



No. 61A

N° 61A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 14 June 2004

Lundi 14 juin 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 14 June 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 14 juin 2004

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COMMUNITY DAY

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): I rise today to congratulate the Durham regional police and the Whitby community policing committee on their successful 11th annual Community Day. This event marks the largest community police day in Ontario. Police officers come from across Durham region with police displays, including police dog demonstrations, information from the tactical support unit, marine patrol, forensic identification unit and, of course, Air 1.

I want to recognize the police officers who were at the great event on June 13, 2004, and thank them for taking the time to host this fun and educational day. Ontario's police officers routinely go beyond the call of duty to protect their neighbours and their communities. They are true everyday heroes, and they have earned the respect and support of all the people in Whitby and across Ontario.

This event clearly emphasized building safer communities by building crime prevention. This year, thousands of people participated in the 11th annual Community Day and helped raise money for the Kids' Safety Village and community policing and also for Racing Against Drugs.

I was pleased to attend the event this year and look forward to next year's Community Day. We're also looking forward to the official opening of the new police station in Whitby in about two weeks' time.

ST MATTHEW HIGH SCHOOL

Mr Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans): I am proud today to honour the accomplishments of the students of St Matthew high school in my riding of Ottawa-Orléans. On April 23, in an act of great generosity and a spirit of community, 5,117 students, staff and neighbours gathered together to take part in the Guinness Book of World Records breaking bear hug, for which they received their official certificate on June 7. The 1,400 St Matthew students were joined by 30 busloads of high school students from St Peters, Lester B. Pearson and St Pius high schools and from Divine Infant, Chapel Hill, Convent Glen and Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha elementary schools, as well as 900 members of the general public, of which I was pleased to be one.

Although the Guinness Book of World Records distinction is fun and something to be proud of, what is significant is that the students of St Matt's were able to raise an astonishing \$108,000 through the event for the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre. According to our local media, the sum blew the previous national high school record completely out of the water.

A major part of the joy and inspiration for the event came from one St Matthew student, Erin Gannon, an 18-year-old young woman who fought a battle with cancer for two and one half years with deep faith and courage but succumbed to the illness just days after the bear hug. It is her spirit and heart that stirred a community and that indeed marks the character of many of our young people today.

EXPLOSION IN ELMIRA

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I want to inform the House about an explosion and fire at the Crompton plant in Elmira, which happened last Friday morning. I'm doing so in order to express my gratitude and appreciate for the rapid and effective response by the municipal officials from the township of Woolwich and the region of Waterloo.

While en route to Toronto on Friday morning, I was informed of the incident. Apparently, according to published reports, a waste water tank exploded and burst into flames at approximately 8:20 that morning. The initial reports I received from the minister's office indicated that our local officials had the situation well under control. I insisted on speaking to the Minister of the Environment to ensure that she would be fully briefed on the situation and, if necessary, be in a position to take appropriate action.

From the information currently available, it appears that the entire emergency response system worked very well. The town siren warned the residents that they were on high alert, and then a phone call went out to all residents asking that they stay inside, keep their windows closed and listen to the radio for further reports.

When I arrived at the plant in the afternoon, I was very relieved to know that the situation had stabilized and everyone was safe. For that, I thank the 75 firefighters from the stations in Elmira, St Jacobs and Floradale, who worked through the morning with Crompton's own fire brigade. The Kitchener Fire Department provided back-up. I must tell this House that those township firefighters are volunteer firefighters, and I commend Chief Earl Wideman and his crews on a job well done.

I want to acknowledge the role of the Ministry of the Environment, who deployed the mobile TAGA unit—TAGA stands for trace atmospheric gas analyzer. It was on the scene to ensure that our air was safe to breathe. The township of Woolwich mayor, Bill Strauss, and township staff responded superbly. I want the House to be aware of their extraordinary leadership and how they rose to the occasion to ensure that residents in Elmira were protected and safe.

URBAN SPRAWL

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): The Liberals talked a good line with respect to protecting the Oak Ridges moraine when they were in opposition, and they got into government after making a promise that they would protect it. They ended up breaking that promise and allowing 6,000 new houses to be built.

The government had another opportunity to test its commitment to curbing urban sprawl and protecting environmentally sensitive land. Local ratepayers are begging for help. It's the Wild West out there. Look at what's going on in Simcoe county: Developers are literally leapfrogging over the protected area and the greenbelt and are starting to build all kinds of low-density housing there.

I put forward a number of amendments in committee to deal with leapfrog development in particular but also with the Niagara Escarpment not getting as good protection as the Oak Ridges moraine and other important amendments. Not one Liberal member on that committee stood up and supported one of these amendments, which would have made this commitment to curb urban sprawl real. As it is now, it's another broken promise.

This was the acid test of the government's commitment to curb the urban sprawl, and they failed miserably. There will be a debate on the greenbelt coming up in this Legislature, and I urge the Liberal members, if they want to keep their commitment to curb urban sprawl, to have a committee of the whole House and allow those amendments to come forward once again.

1340

FOOD SAFETY

Mr Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): A recent Decima Research poll showed that 93% of Ontarians are confident that Canadian farmers provide us with high-quality food. It also showed that 86% of Ontarians believe their food supply is well regulated and safe to eat. That confidence is a result of positive change in food delivery regulations that the McGuinty government has brought to the province of Ontario.

I'm proud to stand and recognize the work this government has done to rebuild Ontario's meat inspection programs and strengthen the province's food safety system. We are ensuring that we have the highest safety and quality standards for our food. We have appointed the Honourable Roland Haines to review Ontario's meat regulatory and inspection regimes.

Small and medium-sized food processing plants are an essential part of Ontario's food production industry. We have introduced a new food safety system for small and medium-sized food processing plants, called the hazard analysis critical control point. This voluntary program minimizes the risk of food safety hazards and helps ensure the manufacture of safe food products by detecting potential hazards before they occur.

Perhaps most essential is the McGuinty government's hiring of more full-time meat inspectors to fill the void left by reckless Conservative cuts to essential services in Ontario.

With these actions, we have turned the corner in restoring the confidence of Ontarians in their government and the services we provide.

AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the 2004 inductees to the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame.

One of those inductees is particularly deserving. A pioneer in direct farm marketing, now commonplace in Ontario, and an innovator in growing and production techniques, this inductee hails from my riding. I'm particularly pleased that he is my brother, Tom Chudleigh. On Sunday, he was honoured with induction into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame.

As he mentioned in his opening remarks yesterday, Tom's partnership with his wife, Carol, started with the words, "I do." Their innovations with high-density tree fruit production, revolutionary pruning techniques and integrated pest management have had a significant impact on the efficiency of Ontario's apple industry.

Tom and Carol introduced "entertainment farming" as part of his leadership in the area of value added agritourism, an alternative to traditional wholesale marketing practices. In addition, Tom and Carol, with the help of their sons, Dean, Scott and Michael, produced a line of products for local markets, which are now sold nationally and internationally, especially to the US and Japan. Products such as Apple Blossoms and Chudleigh's Apple Pies were born on the farm and are now enjoyed at dinner tables around the world.

I hope all members will join with me in congratulating my brother, Tom Chudleigh, and his wife, Carol, and all the other inductees into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame.

IMMIGRANTS

Mr Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): Last Friday morning in London at the Cross Cultural Learner Centre, I was proud to make an announcement, with my colleague Deb Matthews, on the government's newcomer settlement program. I was pleased to be able to tell three London organizations that their government was fulfilling its promise to help those who arrive here from another country.

In London, we are going to be helping such organizations as the Cross Cultural Learner Centre and LUSO, which teach people English, help them to find an apartment and settle in their new hometown of London. Mary Williamson is the executive director of the Cross Cultural Learner Centre, and she does a great job helping newcomers feel welcome. We are helping the WIL employment organization, which assists new immigrants to Ontario find work and educational opportunities.

This is something close to my heart, because in 1989 I was a newcomer to Ontario. I couldn't speak English, only knew a few people here and wasn't too sure where to start on my new journey. But I knew one thing for sure: I was home here in Ontario. Because of the help I received from the Cross Cultural Learner Centre, and the few friends I had at the time, I began to build a life for myself. I started businesses, hired employees and began to contribute to my new home.

That is what makes Ontario a great province. We welcome newcomers to Ontario, and we understand that immigrants bring new energy, talent and skills to the economy of Ontario and help make our communities strong.

Today is a good day for Ontario. Our government is laying out a welcome mat for newcomers by assisting community newcomer settlement programs.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Chalk this announcement up to one more commitment delivered on by the McGuinty government. Our pledge to save the cardiac unit of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario was fulfilled last Friday when the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced that prominent heart surgeon and senator Dr Wilbert Keon would oversee a joint pediatric cardiac surgery program between hospitals in Toronto and Ottawa. Dr Keon will help implement the program at Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa.

I'm sure we all remember the previous Conservative government having terminated the pediatric care surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario in London in the summer of 2002, which left large swaths of underserved areas in the province, instead favouring a centralized point of delivery in Toronto for child health care. The reckless cuts to spending by the former Conservative government have not only deeply impaired the finances of Ontario but also, in this case, almost resulted in the closing of an extremely important point of delivery for children's health in eastern Ontario.

It is encouraging to see that the McGuinty government has its priorities straight. We committed to keeping both pediatric cardiac surgery units open last fall and we are delivering. It is essential that we maintain a system that has a capacity for being in more than one physical location, as SARS has shown us. This announcement is

reflective of the commitment of the government to ensure the health for all Ontarians throughout Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Could I ask the members to keep private conversations a bit lower.

PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): As revelations go, this was a doozy: Over the weekend, John Tory, the leading candidate to replace Mr Eves, acknowledged that his party should have been more forthcoming about the state of the province's finances during the last election. According to a CBC report, Mr Flaherty agreed, admitting he was surprised by the size of the financial mess. Finally, after months of denial and a clearly orchestrated effort to blame everybody else, a couple of sorry Tories have come forward, actually prepared to come clean.

What I found fascinating was that Mr Flaherty, former finance minister and consummate insider, would admit to having been blindsided by the state of affairs. If true, and I have no doubt it is, then the new government and the new Premier must, out of a sense of decency, be given even more benefit of the doubt. If, as we have learned, Mr Flaherty was surprised by the size of the deficit, imagine the new Premier's and the new government's absolute astonishment at learning that the real deficit figure was more than three times the \$2 billion we had projected. Is it any wonder that so many citizens remain cynical and distrustful of politicians and politics when a situation like this exists?

My mother used to say, "When you mess up, fess up." Today I want to applaud Mr Tory and Mr Flaherty for taking mom's advice and finally summing up the courage to fess up. I want to say to all my Tory friends that there is hope for you, indeed for all of us, when we recognize that it is the truth, and only the truth, that shall finally set us free.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery a delegation from the Mid-western Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments. They are Senator John Hottinger from Minnesota, Representative Libby Jacobs from Iowa and Representative Stephen Buehrer from Ohio. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on

Monday, June 14, 2004, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Mr Caplan has moved government notice of motion 131. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those against, say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve
Bartolucci, Rick	Duguid, Brad	Peterson, Tim
Bentley, Christopher	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fonseca, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Matthews, Deborah	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Mauro, Bill	Smitherman, George
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	McNeely, Phil	Watson, Jim
Cordiano, Joseph	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Crozier, Bruce	Milloy, John	Wong, Tony C.
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Patten, Richard	

The Speaker: All those against, please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Runciman, Robert W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martel, Shelley	Scott, Laurie
Flaherty, Jim	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Murdoch, Bill	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 53; the nays are 23.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Before I begin my remarks, I'd like to acknowledge some people in the gallery who have come today to hear them, including David Kelly, executive director of the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs; Patricia Bregman and Peter Coleridge, representatives of the Canadian

Mental Health Association; and Mike McClintock, vice-president of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, in the east members' gallery.

I'm pleased to rise in the House to tell you today that the McGuinty government is taking action in an area of health care that has been neglected for far too long in this province: community-based mental health services. That means a system that gives people across the province enhanced health services in their communities, because we believe that the best health care is found as close to home as possible.

What we are building in Ontario is a responsive, accountable, accessible health care system that serves the needs of Ontarians. To deliver on this plan, we are restoring and fortifying the essential health services that Ontarians need. We are using our precious health care resources in the best possible way to deliver the best possible results. Our strategy is to drive vital health resources down into communities where they can do the most good, and that embraces all aspects of health care, including mental health services.

For a long time there has been a stigma around the issue of mental illness, and that has created a wall between people and the care that they need. Twenty per cent of Canadians will personally experience mental illness in their lifetime. It touches most families; it has certainly touched mine. The economic cost of mental illness in Canada was estimated to be over \$8 billion in 1998.

1400

Our government believes that it is crucial that people who are mentally ill receive care in their communities from people they know and can trust. Today I'm pleased to inform Ontarians that the McGuinty government is making a record investment in community mental health. It is an investment that is going to have a major impact on the way this care is provided for Ontarians who need it. That's because we have committed an additional \$185 million in new annual funding over four years, for a total investment of \$583 million in these crucial services by 2007-08.

Our government is reaching out a caring hand to Ontarians with mental illness and expanding services where they are needed. That is because we know that community-based mental health care is more therapeutically effective and more cost-effective. Community-based mental health care keeps people out of hospitals and jails, leaving both institutions to focus on those with more pressing needs.

This investment will help relieve some of the stress that many families face in caring for loved ones with mental illnesses. Our over half-billion-dollar total investment will help relieve some of the stress that many families face in caring for loved ones with mental illnesses. This will come as a helping hand to families and communities.

I want to take a moment to tell you about some of the particulars of our commitment to community-based mental health care in Ontario.

Our investment will result in expanded case management for people living with mental illnesses. Case management provides a vital anchor to people coping with mental illness. This involves a team of mental health professionals who build a trusting and respectful relationship with the patient and help that individual negotiate through a complicated system to ensure they get the care and support they need.

This funding will also expand crisis response services. These services come to the assistance of individuals who are in acute distress. They include telephone crisis lines and mobile outreach teams that are rapidly deployed to individuals in times of need.

We are also funding more early intervention programs. We know that the earlier a person with mental illness is diagnosed and assisted, the better their chances of recovery.

I am also very pleased to announce that our government will be providing a base funding increase to stabilize the capacity of community mental health agencies in communities all across the province—the first such increase in 12 years.

The public has a significant need for up-to-date and accessible information on mental health resources. The Ontario Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment—DART, as it has become known—has come forward with a proposal for a provincial mental health registry. I am very pleased to announce that we are responding to this innovative proposal and will be funding the creation of the Ontario mental health services registry. This registry will be a one-stop portal for information about mental health services. Information can be accessed 24/7 through a toll-free line, staffed by professionals, as well as on-line services. Part of this funding will go toward improving coordination and collaboration with other ministries and the police to better service the needs of mentally ill people who have been convicted of crimes or are involved with the criminal justice system.

More than 78,000 Ontarians—our friends, family members and neighbours—are suffering from mental illness. They will benefit directly from the expansion of these services.

We know that investment in community-based mental health services has proven to be a cost-effective use of health care dollars. We know that the mental health community is behind us as we make this commitment. I can offer the following quotes from members of the mental health care community as proof that our commitment to community-based mental health services will be an effective one.

From Dr Barbara Everett, CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association: “Funding for mental health and addiction services is an excellent investment by the government. Community mental health and addiction services save money by relieving pressure on more expensive services. Research has shown that they reduce hospitalizations by 86% and emergency room visits by 60%.”

Dr Paul Garfinkel, president and CEO of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, offered this support:

“Mental health and addiction services have long been the orphan of the health system. With the pressures this government faced given the province’s deficit situation, we applaud the McGuinty government for their forward-thinking investment in services, as well as the desperately needed increases in income supports. These investments will help some of Ontario’s most vulnerable people—those with mental health and addiction problems.”

David Kelly, executive director of the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs, offered this comment on our government’s plan of action: “This is a great first step in solving this province’s mental health and addiction problems. The McGuinty government can be congratulated for recognizing the need to build community-based mental health and addiction services. After 12 years, there is now renewed hope for these services in Ontario.”

That is a remarkable display of solidarity in the community-based mental health sector.

Our plan of action on community mental health is going to make a very real difference for the 78,000 Ontarians in need of these services. Our government is committed to a more accessible, responsive health care system in this province because we want all Ontarians to lead healthier lives. The funding increases I have spoken about today are a very real, tangible way that we’re going to work together to meet that goal.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Responses?

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): First of all, on behalf of our caucus and, I dare say, all members of the House, we welcome new funding that goes into mental health services in this province, especially community-based mental health services. It’s worthy of note that today’s announcement is a multi-year commitment of \$185 million, which is less than the commitments that were made in the previous budget in this area.

Hon Mr Smitherman: Annual—\$185 million.

Mr Jackson: I understand how to read your press release.

The minister has raised quite a few questions with his statement in the House today. First of all, is he acknowledging that this includes some of the children’s mental health services dollars? Does it include recognition of the fact that domiciliary hostel funding in this province is at a meagre \$40 per day compared to individuals in our corrections institutions who are funded at \$140 a day? The domiciliary hostel funding program, Minister, as you well know, is a significant safety net for mental health patients in our province and, as such, we would hope they are included in your plans and your announcement today, although I do not see any evidence of that. These are front-line residential and program supports on a daily basis for thousands and thousands of mental health patients in our province.

You talk about coordinating services and helping navigate the system. We’d like to know how much of this is actual new money or is part of the federal homeless funding initiative that deals with mental health issues. How much of this has to do with the large increase in

lottery revenues that your government is experiencing this year, which forms part of the funding that assists persons with addictions?

I'd also like to comment that, as you shorted our hospitals in this province to 3.4%, the minister, with his experience, will know that one of the first programs to suffer when hospitals run deficits is their community mental health and mental health programs. I've seen anecdotal evidence of that. Therefore, the importance of this announcement cannot be understated, but it is also part of a significant area that affects our hospitals as well. There's no comment in today's announcement about that.

Finally, as I indicated earlier, we're anxious to determine just how much of a commitment this government will be making to children's mental health services as part of this issue. This is hard for us to reconcile when we consider the fact that children's aid societies have been red-circled by your budget in terms of their budget. There is no increase projected for that.

The school boards—

Interjection.

Mr Jackson: We paid all their back deficits as well. You've red-circled children's aid societies at fewer dollars this year than last year. The Minister for Children and Youth Services may be upset—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Could you allow the member from Burlington to finish his response?

Mr Jackson: There's a lot of latent anxiety over there in the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

The fact of the matter is that children's aid societies have been red-circled this year and they are struggling with their budgets right at this time of the year. They certainly are receiving more children into their care, more children at risk who are involved with families where mental health problems not only affect the parents but also their children.

