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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 9 June 2004**

**Mercredi 9 juin 2004**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 June 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 juin 2004

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

**Ms Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** I'm pleased to rise today to welcome members of my community who have come to Toronto to bring me a petition. They are from Brock township and are keen to make the government aware of the need the community has for a community health centre.

Brock township has been declared an underserved area by the Ministry of Health. They have an immediate need for the range of community services that a community health centre would provide. They have the support of the local district health council. They have my support. They hope the funding will be forthcoming in the near future. I'm heartened to see signals from the ministry and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care that the funding for their proposal will be available soon.

Several of the community volunteers who have been active in promoting the Brock community health centre are in the gallery today. I would like to welcome Joanne Lloyd, Janet Vendrig and Larry O'Connor. I want to mention that Larry is a former member of provincial Parliament and was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care when he was here. I'd like to thank them for coming and also to thank all the community volunteers who have worked so long on this project.

BLOOD DONATION

**Mr Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** I rise today to inform you, all the members and the public that I participated in a blood donor clinic at the Mississauga Seniors' Centre on Thursday, May 27.

The Canadian Blood Services is the successor agency to the Red Cross and the Canadian Blood Agency. Each year there are thousands of people who require blood transfusions. Blood transfusions are needed for trauma victims, burns, heart surgery, leukemia and other diseases such as sickle cell disease. The number of organ transplants has increased steadily from 16 per one million Canadians in 1981, to 59 per one million Canadians in 2000, an increase of three and a half times in only 19

years. One donation of blood can help up to four people, but only 4% of eligible Canadians donate blood.

As all of us work to build our Ontario, it is important to know that each of us can help our hospitals, doctors and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care by giving blood. As the Canadian Blood Services says, "Blood: It's in us to give."

GIRLZ UNPLUGGED

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I rise today to bring attention to a valuable program offered by the YWCA in Muskoka. Girlz Unplugged is a school-based anti-violence program that promotes self-esteem and confidence-building in girls at risk.

This year alone, more than 70 girls aged 10 to 14 from eight schools across Muskoka benefited from the program. In the past two years, the Muskoka YWCA has been able to offer this program through the generous support of anti-violence funding from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

Unfortunately, once the province redraws the lines for northern Ontario, young women at risk will no longer be able to participate in this program. This is yet another of the many valuable programs which will be lost as a result of this government's mean-spirited decision to remove the northern designation for the communities in the district of Muskoka.

Like many places in northern Ontario, the Muskoka YWCA was opened to address the social risks affecting women and families due to a seasonal economy and underemployment. There are over 1,700 single-parent families, 1,400 of which are headed by women. The Muskoka YWCA has waiting lists for sexual assault trauma therapy, a full women's shelter and a shortage of affordable housing. Providing programs for young women at risk is one way of breaking the cycle of violence and abuse. The government's decision to remove the northern Ontario status for Muskoka will directly affect those who need and benefit from these vital community programs.

DANIEL WHITE

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** Mr Speaker, it is with great sadness that I inform you and my colleagues in the House of the passing of Daniel B. White on May 8. Dan was associate vice-president of technology at the St Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology in Windsor.

Throughout his 32-year career, Dan's leadership and passion for the manufacturing sector led to many new and exciting learning opportunities for St Clair students, providing them a solid foundation for a career in the manufacturing and skilled trades sector.

Most recently, Dan was asked to manage the design and construction of the \$41-million Ford Centre for Excellence in Manufacturing, a teaching facility designed to look and feel like the real-world manufacturing environment.

Thanks to Dan's expertise, the college was able to secure \$18 million worth of state-of-the-art equipment and teaching software for 50 cents on the dollar, ensuring that students would have the most current technology on which to learn.

Dan White had a clear vision of what a teaching environment should be, a passion for students and the respect of all who came to know him. His legacy will continue through the thousands of lives he touched in the classroom and in the Daniel B. White Scholarship Fund, ensuring that the students of tomorrow have the financial support to achieve their dream of a career in the manufacturing industry.

#### DEMONSTRATION

**Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** Earlier today, I had the pleasure and the opportunity to join in the Canadian Taxpayers Federation rally here at Queen's Park, joining hundreds of people from all across the province of Ontario. I had the opportunity to speak to people from my riding and also people from the riding of my colleague from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock. They were voicing their abject disappointment, displeasure and fury about the breaking of Liberal promises when it comes to raising taxes on the hard-working people of the province of Ontario.

We were even joined by Howard Hampton, the leader of the NDP, who also agrees that this government is dipping its hand into the pockets of people far too often and far too deep.

John Williamson, Linda Leatherdale and our own finance critic, John Baird, were able to speak to the crowd and gauge the sense of anger that is out there in the people of the province of Ontario.

Today we even heard about Senator Anne Cools, who has lost faith in the Liberal Party in Ottawa.

Those people out there on that lawn today left here making sure that all across the province of Ontario the anger at this government will be directed at their cousins in Ottawa, and on June 28 we're going to see some changes there.

1340

#### BEACHES INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

**Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** I rise to talk about that venerable and wonderful institution, the

Beaches jazz festival, which is now in its 16th year. It is an absolutely tremendous event that takes place in my community each and every year. Last year, for the city of Toronto it raised some \$36 million in new spending, including over \$6 million spent in accommodations in hotels in the Toronto area and \$13.2 million to the local restaurants.

Indeed, 700,000 people showed up for that jazz festival, making it one of the largest of its kind in Canada.

The most amazing thing is that it's all free. It is the leading festival of its kind that promotes Canadian talent.

Under the brilliant direction, for 16 years now, of Lido Chillelli, the festival itself has grown, and this year it is going to be bigger and better than ever. PartiGras kicks it off on July 16 to 18 in the Distillery District, followed by street jazz from July 22 to 24, and Kew Gardens jazz, the main event, is on July 24 and 25 at Kew Gardens.

But there are also some other spinoffs that people may not be aware of. The Toronto East General Hospital is the main recipient of all the funds raised; they have this year dedicated the newborn maternal wing, calling it the Jazz Festival Wing. That's just great. Kew Beach school has a kids' zone, and all the money raised there goes to talented people who come in and teach the kids about music. The firefighters have their own boot drive. Even Bellefair United Church this year is having a jamming-it-up congregation on Sunday morning, where the jazz festival people are going to play.

Please come out to our community. You will be glad you did.

#### EMERY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAM

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** Today I proudly announce the victory of the Emery Collegiate boys' basketball team in its first ever participation in the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations tournament. Emery Collegiate defeated Sarnia's St Clair Secondary School in the spring final to win the title.

The AAA championship win, which was held in Brantford, was a deserved reward after a long year's hard work and effort. Coach Bob Maydo's successful training and mentoring proved to be just unbeatable. This was a phenomenal display of team effort. Although the team boasts strong, talented individual players, Emery relied more on teamwork than on dominant individual efforts to bring home the crown.

I heartily congratulate the Emery Collegiate boys' basketball team for their persistence, team spirit and hard work toward their common goal. They have proved inspiring role models in demonstrating what achievements determination and effort can attain.

We look forward to many more successful displays of skill and camaraderie from our neighbourhood champions. To the coach, principal and staff at Emery, I say congratulations, well done, and I hope for many more.

## ESPANOLA LONG-TERM-CARE FACILITY

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** Yesterday I was pleased to attend, with my federal colleague Brent St Denis and Mayor Bernie Gagnon, the grand opening of the Espanola long-term-care facility. This new facility will result in 32 new beds, allowing individuals to have a place to call home, receiving the care they need in their own community.

The Espanola long-term-care facility came to be a reality due to the hard work and determination of the community. This was not an easy task, but nonetheless the people of Espanola pulled together and have raised, to date, over half a million dollars toward the cost of this facility.

I want to recognize the leadership of Clive Fitzjohn, the chair of the hospital board, and Ray Harding, chair of the hospital foundation, for their efforts. The people of Espanola are to be commended for their perseverance to ensure that this long-term-care facility has become a reality for seniors.

I was very pleased that the former mayor of Espanola, Leo Foucalt, was the person who cut the ribbon to open this particular facility. Leo is a resident of this facility and was the driving force behind the institution of this complex back in the late 1980s.

I also had the great opportunity of celebrating with the Espanola General Hospital Auxiliary their 50th anniversary of service to the people of Espanola and area.

## EDUCATION

**Ms Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** In our first eight months in office, the McGuinty government has made some tremendous improvements to Ontario's education system. The Tories implemented a one-size-fits-all funding formula that hurt students. Our formula will better reflect rural, urban, suburban, northern and francophone factors to help our students succeed.

Where the Tories put half a million children in classes of 26 or more, we are reducing class sizes in the critical years, junior kindergarten to grade 3, beginning this September. Under the Tories, 50% of the students who began grade 9 either did not complete or stopped their education after grade 12. We are putting an emphasis on apprenticeship training, raising the dropout age to 18 and targeting support to struggling students.

The Tories watched Ontario's skilled workforce dwindle. We are revamping high school tech equipment so that programs better reflect the needs of Ontario workplaces, and we are increasing the number of people with critical skills to advance our competitive standing.

While the Tories raised tuition by 137%, we have frozen college and university tuition for two years to increase accessibility to higher education.

The facts speak for themselves. In their tenure, the Tories dropped the ball on education. They dropped the ball for the people who will make up the future of this

great province. Only the Ontario Liberals are committed to real excellence in public education.

## 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 9, 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 in the galleries today some of the distinguished members of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians: Phil Gillies from Brantford, the 32nd and 33rd Parliaments; Vince Kerrio from Niagara Falls, the 32nd through the 34th Parliament; and Larry O'Connor from Durham-York, the 35th Parliament. We welcome them all here.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### KEEP YOUR PROMISE ON THE GAS PRICE WATCHDOG ACT, 2004

### LOI DE 2004 SUR L'OBLIGATION DE TENIR LES PROMESSES ÉLECTORALES CONCERNANT L'AGENT DE SURVEILLANCE DES PRIX DU CARBURANT

Mr Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 93, An Act respecting the price of motor vehicle fuel and the appointment of a Gas Price Watchdog /  
Projet de loi 93, Loi concernant le prix du carburant pour véhicules automobiles et la nomination d'un agent de surveillance des prix du carburant.

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

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** This exact bill was actually introduced by Liberals back when they were in opposition. As you know, the price of gas is going through the roof. We have people all across Ontario who are upset about the price of gas. What this bill purports to do is to create what's called a gas price watchdog. It's a bill that was introduced in this House before that had the support of the Liberal opposition at the time, and I look forward to their support.

Ce projet de loi donne l'opportunité de créer un « watchdog » pour regarder au prix du gaz. C'est un projet de loi qui a été introduit par les libéraux en opposition et qu'ils avaient supporté. On regarde le support de ce gouvernement quand ça vient à supporter ce projet de loi qu'ils avaient introduit eux-mêmes et que moi, j'introduis encore aujourd'hui, pour être capable de refléter le problème qu'on a avec le prix d'essence.

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## PUBLIC ACCOUNTING ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004  
SUR L'EXPERTISE COMPTABLE

Mr Bryant moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 94, An Act respecting public accounting / Projet de loi 94, Loi concernant l'expertise comptable.

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

**Hon Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** We'll all be talking during ministers' statements.

ONTARIO LOTTERY  
AND GAMING CORPORATION  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2004LOI DE 2004 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ DES LOTERIES  
ET DES JEUX DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Arnott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to amend the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 95, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la Société des loteries et des jeux de l'Ontario.

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

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** By introducing this bill I am seeking to amend the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation Act, 1999, to prohibit the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp from authorizing the establishment of any new gaming premises on or after the day upon which the bill comes into force and to prohibit any gaming premises from expanding their operations on or after that same day.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council would be required to appoint a commission under the Public Inquiries Act to conduct an inquiry to study the social effect that the playing of games of chance has on the public. The commission would be required to make a report to the Lieutenant Governor in Council on its findings after conducting an inquiry and the public would be entitled to inspect the report.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTING

**Hon Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** After four decades of debate on public accounting practices in Ontario, four decades of hard work by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario, the Certified General Accountants of Ontario and the Society of Management Accountants of Ontario, four decades of discussions, efforts, questions and at times log-jams on how best to move forward, I have good news: The log-jam is broken. Finally we have an agreement on how public accounting standards and access should proceed.

That is why I'm pleased to introduce new legislation today that builds on the high regulatory standards maintained by Ontario's public accountants over many years. The Public Accounting Act, 2004, would bring about the positive, necessary change that investors and industry alike are seeking and that will better serve the public interest.

This bill is a long time in coming. It means a fundamental change for one of our most important and valued professions. This government is proposing what will amount to one of the most significant changes for this profession in over 40 years.

We know how valuable comprehensive, reliable standards for public accountants are to protecting Ontario's economic credibility, at home and abroad. Good accounting means good business, and good business is good for Ontario.

If passed, this legislation would further ensure that the current internationally recognized high standards in Ontario are not only maintained but increased over time by a reconstituted Public Accountants Council. The council would encourage more rigorous testing, harmonize the regulation of public accounting with evolving national and international standards, and strengthen regulatory transparency, independence and accountability within the field. The bill, if passed, would also create a new structure that favours fairness and competition without compromising Ontario's public accounting standards.

The reforms contained within this bill would mean that the principal accounting organizations that represent CAs, CGAs and CMAs would demonstrate their ability to meet the standards set by the reconstituted Public Accountants Council and become responsible for the direct licensing and governance of individual public accountants. Over time, there may be other bodies which will meet the standards set by the council and will be able to license their members. The act provides for this.

The licensing system is a cornerstone of the reform package that will provide access to licences to a broader range of accounting professionals, consistent with the

public interest and maintaining the high standard of which Ontario proudly boasts.

With a new public accounting system, based on the principles of protecting the public interest and fostering competition and innovation in the design of a professional, self-governing regime, we can be assured that the practice of public accounting in Ontario will remain among best in the world.

The three principal accounting organizations are to be commended for their ability to work together in the public interest and stand together in supporting the reforms embodied in this bill. I'd like to acknowledge the representatives of the three organizations who are in the gallery today: Rod Barr of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario; David Hipgrave of the Society of Management Accountants of Ontario; and Ron Colucci of the Certified General Accountants of Ontario. Congratulations to you all.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Ron Daniels, dean of the faculty of law at the University of Toronto, for his commitment to bringing together the consensus that has led to the formation of this proposed legislation. Bravo, Dean Daniels.

I also extend my gratitude to the many members of the professional public service who worked long and hard over many years on what is a difficult and complicated issue, but a very important one. I recognize your professionalism and dedication, I appreciate it, and I thank you.

I'd also like to thank my parliamentary assistant, David Zimmer, for his dedicated work on this bill and for the leadership he has displayed in helping to bring it before the House.

I encourage members of the House to consider supporting this bill with the confidence that it represents a new and innovative approach to professional self-governance that will benefit our thriving economy for many years to come, because a strong and prosperous economy means a quality of life for Ontarians that is second to none.

## HEALTH CARE

**Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** On a day when the galleries are loaded with young people, it strikes me as fully appropriate to talk today about our government's commitment to our Plan for Change budget to rebuild and transform health care in this province. I stood in this House recently to outline some specific ways we are going to do this.

I am proud to speak here today about another major initiative that is going to help Ontarians become the healthiest Canadians. I'm going to speak today about our government's immunization strategy, an essential part of our plan to transform health care for all Ontarians.

Before I do that, I want to tell you briefly about our Plan for Change, a bold four-year plan to transform health care in Ontario. It is inspired by the idea advanced by Roy Romanow and many others that health care is the

most essential public service. Our Plan for Change puts Romanow's key ideas into action.

What we are building in Ontario is a responsive, accountable, accessible health care system that serves the needs of all Ontarians. To deliver on this plan, we are restoring and fortifying the essential health services that all Ontarians need. We are using our precious health care resources in the best possible way to deliver the best possible results.

### 1400

Our strategy is to drive vital health resources down into communities where they can do the most good. Over four years, we will create 150 family health teams, where doctors work alongside nurses, nurse practitioners and other primary care providers to deliver front-line care as close to people's homes as possible.

We will expand home care, community mental health services and long-term care so that more Ontarians can receive the care they need in a community setting.

We are expanding access to essential health care by bringing down wait times for important services like cardiac care, MRI and CT scans, hiring more nurses and making it easier for international physicians to practise medicine here.

Firmly entrenched in this transformation plan is the idea of prevention. Certainly taking care of people when they get ill is central to any publicly funded system, but we must not overlook the enormous importance of helping people to prevent and minimize risks to their health. We have to find a way to get people thinking about their own health and wellness before they're diagnosed with high blood pressure or before they have a cancer scare.

I've said on many occasions that prevention begins with children. That is why I am so pleased to announce today the beginning of a comprehensive immunization strategy that will provide all Ontario children with free vaccines to protect them against chicken pox and meningitis. We are providing all of these vaccines free of charge to children across this province.

Let me say right away that even though these diseases are often called childhood diseases, our government takes them very seriously because they can lead to serious health problems and, in some cases, death. Chicken pox, for example, was once thought just to be a nuisance disease for children. Now we know that chicken pox rashes are an entry point for a more serious form of the infection known as flesh-eating disease.

Meningitis, which causes swelling of the brain and spinal tissue, can be fatal. In 2001, 65 people in our province became ill and eight of Ontario's children died from meningitis. Every year, 890 Ontarians are hospitalized and 234,000 workdays lost because of chicken pox alone. That places a tremendous stress on our province's families and on our economy. It also places a great strain on hospitals and on the health care system as a whole.

In our Plan for Change, we've committed to diverting basic care out of hospitals and into communities. We're making this investment because we know that these diseases can be prevented. And we know that by vaccin-

ating Ontario's children we will save lives. That is why I am so pleased to announce the details of the Ontario childhood immunization strategy.

Over the next three years, we are committing \$156 million to this strategy. It will see 3.3 million vaccinations administered to Ontario's children without charge. The program will begin in July, when we will immunize all high-risk two- to four-year-olds against pneumococcal diseases, a leading cause of meningitis. In September, we will immunize all one-year-olds against chicken pox and meningitis. In January 2005, the Ontario childhood vaccination strategy will be fully implemented and all three vaccinations will be delivered to Ontario children as part of routine immunization.

Now, Ontario families will have the benefit of knowing that their children are safe from these diseases, and this will save Ontario families more than \$600 per child for these three vaccinations. Our government is making sure that all Ontario children and infants, the most vulnerable people in our society, are kept safe.

The people who can best understand the importance of this program are Ontario's parents. I want to tell you what one parent said about this. Kathryn Blain, chair of the Meningitis Research Foundation, who lost her son to meningitis some years ago, had this to say today: "The McGuinty government has demonstrated real leadership by adding the meningococcal and pneumococcal meningitis vaccines on the province's routine immunization schedule. Ontario's move will help ensure that children no longer suffer from the effects of these preventable diseases."

