



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 38th Parliament

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de l'Ontario

Première session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 21 June 2004

Lundi 21 juin 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 21 June 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 21 juin 2004

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): For two years now, I have been advocating for legislation to protect the right of professional firefighters to serve as volunteers on their free time and in their home communities. The professional firefighters' union wants to force double-hatters to resign as volunteers. If this happens, small-town and rural fire departments will be weakened and communities will be less safe.

The Minister of Community Safety knows that I recently received a letter from the fire marshal, Bernard Moyle, on this issue. You know that a key part of the fire marshal's job is to advise the provincial government on fire standards and legislation. In the fire marshal's letter, he expressed appreciation for my efforts to resolve this issue and protect double-hatters, and he reaffirmed his support for legislative action to resolve the problem.

Just last week, we learned from the Ottawa firefighters' union Web site that the Ontario professional firefighters' union has lifted a moratorium on charges against double-hatters, essentially declaring open season on these firefighters. The Web site actually encourages union members to seek out double-hatters, urge them to resign as volunteers and threaten them with charges if they don't, possibly leading to their expulsion from the union and the loss of their full-time jobs.

The minister knows that the fire marshal, in this context, has warned that this situation carries with it "a potential serious threat to public safety." This is the opinion of the fire marshal. Once again, I call upon the minister to avoid this threat and protect community safety by immediately introducing a government bill to protect double-hatters, before the summer recess, and send a signal to the union leaders that community safety in rural Ontario is more important than their union membership drive.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I'm pleased to rise today to recognize National Aboriginal Day on behalf of the Ontario government. June 21 was designated National Aboriginal Day in 1996 to celebrate

the cultures and contributions of Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. June 21 was chosen because of the cultural significance of the summer solstice, because many aboriginal groups mark this day as a time to engage in traditional ceremonies.

Last week, the minister responsible for native affairs, Michael Bryant, attended the 30th annual All Ontario Chiefs Conference held at Hiawatha First Nation, where he discussed Ontario's new approach on aboriginal matters. This new approach will be based on co-operation and mutual respect. We will involve the aboriginal leadership in developing this approach.

At the All Ontario Chiefs Conference, the minister also reinforced Ontario's commitment to resolving pending land claims. This government has already invested more than \$190 million in the aboriginal healing and wellness strategy for a five-year period and has committed \$7 million annually for post-secondary education for aboriginal students.

The McGuinty government hopes that by working co-operatively with these communities, we can help improve the lives of aboriginal peoples in Ontario. The quality of life of all Ontarians improves when we have strong and prosperous aboriginal communities. Please join me in acknowledging the significance of National Aboriginal Day and the important contribution of aboriginal people to the province of Ontario.

BONNIE BRAE HEALTH CARE CENTRE

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Today I stand to ask the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to make a decision in regard to a long-term-care facility in my riding of Oxford. Last August, the residents of Bonnie Brae Health Care Centre were notified of the decision of Tri-County Mennonite Homes to purchase the centre for a new community lifestyle project. The residents and staff were excited to hear the news and have been part of the planning process to upgrade the facility from a D to an A standard.

But here it is, 10 months later, and we're being told the entire project is on hold until the Ministry of Long-Term Care's licensing division has made a firm decision to allow the transfer of the beds. They had no information on the status of the project, even though public hearings have been held and there were no objections.

I know long-term care is of utmost importance to Minister Smitherman. The minister has often said the government is committed to ensuring that the people in long-term-care facilities live in dignity and have the

highest possible quality of life. Well, Mr Smitherman, here is a resident council telling you what they need to do that. I urge you to fulfill your commitment to the residents of Bonnie Brae and make the long-overdue decision to let them proceed with the renovations of their facility. Follow through with your promise to let them live in dignity and have the highest possible quality of life by signing off on this project today.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I have a statement today about local democracy. It's about what happened in Quebec yesterday, and I hope everybody was watching that.

Right across Quebec, people had an opportunity in some 89 municipalities to vote on their local futures. They had an opportunity to vote—

Interjections.

Mr Prue: —if you'll stop yelling to hear—on how they will be governed locally. That is something that might be foreign and anathema to some of the members opposite, but that I would think is a fundamental right all the same.

Many of those communities, given the opportunity, voted to remain merged with their new municipalities. Others voted to demerge, because they felt it was in their own best interests not to be part of a larger municipality. The issue is not how they voted; the issue is that they were allowed to vote in the first place and that the government was willing to take whatever their votes were and move forward on those referendums.

I contrast that with the government of Ontario, where you have denied those same rights to the people of Ancaster, Dundas and Flamborough. I ask you to contrast that with the government of Ontario, where you are denying democracy and the vote of the people of Kawartha Lakes.

These people are not going to go away. They are going to continue to advocate for local democracy. They are going to continue to fight for local government. Some are here today, and they are asking this government to listen and to act. If they can do it in Quebec, you can do it too.

1340

BLYTH FESTIVAL

Mrs Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): This past Friday, I had the privilege of attending the Blyth Festival grand opening gala dinner in Blyth, Ontario. The Blyth Centre for the Arts, including the Blyth Festival, was founded in 1975. It is unique in that it produces theatre that reflects the culture and interests of people from southwestern Ontario, of which I am especially proud.

Blyth has celebrated our life in small-town Ontario very well with its development of new plays. This year, Cricket and Claudette portrays scandal and romance at the village dumpsite. Test Drive is also on this year's

play list. It celebrates the family business of the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

I have a coupon for a couple of tickets for the member, so when he is ready he can call and dicker with the box office to set a date.

I also encourage everyone here to drive to the beautiful village of Blyth, Ontario, and enjoy a wonderful, truly Canadian theatrical production.

WEST LINCOLN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I have to ask, if it's good for the goose, is it good for the gander? Certainly the folks in the Sudbury and Thunder Bay communities will be welcoming the announcement by the McGuinty government and the Ministry of Health that they are receiving 80% of funding toward their capital projects. But if they get 80%, what about West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby, the hospital that serves the people of Lincoln, West Lincoln, east Stoney Creek and the surrounding area? There are great, talented, hard-working people there. It has an excellent reputation, but it's a tired old building in need of renewal.

Locally, citizens have raised millions of dollars, expanding from 60 to 85 beds, new equipment and better services. But despite a lot of sweet words and promises, there's no indication that that hospital will receive any money from the McGuinty government, let alone the 80% level that Sudbury and Thunder Bay are receiving. Surely if these hospitals are receiving 80% from provincial funds, local residents of West Niagara have a very fair expectation that they too will receive that 80% share. It's certainly justified by the need, the growth in the community and local generosity.

If that 80% share is good for those two hospitals, it should be good for the people of West Lincoln as well.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): My constituents in Perth-Middlesex remember a chap named Tony Clement as the Minister of Health who brought private MRIs and other diagnostic exams to Ontario. He was the minister who allowed private MRI clinics to poach staff from public institutions despite repeated empty promises that this would not happen. Two-Tier Tony is now running for a party that, if elected, could force private health care delivery on the provinces, in violation of the Canada Health Act. He would be ably assisted by his fellow traveller, Ralph Klein.

I for one—and I know my constituents feel the same way—do not want to walk into an emergency room or doctor's office only to be judged by the size of my wallet rather than the reality of my pain or illness. That's why I'm glad our Liberal government has delivered on our commitment to improve the public delivery of health care in Ontario.

Our Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act reaffirms Ontario's commitment to universally accessible, publicly funded health care. We are investing in

nine new, publicly funded MRI and CT sites, and we are funding the first northern Ontario medical school in 30 years. Our actions demonstrate our commitment to the health care system that we can all be proud of, a health care system that is fully accessible to all Ontarians, not just for those who can afford it.

My message to Two-Tier Tony and King Ralph: Hands off our public health care.

GAY PRIDE WEEK

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): Today is the start of Toronto's 24th annual Pride Week. Over a million people will participate in this year's festival, named Bursting with Fruit Flavours. There are 18 official events, including the pride and remembrance five-kilometre run, a new speaker series with Winnipeg mayor Glen Murray and Ann-Marie MacDonald, and the open-air church service led by Reverend Brent Hawkes, who is one of the original champions of Pride in Toronto. All of that leads up to the parade on Sunday.

Thank you to Pride Toronto co-chairs Ayse Turak and Fred Pitt and the 700 volunteers who make Pride possible.

Pride is about coming together to celebrate the fight for equality and dignity for members of Ontario's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and two-spirited community. It's about people of all ages, from all walks of life, some of whom live closeted lives 51 weeks of the year, and allowing them to have a brief window on what it would be like to live in a world without homophobia.

It's about families celebrating their diversity. There are a lot of "I love my gay sister," "I love my gay brother, uncle, aunt, grandmother" buttons worn during Pride.

If you join us on Sunday for the parade, you will hear the warmest and most enthusiastic cheer for PFLAG, which is Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. That's an organization that understands that many gay, lesbian and transgendered people are ostracized from their families, and they are support for those people.

Today I ask you to join me in celebrating Pride. Next Monday we will, as a country, make an important choice. We will choose to build on our fragile successes and continue to promote equality and dignity for all of us, or we will vote to turn back the clock. I hope you will vote to build on our successes with a government—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): At the end of each session, for the last four years, I was pleased to give the government an evaluation of how it has done so far. To be fair, I believe I need to do it for our government.

If we look at what we've done over the last few months, we've uploaded public health costs instead of downloading them. I'll explain uploading to you afterward.

We've created 8,000 full-time nursing positions. They're not Hula Hoop workers; they're nurses who provide quality care.

We're providing free vaccinations to children. The public health officers begged you for the last four years to do it. We've done it.

We're investing in our children. It is common sense to have classes of 20. It's only common sense. You ruined that phrase, and we're taking it back.

We're investing in our cities. You created gridlock over eight years. Accidents went down because no cars moved on our highways under your jurisdiction. One cent per litre of gasoline will go to municipalities, followed by two cents. It's too bad you didn't listen to me in the last four years.

We're taking care of those most in need. We will increase care at home for 97,000 Ontarians who want to stay at home, not in long-term care.

We're opening an additional 3,760 long-term-care beds. They don't belong in hospitals; they belong in their homes in long-term care.

We've increased, for the first time in 11 years—and both parties can listen to this one—the basic allowance and maximum shelter allowance for ODSP and Ontario Works.

We're protecting Ontario's drinking water. Shame on you. We're doing it.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to standing order 109(b).

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Mr Racco from the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly presents the committee's report prescribing the ministries and offices assigned to certain standing committees.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Racco: No, thank you.

The Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 109(b), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TRANSITIONAL PHYSICIAN PAYMENT REVIEW ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004 SUR LA RÉVISION PROVISOIRE DES PAIEMENTS D'HONORAIRES DE MÉDECINS

Mr Smitherman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 104, An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act and the Ministry of Health Appeal and Review Boards Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 104, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé et la Loi de 1998 sur les commissions d'appel et de révision du ministère de la Santé.

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

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Briefly, I've had the opportunity to share this bill with both opposition parties and with key stakeholders. The request for submissions to Justice Peter Cory's review of the medical audit practice in Ontario was posted in major daily newspapers today. This bill would temporarily halt the activities of the MRC while we ensure that the MRC process is fair and accountable to the people of Ontario, to the positions and to the government.

Pending Justice Cory's review, the legislation would put in place a process that would give doctors the choice to freeze their case or to pursue an alternate process in the meantime.

1350

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent of this chamber to proceed with second and third readings of this bill.

The Speaker: The member from Niagara Centre has requested second and third readings of the bill. Do we have unanimous consent? I heard a no.

LOI DE 2004 SUR L'HARMONISATION DE LA TERMINOLOGIE FISCALE

TAX TERMINOLOGY HARMONIZATION ACT, 2004

M. Sorbara propose la première lecture du projet de loi suivant :

Projet de loi 105, Loi révisant la terminologie utilisée dans la version française de certaines lois / Bill 105, An Act to revise terminology used in the French version of certain statutes.

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

L'hon. Greg Sorbara (ministre des Finances): Ce projet de loi vise à changer la terminologie utilisée dans la version française des lois fiscales de l'Ontario afin que cela corresponde à la nouvelle terminologie utilisée par le gouvernement fédéral dans la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu du Canada.

Nous diffuserons ce projet de loi pendant l'été afin de recueillir des commentaires. J'espère que nous pourrons obtenir le consentement unanime de tous les partis afin que le projet de loi puisse être adopté rapidement à notre retour à l'automne.

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2004 (NO. 2)

LOI DE 2004 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES (N^o 2)

Mr Sorbara moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act to implement Budget measures and amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 106, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures budgétaires et modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la durabilité des forêts de la Couronne.

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

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

All those against, say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1354 to 1359.

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

Ayes

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Arthurs, Wayne | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Peters, Steve |
| Bartolucci, Rick | Fonseca, Peter | Phillips, Gerry |
| Bentley, Christopher | Gerretsen, John | Pupatello, Sandra |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Gravelle, Michael | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Bountrogianni, Marie | Kennedy, Gerard | Racco, Mario G. |
| Brotten, Laurel C. | Kwinter, Monte | Ramal, Khalil |
| Brown, Michael A. | Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Ramsay, David |
| Brownell, Jim | Levac, Dave | Rinaldi, Lou |
| Cansfield, Donna H. | Marsales, Judy | Sandals, Liz |
| Chambers, Mary Anne V. | Matthews, Deborah | Sergio, Mario |
| Colle, Mike | Mauro, Bill | Sorbara, Greg |
| Cordiano, Joseph | McNeely, Phil | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Crozier, Bruce | Meilleur, Madeleine | Watson, Jim |
| Delaney, Bob | Milloy, John | Wilkinson, John |
| Di Cocco, Caroline | Mitchell, Carol | Wong, Tony C. |
| Dombrowsky, Leona | Oraziotti, David | Wynne, Kathleen O. |
| Duguid, Brad | Parsons, Ernie | Zimmer, David |
| Duncan, Dwight | Patten, Richard | |

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

Nays

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Arnott, Ted | Klees, Frank | Prue, Michael |
| Baird, John R. | Kormos, Peter | Runciman, Robert W. |
| Barrett, Toby | Marchese, Rosario | Scott, Laurie |
| Flaherty, Jim | Martiniuk, Gerry | Sterling, Norman W. |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Miller, Norm | Tasca, Joseph N. |
| Horwath, Andrea | O'Toole, John | Witmer, Elizabeth |
| Hudak, Tim | Ouellette, Jerry J. | |

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 53; the nays are 20.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): This is the second bill that I've introduced to implement our Plan for Change. Among its provisions is a proposal for the Ontario health premium, which will help transform health care in the province of Ontario. The bill also proposes the enactment of the Trust Beneficiaries' Liability Act, 2004, as anticipated in the budget and as requested by my colleague Gerry Phillips, the Chair of Management Board. In addition, the bill contains an amendment to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that my colleague

David Ramsay, the Minister of Natural Resources, has requested.

I do look forward to discussing the bill with members during debate in this House.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

AIR QUALITY

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): Today I attended the smog summit at Toronto city hall. This event is attended by some of the most influential experts in the field of air emissions and smog-causing pollutants.

The smog summit is usually an opportunity for governments to highlight their actions on cleaner air. For the past few years, the previous government has shown up empty-handed, if they showed up at all. Today, our government has changed that. Today, we unveiled our five-point plan for cleaner air, the most far-reaching commitment on air quality in this province in 30 years. Our five-point plan is built on the basic principle that people's health should not be compromised by air emissions, and our plan has real, concrete, measurable results.

Our five-point plan for cleaner air limits reduces emissions of harmful pollutants. It is built on the best science, and it puts a priority on actions that will reduce the risk to human health. It tackles major smog-causing pollutants as well as lesser-known substances.

Our plan sets tough new limits for the two most smog-causing pollutants: nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide. These limits will apply to a whole range of industries that never had limits before: the iron and steel sector, the cement industry, petroleum refineries, pulp and paper and the producers of glass and carbon black.

Second, our plan sets out right now that these limits will get even lower in future years. This means that our pollution rules not only apply to more sectors than ever before but they will make each of these sectors keep improving.

Third, our government is looking beyond the big pollutants like nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide. Today, I am announcing proposals for new and updated air emission standards for 29 different substances. These substances include carcinogens and toxins that could pose a more serious threat to human health. In some cases, we are proposing standards for the very first time.

The fourth point of our plan is better modelling. This means using newer, better science to get a clearer picture of how air pollution gets dispersed. Ontario has been using a 30-year-old dispersion model. If you think about how much our science has improved in that time, it is clear that we need to make changes.

Finally, the fifth part of our plan is a new, risk-based approach to implementing air standards and models. We look at the effects on the local communities and consider

the efforts that local businesses are making to improve air quality.

The McGuinty government is committed to delivering real, positive change to improve the quality of life enjoyed in our communities. Ontarians deserve safe, clean, livable communities to call home. We are paying too big a price with our health, with our prosperity and with our ability to provide proper health care to those affected by poor air. In one five-point plan we are making up for a decade of half-hearted measures by previous governments and setting the course for a future of cleaner air, better scientific knowledge and a stronger link to human health. This plan will reduce air emissions; it will reduce the risks to human health; it will decrease the likelihood of smog days in the future. It puts the needs of Ontarians first and ensures that, even though it is tough, industry can find ways to meet it.

Our five-point plan for cleaner air works for Ontarians, and our government works for Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Responses?