School boards as well have not seen the kinds of increases this year for their special ed programs, again, where school boards have to cope with an increased number of complex cases of children and their needs.

1410

We welcome the new funding for community-based mental health services. There's no question that these services require a significant expansion. We will be anxious to look in more detail as to where the funding is coming from, and more directly where the funding is going.

We'll be anxiously waiting for confirmation that you are including support for domiciliary hostels in this province, that they have not had the increase they're due. They are almost exclusively assisting persons with mental health to find accommodation they would otherwise be unable to find in this province. So that first line of defence for mental health needs the support of this government.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I want to begin with a mental health issue that I remain most concerned with, that's closest to me because it affects our commu-

ity and one that I do not think is resolved by the announcement today. That's the deficit at the Northeast Mental Health Centre, a \$2.3-million deficit that is going to cause a crisis for that centre and a crisis for children and adults who receive mental health services right across northeastern Ontario.

I first raised this issue with both the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister of Health at the end of February, in letters to them urging them to intervene with this situation, to deal with the program cuts that were proposed. Here we are, mid-June, having had an announcement with respect to children's mental health, and now an announcement with respect to adult mental health, and still not an indication that this very serious problem is going to be resolved. I want to point out to members again just what is at stake if these two government ministries don't deal with this serious issue.

The cuts to children's programs include the following: the cancellation of mental health services for children aged 0-6 living in Sudbury district east, Espanola and Manitoulin Island; the cancellation of mental health support for children living in CAS foster homes; the cancellation of the district day treatment program that helps secondary school students who are fighting addictions to finish high school; services for children who are duly diagnosed with mental and developmental disabilities will be reduced; and the waiting list for preschool speech and language services is going to grow from eight months to a year.

On the adult side, the consequences are: Adults are going to lose their community-based programs in Elliot Lake and Walden; counselling services will be reduced elsewhere in Manitoulin-Sudbury; wait times will grow for seriously ill patients needing help from the ACT teams; and nine acute care beds on the hospital side of the operation will be left empty by the end of the fiscal year 2004-05, even though they are desperately needed.

I look at the announcement today, which is a global announcement, which doesn't indicate how much each individual agency is going to get, and say to this government, you cannot not act any longer. The unions have already been advised of the layoff notices. People are looking for other work. Patients with mental illness, who are already very vulnerable, are being put at even greater risk because of their concern about the services that are going to be lost.

I urge this government to finally sit down with this centre, with the staff, and come up with the \$2.3 million that is necessary for this mental health agency to stave off the cuts, stave off the layoffs and ensure that children and adults in northeastern Ontario can get access to the mental health services they need.

Let me deal with three other problems with respect to this announcement. I said earlier, and I'll repeat, that this is a global announcement of \$65 million this year. Agencies do not know what their allocation will be. We do not know what the percentage increase for each of those agencies will be. That's very important. If it's only a 2% increase to base funding this year, I can tell you

that's not going to do anything to solve the problem at the Northeast Mental Health Centre. Frankly, it's probably not going to do much to solve problems at other community-based agencies that have been desperate to try to retain their staff when those programs were underfunded.

If it's only a 2% increase, I can tell you that agencies will not be developing and delivering new programs. They will probably not even be hiring new staff. They will probably just be using the 2% increase to hang on to the staff they have and to pay their utility bills. We need to know, and those agencies need to know, if that is the situation. We're not going to do anything to deal with the serious problem of wait lists either if the percentage increase this year is only at 2% or 3%.

The second problem with this is, does it involve addictions agencies as well? I looked very carefully at the statement and I looked at the press release that was announced today. There is no reference at all to addictions agencies, those that provide community services. We know that those addictions services agencies and mental health agencies work hand in hand. Those agencies haven't had an increase in a long time. They are losing their staff as well. They have wait lists, and they need more than a 2% increase this year as well in order to survive. But we need this government to make an announcement that this money also applies to addictions agencies.

Third, where is the supportive housing component? The government was very clear in its election promise that they were going to significantly increase supportive housing options for those suffering from mental illness. There was not a word about that in today's announcement despite the fact that all nine task force reports noted the need for that, despite the fact that all the most recent research that has been put forward shows clearly that when people have supportive housing when they are chronically ill, they will stabilize in a stable environment.

Finally, we need announcements with respect to huge children's mental health waiting lists. The minister needs to make announcements in those fields as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): My question is for the Premier. When you were seeking office last year, you promised the voters of Ontario that you would not raise their taxes, that you would hold the line on taxes. Then, in the provincial budget you imposed an OHIP tax on all the people of Ontario. Well, the people of Ontario have had an opportunity to consider your broken promises: Provincial support for McGuinty's Liberal government plummets to 32%; Conservatives now lead at 39%. In fact, seven in 10 Ontarians, according to this morning's Ipsos-Reid poll, believe the budget is bad news.

Given the overwhelming anger of the voters in Ontario, of the taxpayers in Ontario to your betrayal, to your breach of your promise to them, and their desire for change in the budget, is your government considering reversing its decision to impose the health care tax on the people of Ontario?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): No, of course we are not considering doing any such thing. But let me just take the opportunity to say that we welcome the entry of John Tory into the debate about the misinformation that was released prior to the last provincial election, when the government members insisted that the budget was balanced. We all learned, to our dismay and chagrin, that they were hiding a \$5.6-billion deficit. I'm with John Tory, when it comes to this particular matter, who says that it's time for their party to admit that they in fact hid a \$5.6-billion deficit from the people of Ontario.

Mr Flaherty: I welcome the Premier's comments. I'm not sure if John Tory will welcome them or not, but those are the comments of our Liberal Premier.

You say you're not considering changing the tax. Your health minister, in the Toronto Star, is talking about a health account to give Ontario taxpayers back some of the money that the government was going to take away from them in the health care tax—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. This is just the first supplementary and we have had a lot of shouting on the other side. I'd like to hear the member for Whitby-Ajax put his supplementary.

Mr Flaherty: Thanks, Speaker.

Not only is the health minister talking about changing the tax; the MPP for Niagara Falls, Kim Craitor, is quoted in the Niagara Falls Review as stating that he is lobbying his own government to reverse its decision. Mr McMeekin, Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot: "I heard about the potential delisting of health services. I asked that that not happen."

It certainly sounds, Premier, like there are discussions in the backbench, and in one case the minister of health himself, indicating that you are discussing reversing your decision with respect to imposing this unwelcome tax on the people of Ontario, a tax that you promised you would not impose when you were seeking their votes. Are you not having those discussions—

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I'll take the opportunity to remind the honourable member opposite and the good people of Ontario about some of the contrasts between this, our first budget, and their very first budget. In their first budget—and I know they're very proud of this—they cut welfare spending by 22%, they fired one third of the Ministry of the Environment staff, they slashed education funding by \$400 million, they cut \$400 million from colleges and universities, and they took \$552 million from our municipalities.

There's no doubt about it: We've decided to invest in better quality public services for the people of Ontario.

That's the difference between our budget and their budget.

1420

Mr Flaherty: What we haven't seen is an investment in political integrity; that is, when you make a promise to voters in Ontario, you keep the promise. That's character education, Premier, and another one of your problems.

It's not just your backbench MPPs; it's not just your health minister; it's you yourself—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The Minister of Community and Social Services and the Minister of Health, could you come to order?

Member from Whitby-Ajax.

Mr Flaherty: It's not just your health minister, it's not just backbench MPPs who are saying you should change the tax; it's you yourself. Osprey News reported, "Ontario's Liberal government will consider modifying a controversial health care premium introduced in last month's budget, Premier Dalton McGuinty said in an interview with Osprey News on Thursday.

This is only Monday. That's only a few days ago. Surely you remember what you said on Thursday to the reporter, that you're thinking about making changes to this unpopular health care tax.

Let me suggest a change to you: Get rid of it. You promised you would not increase taxes in Ontario. The only thing less popular than your government is this Liberal tax, and the only person less popular than your government is you, at 9% in the polls. Do the right thing: Repeal the tax.

Hon Mr McGuinty: Personally, I've always thought popularity was a bad thing, and so far I've managed to avoid it.

I'll tell you what people are concerned about. They're concerned very much about the fact that a \$5.6-billion deficit was hidden from view when we went into the last election campaign. In fact, the quarterly financial statement—the quarterly update, as they called it—specifically said that the books were balanced, that there was no deficit.

What we intend to do for and on behalf of the people of Ontario is, by means of our Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, ensure that before each and every ensuing provincial election the people of Ontario will know exactly what the state of our financial affairs is, so that never again will what happened at the time of the last election ever be perpetrated on the people of Ontario.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Premier. You're absolutely right. I think you're right that the people of this province will ensure that never again will happen what happened in the last provincial election; that is, that they believe you, because they can't believe you.

The fact is that last week's poll said that only 9% of people in this province believe anything you say—9%,

Premier. This week's poll tells us that seven out of 10 people think you brought in a bad budget. One third of Ontarians are saying that they're going to punish the federal Liberals for what you've done in this province, and we're looking forward to that.

We have observers here from another country. Surely they have never experienced the kind of deceit in their elections that has taken place—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. I'll ask the member from Oak Ridges to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

Mr Klees: I'll withdraw that. If I might—

The Speaker: You've completed your question. Premier?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'm sure that the member is very much supportive of those parts of our budget that would do the following: shorten wait times by creating 36,000 more cardiac procedures, 2,300 more joint replacements, 9,000 more cataract surgeries, 8,000 more full-time nursing positions, and 78,600 more Ontarians receiving mental health support in their communities.

We think those are good things to do. They're not easy things to do, but they're important things to do, and we are committed to doing them by means of this budget.

Mr Klees: The Premier doesn't get it. What the people of Ontario don't think is a good thing to do is promise one thing in an election campaign and then break every promise you make to people once you're in office. That's what the people of Ontario object to. What the folks who are observing us here may not know is that in this province we have a law, brought in by the previous government, that before you bring in a tax increase, you have to have a referendum by the people of Ontario. Not only did you promise not to increase taxes; you've broken the law in this province by not having a referendum. Will you at least stand in your place and say we will have a referendum to do what you said you weren't going to do? Will you stand in your place and do that today?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Well, I think the law that the member is referring to is called the taxpayer protection act. That would be the same law that he and his colleagues broke in this very Legislature by amending that same law, without a referendum.

Also, because they did not balance their last budget, they stand in abrogation of the balanced budget legislation. There's a consequence connected with that, and that is to give up 25% of your salary. I'll be asking the member to stand in his place now and tell the good people of Ontario why it is that, in the face of breaking that particular law, the balanced budget legislation, he has yet to send over a cheque payable to the treasury of the province of Ontario in the amount of \$9,000.

Mr Klees: I cannot believe the Premier walked into this one. The fact of the matter is, Premier, you had six months to balance the budget. I stood in this place and asked you at least 25 different times: What have you done? Have you instructed your Minister of Finance to balance the budget in the months that you have left to do

so? Not once did you answer the question. You, sir, had the opportunity to balance that budget, as we would have. You didn't, and now you're increasing taxes to the people of Ontario. Will you at least do it legally and have a referendum according to the law of this province? Why won't you do that? Why do you continue to spin further untruths in this place?

The Speaker: You know the unparliamentary word, and I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr Klees: I'll withdraw that, but you know—

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon Mr McGuinty: Again, we brought a very different approach to dealing with our financial mess left to us by the Tory government. It's true that in order to balance the budget this year and deal with their \$6-billion deficit, we could have shut down our entire community college system, and that would have saved us \$800 million. We could have shut down 10 hospitals; that would have saved us about \$1 billion. We could have fired 16,500 teachers, and that would have saved us about \$1 billion. We could have done what the Tories did and reduced welfare by a further 22%. We could have cut again at the Ministry of the Environment, with ensuing dire consequences in the community of Walkerton. But we chose a different path. We didn't choose an easy path, but we chose the right path. We chose to make investments in better health care and better education because we believe that's in the interests of the people of Ontario, and we're proud of that.

1430

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. I want to read from your radio ad. It goes like this: "I'm Dalton McGuinty, and I want you to know that every penny of Ontario's new health premium will go to health care."

Then we turn to page 44 of your budget, and what do we find? We find things like sewer and water projects being counted as health care services. In fact, \$113 million of what you call health care services is in fact sewer and water construction. When are you going to explain this to the people of Ontario? Under the McGuinty government, when did sewer pipes become a health service?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'm pleased that the leader of the third party has now taken the opportunity to take a look at the budget. This is hardly a secret. It was part of the budget that we put out several weeks ago. You'll see, on page 43 and thereafter, we list the investments that we are going to make in order to—it says, "Investments for Healthier Ontarians." I'm sure that my friend opposite understands the concept of broader determinants of health, which medical experts have been speaking to for many, many years. For example, earlier today, the Minister of Health talked about the investments that we're making in community-based programs, including those that will serve children at risk. Technically, that

money does not flow through the Ministry of Health; it will flow through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I'd like you to come to order.

Mr Hampton: Premier, these are your words: "I promise you that every penny of Ontario's new health premium will go to health care."

I think what people across Ontario want to know is this: People who need the health care services of a chiropractor are now told, despite the McGuinty health tax, that a chiropractor is no longer a health care service covered by OHIP in Ontario. People who need to have their eyes checked by an eye doctor are told that under the McGuinty government, despite the new health tax, the services of an optometrist are no longer a health care service covered by OHIP. But if you look at your budget, sewer pipe is now, according to you, a health care service. Can you tell me: Why is health care money now going for sewer pipes, but people are told that chiropractors and optometrists no longer provide health care services?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member opposite doesn't believe or doesn't understand that clean and safe drinking water is a prerequisite to good health in Ontario. He might want to review Mr Justice Dennis O'Connor's report arising from the Walkerton inquiry, where seven people lost their lives as a result of drinking dangerous water. We are not going to apologize for investing in safe and clean drinking water—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'm going to warn the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. The next time I'm going to be naming you. I also caution the member for Simcoe North.

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member opposite may not believe that safe and clean drinking water is a prerequisite to good health in Ontario, but I want to commit to him, and to his constituents in particular, that we will not apologize for doing whatever we can to invest in the better health care of all Ontarians by ensuring they have safe and clean drinking water.

Mr Hampton: I know enough that sewer pipe is not a health care service.

I also want to read your ad again.

Interjections.

Mr Hampton: If I can speak over the Minister of Health, I'd like to—Dalton McGuinty says—

Interjections.

The Speaker: I'm going to ask the Minister of Health—I'm going to warn you. The next time I may have to name you.

Mr Hampton: There's another problem with your ad. It makes the promise that every penny from the new health care premium will go to health care, and then you say, "meningitis vaccinations for children." Your Minister of Health had to retreat on that last week,

because the health care premium is not going to pay for vaccinations. We already discovered that \$156 million is coming from the federal government as part of a national program of immunization. We know that vaccinations are paid for by the federal government. Why are you trying to claim that the new health tax is paying for vaccinations? That doesn't seem to be true either.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I don't know why it is that the member opposite is so opposed to improving the quality of health care for the people of Ontario. I don't know what he has against vaccinations for our children. I don't know what he has against quicker and more readily available cataract surgeries, hip and knee replacements, cardiac surgeries, more chemotherapy and more radiation. The member opposite apparently does not support those kinds of initiatives, but we on this side of the House feel we've got a responsibility to move forward in that direction and we will continue to do so.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr Hampton: I simply want people to know what's actually happening here. The new health tax isn't paying for vaccinations. That's coming from the federal government. And the new health tax isn't going to pay—

The Speaker: Order. The question is to?

Mr Hampton: Oh, to the Premier, of course.

The new health tax is not going to cover people when they need to see a chiropractor or an optometrist, but it's going to cover sewer pipe, according to your budget.

Let me tell you what I think really happened here. After you made the decision to impose the health tax, you suddenly discovered you were about \$200 million short in health services, so you sent out the communication gurus and said, "Try to find \$200 million more that we can somehow relate to health spending." That's how sewer pipe, according to your government, became a health care service, isn't it, Premier? Your health care spending didn't match up with the new health tax so you had to start counting sewer pipe as a health care service.

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member is wrong again. If he was so committed to ensuring that there were sufficient resources available for absolutely essential investments in better quality education and health care, then I ask him, why did he vote against Bill 2? Why did he vote against rolling back the corporate tax cuts? Why did he vote against eliminating the seniors' education property tax credit? Why did he vote against scrapping the private school tax credit? Why did he vote against taking the first step toward raising the tobacco tax to the national average? If he is so dedicated, not only on behalf of his constituents but to all Ontarians, why is it that he stood four-square in the way of making the necessary tough decisions to ensure we had the money that was essential to investing in better health care and better education?

Mr Hampton: Premier, it would help the people at home if you'd simply answer the question.

Let me give you another example. One of the things you list as a health service in your budget is money that's going to the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation for

something called Active 2010. When we called the communications officials, they said, "Well, this is going to be like the Participaction TV ads that people used to see." What it amounts to is this: People are now going to see television ads telling them, yes, they should be more active—I think most people probably know they should be more active—but do you really expect people to believe that that's a health care service, that running TV ads telling people, "You should do this, you should do that,"—do you really expect that is a health care service?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I have no idea where the member is getting his information, but I can tell you one thing: It is simply not reliable.

I want to drag him kicking and screaming out of the 19th century and into the beginning of the 21st century and impress upon him that we can't continue to fund health care in the ways that we have in the past. It's time for us to go a little bit more upstream and invest in those kinds of things that ensure that we have a healthier, more active population. We should have done that years ago. Public health administrators have been pleading for us to do that very kind of thing. We look forward to talking more about our particular program, to make sure that more Ontarians are taking a greater interest in leading active, healthy lives.

Mr Hampton: The Premier wants to know where my information comes from. Here it is, page 44 of your budget, at the bottom: Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, Active 2010 program. Underneath, it says that to ensure there will be funding for this, the government proposes to introduce a health premium.

I simply say to you, how is it that sewer pipe is now counted by your government as a health service, that television ads run by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, according to your government, are now a health service, but things like seeing a chiropractor, being able to see the optometrist to have your eyes checked, being able to see a physiotherapist when you have a chronic condition with your shoulder or your back or your knee—none of that is now counted as a health service in Ontario. You are the one who said all the money was going to go to health services. How can it be going to sewer pipe and television ads?

1440

Hon Mr McGuinty: Never has so much misinformation been conveyed within a single statement as we've just had the painful experience moments ago in this Legislature.

Just to convey a few facts—because from time to time I think they are helpful to us—the premium is raising \$1.6 billion this year, yet we are increasing health care expenditures by \$2.4 billion. So we're going as far as we can to make absolutely essential investments.