Our strategy will transform Ontario's record on public immunization dramatically. With today's announcements, we will go from being one of the worst provinces on immunization to one of the only provinces that provides free immunization for chicken pox, meningitis and pneumococcal disease to all of our children. This will also give us one of the most comprehensive free vaccination programs of any jurisdiction to be found in North America. That's something that I believe we can all take pride in.

Our transformation agenda will involve making some tough decisions, but the decision to protect the health of Ontario's children is not tough at all. We owe it to them, their families and all Ontarians, to protect these vulnerable members of society and to ensure their sustained good health by removing the financial burden of vaccinations on families.

The province-wide immunization plan that I am announcing is the right choice for Ontarians. Our government has a plan to rebuild and transform this province's health care system. Today's announcement is another step in that process, one that protects children, helps families and benefits all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Responses?

**Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** The announcement today of the vaccination and immunization program for our children is a very positive step forward in protecting the most vulnerable members of

our society: our children. The announcement today is of tremendous benefit to the children in this province and their parents.

We owe a debt of gratitude to people like Kathryn Blain, from my community, the chair of the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada, who lost her son to meningitis. People have worked extremely hard in order to encourage both the federal and provincial governments to introduce immunization for these vulnerable children.

The decision for this government was certainly made much easier by the fact that in the 2004 federal budget the Prime Minister proposed \$300 million for a national immunization strategy to ensure children across Canada have equal access to vaccines. So this government was certainly obligated to make sure that that money was going to be utilized in order to provide immunization for our children. This will help ensure that children no longer suffer from the effects of these very preventable diseases, and it is also going to provide access regardless of their ability to pay.

It's also important to mention that my colleague Shelley Martel has certainly been advocating for this. I introduced a private member's bill on April 29 to amend the Health Insurance Act to make sure that these very immunizations would be provided for all children in this province regardless of ability to pay. I think all sides of this House have been working very hard with the medical community and with parents and families in this province. This is certainly a very good step forward.

In January 2003, our government had taken that first step toward an immunization program by announcing that all HIV-positive babies born on or after January 1, 2002, would be offered vaccination against meningococcal meningitis as well as pneumococcal disease. This is a good day for children and families in the province of Ontario.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTING

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):**

I'm pleased to stand up and respond to the Ministry of the Attorney General's public accounting legislation. I'd just like to note that the Attorney General did not extend thanks—and he extended thanks to a lot of different people and bodies—to the PC government, which introduced public accounting reforms in August 2003, guided by the recommendations made by Ronald J. Daniels, dean of the faculty of law, University of Toronto. I may add, he was appointed by the Progressive Conservative government in October 2002.

When he completed his report, Ronald J. Daniels stated: "Let me finally note that if the regime adopted in this report is adopted in a timely manner, I am confident that the accounting profession in the province will be better equipped to support the commercial needs and interests of Ontario's citizens. It is to this task of building an enhanced system of public accounting regulation to which the province must now turn with alacrity and determination."

We're pleased that the legislation will use the existing internationally recognized public accounting standards as the interim standards and share the commitment to driving the current standards higher still. We are especially pleased that the legislation will ensure that the other accounting bodies meet the required high standards for public accounting before they can license their members and that all public accounting services will remain regulated.

1410

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** First of all, I want to respond to some of the general comments the Minister of Health made earlier today. The Minister of Health wants people across Ontario to believe that the budget and the Ministry of Health are now into a regime of prevention. I just want to remind the Minister of Health that that's the work that chiropractors do. Chiropractors help people to maintain their mobility. They help them to maintain their capacity to continue to work. I say to the Minister of Health, when was the last time you saw a physician get down on the floor with a patient and show them how to do the stretching exercises and the mobility exercises so they can maintain their own health? When was the last time you saw a physician do the kind of work that a physiotherapist does with patients so that they can stay out of hospitals, so that they can stay out of the emergency ward and so that they don't cost the health care system a lot of money?

I say to the minister, don't overstate your case. When you are cutting health services, when you are saying to people they can no longer have a visit to the optometrist to have their eyes checked covered by OHIP, that is not a good thing for health care in Ontario. When the 1.2 million people across Ontario who depend upon access to a chiropractor to maintain their health can no longer have that covered by OHIP, that is not a good day for Ontario. And when patients, many of whom are faced with debilitating injuries, can no longer access a physiotherapist except if they pay for it out of their own pocket, that is not a good day for Ontario citizens.

I just say to the government, when you are actually cutting health services, something you said you were not going to do, don't give yourself a pain in the back by patting yourself too hard, because the chiropractor won't be there to help you.

Now, I just want to make a point with respect to vaccinations and inoculations.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Hampton:** I can tell that the Liberals suddenly are very upset. They don't like to be reminded that they're actually cutting health services in Ontario.

With respect to vaccinations and inoculations, we all agree that this is a health service that we need to move on, but I want people to note that what the Minister of Health was saying today is that if everything goes according to plan, some children may get vaccination and

inoculation in 2005. When we look at the details of what has emerged so far, it's very spotty. So when the Minister of Health stands up and says "all children," let's be clear: This will not be all children. In fact, what the government has put forward so far is very selective inoculation, very selective vaccination. To parents who think that all children are going to be vaccinated and inoculated: Check the fine print. I urge you to check the fine print now.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** With respect to the accounting bill, I am glad that the Attorney General has found the faith.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Stop the clock, please. Could I ask the Minister of Health to come to order, please.

**Mr Hampton:** I just say to the Minister of Health, I want to remind you of your promise to autistic children. You were going to end discrimination against autistic children. I just remind you of that.

With respect to accounting, I'm glad the Attorney General has found the faith. I remember it was only a year and a half ago that when I proposed that this kind of legislation be moved forward, Liberals weren't sure. So I congratulate you on finding the faith.

I want to say that what is contained in this bill is not everything that certified general accountants have asked for. It is not everything that I have asked for, that I believe needs to be done. As usual with Liberals, it's a half step, and among those groups who are happy just to see a half step happen, this is reasonably good news.

I would suggest to the minister that in fact, since you seem to have general agreement on this, I believe we should pass it through second reading today. I ask for unanimous consent, Speaker, that we move this legislation through second reading today.

**The Speaker:** The leader of the third party has moved that we have second reading of the bill before us today. Agreed?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. There seems to be no unanimous consent.

## MEMBERS' ANNIVERSARIES

**Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would be remiss if we did not note that today the member for Lanark-Carleton, Mr Sterling, and the member for St Catharines, Mr Bradley, are celebrating the 27th anniversary of their election to the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** That is not a point of order, really. Another point of order?

**Hon Mr Duncan:** It should be noted that Mr Bradley celebrated that at the new casino in Niagara Falls last night.

## RICK HANSEN WHEELS IN MOTION

## RICK HANSEN ROULER VERS DEMAIN

**Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes on the Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion campaign.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent to speak for five minutes for each party on Wheels in Motion? Agreed.

**Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I want to begin by thanking all members for granting unanimous consent to recognize Rick Hansen and the work of the Man in Motion Foundation.

Many of us first heard the name Rick Hansen some 20 years ago when he started his journey around the world. During his Man in Motion tour, Rick raised more than \$26 million, but he accomplished much more than just that. He raised awareness of spinal cord injury, he helped researchers explore new frontiers of medicine and showed all of us the power of the human spirit. I've had the opportunity to meet with Rick Hansen on a couple of occasions since earning the privilege of serving Ontarians as Premier, and I can tell you, within about 30 seconds you stop seeing the wheelchair and you are impressed with his strength, his energy, his determination, his perseverance and his powerful advocacy on behalf of a very important cause.

Le dynamisme et la détermination de Rick nous incitent à croire en nous et à réaliser nos rêves. Aujourd'hui, Rick et sa fondation, l'Homme en mouvement, continuent de nous inspirer.

Rick's drive and determination inspired all of us to believe in ourselves and reach for our dreams. Today he and his Man in Motion Foundation continue to inspire us. Thanks to Rick and his tireless work with the foundation, more children with spinal cord injuries can go to the playground with their friends, more kids can enjoy the thrill of competing in sports, more adults can live independently in their own homes, and medical breakthroughs are closer than ever. For thousands of Canadians, the Man in Motion Foundation has made a real difference in their quality of life.

I know that I speak for all Ontarians when I applaud the work Rick Hansen and the Man in Motion Foundation have done on behalf of all of us. As Premier, I want to urge people all across the province to continue to support this important work and I encourage Ontarians to get involved in the Wheels in Motion event in their communities this Sunday, June 13. Ontarians can wheel, walk, ride or skate to help raise money for spinal cord research and break down barriers facing people with spinal cord injuries.

**1420**

Together, we can help find a cure for spinal cord injury, help people with spinal cord injuries enjoy life to the fullest and build stronger communities.

As Rick Hansen himself has said, "If you believe in a dream and have the courage to try, great things can be accomplished." Together, as Ontarians and as Canadians, we can accomplish great things.

**Mr Ernie Eves (Leader of the Opposition):** It's a privilege and an honour for me to rise on behalf of our party and my colleagues. I'm sure I speak for all people, not only in this House but across this province, when I recognize Rick Hansen, an outstanding individual, and all those things that he has stood for, for so many years.

It was a little over a year ago, on February 7, 2003, when we were proud to renew Ontario's commitment to the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation. Rick Hansen certainly was the one who was instrumental in 1998 in convincing the province to do that. I was certainly proud to renew that commitment a year ago for another \$25 million, not for the sake of the money alone and not for the sake of Mr Hansen alone, but for the tremendous example that he has set for people across the world who, through no fault of their own, obviously, have had a disability that they have had to overcome in life.

Crises in people's lives quite often not only provide a huge challenge and alteration of an individual's life, but they often also provide and create an opportunity for that individual to respond to that challenge and make a real difference in the lives of others.

Now, in 1973, Mr Hansen was only 15 years old when he certainly had a tremendous life-altering experience, in the form of an automobile accident, and became a paraplegic. He could have easily just given up, but he did not. He pressed on, and he has done many, many things, not just in the areas of neurotrauma and disability. He is a truly outstanding individual.

When I looked through some of his CV today—and I've had the opportunity to talk to Rick on a couple of occasions—I agree with the Premier: That first impression never, never leaves you. He is a person of tremendous strength, courage and determination.

He has fought for the disabled community in terms of the Commonwealth Games, and got them medal status, which will now be recognized for the first time in 2006. He is fighting for the same status in the Olympic Games. He has represented this country in the Olympic Games. He has won 19 marathons around the world. He has lectured in schools. He has gone and talked to classes. He has coached athletic endeavours. He has talked to young people. He has gone out of his way. You could go on and on and on, but the point is that he has truly made a difference.

When you go through some of the appointments and responsibilities he has had, they're not just limited to neurological problems or the disabled community. He has truly been a leader in environmental concerns around the world. He has chaired international congresses. He has led Canada as the commissioner at the world exposition in Australia in 1988. He is truly connected with nature. He has led several projects. He's currently chairing the Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society. He's a member of the board of directors and the interim chair

of the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund Society. His CV would read as any very active and accomplished young person's CV might read. But when you think of the tremendous difference he has made worldwide—he has received an award for the outstanding young person in the world, he has been newsmaker of the year, he has been outstanding athlete of the year, he has chaired the Grey Cup Festival, he has done work in aboriginal affairs, he served as secretary to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth on her visit to this country in 1989—he is truly an outstanding individual.

He certainly motivated me when I was sitting over there, and will continue to motivate me, even if I'm over here or out of this place. I'm sure that anybody who has met Rick Hansen will know that he has the courage to stand up and fight for people when he believes all they need is an opportunity to help themselves.

I think that I would urge all Ontarians, all Canadians for that matter, to follow Rick's example and rise to the challenge in just a small part of the way he has responded to the challenges in life he has met, and we all will be the better off for it.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** The New Democrats join the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in honouring Rick Hansen.

This Sunday thousands of people will bike, skate and wheel through communities across Ontario. They will be taking part in Wheels in Motion, an event that raises funds for research into spinal cord injuries.

As others have said, the guiding light behind Wheels in Motion is Rick Hansen, whose leadership and commitment have made a significant contribution to Canada. Rick Hansen's name has become synonymous with courage and determination. Out of personal tragedy he has built a movement and an organization that have made life better for thousands of people.

The Man in Motion world tour has inspired thousands of Canadians to show their support for Rick's crusade, and they donated generously to the Man in Motion Legacy Fund for spinal cord injury research, rehabilitation and wheelchair sports. In all, \$216 million was raised during the tour and that became the seed money for the Man in Motion Foundation. Money raised has gone into improving peer support, community and residential access ramps, training assistance dogs, accessibility to children's play and park structures and other quality-of-life initiatives.

Since 1987, the foundation has been a worldwide leader in the area of spinal cord injuries. There is also an ambassador program, a Canada-wide network of volunteers, spokespersons, who share their stories of living with spinal injuries. The Man in Motion Foundation also runs a school program. A Rick Hansen Awards program recognizes those who exhibit the ideals and values of its namesake, and the school program also offers teacher resources so that students across Canada can learn about courage, determination, achievement and other values that Rick Hansen embodies. None of this would have been possible without Rick's drive and determination.

Rick has been breaking down barriers for a long time, and we hope the government will do its part in breaking down barriers for people with disabilities, as expeditiously as possible, by amending the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I want to salute Rick Hansen for his great work and encourage Ontarians to get things spinning this Sunday by taking part in Wheels in Motion in their communities.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James):** Je veux prendre l'occasion très brièvement pour remercier M. Hansen pour tout l'ouvrage qu'il a fait pour les Canadiens à travers le Canada; c'est réellement quelque chose qui prend beaucoup de courage. Ce monsieur, avec beaucoup d'adversité devant lui, a vraiment fait une impression sur ce pays avec les expériences qu'il a vécues à travers son projet qui est si bien fait pour les Canadiens.

On se rappelle justement avant ça M. Terry Fox, qui avait essentiellement essayé la même chose. Il n'a pas eu l'occasion à cause de sa santé, mais on reconnaît l'ouvrage qu'il a fait.

M. Hansen, comme on le sait, s'est impliqué dans beaucoup de projets et beaucoup d'organisations depuis ce temps-là, et a réellement indiqué qu'il est un Canadien qui est fier, qui est préparé à continuer, non seulement après ces épreuves et ce qu'il a fait il y a une dizaine ou une quinzaine d'années, mais à s'impliquer dans la société canadienne.

C'est ça l'important: se réaliser comme Canadiens. Nous avons une responsabilité comme Canadiens de nous impliquer dans nos communautés, de réaliser que chaque citoyen et citoyenne a la capacité de faire de ce pays une meilleure place. M. Hansen, dans cette tradition, continue la tradition de beaucoup de Canadiens avant lui. On va continuer après lui à bâtir la meilleure nation au monde, appelée le Canada.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** I would also ask you to recognize some of the distinguished former members, former parliamentarians, who are in the gallery. We have the former Speaker, Hugh Edighoffer, member for Perth, the 32nd through the 34th Parliaments. And more senior than he is Murray Gaunt of Huron-Bruce, from the 26th through the 31st Parliament. Also, Herb Epp of Waterloo North, from the 32nd through the 34th Parliament.

Most of the former members will be here during the day conducting their annual meeting. And from time to time, I hope you will be recognizing them if they're here.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Other members have been recognized previously.

In paying strict attention to the proceedings—first put away the props, member for Nepean-Carleton—it's time for oral questions.

1430

## ORAL QUESTIONS

## TAXATION

**Mr Ernie Eves (Leader of the Opposition):** I would like to ask a question to the Deputy Premier, but that raised such a controversy yesterday over who the real Deputy Premier was that I'll just refer my question directly to the Premier of Ontario.

On your way into cabinet this morning you were asked a very direct question by one of the media: "Since tax hikes are not going over so well, will you guarantee to the people of this province that they won't go up next year?" You refused to give a definitive "no" to that question, so I'm going to give you an opportunity to give one now.

**Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I'm not going to speculate on the contents of next year's budget, or the budget coming after that, or the budget coming after that. But I can tell you that, unlike the previous government, we fully intend to live within our means and we will not be hiding any \$6-billion deficits from the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Supplementary?

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton):** I say to the Premier, six weeks ago, you didn't speculate about the upcoming budget; you told working families in Ontario that there would be no tax increase. You've broken your promise not to raise taxes. You've broken your promise not to hold a public referendum on this big tax grab. Now, after your approval rating has fallen to 9%, lower than Brian Mulroney's ever fell in eight years in office, you've inflicted a huge amount of pain on working families in Ontario. You have made a real career-limiting move to the entire Paul Martin caucus. After having a few hours to think about it, will you now just stand in your place and promise the people of Ontario that you won't dig any deeper into their pockets? Would you do that?

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** Something that my friend opposite and his associates have never come to understand: It's not about my career, it's not about Prime Minister Martin's career. It's about the people of Ontario and doing the right thing for them. That's what we're doing through this budget and we're proud to continue on that path.

**Mr Baird:** It is about working families in Ontario. On January 1, you brought in a \$4.2-billion tax grab on our small businesses, on seniors living on fixed incomes, on middle-class families who send their children to independent schools and on employers, those who create jobs. In just a few short weeks you're planning on hitting the middle class with another huge tax increase—a \$2.5-billion tax increase. Driver's licences are going up; you're bringing in a new hydro tax; spirits and beer prices will go up; cigarette taxes are going up; and a host

of new user fees. You are sticking it to the middle class in such a huge way that they can't cope, they can't handle it. Will you now call this tax grab off and admit that this budget was a complete failure, and will you withdraw it and start from scratch again?

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** No, we will not withdraw this budget.

Listen, there was a demonstration earlier today by some of those who are opposed to this budget. But I can recall, having been here for some 14 years now, the protests that took place after NDP and Tory budgets. I can recall their regularity, their enthusiasm and their size. I can tell you that by and large, as more and more people come to understand what we are doing for them through this budget, more and more Ontarians are saying, given our financial circumstances, given our priorities—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Nepean-Carleton, I don't want you shouting across when the Premier is responding, or when anyone is responding.

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** The member may not be interested in this, but I think Ontarians are very interested in the news that's flowing from this budget, including the news, for example, recently referenced by the Minister of Health, about our vaccination program and what we're going to do for so many Ontario children. We believe that is an absolutely essential investment if we are going to live up to our obligation to improve the quality of health for Ontarians.

## HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Ernie Eves (Leader of the Opposition):** To the Premier, speaking of the Minister of Health, I'm sure you are aware that your Minister of Health has been out and about around the province speculating on perhaps retracting some of the ideas in the budget with respect to delisting certain services.

He has floated the idea, albeit admittedly by him in his own head, about setting up a health account for \$150 to allow people to take their first \$150. He's floated that idea in Sudbury. He did say the idea was only in his head, but he is floating those ideas and speaking his mind when he is out around the province.

Do you have any intention whatsoever of changing the provisions in your budget in terms of the policy you've taken about delisting certain services, as obviously your Minister of Health does?

**Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** We stand by the budget as presented.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Supplementary?

**Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I have a question to the Premier. Ian Urquhart reports that Liberal MPPs are getting "more calls on the delistings than on the premiums." Some of them, according to Ian Urquhart, have broken rank and are suggesting that the matter has to be revisited. Particularly in light of the fact that the Minister of Health, who is not a backbencher but a

cabinet minister, is clearly saying to members of his own party at these very public meetings that they should be looking at some way to get out from under the burden of this budget, Premier, why are you ignoring your backbenchers and why are you ignoring your Minister of Health when, in his wisdom, he is understanding that this budget is hurting the people of Ontario?

**Interjection:** We agree with the “wisdom” part.

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** Now you’re putting me in a tight spot. Let me just say this. Let me tell you how proud I am of the fantastic work that has been done by this Minister of Health in greatly influencing the expenditures we are making through this budget. As a result of his advocacy, his championing medicare in the province of Ontario, we’re going to have shorter wait times, more cardiac surgeries, more cataract surgeries, and we’ve got more vaccinations available for children than ever before. That is the direct result, I am proud to say, of the positive influence of our Minister of Health.

**Mr Klees:** I have no doubt that the Minister of Health is then particularly disappointed that the Premier is not willing to listen to him on this. But Premier, if you’re not willing to listen to your backbenchers or your Minister of Health, will you listen to the hundreds of thousands of people across this province who couldn’t be here today but who have sent in their petitions? I am going to ask that pages come and deliver to you petitions from across Ontario. This was presented to me by Linda Leatherdale of the Toronto Sun—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. You had a point of order?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I think your question was finished, actually. Premier?

1440

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** I want to assure my colleague opposite and all Ontarians that we are paying close attention to the response to our budget, but we especially feel a sense of responsibility when it comes to those we are not hearing from; for example, the thousands and thousands of Ontario children who are about to be vaccinated as a result of this budget. We are keeping them in the front of our minds. The 100,000 more Ontarians, overwhelmingly seniors, who are going to receive home care as a result of this budget, we are keeping in the forefront of our minds. The 70,000 seniors who find themselves in Ontario’s long-term-care centres, our nursing homes, may not be marching on the front lawn of Queen’s Park, but we will not lose sight of our responsibility to them and the improved quality of care that will be available to them as a result of our budget.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, earlier today there were more than a few hundred people demonstrating in front of the Legislature against your budget of broken promises. They are angry because they understand your

budget is loaded with unfair and regressive taxes and because you said one thing before the election and did the opposite after the election.

Here is what one person had to say about you and your budget today. This person said, “He owes the people of Ontario an apology for what he did.” Premier, will you apologize to Ontarians for what you’ve done?

**Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I’m sure the leader of the third party would understand that the most important thing I can do for the people of Ontario is to ensure that this will never, ever happen again, and we are doing that by means of our Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, which will prevent any future government from hiding a deficit from the people of Ontario. That is the most important thing that we can do for the people of Ontario.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, I don’t think this person quite agrees with you. She is quite upset at the promise that you’ve broken. This person is Susan Whelan, Liberal MP for Essex. Now, I suspect the reason that Susan Whelan, Liberal, is upset with you is because she will probably lose her job as a result of your budget. She believes you should apologize for what you’ve done, and she is not alone. Sarmite Bulte, Liberal MP for Parkdale-High Park, says, “That McGuinty, he really did a number on us.”

Premier, will you apologize to all these Liberals who are going to lose their jobs as a result of your budget?

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** If I only had such power, that the fate of the entire country rested in my hands. It does not.

The motivation for the provisions to be contained within our budget consists of nothing more and nothing less than doing what we think is the right thing to do for the people of Ontario. Given our financial circumstances, we felt that we had a couple of choices. We could have put up our feet for some four years and said that all we were going to do was simply allow further cuts to unfold the way they did for the past eight and a half, or we could make some difficult decisions and call upon the people of Ontario to help us make investments in important public services. That is the choice we made. We are holding ourselves to account to the people of Ontario. We’ve already set the next election date. There will be no more guessing games in that regard.

The other thing is, we are not using taxpayers’ money to spin Ontarians about our budget. We actually believe in our budget, we have confidence in our budget, and we look forward to talking about it more and more.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, your failure to apologize and reverse your tax hikes on modest- and middle-income families, and reverse your cuts to OHIP for chiropractors, physiotherapists and optometrists, is destroying not only the credibility of Liberals, it’s destroying your credibility. Only 9% of Ontarians believe anything you say any more and they are angry.

Let me give you another example: Janko Peric, Liberal MP for Cambridge, another Liberal who is scared that he’s losing his job, has written you a letter calling on you

to reverse your health care premiums. He describes the response he's getting at the door as "anger, anger."

Will you do the right thing for Janko Peric and, most of all, will you do the right thing for all Ontarians and reverse your regressive and unfair tax hikes on working families and stop the cuts to OHIP?

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** I appreciate the leader of the NDP rising to the defence of my federal cousins. Again, it's not about this particular political party or another particular political party.

I want to tell you about the response made by a parent with respect to our announcement on meningitis vaccinations. This particular parent, Kathryn Blain, is chair of the Meningitis Research Foundation. She lost her son to meningitis some years ago and she had this to say today: "The McGuinty government has demonstrated real leadership by adding the meningococcal and pneumococcal meningitis vaccines on the province's routine immunization schedule. Ontario's move will help ensure that children no longer suffer from the effects of these preventable diseases."

We are very proud of the investment we are making in better health care for all Ontarians, including vaccinations.

#### LIBERAL CAMPAIGN PROMISES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question again is for the Premier. You seem to think that it's only New Democrats and perhaps a few Conservatives who recognize your addiction to promise-breaking, but here is what Yasmin Ratsani, Liberal candidate in Don Valley East, had to say: "McGuinty broke his promises. We voted for him and he broke his promises." This is a Liberal, one of your federal cousins.

Doesn't this cause you to think maybe just for a minute that you have it wrong, that promising before the election, "I will not raise taxes," and then, after the election, raising taxes on the people in Ontario who can afford it the least, and then cutting off their access to chiropractors, physiotherapists and optometrists—don't you think that just maybe they have it right?

**Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The member may want to cast his mind back to their days in government and talk about what happened with respect to public auto insurance. He may want to talk about the social contract and the way people reacted to that.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** I know the member doesn't want to be serious about this, but I do.

We found ourselves in a very difficult situation. As I say, we could have put our feet up for four years, we could have proceeded with cuts the way the previous government had done, but we chose instead to make what we believe are absolutely essential investments in better quality health care and better public education. We stand by those investments. We stand by the commitment

we're making on behalf of the people of Ontario to better quality public services.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, if you're not prepared to apologize, I think what you're going to face is that you may even see Liberal MPs and candidates on the front lawn of the Legislature, and they won't be here to say, "Thank you, Dalton." They will be here to deliver another message, a message like Borys Wrzesnewkyi, Liberal candidate in Etobicoke Centre, who had this to say: "The McGuinty budget ... that just derailed everything. I think people were really caught off guard.... People were angry ... and I was angry too."

**1450**

Your own people are angry at you. Don't you understand? There is something fundamentally wrong when you look people in the eye before the election and you say, "I will not raise your taxes," and then immediately after the election you raise taxes on the people who can afford it the least. When you say before the election, "I will not cut health care," and then you cut access to—

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Thank you, Premier.

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** Just so we are clear, and I know my friend would not want to leave the wrong impression out there, we are investing, as a result of difficult decisions we are making, an additional \$2.2 billion in health care in Ontario. Now, he may not want to accept that, but we've made some difficult decisions. Obviously he doesn't want to support us in terms of the measures we are taking to make those investments. For example, he did not support our bill to roll back corporate tax cuts. He did not support our bill to get rid of the private school tax credit. He did not support our measure to take away the property tax credit from seniors.

Those are difficult decisions we made so that we can make investments in better quality health care. We're proud of making those investments, if only my friend opposite would support those investments and better health care for all Ontarians.

**Mr Hampton:** I'll tell you what I don't support. I don't support you whacking modest- and middle-income families with a \$2-billion tax increase, while you give those poor banks and those impoverished insurance companies a \$1-billion tax cut. You're not just hammering Liberals in Ontario. The Deputy Prime Minister, Anne McLellan, in far-off Edmonton, says, "There is no question that the McGuinty budget in Ontario hurt us." But it's not just her, it's Steve Mazurek, Liberal candidate in Leeds-Grenville, who says, "People are mad as hell at Dalton McGuinty."

Would you not admit that it's time you apologized, that it's time you stopped trying to raise the taxes of modest- and middle-income families, while you give insurance companies and banks a \$1-billion tax reduction?

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** No, I don't agree with my friend opposite. I am looking forward to the day when the federal election is over so they might talk about some provincial issues. One of the things we have done, for example—I know my friend opposite will be interested

in hearing this—is we hear from seniors, time and time again, about the particular challenges they face when it comes to cataract surgery, so we've decided by means of our budget to help those seniors who tell us they can't do basic things like read, drive or work on a computer. We don't have provincial waiting time stats in this area right now, but one of the things we're going to do, as a result of the health minister's determination, is begin to collect that information. But we have heard that in one particular hospital, waiting times are now up to close to six months. So what we are doing is we are now funding an additional 9,000 cataract surgeries every year. We think that's good news.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton):** Premier, I need your help. As I travel around the province of Ontario, some people are assigning all the blame to you for breaking your promise not to raise taxes. I know it wasn't all your fault. I know it was Paul Martin who cut health care by \$25 billion. I know it was Paul Martin who didn't give you a dime of new funding for health care in his recent budget. Clear up this misunderstanding. Paul Martin says that you didn't tell him about this health care premium, that you didn't tell him about this massive tax grab on Ontario families. Who can the people of Ontario trust? Can they trust the Prime Minister or can they trust you? Would you tell us?

**Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The people of Ontario can trust us to invest \$2.2 billion more into their health care.

**Mr Baird:** What the people of Ontario can't understand is when their Premier says one thing and their Prime Minister says another. Let's look at what Prime Minister Martin said. In interview transcripts which were distributed after your press scrum this morning, here's what the quote said: "Martin also said that he was caught off guard by Ontario's budget. He said Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty gave him no indication that there would be tax hikes, other than the budget would be a tough one."

The people of Ontario believed you when you told him that you gave him a heads-up. They understand that Paul Martin's campaign manager, David Herle, got an untendered contract to help you write and sell that budget.

Premier, would you just come out and tell the people of Ontario that Paul Martin is not being honest with them when he said he didn't know anything about this massive tax grab in the name of health care? Will you do that?

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** Gosh, the member is consumed by his responsibilities playing, I guess, a high-profile position in the federal Conservative campaign.

We on this side of the House feel that we've got a responsibility to talk about education and health care and to address environmental issues and the like. So, notwithstanding my friend's continuing obsessive interest with the federal campaign, we will continue to focus on prov-

incial responsibilities, including better health care and better education.

#### HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We all woke up this morning, of course, to our Toronto Star. We all opened it up and saw the quotations that were there from you in Ian Urquhart's column and all the ideas you have about blue-skying for this budget.

Your idea looks to me—I have to say, it smacks of a giant smokescreen to get around all of those things you're trying to do: delisting chiropractors, delisting physiotherapists and delisting optometrists. Your answer is that you're going to give everybody a \$150 health account. I would put it to you that this is a sign of desperation as you try to get out of this regressive, unfair budget.

I'm asking you, instead of dreaming up this kind of crackpot scheme, why don't you sit down with your cabinet colleagues and do the right thing: admit you've made a mistake and go back and do another budget?

**Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I feel baited when I hear the word "crackpot."

I want to say, in answer to the honourable member's question, that the point that I think is important to make in this discussion is that there is, in our health care system, a series of services which are medically necessary, under the guise of the Canada Health Act, and a variety of others, some of which have received funding and many of which haven't, that are therapeutically beneficial. Chiropractic is one of those, and there are others that were regulated, as an example, under an NDP government, but no funding has been offered to them.

I simply was intending to make the point that across the health care system there are a number of decisions that have been made over time which fund some services which are therapeutically beneficial and not others. I think it was helpful to add that to the debate.

**Mr Prue:** Back to the minister: Only 11% of the people of Ontario think this budget is a good budget, and only 9% think the Premier is doing a good job. I will put it to you that you cannot float these pie-in-the-sky, non-starter ideas and expect that the people are going to buy them. You first have to come to the conclusion and admit that your budget is an electoral disaster. You have to admit that the twin evils of this budget are the health tax and the delisting.

Once you've admitted that, it's really easy. You've admitted your mistake. You go back, you withdraw the budget, and you convince your cabinet colleagues to do the right thing and do something that's going to work.

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** I don't think there's any evil to be found in a health premium that's going to give us the capacity in this province to deliver premium health care.

The 2.5 million Ontarians who will benefit in the form of meaningful primary care haven't had a chance to

speak. The 95,000 additional people who will receive services as a result of our expansion of home care haven't had a chance to speak. Where are the voices of those 70,000 residents in beds in long-term-care facilities that, as a result of this budget and the commitments of our government, will see 2,000 new staff serving them and enhancing their quality of care? I haven't heard from them, except perhaps in Markham on Sunday at the opening of Markhaven, where there was extraordinary delight at the realization that this government is committing 191 million new dollars to enhance the quality of care for long-term-care residents—

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Thank you.

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** —because shortly after we were elected, the word related to long-term care was “crisis.” As a result of the work of the member from Nipissing, and the funding provided by that Minister of Finance, our government is moving forward with reforms that will dramatically—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

1500

#### TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

**Mr Tony C. Wong (Markham):** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. A key goal of our health strategy is to ensure Ontarians are kept healthy. One of the ways this goal can be achieved is through the practice of traditional Chinese medicine, TCM. TCM has been practised for more than 1,000 years and has proven to be an effective method of keeping people healthy and for treating various health ailments. Thus, the demand for traditional Chinese medicine practices has grown tremendously as an alternative to Western medicine. Minister, how does the budget help to move forward our commitment to TCM?

**Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Traditional Chinese medicine stands out as one of those opportunities for Ontarians to have the protection of a regulated service for the provision of something that they, in great numbers, find to be therapeutically beneficial.

I'm pleased to say, as a result of the funding initiatives in the budget, that our government is moving forward to fulfill a campaign commitment we made, which is to move toward the regulation of traditional Chinese medicine. The budget gives us the opportunity to do so, because it gives us the funding necessary to begin to work with all of the affected parties, to be able to move forward with legislation to regulate traditional Chinese medicine.

**Mr Wong:** Residents of Ontario have indicated that they would like to encourage wider accessibility and use of TCM to keep Ontarians healthy. However, many are concerned with the safety of such practices if left unregulated.

Minister, will the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care proceed with legislation pertaining to the regulation and control of traditional Chinese medicine to ensure that

practices and practitioners maintain high safety standards?

**Hon George Smitherman:** I think safety is a primary motivation here. Many of us will have been familiar with the story that came out of Montreal some number of months ago that caused concern about the unregulated nature of these practices. This is, in part measure, the motivation.

I give the member the commitment that today we have the capacity to move forward, to work with all of those affected parties and bring forward legislation to this House which will finally regulate traditional Chinese medicine so that the therapeutic benefits of it can be provided to those Ontarians who wish to take advantage of that opportunity, and we assure them that we'll do that in a fashion which provides for their safety first.

#### PREMIER'S CONDUCT

**Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** I have a question for the Premier. Premier, we've heard a number of references in this House in the past week or so related to polls that show significant disillusionment and distrust with you and with your government with respect to, primarily, the budget, the broken promises and the increased taxes. I also suspect, Mr Speaker, through you to the Premier, that another element of this is your role in this House and what I would suggest borders on contempt for the proceedings in terms of your responses to questions by the opposition.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Runciman:** Well, I feel strongly about this.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Runciman:** Mr Speaker, may I ask a question without the interference of the Minister of Finance?

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Question.

**Mr Runciman:** The question is, we have never had a fulsome explanation, the people of Ontario have never had a fulsome explanation, with respect to your commitment to call a referendum if you were going to increase taxes. Will you stand on your feet today and give the people of Ontario a clear explanation as to why you feel it's not necessary to—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I've addressed this matter time and time again. The member opposite may not like the answer, but the answer remains the same. We engaged Ontarians in the most extensive pre-budget consultation exercise ever. The other thing which is an important contributing factor here is that we discovered, upon taking over government, a \$5.6-billion deficit.

My friend says he's a champion here when it comes to the integrity of this place which we are privileged to serve in, to find ourselves in today. Then why is it that they introduced their budget outside of this legislative precinct over at the Magna operation? This is not a time and a place for this particular individual to lecture us when it comes to respecting the traditions of this Legislature.

**Mr Runciman:** That's another indication of political rhetoric rather than a straight answer, and that's what we're getting used to with this Premier and this government.

Another broken promise with the Liberal platform where it clearly indicates, "The public should be given the opportunity to comment on any legislation." This is not potential legislation, not possible legislation, but legislation that's tabled in this House. Now we find out that not only are they turning down the opportunity for input through a referendum, but they're not going to allow us to have meaningful hearings on this legislation, this dramatically changing budget. They're not giving the people of Ontario an opportunity to have input. They stand up and talk in this House; we've heard it today; Let's hear from people who don't have a voice. There's the opportunity: public hearings. They will not afford us public hearings. If you really believe in consultation with the public, will you direct your House leader to allow public hearings to occur on your budget?

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** Sometimes it seems that the only place in the universe where sound travels faster than light is over there. Here's the truth: We are going to hold public hearings. That may come as news to the member opposite, but we are going to hold public hearings.

The other thing is that I want to remind the member opposite—and I've got a copy of the Hansard report—that on June 27, 2002, Bob Runciman voted in favour of breaking the Taxpayer Protection Act. There was no referendum; there were no public hearings, no referendum. I just thought the public might be interested in knowing that.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton):** On a point of order, Speaker: I would like to ask for unanimous consent for four weeks of public hearings to be put out on this budget bill. Could I get that?

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

#### HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** My question again is back to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I'm asking you to take a very close look at your musings today in the Toronto Star. Your plan is to give every single Ontarian an amount of \$150 for services that you, in fact, are going to delist. Just do the math in your head for a minute. Of the 12 million people in Ontario who are covered by OHIP, at \$150 each, it's a potential cost of \$1.8 billion. So your plan is to potentially spend \$1.8 billion to solve your \$200-million problem. That's the way I see it. Perhaps you can explain it yourself. This budget is going downhill. It is driving you and your Liberal cousins in Ottawa close to that political point of oblivion. I'm asking you again, will you just admit your mistake, cancel the regressive health tax and the disastrous delistings and start over again?

**Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I appreciate the opportunity to have

another question from the honourable member so that I may repeat the point I made earlier, which I think is rather helpful: The member wants to refer to some services. I simply make the point that in our province there is a wide range of therapeutically beneficial services. Some have had the advantage of funding through OHIP, and many others have not. I think that's an important point from the article.