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I've just returned from the Toronto smog summit. As far as the comment about showing up, I can't speak for the previous Toronto government. At this Toronto summit, the minister announced nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide limits for heavy industry, including Stelco, Dofasco, cement, Esso and other refineries—I'll point out that Ontario hasn't built an oil refinery since 1978, and I don't think this is going to help—the pulp and paper industry, glass and carbon black.

This continues the work done by previous governments, NDP and PC, to introduce both NO_x and SO_x limits to the electricity sector and non-ferrous smelting. I'll point out that these efforts have already produced important gains in emission reductions. OPG Nanticoke, for example, has dropped sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions, including the implementation of the SCR, the selective catalytic reduction units. These installations at Nanticoke and Lambton have served to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by 80% from the units to which they're attached. Due to these and other efforts, nitrogen oxide emissions have dropped more than 50% from 1984 at OPG Nanticoke; sulphur dioxide has fallen more than 60% in that same time period. This new regulation would require significant NO_x and SO_x emission reductions by 2010 and further reductions by 2015. That's a fair bit down the road.

Again, I point out that these initiatives build on what I consider the full-hearted work of previous governments. The Fraser Institute reports that Canada's environment is markedly healthier than it was 30 years ago. In fact, 84% of environmental indicators have improved since the 1970s. Airborne sulphur dioxide has decreased by 73% between 1974 and 2001. Levels of particulates are down by over 50%.

That said, there is more to be done, of course. I'm happy to see that this recent report outlines Ontario's implementation plan for Canada-wide standards for particulate matter and ozone, something our Conservative

government committed to in the year 2000. Let's look at some of the clean air incentives outlined in the discussion paper presented. The government wants to exempt biodiesel from fuel tax, exempt natural gas and ethanol, provide a lower tax rate for propane—a very laudable concept, and I'm pleased to assure the minister that these measures do work. In fact, all these measures were in place during our government's term in office and we were able to reduce emissions by 12%.

1410

I'll turn to page 18 of the accompanying minister's report, entitled *Taking Stock and Closing Gaps: Ontario on Track to Meet Emission Reduction Targets*: "Ontario's smog reduction efforts have been successful. Over the last decade, emissions of the four key pollutants have been declining, even while Ontario was going through a period of strong economic growth."

We thank you, Minister, for that comment. It's nice to know that people on the other side of the House recognize the success we've had in reducing emissions. We appreciate the acknowledgement that strong economic growth is possible while we continue to protect the environment.

I will point out the minister's message on page 3 of the report: "Government is working to improve Ontario's Drive Clean program to make it even more successful in reducing smog-causing emissions from vehicles." Only three months ago, this same minister was reported to be musing about phasing out Drive Clean. Which is it? We know auto emissions are the cause of 60% of our domestically produced smog. It's essential that we continue, and this government continue, the work our government started—a far superior strategy to speaking out of both sides of one's mouth.

You know, this government is actually going backward when it comes to providing incentives to reduce emissions. We put in place a program that would provide incentives for businesses to engage in self-generation of electricity and for people to purchase energy-efficient equipment. What did this government do? Their broken-promise budget has cancelled these incentives. They have told businesses that they're on their own.

I regret that this report doesn't even address transboundary air pollution.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): The finance minister just got out of the picture in the nick of time. He was over here trying to give me some advice as to how I should respond to this statement.

I don't know if anybody in this Legislature—I'm sure they do—has children or grandchildren or a parent or somebody in their family who suffers from asthma or some other kind of respiratory illness. I know I've mentioned in this House before that I have a little grandson who has been hospitalized on several occasions and was close to death on a couple of those occasions. I saw this little boy in a hospital bed, hooked up to every machine possible, with a mask on. It's one of the scariest, most heartbreaking things you can ever see.

More and more children are being affected on smog days. As you know, seniors can't go out, kids with

asthma can't go out, and we know that smog is contributing to that. So any announcement that attempts to deal with smog is always welcome. I'm sure the minister and the government would love everybody to stand up and applaud the measures today, but as a comprehensive smog strategy, it comes up rather short. Let me tell you why.

The minister's own paper says that transportation produces 63% of NO_x emissions and electricity produces 15%. That's not to say they're not significant and don't need to be dealt with. The problem here is that there is no plan to reduce or relook at the building of a ton of new highways in the Golden Horseshoe area. In fact, at the greenbelt legislation hearings I put through a number of amendments to deal with expanding highways within the greenbelt area, and that was rejected. So an amendment that could have prevented at least a review of some of these highways from crossing the greenbelt, as well as infrastructure—the big pipe in King City just got permission to go ahead.

The reason I'm bringing all these things up is that—you've heard me talk before in here, and we'll be debating the greenbelt soon—it is directly related to smog because of the inadequacy of the greenbelt legislation which is coming through this House very soon. Minister—and I'm talking directly to the Minister of Municipal Affairs now—I put forward amendments that would have dealt with the big holes, Mack-truck-like holes, in the legislation.

I have to say, the Tory members voted against me, but I expected them to. However, the Liberal members voted against every one of my amendments. The reason why I'm bringing this up is because of what we're referring to as leapfrog development. That is in the Simcoe area. It has been pointed out time and time again that allowing development to leapfrog over the little greenbelt area is actually—and it's happening as we speak—going to increase transportation use. That is a fact. Nobody is denying that. The government is allowing that to go ahead.

The other thing is, when the Premier announced his plan for funding the TTC, it—actually, the Tories will like this—turned out to be less than the Conservatives had committed. This is hardly the bold new plan that we needed.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): That's not true.

Ms Churley: It's true. It is true.

The government's commitment to fight urban sprawl is also less than meets the eye. The leapfrog development will mean tens of thousands of more cars on the roads, causing more and more smog.

I'm also worried about the timetable on the coal-fired plants. We're not seeing much movement there. We're not seeing nearly enough on conservation and creation of more green power.

On the conservation front, the government thinks that smart meters in homes will deliver what they need. They

should get serious about conservation instead of relying on gimmicks like this.

Finally, better standards are a good thing, but they don't mean much without enforcement. Your own budget—get it out; page 12—shows that the Ministry of the Environment is one of 15 ministries about to take an average cut of 12% in its operating budget. At the end of your term, those ministries, including the Ministry of the Environment, will have 12% less purchasing power than they have this year. That will mean you'll be laying off inspectors, scientists and enforcement officers, not hiring new ones to make sure that these new standards are adhered to.

As usual, the Liberals have rolled out something that is far less than meets the eye.

DOMINIC AGOSTINO

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes to pay tribute to our dear friend and colleague, Dominic Agostino.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Do we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to our late colleague, Dominic Agostino? Agreed.

The member from Hamilton West.

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr Speaker, if Dominic was here, he would have heckled you for that. It's Hamilton Mountain.

I'm honoured to have this opportunity to pay tribute to our friend, Dominic Agostino. Dominic was a hard-working and dedicated member of provincial Parliament. He embodied the very essence of what it means to work for the public good. I know he earned the respect and admiration of all of us in this Legislature and indeed the province.

I had heard about Dominic even before I met him. This probably comes as no surprise. At the tender age of 20, he was elected as a trustee to the Hamilton-Wentworth separate school board and was re-elected for three subsequent terms. He was the youngest trustee ever to be elected in Ontario at that time. Then in 1987 he was elected to Hamilton city council and Hamilton-Wentworth regional council in a by-election. He obviously worked hard for his constituents because they returned him to council, re-electing him three more times.

I met Dominic 10 years ago, when I sought the nomination in my riding. The first thing I noticed was, he had an aura about him. There were always a lot of people around Dominic wherever he went. I was in awe that someone so young could command such fierce loyalty and respect. He was the go-to guy in Hamilton. If you wanted anything done, you knew Dominic could help you out. If you had Dominic Agostino on your team, you were very lucky.

In 1995, he was elected as the MPP for Hamilton East. In opposition, he held a number of important posts, including chief whip and the critic for labour, housing and community and social services. He was a tireless worker for the people in his riding, and they rewarded him by returning him to Queen's Park in 1999 and in 2003.

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Dominic had a reputation for jumping on government issues that he felt needed attention. I'm sure everyone remembers the time he wanted to make a point about the quality of our air and he wore a gas mask in this House. Apparently, that stopped him from being heard, but he made his point nonetheless.

This kind of creative thinking made him a popular member among the press gallery. You could always count on getting a great quote from Dominic, and he freely admitted that he liked to dominate the media. In fact, because of this and his electoral successes, he was named the Dominator in Hamilton—a big headline in 1999. But not only did he give colourful remarks; he had the research and the work to back it up. I think that's why he was respected. He had substance behind the style.

Dominic drew strength from his roots growing up in a working-class neighbourhood. He was always a great defender of the little guy. He often worked to help injured workers in his community because of his own father's struggles. In 2003, he introduced an amendment to the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act to increase the penalties for workplaces that did not take action to ensure a safe work environment.

Dominic was a strong advocate for his constituents. Last year, a woman in his riding approached him for help because she needed a new wheelchair but she wasn't getting anyone to listen to her case. He helped her cut through the bureaucratic red tape, which took several months. But they persevered, and the woman got the assistance she needed. She received her wheelchair two days before he died. That was typical of Dominic: his passion to right wrongs right to the end.

It's something that I know his family can attest to. I've had the honour of meeting members of his family several times, and they're here today: his mother, Teresa, whose house was always open; his brother, Ralph; his sister, Mary; nephews Michael, Nicholas and Sammy; and niece Krystina. Anthony is graduating today; otherwise he'd be here as well. We all know how many times Dominic bragged about his nieces and nephews.

Signora Teresa's house was always open for barbecues. I remember one summer I went to one. There were wall-to-wall people in and out of your house, Signora. I said to Dominic, "Where's your mom?" "Oh, she's in Italy." I thought, "This is probably the last time we'll see Mrs Agostino's house for one of these," but every year you were there for your boy, for us.

He often made a world of difference to people needing support and help. If that isn't what public service is all about, then I don't know what is.

Dominic was instrumental in helping me find my way as a politician when I was first elected in 1999. All of us know how daunting it can be to arrive here. Right after the Roy Green show the morning after the election in 1999, I said, "Dominic, can we have a coffee?" He said, "Sure." I said, "OK, now what do I do?" He lent me one of his assistants for the summer, who showed me the ropes.

Working alongside him was a wonderful experience. He had an incredible sense of humour, and he kept me in stitches, often at the Tories' expense. He loved heckling. We sat close together in opposition, and every day in question period, I was wondering what he would say next. I literally missed him when he was away here and there. I literally missed him. I said, "It's not the same without Dominic here." And it's not the same without Dominic here.

We were more than just colleagues. I felt he was more like my brother in here—sometimes my little brother and sometimes my big brother. We shared many opinions and views and believed what we were doing made a difference.

Dominic will be remembered for his dedication, tenacity and drive. He will always be remembered for his love of politics and the love of the people he served.

A great philosopher once said, "When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight." Dominic was the delight of his family, friends and colleagues. Signora Teresa, he was a delight to me as a friend. He held a special place in my heart—indeed, in all our hearts—and he will always be remembered with great affection.

Lui serà sempre con noi, Signora Teresa.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): It's a great privilege for me to speak on behalf of the official opposition, and certainly a greater privilege to speak about my good friend Dominic Agostino.

The worth of every human being can be measured, and it can be measured in so many ways. But there's perhaps no greater tribute to Dominic than the outpouring of grief from those whose lives he touched following his passing just a few short months ago. At his funeral in Hamilton and at a memorial service here in Toronto, people from so many walks of life showed their deep affection for Dominic. People from every walk of life—from frail Italian seniors to working people, to students, to business people, to three former Premiers—all paid tribute to him by their mere presence.

Hamilton is the kind of place that is part big city and part small town. I can remember en route from the funeral to the burial that the member for Whitby-Ajax said, as we looked out the car window, that, wow, Dominic was a big man in this town. Police officers had blocked off the entire route through town in honour of the contribution that Dominic had made to his home community. Even more impressively, many people stopped by the side of the road, with their grocery bag

next to their feet and their children at their side, or simply looked up from their porch to pay respect.

In the game of life, if the person who dies with the most friends wins, then Dominic indeed was a winner. He represented the very best in public service and commitment to those he served. He had a rare ability to bring people of very diverse backgrounds together, and that certainly was the case following his death. I think of a number of incidents. I think that maybe the Minister of the Environment isn't such a bad person after all, after she kept passing me tissues during the funeral.

I recall being at the memorial service, where Jaime Watt gave a very glowing introduction to our Premier. I can recall even the Premier's comments at the funeral service, where for a few short moments—or maybe even the whole day; I'll say the whole day—the Premier was even my Premier on that day. Dominic was very proud to be a member of your team.

Throughout his time in government he strongly, and even forcefully, stood up for the people he served and represented, and it was always easy for him to do so because he was totally in sync with the people he represented. It was always easy for him to do so. Some say there is no room for idealism in politics, and I can certainly say without a doubt in my mind that it sure wasn't Dominic Agostino who said that. He was a principled politician who never forgot who sent him to this place.

Sometimes in public life we're all tempted to back away from a challenge, that it is better to simply remain silent on an issue that may not enjoy public support in the short term. Such was the case in the first year of the Harris government, back in 1995, in the thick of the Common Sense Revolution. Some were licking their wounds from electoral defeat, but Dominic stood up and aggressively fought for those he cared about and passionately supported. I think of his one-man crusade against welfare reform back in 1995 and 1996, a policy that wasn't easy to attack because it had, I think, somewhere around 91% of public support. But Dominic would have none of that support and he would represent forcefully the other 9%.

Some thought that Dominic's tactics in that first year in opposition were over the top and were aggressive. His pursuit of Mike Harris's agenda came only second to his eager pursuit of the media, as they were the ones who would give an audience to his opposition to the government. Back then I thought that he was over the top. But, having thought about it these last eight months, perhaps he was more accurate than even I could have recognized at the time.

As one person who followed Dominic's career observed, he was not a politician who looked for a political legacy in a new highway or a new government building in his constituency. Rather, he did it in other ways, in more direct ways that perhaps not everyone saw or even knew about, as one person discovered going door to door during the recent by-election, when a young disabled girl answered her door. I think the minister of children's

services has already told that story. The girl said, "Oh, Dominic Agostino: When I needed help, he got me a new wheelchair." That wasn't the only story. There are hundreds of stories, if not thousands, whether it was a young child who needed to be on a bus route going to school, whether it was a zoning problem for a non-profit group in Hamilton or whether it was one of thousands of people he served one-on-one.

He will be greatly missed. For those he loved and for those who loved him—Teresa, Andrew, Ralph and Rose, Mary and Tony—and to his nieces and nephews, whom he was so tremendously proud of, our profound sympathies. You can be so proud of his contributions to his community and of his accomplishments to our province.

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Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I'm very honoured to be here on behalf of the New Democratic representatives in the House to talk about Dominic Agostino. I knew Dominic for many years in Hamilton as a very kind, very caring, very effective and very dedicated representative of the people of Hamilton East and of Hamiltonians overall. His name in our city became synonymous with advocacy, with the fight for the underdog. He was passionate and well respected by constituents, yes; by activists, yes; and by politicians of every political stripe in Hamilton as well as here in Toronto.

He cut his political teeth, as was mentioned by the member for Hamilton Mountain, on the school board but also on city council. That's where I got to know him. At the time when he was on city council or on regional council as a chair of social and public health or the social services committee, I was an advocate at a legal clinic for people living in poverty in the east end of Hamilton. I had the occasion many times to talk to him and to the people who worked for him about the issues that were facing people in poverty in the city of Hamilton. He was always there to listen and was always very concerned about what he could do at the local level to try to make it better for people in their everyday lives.

I can recall when he got elected in 1995. At the time, I was still in that position when I was advocating on behalf of tenants. I had the occasion to call Dominic up and ask him for some quotes for a particular document that I was preparing for tenants in Hamilton who were trying to organize against some very nasty changes to legislation that were going to hurt tenants severely. He was there. It didn't take very long for his staff to get him on the phone. I can recall my phone ringing, and it was Dominic and I was shocked. I said, "You called me back," and he said, "Of course. You wanted a quote, didn't you?" I said, "Yes, I did, as a matter of fact. Thank you." I can recall that the thing about him was that, for some strange reason, he became very skilled at encapsulating the very essence of an argument or an issue in a very small phrase that just took off in popularity and the media could just grab on to and it became a headline. I can remember talking to him that particular time, and I think he said, "Tenant rejection act." I was floored and I said, "Did you just think that up on the spot?" He said, "Yeah; is it a

good one?" I said, "It's a very good one, Dominic." Nonetheless, that's what we knew about Dominic in Hamilton. He was always a fighter for the people and always committed to having a strong voice.

On a personal level, although I was from a different political party, Dominic really did encourage me from the day I was elected at city council. Every time he came to city hall and was in the council chambers or around city hall talking to different people, he would always take the time to say hello to me, ask me how I was doing, to ask if there were any questions that I had or any advice that he could provide. He really was a very decent person, and several of his friends became friends of mine.