Again, what we are talking about are the fundamentals. I'm talking about more cardiac procedures, more joint replacements, more chemotherapy, more radiation, more full-time nurses, more full-time doctors, and family health teams. We think that, together, makes up a modern

infrastructure for the delivery of health care at the beginning of the 21st century.

The member opposite can spin and turn in his place as much as he would like, but at the end of the day the people of Ontario are going to experience better quality health care and better care for themselves.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): My question is to the Premier as well. I've listened to you in the House today talk about defending the new order for health care that will provide funding for sewer lines. I want you to stand in your place today and make as strong a commitment to cancer sufferers in this province, an increasing number of whom are going to Buffalo and Rochester to get treatments that other Canadians currently receive.

Last Thursday, I referenced to you the new drug funding program and that your government has put a \$60.7-million hard cap on their program. There is a 4% growth in the number of cancer patients requiring life-saving and life-palliating treatments, and yet you persist in putting on this hard cap. You referenced last week that there was another \$60.7 million. The same amount that they were given last year is just what they are getting this year for a disease that is on a rampant increase.

Premier, on January 28, only four months into your mandate, you put in the cut. I'm asking you again, will you lift the hard cap on the new drug funding program for Cancer Care Ontario and try to save some additional lives in Ontario?

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

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I appreciate the opportunity to correct a lot of the misinformation that the honourable member has very deliberately and wilfully been presenting on this issue.

There is no such thing as a hard cap. There is a printed budget number, and the reality is that on a variety of programs in the Ministry of Health—as the member will well know as a sometime cabinet minister in the previous government—as some programs come under considerable pressure and new discoveries in terms of drugs are brought on-line promptly, there are always in-year adjustments to the funding for cancer drugs.

The assurance that the member is looking for is an assurance I am very pleased to provide, and it is this: This government will stand behind a program that is designed to make sure that the people of Ontario struggling against the—

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Weasel words.

Hon Mr Smitherman: That member calls it “weasel words.” To give an answer in this House that says that we will as a province stand behind those people who have cancer by ensuring that the best, most reliable, effective and available drugs are there to help people in those crisis times is the commitment of this government. Those aren't weasel words, but you'd know a weasel word, wouldn't you?

Mr Jackson: Premier, your minister can stand in the House and say that he is committed, but the fact of the matter is that an increasing number of Ontario residents are not gaining access to cancer treatment in this province under your watch as Premier. That is a fact. For the first time in Cancer Care Ontario's history, we've witnessed the delisting of life-saving drugs and the denial of life-saving drugs in this province under your watch as Premier.

I brought in the issue of Rituximab, which prolongs progression-free survival of patients with advanced non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In New Brunswick, PEI, Saskatchewan and BC, citizens get this drug. They don't in Ontario. Yet in BC, the clinical evidence is clear. It results in 58% fewer deaths from this disease.

I ask you once again: Are you prepared to lift the hard cap, or the budget—you can call it what you like, but Cancer Care Ontario has withdrawn these drugs for the first time in our province's history. Will you save these lives, lift the cap and make the commitment instead of talking about all these extracurricular things you talk about?

Hon Mr Smitherman: The first thing the member needs to know: Any decisions that were taken, were taken by Cancer Care Ontario, with no direction or involvement from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. In one case, officials at Cancer Care Ontario put a drug on the formulary list which is provided to hospitals, even though it hadn't come through their board. They might have made some effort to correct that. They did so with no direction whatsoever from the Ministry of Health.

On the issue at hand, which is about the member continuing to raise this idea of a hard cap, there is no such thing. The fact of the matter is, we've clearly conveyed to our partners at Cancer Care Ontario that this Minister of Health and this government will always work with Cancer Care Ontario to make sure that the best, most efficacious drugs are available to the people of the province of Ontario.

The member will well know—and should be reminded, though—that we depend on expert advice around these things. We look to the Ontario drug quality therapeutics committee to provide some evidence around the efficacious nature of drugs. I repeat the essential message here, which is: That member needs to cease and desist from the suggestion to the people of the province of Ontario that there is any hard cap on the amount we will spend to help people to stay alive if they're fighting cancer in our province, because that is a fundamental contribution—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Premier. During the election you promised there would be no cuts to health care. Then after the election, and with your budget, you cut essential health care

services like eye exams, physiotherapy and chiropractic services.

If that wasn't enough, it appears that you're prepared to make even more cuts to health care services. In a media interview on Friday, "McGuinty raised the prospect that the government may consider dropping other services from medicare."

What else did you intend to cut, and how does that compare with the election promise that you made not to cut health care services?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I want to remind the member opposite that we're proud of putting an additional \$2.4 billion into health care in the province as a result of this particular budget. That may come as bad news to the member opposite, but we think it's good news on this side of the House.

Did we make some difficult decisions with respect to those services that we think we can no longer afford to provide? You bet we did, but those are the kinds of decisions that we're going to have to make from time to time. We've been very progressive and balanced in terms of who is going to be able to get optometry services, chiropractic services and the like. The important point we are making is that this year, as a result of this budget, we are providing more than \$2 billion in additional health care services for the people of Ontario.

Ms Martel: May I remind you of your election promise, which was that you were not going to cut health care services? You see, when you cut access to OHIP-funded services, it means that those who can afford to, pay for care buy quality care, and those who can't, just do without. You and your government are contributing directly to two-tier health in Ontario, despite all the rhetoric in the election and despite all the rhetoric with respect to Bill 8.

Eye exams, physiotherapy and chiropractic services are essential health care services. They should continue to be covered under OHIP.

I ask you again, very specifically: What other cuts to health care do you intend to make? How does that compare with your very specific election promise, that being "no cuts to health care"?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member will know that the services we have delisted are not deemed to be essential under the Canada Health Act. What motivated us to do that was the same thing that motivated the NDP government to delist the following formerly insured services: acne removal, tattoos, skin lesions, varicose veins, reversals of vasectomies, tubal ligations, routine circumcision, and many, many more. They used to be covered before the NDP decided they were going to delist those kinds of things. Just so we're clear about delisting and who has done what, they have done more than their share of it.

1450

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade

about an issue that is so important to my own riding of Oakville as home of Ford of Canada. It's a question about the automotive sector.

Today in Niagara, the Paul Martin Liberal government announced \$500 million over five years for the auto sector. Last April, Premier McGuinty and yourself announced the Ontario automotive investment strategy, which was another \$500 million over five years for the auto sector.

Minister, how does your strategy differ from the one the federal Liberals announced, and what do you think this will mean for the auto sector in Ontario?

Hon Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): Let me thank the member for the question. Today's announcement means great news for Ontario's auto sector. It's good news for Ontario's economy. It means the federal Liberals get it; they understand the auto sector is vital to Ontario's economy. In fact, they realize we're facing unprecedented competition south of the border, and they are investing in the auto sector and matching what the Ontario automotive investment strategy is all about.

They are investing in key areas: skills training, energy efficiencies, environmental technologies, public infrastructure and innovation. These are essential legacy commitments that we've made in the Ontario automotive investment strategy, and the federal government is matching those because they recognize the vitality necessary for the auto sector to move ahead and be competitive in the world.

Mr Flynn: Last week we all heard Mr Stephen Harper, while unveiling his corporate policy, refuse to invest in the auto sector. He would simply focus on tax cuts. That policy, or lack of policy, is incredibly shortsighted and neglects Ontario's auto industry. It appears Mr Harper does not want good, high-paying, high-value jobs or skills upgrades for Ontarians, and would rather export those jobs to the southern US. For every one job created in an assembly plant, eight more are created in the community. What do you think Mr Harper has against Ontario and Oakville's economic prosperity?

Hon Mr Cordiano: Mr Harper wants to impose the same Harris-style tax cuts that were imposed on Ontarians and saw 19 new plants located in North America, but not one of them come to Ontario. That has been rejected. Those are failed policies.

I want to quote from Christina Blizzard, who wrote in the Toronto Sun—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Those members in the front row here—the member for Leeds-Grenville and the member for Nepean-Carleton—I'm going to ask you to come to order.

Hon Mr Cordiano: I want to quote from Christina Blizzard from the Toronto Sun, who said: "Sometimes you need to invest in an industry if you want to keep jobs in this province. You can't hold your biggest industry hostage to political ideology."

Let me say to the member from Nepean, who is the co-campaign chairman for the federal Conservatives: Get

on the phone now to Mr Harper and tell him in no uncertain terms that he should support Ontario's auto investment strategy. He should come to the table with a similar strategy and show some support for Ontario's important automotive sector, show that he cares about Ontario. Will you do that?

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): My question is for the Minister of Education, and it concerns some of the most vulnerable people in the province of Ontario: children with special needs. A promise made by the government when they were seeking office was, "We will help the children who need the most help, those with special needs."

In fact, the minister has announced holding back a promised \$102 million in approved special-ed funding. It was confirmed by the MPP for Kitchener Centre to the Star on June 9 that Mr Kennedy ordered a hold on these payments. One of the consequences of this is the inability of school boards to plan for the fall semester, the fall school year. We are now almost in the middle of June. The chair of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board's special education advisory committee said, "The government's holdback of special education funding is a recipe for even more instability to the lives of our special-needs students." Minister, why are you breaking your promise to special-needs students in Ontario?

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I find it not just passing strange but almost bordering on the ridiculous that this member opposite, representing the government that subjected vulnerable children in this province to not one year, not two years but four years of delay to provide for them any of the supports that they require, had to be forced, with their backs against the wall and Dr Rozanski's metaphorical gun, to give up even a portion of the dollars that were owed.

What we have done, in fact, is release to the people of this province, the parents and students, \$63 million this year. We have a system put in place by the last government that needs verification. We're working with the boards. I'll give you the assurance that we, distinct from that government, will make sure that every single special-needs student in this province receives the help they require. We're doing that in a way the member opposite wouldn't recognize: co-operatively, working with the boards and making sure those students finally get the help they deserve.

Mr Flaherty: I'm sure there's no comfort taken by special-needs parents in the province of Ontario to that kind of partisan attack. When you're a parent of a special-needs child, Minister, you need to have the assurance that your child will be taken care of in the fall, when the child goes to school.

You're creating instability in the school system, as confirmed by the chair of the committee in Waterloo. More than that, they've already started layoffs. Now we have special assistants who are working with children with special needs in the province being laid off as a

result of your holdback of funding for them. This is happening in Brant-Haldimand, where notices have already been sent out in the Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board, cutting services to special-needs students for the autumn of this year. Shame on you. Get the funding out the door for these children with special needs in the province. Enough of the partisan nonsense; get the money out.

Hon Mr Kennedy: I'll take no instruction from the member opposite on how to have regard for these same kids who lost four years in their education system, thanks to him.

I would say to all the people watching that—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Flaherty: You should be ashamed. Get the money out to the kids.

The Speaker: Order, member from Whitby-Ajax. Minister.

Hon Mr Kennedy: While the member opposite would relegate his responsibilities as a member of this House to fearmonger—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. I'm going to warn the member from Whitby-Ajax.

Hon Mr Kennedy: He would relegate his responsibilities to these vulnerable families, and what he should do instead is repeat what every board in this province is now aware of: that no layoffs will take place that will affect children whatsoever; that legal notices, once budgets are filed, will be rescinded. In fact, anyone who stands in their place in this House and tries to say that a child's future is in jeopardy because of this is putting their political advancement ahead of the needs of those kids.

It is finally time in this province to arrive at a consensus in this House that those children will receive our penultimate attention and that the dollars they deserve will be there.

HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Bay Street's major law firms are licking their chops over your new private hydro scheme. They want to skim a fair amount of money off the top of what they believe could be \$40 billion worth of new business. That's big money. It also means huge increases in hydro rates after you've already increased hydro rates twice, after saying you would freeze them.

Could you tell us, Premier, why you're adopting the Mike Harris plan to enrich your friends on Bay Street and why you're going to make the average consumer across Ontario pay for their enrichment?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): We're not adopting the previous government's plan, nor are we adopting the first choice of the leader of the third party. We're bringing a balanced, pragmatic, responsible approach to deal with our generation needs.

I want to remind the member opposite that he, on his watch, raised hydro rates on behalf of the good people of Ontario by 40%. We're taking a balanced, responsible approach, and we look forward to delivering on that.

1500

Mr Hampton: I just want to read you a letter. This is a letter of October 31, 2001, sent by Dalton McGuinty to the private energy sector. It says, "Throughout Ontario's electricity restructuring process, Dalton and the Ontario Liberals have been consistent supporters of the move to an open electricity market in Ontario." Now I want to jump ahead and quote Chris Portner, a partner at Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt, a leading Bay Street firm, who talks about how much money firms like his will make off your new hydro scheme: "It's huge numbers, absolutely staggering numbers," he says.

Those huge, staggering numbers are going to be paid for by working families, the same working families whom you now want to pay for your new health tax. Why are you adopting the Mike Harris hydro agenda and forcing Ontario consumers to pay and pay, and pay again?

Hon Mr McGuinty: If we're going to get into the record, then perhaps the people of Ontario will be interested in the following statements made by my good friend opposite. Mr Hampton said, "There will be important roles for the private sector to play in the future of our electricity system." He went on to say, "I'm not ideologically opposed to private power any more than I'm opposed to private restaurants, clothing stores or car dealerships." He said, "Not sending consumers clear price signals discourages conservation and energy efficiency."

Those are all things said by my friend opposite. Again, notwithstanding his very best efforts to frighten the people of Ontario, in particular the consumers of hydro, we're bringing a balanced and responsible approach.

IMMIGRANTS

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a question for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Recently you signed a letter of intent with the federal government to begin negotiations on a federal-provincial immigration agreement. This is an important and long overdue first step. As I understand, Ontario is the only province that does not have an immigration agreement with the federal government.

For too long, Ontario's immigrants have not received the same attention as immigrants in other provinces because the previous government did not want to, for whatever reason, forge working relationships with other levels of government. However, as you're also aware, Ontario receives many highly educated immigrants who, unfortunately, are unable to find jobs in their chosen professions. In fact, many can't even find a job, can't make a living and, in their desperation, many are driving taxis or delivering pizzas. I'd like to ask the minister, how would this federal-provincial agreement address the problem of immigrants finding jobs?

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I'd like to thank the member for the excellent question. He's right, there are far too many foreign-trained professionals being underutilized in this province. The signing of this letter of intent is a major accomplishment, for it is a redefining of the vision of a future immigration and settlement policy in Ontario, something that is a priority for the McGuinty government.

This letter sets us on the path toward achieving better outcomes for newcomers to Ontario and optimizing all the economic and social benefits of immigration. I'm committed to improved processes so there can be a seamless integration of services, a comprehensive one-stop shopping for newcomers and prospective immigrants in accessing settlement supports.

Minister Chambers and I are working earnestly to improve outcomes for newcomers to Ontario and help them gain better access to meaningful employment opportunities. This is just the beginning, but I'm very proud of this achievement. It's historic, and it is the first one that includes municipalities in the federation.

Mr Ruprecht: We made a commitment to the people of Ontario during the election campaign to negotiate an agreement with the federal government to improve support for settlement services and language integration for immigrants. Immigrants enrich Ontario communities and strengthen our economy. I am glad to see that we're moving in a positive direction to helping our newest citizens. One-stop shopping is a great idea.

While our federal government has immigration agreements with many other provinces, I understand that this letter of intent is unique, in that it involves cities and other municipalities. In Ontario alone, about 80% of the over 130,000 newcomers each year settle in the GTA. Another 22,000 immigrants settle in cities such as Hamilton, Ottawa, Windsor, London and the greater Niagara area. Could the minister please tell me, what kind of involvement will cities have in this process?

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: Fully understanding the impact that municipalities have on immigration, for the first time in Canadian history we consulted with municipalities on the immigration agreement, and in the letter of intent, it's right there that they will be consulted in part of this agreement. In fact, I'm very concerned, with the upcoming federal election, that this and other federal-provincial agreements will be sabotaged, and I tell the people of Ontario to consider this come election day.

SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is also to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. A \$24-million capital investment in children's treatment centres was included in your budget. This is actually on page 16. They acknowledge that CTCs "help parents obtain and coordinate a range of services for their children with disabilities."

Parents of the approximately 23,000 children with disabilities in Simcoe county and York region are without a children's treatment centre, and 6,000 of the children need multiple rehabilitation services such as speech, physio, and/or occupational therapy. Can you indicate to the House and to the parents of York region and Simcoe county who have children with disabilities that the \$24 million includes funding for them?

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I will respond to the Simcoe situation in my supplementary. I'd like to reiterate that not only will we be giving \$24 million for badly needed capital funding for the treatment centres, but we will also be giving a 3% increase for their base funding as well. We will continue to work with all service providers, including our children's treatment centres, including the community in Simcoe-York on these issues.

Mr Dunlop: Children with disabilities and their families access ongoing rehabilitation services at children's treatment centres everywhere in the province except in Simcoe county and York region. As you know from your previous experience and your previous work, access to these rehabilitation services is considered critical to the optimal development of children with disabilities.

The proposal for a children's integrated rehabilitation service system to deliver these services in Simcoe and York has received internal approvals from the different ministries. That's my understanding. When will the government provide the capital and operational funding to deliver core rehabilitation services to the children and youth in Simcoe county and York region? I reiterate, it's the only area of the province that does not have a children's treatment centre.

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: I am aware of the Simcoe York District Health Council's proposal for integration of rehabilitation services for children and youth of your county, and I understand the increasing pressures faced with that growing region. In fact, my ministry will be working with the district health council to find solutions. To begin the dialogue, my ministry staff have contacted the health council and they are in the process of setting up a meeting to discuss the proposal. It is an innovative proposal. It deals with the coordination and integration of services, which is the direction we want to go, generally speaking, with children's services in this province. I would like to assure the member that we're taking a very serious look at this issue in your region.

TORONTO POLICE SERVICE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Premier. There's a story in today's *Globe and Mail* that says Norm Gardner billed \$50,000 worth of junkets to Paris and other glamorous places to the Toronto Police Services Board. Former board vice-chair Gloria Lindsay Luby says, "He wouldn't ask for permission to go, he just went. We'd find out about it later, if we found out about it at all."

It's bad enough that Gardner refuses to resign after being suspended, thereby paralyzing the board, but now we find that he's been jetting all over the world at taxpayers' expense, approving these expenses himself. Premier, I've told you before: If you need to pass legislation to get rid of Norm Gardner, let's do it. What are you waiting for?

1510

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Minister of Community Safety.

Hon Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): I'm sure the member knows that Mr Gardner was appointed by the previous government, but he was appointed to the police services board as a member only. It's up to the police services board themselves to elect their own chairman, which is what they did. So he serves as chairman because his fellow members elected him chairman.