On the issue of our budget, let me take the opportunity to say to a member whose constituency includes a very high proportion of seniors that in this budget seniors will find the following advantages: significant efforts to reduce wait times for key surgeries which are very impactful for seniors, like cataract surgery and hip and knee surgery; an additional 95,000—primarily seniors—will receive benefit through our home care as a result of a significant new investment; long-term care, as I mentioned earlier, not just \$191 million for existing beds, but more than \$200 million to expand by some 3,760 beds the opportunities for people to have good, quality homes. My point simply is that those seniors are going to benefit from our—

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Supplementary.  
1510

**Mr Prue:** Although we are very proud of our seniors in Beaches-East York—of course, all of us are—we actually have the lowest number of seniors of any riding in Toronto.

I'd like to go back. I love quotations and I think this minister should do a little reading. I think the person who said it best was Goethe, when he said, "That which is the hardest thing for a man to see is that which is before his very eyes." What you have here is something before your very eyes that you cannot see. The citizens have seen it and the citizens are angry. Your \$1.8-billion scheme to hide a \$200-million mistake is surely a non-starter. What I'm asking you again is to do the honourable thing: Go back to your cabinet colleagues, tell them that they've made a mistake, admit it, and redo a botched job, redo the budget, reintroduce something that's going to work.

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** I'd like to thank the honourable member for the true expression of his commitment to the seniors in his riding in being able to make the claim boldly and pound his chest and say, "I have fewer than many others." It is the riding that he represents where Judith Leon, such a great advocate for the voice of seniors, has done so much good work, only to be run down by the local member.

I think it's incredibly important to recognize that this is a budget that moves forward on a transformation agenda, that drives more resources to the community level, that diverts the flow of patients to our hospitals by making sure they have access to services that, over the legacy of those two parties while they were in government, have been ignored. Community-based mental health and addiction treatment are an issue that I would have thought the member was a supporter of. Evidence is very clear that from 1992 on, through the legacy of two parties while in government, they did nothing to enhance

the quality of essential services, like the availability to help people with mental health issues at the community level. In our first budget, in trying fiscal times, we're moving forward because we know that these investments are essential to good quality health care.

### EDUCATION

**Ms Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore):** My question is for the Minister of Education. On April 26, I had the opportunity to meet with Bruce Davis, the Toronto District School Board trustee in ward 3, Etobicoke, and leaders of all the parent councils in each of the schools in this ward. This was the first opportunity I had to speak to them following the Premier's speech detailing our government's commitment to public education. In that meeting the parent councils applauded the Premier's commitment to public education, but they made repeated references to the Rozanski report and whether our financial commitment to public education was going to match our passion. Minister, can you please tell me how our government's commitments, as detailed in the budget, measure up to the transformation program set out by Rozanski?

**Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I thank the member for the question and I appreciate the work she's done, not just in Etobicoke-Lakeshore but in advocating for education, because it's time to do that; it's time for that to happen. In our province there was a welling recognition that our schools were deteriorating. It was conspicuous to members in every part of this province. Yet, even forced, with their backs against the wall, the previous government did not reply at all adequately to those needs. We have a report from Dr Rozanski that received not scant attention but not great response from the government.

I can tell you now, as of the school year that we've announced, that for special education—for years, the previous government left kids with special needs waiting. Dr Rozanski said that \$357 million was waiting to be delivered. We have provided now a total of \$373 million, more than Dr Rozanski asked for. One of the worst reasons for people struggling in school is not having the language of instruction. Dr Rozanski said there was \$90 million needed there to help those kids to get to a level playing field; \$93 million has been delivered, in the area of language, in our schools.

**Ms Broten:** Thank you for your answer, Minister, and most importantly, I also thank you for your commitment to public education. I'm wondering, in practical terms, because I know this is the question I will face from the parents' council representatives when I meet with them again, what changes we will see in classrooms in Etobicoke-Lakeshore. How will the students in Etobicoke-Lakeshore benefit from these specific changes that we will be bringing in place?

**Hon Mr Kennedy:** In addition to having the personalized attention that can only come with recognizing special needs, with eliminating the language barrier, this

economy depends on our receiving new Canadians and having them do well in their schools. They will see smaller class sizes as a result of new investments, over and above the ongoing needs of education. They will see extra help for kids who have challenges because of low income, because of poverty. They will see people getting help to stay in school. We will attack aggressively the dropout rate. Yesterday we announced a total of 71 million new dollars, and \$60 million being put to better use to make sure we have fewer kids dropping out.

Overall, in this one year alone, we invested double what the previous government did toward Dr Rozanski's recommendations. By the end of the fall we will more than exceed the investment that's needed—not that much to do with Dr Rozanski; to do with kids out there who have been made to wait for their futures. Some of them have been compromised, and I'm pleased to tell the honourable member that that ends with our government, and what does begin is a better future for every student in this province.

### HEALTH SERVICES

**Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** My question is for the Premier. The poll yesterday which shows an approval rating of only 9% and the flood of letters and e-mails and faxes that continue to come into our office continue to show that Ontarians are very unhappy. They're angry. They're frustrated by the budget with its health tax and the delisting of services.

I have an e-mail here from a health care worker called Carole, who says, "I have been a long-time Liberal supporter. Your announcement of the new health premium and the simultaneous delisting of such services as physiotherapy and eye exams has been the final straw. You have lost my support and that of my colleagues and acquaintances." Carole and others like her wonder why they should pay your regressive, hefty health tax while being denied OHIP coverage for eye exams, physiotherapy and chiropractic services.

**Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** I know the member opposite would have taken advantage of the opportunity to have discussions with her constituent to let her know exactly what we're doing with respect to those particular delistings.

I also know she would appreciate, as a former Minister of Health, that when I got here 14 years ago the health budget consumed about one third of the global budget and now it's close to one half. So we've got to decide exactly how it is we're going to put the brakes on the growth in expenditures when it comes to health care.

What we have done is made some difficult decisions with respect to these delistings, but we're also adding another \$2.2 billion into health care; all with a view to getting better results, whether it's wait times, more vaccinations and the like.

I'm sure the member opposite will want to convey that to her constituent.

**Mrs Witmer:** I can tell you, Premier, that Ontarians feel very betrayed that you broke your promise.

I have another letter here from a person by the name of Greg, and he writes:

“You say the reason you raised taxes is because you didn’t have the money to support the budget plan. Well, I have no more money to give you, so what am I supposed to do? Go further into debt? As I’ve already advised, if I’m forced into debt, then all I will do is declare bankruptcy, so no one wins. Not a very pretty picture, is it? So why,” he asks, “are you doing this to the people of Ontario?”

I ask you, what do you say to people like Greg, to seniors and to others who simply don’t have the money to afford your new health tax?

**Hon Mr McGuinty:** The first thing we say to people who follow these matters closely is that never again will they have this kind of shenanigan foisted upon them by way of a hidden budgetary deficit. That’s not going to happen again, because we’re changing the law in Ontario to make sure it doesn’t.

The other thing the member opposite is not prepared to convey to her constituents, obviously, is the good news that is coming out of this budget with respect to the improvements in the quality of health care that are going to be made for the people of Ontario: 9,000 more cataract surgeries every year. We’re increasing the number of cardiac procedures by more than 36,000. We’re providing 2,340 additional joint replacements every year. We’re going to perform another 425 extra organ transplants per year. We’re going to expand dialysis treatments by 529,000 annually. Those are just some of the things that we are going ahead with as a result of the difficult decisions we’ve made to invest in health care for all Ontarians.

1520

#### HEALTH PREMIUMS

**Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Premier. I’ve had a look at your budget bill. Since you claim that every penny raised from the premium is going to health care, Ontarians, including myself, expected to find a dedicated fund in your budget bill. But there is no such thing there. Premier, only 11% of Ontarians think your budget is on track when it comes to health care. Can you promise the people of Ontario that if and when you finally get around to introducing legislation enabling your unfair and regressive health tax, there will be a fund dedicated only to health?

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

**Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance):** My friend from Hamilton East, as she becomes more familiar with the procedures of this House, will know that very soon estimates will be presented in this Legislature. Those estimates will show exactly the revenues that will be raised from all aspects of the budget that we presented.

More importantly, it will show that every single cent that we raise with the Ontario health premium will be spent in additional health care services. This is the money that will give us better home care, better community care. We’ll begin to transform primary care. We’ll provide vaccinations for young children. We’ll do more for the 100,000 people who, under this budget, will for the first time have access to primary care through a family health team. We’re very proud of those expenditures, and very proud of the fact that every single penny of the health premium will be invested in better health care in this province.

**Ms Horwath:** Minister, the question is, why don’t you level with the people of Ontario? People don’t trust your government at all. That’s why they want to see exactly what you’re going to do with this middle-class tax grab. They’ve had enough of the broken promises. They want to see the details of the bill that imposes the regressive and unfair taxes. Why don’t you show us the bill directly? Why don’t you want the people to see exactly what’s there, or what’s not there?

**Hon Mr Sorbara:** The wonderful thing about the budget I presented is that for the first time we have introduced—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Order.

**Hon Mr Sorbara:** Perhaps I’ll just do this between you and me, sir. I’m not sure they want to hear.

For the first time ever we’ve introduced a bill entitled the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, which will require our government to report quarterly to the people of this province and its Legislature on all our expenditures. For the first time ever a government is going to present—and this will happen this fall—detailed expenditures for the four years between now and when the next election is called. For the first time ever this government will be required to present audited financial statements to the people of Ontario before an election so that all political parties can have equal access to the same information.

#### NORTHERN MEDICAL SCHOOL

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a question for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. During the election campaign, we made an important commitment to the Northern Ontario Medical School. Minister, I was in Espanola yesterday, in Elliot Lake a couple of days before. People are asking about the progress of the Northern Ontario Medical School. Could you report to this House on our progress?

**Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I do think that the Northern Ontario Medical School is something that we all celebrate. I’d like to take the opportunity to inform the House that we congratulate—

**Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** We announced it.

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** Yes, you announced it. Like many other things you announced, you didn't fund it. We funded it.

We offer our congratulations to Dean Roger Strasser. We know the group putting together the curriculum for this school has been working enormously hard and that the Liaison Committee of Medical Education has recently issued the decision to accredit this new medical school.

We committed \$95.3 million; construction is initiated on two campuses. We're going to see the first students coming to classes in Sudbury and in Thunder Bay in August 2005. This means more doctors for Ontario, more budding new doctors given the opportunity to experience the extraordinary flavour of northern Ontario. I already know anecdotally from members and from northern communities that they're seeing the effect and benefit of more doctors wanting to take up practice in northern Ontario.

**Mr Brown:** The shortage of doctors in our area is critically important to all of my constituents. I want you to further elaborate on the situation in northern Ontario where the small communities of northern Ontario, in particular, find the shortage of doctors to be very, very difficult in that circumstance. Could you help us with that, Minister?

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** We went one step further to correct the mess that the previous government left behind that imperilled the future of the Northern Ontario Medical School. That is that the Premier and I, working with the local members, went to the communities of Thunder Bay and Sudbury to make sure that those two significant regional hospitals are financially viable and, in the case of Sudbury, that it is even completed.

Why are we so supportive of this initiative? Why are we so dead certain that we must make sure that it succeeds? Because we know that if given the opportunity to train in northern communities, communities long since underserved, these doctors will stay in the north and provide benefit in communities like Blind River, Chapleau, Espanola and so many other great communities across the north.

That's why I'm so pleased to say that this commitment remains at the top of our list with respect to delivering better health care to northern Ontario. It stands as an important link to the economic viability of those communities.

#### HEALTH PREMIUMS

**Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** Premier, only 9% of the people in the province believe you. It's really no wonder because, from the very beginning, you somehow have an inability or an unwillingness to simply answer the most straightforward questions that are put to you. With regard to the health care premium, yesterday and again today your finance minister refused, for some unknown reason, to agree in this House to establish a dedicated fund for the health care premium.

People are not believing you when you say, "Take me at my word that every penny will go to health care." It's a

simple matter. Why won't you just simply agree to establish a dedicated fund for those health care taxes?

**Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance):** I'm not sure if my friend from Oak Ridges does not have time to actually read the budget papers, but if he would take the time, I would direct him to page 43 and page 44 of budget paper A, which sets out in very specific detail what the Ontario health premium will be spent on this year. If he goes to these papers, he will also see that every single year hereafter, the Ontario health premium will be itemized. The expenditures that are made with the resources that premium brings will be itemized in budgets from here on in this province.

**Mr Klees:** I have read the budget notes. I have read his document. I also read his campaign document. I also read the commitments that he and his Premier made coming into this election. We couldn't believe a word of that document. So how does the Minister of Finance expect us now, or anyone in the province, to believe anything that is in that document?

We're simply saying, look, no one in the province believes you any more. Put this into legislation. Forget your document. If you believe in your document, why won't you entrench it in legislation? Give us a dedicated fund, and perhaps then we may start to believe you.

**Hon Mr Sorbara:** Let's just talk about who's putting out what document. It was the date of the quarterly report of the Ontario finances, which came out on August 12, 2003—this was less than two months before election day—put out by that party when they were in government. I repeat, it was less than two months before election day. It said that there was a balanced budget in the province of Ontario. The election took place on October 2. Within a month of that election, Erik Peters, the former Provincial Auditor, said that there was a \$5.6-billion deficit in this province. How can you blow \$6 billion in less than two months? That's what they put up.

1530

#### HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, will you agree that early detection of disease is the best thing for the patient and at less cost to our health care system?

**Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'd like to thank the member for his endorsement of our family health team proposal, which is based on the principle that by providing a multidisciplinary approach of health practitioners working together, we can not only provide for people's illness but make certain, in a primary health care setting with 150 family health teams coming to provide care to 2.5 million Ontarians, that we should be able to dramatically enhance our capacity to assist people in staying well in the first place.

**Mr Bisson:** Minister, that was a bit of a cute answer, but you didn't answer the question. The question, simply put, was, do you agree that early detection of disease is the best thing for the patient and is cheaper for our health care system? You chose not to answer.

So the supplementary part of the question is, there is a woman in Kapuskasing who says that if she had been in the situation today of having to go to her eye doctor after this budget had been introduced, she wouldn't have gone. As a result of early detection, they detected a cancer behind her eye and they were able to treat it some four years ago. She's saying, with your budget, she wouldn't have gone to the eye exam. Do you think that's dangerous for the public and that finally you'll admit that your policy is going to be dangerous for the public of Ontario when it comes to their health services?

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** Do you know what I think is dangerous for the public? The fact that when your party was in government, you cut the production line of new doctors to the point that while you were the government, we went from having 55 underserved communities to well over 130. That's what I think is dangerous to the public. As a result, that's why we celebrate the Northern Ontario Medical School, and that's why we celebrate a model of primary care reform in our province that will, once and for all, bring medical practitioners together in a wide variety, a multidisciplinary approach to make sure that people have all the care they require.

## PETITIONS

### COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

**Ms Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** I have a petition today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Brock township has been declared an underserved area by the Ministry of Health with respect to physician services since 1996; and

"Whereas a CHC in Brock township could provide a range of community-based health and social services provided by a multidisciplinary team including physicians, nurse practitioners, nutritionists, health promotion coordinators, social workers, counsellors and other health professionals needed in our local community;

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

"That the Brock CHC proposal submitted on February 27, 2003, be funded as recommended by the district health council."

Signed by many people from my riding.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

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

"Whereas the Minister of Finance and the Dalton McGuinty government presented their four-year Plan for Change on May 18, 2004, in this Legislature;

"Whereas the 2004-05 budget commits to an increase of \$2.2 billion for improvements to public health care; and

"Whereas this plan includes the establishment of 150 family health teams, home care for an additional 95,700 Ontarians, expansion of mental health services to serve an additional 78,600 patients, nine new MRI/CT sites, \$156 billion for free pneumonia, meningitis and chicken pox vaccinations for children, and more doctors and nurses;

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

"To support the Minister of Finance and the Dalton McGuinty government's Plan for Change and pass budget legislation as soon as possible so that health care can be improved for all Ontarians."

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

### EVENING SCHOOL BUS SERVICE

**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty has promised to make the needs of students a priority for his government and that students deserve to have a bright future with a good education; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty has promised not to give up on students or Ontario's public school system;

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

"That the provincial government work with the Simcoe County District School Board to establish an evening bus route from St Joan of Arc High School in Barrie to the outlying communities. This would allow students to participate in extracurricular activities and help them to fulfill their potential, secure a bright future and receive the best educational experience possible as promised to them by the Premier."

I want to thank Clinton Ignatov, who has been circulating this petition and spearheading the drive for an after-hours bus to help his classmates, himself and his family. I've signed the petition.

### AJAX-PICKERING HOSPITAL

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas at the time the Centenary Health Centre and Ajax-Pickering hospitals amalgamated under the umbrella of the Rouge Valley Health System, a commitment was made by the Health Services Restructuring Commission that the communities of Whitby/Pickering/Ajax, according to the amalgamation agreement, would not lose a full-service hospital and would maintain all existing services; and

“Whereas municipal governments in the region of Durham have provided financial support to the Rouge Valley Health System on the understanding that Ajax-Pickering hospital would continue as a full-service hospital; and

“Whereas numerous service clubs and other organizations have also raised money in support of the expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital and services provided therein such as the maternity unit on the understanding that the Ajax-Pickering hospital would continue as a full-service facility; and

“Whereas the Rouge Valley Health System has changed its strategic plan without consulting its key stakeholders, such as the residents who use the hospital, the doctors, nurses and other professional staff that work within the system and the local governments and organizations that fund the hospital; and

“Whereas this has led to a decrease in the level of service provided by the maternity unit and the number of acute care beds;

“We, the undersigned concerned citizens of west Durham, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That a full-service hospital with all the existing services at the time of amalgamation be maintained at the Ajax-Pickering site and new services added as the population continues to grow and age, as agreed to by the Ajax-Pickering General Hospital and Centenary Health Centre in the amalgamation agreement signed May 31, 1998.”

Since I agree, I put my signature to it.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

I sign my name in full agreement.

#### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition today on access to trades and professions in Ontario. It's signed by, among others, some Mississauga residents who are finalists in the Canada Wide Science Fair, held in Newfoundland. It reads as follows:

“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'm pleased to sign it and ask Brendan to carry it down for me.

1540

#### COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

**Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Brock township has been declared an underserved area by the Ministry of Health with respect to physician services since 1996; and

“Whereas a CHC in Brock township could provide a range of community-based health and social services provided by a multidisciplinary team including physicians, nurse practitioners, nutritionists, health promotion coordinators, social workers, counsellors and other health professionals needed in our local community;

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

“That the Brock CHC proposal submitted on February 27, 2003, be funded as recommended by the district health council.”

#### TTC RIGHT-OF-WAY

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I keep getting petitions advising us against the dedicated TTC right-of-way. It reads as follows:

“To the Parliament of Ontario and Minister of the Environment ...