He was also a controversial figure locally, as people will know. He never did waiver in his fight and his desire to vocalize the things that he was concerned about. He was always very committed to making sure that the things he believed in were well-known and were at the top of the public agenda. The local media loved him. He was known to be quite accessible for quotes from time to time. Once in a while, he would find a way to make a story out of something that other people wouldn't have thought had a story in it. Dominic could always find a way to make sure that something with little fodder became something very major. Often, some of the things that he came up with were quite insightful. He turned them to make people think about how the small things really matter in day-to-day lives of people.

He will be definitely be missed forever and remembered by members of this Legislature, definitely by his family and friends, but also by every single Hamiltonian whose lives he touched, and those were many.

The Speaker: I want to thank all members for their kind remarks. I will ensure that copies of these comments in Hansard will be sent to the family.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Today in the east gallery, I would like to welcome the mayor of Hawkesbury, the county warden of Prescott-Russell, the eastern Ontario warden and the president of AFMO, Jacques Héту.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): My question is for the Premier. During the past eight months, you have repeatedly broken your promises to Ontarians. You promised very specifically not to raise taxes, but in your budget you introduced a punishing health tax for those earning over \$20,000. You promised to increase access to health care, but you delisted physiotherapy, chiropractic and eye exams. I ask you today, will you commit that you will not take away any more health

services from Ontarians or delist any more health services?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this once again. First of all, with respect to the premium itself, it's important to put this in some perspective. Some 48% of Ontario seniors will pay nothing; 43% of Ontario tax filers will pay nothing; 37% of Ontario families will pay nothing. We've made it as practical, progressive and responsible as we could.

What was the impetus for this? The member opposite may want to account for this at some point in time. The impetus was a \$5.6-billion hidden deficit. We found out about that after the election. We brought in the Provincial Auditor, and he said, "It's there. You're going to have to do something about it."

We decided that in all the circumstances, given the options before us, instead of cutting water inspectors, teachers, nurses and the like, it would be better for us to invest in health care. We've called upon the people of Ontario, and with them we're going to improve the quality of their care.

Mrs Witmer: Mr Premier, people do not believe you. You had an opportunity to reduce and eliminate the deficit. You hired a private consultant to get that opinion. I would remind you that in a Canadian Press article today you said, "Ontario residents needn't fear that anything else will be dropped any time soon." Then you said, "We'll look at these on an annual basis." What does the quote in the CP article mean? Are you going to be cutting more health care services? Will you be delisting more services? Is this more toward privatization and two-tiered health care?

Hon Mr McGuinty: It's important for the member to cast her mind back, and I think it's helpful to Ontarians as well to understand what the Tories did given their financial circumstances and what we are doing given our financial circumstances. They cut welfare funding by 22% and then froze it; we've increased it by 3%. They fired one third of the Ministry of the Environment staff and cut the budget by 40%; we have hired back water inspectors and meat inspectors. They slashed education funding by some \$400 million; we have committed, over the course of our four-year term, to increase funding by \$2.6 billion to reduce class sizes and have, in each and every one of our elementary schools, lead teachers with expertise in numeracy and literacy. That's their approach; this is our approach. There's the contrast. We're proud of our approach.

Mrs Witmer: How can anybody believe you? Our track record on health is as follows: When Paul Martin cut funding to health care, our government increased funding by \$11 billion. We invested in education—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Stop the shouting. I would like to hear the member from Kitchener-Waterloo.

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Mrs Witmer: We increased and supported the Rozanski report in education by \$2 billion. Your Minister

of Education now is causing hardship by holding back the special education funding.

Let me ask you about the Ontario breast cancer screening program. Why have you cut funding for the breast cancer screening program by 10%? They want to increase the number of women who receive the test, yet it's cut by 10%. Why?

Hon Mr McGuinty: We increased that funding by 10% over actual. Those are the facts.

The other thing the former minister may want to recall is that she spent \$400 million on severance packages to fire nurses by the thousands, and then she spent another \$400 million trying to hire those same nurses back. We have a different approach. What we're doing is working together with the Minister of Health and the nursing community throughout the province. Our commitment is to establish 8,000 new full-time nursing positions.

The end game here is to reduce waiting times in our hospitals. In addition to that, we are investing in health care outside of hospitals, whether in nursing homes, whether through family health teams, whether through home care. That is what we are doing with this premium. We understand that it places an additional burden on Ontario families, but I can tell you they are going to get value for their money. We won't be putting it into severance packages.

HEALTH PREMIUMS

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): My question is also for the Premier. Last month you stunned Ontario taxpayers when you broke your promise not to raise taxes. On budget day, you stood outside this place and said it wasn't a tax, but rather, it was a premium, and now your Minister of Finance's bill shows the real truth to this trick.

I want to read the front page of this bill. It says, "The Income Tax Act is amended to impose a tax called the Ontario health premium." This is at complete odds with everything you and your Minister of Finance said. Do you not owe it to the people of Ontario to be honest and admit that this is a black-and-white case where you are raising income taxes on hard-working families in Ontario?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): If my colleague is looking for the black-and-white case to be made, then this is that: They hid from the people of Ontario a \$5.6-billion deficit. What we could have done is put up our feet for four years and proceeded to make more cuts to health care, to education, to the Ministry of the Environment, and perhaps to cut welfare as well. Given that we bring a very different value set to the job at hand, we decided that it was important for us, instead of cutting, to make absolutely essential investments in health care, education, the Ministry of the Environment, and yes, to give people on welfare an additional 3%, and yes, to give our seniors living in nursing homes a paltry 3% increase in their comfort allowance so they might buy a bit of shampoo

and possibly have enough money to buy a gift, from time to time, for a grandchild. We happen to believe that those are the right things to do.

Mr Baird: Last week, 18 Liberal MPPs were absent from the first major vote on your budget. In fact, you only had 52, the absolute bare majority to pass this bill. Your caucus is clearly feeling the heat. Member after member after member has spoken up about the outrageous content of your first budget.

We've heard your rhetoric about the democratic deficit. Now we read in your budget that you want to collect this tax in nine days, before your bill is even debated and before it's law. Does that not put a sham to the electoral process? Does that not put a sham to the utility of this elected assembly, when we don't even get the opportunity to debate and to vote on a new tax before you start to put your hands in working families' pockets? Isn't that outrageous, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: No, it's not. There is a parliamentary convention, a practice, that allows us to do this.

The member raised the notion that somehow some of our members were absent for the last vote. Well, many of his were absent for the last vote. Am I to make the assumption that they support this bill by virtue of the fact that they were not here?

I can tell you that each and every one of the members of this government is very proud of this budget. In particular, they are proud of the fact that it's going to deliver 36,000 more cardiac procedures, 2,300 more joint replacements, 9,000 more cataract surgeries, 8,000 more full-time nursing positions; close to 100,000 more Ontarian seniors are going to be getting home care delivered to them in their homes. We are very proud of that budget and our ability to put that forward for the people of Ontario.

Mr Baird: If you're so proud of your budget, why don't you do exactly what you promised to do and allow the people of Ontario to have their say in the referendum that you, with great fanfare, promised them? You're breaking your signature election campaign promise. You're breaking faith with hard-working middle-class families across the province. Now, in the ultimate act of arrogance, a slap in the face to the democratic deficit, a slap in the face to all of the people and their elected representatives, you are going to dig your hands into the pockets of hard-working taxpayers before their elected MPPs have the chance to vote.

Will you now stand in your place and will you acknowledge this tax, the lack of progressivity in it, and the underhanded way with which it has been introduced in this place? It deserves to be delayed for three months. Allow public hearings to go on on this bill so the people of Ontario can have a genuine debate about this tax, where you're breaking faith with your election campaign commitments. Will you do that, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: It is more than interesting to be lectured by a member of a previous government which arguably, for the first time in the history of British parliamentary tradition, introduced a budget outside of

this Legislative Assembly, at an auto parts assembly plant.

What we have done is very much in keeping with parliamentary tradition. We have introduced our legislation in this House. We've had lots of debate on second reading and third reading. We had votes in this House. We've been very direct with the people of Ontario when it comes to the importance of moving ahead with these initiatives, not in our short-term political interest but rather in the interest of Ontarians: reducing wait times for them and improving student achievement. We'll keep doing those kinds of things.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): New question.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier.

Despite all the Liberal rhetoric about health care, it is now very clear that you will spend health care money on things that no one in this province considers health care. Whether it's spending on sewer pipe or television ads, there is a \$200-million health care credibility gap in this year's budget, and next year the gap will be \$1 billion. That's \$1 billion that should be spent on health care services that clearly isn't going there.

Will you finally admit to the people of Ontario that first you decided to take \$2 billion from the pockets of working families and then, after the fact, you decided to call it a health care premium so that, you hoped, they would swallow it a little easier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: This is a matter of obsessive interest to the leader of the third party. I'll be pleased to respond once again. Every single penny that is going to be generated by this new health care premium will be invested in new health care services for the people of Ontario. It's a very simple matter.

This year we're going to raise \$1.6 million. The Ministry of Health expenditures are going up by \$2.2 billion. Next year, the premium will generate \$2.4 billion. The Ministry of Health expenditures will be going up by \$2.8 billion. Every single penny generated by the new premium will be invested in health care for Ontarians.

Mr Hampton: I invite you to look at your own budget. Here's the Liberal reality: Despite your promise not to cut health services, you're cutting the health services of chiropractors and optometrists. Despite your statement that you would never impose a regressive and unfair health premium, that's exactly what you're doing. But when you add up the numbers, your increases in health care investments, next year over this year, are actually going to be less than the increases in health care investments under the Conservatives.

That's what your rhetoric about health care boils down to. Admit it. What you did is, you decided you were going to take \$2 billion from the pockets of modest- and middle-income families. Then you thought, "Gee, this will be hard for them to swallow, but if we call it a health care premium, they might swallow it a little easier." That's what you did. Admit it.

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Hon Mr McGuinty: The leader of the third party is bringing a very antiquated approach to managing our

health care system and, in particular, our health care expenditures. When I got here 14 years ago, about one third of the budget was consumed by health care expenditures. Today, just under 50 per cent of the budget is being consumed by health care expenditures.

We can no longer afford to measure our success simply by virtue of how much money we're putting into the system when it comes to health care in Ontario. Yes, we are putting more money into the system—obviously not as much money as the member opposite would like. But for the first time, what we're focused on is results. They tell me that 10 per cent of the people in our hospitals shouldn't be there. What we are doing is investing in family health teams, home care, long-term care and public health. We're moving upstream so that we can do more by way of prevention. That's the intelligent, responsible approach to managing health care at the beginning of the 21st century.

Mr Hampton: Premier, no matter how you try to cut the numbers, here's the reality: Between fiscal 2001-02 and fiscal 2002-03, the Conservatives actually increased health care investments by \$1.9 billion. Then, between 2002-03 and 2003-04 they increased it by \$2.1 billion. I remember that when you were over here, you used to castigate the Conservatives for not investing enough in health care. But next year, as compared to this year, you're only going to increase investments by \$600 million.

Why don't you give up all the rhetoric about this being a health care budget and admit this is a regressive and unfair tax and you're simply using the title "health care" to cover it up and hide the fact that this is just a regressive tax grab from the people of Ontario?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The honourable member remains stuck in some kind of time warp where he believes the only thing we can do at any time to improve health care is pour all kinds more money into it. We are making substantial new investments, but, in addition to that, we are determined to get more results. If you talk to the people of Ontario, and particularly families right now who are waiting to access health care, for them it's not about money; it's about the time it's taking them to get health care.

By virtue of these intelligent, strategic investments, we are going to reduce wait times—we're talking specifically about cardiac care, chemotherapy, radiation, hip replacements, knee replacements, cataracts and many other areas. Our investments are designed to do more than just put more money into the system; they're designed to reduce waiting times and make a real difference in the lives of Ontario families.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Premier. Your government's second budget bill today is proof you're still not listening to the people of Ontario. The people don't like your tax grab. They don't like that modest- and middle-income people are paying too much, and they don't like the fact that people making more than \$100,000 are not paying their fair

share. You have had an opportunity to listen over these last many weeks, but you have failed to do so.

My question to you is simple: Why didn't you scrap this unfair tax measure, and why have you reintroduced something that is no more progressive at all today?

Hon Mr McGuinty: We, of course, remain very much committed to our plan to improve health care and our plan to levy the additional funds from the people of Ontario, keeping in mind that 48% of Ontario seniors will pay nothing, 43% of Ontario tax filers will pay nothing and 37% of Ontario families will pay nothing by virtue of this new premium.

Contrast our approach with the approach brought by the NDP through their years in government. They brought in a new tax so that if you earned \$20,000, your taxes went up by \$160. Under our budget, your taxes go up by nothing if you're earning \$20,000. They raised student tuition by 50%. We have frozen student tuition for at least two years. They raised gas taxes by 30%. We haven't raised them by a penny. What we have done instead is that we are taking \$312 million of the revenue we're receiving and transferring that to our municipal partners for them to invest in better public transit. That's the difference between their approach and our approach.

Mr Prue: Mr Premier, you should have spent the last couple of weeks listening to the people of this province and perhaps to some of the members opposite. If you had, you would have realized that large corporations are not paying their fair share. You know, the dedicated health tax which the Peterson Liberals brought in, you have now scrapped. The problem with that dedicated health tax is that there's a loophole: Corporations are not paying \$700 million that they should be paying. If you were really listening to the people, you would have closed that loophole. My question to you again is simple: Why aren't you listening to the people of Ontario? Why didn't you close the employer health tax loophole and save yourself \$700 million?

Hon Mr McGuinty: It's hard to figure out from one day to the next where the NDP stand when it comes to corporate taxation in the province of Ontario, because we gave them the opportunity to vote in keeping with their principal position. We rolled back corporate taxes to the tune of some \$2 billion at least this year. When the NDP were presented with the opportunity to support that legislation, they voted against that bill. So it seems to me that this party has no credibility when it comes to talking about corporate taxes in Ontario.

Mr Prue: When it comes to no credibility, Mr Premier, I think you have the market cornered. You had a chance to listen, but you chose not to. You had a chance to scrap the tax grab for modest- and middle-income people, and you chose not to. You were demanding revenue measures, but you should be demanding revenue measures based on the ability to pay. You should have admitted that your budget, from the outset, was a non-starter. You didn't listen. You didn't change. Therefore, this budget is not based on transparency and fairness. My question is—and I want an answer: Why do you persist going down a road that you cannot possibly win?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I guess the implication in that question is that we're not going to win political popularity by virtue of this budget. I've said this before, and I'm delighted to say it again: This is not about our short-term political popularity; it's about doing what is right for the people of Ontario. Right now, it's time for us to shorten their waiting lists. Right now, it's time for us to reduce class sizes in the early years. Right now, it's time for us to improve student achievement. It's time for us to have more MRIs, more CTs, more surgeries when it comes to cataracts, hip replacements, knee replacements, radiation, chemotherapy and the like. Those are the right things to do for the people of Ontario.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): My question is for the Minister of Education, and it is about promises made, promises broken. Promise number 13, to the Minister of Education, will make sure schools are safe so students can concentrate on learning, and number 22 is to ensure that school boards provide strong local accountability and decision-making. This is about accountability to parents in the public school system.

There's a situation in Barrie where a suspended teacher, according to the *Globe and Mail*, who the children's aid society warned shouldn't be allowed to work with children and had put her on the child abuse register, is volunteering in the schools. Would you agree, Minister, that it is unacceptable for a suspended teacher who, according to the *Globe*, has been placed by the CAS on the child abuse register to be volunteering in the public schools of Ontario?

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): It is the outlook of this government that everyone who comes in contact with children should be screened and should be subject to some kind of sanction or at least oversight by the responsible parties. As a member of the opposition, I put this as an amendment three times in committee to this past government and asked them, indeed, to include volunteers as a formal requirement. Every single time, the government members opposite refused.

I will tell you that in our guidelines to boards there is an initiative in Ontario for voluntary enlistment of these kinds of individuals to use that. I would say that we are in discussions with all the boards around how we can rectify the mistake made by the previous government.

1500

Mr Flaherty: Minister, you are the minister now, and you're responsible for these schools in Ontario. This person was suspended by the Ontario College of Teachers. She was suspended because she wrote something like 64 intimate letters to a 13-year-old boy. She is back volunteering in our public school system. The parents are writing to me, the parents are writing to the newspapers, and they're writing to the school board, saying this is unacceptable. What they get back from the superintendent in the Simcoe County District School Board is that volunteering in schools is a privilege, and that's it.

But how is it that this person can be in this school, can be in the Johnson Street Public School in the county of Simcoe, given the facts of this case? Do something about it. Be accountable to parents in Barrie.

Hon Mr Kennedy: Again, Justice Robins did a report in this province around a very serious issue, and that was the small exposure—the risk that exists in our schools for persons of trust. When it was put to the previous government, when that bill came to this Legislature, they refused to do it. We stand in this House today in a circumstance that the previous government purports to have an interest in but refused and declined to give us the power to exercise.

The member opposite would stand outside his legislative responsibilities and condemn an individual or a circumstance. I can tell you, Mr Speaker, that we will do everything we can with the powers we do have to ensure that all children are safe in this province and that there are guidelines that are followed. I will tell you this, and will serve notice in this House, that we will take the first opportunity we have to make legislative remedy to the job they didn't finish, if they really had that concern in the first place.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Premier. Your delisting of eye tests, physiotherapy and chiropractic services is punishing and shameful to the many Ontarians who depend on these services. It has also been a fatal blow to your credibility as a defender of health care. You have the gall to claim that you're raising taxes to pay for health care services when you're actually spending lots of the money on other things. And your delisting means that not only are people paying much more; they're getting much less.

