telling them, “You know what? I’m not done with you, sir, because there are still a couple of coins in your pocket and I’m going to get them before I’m done.”

I’ll tell you, Mr Speaker, under these circumstances, I am moving adjournment of the debate.

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

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1639 to 1709.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will stand, please. Thank you.

All those who are opposed will stand and be counted by the Clerk.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 9; the nays are 39.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has the floor.

Mr Yakabuski: One of the things we’re trying to do here is convince this government that we need public hearings on this bill so that the people of Ontario have the opportunity. They’re saying they think they know what the people want. Give the people the opportunity to state that. They said they consulted on this budget. Give the people of Ontario the opportunity to confirm or say they are wrong. That’s what we are asking for here.

I have got letter upon letter from constituents in my riding who are just sickened by what this budget is doing to them and their ability to meet their daily expenses and the cost of raising their children in this province. They are extremely upset.

I was talking to a constituent of mine who told me to go ahead and use his name, Tony Bleskie. He moved back to Barry’s Bay because he wanted to retire. But do you know what? He told me that as a result of this budget he can’t retire. He has to continue working, at least part-time, to pay the bills he is faced with now because of the measures in this budget. That’s the kind of damage this budget is doing to the people of Ontario.

Let’s talk about it. Let’s have these hearings. In light of the fact that this government has shown no interest to this date in holding those hearings, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Yakabuski has moved adjournment of the House.

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

All those in favour will say “aye.”

All those opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1713 to 1743.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Mr Yakabuski has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour will stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed will stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 7; the nays are 35.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has the floor.

Mr Yakabuski: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will wrap up here in the next minute or so.

In light of the fact that this government doesn't want to consider public hearings on this budget, and we'd like to see the people have input again into the travesty that this budget is, the other option would be if they—if memory serves me correctly, in the early 1980s, maybe 1980 or 1981, Allan MacEachen, the federal Liberal finance minister, tabled a budget that met with such fierce opposition from the public that they actually went back and reworked it, because it was an absolute crime. Well, this budget falls into the same category. So the other option for this government would be to take it back.

Interjections.

Mr Yakabuski: It's worse. Take it back and redo it. Do it over; maybe you'll get it right.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Prue: I have had an entire hour to think about what the member was saying, with lots of time in between to think about his words of wisdom. I want to tell you that throughout the entire hour the member did have one cogent and important thing to say; that is, that the people need to be consulted on this budget. We would welcome this government's going out to the people on this very important budget debate. I know many of you on the other side have said you consulted many times in advance. You held these little pseudo-meetings with people, with pre-arranged decisions they could make and advice they could give you. But the reality is that in their wildest imaginings the people never dreamed for a moment—nor did you put before them—that you were going to have this regressive health tax put upon them.

I think you really need to go out and hear what the people have to say. I am convinced that if you do that, if you even do a few days of hearings at Queen's Park, if you travel anywhere across the province, you will find that people are very upset with this budget. It is not too late for you to withdraw one or two of the measures, including the regressive health tax.

I would agree—and I've said to you before—there are things you are doing in this budget that are important and that need to be done, but the way you collect the money is not the right way. Think about it, listen to the people, and if you need go back to them, if you need to do it through progressive taxation, if you need to tax the banks and those who can afford it, I am sure the people will agree with you. But, please, do them the honour, give them the opportunity to advise you, because you should always believe in the wisdom of the people. If you neglect the people, if you do not hear them, if you run contrary to what you promised them, then as politicians we are all diminished.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'm glad to have an opportunity to respond to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I want to tell him that this budget is based on integrity. It doesn't have the bogus numbers that the previous budget—the Magna budget—had. That budget was based on what I would call—they cooked the books. After eight years of unprecedented

economic growth in this province, we found ourselves in a deficit of \$6.2 billion. Why did that happen? Because they were able to hide those numbers.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms Di Cocco: I say to you that this budget looks at what we need to do to restore core services, even though, when they left office, we found that the cupboard was bare and we had a deficit of \$6.2 billion. But they used hundreds of millions of dollars on partisan advertising to tell the public that they were doing a good job. In fact, the books did not reflect it. They sold the 407, and they didn't put in there the fact that they were going to have huge losses of revenue. No, Speaker, they didn't.

All I know is this: The public will not be lured into listening to the simplistic spin of the opposition, but they will judge us over the long haul based on the results we're going to achieve, the better management we're going to initiate, more transparency and accountability, and good government, where decisions are based on the public interest and overall public good. That's the foundation of this budget.

1750

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): There's an old saying, "More gall than a canal horse," and it aptly describes Liberal members who get up here and talk about honesty and integrity. As even the Toronto Star said today, they have lost the moral high ground with respect to what has happened in this budget and the fact that Mr McGuinty has broken so many promises, especially core promises that got that government elected. So for any of them to stand up here and talk about integrity and honesty when they said they would have a referendum if they were going to increase taxes—putting this whole deficit question aside—they're not doing it, and they have no justification for that.