I'm sure you also know that at the present time, he is under suspension because of a ruling by OCCOPS. He is under suspension until the end of his term, which is in December. What has happened is that because he is appealing that, we have no ability to remove him. Having said all that—I just wanted to give you that as background—the budget of the Toronto Police Services Board is provided by the city. He is accountable to them and to them only.

Ms Churley: It's not a good answer.

Premier, I'm going to come back to you, because that minister gives me the same answer every time, and it's not an appropriate response. You need to take responsibility. It's very clear that Norm Gardner has got to go. Let me say to you, Premier, despite what the minister says: You're the only one now who can do this. Either you're going to live up to your responsibilities, or you can continue not doing it. You have to help get the Toronto Police Services Board back on its feet. I've told you before: If you want to bring in new legislation, we will give it quick passage.

I'm going to ask you again, Premier. I've researched this; I know you can do it. Are you going to continue to wash your hands of this situation, or are you going to finally do something about it?

Hon Mr Kwinter: The member opposite is really extending her sphere of trying to implicate people. She has been trying to get me to abrogate due process, to interfere with due process. Now she's asking the Premier of Ontario to do the same thing.

I can tell you that, notwithstanding that you think this is something that she should do, there is a process. It's called due process. It's under the review of the courts, and there is no minister of the crown—Premier or otherwise—who is going to interfere with that process.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): My question is to the Minister of Education. As you're well aware, for the past number of years, small and rural schools have struggled

to stay open in Ontario. This is due, in large part, to insufficient and flawed funding to help them with their unique circumstances. There are small and rural schools in my riding that are very anxious about their ability to remain open in the near future. Harrow high school, as you know, is one of these. Just recently I had the opportunity to attend the school's 100th anniversary.

Minister, what is our government going to do to ensure that schools like Harrow high in my riding are not threatened with closure in the near future?

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I want to reply to the member, who has been a strong advocate for rural schools and indeed for good schools everywhere in this province, that that has become possible because of the commitment of this Premier and this Minister of Finance to an \$854-million increase to try to correct some of the skews that have been built into the system that effectively painted a bull's eye on the roofs of small rural schools all around the province regardless of what they did to students, and deleterious to our objective of seeing every student in this province have the same kind of opportunity to go forward.

So we've been able to give the boards more confidence that they can meet their own payrolls. They're not going after rural schools in quite the same fashion. But more than that, we've identified \$31 million specifically to help keep good schools open. We're now working with school boards to ensure that that \$31 million will help the viability of every rural school in this province. A funny thing happened under the previous government, where only some rural schools were recognized and many others with exactly the same conditions were treated as if they were in the middle of large cities. That will change in the near future.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Could I ask members who are standing between myself and the speaker of the next supplementary question to sit down.

Mr Crozier: I appreciate the fact that it takes time to develop sound and sustainable policies to help keep small and rural schools open. However, in the case of Harrow high school, they don't have much time left before some really tough decisions are going to have to be made. Can you tell me when individual school boards will know what assistance they can expect from our government that specifically addresses the needs of small and rural schools?

Hon Mr Kennedy: The people of Harrow and the people of the rural community in general should know that the member for Essex and members in this House have been fierce in advocating for them to finally be seen on an equal footing. What we want to say to the anxieties that were stoked by the inequities in the funding formula that have made rural schools like Harrow worry year after year is that we're making a different kind of connection with school boards and we're saying these are long-term decisions. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by rural areas, these should not be made in haste. We have given boards until August 30 to make their financial decisions, and we're working with them so that by the end of June they are going to know the kinds of

dollars that are coming to them, or at least a very good idea about how they can be applied.

We say to all members in this House, you need to get behind the complexities of this, but these dollars are there. Finally there is a better future for rural students and rural schools in this province.

ANNUAL REPORT, OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the annual report of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner for the period April 1, 2003, to March 31, 2004.

ANNUAL REPORT, LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION OFFICE

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I further beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the fifth annual report from the lobbyists registration office, Office of the Integrity Commissioner, with respect to the administration of the Lobbyists Registration Act, 1998, for the period April 1, 2003, to March 31, 2004.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

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

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty said that he would not raise taxes; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government has announced in their budget that they are imposing a new tax or premium on health care;

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

"That the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government reverse their budget decision to charge an Ontario health premium."

I support this and affix my signature.

TRANSITION BENEFITS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads:

"Yes, Peter Kormos, I agree with you, the Liberal government must enforce our rights for transition benefits.

"Whereas HOOPP is presently funding retirement benefits for those who have less than 20 years of service and are 55 years of age or older;

“Whereas HOOPP is proposing to eliminate the availability of these transition benefits beyond 2005;

“Whereas we, the undersigned, will have in excess of 30 years of service and will not be entitled to these benefits because we have not reached the age of 55;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enforce our rights to receive these transitional funds extended until December 31, 2008.”

It's signed by hundreds, and I've signed it as well.

ONTARIO HERITAGE DAY

Mr Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, believe that the people of Ontario deserve a day to celebrate our province's rich history and heritage. We encourage the government to declare the second Monday in June as Ontario Heritage Day, the ninth provincial statutory holiday.”

I affix my signature.

TAXATION

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

“Whereas the McGuinty government's 2004 budget will break the taxpayer protection law by not conducting a referendum on tax increases; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty signed an election pledge on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of voters through a referendum; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in TV ads not to raise taxes by one penny on working families; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty pledged in writing to obey the taxpayer protection law, which requires a referendum before increasing taxes;

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

“To ensure that all of the McGuinty government's tax increases are put before the people of Ontario in a referendum.”

I sign my name in full support.

1520

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have a petition signed by a number of people from the Kapuskasing-Opatatika region that reads as follows:

“To: Legislative Assembly of Ontario

“Re: support for chiropractic services in Ontario 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;

“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 have signed that petition.

Mr Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on the topic of support for chiropractic services in the health insurance plan, which I file on behalf of constituents.

“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—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order.

Mr Qaadri: —in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

I regret there's no specific provision for the member from Nepean-Carleton. Nevertheless, I present this to Vivienne.

TAXATION

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the McGuinty government's 2004 budget will break the taxpayer protection law by not conducting a referendum on tax increases; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty signed an election pledge on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of voters through a referendum; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in TV ads not to raise taxes by one penny on working families; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty pledged in writing to obey the taxpayer protection law, which requires a referendum before increasing taxes;

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

"To ensure that all of the McGuinty government's tax increases are put before the people of Ontario in a referendum."

I've signed this.

PENSION PLANS

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

"Whereas Stelpipe Ltd and Welland Pipe Ltd are currently operating under the protection of the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA), as part of the restructuring process being undertaken by Stelco Inc; and

"Whereas there is a significant unfunded liability in the Stelpipe and Welland Pipe pension plans for hourly employees; and

"Whereas there will be a significant negative impact on the pensions of both active employees and retirees in the event of a windup of these pension plans; and

"Whereas the pension benefits guarantee fund (PBGF) does not protect the entire amount of accrued pension benefits; and

"Whereas the PBGF may not have sufficient assets to provide such protection;

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

"(1) to amend the provisions of the PBGF in order that it provides complete coverage and protection for the accrued pension benefits of all pension plan members;

"(2) to amend the financing provisions for the PBGF in order to ensure that sufficient funds are available to provide for the complete protection of all accrued pension benefits;

"(3) to take interim action as required in order to provide immediate protection of the accrued pension benefits of both active employees and retirees of Stelpipe and Welland Pipe."

It's signed by hundreds. I've signed it as well.

PROPERTY TAXATION

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

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

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

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

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

"That these seasonal trailers not be subject to retroactive taxation for the year 2003; and that the tax not be imposed in 2004; and that no such tax be introduced without consultation with owners of the trailers and trailer parks, municipal governments, businesses, the tourism sector and other stakeholders."

There are nine petitions from various parts of Ontario, and I'll affix my name.

DISTRICT OF MUSKOKA

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I'm pleased to bring many more petitions to keep Muskoka as part of the north, and I shall read it them.

"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.

I would also like to deliver the first 3,000 across the Premier on the other side of the Legislature.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have more petitions sent to me by Dr Gary Bovine in Welland.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Re support for chiropractic services in Ontario 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;

“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.”

It's signed by thousands and by myself.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly from a group of residents in the Meadowvale area of Mississauga. It reads:

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

“Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, professional and managerial talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their 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 wish 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 this and to ask Jason to carry it down for me.

TAXATION

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I'm pleased to present a petition, one of literally thousands that have

been put through my office, to force Premier McGuinty to obey the taxpayer protection law.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government's 2004 budget will break the taxpayer protection law by not conducting a referendum on tax increases; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty signed an election pledge on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of voters through a referendum; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in TV ads not to raise taxes by one penny on working families; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty pledged in writing to obey the taxpayer protection law, which requires a referendum before increasing taxes;

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

“To ensure that all of the McGuinty government's tax increases are put before the people of Ontario in a referendum.”

I'm pleased to add my name to this petition.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have a petition signed by people from Hallebourg, Hearst, Mattice and Constance Lake, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractors 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 sign that petition.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

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

“Whereas the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal created by this act regularly awards major and permanent

additional rent increases to landlords to pay for required one-time improvements and temporary increases in utility costs;

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

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

“Whereas our own MPP ... called for a rent roll-back...;

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

“To immediately scrap all Tory guideline and above-guideline increases for 2004, as an elementary gesture of goodwill toward tenants, who voted massively against the Tories in last year’s election;

“To shut down the notoriously pro-landlord Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal; and—”

Interjection.

Mr Ruprecht: I’m just reading this petition.

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

Since I agree with the petition, I’m delighted to sign my name to it. I’ve signed my name, but remember, this is a petition. I’m not adding anything or taking anything away.

The Speaker (Mr Alvin Curling): Thank you.

Mr Ruprecht: It’s my duty as a representative to read this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004

SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 7, 2004, on the motion for second reading of Bill 83, An Act to implement Budget measures / Projet de loi 83, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures budgétaires.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, June 10, I am now required to put the question.

Mr Sorbara has moved second reading of Bill 83, An Act to implement Budget measures. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those against, say “nay.”

I think the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1534 to 1544.

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Peters, Steve
Bartolucci, Rick	Fonseca, Peter	Peterson, Tim
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bountrogianni, Marie	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramal, Khalil
Brotten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Bryant, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Marsales, Judy	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Smith, Monique
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	McGuinty, Dalton	Sorbara, Greg
Cordiano, Joseph	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	McNeely, Phil	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Milloy, John	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wong, Tony C.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Patten, Richard	Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Speaker: All those against, please rise and be recognized by the clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm
Baird, John R.	Horwath, Andrea	Murdoch, Bill
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	O’Toole, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Churley, Marilyn	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Dunlop, Garfield	Kormos, Peter	Runciman, Robert W.
Eves, Ernie	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Flaherty, Jim	Martel, Shelley	Tascona, Joseph N.
Hampton, Howard	Martiniuk, Gerry	Yakabuski, John

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 57; the nays are 27.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order dated June 10, the bill is ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

ELECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2004

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 9, 2004, on the motion for second reading of 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 Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): The member from Toronto-Danforth will have questions and comments.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Oh, are there questions and comments?

The Speaker: There will be, I understand, further debate, and I think I am still with the member for Toronto-Danforth.

Ms Churley: The rats seem to be deserting the sinking ship here. Where did everybody go?

I don't think you heard what I said, Mr Speaker, or you probably would have called me on that, but I think it was quite appropriate.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): Just take that back.

Ms Churley: Take it back that I said the rats are deserting the sinking ship? You want me to take that back? I won't take it back, because that's what's happening.

I just noticed that a certain number of Liberals did not applaud your budget, I would say to the finance minister. Not everybody's happy. See, they're still not applauding.

Applause.

Ms Churley: Some of them still aren't.

He's going to leave now. He can't take it. The chief rat is deserting the sinking ship now. I say that, of course, with great affection, because I was born in the Chinese year of the rat.

1550

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This is, of course, addressed to the member from Toronto-Danforth. If she turns back she will see who is abandoning the ship right now.

The Speaker: That's not a point of order, but I just want to ask the member for Toronto-Danforth—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Member for Toronto-Danforth, I presume you will now direct your comments to this.

Ms Churley: I will, Mr Speaker. I'd just like to say that I was born in the year of the rat, under the Chinese symbols, and I've personally got nothing against rats, but they do desert sinking ships.

Interjection.

Ms Churley: I'm so wounded by the comments from the member for—I forget his riding.

To the bill we're debating today: We're talking about democracy.

Interjection.

Ms Churley: High Park, that's right. No, Parkdale.

Mr Ruprecht: Davenport.

Ms Churley: Davenport. Whatever. You're distracting me here.

A good rule of thumb is, if something is not broken, don't fix it. In this case, the declining number of votes being cast by Ontarians signals that something is very broken with our electoral process. That something is people's trust in the process. I believe that we do need to move with great urgency to repair and restore citizens' faith in the provincial democracy. A number of parties

and people across this land, across this province, have been saying that for some time.

The New Democratic Party, both in Ontario and the federal party, has spent a number of years with a citizens' committee from the New Democratic Party and others involved. Others with expertise—university professors and lay people who have done a lot of work in this area—have come together over a number of years and come forward with possible designs and models for some form of proportional representation in this province. I know that Jack Layton and the federal party under Lorne Nystrom have also been, for a number of years, working on proportional representation. Equal Voice, the group with Rosemary Spiers, Doris Anderson—our own Frances Lankin, is involved in that, as well as Janet Ecker. It is a non-partisan group that has come together to try to make sure there are more women in Parliament.

There are a number of organizations and groups out there that have been working on these issues for a long time, so when the minister responsible for democratic renewal stood up the other day and said he was moving forward on democratic renewal, I was expecting some kind of momentous announcement, that at last we're going to set up the process for reviewing and ultimately bringing to a referendum some form of coming forward with some kind of proportional representation model that will suit today's democracy in this global economy, far better than the archaic system we have now, which really doesn't work that well for people any more in this province. We've seen that by the decline in voter turnout in this province.

This broken trust is the sum of a whole bunch of factors, not just some of the logistical problems we can cite, and that I will cite, with the system we have today. The Liberal Party, in this last election and now in this Legislature, has contributed greatly because of the broken election promises, because of a government that went out and made over 200 promises to the people of Ontario. They were told they could have all of those things with no increase in taxes. Indeed, the Premier, then the leader of the official opposition, stood and looked straight in people's eyes on TV and signed a pledge saying that he would not raise taxes. It was a pledge, a solemn pledge to the people of Ontario. He promised those new programs and to restore all the damage created by the previous government, and also that he wouldn't raise the deficit. Looking straight into people's eyes, he solemnly pledged this over and over again, while we, the New Democrats, told the truth in the election. We knew, and we didn't pretend otherwise.

My leader, Howard Hampton, is sitting here beside me. I remember our talking about this, as well as proportional representation and ways to change the system, preparing for the election and saying we'd like to go out there and say to people we can restore all the damage done by the Tory government after tax cuts to the richest in this province, over 30% in tax reductions for the wealthy and for big corporations in this province—with the result being a lack in faith in our democracy any

more. People were promised under the Tories that they could have everything—the moon and the stars. There was so much waste in government that they could give all these tax breaks and it wouldn't hurt the vital programs to our people.

Then Walkerton happened. We saw all the other damage throughout every program. Every system in this province was hurt as a result of the Harris-Eves cuts, as a result of the tax reductions for mainly rich people. We knew then that what Mike Harris was saying was not possible.

Before Walkerton happened, I stood up in this House, and it was cited. Mr Hampton was there with me when then-Premier Mike Harris was being questioned at the Walkerton inquiry. He was told that there were five direct warnings given, that something like Walkerton could happen because of the downloading, the cuts and getting rid of the public water testing labs. He cited two questions—not one, but two separate questions—I had asked in this House, one to him and one to a Minister of the Environment, that these things could happen as a result.

There were other warnings by others, and nobody listened. We said then that what Mike Harris was saying couldn't be done, and we were right. Look at the damage that was caused to our education system and to our health care system. The poor got poorer and the rich got richer, and we're in this mess today.

Then we had Mr McGuinty, the leader of the official opposition, who was desperate to get elected, desperate this time to get the Liberals elected because they'd been up in the polls ever since 1990 and the election would come and they'd lose. So this time Mr McGuinty went too far. No wonder people are cynical about the democratic process.

We New Democrats knew, and many people out there who were paying any attending knew, that there was going to be at least a \$5-billion deficit. I figured it out, and I'm no economist—I think my leader would say that's not necessarily one of my stronger points. Even I remember going to a press conference when then-Minister of Finance Ecker held a rather desperate press conference to show—because the word was out there by then—that there was going to be a big deficit and tried to show that there would only be one or two billion, which is what the Liberals went with eventually. Hidden in that, if you read the fine print and added up what were supposed to be asset sales, which weren't identified, and some other things—it was Charlie Campbell, who has now moved on but was then the director of research for the NDP, and I who pored through this. We went out and spoke to the press and said, "Well, she says there's only a \$2-billion deficit, but we can see, reading between the lines, that there's an over \$5-billion deficit." If I could see that, anybody could see that.

I can tell you, the Liberals at the time had a much bigger research department than we did. Gerry Phillips, then the finance critic, was quoted a couple of times. I have the quotes. He said, "There's a chance of a

\$5-billion risk." There was another time that he said essentially what I said. His quote was very similar to mine: "When you add up all the asset sales and all the deficits to the hospitals and other things, we're looking at a \$5-billion deficit."

So what I'm saying is that the people of Ontario, and indeed the people of Canada, are cynical about politicians, the political process and democracy. It's not just because we have an outdated system that needs changing; it does, which I'm going to go into in a minute. I just want to remind people that as long as politicians bury their heads in the sand, as the Liberals did in the previous election, and don't tell people—how should I put this in a parliamentary way?—the reality, the facts; the facts at that time were that we were looking at a \$5-billion deficit or more, and the Liberals stood up and said, "We will give you everything," practically promised a pony in every child's backyard. I believe the Premier said, "We can't quite go that far," but almost—the moon and the stars.

1600

Look at what happened: This government has gone down in the polls more rapidly than any other government before. Read today's *Star*: "Liberals Can't Put Humpty Together Again," by Ian Urquhart. Mr Urquhart, whom I know has a keen interest in democratic reform—we've spoken of it many times, as I'm sure others have—has some very keen insights of his own. So he writes today in the *Toronto Star* about some of the things the government said they would be looking at in terms of democratic renewal. He goes through them. He talks about "Far more significant reforms to our electoral practices," and says he's been told they're in the works, as were we, but I was expecting them to be announced the other day when we talked about this one minor thing—

Mr Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): Patience.