You've scheduled an emergency cabinet meeting for this afternoon, I hear. Will you use that meeting to cancel the delisting so people get at least some of those vital services back? Will you do that?

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

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I always find it interesting when the honourable member finds a \$2.161-billion increase in funding for the Ministry of Health to be associated with much less. This from a member of a party that, for two or three successive years when in government, what did they do? They froze increases to the Ontario drug benefit, while our budget brings in a full quarter of a billion dollars in new funding for drugs that our seniors are depending on. That is their legacy.

On the matter of physio and optometry, it seems that the honourable member refuses to understand that on the issue of physiotherapy, there is no change in 2004-05, but we will be working to make sure those precious resources that we have for physiotherapy are deployed in an equitable fashion, which is not the case now. Northern Ontario, as an example, is decidedly disadvantaged by the

fact that there are but two schedule 5 clinics and both of those are in Sault Ste Marie. There will be changes to physiotherapy, and they will ensure that the most vulnerable—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms Churley: Back to the Premier. Your credibility has hit rock bottom, and the answer from your health minister just now did not help you any. It's so low that it's actually threatening to bring down a federal Liberal government that everyone thought was unbeatable a few short months ago.

It's going to take a lot more than cancelling the delisting to give people any kind of confidence in you. But let me tell you this: If you don't cancel the delisting, it will show that you're not listening and you must be living on another planet. It will show that you won't even do the minimum for the people who need eye tests, suffer from back pain or need therapy after major surgery.

I'm going to ask you again: Will you use your emergency cabinet meeting this afternoon to bring back those programs for people who need them? Will you do that?

Hon Mr Smitherman: I'm pleased, in supplementary, to have the opportunity to inform the member, because she seems to be continually misinformed, about the work we're doing with respect to optometry in this province. The challenge, of course, in the context of the precious resources we have, is to make sure we deploy them in the most appropriate way. The changes we're making with respect to optometry in this province will mean that those most vulnerable, those who have diseases that affect eyes—our youngest and our oldest—continue to have the benefit of these services.

These investments we're making, including \$600 million for primary care, give us an opportunity to build on our plan, which is decidedly necessary, because when they were the party in government, when they were the custodians of health care in this province, what did they do? They closed medical school spots. They prevented this province and communities all across this province from having the advantage of something they considered pretty essential for health care: a doctor. That's your legacy, and it stands in sharp contrast—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

AIR QUALITY

Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Today marks the beginning of summer, and in Ontario it's synonymous with the beginning of more smog days. We know the health concerns that arise every time there is a smog day advisory: premature deaths, hospital admissions, emergency room visits and sick days. But I understand you made an announcement today at the smog summit that is aimed at addressing Ontario's chronic smog problem. Exactly what is your ministry doing to ensure that we see a reduction in smog days here, as opposed to the steady increase that we've been seeing in the past decade?

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I'm very happy to have this opportunity to clarify for this House the five-point plan that has been introduced by this government, by this Minister of the Environment today.

First, our government is announcing tough new limits on nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide. They are primary smog-causing agents. The second component is that we are toughening the limits for nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide. The third action plan increases the number of industrial carcinogens and toxins now monitored. We've increased that to 29 elements that we are going to be monitoring. The fourth is that we are going to be using newer modelling. The modelling that's in place at the present time is 30 years old. With improvements in technology, we are going to be using the latest in science to model emissions. And the final point is that we will be implementing new air standards and models, and we are going to implement—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Supplementary.

Mr Berardinetti: Today's announcement is good news for those people who have been forced to stay inside due to asthma conditions, aggravated heart conditions or other breathing problems. It also marks a turning point for Ontario's industries. Setting tough new standards means that industries will need to update their technology. My question is, how will today's announcement affect industry and what is being done to ensure that this plan will not push companies out of business?

Hon Mrs Dombrowsky: The Ministry of the Environment has been working with our industrial partners on this initiative. I'm very happy to point out today as well that Ontario's proposed new and updated air standards are comparable to other jurisdictions, including those in the United States and other provinces, such as Newfoundland, Alberta and British Columbia.

Ontario's current regulatory framework is based on assessing local health and environmental impacts on our communities. Ontario's approach is comprehensive and will require that all pollutants, even the most dangerous ones, will form part of our guideline. This is different than the United States' approach, which focuses on technology-based solutions for specific pollutants.

We are working with our industries. There is flexibility built into our model, and we are confident that both our communities and our industrial sector will benefit from our emissions plan.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and, once again, it involves one of his comments to the media.

On Friday, in a column by the Toronto Sun's Christina Blizzard entitled "Chief Deserves Better," you said, "There is speculation in the media today about whether Chief Fantino's contract is going to be renewed. That's not my decision. That's the mayor's and the council's

decision. They are the ones who hired him. They are the ones who pay him. He is responsible to them.”

I'm shocked that you didn't know that the police services board is responsible for the chief's appointment, not the mayor or the council. With these comments, you have offended Toronto police chief Julian Fantino, you have jeopardized his relationship with the Toronto Police Services Board and you have misled the public. In light of the damage you have done—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. I'd ask you to withdraw that. It is unparliamentary.

1510

Mr Dunlop: I'll withdraw that he had misinformed the public.

Minister, in light of the damage you have caused, will you stand in the House right now and admit that your comments were ill advised and inaccurate?

Hon Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): The only person I've offended is that member.

I should tell you that when I was asked the question, the question was that the chief walked out of a meeting at city hall and what was I going to do about it? I said to him at the time, “I have no control over the chief, and when he walks out of a city hall meeting, that's up to the city hall people to discuss, not me, because they're the ones who have responsibility for the chief, for the Toronto Police Services.” I would suggest to you, given the incidents that are happening in this community around my ministry, that you would find this the question to ask is really deplorable and really does not even deserve the kind of respect that you should be looking for.

Mr Dunlop: I'm surprised, Minister, that you're taking this question so lightly.

On Friday you received two letters that clearly spell out how your comments were perceived by Julian Fantino and by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. They were signed June 18. I have copies of them here, if you want a copy of them. In the first letter, Jerome Wiley, counsel to Chief Fantino, requests that you “publicly and immediately clarify your comments to reflect the legal status of the chief vis-à-vis the mayor and city council.”

In the second letter, William Malpass, executive director of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, asks you “to immediately clarify publicly your views on the role of the police chiefs and to apologize to our member, Chief Julian Fantino, and to police leaders across the province.”

Minister, will you make this apology right now in this House?

Hon Mr Kwinter: I would suggest that if the member wants to get a clarification, he should call the chief. He should call Chief Fantino. I have spoken to him. He has no problem whatsoever with what has been said.

If you would only do your research and understand what the role of the police chief is, instead, as I say—I

want to repeat again: There are very serious issues evolving around what is happening in Ontario regarding my ministry. For you to spend your time on that kind of question is beyond you, beyond your caucus, and really is something that you should take a very close look at to see whether or not you're acting responsibly.

PICKERING NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Ontario Power Generation says it has given your Minister of Energy its recommendation to restart unit 1 of the Pickering A nuclear plant. Last December, your own review panel said the cost of rebuilding Pickering A has ballooned from \$800 million to \$3 billion—in other words, by three and a half times. Now, most reasonable people would say there is something wrong when the cost of a project goes up three and a half times. It's now six months later, Premier. Will you share with us the latest OPG estimate of the cost of bringing back Pickering A before you make any decision?

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

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): The Ontario Clean Air Alliance was provided with all the spreadsheets that were used to do those calculations. Those documents have been available to the public for some time now.

Mr Hampton: Well, when OPG was asked to make all of those numbers public, they refused. You're the government that said you believe in complete transparency and public openness in terms of OPG.

I'm simply asking you, before you throw more money down the drain at Pickering, will you make public to the people of Ontario the latest cost estimates by OPG of what it will cost to bring back unit A? It's a simple question. You say the estimates are available. Well, will you tell us right now? What is the latest estimate from OPG on what it will cost to bring back unit A of Pickering?

Hon Mr Duncan: We did provide the information that was used by the Manley commission in estimating the cost. We have been provided with a number of recommendations. We have the recommendation of the Manley commission and we have the recommendation of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance. We've had the advice of a number of others.

The information will be going to cabinet for a decision. When cabinet has had an opportunity to review all of the information, a decision will be taken with respect to Pickering A, unit 1. At that point in time, of course we will make the information available to the public.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Domestic violence is the scourge of our nation, and it

must be eliminated. The tragic facts are that Ontario has the highest incidence of spousal homicide in Canada. Only 27% of spousal assaults perpetrated against women are reported to the police. These horrific statistics also state that children witness 37% of spousal assaults. Those children who witness violence in a home are more likely to grow up to be perpetrators or victims of violence themselves.

It is a known fact that many youth who suffer from violence and drug-related problems have come from broken homes. On this premise, what is being done to break this vicious cycle and help the most vulnerable members of our community escape such torment and murderous abuse?

Hon Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I very much appreciate the question from the member. Let me say that this past budget, I was very pleased to see that this ministry was able to secure funding to itemize a very specific public education campaign that deals with breaking the cycle of abuse in a family. As the member rightly mentions in this House, of those children who have been in a home where there has been abuse—if it is male violence—young boys will be more likely to be abusers, and young girls will be more likely to be abused themselves.

This is the kind of cycle that we must address, that we must break. A \$5-million campaign—over the mandate of this government—in public education will focus on very high-risk communities such as the aboriginal community and the francophone community. We are going to deal with young children in teaching them about healthy relationships. I'm pleased to see that this item was included in this budget.

Mr Sergio: An average of 28 spousal homicides occur in Ontario each year. In my riding of York West, on Saturday, June 12, a pregnant woman was shot at by her partner. She was driving to a police station seeking help in an effort to escape an abusive situation. Bullets shattered the windows of the vehicle she was driving.

Here again, this was not the first incident. This woman had endured domestic violence for some time. What is being done by your ministry to help provide immediate shelter and adequate counselling in these horrendous situations?

Hon Ms Pupatello: Unfortunately, what the member is telling us in this House today is true. Most women who do finally flee abuse from their homes have witnessed or suffered violence at least five times before they choose to leave. What we need to do as a government is play our role to see that there is support in communities, so that when they choose to leave, they know they can bring their children with them, and they know they'll get help getting back on their feet.

I am pleased to say that our recent budget has addressed this, providing \$3 million more to support the shelters themselves, which help when women do finally choose to leave these homes. We're also addressing it through \$8 million worth of capital that in this fiscal year

will go to build more shelter beds where we don't have enough.

Again, we mentioned the prevention campaign, but more importantly, for the first time in a very long time, the Ontario government is getting back in the business of second-stage housing. To women who are fleeing, this is a vital service to get women back on their feet.

TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

Mr Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): My question is for the Minister of Culture. Last Thursday, in your absence, I asked the Premier why your government cut \$5.5 million from the Trillium Foundation's budget for this year. The Premier seemed unaware of the cutback and referred it to the finance minister. The finance minister said that the cutback was justified so he could spend more in education and health.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Mr Alvin Curling): Order.

1520

Mr Sterling: Mr Speaker, I suggest members read Hansard for verification.

When I went back and looked at your budget, in fact you got more money this year than you did last year for granting, but for different purposes. Minister, why have you increased funding to the Ontario Arts Council by \$15 million while slashing grants to charities and community projects through the Ontario Trillium Foundation?

Hon Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Indeed my ministry had to look for some money, and we have taken money out of Trillium because the Ontario Trillium Foundation already had money in reserve. This year, the Trillium Foundation and Trillium recipients will not sustain any reductions in their grants.

Mr Sterling: I suggest that the minister go and talk to the people at the Trillium Foundation.

Minister, if you look at the Web site of the Ontario Arts Council, you will see that the largest proportion of recipients is in the city of Toronto. On the other hand, the Ontario Trillium Foundation distributes grants equally to communities across our province based on population. Trillium is an especially important supporter of projects in smaller, less densely populated areas of the province. In my riding of Lanark-Carleton it has supported programs for people with Alzheimer's, cleaning up the Carp River and the establishment of a breakfast program. Why are you taking \$5 million out of the Trillium Foundation to give the Ontario Arts Council a huge 60% increase in their granting budget?

Hon Mrs Meilleur: I recognize that the Ontario Trillium Foundation is a very important foundation. As I explained, we are not going to take any money this year from organizations that are in need. But we all recognize that the Ontario Arts Council is an incubator for our artists and it's very important to invest money. We are going to continue to invest, recognizing that both organizations are very important.

Even if the member from the opposition is saying that most of the money goes to Toronto, that's not exactly right. Each of you will receive a report on what your riding has received with regard to the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ontario Arts Council.

The Speaker: New question.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Stop the clock.

I'd like to hear the member from Trinity-Spadina with a new question.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Premier. All over Ontario, drivers are hoping—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. The Premier is not here; maybe the Acting Premier. Go ahead.

Mr Marchese: All over Ontario, drivers opening their renewal notices are getting whacked with double-digit rate increases, this despite your promise to lower rates by, they say, between 10% and 20%. Here's how your promise is working: Aviva insurance was granted a 10% reduction, but they still hit Harve Sokoloff with a 30% renewal increase. He drives a 1999 Honda Civic CX, has a good driving record and has a policy renewal date of June 23. Premier or others, what do you say to the millions of Ontarians like Mr Sokoloff, who are expecting a 10%, 20% reduction in their premiums but are getting hit with double-digit increases instead?

The Speaker: The Acting Premier.

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I'll refer that question to the minister, who has done a lot to reduce insurance premiums.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I would say it adds to the quality of question period when the NDP allows the member from Trinity-Spadina to once in a while ask a question. We love to hear from him. Unfortunately, in this question he's simply on the wrong track. My friend should know that as a result of the initiatives we took—and it was the first step after we were sworn into government—to freeze auto insurance premiums, we brought forth measures through regulation and through the bill that have resulted in an average reduction, including Aviva insurance, of 10%.

My friend knows that you simply can't take one example of one driver who may have had, and may not have told his MPP of, several traffic tickets, who may have had an accident, who may have had problems with his driving record. On average, rates are going down by 10%, and our next series of initiatives is going to have an even further dampening effect on the cost of auto insurance in this province.

Mr Marchese: Minister, your 10%, 20% rate reduction promise, in my humble view, is a sham. Few, if any, Ontario drivers are seeing actual rate reductions, and it's not at all clear that they ever will. Meanwhile, provinces with public auto insurance have seen single-digit rate

increases at the same time that Ontario has seen rates go up 20% to 30% annually. Please, Minister, explain to Mr Sokoloff how your 10%, 20% rate reduction has become a double-digit rate hike. Please explain it to him.

Hon Mr Sorbara: Without any disrespect to my friend from Trinity-Spadina, I would prefer to refer to and rely on the research and analysis on the trend in auto insurance premiums that come in objectively to my ministry. Over the course of the past couple of months, insurance company after insurance company has filed new rates. On average, the decrease is 10.15%. I should tell him that the provinces he referred to—the trend we are seeing is the reduction in accident benefits, so that notwithstanding that they are public auto insurance, they are reducing benefits going to individuals having accidents, and this is the only mechanism that is dampening increases in those provinces. Here we have a system that provides both sufficient benefits and lower insurance premiums.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): My question is for the Minister of Culture and minister responsible for francophone affairs.

A few days ago you moved second reading of Bill 60, An Act to amend the Ontario Heritage Act. I know that passage of the bill would ensure the preservation of Ontario's irreplaceable heritage for present and future generations, but unfortunately not everyone seems to agree.

Just a few days ago a developer destroyed a 160-year-old pioneer farmhouse in the riding of Mississauga West, which I represent. This is a farmhouse I used to drive by every day on my drive into work. This type of destruction is happening far too often in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Will you allow the member to ask his question?

Proceed.

Mr Delaney: How does the ministry prevent the destruction of historical buildings in Ontario?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur (ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones): Je voudrais remercier le député de Mississauga-Ouest pour cette question.

Yes, it is sad but true that many heritage buildings continue to fall victim to the wrecker's ball. If passed, the proposed amendment to the Ontario Heritage Act would accomplish several goals. Perhaps the most important one is that it would give the province and municipalities the tools they need to stop the demolition of heritage properties. When I was a city councillor in Ottawa, I witnessed too many times the destruction of several heritage sites in my ward and elsewhere in the city. If these amendments are passed, the loss of valuable properties will stop in Ottawa, in my riding of Ottawa-Vanier and elsewhere across the province.

1530

Mr Delaney: Again a question to the Minister of Culture: In Mississauga West, people talk about this type of problem very often. I've had many discussions about the destruction of local heritage buildings with both our mayor and our city councillor. This particular farmhouse was one that stood for many months and that the local citizens petitioned our mayor and our council to try to save. Unfortunately, it wasn't possible to save this particular building; however, it would have been through the Ontario Heritage Act, had it been passed.

Minister, could you please tell me what the reaction to the proposed amendments is and what happens next?

Hon Mrs Meilleur: Since we introduced it for the first reading in April, we have seen a groundswell of public support across the province. For example, Pamela Minns, an influential member of several heritage groups in the Niagara region, is one of those supporters. She agrees that the existing act is weak and outdated and that the proposed amendments would "strengthen our hands at the grassroots where we work to save Ontario's heritage."