I want to compliment the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, who is a great addition to this assembly, a fine addition, and an outstanding representative not only for his riding but for all of the people of eastern Ontario. So, sir, I compliment you on your presentation here this evening.

Just laying out the facts: We talk about consultation. They consulted their friends and they called that a consultation. Well, we know what has happened with the polls. How accurate was that consultation with their Liberal friends? About 4% of the people of Ontario, according to that poll, support this budget. That was quite a consultation when you came back and said, "We have widespread support for doing what we're doing." Did you talk to them about significant increases to their taxes? No. Did you talk about further breaking of your promises and your sacred pledges? Did you talk to Ontarians about the Premier swearing an oath on the Bible when he came into the executive council as the Premier of the province and then breaking that oath that he swore on the Bible? That is completely shameful.

Giving out cabinet secrets: The Premier has even publicly admitted he did that. He shared cabinet document

secrets with his Liberal friend Prime Minister Martin. That's shameful, and he should resign.

Ms Horwath: My colleague was commenting that the most important piece of the comments that were made by the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke was the discussion about the lack of consultation on this budget, and in fact that's true. That was a very important part of the remarks that were made. However, I would say the other very important part of the comments that were made by the member were around the fact that this budget is being brought down on the backs of working families and low-income people in Ontario, and I can tell you that those are the people I represent in the riding of Hamilton East.

I have to say, as I listened to the comments about this budget in my first opportunity to be participating in a debate on a bill—it's very opportune that it's the budget bill, but the thing that's not opportune, in fact the thing that's a bit of a travesty from my very personal perspective, is that this debate couldn't have occurred prior to the by-election being called in Hamilton East. That is a shame. In fact, it's really a travesty, because had those people in Hamilton East seen what was in this budget prior to having the opportunity to vote, I'm quite sure the wide margin I received in the by-election would have been expanded and may have made history on more than the one or two counts that we already have.

I'm looking forward to my opportunity to make some remarks on this budget myself within the next few minutes, but I do have to say that I find it interesting, as a new member in this Legislature, to have to agree with some of the comments being made by the opposition, because, quite frankly, I had some concerns when they were in government.

I was really shocked to have seen the budget that came down from the government. I really was quite shocked to see the things that were in there, and I will be expanding on them in my opportunities to discuss it further in debate. However, it was a frightening budget. It is scaring the heck out of people in Hamilton East and all across Ontario. Federal Liberals are hearing about it.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has two minutes to respond.

Mr Yakabuski: I appreciate the comments of the members from Beaches-East York, Sarnia-Lambton and my colleagues from Leeds-Grenville and Hamilton East. My colleague from Leeds-Grenville is very passionate about this and other subjects and a tremendous leader in our party.

One of the reasons this budget is causing such a stir is the sense of betrayal out there among the people of Ontario, and that is what hurts the most. They placed their trust in the Liberal Party last October 2. They went to the polls and voted them in. They now feel it was a complete election under false pretences, that this government, the government of today, had no intention of following through with what it promised to the people of Ontario. They voted for them under those circumstances. They didn't give anybody a blank cheque; it wasn't a *carte blanche*. It was, "We're supporting you because you have put forth a platform and the program of promises that we're identifying with. We're accepting that platform."

But you've turned around and done a 180, and the people will not forgive that. They're about to take their anger out on the federal Liberals. They're about to wipe that saccharine smile off the face of Paul Martin. They have no option with how they're going to deal with the McGuinty government at this time, but sometime down the road this government is going to pay for what they've done to the people of Ontario because the people of Ontario are going to be paying for the next several years for this budget. But they will have their comeuppance.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to thank the members for letting me get back into the groove today after being away a week at the Indianapolis 500, where the only groove I saw was going in a circle. So thank you for your indulgence.

It being, oh, 6 of the clock and the media is waiting for everyone, this House stands adjourned until 10 of the clock Thursday, June 3.

The House adjourned at 1757.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Alvin Curling

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Beaches-York-Est		Hamilton-Ouest	
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Springdale		Addington	
Brampton Centre /	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton-Centre		Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
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Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga		Kingston and the Islands /	Gerretsen, Hon / L'hon John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston et les îles	
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)		
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		London North Centre /	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley West /		London-Centre-Nord	
Don Valley-Ouest		London West /	Bentley, Hon / L'hon Christopher (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
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Etobicoke Centre /		Mississauga-Sud	
Etobicoke-Centre		Mississauga West /	Baird, John R. (PC)
Etobicoke North /	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga-Ouest	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Etobicoke-Nord		Nepean-Carleton	
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Niagara Centre /	Craitor, Kim (L)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara-Centre	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Nickel Belt	
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Nipissing	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Northumberland	
		Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon / L'hon Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
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	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Watson, Hon / L'hon Jim (L) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (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	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Hon / L'hon Gerard (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	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
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Hon / L'hon Greg (L) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (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
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Yakubuski, John (PC)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (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
Sault Ste Marie	Oraziotti, David (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 Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	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 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 North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	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-Agincourt	Phillips, Hon / L'hon Gerry (L) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Hon / L'hon Alvin (L) Speaker / Président		
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		

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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