Ms Churley: I'm being told, "Patience." "Patience, everybody out there; it's coming." That's what we're being told. The government stood up and just announced that it's moving forward with a set date for elections.

Mr Urquhart goes on to mention proportional representation and that "the Liberals promised in their election platform" that they would "set up a 'citizens' assembly' to consider proposals for electoral reform, including proportional representation...." Of course, there are many forms of proportional representation. The New Democrats have looked at every form there is in the world and have some ideas of our own of what would make sense for Ontario, but what we want to see is it being put in a very fair, non-partisan way to the people of Ontario. We were expecting that to be announced, and it wasn't.

He talks about election financing. Mr Urquhart says there should be "tighter restrictions on campaign spending, which the Liberals also promised in their election platform. In addition, the government is looking at a ban on corporate and union donations to political parties and limits on third-party advertising, both of which are in place federally."

He talks about the voters list, and we all know this is something the Liberal government promised, but there was nothing about that; a lower voting age, something that will be very interesting to look at, something I and New Democrats support; Internet voting, another thing that will help give people access to be able to vote more easily.

But what Mr Urquhart ends his column with is this: "But as for reducing voter cynicism, I am afraid no amount of tinkering with the system will overcome the damage done by the Liberals' broken promises and the Conservatives' hidden deficit."

I believe that is basically true, and that's what the Liberals, and therefore all of us, are up against now: trying to overcome this cynicism that's out there for a darned good reason. You hear now in the federal election that so few people actually believe anything anybody says, because they watch Mr Martin as well. He brags about the fact that when he was the finance minister of the federal Liberal Party he was able to bring down the deficit. Sure enough, he did, but on the backs of the provinces, cutting transfer payments and downloading programs to the provinces, with the provinces then downloading to municipalities. It was a race for the bottom. Therefore, a lot of promises that Mr Martin made in the last campaign, that the Liberals made in the last couple of campaigns—a national daycare program and more money to the provinces for health care. Instead, more money was taken away. And all kinds of other promises have been broken.

So no wonder people are so cynical about politicians and the democratic process. They feel, "What difference does it make? How do I trust politicians to keep their promises?"

I believe the level of disengagement has been growing over the past decade, and there's all kinds of evidence for that. According to Elections Ontario, only 57% of eligible voters showed up at the polls. In 1999, it was only 58%; in 1995, 63%. So it's going down. Voter disengagement has become one of the major stories of this federal election.

A set election date amounts to only a small gesture that hardly scratches the surface of renewing people's faith in the electoral process. When the AG first announced introducing fixed election dates, I supported the move, and I must say, no, it's not just because it meant the end of my terrible track record when it comes to predicting election dates. I'm always losing bets, and I mentioned that day that I will not have to go out and buy fine wine any more for journalists, mostly, and colleagues whom I bet with. I don't know why I bet with journalists on election dates, because they tend to hear more, they tend to know more than I do about when it's coming. I always lose those. I should be quite clear, though: I still owe Gil Hardy a bottle of wine. I should also be clear here that I don't go out and buy fine wine. I make my own wine, with my own labels on it—

Hon Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Are they Ontario grapes?

Ms Churley: —and that's what the poor press ends up having to get. They're Ontario grapes. I only buy Ontario wine.

Seriously, though, we had just received the bill that day. I know that fixed election dates are very popular with people. I think any move by anybody to try to improve the system is popular with people. But when you take just this fixed election date out of context, when it's not part of your cherry-picking, really, and in a sense the easiest piece to pull out—I know the government is desperate now to have something they can look at and say, "Hey, a promise kept. We're keeping our promise on this." They can say it over the summer.

Interjection.

Ms Churley: Yes, but far more broken promises than ones you've kept.

But when you pull it out of the whole general context of electoral reform and democratic renewal, it is such a small piece. In fact, I would go further than that, because now I want to give more of a critique, after having had an opportunity to read it and talk to others who perhaps had better knowledge of this than I did, and discuss the implications of it. I've come to the conclusion that out there, all by itself, it may increase voter cynicism. I say it and I'm going to tell you why and what some others are saying.

I know the Toronto Star had an editorial expressing concern about moving to an American system with fixed dates and all the implications of that, the year-long—

Interjection.

Ms Churley: Well, that's what we're here for, to critique and give reasons why we have to look at these kinds of things carefully, which is why I'm glad we're debating it today.

A member of the Liberal Party who's sitting in the rump to my left here is saying, "How come you guys never agree to anything? First you say you support it, then you don't," blah, blah. Well, that's what we're here for, to critique these things, because backbenchers in any government—that's part of what's wrong with the system too—are there to prop up the government. No matter what they think themselves, they are there to just go along with it. Half the time, backbenchers don't even know what they are voting on. They are busy doing other things and they're just, "Oh, yes, you vote this way today on this." That's the reality. We have an opposition to point out the problems with legislation and to suggest improvements to legislation.

I want to point out again that the Toronto Star raised, in its editorial, some very good points around what could happen when this is hanging out there all by itself, without the rest of the package along with it.

1610

Some opponents to the government setting a fixed election date worry that it would give rise to the US phenomenon of prolonged campaigning, when government becomes overwhelmed by unofficial campaigning during the last year of the mandate, all of this in anticipation of election day. As we know, that's what goes on in the

United States. Ontario is at risk of seeing this trend repeat itself here if the bill passes in its current form, without some of the other democratic renewal going along with it.

This bill fails to include measures needed to stave off constant campaigning—and this is a really big one, an important one—such as imposing spending limits between election campaigns. Because that piece is left out, this bill actually has the potential to spur on more voter cynicism rather than curb it.

I also wanted to bring up the government's target of trying to achieve a 10% increase in voter turnout. I said at the time of the announcement that I don't think this government will have a lot of trouble getting a 10% increase in voter turnout in the next election. You don't need any electoral reform to cause that to happen, because I expect—and I wonder if I'll make a bet again—that there are going to be people coming out in droves to turf this new Liberal government out.

I also want to say that, in addition to fixing this bill, so much more is required to renew citizens' engagement with their government. Another telling measure of the level of pessimism out there is that so many non-voters are people who want to make a contribution to their community. They are our youth.

I'm happy to say that I supported the leadership of my friend and colleague Jack Layton to run the federal New Democratic Party as our new leader. One of the things that excited all of us in having Jack take over the leadership was his ability, because of his programs and his never-ending energy—he's like the energy bunny; he never stops. His programs, his positive attitude toward life and the things we can do as a community, in partnership with people, have brought youth to our party in droves. That's been a very positive movement, not only for our party but for politics in this country.

Some of these youth are the most informed and articulate generation of youth that our history has ever seen. They are individuals who are very involved in grassroots work. They are dynamic community leaders. These people are eager to see and be part of bringing about meaningful change that leads to a more prosperous, just and green Canada, but many of them are choosing not to vote. It's not because they're apathetic, as some people might say, but many don't vote because they don't believe their vote will be heard and, within the existing system, they're right. They vote for people who don't stand a chance of getting a seat, or they vote for people and then they're told, "No, no, don't vote," as happened to the NDP, not so much in this election, but certainly big time, because there was an orchestrated campaign, in the previous election. But it happened naturally this time. People so wanted to get the Tories out that they were being told, "Don't vote for what you believe in. Don't vote for the party you trust and believe in most"—ie, in this case, the NDP and in some cases the Greens—"because your vote will be wasted. We've got to make sure you vote strategically to kick out what we don't like, as opposed to voting for what you believe in."

That's wrong. We have to change a system that is set up and designed in a such a way that it encourages people to actually not vote for what they believe in, what they want to see, the kind of province or Canada they want to see, but to vote against something. I would say we've come to a time when the only way we're going to be able to bring a lot of these dynamic young people back into the process is to give them a system that allows them to vote for what they believe in, who they believe in, so that they feel their vote is not wasted.

First-past-the-post, which we have now, has outlived its usefulness. I've been saying that for some time. It fails to translate an accurate representation of the makeup of contemporary Canada and its diverse views and voices.

As I said earlier, the NDP has been studying how to re-energize Canadian democracy, and we have found that the model of mixed-member proportional representation could be an option to consider. Already in places like New Zealand and Germany, this system retains the better parts of the first-past-the-post system, providing voters strong local representation—which I don't think anybody wants to give up—while reducing the discrepancy between a party's share of seats in the Legislature and its share of the vote.

When you get into proportional representation, some people will try to make it really complicated. It can sound really complicated because there are tons of models out there and some work better than others. We're often given examples of the ones that work less well than others; people hold up Israel, for one, and I've forgotten the other place now. There are two countries where people say this system is dysfunctional, but they don't use as an example some of those that work very, very well and have been working for a long time. Those are the kinds of things the people of Ontario need to take a very good look at and pick a system that works best for Ontario so that people feel their regions, their communities, can be represented by somebody who is from their community and understands their community but will also allow a certain proportion of the party that gets a certain amount of votes—that that proportion represents them as well here in the Legislature.

I want to get to another point, and I'm going to talk about it for a little bit because it's something I'm very concerned about, that I mentioned at the beginning of my speech today on democratic renewal; that is, the deficit of women and minorities in public office. I can say without a doubt, if you study all the documentation out there—countries across the world that have some form of proportional representation have more women and visible minorities representing their areas.

I must say, as the NDP critic for women's issues—and I have been for some time now—I do want to talk about the lack of gender parity in Canadian Legislatures. Women compose more than half of Canada's population but still hold only 20% of the seats in Canadian Legislatures. Different factors account for women not breaking the glass ceiling in politics. In fact we've broken that glass ceiling to some extent, in varying

degrees, in business and in other sectors in the world, but we still have this really huge, thick glass ceiling in politics for women. One of them is our present electoral system.

I'm going to tell you about some research conducted by Equal Voice. I mentioned Equal Voice before, and I ask everybody to take a look at the Equal Voice Web site because there's a wealth of information there. It's chaired now by Rosemary Spiers, who actually works for the Toronto Star and used to be, as I understand it, a legislative intern here at one time. She developed a keen interest in women and politics, and she's now chair of Equal Voice. There are a number of very prominent women from all parties on this committee, which is working diligently and hard to make people understand that we have to do something concrete and real. It's not going to happen by osmosis or by itself. We've tried that, but it hasn't been working.

I should also mention Doris Anderson, whose 80th birthday was celebrated a number of years ago. She's very keen and clear about why we need to change the electoral system in order to get more women elected. She's been a powerful voice and continues to show up at all kinds of events to speak about Equal Voice and about changes that are needed to get more women in politics.

The research by Equal Voice shown by this group dedicated to raising publicly the issue of underrepresentation of women in our national Parliament, as well as our provincial Legislatures, has found that democracies with proportional representation have, on average, twice as many women in their Legislatures compared to jurisdictions that use first-past-the-post, such as Canada. And Canada, Mr Speaker—I don't know if you're aware of this—which used to be a leader in electing women to public office, now ranks 36th in the world among democracies in terms of women's representation in the national Legislature.

This slide is mirrored provincially as well. In Ontario—and I've paid a keen interest to this, having been elected as one of the highest number of women elected and in cabinet in 1990 under the NDP, and watching with some despair those numbers go down since then. Twenty-eight women sat in the assembly when the NDP was in government from 1990 to 1995. That figure decreased to 19 when the Conservatives took over and to 18 in their second term. We've come up a bit since then, but not up to the 28, which, may I say, although it was the highest, was not good enough either. But things were going up, at least. We're now at 23 female members in this Legislature.

1620

What I've also noticed with despair is that the number of women in leadership roles has dramatically declined over the past decade. When the NDP was in government, about a third of the members of cabinet were women. That was 14 out of the—I forget the exact number; I know we reduced it—20-odd; 14 of maybe 28 or so were women. I want to point out that today, out of the provincial Liberal cabinet, we only have five women. So

we've gone from 14 when the NDP was in power and we have only five women in the provincial Liberal cabinet today. I think that's a shame. There are some other very competent females who could be appointed to cabinet, and I'm disappointed to see that number going down instead of up. This is not about quotas. There are always women, no matter what the circumstances, who are more than capable and equal, or more than equal, to men to fill any position you can think of.

I understand that in a government—I've been there—the Premier has to make difficult choices about who's in cabinet, because there has to be regional representation and you have to look at francophones and all kinds of other considerations to make sure the communities are well represented. I understand that, and it's very important. But I still do not understand how the Premier of this province ended up appointing only five women to his cabinet.

As a result, after seeing women gain ground in provincial politics a decade ago, the number in elected office today has not just plateaued but is actually going down. It has waned. We're going backwards. We've taken one step forward and two or three back. That's not good enough. In fact, I find that outrageous. I really do. How come we continue to go backwards? What is going on with our system? Why do we have more women not running at all, or being put up—

Interjection.

Ms Churley: Yeah, power to the women. That's right. Let's hear it. We've got to do something about that. The numbers are going down, not up. There's a problem here. They're laughing. I consider this to be a really serious issue, Mr Speaker.

I was glad to read in the Toronto Star that the minister had indicated that a citizens' assembly regarding proportional representation will convene this fall. We'll see if that happens. But I want to say that these consultations, again, like the bill we're debating today, can and will result in more disillusionment if these sessions follow the disingenuous—and I chose that word carefully—format of the pre-budget public consultations the Liberals held this past fall. Many of our constituents out there describe these sessions as public relations dog-and-pony shows rather than authentic consultations. I bring that up—

Interjections.

Ms Churley: Oh, yeah, we heard that a lot. I know you don't like to hear it, but it's true. And I bring it up—it's critical—because if there is some kind of citizens' process across this province, we want to be darned sure that it's absolutely neutral, that the Liberals won't have a plan already thought up, look through the various options available to them in terms of some kind of PR system and come up with one they think suits them best, as Liberals, to get the maximum amount of seats in the next election.

I will be the first to admit that it's hard to get a majority government of any stripe to change the system in such a way that will make it nearly impossible, if not impossible, to be able to form a majority dictatorship-like government again. It's a lot to ask of any government in

power. It's easy to stand up and say, "We're going to make a fixed election date," but to actually bring in some form of proportional representation that will be better for the people of Ontario but actually hurt that party's chances and disallow them from sitting in a majority government again is a lot to ask of any majority government.

That's why I say it's extremely important that the government be very transparent about this system, if they do go forward with it, and make sure there is no hidden plan, no hidden model, that somehow any kind of citizens' group asked to look at this issue is not manipulated behind the scenes to come up with a plan that the Liberals would like to see.

I want to come back to talking a bit about women and the problem we have with, as I said, taking one step forward and two steps back. Things were getting better. We were electing more women, and I should say visible minorities as well. Our communities are not represented well enough in all those areas. I've been particularly interested in what's been happening with the decline of women within Parliament.

I read this very interesting article, probably pulled off Equal Voice—that's where I get a lot of my information, because they do such good research. This article is by Linda Trimble and Jane Arscott, the authors of *Still Counting: Women in Politics Across Canada*, published in 2003 by Broadview Press. I'm going to tell you some of the information they were able to compile about what's been happening with the decline of women in politics, in provinces and in Canada.

They say they've "been counting the number of elected women in Canada's Legislatures for over a decade and we persist for two reasons. First, by any measure, Canada is far short of gender parity, the goal of electing women to about 50% of the political posts." I think we would all agree that should be our goal, wouldn't we, Mr Speaker? I think you would agree with me that that should be the ultimate goal. I doubt if anybody disagrees with that. It's about how we get there.

"Second," the study says, "we can't assume steady progress for women in the political arena. Indeed, there is clear evidence of a downward trend, signalling that the electoral project, the goal of electing more and more diverse women, has stalled." It's getting worse instead of better. "Recently, women have been bumping their heads on the electoral glass ceiling, an invisible barrier to women's progress in public life." It's the glass ceiling I talked about earlier that women feel more and more that they're bumping their heads on.

When this group published *Still Counting* a year ago, they said that only 20% of Canada's elected representatives at the federal and provincial levels were women, and they argued at that time that the glass ceiling seemed set at the 25% mark for the foreseeable future. But since *Still Counting* went to press, nine provincial and territorial elections have been held. I think it says 505 seats were available; women won only 113 of them. So after 12 months and nine elections, there was no change in the percentage of women elected across Canada. Women still

hold only 20% of the seats in the Legislatures, well below even that glass ceiling mark of 25% and not getting even close to 50%.

1630

In this study, there are a number of graphs. I can't use props, but if at some point you look at these graphs, you see very clearly how we were starting to go up, women were starting to move in an upward trend, and now it's going down again. The authors of this study say, "If we break down these numbers, the picture becomes even clearer. There is modest progress in very few places. Quebec is the one province bearing good news; there the percentage of women elected has risen steadily, and increased dramatically in the last election. In 2003, Quebec women won over 30% of the seats in the National Assembly, setting a record. In Newfoundland, Ontario and Nova Scotia the increases were much more subtle, under 3%."

What the study concludes is exactly what I said and that Equal Voice and others who are looking at proportional representation are saying: "Overall, the news is" very "bad for women. Numbers have dropped in half of Canada's provinces and territories as a result of the most recent elections. The prairie provinces, where women first won the right to vote and first entered political office, provide a clear example." Their numbers are going down as well.

We have to ask, what is going on? Why is the number of women in politics going down? They say there are a number of reasons for that. The summary of the study says, "We need to be active in promoting election finance reform..." I mentioned that earlier. The major issue for a lot of women who want to run, is the lack of the huge amount of money you need to run a political campaign these days, even to win a nomination. If you look at the studies, it is a huge problem for women when they want to run.

That should have been part of the announcement of fixed election dates. Whether you agree with it or not—and as I said earlier, there are issues and problems around that, although it's very popular with the population—I think it is such a small piece of the overall democratic reform we need that in some ways it's hardly worth dwelling on.

As I said, I believe if you go there without some of these other pieces attached, it could actually make things worse. That's why I'm worried. On the surface it looks good. It's a promise made and it's popular with the population. But when you look at it out of context, when it's just cherry-picked out of the other kinds of reforms, like financial reform—how much money is spent even between elections, and parties being able to take money from big business and corporations and unions—all of those are things the government promised, but they were not announced when this was announced. Therefore, this piece standing all by itself could be very problematic.

Again, in the whole scheme of things, that is not very relevant to what the people of Ontario say they need. Some of the reasons given for why the government

decided to proceed with this one piece is that they made the promise and that the public wants to see this, and that the government, the Premier, is actually giving up a clear advantage over others.

Well, if you look at the history of governments being elected in this province for some time, it appears it hasn't been much of an advantage for most governments over the last few years. Only the Premier and his few trusted advisers were aware of when an election might be called, and the rest of us were out there guessing. But look at who actually won those last several elections: not the party in power, not the Premier in power—except for the Tories having won those two elections in a row.