The support is not limited to heritage organizations. Sandy Smallwood, a prominent developer in Ottawa, is very much in support. As president of Andrex Holding Ltd, his company specializes in restoring historic buildings. He says, "The package of proposed amendments are a bold initiative that represents a giant step forward in the preservation of Ontario's heritage." We hope that members of this assembly will support this amendment. I hope it will be passed very quickly.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): This is a question to the Minister of Education. There's a young student who contacted my office in Jordan, in Niagara, who's enrolled in a distance education program through the Avon Maitland District School Board. Previously, students like him who were enrolled in this distance education simply paid a \$50 deposit that was refundable upon completion of the course. Now he is being whacked with an \$850 fee. The only reason is because he's enrolled at Heritage Christian School, an independent school in Niagara. Minister, will you please investigate this situation and help to correct this inequity?

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I want to thank the member opposite for bringing it to our attention. He may well be aware that under his previous government, distance education was moved to TVO, away from the Ministry of Education.

I would still undertake, because it involves a school board under our jurisdiction, which he has connected the course to, and there are courses offered by school boards in conjunction with a more provincial program through the distance education office, to look into any changes and how they may impact on the student he has talked about and, he's inferring, on perhaps even a group of students. I would undertake to get back to him as a mem-

ber, and if he or the family involved wants to contact our office, we'll look into that.

I would just give him that notice and advice. It could involve TVO and my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, depending on exactly what course is taken and when.

Mr Hudak: I appreciate the minister's endeavour to get back to us. He'll be receiving a letter from us immediately, copied to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

I think the point is very clear that a student enrolled in the public system whose parents paid into the local school board would not face an \$850 fee. It would be paid by the host board or by the Avon Maitland board, whereas students of parents who still pay their taxes to the local school board, but simply choose to send their children to an independent school, face this additional fee. I hope the minister will get back to us shortly to make sure we can address this situation in a fair and equitable manner. I appreciate his endeavour in responding to my request.

Hon Mr Kennedy: All I can say more generally is simply that we're trying to be better at the availability of distance education. We have made a commitment to rural schools in this province through our good schools open policy. We want to make sure that the only barrier there for people in our rural areas to get access to a good, high-quality, publicly funded education is because of issues that can't be overcome, because there hasn't been a fulsome rural education policy in this province for some time now.

We are working very hard to make sure that that choice is there and available to each and every resident of rural areas. We've put forward \$31 million, thanks to the Minister of Finance and the Premier, in this most recent budget. We'll address what too many governments have taken for granted, which is that everyone in this province should have equal right to a same-quality, high-quality public education.

We make that commitment to the people in rural Ontario. There are many schools that have been under pressures—many, as the member knows, in his own riding. One of the best schools in the province, with one of the highest scores, was shut down by his previous government. I was there at the time and there were tumbleweeds literally going through there. Recreational facilities can't be used by his community. I'll tell you, our endeavour will be a complete policy of rural education. Distance credits will be there, and so will all of the services that every rural—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): New question.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Mr Minister, yesterday there was a huge referendum in the province of Quebec. The Liberal government of that province has allowed democratic referenda on forced

mergers—the de-amalgamation of many cities. Eighty-nine former municipalities and the people who live in them participated; 15 alone in Montreal voted to return to their former cities and towns.

In Ontario, you have denied that same opportunity to the people of Flamborough, Dundas and Aldershot, and you have refused to respect the vote of the people of Kawartha Lakes.

My question to you is a simple one: When will you grant the same rights to Ontario citizens that people in Quebec enjoy? When are you going to grant the right of those people to control their own destinies?

Hon John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): I thank the member opposite for the question. As he well knows, we're looking at the Quebec situation with some interest, but our primary responsibility is to make sure that all municipalities are fiscally and financially sustainable and accountable in the province of Ontario. That's our primary responsibility. As we have always said, the prime interests of this government that was elected last October 2 are health care and education issues, to make sure that we improve health care and education in this province. We'll be taking a very close look at the Quebec situation and we will deal with the situation accordingly.

ANNUAL REPORT, OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2003-04 annual report of the Ombudsman.

The member for Leeds-Grenville had a point of order.

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Earlier today there was a request for unanimous consent for second and third reading for the medical review, Bill 104. I'd like to ask for unanimous consent for both Bill 86 and Bill 104 to receive second and third reading today.

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We are prepared to discuss those things at the House leaders' meeting. The opposition cancelled today's House leaders' meeting. We've rescheduled it for tomorrow. We'd be pleased to talk about it tomorrow.

The Speaker: Do we have consent? There's no consent.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): As you know, the Liberals' disastrous budget was passed last Thursday at 9:30. Unfortunately, a lot of people still don't agree with it. On Friday, I had over 1,000 petitions

brought to my office and they are to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

As I mentioned, over 1,000 signatures came in on Friday, and I've signed this.

1540

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

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

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

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

It is signed by about 60 people from the former cities and towns of Kawartha Lakes. I'm in complete agreement and add my signature thereto.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): I've been asked to present this petition on behalf of about 80 of my constituents.

"To: Legislative Assembly of Ontario ...

"Whereas,

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

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

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

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

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP

coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

I’m going to table this petition.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“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 affix my name in full support.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

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

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government is cutting provincial funding for essential health care services like optometry, physiotherapy and chiropractic care;

“Whereas this privatization of health care services will force Ontarians to pay out-of-pocket for essential health care;

“Whereas Ontarians already pay for health care through their taxes and will be forced to pay even more through the government’s new regressive health tax;

“Whereas the Liberals promised during the election that they would not cut or privatize health care services in Ontario;

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

“We demand the McGuinty Liberal government keep its promises and guarantee adequate provincial funding for critical health services like eye, physiotherapy and chiropractic care.”

This is signed by hundreds of people who live in the riding of Nickel Belt. I agree with them, and I’ve affixed my signature to it.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a petition.

“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 submit this on behalf of the constituents.

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): It’s a pleasure to present a petition on behalf of Julia Munro, who’s the member from York North. I extend to her my respect. I hope she’s in good health. On her behalf I am reading.

“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’m pleased to sign this and endorse it on behalf of my constituents and those of Julia Munro.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

“Whereas North Americans (USA and Canada) have become continuously heavier, and overweight persons now make up over 65% of the population; and

“Whereas obesity among children has now been termed an epidemic; and

“Whereas diseases such as diabetes type 2, circulatory disease, knee replacements and some cancers are known to be associated with obesity; and

“Whereas such chronic diseases could be prevented by an active lifestyle and training,

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, request that physical education be reinstated in our schools as a mandatory subject, with an emphasis on training toward lifelong productive skills.”

I’ll affix my name to it.

TAXATION

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I have literally thousands of signatures here on this petition. It reads as follows:

“Petition to force Premier McGuinty to obey the taxpayer protection law.

“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 sign this petition as well.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that has been sent to me by Alex Cullen, who is a councillor for the city of Ottawa, Bay ward. It reads as follows:

“Whereas property reassessment occurs now on an annual basis; and

“Whereas higher housing markets increase assessment, leading to higher property taxes; and

“Whereas property values are not related to the cost of municipal services, nor to the ability of taxpayers to pay; and

“Whereas the assessment system is a provincial responsibility;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to initiate a review of Ontario’s property assessment system that would lead to reforms that will protect homeowners from excess increases in assessments due to hot housing markets.”

I affix my signature to this.

ROUGE VALLEY CENTENARY

Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition which I wish to present.

“To the Parliament and Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, MPP Mary Anne Chambers (Scarborough East):

“Whereas Rouge Valley Health System is a two-site hospital consisting of both the Ajax-Pickering hospital in Ajax, Ontario, and the Centenary Health Centre in Scarborough, Ontario (hence known as RVC); and

“Whereas RVC is designated as the regional level 2+ paediatrics, neonatal intensive care unit and obstetrics unit since 1996, and carried official regional status after amalgamation of the two sites in 1997, and achieved recognition from the Hospital for Sick Children and the Child Health Network and funding from companies such as BMO Bank of Montreal and Glaxo Wellcome, who invest in technologies that make the regional centre a state-of-the-art facility; and

“Whereas potential threats to closure, downgrade of regional status or advanced level 2+ services or otherwise affecting 6,400 annual pregnant women, several thousand babies, children and mothers, to the communities of east Scarborough and west Durham, and the unexplained delay of construction on a new wing of the RVC site for family-centred care including the regional departments after extensive community fundraising efforts and the contribution of the provincial government; and

“Whereas the RVC catchment area has expressed full outrage over the delay in construction of the new wing that may result in potential legal action from donors in the community and any threats to the hospital’s regional paediatric, NICU, obstetrics centre will force women, mothers and children to travel outside the hospital catchment area to downtown Toronto or Oshawa;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament and Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care”—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Thank you. I’m sorry I interrupted you. The member for Erie-Lincoln.

1550

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I’m pleased to present a petition signed by people across Niagara, including Sharon Kovacs of Port Colborne and Mary Padolyak of Wainfleet, that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Dalton McGuinty Liberals promised a 'health care system that gives us all the care we need, when we need it'; and

"Whereas chiropractors, optometrists and physiotherapists provide the necessary health care to the people of Ontario to maintain healthy and active lifestyles;

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

"The Dalton McGuinty Liberals should keep their promise to invest in health care and restore funding to cover optometry, physiotherapy and chiropractic care under OHIP."

In support, my signature.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

I put my signature to this.

DISTRICT OF MUSKOKA

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Over the weekend I received thousands more petitions to keep Muskoka part of northern Ontario. I shall read it.

"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 will adversely affect the hard-working people of Muskoka by restricting access to programs and incentives enjoyed by residents of other northern communities; and

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition and affix my signature to it.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have a petition signed by a number of constituents. It was sent to me by Dr Dario Laurenti and Dr Harold Simon. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario....

"Whereas,

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

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

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

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I move that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing July 1, 2004, and ending December 31, 2004, such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation for the 2004-05 fiscal year following the voting of supply.

It's a great honour to be able to begin this interim supply debate. Around this place it's a special debate because as we begin it—it generally happens at the end of the spring session—we know that this House looks to rising for the summer recess. I think it's a good opportunity for us to look back on some of the things that this Parliament has achieved over of the course of the spring sitting.

I hope I can, with your indulgence, expand that a little bit, to include what we have achieved in our first eight months of government. Indeed, it was almost exactly eight months ago in this very chamber that Premier McGuinty was sworn in, a cabinet was sworn in and the Liberal government's mandate really began in earnest, following the October 2 election. A great deal has happened over the course of these eight months. I hope I can just point to some of the ones that are highlights for me and some of the things that I think punctuated these first eight months in government.

Before I do that, I want to do a couple of things by way of thank yous. I think that there has been a new mood of co-operation in this Legislature. The previous Parliaments became rather acrimonious, and this Parliament has its acrimony as well, but I think the members of this Parliament have conducted themselves rather effectively and with great integrity moving through the legislative agenda which our government has presented over the course of the past eight months.

I also want to thank my parliamentary assistant, who is sitting right by my side here during these remarks. The member for Eglinton-Lawrence and I joined up as a team over in the Ministry of Finance. He took on a couple of very significant assignments, the first being, notably, automobile insurance. We had made a commitment to bring forward measures that would reduce auto insurance premiums in the province. We had another question on it today, and I was able to say again in this House that our program to bring auto insurance premiums down has been very, very effective. If we have been effective, and I say we have, it's in large measure due to the tireless work of my colleague and parliamentary assistant, the member for Eglinton-Lawrence and my friend, Mike Colle.

I also want to take a moment to thank the hard-working men and women in the Ministry of Finance. The transition from one political party to another, from one government to another, is not an easy thing, even for a

seasoned public service like the Ontario public service. But I want to say publicly, and put on the record, that we have been served with such diligence, energy, imagination and commitment from a public service that certainly welcomed us after the election and assisted us not only in getting established in office but in putting together the measures that I think have punctuated our first eight months in government.

1600

Obviously, I am particularly proud of the budget we presented in this Legislature. I am proud of the fact that we were able, in that budget, to begin a new and stronger era of public policy in Ontario. Yes, there's no doubt that the measures we voted on today, in terms of the bill for the Ontario health premium, have given rise to some controversy. Yes, we said during the election campaign that we would not raise additional revenues. And yes, in this Legislature we have brought forward a bill to raise additional revenues.

I think it's worth saying once again that the financial circumstances we inherited when we took office on October 23 were so critical that it was absolutely necessary for us to bring forward those measures if we were going to fulfill all the other commitments we made during the campaign, notably in the area of a stronger and more sustainable health care system, improvements in public education, strengthening Ontario communities, beginning a program of infrastructure renewal, whether it is in public transit or the electricity system, and giving people the kind of public services that they long for and said they wanted during the course of the 28 days of the election campaign.

As the Premier said earlier in this House today, we could have simply inherited that huge problem and sat back and said that there was no possibility of really doing anything because the province was in serious financial circumstances. The province was in fact in the midst of a debt spiral that threatened our ability to deliver any real standard of service in any of the areas we're responsible for. It threatened our international credit rating. It threatened our ability to service our debt. And it threatened the quality of life of the people of Ontario to the extent that they look to government for high-quality public services.

We simply rejected that and said that this is not about our own political salvation; it's about doing what was right under the circumstances. I've said in this House and in speeches right across Ontario and beyond that it simply would have been unacceptable for us, as we prepared a budget, to allow Ontario to fall into further and further and further debt or, to get ourselves out of debt, to undertake the kind of slashing and burning of public services that would have been required to bring forward a balanced budget within this financial year.

Some of the things we've been able to accomplish in the budget are particularly satisfying to me as a Liberal and as a member of this Parliament from the greater Toronto area. I think, for example, of the assistance we can give seniors who are living on fixed incomes and who said to my colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence and, I think, every member of this Legislature during the

election, "We have problems paying our bills. How are we going to stay in our homes? We live on a fixed income, a fixed pension. Costs are going up. We feel like we're not going to be able to stay in our homes."

What I heard during the election campaign on this matter simply resonated in my head over and over again as we began to prepare the broad schemes of the budget. I said to Mike and I said to others around the table, "We have to make sure that we do something for our seniors. We have to make sure that as we are setting our course on a four-year comprehensive plan to bring Ontario back to financial health, we can't forget about our seniors. We can't forget about the people who worked hard over the course of 30 and 40 and 50 years and now are retiring on pensions and are worried about whether or not they have the resources to simply stay in their homes and live out their remaining years in health and with some sort of confidence that they will be able to maintain simple but comfortable lives."

So we put in the budget a measure that actually represents one of the largest increases, if you work on percentages. Seniors know that those on low and moderate incomes receive a property tax credit of up to \$500 to assist with the paying of property and sales tax credit. We were able to increase the property tax credit by some \$125. That's a 25% increase. I don't want to pretend that that will solve all the problems in the world, but it gives me some satisfaction that in an environment where every single penny we spend had to be justified, in an environment where there was pressure to reduce expenditures so we can get Ontario out of its debt spiral, in an environment where every single ministry was asked to find areas where money could be saved so we could make investments in key areas, in an environment where we have had to take some pretty serious steps, where we have had to delist some services in the area of chiropractic and physiotherapy and optometry, in that kind of environment, this caucus and this cabinet and this Premier were able to say to senior citizens, "We understand your plight, those of who you live on low and fixed incomes, and this budget needs to speak with you." That increase of \$125 a year is going to play a very important role in the lives of thousands and thousands of seniors right across Ontario.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Some 683,000 households.

Hon Mr Sorbara: My friend and my parliamentary assistant has got the numbers: 683,000 households will be helped by this measure.

The other matter that gave me some degree of satisfaction along the same line is that we were able, for the first time in 11 years, to increase the benefit that goes to people on disability pensions and those who, for a time, live on social assistance. I will never forget the day in our caucus—and this is not breaching caucus confidentiality, but in our caucus we talked about the fact that we needed to make sure that a Liberal budget spoke to those in Ontario who are most vulnerable.

When I said to my caucus colleagues, "Any budget I present in this Legislature is going to deal with the issue

of those who have had their disability pensions frozen for 11 years and those who have had their social assistance frozen for 11 years," every member of our caucus stood up and applauded, and I really knew that I had the support for that on this score. I was delighted that we were able to include that in the budget.

Just to conclude and have a quick overview of some of the things that have punctuated what we've been able to achieve in these eight months—and you know, there are ups and downs. Some days you feel like, my goodness, you're banging your head against the wall, but I was glad that on the first day we took office, we took steps on the auto insurance premium matter. Finally we see rates starting to come down.

I was delighted that we could, even before the budget, make some critical new investments in the public transit systems of this great city, the TTC. I was delighted when my colleague the Minister of Labour introduced legislation to increase the minimum wage and, down the road, took some steps to deal with the 60-hour workweek that the previous government had put in place.

I was thrilled when the Minister of Energy made announcements in this Legislature that, as they are implemented, will give us once again one of the strongest hydroelectric systems on the entire continent.

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I was thrilled when the Minister of Education, in the fall session of Parliament, made some extraordinary allocations for those who are most vulnerable within our school systems.

When my friend the Chair of Management Board introduced legislation in this Parliament to ban forever in this province partisan political advertising, I thought, "Do you know what? These are things we committed to during the campaign, and we're finally achieving them."