“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 comments by the chair and the members of the Toronto Transit Commission have made it clear that there is a predetermined outcome to the EA process, regardless of the objections of the local community;

“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 the ambulance and fire department staff, they don't like to work with rights-of-way;

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

“Whereas the ROW will have substantial negative economic effects on local business;

“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 wholeheartedly with this petition, I affix my name to it.

#### CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas,

“Elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“There was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

I affix my name in full support.

#### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** I have a petition signed by over 600 people—two at a time, I might add, and not all on one sheet.

“To the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas the current method of allocating municipal tax revenues to the taxpayer by property tax based on current market value has the following unwanted characteristics:

“(1) The tax burden varies subject to the desirability of a location, making taxes unpredictable and difficult to budget for;

“(2) The relative market value of a property is subjective and variable and subject to disagreement;

“(3) Long-time residents on fixed incomes in particular are affected, causing hardship, but this problem also affects young families;

“(4) Neighbourhood instability is increased as house sales are accelerated beyond the normal rate of neighbourhood renewal;

“(5) Residents who have done no home improvements pay increased taxes because of new higher cost development in a neighbourhood, out of their control, and perceive this as unfair;

“(6) Widely different property taxes caused by market value pay for equivalent services for each resident, without any apparent conscious policy social good and regardless of ability to pay...;

“(7) Long-standing policy exempts the sale of a principal residence from capital gains tax, yet current value assessment effectively contradicts this, causing a prepaid capital gains penalty based on a latent value which may never be realized;

“(8) Resentment in one part of a community that it is paying more than its fair share can lead to division and other socially undesirable effects; and

“Whereas these undesirable effects, which are sufficient reason on their own for our petition, are exacerbated by the increased reliance on the property tax to fund a greater range of government programs as instituted by the former government;

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

“To change the method of property assessment so that it becomes based on objective criteria, using a formula such as lot size in conjunction with building total exterior dimensions, and removes the location and desirability factor from the calculation.”

It's a petition I agree with, and I affix my name thereto.

#### CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It concerns the support for chiropractic services under Ontario's health insurance plan.

“Whereas elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need; and

“Whereas those with reduced ability to pay, including seniors, low-income families and the working poor, will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments; and

“Whereas elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“Whereas there was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

I affix my signature, as I totally agree with this petition.

#### DISTRICT OF MUSKOKA

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I have more petitions to keep Muskoka part of northern Ontario. I have about 3,000 and counting, so far. This 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 support this petition and affix my signature to it.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ELECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2004

#### LOI DE 2004 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ÉLECTIONS

Mr Bryant moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 86, An Act to amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act, the Legislative Assembly Act and the Representation Act, 1996 to provide for provincial general elections at intervals of approximately four years, to govern the timing of writs, close of nominations and polling day, to make modifications relating to the electoral readjustment process, and to make technical amendments / *Projet de loi 86, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections, la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative et la Loi de 1996 sur la représentation électorale en vue de prévoir la tenue des élections générales provinciales à intervalles d'environ quatre ans, de régir le calendrier relatif à l'émission des décrets, à la clôture du dépôt des déclarations de candidature et au jour du scrutin, et d'apporter des modifications au processus de révision électorale ainsi que des modifications de forme.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier):** Mr Bryant.

**Hon Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** I'm honoured to rise today to speak to this historic bill. I'll be sharing my time with the members for Scarborough Southwest, Etobicoke North, Perth-Middlesex and Sarnia-Lambton. This bill, for the first time in the history of Ontario, and for one of the first times in the history of the Commonwealth, does something that is completely in the public interest, and yet, I realize, may not be in the short-term political interest of the incumbent governing party or any party in particular.

#### 1550

This bill fixes the election dates on a four-year calendar cycle so that everybody in the province of Ontario—everybody—knows when the next election is going to be. The bill is not just about the next election, October 4, 2007; it's about all elections after that as well. It's about setting elections for the next 100 years or more in the province of Ontario.

That means establishing a bill that has a structure that, among other things, permits for the constitutional requirements, permits for certainty, provides discretion to the chief electoral officer and addresses a number of additions that were acquired over time.

Obviously, I think all of us in this chamber are very grateful for all the great work that Elections Ontario does. This will create greater certainty for Elections Ontario; there's no doubt about it. Elections Ontario likes to know far in advance when the next election is. They can get all those polling stations set up, they can hire the people who will be working in the polling stations, they can

ensure that everybody is ready to go, well in advance, for the advance polls and for everything that has to happen in the writ period.

I think we in this House also agree and are very grateful for all the work that people do in volunteering their time working for Elections Ontario and participating in this democratic process. They don't help out one party or another party or one candidate or another candidate. They are there to assist our democratic process.

We are here today to do the same thing. This Legislature has an opportunity to debate and, if it receives the confidence of the House, pass a law that is going to give everybody, no matter what the voter's traditional support is, greater confidence in our electoral system. All of us in this House will have an opportunity to say to our constituents and to all voters across Ontario, (1) "We want you to get out and participate, to get out and vote," and (2), "We want you to have confidence in your democratic system, and we feel that one way we can do that is to provide the certainty of a four-year election cycle."

This is not only going to provide certainty for Elections Ontario, which is very important, but it's going to provide economic certainty as well. There's no doubt that with respect to some elections there is uncertainty as to what will happen at the end of the election. In the pre-writ period there is uncertainty around which party may form the next government. That uncertainty, at times, creates economic uncertainty.

This will permit people to govern their affairs and understand exactly what the mandate of a particular government is. To that end, governments will know; I don't just mean members of this House, but governments will know what their agenda is and what their mandate is and what their timetable is—no guessing as to whether this or that project has to be completed by winter, spring or fall, as we've seen in past elections.

If you talk to anybody who has served in government they'll tell you that around the time of an election, in the months around the time an election might be called, there is enormous uncertainty as to what they can or can't get done. They don't know when that writ is going drop. They have no idea. That kind of uncertainty is not in the public interest. It's not. It means that governments have to operate with a number of contingencies, unaware of whether or not the Premier of the day will make that walk to the Lieutenant Governor's office and drop the writ.

It removes the uncertainty that comes from the snap election call. It removes the uncertainty that comes from a particularly elongated mandate. It provides greater public confidence in the democratic and electoral system. It provides greater confidence and certainty as to how the government is going to complete its operations. Certainly it provides greater certainty to the people who work in this building—in Queen's Park—and to the people who work at that table in front of me too. There's no guessing. Pages will have more certainty. This is good for the pages too—greater certainty. There will be no guessing as to when you're coming back or not coming back. It's good for the pages—the pages are cheering.

In addition to that, of course, you'll have voters who understand that an election is not being called because it may or may not be the most opportune time for the Premier of the day. The election is not being called because at that particular time it's in the political interests of the incumbent governing party. The election is not being called as some kind of tactic—it's not being called too early; it's not being called too late. Why is the election being called? The election is being called because, if passed, that's the law of Ontario.

Now, of course we'd have to literally amend the constitution if we were going to entrench that election date, because right now there are, in fact, conventions and constitutional laws that govern the calling of elections. Of course, in the event of a minority government, if the confidence of the House could not be established, the Lieutenant Governor would be able to call an election, and the way this law would work is that it would provide certainty thereafter, because you would go back to that four-year cycle. In other words, if in 20 years a minority government election was called and it happened in February, it would not mean that thereafter in Ontario we have elections in February; it would revert to October.

This bill is part of a democratic renewal package that, it is my hope, can earn the support of all parties and all members of this House, because the fundamental purpose of it, and the mandate of the secretariat for democratic renewal, is to give people more confidence in their electoral system. The idea is not only to improve the institutions themselves, so part of the democratic renewals agenda is parliamentary reform.

My fabulous parliamentary assistant Caroline Di Cocco, the member for Sarnia-Lambton, is working with the government House leader and the government House leader's counterparts, and working with the existing reports on greater empowerment of MPPs, and over time she will be meeting with every MPP who is interested in this issue, because we want to take our time and get this right so that people can have greater confidence in the way this House works. That's improvement to the institution itself. And yes, I guess we're changing an institution; that is, elections and the calling of elections.

Part of the democratic renewal agenda is also to have an electoral reform process whereby we will go to the people, not unlike they went to the people in Ontario, to seek their advice on what the alternatives should be in a referendum that would change our electoral system here in Ontario.

In addition to that, we want to give people confidence in our campaign finance system, so that people feel the democratic system is working as it should. Some of these things are institutions, but the purpose, ultimately, is not just to reform the institutions themselves. We don't want to have democracy boil down to nothing more than a set of hollow democratic institutions that don't have real meaning to the people of Ontario, or Canada for that matter. Democracy is primarily a hope and a demand. For a time, democracy fought for freedom, individual freedoms. For a time, democracy's main focus was the social

justice project, in addition to fighting for those freedoms, and of course we continue to do so now. But today, perhaps democracy's greatest challenge, at least in the province of Ontario, is dealing with the evil of the civic malaise, the distrust of democratic processes, the distrust of matters democratic. The rush, in part, towards the non-governmental organizations; the rush, in part, to all of the alternative Internet voices for the people of Ontario and for the people of Canada and the world, and the rush toward the globalism movement, in part, is a step away from our existing institutions.

1600

Even as provincial government and the Legislature remain outside the family, for most people it's the most important secular institution in their lives. It collects their taxes, spends money on their social system, on their health care and their education. The provincial government responsibilities today and their pre-eminence in Confederation, is not, I think, what the Fathers of Confederation imagined at the time. I don't think they could ever have imagined what would become of what is now our social safety net. I don't think they ever could have imagined how important, for example, regulation and jurisdiction over the environment and energy would have been. It is truly an accident of history, for example, that a topic as important as energy, that cries out for co-ordination, is a provincial responsibility. Each province has its own responsibility and its own set of circumstances, geographic and otherwise.

We have the provincial government—and certainly in Ontario it is true—playing such an important role in people's lives. That is why we must engage people in matters of government, legislative and democratic, so people feel that they have confidence in this democratic system, that they have confidence not only in these institutions but in the people who make them work, so that this incredibly important thing that is Queen's Park and opposition and government, the Legislature and MPPs and the public service, is seen as something that they should have confidence in.

The Democratic Renewal Secretariat's goal is to give people confidence in that, in those institutions, in those people, in those principles. That means, amongst other things, that the incumbent governing party that makes these changes—and in that case, it is the McGuinty government that is introducing these change, pursuant to our commitments to make government work better for people—has got to face the reality, as we do, that we may bring forth democratic reforms that are in the public interest and are in the interests of addressing and curing the civic malaise, that do give people greater confidence in matters electoral, legislative, government, and otherwise, that do engage more people, particularly young people, who are that next generation of leaders that right now is a generation totally disenchanted with what are sometimes called "traditional institutions" of democracy, the only institutions of democracy that play this critical role that I described before that the provinces and the federal government play.

We may do all those things in the public interest, give people greater confidence in the system, greater empowered and enfranchised voters, currently, formally, informally, officially, illegally, or otherwise, not participating in the system. We may do that and give people greater confidence in the system, and do it in a fashion that is not to our political benefit. I think it is the test of a government and a Legislature that it will put that public interest ahead of one's own particular interest. I have confidence that this House is the House that can do that.

We have in government people who've served in government before. But also, of course, the majority of the government caucus has not only not served in government before but has not served in the Legislature before.

Fresh ideas and not just doing things the way things have always been done are within the government caucus. The official opposition caucus, yes, has new members. But you have a number of members who have served in government before and know how it works. The same, of course, applies to the third party. There is a wealth of experience on how this place should work, has worked before and ought to work in the future.

It is an opportunity now for all those ideas and all those reforms that we kicked around and talked about but never moved on to finally happen. That's the purpose of the Democratic Renewal Secretariat. That's the agenda of this government when it comes to democratic renewal. It is not a political or partisan agenda. It is about improving democracy. It is about trying our best to cure the evil that is the civic malaise, that is apathy, that is those who have lost confidence in our democratic systems. I hope we can do it in a non-partisan fashion, but we're certainly going to pursue it regardless. This is just the beginning of great things for our democratic system from all sides of this House.

**Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I want to congratulate the minister on bringing forward this piece of legislation. It's a significant shift in the way that we will govern here in Ontario, and it sends a very strong signal to people in Ontario that this government is serious about engaging the public in future elections.

By setting a fixed date three and a half years from now, we are telling the people of Ontario, "Here is the election date. It's a set date in 2007." It's a date that will be advertised and known to all, and it's a date that people can get engaged in, or before. I think about students in schools who in the last election didn't really have an opportunity to get too involved. The writ was dropped by the then Premier, Mr Eves. I think it was around September 1. An election was held a month later, on October 2. There wasn't much of an opportunity to debate issues, to discuss what the government had done and what the government was planning to do if it got re-elected. It also made it difficult for the opposition parties to get involved and to really bring forward their platforms in that short, one-month period. With this new legislation, election campaigning, in a way, begins today. People can know that there's an election coming up three

and a half years from now and they can get involved in that process.

I also want to talk briefly about this institution, this parliamentary chamber. I've been a city councillor since 1988. I was elected last October and I had the pleasure to come into this House and to start learning how this Legislature, or this assembly, works. It's very different from city hall. I realized very quickly in the first few months that this institution, this assembly, is really outdated. It has great tradition and great employees and people who are really dedicated to doing the best for Ontario, but it is extremely archaic and out of date.

Oliver Cromwell, back in England in the 1600s, if I'm not mistaken, made the last significant change to Parliament when he removed a lot of the powers from the sovereign and brought them into the House of Commons in England. Since then, the system has stayed basically the same: We have opposition sitting on one side, the government on the other; debate takes place; a Speaker is in the chair; and votes are taken throughout the session.

I think it's time, long overdue, that that system from the 1600s be updated. Look at any other area of society: In transportation, we no longer use horse and carriage; in communication, we no longer use outdated communication systems. It's changed and modernized tremendously in the last 50 or 25 years. Look at other systems, such as our health system. Many of the procedures used by doctors and hospitals 200 or 300 years ago are archaic, are gone, have been changed, but this parliamentary system that we have remains the same. It remains the same way it was basically in the 1600s.

#### 1610

It cannot be changed overnight, but I think a significant step is being made by bringing forward Bill 86 because, by bringing forward this bill and by fixing an election date, you are removing the power from the Premier of the day to say, "I think I'll call an election when I feel like it," in a certain period of time. As the law presently stands, a Premier can get up in the morning, take a look out the window, take a look at the weather and say, "You know what? I think I'll call an election," take a walk down the hall, go and see the Lieutenant Governor and say to the Lieutenant Governor, "I want to dissolve this assembly and call an election."

In some ways, it's advantageous to certain individuals, particularly the Premier of the time who does that, because usually he or she is popular and is in a position of getting re-elected. We're now saying, take that out of the hands of the Premier and put it as a fixed date that applies to the Legislative Assembly as a whole. It's a first step in what the Attorney General has pointed out in his remarks earlier toward a broader change or a broader democratic renewal of this assembly and of the way we govern ourselves here in Ontario.

This, to me, is another promise fulfilled. I'm sure the opposition members are going to stand up and say, "This doesn't go far enough," or, "It's not the real promise you made," or, "You should do more than you're doing," or, "You should do less than you're doing," but I recall as a

candidate campaigning on this issue and saying that if we were elected, we would bring in fixed election dates. We're delivering that today.

I also wanted to bring forward the fact that with the 28-day period that I mentioned earlier—there is so little interest in the election that we've seen that we've had shorter and smaller turnouts at election time. We've reached the point, I think, of just over 50% of the public voting. I think that by fixing the date and by bringing forward other renewals in the next few years or in the next few months, we will see that more of the public will get involved.

Elections are important. Elected representatives are important. They make decisions that affect everyone in this province. All sorts of legislation has been brought forward in the past several months by this government which has affected all sorts of people right across Ontario; lasting, strong changes, such as the increase in the minimum wage and the freezing of insurance rates. These are all decisions that are made in this room that we sit in together. We really need to look at the way we do our business, the way this place conducts business.

It was funny because recently I had the opportunity to speak with an American who was in Toronto. He was saying he turned on the TV late at night and saw a replay of this assembly, and he asked me, "What's all the yelling and screaming about? What are you guys doing in there? What goes on in the Legislative Assembly? I can't figure it out." There are a lot of people out there who do tune in and watch—if they do tune in and watch at all, besides my father and my family—who would probably say, "What's going on in the Legislative Assembly?"

It's difficult at times to follow the debate, difficult to follow the discussion and difficult to follow the decisions that are being made. We need to change that. We need to truly engage the public. We need to pull this institution out of the 1600s and bring it into the year 2004. We need to get young people, seniors, people with families, all different people who otherwise would not get involved fully, into this system. We need to have them have a voice.

In Australia they have mandatory voting. I think that if they don't vote there, they're given a penalty of some type.

**Interjection:** A fine.

**Mr Berardinetti:** A fine of some type. I don't think we need to go that route, but I truly think that legislation of this type, which fixes election dates, and future legislation which will be brought forward by our minister, which changes this institution, will engage the public, will bring people forward and will involve the public in the everyday decisions that affect them all here in Ontario.

I want to wrap up with that and let the next speaker continue on from there.

**Mr Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North):** Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to address my remarks contoured by three broad headings: democracy, not gamesmanship; new Canadians; and schools and universities.

Before beginning each of these particular subheadings, I'd like to start with a quotation from the realm of politics, from the realm of political history, for each of these.

I'd like to start by quoting a former Vice-President and President of the United States—a Tory, I might add—Gerald Ford, who said, “The political lesson of Watergate is this: Never again must America allow an arrogant, elite guard of political adolescents to bypass the regular party organization and dictate the terms of a national election.”

I bring this to your attention with a view to the first subheading I've cited: democracy, not gamesmanship.

One of the very remarkable things that we in the government of Ontario, a McGuinty-led government, are doing is ceding, relinquishing, giving up one of the great powers that a government, a Premier, in this province has had for Ontario's entire history: the timing of an election, be it based on the mood of the electorate, the economy, the way the United States' GDP is flowing or their latest involvement in either engaging the world in war or disengaging themselves, and also based even on polling that would be done Ontario-wide, which is being done in great measure these days, as you will realize, with the federal election underway.

That is a magnificent opportunity for an incumbent government to play games, to structure the timing of the election, to call it when they might perceive the opposition would be most unready, when they would be most caught off guard, which until this bill, this initiative, this move for democratic renewal, has been the gamesmanship that Ontario has had to suffer. You'll recall that there have been governments in this province that have gone to the polls earlier than the accepted four-year mandate and governments that have gone to the polls later than that, perhaps in their fifth year. That power to work around Ontarians, to be poll-driven, is now going to be eliminated for the first time, certainly in this province, but I might also add, very nobly, for the first time in the history of most of the Commonwealth countries on the planet.