But look what happened to Peterson. When he called an early election in 1990, he had the advantage of knowing he was calling the election and was able to do whatever was necessary to work up to that election. Look what happened to him: The NDP won the government. And look what happened to us. We waited until the last minute. By the time Bob Rae called the election, there was no time left; it had to be called then. We were hoping our fortunes would improve. They didn't. Certainly having the advantage of calling the election at the Premier's pleasure did not help us.

Sure it gives more certainty to the people, but I don't believe it's going to make any difference in terms of government—well, everybody—being aware there's an election coming, with money being spent on more programs working up to that date as normal. Overall, it doesn't make that much difference. It can save the opposition a bit of money. I remember last year, that not knowing for sure when the election was going to be called ruined my summer. I admit it. I kept going away and having to come back. We opened our office; we weren't sure if there was going to be an election or not. So sure, for political parties and ridings, there are some advantages to this. But I think the disadvantages outweigh the advantages when you look at it all by itself without these other reforms, especially financial reform, as part of it.

I digressed a little bit here because I think it's really important to point that out over and over again to those who, as I did on first glance, look at this and think it sounds good. When you start looking at the implications of it, without these other reforms going along with it, it actually could make voters more cynical. It could create more problems than we have now.

The other thing the authors of this study say, besides being, "active in promoting election finance reform, to reduce the role of money in the campaign and nomination process and in urging electoral system reform," is they're really big on some form of proportional representation.

They also say, "More progress will be made, and more quickly, with a fairer, more transparent electoral system. Thirdly, we need to work on recruiting, training and supporting female political aspirants. Finally, we should recognize the sacrifices and hard work of those women serving in Legislatures across the country, regardless of their political affiliation. Women need to know that their public service is appreciated and valued."

I think all of those—the study that was done by Linda Trimble and Jane Arscott, who looked very, very closely at what's been happening in Canada with women being elected. It's very interesting information.

Another study that I have looked at recently is GP Murray. We're all familiar with Graham Murray Research Ltd. He's had a keen interest in our electoral system and in democratic reform as well. He did an election watch on September 26, 2003, during the last provincial election, called Women at Queen's Park, 1981 through 2003. When you look at the numbers, it really is quite distressing. They're staring you in the face. He goes back to 1981, and I should say—nobody else is going to toot the NDP's horn here, so I'm going to do it—the NDP always does better than the other parties. If you look at all the numbers, both on the federal level and the provincial level, we always do better than the other parties and, in some cases, significantly better. But that's not through accident. That's through design. That's through our party coming together across the country and across the province and saying we've got to do something. Because if we don't, looking at what's happening with the other parties, we can see the decline in numbers. We have to do something. So we put in place a system that is fair, and it's still not getting us up to the 50%. But I know that in the federal election, for instance, under Jack Layton, we have over 30%. I don't know how much or, Howard, if you're aware, but 32% or something of our candidates are women and a number of them are running in winnable ridings.

Of course, we watched what Paul Martin did to high-profile women in the federal party. Sheila Copps is the perfect example, and how horrified, speaking of democracy watch—and after Paul Martin had actually made a speech about how for this election he was going to work at getting, I believe, 50% of the candidates to be women. Well, they haven't even come close to that. Not even close.

But then we saw in a couple of places the Prime Minister go in and appoint—some were men and some were women, which is another process, interestingly enough, that New Democrats don't agree with. We don't think that's the way to do it. We don't think walking in to a riding and taking away that riding's, that party's, democratic right to select their own candidates is the right way to go either. That's worse, I think, than a quota system in some ways. What the NDP does—it certainly has not provided the up to 50% that we want to see, but we have a system in place where all riding associations have been told that they can't nominate until they can prove they've gone out and have sought candidates who are women and visible minorities who have the credentials and the capacity to run. This is not about tokenism. As I said earlier, there are all kinds of people—female, male, visible minorities—in all our communities who are more than capable of running in nominations, winning those nominations and going on to serve their province or their country. It's just that often, because of the glass ceiling, for a number of reasons, they get left out.

1640

We make sure that our riding associations go out there. We have somebody on staff, both provincially and federally, whose job it is to work with riding associations across the province—and right now, in the federal election, across the country—to make sure they are going out there and seeking female candidates, visible minorities, people with disabilities, people who are generally left out of the political process. They are invited to work in the back rooms—no doubt about it—but frequently they are left out of the political process when it comes to standing up and at least running for the nomination, but being put in a position where they can win that nomination as well.

Clearly, if you look at the numbers across the country and provincially, you will see that there is a reason why New Democrats traditionally do better on all levels in terms of running women and other, what we refer to as, equity-seeking groups. I believe at least 50% of our candidates—I hope I've got the number right here—are either women or what we refer to as equity-seeking groups. We really work hard on it, but we don't appoint, because that is not democratic.

I would suggest that the other parties look at some form of the same process that New Democrats use in order to get more females and other equity-seeking groups elected or running as candidates in winnable ridings. That is the other thing we see a lot, and we work hard on that, to make sure, as New Democrats, that women are run in winnable ridings. The other thing that happens quite often—and I've seen it happen a lot—is that women can be put in by a particular party in absolutely unwinnable ridings, to bring the numbers up a bit, which also isn't fair. This is the only way we're going to bring these numbers up here in Parliament, so that we can look around and see at least 50% of the representatives, here and in the federal Parliament, being women. After all, over 50% of our population are women. Those are the kinds of things we have to do, that parties have to do, and I would suggest that everybody get with it.

I'm going to read something to you. In 1981, the PCs had 13 women candidates—10.4%—and elected four out of 70, which is 5.7%. The Liberals had 8—6.4%—and one out of 34 was elected—this is back in 1981—which is 2.9%. The NDP, even back then, were doing relatively well.

I'm going to come up to 2003. Let me go back first. Perhaps I should go back to 1995. The PCs had 20 female candidates—15.4%—and 11 out of 82 elected were women. That was 13.4%. The Liberals had 31 women—23.8%. That is four out of 30—13.3%. The NDP had 38 candidates—that was 22.8%—four out of 17. That is 23.5% elected. The totals were 89 candidates out of 390. The candidates' percentage was 22.8% elected, 19 out of 130, 14.6%. Before that—the reason I'm reading these numbers is to show you how we're going down. In 1990, when the NDP won the government, the PCs had 15% elected; the Liberals, 16.7% elected; the NDP, 25.7% elected. A third of the women were in cabinet at that time. If you look at all the

numbers, except in Quebec, they're going down across this country. So we absolutely have to do better.

I've just got a few minutes left, Mr Speaker.

This was an opportunity to talk about why we need to change the system. A big part of that for me, as a women's issues critic and as a person who's interested in seeing more women representing their communities, is a very good reason to look at some form of proportional representation. The studies have been done. There are some models that work very well. We can come up with a model here in Ontario that works best for Ontario and we can have, as a result, better representation of our communities. That includes women, other visible minorities, people with disabilities, all those people out there who are involved in the political process but have been shut out of the system. So all these things can make a huge difference and we can renew our democratic system so that people feel engaged again and feel that their vote matters and that the person they vote for, whose ideas they support, can make a difference to their lives—that if they vote for them, it will in fact make a difference.

One of the things we have to change as well, and I started with this at the beginning of my speech, is the cynicism people have about the first-past-the-post system, where you don't have to co-operate with anybody—once you're in, you're in; you can do what you want—and where leaders of parties—as happened with the provincial Liberal leader, who was so desperate to win the government that he went out and made all kinds of promises he knew he couldn't keep.

People are really fed up with that. I believe if people have a change in the system where they know they're going to elect people from all parties—newer and smaller parties with new ideas can come into the system—political parties are going to work more for the betterment of all the people of Ontario.

We're not going to be able to do it with the existing first-past-the-post system any more. We see clearly that it doesn't work any more, for all kinds of reasons. When we have a government like we have now, the Liberal government, that stood up and made all those promises and people voted for them thinking they could have it all without tax increases, and then found out that they were misinformed, then no wonder people get more and more cynical about the process and just feel like giving up. That's why that's such a big issue these days.

The only way we're going to fix that is for the Liberals to come forward now. Let's not wait. Let's start the process of democratic renewal, because that's the only way we're going to make the changes that are necessary. Just giving a fixed election date is not going to do the trick. We should not be bringing it in until it's part of a bigger package of democratic renewal.

My advice to the government would be to withdraw this bill right now and include it in the entire package of democratic reform, if that indeed is what we are going to see in the next sitting.

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

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): I want to make a couple of comments on the remarks of the member for Toronto-Danforth.

First of all, I want to start by saying that this move the government is making to fix election dates, in fact, is part of the larger package of reforms and the larger program that we are going to put in place. Much of what the member said in terms of cynicism about politics—I think it's a little disingenuous to suggest that cynicism about politics has started in the very recent past. I think we could go back quite a while and see other junctures where people started to think, "Politics isn't what we want it to be." Having said that, the idea that people will know when the next election is going to be and can plan for it, it's predictable—teachers will know when the election is coming and can build that into their curriculum—I think, is a very positive move.

1650

The member seemed to suggest that this piece couldn't stand alone, and I guess I would suggest that the idea of giving people as much notice as possible about when the next election is going to be is why we are introducing this right now: so people will know exactly when the election is going to be—October 4, 2007. We don't have to wait.

The conversation about first past the post versus proportional representation is a much longer conversation, and that's why in our platform we said we're going to set up that discussion with citizens' assemblies. We're going to have that discussion. It's going to take longer.

But we want people to know when the next election is going to be so there's no doubt in people's minds. It is a major step in terms of taking away a piece of leverage from the Premier, but in fact giving that power back to the citizens so they will know, they can plan and there will be no guessing.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm pleased to respond to the member from Toronto-Danforth with respect to this bill, which is dealing with fixed-term elections.

Yesterday, I was listening to the CBC cross-country program; they had a federal debate on in my riding of Barrie. There was a pointed question put to all candidates about fixed-term elections. In the response to the question, the NDP person who was running, Mr Peter Bursztyn, indicated that the NDP was supportive of fixed-term elections. The Conservative Party candidate, Patrick Brown, indicated that the Conservative Party was supportive; it was in their platform that they were supportive of fixed-term elections. The Green Party candidate, Mr Jacoby-Hawkins, indicated also that the Green Party was supportive of fixed-term elections. Interestingly enough, the federal Liberal candidate, Aileen Carroll, did not commit the federal Liberals to fixed-term elections. She said that it was under review, that Paul Martin had not indicated one way or the other that they were going to do that.

So when we talk about the democratic deficit and dealing with the power of the Prime Minister's office, it's

very interesting that Paul Martin is not interested in weakening in any way the power of the Prime Minister's office with respect to going for fixed-term elections. So what we have here is the federal Liberals saying they're not committed to fixed-term elections. Everybody knows what is important about fixed-term elections: it fundamentally weakens the Prime Minister's office, as it would the Premier's office.

I guess we'll have to see whether the provincial Liberals can be trusted with actually putting this legislation through. That's the big test here. The federal Conservative Party was supportive of fixed-term elections, and the federal Liberals weren't.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I want to comment briefly on my colleague from Toronto-Danforth's interesting and enlightening speech.

The government would want Ontarians to believe that somehow implementing a fixed election date is a truly revolutionary reform of democracy. I simply want to echo her words and point out that there's really not much in this bill whatsoever. In fact, even with the passage of this bill, there would be nothing that would stop the Premier of the day from going to the Lieutenant Governor's office and saying, "I want you to dissolve the Legislature and hold an election." Nothing would stop the Premier of the day from doing that, and there would be nothing to stop the Lieutenant Governor from doing that, nor would this bill prevent a government from potentially engineering a confidence motion and then losing the confidence motion so as to call a snap election.

I hope that people who truly do care about democracy recognize that there's really not a lot here. There's not much here at all.

As for the government trumpeting that at last they've kept a promise, well, this is a pretty light, pretty superficial promise indeed.

I also want people to note, as my colleague from Toronto-Danforth has pointed out, that there really are substantive issues to be dealt with in terms of democratic reform. But the legislation that has been presented here doesn't address any of those. It doesn't even raise any of the interesting questions. It doesn't do any of those things.

So once again to people across the province: This is pretty superficial, pretty thin gruel, when in fact there are real democratic debates that need to be engaged in.

Mrs Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): I want to comment on the speech by the member from Toronto-Danforth. I'd like to start by pointing out a few numbers. She mentioned, quite correctly I'm sure, that when the NDP was in power there were 28 women members and there are currently 23 women members, and implied that somehow this was a decrease. What she didn't mention was that the number of members in the House has actually decreased. When the NDP government was in power, 21.5% of the members were women. Currently, 22.3% of the members are women. I wouldn't dispute her fact that when the Conservative government was in power the number of women in the House did go down

dramatically, and I would certainly agree with her that it would be a good thing to have more women. But to imply that somehow the Liberals have a worse record than the NDP is just not true.

What I did want to talk about was the concern that was raised about an unofficial prolonged campaign. I would like to point out that one of the groups that has an unofficial campaign is Elections Ontario. If we look at what happened while Mr Eves dithered in this past experience, Elections Ontario, back about February, hired returning officers, rented returning offices, went out and did the spot enumeration update—all waiting for Mr Eves to call the campaign that never happened. After four or five months of renting offices, they finally had to cancel the leases and then had to go and get new leases when he really did call the campaign. That's wasting taxpayers' money, and that will no longer happen because we know when the next election will be.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Toronto-Danforth has two minutes to reply.

Ms Churley: I know why the Liberals are desperate to get this voted on before they go out over the summer break. It's because they're going to get beaten up so badly about the broken promises, and they're going to be able to say, "Hey, we kept a promise. We're bringing in fixed election dates."

Interjection: We're not that shallow.

Ms Churley: They're not that shallow, they say.

It's not me who is saying that the Liberals have a worse record than the NDP on getting women into politics. Read the statistics; look at the statistics. It is a fact, we would all agree, that we need to see more women in politics, and we need democratic renewal to make that happen. I think we would all agree on that. OK, we all agree that we've got a problem with that.

But I would say to those who spoke in defence of the Liberals coming forward with this one little piece of a huge piece of electoral reform that we need to do, that it's not me who is being disingenuous; it's the Liberals who have been disingenuous on this. You can't pluck one small piece of democratic renewal, electoral reform, and say, "Oh, we're going to hold this up as our flagship piece here," picking a date, which is fraught with problems if the other pieces aren't attached to it. It's not just me—

Interjections.

Ms Churley: They're saying, "We're going to do it later." Why not start the process now? What are we waiting for? People want to see this process. You know what we have to ask people. Why take this one little piece out and hold it up as the flagship? It's seen as popular out there, but people have to understand that when you delve into the implications of going forward with this without the other companion pieces, it actually can make things worse, and it's not just me saying that.

Mr Hampton: I'm all for Gordon Campbell's fixed election date.

Ms Churley: Gordon Campbell, the Liberals in BC, fixed election; right.

I would say again to the government that this bill should now be withdrawn and should be part of a bigger piece of democratic renewal when they bring it forward, if they do.

1700

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I will be sharing my time with the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. I will be delighted to share time, and I look forward to hearing his wise words as one who has been here for some time.

I want to say quite candidly at the outset that this piece of legislation doesn't cover the waterfront that we need to cover, and there's a reason for that. We believe that before you bring legislation into the House, particularly legislation that deals with important democratic changes, we owe it to the Ontario constituency to consult and actually be out there and have them help us frame the legislation we want to bring forward, and we intend to do that.

Mr Hampton: Will this be like your budget consultation?

Mr McMeekin: If it were, it would be a great model. I can tell the member opposite that without any shadow of a doubt.

We believe in being consultative and deliberative about our democracy. Levels of confidence and trust in political decision-making are waning, and we have a public that is increasingly disengaged, cynical and even apathetic about the political system. Citizens feel excluded from the process. They don't believe that elections really matter any more or that their votes count. They see lobby groups and special interests that appear in many instances to be dominating debate, and that worries them.

The crux of our democratic challenge, from my perspective, requires strong political leadership that's committed to opening up and democratizing policy formation. I did some graduate work in social policy development and my master's thesis was on participatory democracy, particularly as it relates to social housing policy, so I have done a little bit of background on this. Out of that, I have a sense that not only is real reform needed, but we need reform that will foster genuine interest and activism in political life by future generations and the potential leaders of tomorrow. I think that's a goal we should all strive for here.

Recently, based on citizen consultation in my own riding—we do something very interesting in Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot. I have a series of listening advisory groups: one on the environment, one on education, one on health care; we have a youth group, and I meet with a group of young people every six weeks to get their perspective; and, based on my new responsibilities with seniors, a seniors' listening and advisory group.

Mr Hampton: Do you talk about the budget?

Mr McMeekin: Well, we do that too. We had several meetings on the difficult situation we found ourselves in, I say to the member opposite.

I find that being deliberative about democratic processes in my own riding makes me a better MPP. It give me an opportunity to share and to hear. Twice a year we hold a constituent assembly. The only limit is that we limit it to the first 100 people who register. We use an open concept, with some professional facilitators to help gauge where people are. I share that because, as important as this legislation is in fulfilling our commitment around fixed dates, I believe, and I said this in the House the other day, that by itself it's a very tepid start. But I know from the discussions we've had—and I've been offering some feedback to the Attorney General and his parliamentary assistant—that we have a number of ideas we'll be pushing forward with.

For example, I quote from a paper I wrote recently on this very topic: "In the Liberal government's platform entitled, 'Government that Works for You,' we delineate how the governing party will go about 'strengthening our democracy.' One component of this plan is to conduct open public debate on voting reform. The government is committed to increasing voter turnout by" at least "10%. This includes a debate and subsequent referendum on whether the existing voting system should continue or be replaced by another system," ie proportional representation, preferential ballot or, in my view, a combination of the two.

I think the first-past-the-post system, to be guaranteed a little bit more integrity, ought to move to a preferential ballot. I think that would be of some assistance. In my own view, based on consultations with my constituents, I would like to see another 25 seats added here in the Legislative Assembly, with seats—

Interjection.

Mr McMeekin: They probably would be Liberal seats, given the previous turnout, but based on every 4% or greater part thereof that people receive. So when people went to vote, they'd actually cast two ballots. One would be for the first-past-the-post and the other would be for a political party. A prescribed list is the way it works in a number of European democracies—a list of people, I would venture to suggest, who might not ever get elected in a first-past-the-post system but would make great cabinet ministers in any government.

Let me continue. In addition, there is a commitment to make government agencies and appointments more accountable by empowering a legislative committee to question leaders of government agencies on an annual basis; publicly disclosed annual salaries to government agencies, commissions, boards and employees; and making all agencies subject to the freedom of information act. Those would all be significant changes.

Mr Hampton: I want to know how many seats you'd give to the Liberals.