The fact that we were able to create, when we were sworn in, a Ministry of Children and Youth Services and that we were able in the budget to allocate some \$25 million to children's mental health, I think, punctuates our first eight months in office.

What can I say about the work that has been done by the Minister of Health over these eight months? This is the most challenging and difficult portfolio of all in government. The demands are huge. Our commitment to public health drives everything we do. The minister has worked tirelessly to help us organize and articulate a plan that will transform forever, and for the better, our system of public health.

When we have completed this first mandate four years down the road, I think we'll look back at these eight months and see how important and how productive the seeds the Minister of Health has planted in health care, the Minister of Education in education and all my colleagues around the cabinet table really were.

In closing, I simply invite my colleagues and members across the aisle to have their say on interim supply. I know and expect that this motion will be carried and we'll be able to pay our bills until we vote the supply motion later on in the parliamentary year.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): Just like families sit down across Ontario, we're going to sit down today and discuss the bill-paying of the government.

When it comes to families, they're finding it more and more difficult. I say enough is enough. Gasoline prices have been escalating at alarming rates, causing the people of Cambridge, North Dumfries, south Kitchener and the rest of Ontario to continually have to hand over more of their hard-earned money at the gasoline pumps. The McGuinty Liberal government has turned its back on this issue.

I've asked the McGuinty Liberal government to take the initiative and immediately freeze gas prices for a temporary period while world prices moderate. I've asked further that the McGuinty government and the Martin Liberal government immediately lower their taxes on gas for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate. I've again asked the McGuinty government to immediately start a royal commission to investigate predatory gas prices charged by oil companies operating in Ontario.

Together with the people of Cambridge, we have collected hundreds of signatures from concerned constituents, asking the McGuinty Liberals to take action. The variable and high gas prices in different areas of Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship to hard-working Cambridge families. This is unfair, and the people of Cambridge deserve better. I will continue fighting for the people of Cambridge, North Dumfries and south Kitchener. They deserve better than broken promises, which is all the McGuinty Liberal government has given to the people of Ontario to the present time. Pay more and get less: the McGuinty plan.

In talking about that, we're dealing with the payment of bills. In effect, the McGuinty government is now slashing health care. The budget announced increases in health care spending that were well below what the Progressive Conservative government spent during the last couple of years of their tenure, and yet they still promise shorter waiting lines and thousands more nurses. They don't say how this is going to happen when they're cutting back on health care.

Integrity, honesty and truthfulness are words that have little or no meaning to the McGuinty Liberal government. Their platform revolves around broken promises. The people of Cambridge deserve better than a government that breaks its promises.

Premier McGuinty assured us, as part of his election platform, that he would not raise taxes. However, the Ontario Liberal budget announced on May 18 imposed an increase of income tax ranging from \$300 to \$900 per taxpayer, in addition to a \$3.9-billion electricity hike. The increase in taxes is another jab at the pocketbooks of hard-working citizens and seniors of Ontario.

Many in Cambridge, North Dumfries, south Kitchener and the rest of Ontario will be forced to accept a reduced quality of life due to the Liberal McGuinty government's

delisting of key essential health services. Many people rely upon chiropractic services, eye examinations and physiotherapy to live a healthy lifestyle. For some people, chiropractic treatment and physiotherapy is the difference between walking and being confined to a wheelchair. Shame on you, Dalton McGuinty. The people of Ontario deserve the health services they've come to know. What essential service will a Liberal government axe next? I'm asking the McGuinty Liberal government to reverse the delisting of eye examinations, chiropractic and physiotherapy services and to restore funding for these important and vital services.

Reckless promises of the Liberal McGuinty government have adversely affected the trust between Ontarians and their elected representatives. My office has received many phone calls from the people of Cambridge, North Dumfries and south Kitchener expressing their disgust. They want to know why the Liberal government is breaking its promises in raising their taxes and cutting services. They deserve more from a Liberal government, more than broken promises. Just ask FDR, who promised a chicken in every pot. I can only hope that Dalton McGuinty will promise a polygraph machine in every Liberal office. But that will not be enough for the Premier's office, and I suggest a water fountain full of sodium pentathol be installed. I realize copious quantities of this liquid would be required, but the means justify the end.

The McGuinty government has been ignoring the needs of taxpayers. They're ignoring the health needs of Ontarians by delisting essential services. Instead, the Liberal government has imposed health premiums on already strapped-for-cash citizens.

Premier McGuinty and Minister of Finance Greg Sorbara now have a class action suit launched against them by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, and rightfully so. They shouldn't be able to get away with breaking their promises and ignoring the people of Ontario. In view of the recent budget of the McGuinty Liberal government, I believe the people's trust in our democracy has been drastically diminished. I have never seen such anger from my constituents, who are asked to pay higher taxes for fewer services, in direct contrast to Mr McGuinty's written and oral promises made before and after the election. These brazen actions were made with the arrogance of a Liberal government which believed that the memory of the electorate is so short that all would be forgotten by the next election, some four years from now. That will not happen.

But in the meantime, what can the electorate do? Unfortunately, very little. I have never believed in a recall vote, but I also underestimated the ambition of those who will do or say anything to win an election. I thought the best of people and was shocked by the lack of integrity that has been illustrated. I have therefore instructed legislative counsel to prepare a preliminary draft of recall legislation that can be used to consult with my constituents over the next few months to determine their wishes. In the alternative, I will be exploring

legislation that would permit citizens to bring a class action against any elected representative for special, exemplary and punitive damages. The grounds for such an action would be a breach of promise or representations that were made negligently or recklessly.

My office has spent a great deal of time dealing with the problem in the registrar general's office. It seems that the citizens of Ontario are having a great deal of difficulty obtaining official documents such as birth certificates. Shortly after the election, Jim Watson, the member for Ottawa West-Nepean, was appointed Minister of Consumer and Business Services, and the registrar general's office came under his jurisdiction. To that time, documentation from the registrar general could be obtained on one day's notice for emergency circumstances and two to three weeks for ordinary delivery. I must say the staff at the registrar general's office was always efficient and helpful. Suddenly, the one-day delivery was stopped by Mr Watson, and ordinary deliveries stretched to months rather than weeks. My constituency office, along with others, was then bombarded with complaints from the public about the time delays, and that still continues.

1620

What happened? Minister Watson stated in this House on a number of occasions that the new delays were due to the funding of the registrar general's office by the previous government, but that explanation does not explain why substantial delays did not happen gradually but in fact suddenly, after Minister Watson took over. Investigation has revealed the real reason for the delays, which the government has been covering up until now. Immediately on taking office, the government initiated a number of security measures regarding requests, including communications with a federal government agency for each request. Yes, Big Brother is watching you. This resulted in increasing the workload of the staff by two to three times and created a tremendous backlog, which we now all suffer from. These security measures were not phased in to lessen the impact; they were imposed without notice. No new staff was hired to meet the workload, no planning was done and the public was not informed about the new procedures. To make matters worse, Minister Watson initiated planning implementation of a new computer system for the registrar's office that compounded the problem.

After creating this great mess, the government too late recognized the problem and in a panic started substantial overtime for staff. In addition, they announced a plan to hire 57 new staff members. A month later, after realizing the number was insufficient to cover the backlog, the government announced a plan to hire over 100 new members—this is planning. But of course the backlog continues, and we can no doubt expect a new announcement hiring even more people in the near future.

This government's negligence has caused grievous harm to many men, women and children in Ontario. Come clean. Can you not at long last tell the public what really happened and take some responsibility for your actions?

The issue of trailer assessment has kept my phone lines busy over the last five months. The government at long last backed down on its decision to tax many travel trailers for 2003 but is still proceeding with a tax for 2004. I've collected hundreds of names of people in my riding alone who are against the new trailer tax. I also started a petition that has been signed by over 750 trailer owners in Cambridge, North Dumfries and Kitchener. These owners are not wealthy people and are hard pressed to pay the new tax in addition to the new health tax and higher insurance and hydro prices.

Things are really improving at Cambridge Memorial Hospital. I like to call it a new beginning. After some confusion and a superintendent being appointed, we now have a new chairman of the board, a new board of directors and a new CEO. I would like to extend special thanks to the 1,200 professionals who care for our seniors and residents of Cambridge, North Dumfries and south Kitchener at Cambridge Memorial Hospital. It is through their constant dedication that health care in Cambridge thrives.

I'm eager for the new wing and redevelopment of Cambridge Memorial Hospital to begin this fall. This project will add 98 new beds to our hospital, emergency services will be increased by 30% and ambulatory care will see an increase of 72%. The expansion will also increase the number of operating rooms from five to seven. Without the commitment of Cambridge Memorial Hospital, the Cambridge Memorial Hospital Foundation and countless volunteers and health care professionals, this expansion would not be possible. Because of the hard work of health care professionals and volunteers in Cambridge, North Dumfries and south Kitchener, we will have shorter waits in emergency, more operating rooms and better ambulatory care. Congratulations and thank you again to all those who help nurse the sick back to health. Because of you, we can be proud of our hospital and our health care community.

I would also like to welcome Mr Lee Gould, who was appointed executive director of the Cambridge Memorial Hospital Foundation in April. Mr Gould brings years of expertise to the foundation. He has held a number of senior positions within philanthropy, including helping to lead fundraising initiatives by the Scarborough Hospital Foundation.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): This is an interim supply motion and, as such, what the government is attempting to do—if there's anybody out there watching—is to pay its bills. That's all the motion is about. But I anticipate that nobody is going to talk much about the need to pay the bills, they're going to talk about other things, and I of course am not going to be dissuaded from talking about other things as well. I don't know how any of you are going to talk for 38 minutes on the necessity of meeting one's bills for the period July 1 through December of next year. The reality is that interim supply motions are passed by literally every government following a budget in order that the money continues to flow, so that our civil servants can be paid and so that the other

bills a government has can be paid as well. I have no doubt whatsoever that the Liberal majority will pass this and see it into law later this afternoon. The civil servants should all rest assured that come the next payday, there will be some money in their packet.

Having said that, I listened with some interest to the Minister of Finance because he never spent as long on an explanation as I just have on this bill. He talked about other things that the government has done, and I suppose it behooves me to also speak about what the government has and has not done in its eight months.

Of course, for the last couple of weeks we have all been subsumed and consumed by interest on the budget. He has said that his budget is not without controversy. I would put it, I think, a little bit stronger than that: Not only is it not without controversy; it is a budget that has captured the public's imagination in ways I think some of the members opposite wish it had not. It has captured it because the public is angry on two fronts: They are angry because they are being taxed, after having been promised they wouldn't be taxed, particularly in a regressive health tax; and secondly, they're angry because some of the services they have had to rely upon have been delisted in that same health scenario they have used for many years.

Speaking of delisting first, I had an opportunity to be in a home for the aged today. Actually, it was a charitable nursing home run by the United Church of Canada. I was there for the yearly assessment of my mother-in-law, with whom I have power of attorney. While I was waiting for this yearly assessment, one of the physiotherapists came up and started to talk to me. She was speaking some very real home truths. They are very wary and upset in the home for the aged and in the nursing home because they believe that the services they provide to the frail and elderly people who live there—and they are all women in that particular home—are going to suffer as a result of this budget. She asked me whether or not the government had made final determinations as to what constituted a home for the aged, whether or not a nursing home under the Charitable Institutions Act constituted—I told her I could not imagine that they would take away those charitable homes run by various churches, although I didn't know, in fact, whether or not they will include nursing homes that are privately run, but that the devil was in the details, and we're waiting to see that.

She wanted to know what I could do to stop it, and I told her some real truths: The people of Ontario last October elected a government with an overwhelming majority, and that government can use that overwhelming majority to do whatever it wants; the opposition on this side is some 32 people, the government side has 71, and it is often difficult for the opposition to be heard, but that we would continue to speak out on this delisting, we would continue to speak out about the need for physiotherapists to do their jobs in the nursing homes, and we would continue to try to say that those should be expanded, not retracted. They should be for every single person of age who needs them, whether those people live in nursing homes or in charitable institutions, whether

they have home care or whether they are one of the seniors who are lucky enough to remain in their own homes and who will require physiotherapy from time to time to help them remain in those very homes and, by the way, save the government a lot of money.

1630

I talked to her at some great length, but she did not seem to grasp or to understand that with the government bent on delisting services, it will be very difficult to try to get them turned around. I also know that about a half an hour ago there was an emergency meeting of the cabinet. I would hope that the cabinet is upstairs discussing this very delisting. This has been a mistake from the beginning. This is not going to save huge amounts of money for the government, but in fact is making many, many people in this province very anxious about the loss of their service, whether it be for optometrists, whether it be for physiotherapists or whether it be for chiropractors. We have seen, day after day after day in this Legislature, the petitions signed by not one, not two, but hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands of people angry about these delisted services.

We have also seen in these very same times people angry about the health tax, which they believe has been imposed unfairly upon them—a health tax that is not fair to the average person, because it starts taxing them at some \$21,000 of income and has a cap that stops taxing those people who earn huge amounts of money, so that if you earn \$200,000 or \$300,000 or \$500,000 a year in this province, you pay a capped amount of only \$900. People know that is unfair. They know there is money in the system; we are a rich province. They know that after years of the previous government cutting taxes, there are people who are very, very well off and who can afford to pay for these services if we need them; and I would suggest we do.

But this government does not appear to want to listen to any of that. They want to govern, they want to get the interim supply bill passed so that they can pay their bills, but they are not doing in reality what they promised to do just last October. There is a whole litany of broken promises which seems to be added to each and every day. Although there is some admission that some of these have been broken, they continue to stand there and aggravate people who are watching from the outside.

I listened to the minister today say how proud he was of his auto insurance bill. With the greatest of respect, people who have auto insurance continue to see that insurance rise every single day. Every time they open up their auto insurance, they see that the costs are going up; they open up their house insurance, the costs are going up; they open up any kind of insurance at all, they see the costs are going up. Then they open up the newspaper—as I think some of them are wont to do, particularly if they read the financial sections—and they can see that the profits of the insurance companies and the profits of the banks and the profits of the big corporations continue to go up massively: the banks making \$3.1 billion in profit in the first quarter of this year, and the insurance

companies making half a billion dollars in profit in the same period. And they see that what they have to contribute to this budget is absolutely static. In fact, what they are probably going to have to contribute over the long term of some 12 years, as set out in the budget, will actually decline. The people who see this are angry that their auto insurance rates go up while the corporations continue to make more money.

They are also angry because they saw a promise that this government made to cap hydro rates. If anything, I would have to tell you, members opposite, it was not a very good idea to make that promise in the first place, because you could not continue in the long run to sell for 4.3 cents electricity that costs you 5.3 cents. You couldn't do that, but you still made the promise anyway. I don't understand why you made the promise. So I have to tell you, when you broke that promise, I could understand, at least in my head, why you broke that one, because it was unsustainable. But you should never have made it in the first place. I put that one right up there with your promise to the taxpayers federation not to increase taxes. You cannot and you should not be telling people you're going to do those kinds of things if it is your intent to fairly govern this province.

The minister also talked today about some of the other things he was proud of, and I'd just like people to stop and think about them for a few seconds. The first was the minimum wage. Yes, the minimum wage has not gone up for years and years and years, and yes, the minimum wage needed to go up. But look how much the minimum wage is in Ontario today: only \$7.15. A person who goes out to work for \$7.15 per hour in this, the richest province in one of the richest countries of the world, and who works a 40-hour week, at the end of the month will have about \$1,100 in take-home pay. If that person lives in a city like Toronto or Hamilton or Ottawa or Windsor or Thunder Bay, he or she will see almost all of that money eaten up simply on the cost of a one-bedroom apartment. In the city of Toronto, the average cost of a one-bedroom apartment, we all know, is running around \$900 a month at this point, which leaves scant money, almost nothing. By the time you've paid your small amount of taxes, it leaves nothing for food, clothing or transportation. That's what people are expected to live on at minimum wage.

In upping it that small amount, we have ensured that anyone who works for minimum wage and who works a 40- or even a 50-hour workweek will live in poverty. For us to say and for him to say that that is a good thing—I think he should re-look at those words. Yes, any amount of money would be welcomed by people who are that poor, but the reality is that \$7.15 is not a living wage. They could have, and should have, done much more. Their promise is to raise the minimum wage to \$8 over the lifetime of this government. I will tell you that many of those poor people cannot wait that period of time. They cannot wait for the full four years to get to \$8 an hour. They have to speed up the minimum wage. They have to do it to help to eradicate poverty. It's not going to have any deleterious effect on the businesses in this

province any more so than it did in the United States. Many of the states increased their minimum wage, to many of the same clarion calls that all the poor businesses were going to go bankrupt. But it was soon realized that it did not happen. What did happen is that those same people who had just that little bit, that modicum of increase in their life standards were able to spend their money on the necessities of life and actually saw their own living standards increase. It was a good thing in the United States, where it was done, and it could be a good thing here. We have to revisit, and you as a government should have revisited, the snail's pace at which you're getting to \$8. In fact, you should get there very soon.

I looked at the other things the minister had to say he was most proud of, and that is increasing social assistance rates by some 3%. That, to me, said a lot. Some eight years ago, in 1995, the first act of the Conservative government under Mike Harris was to slash by 21% the money for those on social assistance, to slash that money to women and children, because most of the people who are on social assistance are women and children, to slash it so they no longer had enough money to live and in many cases didn't have enough money to eat, and certainly to ensure that they lived in poverty to a far greater extent than one could possibly imagine. Those rates were slashed and they remained slashed for all of those eight years. In spite of inflation, which was some 13% over those eight years, nary a penny went to those people.