As the Premier of this province has said, “Elections do not belong to Premiers to use as they see fit for their own political agenda.” That is a remarkable effort on the part of this government toward a broader democratic renewal and to engage the citizenry.

As the Honourable Michael Bryant, Attorney General and minister responsible for democratic renewal, has stated, “There are a few key planks of this particular bill. Firstly, elections will be held on the first Thursday, every four years, starting Thursday, October 4, 2007.”

As one of my colleagues was sharing with me this morning, this is yet another of the long and burgeoning list of promises that the government of Ontario is fulfilling today.

**1620**

One of the things that this particular bill will do is strengthen democracy and engage the people of Ontario in this, the most ambitious democratic renewal process in

our history. As we said, it will ensure that government works for Ontarians, and not around them.

I'd now like to turn to the second broad area that I'd like to consider, and that is, as I mentioned earlier, new Canadians. With that, I would like to quote James Clarke, who was a former Secretary of State, again, of the United States, who said, “A politician thinks of the next election. A statesman, of the next generation.”

One of the things that new Canadians who come to this country—who may have hailed from countries with less robust democratic systems, if there was democracy in anything but name at all—will often tell you is that one of the great privileges that they feel, one of the great marks of citizenship that they feel, along with the signing of the citizenship papers, the oath of that particular station, the ceremony and singing of O Canada and all the rest of it, one of the great things that they feel privileged to do, some for the very first time in their lives, is to actually participate in the democratic process.

New Canadians will tell you that when they have come from countries which often would not ask them for any kind of voting at all or, if there was at least the semblance of a mock democratic process, where they might find, for example, the president and his party as the only option on the ballot for whom to vote, or that the voting day itself in particular districts was essentially impassable because of either riots, police, protests or crowds becoming unruly—one of the great things that new Canadians will tell you is that they are honoured and privileged to actually cast a vote in the democratic process.

They will realize, as we publicize the details of this particular bill, that the government of Ontario, by fixing the date of elections, by removing the gamesmanship, is opening up the opportunity for those individuals to exercise their democratic right, their democratic privilege, by casting a vote both federally and provincially in ways that they value and that are even hard for us to express. As I said, these are individuals who have perhaps come from, say, a country like mainland China, where the only vote is taken by internal party people within the confines of that particular ruling class, that particular ruling party.

So it's a very great initiative that we are putting forth, as I mentioned, really among the very first in the Commonwealth.

The third area that I wanted to speak about is regarding schools, universities and just the broader educational communities. With that, I would like to begin with a quotation from Sir Winston Churchill, who said, “No part of the education of a politician is more indispensable than the fighting of elections.” Of course, Churchill, in his infinite wisdom, was talking about re-engaging the people, being on the hustings, speaking at Hyde Park, learning directly, without any intercession, without pollsters, without the backroom boys, but actually going directly to the people.

One of the great things that schools, colleges and universities at all levels are going to sense with this

particular bill is that when they teach their kids or their graduate students or when there's an oral defence of a PhD about the democratic process in this province and in North America, when they realize that there are fixed elections, fixed campaign periods, that a lot of the gamesmanship, as I said, is removed, they will be able to plan their civics classes, civics lessons. They will be able to participate fully in the democratic process.

I can see, for example, within my own riding so many of the schools actually assigning electoral participation—getting out on to the hustings with whatever particular party of their choice—as part of school projects.

As you'll note, many times here at Queen's Park, in the Legislature, we are host to students of all ages who come to see their government in action, to hear the words being spoken here in Parliament, the exchange of debate and ideas. With this bill, the democratic renewal bill, the Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004, we in the McGuinty government are moving forward in all these areas, whether it's the restoration or the improvement of democracy, not gamesmanship, well appreciated by new Canadians and by those who honour and value democracy, in particular our educational communities. It is with that that I move to support this bill.

**Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** I'm always glad to join in a debate on a hot and smoggy day here in Toronto. Hopefully the good people at home are in somewhat more comfortable conditions than all of us in the Legislature right now. But this is a very important piece of legislation.

I want to preface my remarks by saying one thing. I'm proud of the Premier. I'm proud of the Premier for doing this. And I'll tell you why. One of the moments where I was proudest of the Premier of the day, Mr McGuinty, was when he was Leader of the Opposition. When our party, as part of our overarching platform, announced this to the people of Ontario prior to the last election, the Premier had the great opportunity to be on TVO with Steve Paikin. I'm sure many of our viewers watch Steve on TVO. He was interviewing Dalton McGuinty, then Leader of the Opposition, and he said to him, "Are you crazy? One of the great tools, one of the great powers, one of the great advantages you would have if you were to be the Premier is the ability to have le droit de seigneur, the right of the king, to decide when an election is going to be. Why, man, why would you give up that right?"

Do you know what he said? I'll always remember this, because I remember this story with pride. He said, "Steve, now, can you imagine if we actually go ahead with this reform that we've promised to do and there are fixed elections in this province, and another political party comes along and says, 'You know what? We don't agree with fixed elections. What we'd like to do is to change the system back to the old way, where the Premier of the day can call an election whenever he or she thinks he or she can win it.' Would the people support that? They wouldn't. They would not support that."

That's why I know that this historic piece of legislation is the right thing to do. Because people, when

they examined it, would say, "Of course it's the fair thing to do." And if we do this, I can assure you, no politician in this province will ever be able to go back to the old system where they have this personal right to decide when an election should be.

There are 1,211 days to the next election. I'm sure my friends in the opposition are probably jotting that down right now, as I speak, and putting it in their calendars—1,211 days. Everybody in this House, everybody in the province knows when the next election is going to be. Now, that's fair, because everybody knows.

My daughter, Alexandra, will be 19, it will be her birthday, on October 4, 2007.

**Interjection:** Really?

**Mr Wilkinson:** It is. And what made me think of that is, my daughter now knows, without a shadow of a doubt, that she will vote in the next election. Hopefully, she'll vote for her father. But you never know; it's a free country. But she is in grade 10. What this bill says to every high school student from grade 9 up is that they will be allowed to vote.

Now, here we are as a society, trying to change a scourge to our democracy, which is the lack of voter turnout, particularly in the younger ages. Only about 25% of young voters vote, because they don't think it's important to them. Every high school student in this province knows that they're going to have the vote in the next provincial election. Every member of this Legislature must reach out to those students. If they don't, it will be at their own peril, because we know who's going to be able to vote. I think it will be incumbent upon us to reach out to those young Ontarians to make sure they feel part of the system. Because we can go into every high school classroom, as MPPs from all parties, and say, "You have the vote. You may not be 18 yet, but we can assure you that you will have a vote on October 4, 2007." I think that's going to be revolutionary in this province. I think it will be. I think that's one of the great benefits of this very forward-thinking piece of legislation.

**1630**

I want you to know that I'm proud of our democratic reform proposals. There are really five promises that we've made. The first one was that we would introduce legislation to ban government-paid, partisan, self-promotional advertising. As I've said in this House before, my God, were people upset about that. One of the reasons I think we are here in the Liberal caucus is because so many people were so thoroughly unhappy that their taxpayer money was being spent by the previous government to promote itself shamelessly. We've introduced that legislation. So there's a promise that has been kept.

Every member in our caucus has a seat on a cabinet committee. I know I serve, at the discretion of the Premier, on the cabinet committee on economic affairs. It's a fascinating experience, even though I am the rookie of the rump rookies in this Legislature.

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** The firm.

**Mr Wilkinson:** The great firm of Zimmer, Wynne, Wong and Wilkinson. Always, we are here—

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** And the others.

**Mr Wilkinson:** And the others, of course, but I'm just the rumpiest of the rump rookies right here in the back row.

We are able to be on those cabinet committees, and that has been a great empowerment of our caucus, to be part of government and to have our say at the very birth of new legislation. The Premier has appointed the Attorney General, the Honourable Michael Bryant, to be the minister for democratic renewal, and he is ably assisted by my friend the member for Sarnia-Lambton, who is his parliamentary assistant on this file. She'll be speaking after this.

The fourth promise that we made is the promise in our platform that we would fix election dates to be every four years. It's going to be the first Thursday of October. We were elected on October 2, 2003. I'm sure the people will cut us some slack because we're actually going four years and two days. Surely within a week we could have some leeway. That's when the next election is going to be.

The fifth thing is we have agreed to explore the issue of proportional representation. But of the five election promises that we've made, we've already kept or are keeping four of them. By getting this off the deck, it will allow us to look at other issues.

This proposal, on the face of it and beyond the face of it—but actually, on examination—is fair. I am 45 years old and I can recall five governments of three different political stripes that went to the end of their mandates. I remember the Liberal government under the great Pierre Trudeau and his successor, Mr Turner; I remember the Mulroney government, which at the end was taken over by Ms Campbell; and I remember the Bob Rae government. Three parties, all at the end of five years. I believe the Bob Rae government actually went beyond five years. There was a bit of a loophole there and they extended it just as far as possible before they met with the people so people could render whether or not they deserved another mandate. We all know what happened in all three of those elections. People were frustrated by that. They felt used by it.

On the other hand, at the other extreme, we have Prime Ministers—some who have been very successful, I might add; the former Prime Minister of Canada—who were able to cannily drop an election. It's good for the press. It allows them to write endlessly and speculate about whether or not there's going to be an election, but I don't think it serves the interest of the people.

Finally, it's efficient. It's efficient because, for people to vote, they have to be on the voters' list. We know when the next election is going to be, so it helps us create the voters' list that will ensure that people have their franchise.

Finally, I want to say—and it is so good to see the member for Nepean-Carleton come here, just dropping in. I was speaking to somebody last night—actually a federal member—and he said, “I don't like fixed election

dates.” I said, “Really?” He also said, “We've got to stop this cycle of governments, as they leave, trying to get re-elected, painting this rosy economic picture of the state of the land economically, and then new parties finding out that perhaps the other party was not completely forthcoming.” So our promise now is that, six months before the next election, the Provincial Auditor, who is independent of this place, will write a report to tell people the state of the books so we can stop this endless cycle of rosy expectations followed by a very strong dose of reality that the next government inherits.

How can we do that? How can we say, “In six months before the next election,” if we don't tell people when the next election is? That's one of the great advantages of this reform. This reform allows us to stop yet another problem we have in the system. This reform leads to the other reform, so that never again will the people of Ontario go into an election with competing promises and not be able to understand the state of the books of the province.

I support this bill and I commend the minister. There are 1,211 days left in this government; everyone knows that.

**Mr Qadri:** This mandate.

**Mr Wilkinson:** This mandate; true, because we're always hopeful. I look forward to my daughter's 19th birthday on October 4, 2007. Thank you.

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** It was interesting to hear the member for Perth-Middlesex. He certainly was eloquent about the reason, the rationale and the various dynamics. And I have to say that my father's birthday is on October 4 as well, except that he won't be 19 at that point in time; he will be 87, and I think he has never missed a vote. Actually, he told me it's good thing that I ran for the Liberals; otherwise he couldn't vote for me. That's what he said to me.

I stand to speak on this bill, and I want to say that the minister responsible for democratic renewal, the Honourable Michael Bryant, certainly has a very strong commitment to democratic renewal. Democratic renewal is about making government work better. It's about strengthening our democratic institutions, the participation of the citizens in the province, and more transparency and accountability for what government does and how it does its job during the four years. It's one thing to want, sit here during the bantering that goes on sometimes in the House, and it's another thing to take a look at the facts and the reality that we face on a daily basis.

I'm very proud to be part of a government that is set on making a difference and doing the right thing for the public interest. The fixed election dates: I'm sure we'll hear the opposition talk about this being the Americanization of our democracy, which it is not. This is about bringing some consistency, reliability and efficiency to a corporation called government so that Elections Ontario has the capacity to have some kind of assurance that there is going to be an election at a certain time so they can better prepare. We probably had an extreme situation in, I would say, the last year, from the time we had a new

Premier in this province in 2002, I guess it was. There was this on-again, off-again, on-again election because they used the election date almost as a political football. That will no longer happen in the province because a fixed election date allows Elections Ontario to better prepare, because they have a lot of work to do. And it's a better use of their dollars, rather than putting up, if you want, their offices and then having to take them down again, setting the system up and taking it down again. It's a tremendous waste of money, energy and just people's time in doing this.

As well, it's a way of better preparing the electoral lists that have to be done. It is no small feat to put on an election. I am proud that this is another example of trying to make government work better. And an election date that is set means that young people, our citizens in the province, will know that every four years, on the first Thursday in October, there will be an election, and no one can play silly games.

**1640**

It has been a tradition that the Premiers of this province have had the discretion to set the length of the campaign period and to find out—how do I say it?—the way the wind was blowing so they could call an election. This is about changing that, and now we're going to ensure that there are 28 full days, that all parties know that's the campaign period and when it's going to begin.

We have made other changes that I believe are of benefit and in the public interest, things like ensuring that before the next election as well the Provincial Auditor will look at the books and be able to qualify that either yes or no, the financial affairs of the province are what the government tells the people of Ontario they are. We did a great disservice to the people of Ontario before the last election, and I say this Parliament has. Why? Because the government of the day provided financial reports that did not indicate the true picture of the financial situation of this province. That did a great disservice to the people of Ontario.

I have had constituents say to me, "Is there no recourse when a government does not state the true finances?" When people have to pay their taxes, they certainly have to provide accurate information to their accountants, and it's done on an honour system. But nonetheless there is a moral obligation on the part of the person providing the information that that information is correct. That did not happen in this province, and it put all of us in a situation that no one expected. Now that aspect of accounting, if you want, will not happen any more because we will have oversight in this province—more transparency, more accountability on the financial situation of the province.

Another aspect is that we are going to apply standards to advertisement that the government, on behalf of the people of Ontario, puts out in the public interest. That advertisement is not about what I call self-promotional advertising, telling the public how good a job you're doing; it's about providing people with needed information such as how to prevent people from getting West

Nile virus. I think that is the role of government: to always protect the public interest. It's not about self-promotion.

We've brought in legislation to stop that, to put standards there that have to be reviewed by the Provincial Auditor, now the Auditor General, that will ensure those standards are met. We also have brought forward a change to the Audit Act, an ability for this Provincial Auditor to oversee transfer agencies and value-for-money audits done on them, which has not happened in the past.

It's about good government. It's not about just holding on to power, which we saw for the last eight years. What we are doing today really does take away some of the power that the Premier had in establishing and setting the date. That power was used and abused by all parties in the past to meet the political interests, not the public interest sometimes, of all parties. This happened again, and you see it happening in various jurisdictions as well. So all parties are guilty of this.

It's not easy. It takes a great deal of courage to take away some of the power that's inherent in the position of a Premier. There is an intent on the part of this government to do the right thing, to ensure that we bring in legislation and a *modus operandi* that truly transforms the way we are going to govern.

We are engaged in what we call results-based planning. It is an incredibly exciting aspect of better management of government. This was not in place. Transfer partners did not have to justify results based on the investment that was made into their agencies. Now that is where we are going. It's a tremendous paradigm shift to go to results-based planning, and it's an onerous process.

We went through the budget not long ago, and that budget was one of the most courageous stands a Premier and a finance minister have taken. It's courageous because the easy thing to do would have been to just sit and say, "You know what? We have a choice and we are going to cut our services, continue to erode our services, or we're going to pay down the deficit, a deficit we weren't supposed to have." Instead, we decided that we're going to have to do both. We have to rebuild our services and at the same time we have to also pay down the deficit.

One of the myths around this place is that the previous administration were good fiscal managers. When you look at the evidence, they were not good fiscal managers in any respect, because their finances were way out of control. They were giving out tax cuts before they were paying down their deficits, and therefore put this province in an incredibly precarious position. I would suggest that this notion of balancing a budget at all costs, without any consideration to the consequences it had on people's lives—

**Mr Levac:** And added \$15 billion more on the debt.

**Ms Di Cocco:** They would also raise the debt by \$21 billion. I have a question: Where did all the money go? That's the question I have for the members from the previous administration.

Nonetheless, I would say that this bill is a very significant step to better democracy in the province. It is a

significant step to stabilizing and not allowing for games to be played when we near an election.

I spoke to former parliamentarians, and you see the commitment and dedication people have when they come to this place. Sometimes it saddens me when I see ideological blinkers on that prevent people from thinking critically and, I would suggest, being frank about some of the issues that have to be dealt with in the province. On this bill, by the way, I have had many responses across the province from people who are very supportive about having fixed election dates, because it provides stability, consistency and an efficient way to do the business of this corporation called government.

I am thrilled that I am part of a team that has a very strong commitment to making this government, to making this place, work better, and am part of a team that does what is sometimes a lot harder to do, because it's about what is best in the public interest, not in our own self-interest. We will continue to strengthen our democratic institutions in this province, unlike what we saw when the budget was taken out of this place and put into Magna. I did not see one member from the previous administration stand up and say, "This is not right and we should not be taking the budget out of this Legislature, because this is the people's House and the people's representatives have a role that they must play in scrutinizing the budget."

I am proud that the Premier, the minister responsible for democratic renewal and this government have had the courage to bring forward this bill, because it is better for the people of Ontario.

1650

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

**Mr Marchese:** I want to say that I don't see this as much of an ideological issue between parties, so you'll have a variety of opinions, I suspect, from all sorts of members on this side of House. I think this is good for debate; it really is. I don't see this necessarily, like the Liberals who have spoken, as a serious part of democratic renewal. When people argue that this might engage voters to vote, might motivate them to vote, I really don't think this will do it. If some of you think that, I believe you are mistaken, because that's not what will get people to vote.

I appreciate the argument that the electorate will have certainty. That's an obvious one. They won't have to be guessing about when a government is likely to call an election and using that for their electoral purposes. In that regard, it's positive to take away the power of a party to determine when it wants the advantage of calling an election so it can get itself elected. I understand that. The positive is that people will now have a date that will be fixed, more or less, in that October period, given a variety of circumstances.

A lot of people will say, "It's a good thing," but in terms of speaking about democratic renewal, I would be more excited to speak about proportional representation as an issue that would be here in front of us to debate than this one. I know we're going to be discussing it. I

don't know how committed you are to the whole issue of whether we're going to have proportional representation for the next election, but I look forward to that debate as soon as possible. That will get me going.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I am very pleased to see this piece of legislation come forward. I want to congratulate my colleague from St Paul, the minister introducing the bill, and the members from Scarborough Southwest, Etobicoke North, Perth-Middlesex and Sarnia-Lambton. I thought they all added something different in terms of the value of this historic first step, and I underline that this is only the first in a series of initiatives that will help this place and governments be more democratic.

I look forward to the debate that the member from Trinity-Spadina, who just spoke, issued. He talks about proportional representation, and we have a commitment to introduce an element to address that as well.

One thing I would say in terms of an election date is that it should help turnout. Add that to a few other things, like my private member's bill, which was there in terms of party affiliation so people know who is affiliated with which group, which party etc, helping Elections Ontario and Elections Canada to be organized. They know when it is and when they can get their people in.