Mr McMeekin: As well, the government vows—well, you can do the math—to limit the amount of money political parties can raise and spend in political cam-

paigns, ban self-promotional government advertising schemes and require ministers to attend question period, with fines set out for those who do not meet the two-thirds attendance criteria. On a good day, most members opposite would wax on about these very kinds of issues.

Moreover, the Liberal government has stated that it intends to look into the implementation of citizen juries; Internet voting by bank-machine-style voting kiosks in public places initially, and, over a period of time, to move to the Internet—there are some security issues there that need to be worked on; mandated public consultation on all major legislation; and fixed dates for election, which is what we're debating here today—every four years, as I think Minister Peters was saying. I think it's every four years, Steve, isn't it, that we intend to do that?

Hon Mr Peters: That's right.

Mr McMeekin: So we're anxious to see that move forward.

Furthermore, members of provincial Parliament—at least non-cabinet members—would be free to criticize and vote against government bills. These measures are currently underway to effectively usher in a new democratic era in the province of Ontario. With these actions and the establishment of constituent assemblies across the province—and, I would recommend to the members who are still in the House, constituent assemblies right in the local constituency. Parliamentary reform in and of itself, unless we are, as Gandhi says, actually living and mirroring the kinds of lives, the kinds of processes we want, will be less meaningful than on a good day we'd want it to be. Those constituent assemblies will be very important, and we're working hard on that. With these actions across the province, we believe that we can respond to citizen apathy and scepticism concerning political affairs and bring a sense of new optimism to this important debate.

The ability to conduct face-to-face debate on local issues always needs to be looked at as the way to bring back real accountability to government and to heighten citizen trust of our elected officials. These processes will help us to mitigate the problems of pessimism, cynicism and apathy in our present system, and it's hoped—I sincerely hope—that as we continue to discuss the merits of deliberative democracy, more people will enter the debate, and true civic engagement, which I think is the goal we all share here, will in fact ensue.

I'm pleased to offer those brief thoughts as I stand in my place to support this initial launching pin of a deliberative, democratic process that will see the kinds of change throughout Ontario that on a good day, free of vigorous partisan debate, we would all in our heart of hearts admit we'd like to see.

1710

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): It is with pleasure that I take part in the debate on this very important bill, Bill 86.

The McGuinty government wants to eliminate the waste of taxpayers' money. Also, there will be no more

partisan, self-promotional government advertising. After the passing of this bill, we will be sure that the election will come up every four years. Right now, the next election is scheduled for October 4, 2007. Also, the Premier will have a set date, which will give us 28 full days of campaigning. As it is right now, the Premier could call an election and give the people 56 days of campaigning. It doesn't mean we will not campaign during the summer of 2007, but officially you won't be able to come out with all your posters all over the place.

It is a very important bill. We know that there are many parts of that bill which are very important, really. The first one is to eliminate waste of taxpayers' money. The second one is having competent people in place for the election.

What we went through in this past election—I remember having the regional chief returning officer in my office two days prior to May 17. He came to my office and said, "Mr Lalonde, I was just on the phone and they told me we have to have all our offices open by May 17." Immediately, he was looking for spaces. Depending on the size of your riding—my riding, from one end to the other, is about 160 kilometres, so it means they have to open up four electoral offices. That is the first one. They start going around looking for offices, and the people who had that space for rent say, "When would you like to have it?" "Well, we don't know. We think the election might be called on May 17, so we would need it within two weeks." So the chief returning officer for the region, Mr Brunet, went around and rented space all over my riding. They did the same thing in the whole province. They rented the space and the equipment and they hired the staff. To my knowledge, it came to over \$30 million of taxpayers' expenses wasted.

Second, you always look for the competent people to work there. Many of those people are not retired yet, they are not on Ontario Works, so really they are people who have a steady job. In the Ottawa area, a lot of them work for the federal government or the provincial government and take time off, so they have to ask for permission to take the time off.

I remember that in 1994, when I was selected at the nomination convention, at which we had over 5,200 people in the small village of St Isidore, with a population of 700, I ran. I was retired, so I had time. But I'm looking at my friend Phil McNeely, from Ottawa-Orléans. He was a councillor in the city of Ottawa and didn't know if he was going to run in the next municipal election.

So some of the people have a full-time job as a federal civil servant or they have a permanent job, and all of a sudden, after they run for the nomination, they have to leave their job. When I ran for the federal government, I had to take time off without pay. You can take time off without pay for a year, the way it is going at the present time.

This bill will eliminate all this waste of taxpayers' money and the waste of people's time, really, that they have to take time off.

Another situation that I went through in the last election, and I'm sure it was the same thing all over Ontario,

was that I went into a place that was not accessible for handicapped people. They couldn't find a place at the last minute. They had found one, but at the last minute the places that they had found, three of those places, were rented out to other people. So do you know what they had to do to go and vote? They had to call the people from inside, people in wheelchairs having to vote outside the polling station, and then the people had to walk back in there. I said, "This is unbelievable," what I just noticed in this provincial election. "Well, they had no choice." They had no choice. This is the way they had to do it.

We made a promise during the last election campaign, and we are keeping our promise. When I say we are keeping our promise, we are keeping our promise on something that we control. The people are saying, "You are raising taxes." We are raising taxes—do you remember last week, last Wednesday, on the front lawn? They had a big sign, "The Lying King." Do you know who was "The Lying King"? It was certainly not our leader; somebody else was.

The Deputy Speaker: I remind the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell that we can't say anything indirectly that we are not allowed to say directly. So I would ask you to—well, I will warn you at this point, but keep that in mind.

Mr Lalonde: It's a very popular movie here in Toronto. I will withdraw my word, Mr Speaker, and make sure I don't repeat that. But again, we saw all sorts of signs on the front lawn: "No more taxes. No more taxes." We didn't raise the taxes for the purpose of raising the taxes; it is because we had to balance the books that were left in a big, bad situation by the former government.

We could have done the same thing as when the Tories took over from the NDP: slashing down health care, slashing down education and downloading everything to the municipality. We said, "We cannot do that to Ontarians." We are a party that does believe in the future of our kids, and this is what we have done.

Also with this bill, knowing that we will be having the election every four years, nobody, no other government, will be able to do as this past government did and leave the books in the situation that we got them in. We have a Bill 18 that is very clear. The Auditor General will make sure that whatever the government or the parties are preaching about has some real truth to talk about. Bill 18 is very clear. Bill 18, sections 10 and 11: "Every ministry of the public service, every agency of the crown, every crown controlled corporation and every grant recipient shall give the Auditor General the information regarding its powers, duties, activities, organization, financial transactions and methods of business that the Auditor General believes to be necessary to perform his or her duties under this act."

This is the end of what we have gone through. This is why we couldn't come up with a balanced budget, because the former government left us in a mess. They blamed the NDP in the past when they took over, but this is worse than the NDP. They left this government with

\$139 billion of deficit. When they took over, it was \$91 billion. So you mean to say that those people knew how to administer a government? I don't think so.

But before my time runs out, I want to say that this is the best bill. I have to congratulate our Attorney General for coming up so soon with this bill, and also our Premier. He said, "I made a promise that the election would take place every four years from now on," and we will have the next election on October 4, 2007. This is what the people of Ontario want. We have been listening to them, and that is what we will do.

1720

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the address of the honourable members. In principle, I don't have a great number of problems with the idea of having fixed election dates. In fact, if there's anything positive to be said about it, the people of Ontario will actually know how long they're going to be afflicted with this government. So they'll know that on October 4, 2007, they're going to be able to say goodbye to the current government.

Part of the reason for them bringing in this legislation is that they had to have something on which to spend the summer going around saying, "We are fulfilling our promises." It's an easy one to fulfill because it doesn't add to the picture of mismanagement that they're portraying and painting across the province of Ontario right now.

The honourable members wanted to talk more about their excuses for the budget that they tabled on May 18. They wanted to spend more time talking about that than they did the actual bill that is before the House right now. So perhaps I could respond to that for a second because that is the crux of the problem here. They keep trying to make excuses for the mistakes they made, but the people of Ontario will not be fooled. They see the numbers and they see what this government is doing to them. They see the way they're dipping their hand into the pocket and taking out their hard-earned money.

So that's the message that the people of Ontario are going to be hearing throughout this summer. That's the message they're going to be sending back to the Liberal government. When we come back in September, we'll be debating this bill again, I'm sure.

Mr Hampton: It's really hard to figure out why the government wants to make such a big deal out of this bill. As I've already pointed out, this doesn't change the constitution of Ontario. This doesn't prevent the Premier of the day from, at any point in time, going down the hall, seeing the Lieutenant Governor, and saying, "I want you to dissolve the Legislature and hold an election." It doesn't prevent the government of the day from engineering a non-confidence situation, losing a non-confidence vote and having an early election. It doesn't prevent any of those things. In fact, legally and constitutionally, this bill does nothing.

If the Premier wants to make another promise, if he wants to promise that the next election will be held the

first week of October in 2007, then just go out and make the promise. Because that's all there is in this bill. This bill doesn't do anything legally; it doesn't do anything constitutionally; it doesn't prevent an early election from being held and it doesn't prevent the Premier from conniving to hold an early election; it doesn't do any of those things.

This is simply a promise that you're trying to truss up, dress up and make out to be something big. It's simply the Premier promising people that the next election will be held the first week of October 2007. So get on with it. Make the promise, publicize the promise and then let's deal with some real legislation, some legislation that actually creates a legal requirement or creates some legal rights. This doesn't. This is simply another promise by the Premier and he's trying to dress it up as if it were a law.

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I'm pleased to rise on Bill 86 and comment on the presentations given by the members for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot and Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. Both members made very salient facts and points to the issue of Bill 86 and what is contained in it.

First and foremost, I think members are asking why we are so pleased about this bill and why we're so excited about it. First of all, it is the content of the bill, and that is that election dates will be held on the first Thursday of October here in the province of Ontario.

I think it was raised previously by my colleague, but I want to reiterate as well that, in the past, prior to the 1995 election, I was nominated in 1994. I started campaigning for the nomination within our party apparatus some time prior to that. So I was nominated in July 1994. People were speculating that Bob Rae would go to the polls very shortly; however, we all know that didn't happen, and I was a candidate for almost a year because the election didn't happen until 1995.

I know other members in this place experienced the same thing in the run-up to the last election; some were candidates for much longer. It is very difficult on families to put one's life aside for that length of time. This will actually help the opposition in Ontario from this time on, in that they will know when the election is. They will be able to seek out candidates and say: "We know that the election in Ontario will be the first week of October. You need not put your life on hold for a year and a half, seeking a nomination under the speculation that a Premier holds over the opposition parties." I would think they would be very pleased at the opportunities of recruitment that are availed to them.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I look forward to the opportunity to rise and speak on a couple of comments regarding Bill 86. Personally, I'm not supportive of this, as mentioned by my colleagues here. According to the Constitution, there are up to five years in each of the provinces that we have this ability. Our system is based on a British system that is very much different from what is coming forward as a Americanized date-setting sort of principle.

I would hope the members are very well aware of what took place when—I know it was Minister Kerrio at the time who was at a function in Kenora with the Outdoor Writers of America. He looked over and mentioned, “You realize that Peterson is about to call a provincial election.” It was Minister Bradley at the time who was very adamant that we’re going to catch them off guard and was going to make it happen. Look what happened there when they tried to move forward. Those are the political opportunities that you take.

If the people think you’re doing the right job and if it’s the way to move forward, then that’s the way it will happen. What happens in the case of a minority government when you are not functioning in an adequate way? Normally minority governments are very quick to turn over.

I know the member spoke about the changes and what is taking place regarding finances, yet they made a 3% increase announcement with millions of dollars announced again today. So there are a lot of things in there that have to be addressed, and I’m trying to respond to a lot of these issues.

As well, the member from Kenora-Rainy River said that if people want it, just set the date. I’m in full agreement. If that is what the people want, then set the date and move ahead with that. Another government will come in, just as this government has, and change the legislation and make it not happen. If it is against the Constitution, it shouldn’t be happening.

In closing, I would like to say that it was a member who was sitting in this Legislature, who was on TVO, who was very much opposed to it because of the Americanization of the Parliament of the province of Ontario. Who was saying that on TVO but Sean Conway.

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

Mr McMeekin: I want to thank my esteemed colleague from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, who always brings a real note of wisdom to the debate here, and also the members for Oshawa, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Kenora-Rainy River and Chatham-Kent Essex.

I remember the story of the Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland, where Alice arrives and says, “Mr Cheshire Cat, which way should I go?” And he says, “That depends where you are going. Do you know where you are going?” She says “No, I don’t.” The Cheshire Cat says, “Well, it doesn’t matter much which way you go then, does it?” I want to tell you that we know where we’re going. The journey is always shorter when you do know where you’re going.

These are some important first steps that we are taking. They are incredibly important steps predicated on this government having the right look in its eye. You can’t do anything these days without having the right look in your eye, and we do. George Will, the famous US political commentator, once wisely observed, “The constituency that holds its elected officials in contempt will not long respect itself.” I believe that many of the con-

stituents across Ontario do, in fact, hold this place and many of the elected officials in contempt. I think we need to start to turn that around. We need to start to restore the integrity and respect for this place, to see a return to stability and civility, particularly in this people’s place.

It’s important that we start here. It’s important that we build confidence. It’s important that we pass this first step about fixed election dates, and then we’ll get on with the wider agenda.

1730

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I’m pleased to respond for a few minutes on 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. That’s quite a mouthful of a bill.

As many people have said here today, it’s interesting that there’s so much interest all of a sudden from the government to pass this piece of legislation. I listened to the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell’s comments, and different members over there have made a few comments in the Qs and As and in their speeches, and the one thing I’m really concerned about is that with all the arguments they use to actually pass this bill, I can’t understand why their federal cousins—Paul Martin and the federal government—have not done it. If it’s so important, with all the excuses they’ve used for passing this bill, like opening up Elections Ontario offices and hiring people, why would Paul Martin not have done this already and shown leadership across our great country? If it’s costing extra money and they’re wasting taxpayer dollars in Ontario, imagine what it costs to do what Mr Martin has been doing for the last year in all of our country, where we have 306 ridings, I believe. Why is that?

I call this bill the Ernie Eves election day act, as the last Premier to have the guts to call an election in Ontario. There’s no question, Ernie Eves called an election. Obviously you don’t have confidence in your leader, and I don’t know why that would be. I don’t know why anyone wouldn’t have confidence in the Premier, but this government doesn’t even have confidence in the Premier.

I’ll tell you why they want this bill passed: It’s Greg Sorbara’s bill. Greg Sorbara had a private member’s bill and we called it—and Mr Sorbara went out of his mind when we debated this in the House—the “Americanization of Ontario politics” by holding elections every four years. That’s what we called it. Mr Sorbara got almost violent in the House, yelling and screaming one day. The fact of the matter is—

Interjections.

Mr Dunlop: I’m hearing lots of heckling now. I’m just trying to make my speech. I didn’t heckle any of you

folks when you spoke, but here you are back again, heckling me. I don't know what I do to deserve all this heckling.

It's Mr Sorbara's bill. We all know who the real leader is over there: It's the Minister of Finance. He wants his little private member's bill, which he introduced I believe in the spring of 2002, passed. That was his reintroduction into the House. He wants set election dates passed. Of course, it is one election promise. Let's give him credit. Of the hundreds he made, of the letters he wrote, it is one election promise. Mr McGuinty can go to every barbecue all summer and spend the whole summer talking about keeping those election promises—a set election date.

Of course, we're not going support this nonsense. I'm not going to support it, that's for sure. Because you know what? In the end it means nothing. Mr Hampton, the member for Rainy River, laid it out very clearly. The Premier can call it whenever he wants. Let's say, for example, he's having a very difficult year financially. Let's say it's the spring of 2007 and he's made a bunch of announcements on hospitals and we're heading toward that fall election. He can walk down the hall and tell the Lieutenant Governor to call the election in the spring of 2007. It's as plain and simple as that. This bill allows him to do that. Now, if I'm wrong on that, I would really appreciate some clarification from the government.

The other people who need this bill are the Attorney General and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. They're supposed to be the justice ministers? They have introduced no bills. My colleague for Waterloo-Wellington has a lot of comments on that, the two-hatters, that he'll bring out later on. But the bottom line is, neither Mr Kwinter nor Mr Bryant have really laid out any piece of legislation. I was used to working with a government and with a person like Mr Flaherty, the former Attorney General, and Mr David Young. They brought out legislation. We debated legislation in this House. What's Mr Bryant doing, the minister of democratic renewal? We can get to democratic renewal in a second. We've witnessed democratic renewal this afternoon in your vote, closing down debate on second reading of the elections bill.

The fact of the matter is, Mr Bryant has really brought no legislation forward, so this is maybe his claim to fame. So he can go out on the barbecue circuit this summer and he can probably drop around to all the different ridings, maybe take a trip into my riding or to those of some of the other folks out there, and he can brag to the riding associations about all the legislation that he's passed—a fixed election bill.

I give him credit for trying it, and maybe in the end—it doesn't mean a lot to me. Since 1980, I've been involved in municipal politics. I know what a fixed election date is. I have no problems, whether it's four years or five years, but it's the way it's being brought forward. Here's a government that has been just pounded by the media, pounded by the constituents, the polling across our province, and they have to have something kind of good to talk about. So they're going to talk a little bit

about their fixed election date, an election promise that they plan on keeping.

It gets me back for a moment to the ministry responsible for democratic renewal, the Attorney General's office. I'd like to talk a little bit about democratic renewal. I thought the way he was talking—when I heard the House leader's comments over the last few weeks and I heard that there would be no more time allocation in this House, I heard that would be the end of public meetings—excuse me a second. What's that?

Interjection.

Mr Dunlop: I just want to talk a little bit about democratic renewal and time allocation. As we talked a little bit about the 2004 budget, we were told about this open government, how new and open they were, the consultation process, the Ministry of Finance committee going out there, the town hall meetings, the pre-budget consultations by a private company—which were untendered—that did all the background work. The government was responsible. They were going to eliminate government advertising and non-partisan advertising.

Wow, what a disappointment. Didn't the budget bill tell everybody everything they wanted to hear? For a government that bragged about going out to the public for consultations, we in this House rang the bells for five nights on second reading of Bill 83 for one reason: We wanted more hearings after second reading. That bill should be presented to the people of Ontario throughout the summer. You had a couple of amendments here last week and you turned those down too. And today you passed second reading after time allocating the bill. Now the people of Ontario are going to get a total of, what, six hours on an \$80-billion budget that is the most draconian budget, the most damaging budget that the Ontario taxpayers have seen—

Mr Yakabuski: And not really popular either.