When you ask, "Is it a good thing that someone gets a 3% increase in their social assistance rates?" I will not tell you it's a bad thing, but is it enough? Is it enough that an able-bodied person get \$530 a month plus 3%, which is another \$16? What is that going to do to that person? Is it going to help? Of course it's going to help. How it's going to help is that they will have to go to the food bank one less time in a month. That's what it's going to do. That's all it's going to do. Could you have done more? Yes, you could have. Should you have done more? Absolutely, you should have. It is not enough to give them a 3% rate increase when inflation is at about 2% and expect that they are going to continue in a situation like they are in now.

That same thing is visited by those people on Ontario disability support payments. They got a 3% rate increase, and even though the top rate there is \$930 for a single person, a 3% rate to them only meant some \$28 or \$29 a month, and that is twice that they maybe won't have to go to the food bank. Their lives have not appreciably changed under this Liberal government, any more than they changed under the previous Conservative government.

1640

We as a society cannot accept that that is enough. You, as Liberals and as a government, should not accept it as enough either. The Minister of Finance should not stand up and say he's proud of that. He should stand up and say he's sorry for that, sorry that that's all he could or would do with the resources he had. But he should never say he's proud of it.

He also talked about getting back in the housing game—that we were getting back in supportive housing—and so did some other people today during question period. The reality is that we're not. This budget did not allow social housing any kind of money at all. There is some \$13 million in new money, but that is not even sufficient to match what the federal government has given to Ontario: some \$500-million-plus to build housing. We are lagging way behind. We have 75,000 families in the city of Toronto alone who are waiting for socially assisted housing, and probably will not get it.

We have advocated in our party many, many times that one of the great determinants, one of the great equalizers, one of the great opportunities that a government has is to build housing for people who need it. If you come to our city—people who may be watching on the TV—if you come to the city of Toronto, or to Hamilton, Ottawa or any large city and sometimes even just large towns, you will see people who are really down on their luck. You will see people who are homeless. You will see people who have nowhere to go. Housing is the first determinant in making them well. We know that if people have housing, then their psychiatric problems can be reduced. We know that if they have housing, it is easier to find work; it is easier to keep oneself clean; it is even easier to go and apply for government programs, because you have to have an address. That housing is the first determinant. If you can have that, all of the other problems can be reduced, and reduced substantially.

We think that money should be spent, and we think that the budget is woefully inadequate in terms of supportive housing. We think it is particularly woefully inadequate for those people who have psychiatric and other needs, whose housing needs must be met immediately. We will continue to advocate on that behalf.

Back to interim supply until I close: This is a bill—there are many, many things wrong, but we, as an opposition, will continue to tell the government with each and every opportunity we have in this Legislature. In the meantime, I can understand what the bill is for, and I can understand the need to vote on that bill this afternoon. The government needs the money, and I think the money will be forthcoming. I can only hope and pray and wish that once this money starts to flow, as it surely will, that the civil servants are paid, that the other government programs are paid, this government will pay far more attention to the social side of the Legislature, increase the social insurance rates, build some more housing, increase the minimum wage and start doing those kinds of activities which will build a more prosperous Ontario.

Certainly the government knows that the last eight years have been brutal to many Ontarians, and certainly this government should be doing its utmost to make lives better for those same people.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I'm pleased to be able to speak to this particular motion today. This is one of those motions that characterizes the British parliamentary system. This is one of the motions

that said to the king, "You know, you can't spend the money unless Parliament agrees to it." So it has been a way of holding the crown accountable for literally centuries.

Therefore, it is one of the most fundamentally important debates we have. Sometimes we see it as routine. Sometimes we see it as even mundane. But, essentially, it is one of the most important debates that ever occurs in the British parliamentary democracies. That is important.

It is also important for really fundamental reasons. It's how our schoolteachers get paid. It's how our civil servants get paid. It's how the bills of the province in general get paid. If we do not pass this motion before this Legislature rises, the bills won't get paid. I look around: our clerks won't be paid, the pages won't be paid. So we really need to pass this motion today. I'm looking over at my friend—I won't say who. He's going to get paid too if we do this. It's one of the few measures that the clerks at the table and the other officers of this Legislature are truly all in favour of. It is a unanimous sort of thing.

Having said that, I think it is also an opportunity for people to speak about some of the things that are going on in the province that are important in their constituencies. I want to tell you that one of the things that is really important in my constituency, and I suspect—I know—across the entire province, is the commitment to long-term care that the Minister of Health, Mr Smitherman, and the Premier of the province, Mr McGuinty, have made in the budget that we are now considering, or we have just finished considering some of its measures; \$191 million of operating funds is flowing immediately into that sector.

Do you know what that means? It means that people in long-term-care facilities will see an increase in staff of 2,000 people in the sector. There will be about 600 nurses and 1,400 personal support workers, dieticians etc. That will make a real difference to the people who call our nursing homes home—it really will. They will now be entitled to two baths a week. It doesn't seem like a lot, but when you were restricted to getting only one bath a week in an institution—think about that. When I went out to the nursing home in Gore Bay following the budget to talk about it, that was one of the things the residents, their families, the staff and the administration found to be really important in their day-to-day lives.

The day after the budget I was in Manitouwadge. It is a beautiful town north of Lake Superior. It's a mining town. It's a town that has seen prosperity slowly moving away as the mines down at the corner slowly start to close down. They were excited about the opportunities in the budget for their children. Teachers were there; the principal of the elementary school was there. They believed this could deliver opportunity for Manitouwadge and for their children, and they were most pleased.

They were especially pleased, though, with the initiatives in northern development. You would know, Mr Speaker, that the government is investing \$135 million in the heritage fund, an increase of \$35 million. We have a new program, called grow bonds, which will provide new

investment capital to business people who want to grow their business, who want to start a business and need capital. This will create opportunity and jobs. The GO North program is a \$10-million program to attract major employers to the north to provide anchors in the various centres across northern Ontario to provide the kinds of jobs we have been looking for and that we need. They're also interested in the \$285 million we are committing to northern highways. That was the input I was receiving in Manitowadge the day after the budget. It was important; it was significant.

With that, I have exhausted my time; I see my whip making some signals to that effect. I will be taking my seat, but I urge all members to support this motion for interim supply.

1650

Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):

It's a pleasure to be up again in this House, speaking to the interim supply motion. In the last few weeks we have been doing a lot of debate on the budget and the damage that budget is doing to working families and seniors throughout the province of Ontario. We might touch a little bit on that today, but there are a number of other things I want to talk about as well.

I want to talk about some of the things that have happened in the last couple of weeks that have been good news stories. I want to talk about the school visits I have enjoyed here at Queen's Park in the last couple of weeks. I've had eight schools come to visit from my riding in the last couple of weeks, and I've been pleased to meet with them and give them a bit of a tour and assist the wonderful staff here at Queen's Park who also do school tours. It's too bad we can't have a little longer tour for those schools. I will read off a list of them here.

Today, my last school was here, A.J. Charbonneau Public School from Arnprior. Through the last few weeks we've had Horton Public School from RR 1 Renfrew, McNab Public School from Arnprior, Cobden District Public School from Cobden, St Thomas the Apostle Catholic school from Renfrew, Walter Zadow Public School from Arnprior, Admaston Township Public School from RR 2 Renfrew, and the Beachburg Public School. In all those schools they take civics now and learn a little bit about government and how it works, the different levels of government. I'm very pleased, as their member, to be able to assist them with these tours of the Legislature.

Last week I had the pleasure of being present for the fire marshal's awards at the Royal York. Of the 15 recipients of the awards, two of them came from my riding and I do want to talk about them a little bit. The first one, a safety partner award, was the television station, the New RO, which headquarters in Pembroke. They did a series of commercials in Renfrew county dealing with the dangers associated with smoking and drinking with regard to fire. They asked any fire department to piggyback in a campaign that gave them access to \$195,000 worth of advertising for a cost of \$1,000. They are going to do the same thing next year as well. It

gave fire departments in our area a tremendous opportunity to get their message out about fire safety. That's so important to ensure that lives are not lost unnecessarily due to fire.

I also had a young boy here, 10-year-old Cody Videto. Cody arrived home from school one day and noticed that there was smoke rising from his home. He opened the garage door and saw a lot of smoke. He immediately closed the door, ran to a neighbour's house and called 911. The fire department was there tout de suite and was able to minimize that damage, so the smoke damage has been corrected in their home and they're back living in it. But it was the quick thinking and action of this 10-year-old boy under those kind of pressured circumstances to make all the right decisions, to act in the way he did, that thereby saved the family home. I was pleased that Minister Kwinter was there for the awards last week, as well as Fire Marshal Bernard Moyle. I was certainly pleased and honoured to be there as well.

So those are some of the things that have been going on in my riding. On Saturday night my wife and I were able to attend the 53rd charter night for the Pembroke-Petawawa Lions Club. We attend a lot of charter nights for different clubs. This one was special because they were honouring Aiden Russelle, a young child, two-and-a-half years old, who has some significant health issues. He can't eat properly; he can't chew. There are going to be some major, major operations done on him. He's been down to Cincinnati and that is where they'll be done. Lowell Green, the wonderful radio host in Ottawa, found out about the plight of this family—Aiden and his parents, Stewart and Kelly—and said, "We've got to do something about this." With the Lions Club in Petawawa, he devoted one three-hour show to raising money for Aiden. In one three-hour show, he was able to raise over \$120,000, somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$125,000, as a matter of fact. Lowell Green was the guest speaker at that banquet as well.

It's just an illustration of what can be accomplished when people get together and work for each other and show their compassion and caring for someone in need. That is something rural people are well known for. I don't exclude urban people from that. It's just that in rural Ontario, your neighbours are generally someone you know and genuinely care about.

So that's a few of the things. We also want to talk about some of those things that are bothersome up in my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, and the McGuinty budget is one that is bothering them a lot. We still haven't stopped the fight on trying to get this government to rethink this decision, this terrible decision, this wrongful decision, this punitive decision, to delist chiropractic services, physiotherapy and eye examinations for many people. That will hurt people in my riding disproportionately, people in my riding and in the riding of my colleague from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock and in the riding of my colleague from Parry Sound-Muskoka, who incidentally has taken a double whammy, probably a triple whammy, in this budget because of the

punitive way his riding has been treated. But we'll let the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka deal with that issue as he sees fit.

That's one of the things, and this is on top of the many things that have happened since I was elected as a member: the decision by this government to break promise after promise such as unfreezing hydro rates, their failure to act as they said they would with regard to auto insurance, many different things that are hurting individuals and will continue to hurt them as the true impact of this budget is known and felt over the ensuing months.

I know we're talking about interim supply. The government needs this bill passed because it's got to pay some bills. One thing people will find is that nobody can spend it like—it's a toss-up as to who spends it faster, a drunken sailor or a Liberal government. And this government will be liberal in the future. You'll see that that's the way they love to operate: They love to take your money and they love to spend it. It must make them feel good to spend money, so they take more than is necessary, more than we can possibly afford. That's one of the earmarks of a Liberal government: They will take every little thing they can get from you, and if they think there's a penny left in your pocket they'll dive right in and get that too, and then they'll spend it wherever they see fit, not necessarily where the priorities of the province or the people should be focused but where they see fit.

You know, they've got a bear wise program. They're going to spend \$900,000 on bear wise programs in Ontario, and that is not going to do anything to solve the problem of bears in my riding and other rural ridings, again like that of my colleague from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, and I'm sure my colleague on the other side, the honourable member from Peterborough, has some of those same problems in the north end of his riding as well. The government has definitely missed the mark with that policy. I really am hoping that we don't have—but we're already seeing problems. We're seeing livestock being killed, we're seeing people who have been attacked by bears. What's the next incident we could see? I don't even want to say it. We all know what it could be. I don't even want to think about it, let alone say it. I'm hoping that somehow this summer does not turn out to be a disastrous one for berry crops, which will exacerbate the problems greatly. I hope that in the late summer and early fall of this year, we don't have some real, severe problems because of the failure of this minister to do what he should have done, and that is to convince the rest of these members over there that the reinstatement of the spring bear hunt was the right thing to do.

1700

Another issue is of course regulation 170/03, which is having disastrous effects on people in rural Ontario. I know the government hides behind the cloak of saying it was the previous government that introduced the legislation. We know that. But I will say that every single Liberal in the House at that time voted in favour of Bill 195, which encompasses regulation 170/03.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and now what we're finding in this regulation is that there are a lot of problems in there. I am hopeful that the Minister of the Environment, in granting this six-month so-called moratorium on implementation, will find many ways to change this legislation, eliminate parts of it, because it is a tremendous overreaction that will not accomplish the utopian goal of perfection, because perfection cannot be achieved, certainly not by any Liberal government. So we'll not reach that point, but we will reach the breaking point for many businesses. Many campsites have already closed in my riding. They have shut down permanently. They are not reopening. Children's camps are considering it. Some have been given extensions, thankfully, and I appreciate the work of some of the people in the ministry who have worked with us to give those extensions for some reasons. But if at the end of those extensions changes aren't made, we're going to see a significant change in the economy of rural Ontario. Our ability to service and attract tourists is going to be compromised greatly because these businesses are going to be shut down. Some of them are community halls and public places of meeting and so on and so forth. So we have some great concerns about that with regard to the effect of 170/03.

Let's get back to the health care issue. That is one I have received more complaints and more mail on than any other issue since I've been here. This decision by the government needs to be reversed, must be reversed.

I'm getting signals from my colleagues, Mr Speaker. Apparently I have used up more than my allotted amount of time, which is easy to do in this House sometimes because it is so nice to be talking to the members on the other side that we just get carried away sometimes and go beyond our limits. So I'm going to pass this on to my colleague.

Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): I rise in support of the interim supply motion. The reason we need to pass this motion is that obviously it is necessary, as was identified earlier, in that you have to pay the bills. It's not just quite like a family sitting down and making a determination. We in fact support all those families that at one time or another sit down and make the determination on the use of their resources and how they do pay their bills.

I guess the question is, why do we need to bother to do this? Obviously, the main reasons are our health care and our education, supporting those critical parts of the government's responsibilities and obligations in the non-scheduled payment area. We actually can go forward and pay our debts and we can pay some special purpose accounts, but in fact we can't at this time pay our employees. So this is particularly important for us as we move forward.

We have intended to put \$600 million into long-term health care. We need to move forward on that front. Certainly in my area, Etobicoke Centre, we have the Ukrainian Canadian Care Centre that is in desperate need of some additions and renovations in order to support its

community, the Dom Lipa centre that looks after the Serbo-Croatian community, and the Etobicoke seniors' residence, just to name a few, and my community is really no different than any other community. We all recognize the need for each of us to be able to support those communities as we move forward with our seniors.

A lot of people make a little about the fact that they are going to get two baths a week. But if you think about the fact that many of us who have been parents bathe our children every day, it's almost criminal to think that our seniors only did receive one bath a week. This is particularly important as they get older and maybe do not have the continence they had before. Two baths a week can make a significant difference in their lifestyle and how they care.

Another critical part of why we need to do this has obviously to do with our education system. Our schools are falling down. The previous government didn't do one report, they did two, to determine that. We have sustained that and our schools are in great disrepair. In my area in particular, Nativity of Our Lord, which was in fact promised a school by the previous member from Etobicoke Centre—something I don't think he really had the authority to do. But in fact nothing has happened. I have another school, Father Serra, which was built for 300 children. It has over 600 children. You have to look at the health and safety of those children, who have one bathroom for the girls and one for the boys. I mean, certainly these are the areas right across this province where we need to reinvest in the infrastructure. If we don't pass the motion, obviously, the interim supply, then we can't go forward on the issues we need to deal with. Does this make any difference to some people? Maybe not; it certainly does to me, and it certainly does to my community. I think it's a pivotal part of our vision of where we want to go for Ontario, a reinvestment in health care.

Interestingly enough, a lot of people make comments about the issues around eye care, for example—the routine eye examination that will not occur for those over the age of 20 and under 65—but they neglect to say that all medical eye care in fact will be available for anyone for whom it is medically required. That somehow seems to get lost in the conversation. They also neglect to say, in the case of chiropractic, that the maximum amount that any individual could have was \$150 per year. For us to go forward and make the reinvestment that we've made, for example, with \$600 million toward immunization for children, for catastrophic issues such as meningitis and pneumonia, we can make a significant difference in their life and in their future.

That's not to say that the other issues are not important. It's like most things in government: You make decisions, and you base those decisions on your priorities. So for us, those decisions have been made. We need to move forward, we need to be transparent, we need to be open and we need to be able to say to the folks, "This is our four-year plan, not our one-year plan. This is where we're going to invest this year and next year, where we've made our decisions."

Another good example is around the issue of water. When you look at the amount of money that we put into health care for this year, we've actually exceeded the amount, and if there's anybody, actually, in this Legislature who thinks that you cannot get hepatitis from dirty water and that's not a health issue, or the fact that our children are suffering from obesity and that is not a health issue, because in fact it leads to diabetes, then I'm quite surprised they would suggest that those are poor investments.