We make a big assumption about the level of voter-ship. I will tell you, and I've said this to the Chief Election Officer, Mr Kingsley, that in my opinion, in my riding, the list was 15% to 20% incorrect. Do an analysis of 80%, not of 100%, and then we're talking about 60%-plus participation in that. So I don't buy the argument that we have such a poor record. I think our administration is not as good as it should be, and I'd be happy to talk about this further at another time.

**Mr Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** I'm going to be making a few comments in a while, but I just want to address the argument that somehow by fixing the date you are taking away from the governing party the opportunity to call the election when it is to its political advantage.

We only have to look back in recent history. In 1985, we had 42 years of Progressive Conservative government. The next government lasted two years. They won a non-confidence vote, which presumably they didn't call. In the next election, in 1990, Premier Peterson had the advantage of calling it when he wanted to. What did he do? He called it before three years were up, it became a major part of the election and he lost. So the guy who had the advantage lost. Premier Rae decided to wait until the very last moment to drop the writ. Everybody knew it was coming. He lost. Premier Eves, when he decided to call it eight years later, lost.

To me, what this points to is the fact that with today's sophisticated campaigns, everybody knows when the train is coming down the track. They may be out by a week or two, but it doesn't really matter, in the bottom analysis. So that whole argument, in my view, is blown up.

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** This is a little bit like baptism. Baptism isn't

the end of a journey; it's the start of a journey, the start of a sojourn. I agree with the member opposite: If this were taken in isolation from all the other proposed reforms, it would be a tepid and ineffectual response to any argument that you're trying to promote greater participation in true democratic processes.

But that's not what the minister and the honourable member are talking about. They're talking about this as one of several key components. Let's face it: Our democratic institutions—the level of confidence in governments generally; the level of disengagement of citizens, particularly young citizens; and the lack of any kind of meaningful embrace of teledemocracy, citizen juries, deliberative democracy and so many other components is so profound that we have to start somewhere. I think the minister and the member have weighed out very much the springboard for the kinds of changes we want to see.

Our goal as a government—one of those measurements we talk about—is to ensure that participation down the road is going to be enhanced by at least 10%, and I look forward to that.

I look forward to the opportunity to speak more about some of the other things that need to be done, including the concept of proportional representation, which I support and will speak on when I get the chance next week, and also the issue of how we can build some enhanced integrity into the first-past-the-post system, which I think is going to require us to move to preferential ballots. I think there are some really good things we can do, and I look forward to further debate of these issues.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Reply?

**Ms Di Cocco:** I thank the members from Trinity-Spadina, Ottawa Centre, Lanark-Carleton and Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

This is absolutely not the only item. This is one aspect of a bigger attempt, if you want, at different components of democratic renewal. This is one aspect to it.

Having a fixed election date is not about giving an advantage or a disadvantage. It's about that certainty, as the member from Trinity-Spadina said. It's about the ability to organize so we aren't in disarray and so the people at Elections Ontario—I call them the protectors of democracy, the keepers of democracy—have the ability to do their work up until the election, to make sure their ducks are in a row so they can better prepare. This is one component.

As you know, the House leaders will be looking at, and were looking at, changes in the standing orders—how do we make this place work better—enhancing the role of the private member; looking at our committee systems and enhancing them; looking at different recommendations so that this Parliament, this Legislature, will work better, that there's more respect and better rapport here; and that we can actually do the job that the people of Ontario sent us here to do.

1700

It's also about restoring credibility to the institution. This is one step of many more. It is about electoral reform and looking at first-past-the-post versus proportional representation.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Di Cocco:** No. Or looking at both; looking at all. Absolutely not “versus.” So this is one part of a big picture.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Sterling:** It is interesting that I speak today. As was noted by the government House leader, this happens to be my 27th anniversary. That long experience over that period of time will perhaps allow me to look at some of these things in a holistic and big-picture view, as opposed to looking at one thing, as this happens to be.

Before I begin, Mr Speaker, I hope you'll forgive me for wishing my mother a happy birthday on her 95th birthday yesterday.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I join you.

**Mr Sterling:** We had a party for her on Sunday. Unfortunately, I should have told Mr Watson about it—it was in his constituency—but she only wanted one politician there and I was the choice. At any rate, I've got to tell you that my mom raised a family of four kids on her own. My dad died when she was 36, and I was only two years of age at that time. She was a very strong woman, still is a strong woman and continues to give me good political advice. She's very, very sharp.

**Mr Levac:** I bet you don't mess with it.

**Mr Sterling:** I “don't mess with it,” is right.

I'm going to be sharing my time with Toby Barrett, another member of our caucus.

We've talked a little bit about what democratic renewal and those kind of things are about. One of the greatest things that happened in terms of reforming this House happened under the Mike Harris government, when we went from 130 seats to 103 seats and had coincident boundaries with our federal riding. It was an issue and an item which I pushed very strongly on with Premier Harris before he was the Premier. I know many members felt the pain of that happening to them because their ridings changed and there were, of course, fewer politicians as a result of it.

However, I do believe that having coincident boundaries with our federal colleagues creates less confusion in the minds of the public. The public know they have one MP and one MPP. There's one Lanark-Carleton provincially and there's one Lanark-Carleton federally. So I think that is perhaps the greatest democratic reform I've seen that has occurred in this place.

We have heard, and the government has put forward, a number of initiatives with regard to changing the system here. One was done without legislation, and that was putting backbench MPPs from the governing party on cabinet committees. In fact, every one of them is on a cabinet committee.

On the one hand, that can be seen as a very positive move in engaging private members to a greater degree, but on the other hand it can be seen as a loss of independence on the part of MPPs as well. If the Premier and the Premier's office owns your appointment to a particular cabinet committee, and you become part of the cabinet by the very fact that you're sitting on the cabinet

committee, when a member comes in from the backbench of the governing party and sits in this place and says, "Can I vote against a government initiative, can I vote against a piece of legislation that the government brings forward?" he or she must feel that there is a degree of betrayal because they have sat in the room where the decision was made.

I believe that our parliamentary system was based upon the fact that certain individuals are cabinet ministers and other individuals are not. Those other members of caucus who are not cabinet ministers of the governing party, in my view, should feel free to exercise discretion from time to time to vote against their government. That is, in fact, healthy for democracy, it's healthy for our province and it's healthy for our country.

It is further complicated by the fact that the Premier and the Premier's office have the right to enrich each backbencher in the governing party. I don't believe there is any member of the governing party who does not hold another job and receive an additional stipend, somewhere around \$10,000 or \$12,000 more, for doing that particular job. I'm not against MPPs getting paid more for what they're doing because I believe MPPs are underpaid at the present time, but I do object to the fact that the Premier and Premier's office have such control over the financial well-being of the backbenchers. I don't think it is done intentionally, but I think, if it is done intentionally, it can be used to twist the arm of the particular backbencher to come to the game and fall in line and vote with the team, notwithstanding that the member might feel very different in terms of his moral convictions, or he believes that his constituents don't feel that they support a particular government initiative.

That one has been there a long time, too. It's not just this government that has had the ability to appoint all of their backbenchers to an additional job; we had that when we were in government. The government before that had that. It goes back maybe 30 years, but that doesn't say it's right, either. What I am trying to get at is the power of the leader to control what goes on in here and not have healthy debate, either in the government caucus, which, of course, is secret, or in this Legislature or in the constituencies of the members.

We've had that one particular initiative of the government.

We had another initiative with regard to the executive council having to be here or be docked \$500 and somebody keeps a checklist or whatever it is with regard to the Premier. I guess he keeps a checklist and he is going to fine somebody \$500 if he is not here and he doesn't have an excuse. I find that a little childish. I think it's almost going back to the day when they took attendance when you went to school. I predict, by the way, that nobody will be fined this \$500 in the next four years. There will be miraculously good excuses for every absence that takes place here with regard to every cabinet minister here. So that one is a bit phony in a way. I would not say "kind of phony"; I think it's real phony.

The other part of this debate is, can you discuss these things in isolation? Can you discuss true democratic

reform by piecing off little things like having a fixed date for an election? I don't think it's a big deal, frankly, whether you have a fixed date for an election or not. As I said before, I don't think it gives governments any kind of advantage any more. Probably, setting a fixed date gives the governing party even more advantage than having a variable date because all the bureaucracy knows when the next election is going to be. You can be sure that that bureaucracy is going to build, in terms of announcements etc, as they go toward the date; as indicated, October 4, 2007.

**1710**

So I'm not certain it offers the opposition any equal opportunity in the election. As I demonstrated before, we have over the past number of years seen governments fall on a regular basis. Probably the average length of a government has been six years, something like that, over the last 20 years. I predict it may come down even lower than that after October 4, 2007.

I want to read a column from the Ottawa Citizen by Randall Denley in reaction to this announcement with regard to the fixed date. I think this column really does sound in another point I'd like to make.

"It's great to see Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty championing democracy, but it's a bit like closing the barn door after you've set the barn on fire.

"McGuinty said Tuesday that some Ontarians are 'cynical' or 'disillusioned' about politics. No doubt. Do you think it could have something to do with politicians who"—I don't know whether I can say the word, even though it's here—break promises "to get elected."

"McGuinty seems to think the problem is lack of fixed election dates. He's solved that by telling us that the next provincial election will be October 4, 2007."

But as you will note from the legislation, and nobody has talked about the legislation, if October 4 falls on a religious holiday, then the Chief Election Officer must pick another day within the seven following days. We find out that in fact October 4, 2007, is a religious holiday. It's a Jewish religious holiday, as confirmed by a rabbi in Ottawa. We know that notwithstanding that we're talking about October 4, 2007, it's unlikely that the next election will be October 4, 2007. So we have a bill that says October 4, 2007, but it will probably occur a week later.

Interestingly enough, as well, the bill doesn't deny the election returning officer from holding the election on Saturday or Sunday, so we could have an election on Sunday, October 7, according to this legislation, whereas it was always the Thursday of a week in which we had an election before. Perhaps the government would like to amend their bill to allow more latitude in that regard. I think it would be wise to keep the election on a Thursday. I don't care which day of the week it is, but I think it would better if it were constant in terms of whether every election be on a Monday or a Thursday or whatever.

Anyway, Mr Denley goes along and he talks about:

"Rather more important than the date of the election is a respect for the actual principles of democracy. In a

democracy, we transfer our power to the government with the understanding that it will seek our approval for its major policies.”

“The relationship is built on trust. By breaking solid commitments not to raise taxes or run a deficit, McGuinty has broken that trust.

“The only really good news in knowing that the next election is somewhere around October 4, 2007, is that now we know how much longer we have to put up with him. Any prisoner can tell you that knowing your release date helps you endure the sentence.

“There’s likely to be a run on the new four-year Dalton McGuinty calendar, the one that counts down the days until we can vote him out.

“If McGuinty really believes in democracy, there are two things he can do to prove it.

“Rather than neutering the Taxpayer Protection Act, he could choose to live by it, as he promised, and put his tax-and-spend plan to the voters in a referendum.

“Getting rid of the Taxpayer Protection Act will actually reduce democracy in Ontario. The act has been mocked as some kind of right-wing bridle on government, but its basic premise is sound. It doesn’t prevent politicians from raising taxes, but it does prevent them from doing it by stealth.

“A tax increase that was approved in an election is perfectly acceptable under the act. The alternative is a referendum.

“If politicians want to increase taxes, they should seek our approval. The act, in providing those provisions, places actual power in the hands of the people, where it belongs. It’s our money, after all....

“If McGuinty wants to restore democracy to Ontario, a referendum would be a good step in that direction. If his plan is such a good one, he ought to be able to persuade us. Setting an election date for 2007 leaves the people in the same position they are now—powerless until election day. And powerless after, too, if we can’t find politicians with more integrity.

“If he hasn’t got the courage to face the people with his spending plans, perhaps McGuinty could at least have a free vote on the budget. Free votes are most appropriate for moral issues. Perhaps there are actually some backbench Liberal MPPs who think deceiving the people who voted for them is a moral issue.”

That was sort of what I was talking about before. The problem with our present structure is that the leader and the leader’s office, the Premier and the Premier’s office, have such close ties and such a grip on not only the financial wherewithal of their backbenchers but also their position in government.

“As it is now, the Premier is acting like he’s not really even aware of the astounding anger his budget has created. Instead of fixing the real democratic deficit, which he created, he wants to give us smug little civics lectures and pat himself on the back for fixing election dates.

“This guy has got a lot bigger things to fix than election dates, and he’d better get started.”

What Mr Denley has recognized, and what I have perhaps recognized to some degree over the long period of time that I have been here, is that the rules around what happens in here and how we are elected are not nearly as important as the integrity with which we conduct ourselves on a day-to-day basis. The rules on how we decide whether there are 103 of us or 106 of us or 200 of us are not as important as the fact that when we present ourselves to the public, we are forthright, we tell them what they can expect and we live up to those promises. The cynicism that has been created by the breaking of the promises by this government will not heal the democratic deficit which they have created. So all the good work that we might do here—we might debate, we might create new legislation, we might create new standing orders—will not meet the demands of the public for democratic renewal.

I want to then go specifically to this bill. You may know that I introduced two other bills in this Legislature, Bills 51 and 54, prior to the government bringing forward Bill 86. Both of those bills pegged an election day four years out, on October 4, coincident with Bill 86. As well, I picked a date of June 7, 2007. The real reason behind my introducing those bills was there was a rumour that the government was going to, in the first term, extend their term to four and a half years. So I brought in those two pieces of legislation to pre-empt any attempt by the government to try to extend the first term to four and a half years and say, “In October, it’s not good because we’re running the municipal elections. So we should have it in June. But let’s not have it in June 2007. Let’s get at least four and a half years and go to June 2008.” So that’s why I brought these bills in.

But there are a couple of differences with regard to my two bills and Bill 86. I just want to highlight those.

#### 1720

If you read through Bill 86—and I had the opportunity to be briefed by the Attorney General’s staff at the Democratic Renewal Secretariat yesterday to confirm what I thought the bill said or didn’t say or didn’t do—there are two significant differences with regard to my bill and Bill 86. One relates to the fact that in order for a confidence vote to succeed in the Legislature to call an election, what I have in my bill is a double majority. I say that not only must there be a majority of the Legislature, but there must be a majority of the those parties which are not governing, which are not part of the cabinet. I did this because of what happened in 1977. It wasn’t exactly the same, but one of the problems when you are dealing with democratic renewal and the rules that we have in this Legislature is that you’ve got to be concerned not only with majority governments but with what minority governments are doing as well.

What happened in 1977: Bill Davis wanted to have an election. You may remember that he was elected in 1971, when he won the leadership of the party. He won a comfortable majority in 1971 but lost favour with the electorate, and in 1975 had a minority government. I think he had 52 seats out of 120 seats at that time, but he

still formed the government in 1975. By 1977 he was gaining popularity; he was becoming stronger and wanted an election. He wanted to trigger an election by having a non-confidence vote and having the opposition precipitate the election. So he brought forward a bill which limited rental increases in rent control. Rent control was brought in in 1975 or 1976. He put the maximum rent increase to be 8%, and instead of 8%, the opposition wanted the maximum rent increase at 6%.

Tom Wells, who was then the House leader—who has now passed away—wrote to the opposition, “We consider this a matter of confidence.” So they had the vote in the Legislature and the Tories lost that it was considered a matter of confidence. Premier Davis walked down the hall and saw the Lieutenant Governor. He dissolved Parliament, a writ was issued and an election was on. The Tories came back with 58 seats. That’s when both Jim Bradley and I were first elected. So the Tories went from 52 to 58. So it’s not exactly the same as this particular scenario, but I can see the instances where it might favour the Premier to precipitate a confidence vote which he or she might lose in this place. So there are some exceptions to October 4 or around that date, as I discussed before, as being the actual election date.

I think it’s important for members and the public to understand exactly how this place closes down before an election. What happens is this: There’s only one person—now, and after Bill 86 passes, if it passes, there’s only one way that this place closes down. The Premier of the day goes to the Lieutenant Governor and says, “I want you to dissolve Parliament,” and the Lieutenant Governor basically has only one other choice. If he thinks another party can govern, can muster enough people in the place to actually govern, that would be the case. So in spite of the fact that we say it’s going to be October 4, if Premier McGuinty wanted to disregard Bill 86, he could walk down to the Lieutenant Governor the day after this bill is passed and say, “I want an election.” Let’s all be clear that there’s no sanction in Bill 86 against Mr McGuinty’s doing that; in other words, no penalty. In fact—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Sterling:** What I’m saying is, he has that option after Bill 86 is passed. We could almost describe October 4 as a wish date for the next election to take place.

Now the reason he might not walk down to the Lieutenant Governor is that it might be politically very unpalatable for him to do so. But if there was some manner of crisis: another SARS strike, some other event debilitating to the Ontario economy or another leader was elected—Mr McGuinty is not very popular these days, and there’s speculation he may not be leader of party in the next election. The next leader might walk down the hall and say, “Look, I need a mandate for my leadership, notwithstanding Bill 86.”

I cleared those particular perceptions with the Attorney General’s staff. I had them in my office yesterday and asked them, what really constrains the Premier from walking down the hall and dissolving Parliament?

Nothing, other than the political downside of doing so. So October 4 is not really a legal date as such; it’s sort of a commitment, I guess, that the election is going to be on that date.

I asked the staff as well what would happen if he didn’t walk down the hall to the Lieutenant Governor 28, 29 or whatever number of days before October 4? I said, “Would there be an election on October 4? Could it happen after that?” The Attorney General’s staff couldn’t confirm to me that the Lieutenant Governor would act unilaterally without the Premier coming and asking for the dissolution of Parliament.

Let’s say Dalton McGuinty decided on September 4 or 5 or whatever—it doesn’t matter what the date is, but 28 days before October 4 or whatever date the election is going to be on—that it would be very disadvantageous to him to walk down the hall and go to the Lieutenant Governor. Let’s say he was at the same level that he is in the polls now, and he said, “You know, I may take the wrath of the people because I don’t have the election on October 4, but I’m going to lose anyway. So I’m not going to walk down the hall.” I don’t think the Lieutenant Governor has the right to call the election.

I want to point out that I put a section in my bills, Bills 51 and 54, because I read the objections to British Columbia, the only province that has tried to fix a date. There is a conundrum here. It’s not easy to fix a date in the British parliamentary system because of the precedents we have, the traditions we have and those kinds of things. But I did put in my bill subsection 9.1(2): “It is the responsibility of the Premier of Ontario to advise the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the Legislature in sufficient time to permit the taking of the poll as provided in subsection (1).” There is no obligation on the Premier to do that in Bill 86. I think that’s the very least that should be in the bill.

There’s no sanction if the Premier didn’t go down and do it; in other words, there’s no fine. There is, of course, no jail term or anything like that. But at least in this bill there is an obligation upon him, put there in writing, that he go down the hall and consult the Lieutenant Governor 28 or 29 days prior to October 4 or whatever date on which we’re going to have this next election.