Mr Dunlop: Well, no. I know that 71 people think it's okay. No, there's 70, because Kim Craiton hates it. He didn't show up for the vote today. We know—

1740

The Deputy Speaker: I really don't have to remind the member about naming members who aren't here, do I?

Mr Dunlop: What I was trying to say was—OK; I won't go there.

The bottom line is, we know that the members of the government do not support their own budget. So even if we exaggerate, we can say that approximately 71 people in Ontario like the budget, of 12 million, because I can tell you, there are a lot of Liberals out there, federally and provincially, who do not like this budget. Guess who they're going to take it out on? The same guy who hasn't got the courage to show fixed election dates federally. The guy's name is Paul Martin.

That takes us to the federal leadership and how they have interfered in our process here and the impact the Premier's budget has had on the federal leadership, because there's a guy who talked about an election date. He got elected, I believe, last fall, in November, when Mr

Martin took over the leadership of our country: 51% support in the polls, arrogance like you wouldn't believe. The Harper campaign was nobody, Tony Clement was nobody, and all of a sudden, here we are, only eight months later, and guess what? Paul Martin's behind in the polls as a result of that guy right over there, Dalton McGuinty, particularly here in the province of Ontario.

My guess is that Mr Martin will lose the election. It could be a minority Harper government, but I'm hoping for a Harper majority government, because they've kept a clean campaign. If Mr Harper decides on fixed election dates, then he'll do it for all of the country, and that's the kind of leadership we need. We don't need one province at a time bringing in Mickey Mouse legislation to make their Premier look good. We need federal leadership on this issue if it's going to happen anywhere. If there are going to be fixed election dates, it should happen at the federal level and then trickle down from there. I'm guessing people support me on that; I don't know.

I did want to talk a little bit about what people are saying out there. I haven't had anybody come to me in my riding and talk about fixed election dates. Hands up if they've had fixed election dates as an issue in their riding. OK. At the very back. I guess it's a big thing over in—OK. So there are 71 people who have had this problem.

You know what they're talking about in my riding? I think they're talking about the health care premium. They're talking about delisting of some services. Anybody guess what they would be? Perhaps chiropractic, physiotherapy, optometry. That's what the people are talking about in the riding of Simcoe North. Not one person has e-mailed me or sent me a mean letter, anything like that, saying, "Boy, you'd better support that fixed election date. That's really important in my life." Not one person.

If anything, there's one thing that's really good about this bill: We know when Dalton McGuinty is going to go out. That's the good thing about the bill. We know it'll be on October 4, 2007. That's when we'll actually see, on Ernie Eves day, 2007, the end of Dalton McGuinty—unless, of course, there's a leadership review. My guess is, there will be a leadership review on the Liberal side. There are lots of good candidates over there. Mr Brown would make a great one. I'm sorry, I forget all the ridings, and I know I'm supposed to mention the ridings. The Minister of Transportation would make a—

The Deputy Speaker: When it comes to Mr Brown, I'll allow you to say that.

Mr Dunlop: The Minister of Transportation would make a great Premier some day, maybe 30 years down the road, but the bottom line is that we will know the end of Dalton McGuinty. It'll be October 4, 2007—unless, of course, there is a leadership review. You know Liberals: They like leadership reviews. They sure do. Remember Martin, the man who wanted to be Prime Minister for the next 10 years who won't be any more in another month? That's what we've got here. But the bottom line is that—

Interjections.

Mr Dunlop: I'm hearing some heckling over there about September 18, but we on this side of the House have a good feeling about this particular Parliament. It wasn't easy to come in here, having been in government for almost eight a half years and to lose in the last election. We went out to the people of Ontario. We campaigned hard. We thought we had put a good platform across, and do you know what? The people didn't buy it, because someone else went out there with another platform, a whole bunch of promises to the people of Ontario, and they've set a new bar for what people think of politicians here in Ontario. Of course, those are the broken promises that we talk of as we work toward the next election.

There is one promise they can keep: fixed election dates. Here we go.

Interjection: They haven't done it yet, you understand that.

Mr Dunlop: They say they're going to pass it, though, and there seem to be a lot of people really encouraged over there. I think they want to do a lot of special press releases. I can just see them all across the GTA, "Dalton keeps his promise for the fixed election date," hoping that everyone will forget about the health premium. Isn't that what this is all about? Do you guys talk about this in caucus? Give us a nod if you do. I'm sure you do. Oh, you don't talk about it. I know you've had a bunch of messaging around the budget; there's no question about that. How do I sell this budget? How do I get rid of these petitions that are coming into my office? How do I do all these things? I'd really like to know what kind of advice you get as you try to move this thing through the House.

We won't be supporting this bill, mainly because we want more committee hearings, guys. A lot of our caucus members might like parts—you're the government and you don't to give us committee hearings on the budget. As a result of that, I don't think we're going to get a lot of co-operation between now and the end of the session, whether that session ends on June 24 or on August 24. If you want to come back in the summer, we're ready to come back. I'll tell you that right now. We'll be back here to debate whatever you want to debate. But because of the lack of committee hearings, we cannot support legislation you're putting through right now. It's very backward, and I think we've seen it all.

We think the budget has had such a negative impact on the citizens of our province and on many of our small communities. We talk about all the wonderful things you're doing across the province. What are they? The people don't believe you. You're going to have to do a lot of really special announcements between now and the next few months to change the feelings of the general public out there. The public in Ontario that I talk to, the people in my riding, the people I talk to in Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, the riding of my colleague Joe Tascona—I have a lot of colleagues there. We share a lot of the same communities of interest, and they're very concerned. As a result, we're seeing that in our federal election campaign. I'm seeing in my riding a momentum.

We started out with a candidate who was not very well known in the Conservative Party, up against a federal incumbent. I think it's going to be very tight now, and at the beginning of this process, at the beginning of the campaign, it may not have been that way. Now we're seeing this negative impact of the McGuinty budget, of the broken promises, of one thing after another, where the people just do not believe this government any more.

Think of it: In that time, you've already lost a by-election. The by-election went before the budget. Can you imagine what would happen if you called a by-election today? I bet you McGuinty would lose his own riding today. The Premier of the province would lose his own riding if there was a by-election called there today, or any cabinet minister over there would lose.

Look at what's happening in Windsor. The support in Windsor, which has always been either a New Democratic town or a Liberal town, is now showing strong support, federally, for the Conservative candidates, all three of them.

As we go through this process and as we talk more about democratic renewal and fixed election dates and all these things, keep in mind that what people are really concerned about in Ontario today is not fixed election dates; it's keeping your promises. Clearly, the number one promise that Mr McGuinty made to the people of Ontario was, "I will not raise your taxes"—end of story. Now that's history. That means nothing.

I've heard him flounder around over there for three weeks, talking about all the reasons he put in the increase in taxes, and people aren't buying it. They're not buying the deficit garbage argument any more.

1750

You took over the government with six months remaining in the year and you've done nothing. You've done nothing, the same as the Attorney General has done nothing, except bring out this Mickey Mouse bill. That's what he's done.

I know my time's almost at an end here. I was going leave 17 seconds for my friend Tascona, but he'll speak another night on this bill. I just want to say what an honour it is to speak here. I will not be supporting this bill until you do something with that budget.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms Churley: I spoke for an hour earlier on this. I'm sure everybody here was listening with rapt attention. I spoke very much about the need to reform the system, and that this bill before us today, with just fixing an election date, is not adequate. When cherry-picked out of the whole basket—I'm mixing my metaphors here—of changes that we need to make to reform our political system, it is really dangerous to take one piece and go with it, and without reforming the rest.

Although I agree with many things the member for Simcoe North had to say about where the Liberals are now and the broken promises, the deficit that the Tories said they didn't have but the Liberals knew they did have, as we did, but they wouldn't admit it—ah, the tangled web we weave to get elected. That's one of the reasons we have to change the system.

An editorial in the Toronto Star expressed some of the concerns my party and I had after we took a look at the bill. They say, "It is a precise date that we don't ... need. Keeping a campaign promise"—which right now is big for the Liberals because there are so few kept—"Premier Dalton McGuinty is changing Ontario's rules so elections will occur every four years," blah, blah, blah. It says, "In the US, that fixed election date results in long, grinding and outrageously expensive campaigns. Some prospective candidates are on the hustings years before voting day."

It goes on to say, "Provincial elections are high-stakes, hard-fought affairs. There's a real risk that our system of relatively brief campaigning ... will be replaced by year-long contests that will sap and exhaust public interest." It goes on to say, "Governments will still be tempted by self-interest. They will likely dole out favours, and delay unpopular decisions, in the run-up to election day. Fed-up electors facing achingly long campaigns, full of puffery and promises, might spurn the system in ever-greater numbers." So there are serious concerns with this bill.

Mr Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge): I really enjoyed the member for Simcoe North's version of Grimm's Fairy Tales. I have to tell you that I spent last summer and certainly last fall debating the Tory budget under the leadership of Janet Ecker. Throughout that time frame, into August and September, she was just adamant that there was no deficit. That was a balanced budget. The \$2 billion in asset sales or leases were completely undisclosed, no matter how many times she was asked in public settings under debate, "What are the assets you plan to sell or lease?" This is a balanced budget; there were no answers. I know that the members opposite would very much like the world to think that the budget they had was going to work, but it didn't. The finance minister couldn't defend it.

Let me tell you that I'd like to have more time to speak specifically to Bill 86. The public is going to be very happy with fixed election dates, so they know when the election is going to be called. We may even be able to engage people in that process.

But since the opposition at this point would like to talk more about what they think the objective is, let me just remind them that not only are we going keep a commitment to a fixed election date; we've kept commitments to hire more meat inspectors. Not only are we going to keep a commitment to fixed election dates; we've kept commitments to hiring more water inspectors. Not only are we going to keep a commitment to fixed election dates; we've scrapped the private school tax credits. Not only are we going keep a commitment to fixed election dates; we've frozen tuitions. Not only are we going to keep fixed election dates; we've restored local democracy to our school boards. Not only are we going to keep our commitment to fixed election dates; we've provided support for child care. Not only are we going to keep our commitment to fixed election dates; we've increased the minimum wage. I could probably take the 20 minutes to wrap up all the—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Tascona: I'm very pleased to comment on the debate of the member from Simcoe North.

I think one thing that has to be pointed out here is on page 4 of the act: subsection 44.1(5). This is supposed to be a fixed election date of October 4, 2007, yet what they have in here is dealing with the automatic dissolution of old associations. It provides that they either dissolve in the year before October 4, 2007, or if an election is called at a date other than October 4, 2007. So it's exactly what we've been talking about. There is no fixed election date here. It allows the government to shut down the Legislature at any time they feel they want to call an election. I think it's misleading with respect to the interpretation. You've got to read page 4, subsection 44.1(5), because you can drive a truck through that commitment of fixed election dates.

But I think you have to go back to the debate yesterday on the CBC cross-country program where the NDP candidate; the Conservative Party candidate, Patrick Brown; and the Green Party all committed to fixed-term election dates, and yet the federal Liberal candidate, Aileen Carroll, speaking on behalf of the federal Liberals, basically said there would be no commitment whatsoever from the Paul Martin government. Why? Because if you bring in fixed-term elections, that takes the power away from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will have all that power to determine when they want to call the election. And believe me, there was a lot of fooling around and a lot of gerrymandering with respect to the calling of this particular election, so no wonder Paul Martin doesn't want anyone taking away his power to call an election.

The Deputy Speaker: Further questions and comments? The member from Scarborough—don't help me. Scarborough Southwest. I was on the right track.

Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): It's a pleasure to comment briefly. I had an opportunity last week to speak to this bill.

I think the member from Simcoe North brought up some interesting points that are worth debating and discussing, but what I'm a bit concerned about is his criticism of our government and what we're attempting to do here. A number of promises have been fulfilled. I don't know if he can hear me or listen at this point in time, but he did mention in his speech that he was in municipal politics since 1980. When he gets a chance to do his summation, I'd like to know if he ever raised taxes when he was reeve or was in the position of mayor—or I don't know what he did at the municipal level. I was a city councillor and also had a municipal life. He's constantly pointing the finger, saying Dalton McGuinty broke his promise about, "I will not raise taxes." I would like to know, hopefully when he responds, whether or not he ever raised taxes in his time as a municipal reeve or mayor back in his hometown.

Dalton McGuinty, at the time he came to power, didn't know that he was going to face a \$5.6-billion deficit. We've heard now that John Tory, probably the next leader of the party, and Mr Flaherty have indicated that perhaps their party wasn't forthcoming, that their finance minister wasn't forthcoming. That's where the misinformation started, and the Premier had to deal with that misinformation. There are admissions now being made by potential leaders of this party, and I can't wait, when this House resumes in the fall, to hear from the new leader and to see what position they take about the finances of the government prior to this Liberal government taking office.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment in these two minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Simcoe North has two minutes to reply.

Mr Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond to the comments made by the member from Toronto-Danforth; the member from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge; the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, my colleague; and the member from Scarborough Southwest.

In summary, I'd just like to say that I don't intend to support this piece of legislation. I think the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford summed it up best when he said we needed to see the federal leadership actually come through with this first. If I saw a federal Prime Minister set the bar and follow the same kind of legislation, then I can imagine all the territories and the other eight provinces would follow through. That's why I would like to see it.

It's hard for me to listen to the Liberals put this legislation through when their federal cousins are ignoring it. And they are ignoring it, because Mr Martin has followed that same pattern since last November. There are people who think Mr Martin should have called the election before Christmas last year or very early in the spring. Of course, he has waited and watched the polling. When the sponsorship scandal hit, he knew full well he had a problem. That's why he didn't put it off, because as time went on, we knew more and more negative facts were going to come out about the sponsorship scandal. So he immediately went to the polls for a June 28 election, and as a result, we'll see what happens in the next few days. But I would like to see the federal leadership on this particular issue.

In the end, it's like I said earlier: I want to call this the Ernie Eves election day act, because if this bill is passed, history will show that Ernie Eves was the last Premier who had the courage to call an election. I want to put that on the record: Ernie Eves, the last Premier to call an election, who had the courage to do it.

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
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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	Bountrogianni, Hon / L'hon Marie (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative		
Beaches-East York /	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West /	Marsales, Judy (L)
Beaches-York-Est		Hamilton-Ouest	
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-	Kular, Kuldeep (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and	Dombrowsky, Hon / L'hon Leona (L) 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 /	Gerretsen, Hon / L'hon John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston et les îles	
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)		
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 /	Caplan, Hon / L'hon David (L) 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)
Don Valley West /		London North Centre /	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley-Ouest		London-Centre-Nord	
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Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London-Ouest	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	London-Fanshawe	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Hon / L'hon Steve (L) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Markham	Takhar, Hon / L'hon Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
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Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga-Centre	
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		Mississauga-Est	
Etobicoke Centre /		Mississauga South /	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke-Centre		Mississauga-Sud	
Etobicoke North /	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West /	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke-Nord		Mississauga-Ouest	
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre /	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara-Centre	
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
		Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
		Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon / L'hon Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon / L'hon Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Watson, Hon / L'hon Jim (L) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Meilleur, Hon / L'hon Madeleine (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Hon / L'hon Gerard (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon / L'hon George (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
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Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Yakubuski, John (PC)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
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Sault Ste Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Hon / L'hon Dwight (L) Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon / L'hon Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
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Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
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St Paul's	Bryant, Hon / L'hon Michael (L) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		

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

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

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Rosario Marchese, Jerry Martiniuk,
Phil McNeely, Bill Murdoch,
Khalil Ramal, Tony Ruprecht,
Maria Van Bommel, Tony C.Wong
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

CONTENTS

Monday 14 June 2004

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Community Day	
Mr Flaherty	2831
St Matthew High School	
Mr McNeely	2831
Explosion in Elmira	
Mr Arnott	2831
Urban sprawl	
Ms Churley	2832
Food safety	
Mr Rinaldi	2832
Agricultural hall of fame	
Mr Chudleigh	2832
Immigrants	
Mr Ramal	2832
Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario	
Mr Patten	2833
Provincial deficit	
Mr McMeekin	2833

MOTIONS

House sittings	
Mr Caplan	2833
Agreed to	2834

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Community-based mental health services	
Mr Smitherman	2834
Mr Jackson	2835
Ms Martel	2836

ORAL QUESTIONS

Taxation	
Mr Flaherty	2837
Mr McGuinty	2837
Ontario budget	
Mr Klees	2838
Mr McGuinty	2838
Health care funding	
Mr Hampton	2839
Mr McGuinty	2839
Cancer treatment	
Mr Jackson	2841
Mr Smitherman	2841

Health care services

Ms Martel	2841
Mr McGuinty	2942

Automotive industry

Mr Flynn	2942
Mr Cordiano	2942

Children with special needs

Mr Flaherty	2843
Mr Kennedy	2843

Hydro deregulation

Mr Hampton	2843
Mr McGuinty	2843

Immigrants

Mr Ruprecht	2844
Mrs Bountrogianni	2844

Services for disabled children

Mr Dunlop	2844
Mrs Bountrogianni	2845

Toronto Police Service

Ms Churley	2845
Mr Kwinter	2845

Education funding

Mr Crozier	2845
Mr Kennedy	2846

PETITIONS

Taxation

Mr Tascona	2846
Mr Ouellette	2847
Mr Murdoch	2847
Mr Klees	2849

Transition benefits

Mr Kormos	2846
-----------------	------

Ontario Heritage Day

Mr Brownell	2847
-------------------	------

Chiropractic services

Mr Bisson	2847, 2849
Mr Qaadri	2847
Mr Kormos	2848

Pension plans

Mr Kormos	2848
-----------------	------

Property taxation

Mr Leal	2848
---------------	------

District of Muskoka

Mr Miller	2848
-----------------	------

Immigrants' skills

Mr Delaney	2849
------------------	------

Tenant protection

Mr Ruprecht	2849
-------------------	------

SECOND READINGS

Budget Measures Act, 2004,

Bill 83, *Mr. Sorbara*

Agreed to

Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004, Bill 86, *Mr Bryant*

Ms Churley

Ms Wynne

Mr Tascona

Mr Hampton

Mrs Sandals

Mr McMeekin

Mr Lalonde

Mr Yakabuski

Mr Hoy

Mr Ouellette

Mr Dunlop

Mr Arthurs

Mr Berardinetti

Debate deemed adjourned

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors

The Speaker

Annual report, Office of the Integrity Commissioner

The Speaker

Annual report, lobbyists' registration office

The Speaker

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 14 juin 2004

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 2004 sur les mesures budgétaires, projet de loi 83, *M. Sorbara*

Adoptée

Loi de 2004 modifiant des lois

en ce qui concerne les élections,

projet de loi 86, *M. Bryant*

Débat présumé ajourné