**1730**

We have a piece of legislation which doesn’t really alter the power of the Premier. As I said before, I don’t think you can construct a piece of legislation to actually deal with that particular problem because of the constitutional set-up that we have with the Parliament of Ontario and the role of the Lieutenant Governor here. But the very first part of the act, Bill 86, the one we’re debating here, says this: “Nothing in this section affects the powers of the Lieutenant Governor, including the power to dissolve the Legislature, by proclamation in Her Majesty’s name, when the Lieutenant Governor sees fit.” OK? Now, he or she does that, the Lieutenant Governor does that, when the Premier asks him or her to do that. So Premier McGuinty, if he’s still the Premier at that point in time or whenever it would happen, still has that right

to walk down there and dissolve this Parliament at any time. His only downside is that he has promised in this piece of legislation to have that election on or around October 4, 2007.

We have a piece of legislation that doesn't really mean that much. It's a promise. He could do the same by just standing up in this House and saying, "I promise the people of Ontario that I will have an election on October 4, 2007," sit down, it would be over, and that would be the end of it. Put it in a piece of legislation—there's no sanction if he doesn't follow it. There's no penalty to the governing party if he doesn't follow it. So there you have it. The legislation doesn't do much in that regard.

There is one good part of this legislation which I support very much, and that is that, because of our hookup with the federal boundaries and our alignment with the federal boundaries, when we passed a piece of legislation before—I believe it's in the Representation Act—our riding or constituency associations that we have would automatically dissolve on about August 20 or August 24 of this year, this summer. They would automatically dissolve, by law. That would be the end of them. This act extends their life to December 31, 2006, unless the constituency association wants to dissolve before that, and to create new constituency associations, presumably along different geographical boundaries. There is provision in here in terms of how the assets would be divided if there's a dispute, and the constituency association doesn't deal with them, and, I guess more importantly, if there is a liability, as to how the political party becomes responsible for that as well. I support those particular provisions.

As some of the members have indicated before, this act is not a big deal. There are some good arguments for having fixed terms, having a four-year term. I believe the federal Conservative leader, Stephen Harper, supports fixed terms in terms of going forward. But I guess my concern about dealing with these things one-off is that we're not looking at the whole picture. We're not looking at the pushes and pulls of it. We haven't had a healthy debate about the fact that maybe it's healthier to have some flexibility in the hands of the Premier. I just haven't seen this particular part abused by a Premier.

I haven't seen, as either a government member or an opposition member, as I sat in opposition before and sit in opposition now—I think every one of us can see an election coming down the track. They have changed so dramatically over the last 35, 45 years that no leader can hide the fact that he or she is heading for an election. The machinery's just too big now. They know when you rent the bus. They know when you buy the ads. They know when you're printing the literature. They know when you're doing all these kinds of things. So the whole notion that that's a big problem, isn't that much.

I don't think, in terms of the electoral office—although I can see some credibility in the argument that it would be better that those who are running the election know the exact date or the approximate date. I can understand that to some degree. But I'm not so certain that we

should sacrifice the other part of our British parliamentary system, where we have flexibility, to do that.

You see, if we have a situation where there truly would be a significant crisis in the province, I'm not so certain that the Premier of the day should be forced to a confidence motion to call an election. I can't picture what the disaster might be or what the matter might be, but there might be a situation where there are such differing views in our province that it would be right to have an election two and a half years in, three years in or whatever it is. That's the way the British parliamentary system that we have been operating under for over 140 years, I guess—well, almost 140 years—has worked in this province, and it's worked very well.

I'd like to see a debate, quite frankly, about the real issue of democratic reform, as people see it when they talk to me; that is, how do you transfer responsibility from the leader's office out further to the cabinet? Well, the cabinet has some responsibility, no question. But how do you transfer it out further to the backbench and the alternate side of the opposition members?

Right now, quite frankly, in our system, and with what has transpired over the last three or four years, is a cynicism which has grown up in our public that the opposition doesn't have any real responsibility, which is, in effect, somewhat true. I remember that when the Liberals were in opposition, they would debate bills for three or four days that they supported and had very little to say about, but they just wanted to force the government into a time allocation position. So we time-allocated. Nobody really cared whether we time-allocated or not, because it's all inside baseball. But, to me, that was a total lack of responsibility in terms of what a parliamentarian should be doing.

We should be supporting legislation which we think is reasonable, that we don't really care about. We shouldn't debate or over-debate things. We shouldn't drag things on that are less important than other ones. But that's not the way it's been played here.

So I think what we really need is an overall look at where the responsibilities for budget lie. Where do the responsibilities for the Ontario budget lie? If there's some way that they can be shared amongst the members of the Legislative Assembly as well as the cabinet and the Premier, then, in fact, I think you would be addressing some of the things that the public is concerned about.

In summary, therefore, I expect some of my members to vote for this bill. I expect some of them to vote against it. I don't feel strongly one way or the other with regard to it, because I think that the bill is somewhat meaningless, in the fact that it doesn't have any kind of sanction against the Premier. The Premier still has all of the options he had before. He can do what he did before. The election could be on October 4 or it could be after October 4, according to the Attorney General's staff who advised me about the responsibilities that the Premier undertook in this bill.

Lastly, I just want to say that I found it strange yesterday, when I was briefed by the Attorney General's

staff, that I had a political staff member come—I didn't find that strange; he was welcome to be there when I was there—and I was asked if they could record our briefing on tape. I've asked for a copy of that tape. I find that strange because here we are talking about democratic renewal, about a non-partisan piece of legislation, where I'm trying to be as forthright as I possibly can, and we have the office for democratic renewal coming in with their staff when the briefing was taking place and asking me to tape that particular meeting. I found it strange.

1740

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** I wish to thank my fellow member from Lanark-Carleton for sharing his time with me and sharing his experience in this Legislature; as we heard today, 27 years as of today in the Ontario Legislature.

A very interesting history has just been presented and I've learned some new things about Bill 86. Sometimes things are different than they appear to be when you read legislation. Even though some of us are supporting this legislation, and I am, you wonder why you would debate something you basically feel is a good idea—to have set election dates—but as we soldier on, you learn an awful lot of new things. At face value, I look at this and I see that elections will be held the first Thursday of October, every four years, but now I realize maybe that won't be the case. Maybe they will be held before that Thursday, maybe they will be held after that Thursday, or maybe they will be held on that Thursday.

With respect to Bill 86, regarding election dates, from my look at the legislation, it tells us when the elections are going to be; it doesn't tell us where. Clearly it tells us that on the first Thursday in October, every four years, an election will be held, but we realize now it's with some possible deviations, more than one deviation perhaps, as we just heard from the member for Lanark-Carleton.

This Bill 86 does not clarify where we, as MPPs or future candidates, would do battle. It doesn't tell us where the boundaries are, or will be, whether they're existing boundaries or new boundaries or a mix of both. We've had some hints about perhaps some changes being considered in northern Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Barrett:** The member opposite from Brant and I share a boundary, a border. We share a county. On occasion we probably look at the polls and decide how many are with us and how many are against us. I often-times don't venture into the city and sometimes you may not want to venture into the country.

Of course this is of particular interest to sitting MPPs: Do we want to change boundaries? Are we content with where we are now? Most importantly, and the member for Brant would agree with this, when all is said and done, what is the best arrangement for the people in Ontario and, in this case, the people in Brant county, Haldimand county and Norfolk county?

Bill 86, in my view, neglects to clarify where people decide. That's a debate for another day or perhaps another amendment to another bill. As the member

speaking previously indicated, the Representation Act of 1996 would have to be looked at if, for example, the existing boundaries were to remain, rather than going with the new federal boundaries. I'm in no position to know. Who knows what this government will come up with?

Just to refresh everyone's memory, I'd like to read the first part of the title of this legislation we're debating this afternoon, An Act to amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act, the Legislative Assembly Act and the Representation Act, 1996. This bill amends these four statutes, with its primary purpose to establish fixed election dates. We now know that the next Ontario election—we are assuming—should be held on Thursday, October 4, 2007. After that, if it is held on October 4, 2007, elections will be held every four years, on the first Thursday in October.

Before I get into some of the thoughts I have in supporting fixed election dates, I would point out that this act does not remove the power of the Lieutenant Governor to declare an election. In fact, the amendment pertaining to section 9 of the Election Act states very clearly, "Nothing in this section affects the powers of the Lieutenant Governor, including the power to dissolve the Legislature." That sounds like a pretty big door has been left open in a very large way. There's a large space there.

I feel this is an important issue that is actually at present being debated right across the Dominion of Canada during the federal election. Many will know that earlier this year Conservative leader Stephen Harper called on the federal government to initiate significant democratic reform in Canada by establishing consistent four-year terms between federal elections. In calling for that change, Harper stated, "We shouldn't forget that Jean Chrétien fuelled a lot of cynicism about the electoral process in this country during his 10 years in office by calling elections whenever it suited his personal agenda."

Earlier this year, this initiative was voted down by the federal Liberals. They voted in a bloc and defeated this opposition motion. Mr Harper has since made fixed election dates a main plank in the Conservative election platform. Considering the damage done to the federal Liberals and the cynicism created through the broken-promise Ontario budget, it may not be that long before we see fixed election dates coming out of Ottawa. We'll know better by the end of this month.

With this particular legislation, Bill 86, Ontario in general is following the lead of British Columbia and the American-style system of set election dates. As we know, in the United States voters go to the polls to choose their President, for example, every four years, on the first Tuesday in November. Gordon Campbell, the Premier of British Columbia, a Liberal—or titled a Liberal—has just passed a law to fix provincial election dates in that province.

We would probably all admit or agree that there's not a party in this country that has not been tempted to manipulate the election date in order to suit their own political interests. It's become almost a natural thing, in

my observation. The Prime Minister and the various Premiers can call elections when they see fit, with the exception of BC at present. I feel it's time for this process to be taken out of political hands. To what extent Bill 86 will take it out of politics, we'll see in the coming years.

Premier McGuinty has told the Legislature that fixed election dates will reduce voter cynicism. However, we in the opposition tend to put the blame for that cynicism squarely on the Liberals opposite, since they failed to keep so many promises. This is an obvious analysis. Promises made during the election and a number of promises made since the election appear to be being broken: the promise of not raising personal income taxes, and now raising personal income taxes, whether you call it a health tax, a health premium or a health levy; failing to hold a referendum on tax increases—this was certainly discussed both verbally and visually on signs out in front of Queen's Park this afternoon; the delisting of services from health professionals—to what extent that was or was not promised in the election has now been rolled in, in the general conventional wisdom that somehow people have been betrayed on that one as well.

Voters, the people of Ontario, have good reason to be disillusioned over some of what I consider to be the bogus, or phony, promises the Liberals made in the last—  
1750

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** They have lots of promises; they just can't keep them.

**Mr Barrett:** I agree with what you're saying over there.

Promises were made right up—

**Mr Bisson:** They're not bogus promises; they're broken promises.

**Mr Barrett:** Right. And again, sometimes I have difficulty making—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Barrett:** What is the distinction between—

**Mr Bisson:** There are all these commitments.

**Interjection:** Excuses are legitimate.

**Mr Barrett:** OK. This is interesting, because I get confused sometimes with the difference between a bogus promise and a phony promise. It's hard to draw the line.

**Interjection:** They make both of them.

**Mr Barrett:** There is cynicism. I hear cynicism up and down the row in the Legislature this afternoon.

Fixed election dates: Granted, that's one direction that can be taken to ameliorate some of the cynicism permeating our province. It is a step to still take us down the road of democratic reform. We do know from polling, and I will refer to a poll, that Canadians agree this is an idea whose time has come. There's a fairly recent Environics poll that found that an overwhelming majority of Canadians would like to see fixed election dates rather than leaving it exclusively up to the party in power. The figure here: 81% of Canadians would like to see a fixed date.

I would also mention that this legislation does allow for some changes in election dates. If the government

loses a non-confidence vote, the Lieutenant Governor could call an election immediately. The member from Lanark-Carleton gave us an example of that occurring in the past. From what we can see, there's really no reason why that situation could not occur again in the future, in spite of the fact that Bill 86 may well be passed by this government. So there are options. The Lieutenant Governor, in the case of non-confidence, could call an election immediately. If that were to happen, the election date would then return to that regular schedule, in the future, of four years after, what is essentially an unscheduled election. As well, this bill does not prevent a government from participating in a little manipulation, if you will. It does not prevent a government from engineering its own defeat. We've heard this explained as well this afternoon. Essentially, the Premier could walk down the hall to see the Lieutenant Governor.

As I've said, we're told when the next election would be. We know when. We don't know where. We don't know the boundaries, the borders that would be there. The member for Lanark-Carleton has used the term "gerrymandering," and I think it was with respect to this particular bill. Gerrymandering, as we would know, is the deliberate manipulation of a political border for short-term advantage, usually done by incumbents. This is not to be confused with something I discovered on a Google search. When I talk about gerrymandering, I'm not talking about the Gerry Mantaring Show, a Filipino national talk show. I don't know whether we could pull it in up here. You can find this on Google if you type in—

**Hon Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** That's Jerry Springer you're talking about.

**Mr Barrett:** It may be somewhat akin.

You type in "gerrymandering" and a number of items come up. What comes up in that list is the Gerry Mantaring Show. It's a Filipino national talk show. It's on 1180 AM radio. It comes out of Houston, Texas. He spells his last name "aring." We're talking about "ering." I'm sure down in Houston some of the members of the Texas state Legislature would probably get a kick out of the Gerry Mantaring Show. It provides—this is from their radio advertising piece—"a stimulating, bilingual discourse on the issues of the day in both English and Tagalog." I can't get that station, but I thought I'd throw this in. Be careful what you find on a Google search sometimes.

Gerrymandering—it's found in the past and there is a long, storied history of gerrymandering—is most effective in electoral systems with districts that elect a single representative. There's a few hints on how to do it.

One form of gerrymandering occurs when the boundaries of a constituency are changed in order to eliminate some area with a high concentration of people who vote in a similar way; for example, for a certain political party.

A second form of gerrymandering is when an area with a high concentration of similar voters is split among several districts, ensuring that the party has a small majority in several districts, rather than what normally would be a large majority in one district.

This can be a good thing. Often such gerrymandering is held to redress a long overlooked imbalance. For example, there are cases, probably a number of cases in the United States up until recently that I'm aware of, where this kind of gerrymandering is used to help create a black majority district in the United States.

Thirdly, gerrymandering has been used to gerrymander a person right out of office. This may be a case where that particular elected representative has fallen out of favour with his leader, and come the next election, finds himself literally out on a limb, as far as those lines that are drawn on the electoral map are concerned.

There's one story that holds that the term "gerrymander" is named for an early Massachusetts Governor, Eldridge Gerry. Apparently two reporters were looking at the newly redrawn election map for Massachusetts, and one commented that one of the new districts looked like a salamander—obviously four legs; as I recall, salamanders have a tail. The other reporter retorted that in his mind, keeping in mind that the name of the Governor of Massachusetts at that time was Eldridge Gerry, it looked like a Gerrymander, and the name stuck.

I haven't done a lot of research on this. Perhaps the clerks know a bit more about British history on gerrymandering. They know all about it. I assumed it came out of Britain.

In the Republic of Ireland in the mid-1970s, the minister for local government, a fellow named James Tully, attempted to arrange constituencies to ensure the governing National Coalition would win a parliamentary majority. His attempt to gerrymander came to be called a Tullymander.

I've said that we're pretty sure we know when the next election is. We don't know where. That's up to Dalton McGuinty. This legislation gives no indication of the Liberal plan for boundaries. Let's only hope the government is not accused in the future—I hope this doesn't happen or doesn't come up for any good or fabricated reason—of any gerrymandering, Daltonmandering or McGuintymandering. This is not the kind of tradition we have in the province of Ontario. I would expect that we will not see this in the future.

In the two-minute hits, one of members made a bit of a pitch for a private member's bill. In view of what I've observed as voter cynicism in Ontario, I introduced in private members' hour legislation for recall. Again, this would be another option. The government of today was not very enthusiastic about recall legislation. Recall, very simply, would give the people of Ontario that opportunity, at any time between elections, through petition, issuing of a writ or a referendum, to have the ability to recall an individual elected member, or, in the way that we constructed that particular piece of legislation, would also enable people to recall the Premier of Ontario.

Just to wrap up, I support fixed election dates provincially. I support fixed election dates nationally. Over the next three and a half years in this Legislature, I'll certainly look forward to seeing how this progresses.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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

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

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton East /	Horwith, Andrea (ND)
Ancaster-Dundas-	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton-Est	
Flamborough-Aldershot		Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon / L'hon Marie (L)</b> Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative		
Beaches-East York /	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West /	Marsales, Judy (L)
Beaches-York-Est		Hamilton-Ouest	
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-	Kular, Kuldeep (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon / L'hon Leona (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
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
Brampton West-Mississauga /	Dhillon, Vic (L)		
Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga		Kingston and the Islands /	<b>Gerretsen, Hon / L'hon John (L)</b> 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)		
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener Centre /	Milloy, John (L)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener-Centre	
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East /	<b>Caplan, Hon / L'hon David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley-Est	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
		London North Centre /	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley West /		London-Centre-Nord	
Don Valley-Ouest		London West /	<b>Bentley, Hon / L'hon Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Eves, Ernie (PC) Leader of the opposition / chef de l'opposition	London-Ouest	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Eglington-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Markham	<b>Takhar, Hon / L'hon Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Elgin-Middlesex-London	<b>Peters, Hon / L'hon Steve (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Mississauga Centre /	Fonseca, Peter (L)
	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga-Centre	
Erie-Lincoln		Mississauga East /	Peterson, Tim (L)
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga-Est	
	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Mississauga South /	Delaney, Bob (L)
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	<b>Bartolucci, Hon / L'hon Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon / L'hon Dalton (L)</b> 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	<b>Watson, Hon / L'hon Jim (L)</b> 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	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon / L'hon Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	North / Thunder Bay-Superior- Nord	<b>Ramsay, Hon / L'hon David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	<b>Kennedy, Hon / L'hon Gerard (L)</b> Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	<b>Smitherman, Hon / L'hon George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	<b>Sorbara, Hon / L'hon Greg (L)</b> Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Whitby-Ajax	<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> 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)	Willowdale	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Yakubuski, John (PC)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Zimmer, David (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor-St Clair	<b>Pupatello, Hon / L'hon Sandra (L)</b> 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)	York Centre / York-Centre	<b>Duncan, Hon / L'hon Dwight (L)</b> 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 North / York-Nord	<b>Kwinter, Hon / L'hon Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon / L'hon Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York West / York-Ouest	<b>Cordiano, Hon / L'hon Joseph (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough-Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon / L'hon Gerry (L)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement		Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough-Rouge River	<b>Curling, Hon / L'hon Alvin (L)</b> Speaker / Président		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon / L'hon James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs		
St Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon / L'hon Michael (L)</b> 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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