Prevention is the cornerstone of any good health system. It's absolutely imperative that we look forward, instead of spending the money on the illnesses, to prevent them in the first place. That's again part of the long-term care, as well as looking at our family units—150 of them to put across this province. So for us, move on. Get the motion passed. It's time to pay our bills, and it's time to move forward with a vision for Ontario.

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): I appreciate the opportunity to talk on this supply motion. I know the implications of the motion were explained earlier, so I won't get into that.

I would like to touch on a few things related to the actions of the Liberal government since their election last year, and one of the things, of course, we've heard over and over again from the government during debates and in question period is this question of a deficit that they inherited. They've used a number of \$5.6 billion, which we dispute, but in any event, it's out there. Our former finance minister, Ms Janet Ecker, had indicated that certainly there were risks associated with the budget that we tabled in May. When you take a look at two incidences of SARS, the blackout, the Iraq war, the impact on the economy, I think those were realistic, but we were committed and had a plan to meet those challenges, and we would have.

It's interesting to listen to the Liberal rhetoric surrounding this issue. When I hark back to 1990—Mr Speaker, I don't believe you were here then in the run-up period to the 1990 election. I can't recall whether you were or not, but if you recall the budget tabled in the spring of 1990 by the then Liberal government, they were saying, "We have a \$50-million surplus." That was barely a balanced budget. So, of course, as we know, the NDP came into power, and lo and behold, they opened the books and said, "No, we're facing a deficit in excess of \$3 billion." The NDP, under Mr Rae, devised a strategy that I think was their ultimate downfall. Whether it was through the decision of the Minister of Finance, Mr Laughren, or Mr Rae, or whoever the powers were behind the throne, they decided in their lack of wisdom to try and spend their way out of that deficit to boost the economy. Of course, as we all know, the deficit that first year of the Rae government was in excess of \$10 billion and continued to grow and grow. They doubled the debt of the province in just five short years in office.

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Now we've had a different situation where a government comes in, is facing a fiscal challenge, and instead of trying to spend their way out of it, theoretically, they

have said, "We'll spend into it." That's essentially what they've done and have come up with a very significant deficit rather than attempting to meet the challenge. If they could not have met the challenge, I think the people of Ontario would have understood. There was a whole range of options, but they've opted otherwise. As a result, it has built on the reputation they developed in the very first few weeks of their government of breaking promises and solemn commitments made to the voters of Ontario during last year's election campaign.

We now have the Premier of the province, Mr McGuinty, described by some as the 9% man. That's his standing in terms of trust with the people of Ontario. Only 9% of the people of this province believe in and trust the Premier of Ontario, Mr McGuinty. That is unprecedented. We've heard pollsters say they have never seen a leader of a province in single digits. This is someone who in eight months in office has developed that kind of reputation, and I believe has had the impact that the first budget of the NDP had on that party. It branded them; it was something they could never escape from.

Unlike the thinking of the great minds behind this in the Premier's office and the Liberal Party, who feel, "We can do this to the people of Ontario, we can break those solemn promises, but the public of Ontario will forget all about this. Three and a half years from now when we go to the polls, they will forget that we broke promises"—cornerstone promises with respect to tax increases, with respect to a referendum if they felt a tax increase was necessary. "We'll forget about auto insurance, the commitments we made; we'll forget about the hydro rate freeze commitment we made; we'll forget about the promises we made surrounding consultation on major pieces of legislation; and we'll forget about the promises we made for more teachers, more nurses or more police officers." In effect, what they're saying is, "We think the voters of this province are dumb, in capital letters, that they're going to forget about this series, this litany, of broken promises." They've already developed the code words "promise breakers," we've heard "Fiberals" and we've heard language that is even stronger than that and is unparliamentary, so I will not use it in this House.

One of the most serious offences or affronts to the people of Ontario, the people who placed their trust in the Liberal Party in the last election, is the delisting of essential services: chiropractic, optometry and physiotherapy. When we talk about optometry: "This is not necessary; it's not critically important, and if it's medically necessary it'll be referred to the appropriate discipline and be covered." But there was an incident recently with the passing of Ray Charles, who was blind from the age of seven from a minor problem, apparently, and if it had been caught at an early stage by an optometrist, Mr Charles may not have been plagued with a life of blindness. There are very serious incidents that could be caught early by optometrists and be sight-saving diagnoses which now may not occur because of the short-sightedness of the Liberal government.

I have very limited time. Others wish to speak. Hopefully I'll have another opportunity—and I'm sure I will—over the next three years to remind Ontarians of the failings of this government, their breaking of promises and, most importantly, their breaking the trust with the people who elected them just eight short months ago.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): The member from Leeds-Grenville leads me to make quite a number of comments connected to his party. I want to be as kind as I possibly can. It will be difficult, but I will do my best.

You will recall that the Tories had a good economy for approximately eight years while they were in power. They claim the economy was good because they were there. The federal Liberals claim the economy was good because they were there. Presumably two distinct ideologies on some economic approaches, you might think, but they both take credit for this great economic recovery of the last eight years. So who's right?

Interjection: The Liberals are.

Mr Marchese: The Liberals will say they're right. Tories say, "No, it was Mike Harris. He started it." But they're not paying attention, so we'll give you the credit for having done a good job federally, for creating all that wonderful prosperity in Canada.

Just as a reminder about the Tory economic legacy, because they're so proud of themselves, they cut income taxes in the order, cumulatively, of about 16 billion bucks. Now, if you're a banker—and most of you Liberals are not, but some of you may have been—if you're a bank president, not just an ordinary worker in the bank, and you're earning \$1.5 million just in salary alone—God bless, just in salary, not to talk about bonuses and all the other perks you get, because the perks are good—that individual, male or female, woman or man, would get, under the Conservative regime, approximately \$120,000 back.

The wealthy Ontarians really deserved that kind of economic break, because when you're only making \$1.5 million, it's not enough, you understand. It's simply not enough, because the fridge or the stove have just got to go. You've got to replace it every couple of seconds. If you're a banker, it's not good enough to hold it for seven years; you've just got to replace it every other day. So for the banker types—I use bankers as an illustration, to make a point. They did well under the Tory economic policies, where the money you receive back is good for you. The people making 30,000, 40,000, 50,000, 60,000 bucks didn't get much back, they didn't do very well under the Tory economic legacy, but if you were wealthy, you did well.

I remind you that the federal Liberals introduced about \$100 billion of income tax cuts at the federal level. They claim they had to do that, presumably—not to imitate Tories, mind you. No, no. Again, I say to you, the people who enjoyed the benefits of the income tax cuts were not the little guys. If you're a banker, you get a whole heap of money to buy new fridges, new stoves, new boats, however many you want, by the days or the weeks and so

on. So I wanted to remind people that it isn't just Tories who love to give income tax cuts; the federal Liberals did as well, a couple of years ago, in the order of \$100 billion. Liberals don't want to talk about it, but I thought I would remind you.

I remind you that the reason they may have done it was to keep the Tories, the former Alliance Party, at bay, because the only issue the Alliance had was cutting taxes. It's still one of their major planks: "You've got to keep on cutting taxes," as if what the Liberals did wasn't enough. But the reason the Liberals did it, some of us argue, is partly because they are very much like the Conservative Party—at least half of you are; the other half are a little more progressive—and the other part is really to keep the Tories, the Alliance, at bay. Once you take the policy of cutting taxes away from the Alliance, the Conservative Party, they've got nothing else, or at least very little.

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Mrs Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): Except going to war.

Mr Marchese: That's another issue.

I remind you, good listeners that you are, and those of you who follow this political channel—it's 5:20—that the Tories left a deficit in a good economy. Some people might appreciate, possibly accept and understand that in a recessionary period you might lose a couple of billion dollars along the way. It's hard. If you don't have money coming in because people are not working and a whole lot of money is going out, it's tough. The NDP in 1990 could have done what the Tories did, and that was to lay off 15,000 to 20,000 workers in a good economy. We could have, in a bad economy, fired another 20,000 people because we didn't have the money. We could have done that. But we didn't do it.

The Tories left a deficit—and let's not quibble about \$5.6 billion or \$5 billion—in the order, legitimately, of \$4 billion or \$4.5 billion to close to \$5 billion; not a risk, but a deficit. I've got to tell you, your Gerry Phillips, who said that the Tories would have a \$5-billion risk, was dead on, spot on. Except if you say to Gerry Phillips that he predicted a deficit, he gets incensed. He hates it. He doesn't want to be the person who, prior to the election last October, could be so prescient on economic matters that he predicted a deficit of \$5 billion. He doesn't want to be known as that person to have foreseen the deficit. He doesn't want to let the public know that the Liberals knew there was a deficit, because that's how they could adjust the broken promises. I want to get to the broken promises in a few seconds, just as a final reminder that the Tories left us a deficit in a good economy. God bless their souls.

Now I want to come to the Liberals. The Liberals now claim they didn't know about the deficit. At least three months ago, the Premier claimed he didn't know. About two weeks ago, he claimed that he did know about \$2 billion.

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: They're all saying they knew all the time there was a \$2-billion deficit. That's good. That's a

good start. But I remind you that the old Liberals who were here, the old-timers—not you new ones and not the rump, with all due respect—knew that the deficit was in the order of \$2 billion to \$5 billion. Our leader predicted a \$4-billion deficit. The Fraser Institute predicted a \$4-billion deficit. If Liberals didn't have a clue, or they were clueless, about the deficit and claim that they only knew about \$2 billion, that there was no way of predicting any more than that, then I say to you: What kind of politicians are you? What kind of political la-la land are you living in that you, those of you who have years of political experience, didn't have a sense that the deficit was more than \$2 billion?

Why do I say this? Contextually, I say this so that when the Liberals made their promises—you've got to put it into the deficit context, you understand. So if you have a \$4-billion deficit, the experienced ones would know that it is \$4 billion.

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: Work with me. If you—

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me. If the member from Trinity-Spadina travels too far, he'll be out of his place.

Mr Marchese: I am more or less in this area. At least I don't waffle as far as the Liberals do, because the Liberals can waffle on the right and the left with great liberty.

If we have a \$4-billion deficit, how could the Liberals—the experienced ones; forget the new ones—promise \$7 billion of new services?

Follow this; it's not too complicated. Remember the \$4-billion deficit? Let's assume that some of you knew that. You're not going to increase taxes. Do you follow? No new taxes, \$7 billion more in services, you've got to deal with the deficit and then you sign a taxpayers' pledge that says "no new taxes," and you're going to balance the budget. It can't be done. It just can't be done. Whomever you consulted—economists—who said this could be done are wrong, the advisers are wrong, the political party is wrong and all the Liberals are wrong.

I'm telling you that I told them before the election that they were fundamentally mistaken, wrong and manipulating the facts, because you were. I'm sorry. You know that, Speaker. I said in many debates, "You cannot do this; it can't be done." There is not enough money—new money—to deal with new services because of no new taxes, and you've got to deal with the deficit. I'm saying to you, you can't do it, and nobody listened to the NDP before that.

We made a promise to raise money, and we said we would take it from those individuals who were the biggest beneficiaries of the income tax cut: those whose incomes were over \$100,000 or \$150,000. People don't like to hear those things. They don't want to be taxed. They want to hear Liberal politics that say, "Don't worry. We can, through this strange Liberal alchemy, produce greater services, no cuts, no taxes and balance the budget." Only liberals could promise those things and get away with it. It just fascinates me how you do it.

New Democrats have to fight it out all the time. It's like we've got to put our fingers in that brick and just climb ever so slowly and hope the people are listening to what we've got to say. Liberals can go out, say whatever they like and get elected. God bless, I'm telling you. You guys have help up there. We don't, but you guys have a whole lot of help. The help has to be divine, because it's not humanly possible to do what you said you would. There's got to be divine intervention, and I hope at some point that the Trinity up there is going to be a little fair to us. Someone's got to be a little fair to the NDP.

Mr David Oraziotti (Sault Ste Marie): Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Marchese: Well, they're fair in Trinity-Spadina. Part of the Trinity worked in Trinity-Spadina. But you've got to be a little fair to New Democrats, generally speaking, across Ontario. It looks good federally, I've got to tell you. It looks very good.

Here's the other worry I've got. I want to tell you, contextually, the promise the Tories left us, and then I want to tell you how hurtful your promises have been to so many, because they're not going to forget you. The public simply will not forget you. With all due respect and in total disagreement with what Harris did—in spite of all my disagreements with him—a whole lot of people respected the man for keeping his promises. You will be remembered by many in Ontario, particularly in the next election, for having broken your promises, and that's something you've got to live with.

In the meantime, you should crow out there about this great budget. You guys have got to get out there. I'm telling you, not enough people are seeing you. So many of you are so proud of this budget that you've got to go and defend it. So eloquent are you and so competent are you at getting those nuggets out of that budget. Just get them out. There are nuggets in there. You've got to pull them out. Take it out to your ridings and show them that the opposition is wrong; that you were right and we're wrong. You've got another week to do this before the federal election, to help your federal cousins. You've got to take the effort, the time, and just go and help out.

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I've got to tell you, I'm worried about something. There are 12 to 15 ministries that are going to be flatlined. The Minister of Finance makes no bones about it. He's very clear; he's very translucent about this. They will be flatlined, they admit, and they're defending this out there. Some ministries are going to have reductions. Speaker, you know what it's been like to have suffered under the cuts under the Conservative government. All of our constituencies were profoundly worried about our inability to get back some of the services we lost. So here we are, a Liberal budget saying that 12 ministries, possibly 15, will have their budgets flatlined, meaning no increases, and some will have to suffer greater reductions. They're saying, "That's right. That's what you've got to do." If we had problems under the Tories in terms of all the cuts they made in all of the ministries, imagine having the Liberals now admitting and defending flatlining and greater cuts.

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): You have to deal with reality.

Mr Marchese: As John says, what are you going to do? You've got to deal with the reality, and the reality is, we need to raise additional monies so that the province has dollars to deal with the problems the Tories left us. They're saying, "No, we can't tax any more."

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: John back there is saying, "We've got to balance things out." I am saying that this balancing means that we are going to have greater service reduction, and I believe strongly that the province can't deal with that. It cannot deal with that.

Imagine Comsoc, Sandra Pupatello's ministry, possibly having to sustain cuts or at least flatlining. Imagine what that ministry does: They deal with very vulnerable people, and without her support to deal with all of the people, the constituents she deals with who are very vulnerable indeed, what are we going to do?

What should the Liberals do? The Liberals have to reflect on how it is that we need to find new money. The way they did it was to introduce a health levy that is not progressive. You will have Sorbara, McGuinty and others standing up saying, "Our health care tax levy is progressive." In the beginning, anyone earning \$20,000 plus one cent was going to have to pay 300 bucks. When they realized that the lack of progressivity of that move was so egregiously disproportionate, they had to change it. Now they proudly say, "Ah, someone earning \$20,000 will only have to pay 60 bucks, and if you're earning \$21,000 and over, you pay \$120," and so on. So if you are earning 200,000 bucks, you pay only 900 bucks.

Mr Wilkinson: Plus \$8,450 of surtax.

Mr Marchese: If you're earning 40,000 or 45,000 bucks, you pay \$500.

Mr Wilkinson: And no surtax.

Mr Marchese: Imagine. If you are someone, such as a banker, earning \$1 million, you pay no more than 900 bucks. This poor Liberal is defending the fact—he says, "That poor banker has to pay the surtax, so he's already paying." That poor banker, earning \$1.5 million, has to pay the surtax, amounting to what—a couple of thousand? I don't know. He's saying, that's OK.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: They're both saying that's OK, and I am arguing it's not.

Liberals are no different in their ability to discriminate against low-income individuals than the Tories. They are no different. What they're doing is profoundly unfair, and if you don't accept it, ask the Liberals to give you the charts. People with low and middle incomes are getting whacked by the Liberal Party, and people who earn anything over \$100,000 or \$200,000 are doing just fine. They are as comfortable under the Liberals as the Tories. God bless the Liberals. They still defend it as a progressive tax levy; I say it's not. I say the delisting of chiropractors, physiotherapy and optometry was a dumb political move, and you will pay.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It is my pleasure to rise today and speak on the interim supply motion, which all

speakers have said is basically a routine motion to pay the bills. It's really an important question for the people of Ontario, because we've just finished the time-allocated budget and seen taxes go up and service levels go down.

As you might know, it is very hard to follow the member from Trinity-Spadina. He's so entertaining and so engaging because he brings to bear a couple of points which I think are right on track. I'm reading from page 24 of the budget. It says, "Ontarians' priorities...."

"Between 2004-05 and 2007-08, we will restrict program spending to an average growth rate of just 1.9 per cent a year."

We know that the growth in the economy and the growth in demand outpaces that level—no question. It says: "Over the same period, the budgets of 15 ministries are either being flatlined or decreased."

There's another signal in here that the public sector workers should be aware of: "Gerry Phillips, the Chair of Management Board, will begin the process of finding further savings and efficiencies across all our ministries. He has clear targets"—that's code language for reducing the payroll—" \$200 million in 2005-06; \$400 million in 2006-07; and \$750 million in 2007-08."

The budget process will "eliminate several tax expenditures coming out of" the review of efficiency measures. It goes on to say, "We are raising certain fees and charges across a range of services to ensure that they better reflect the true cost of delivering those services," ie, your driver's insurance, your driver's licence, will all increase by as much as 50%.

If I was to review some of the history, I would suggest that it is important to note the ministries that are important to my riding of Durham. One of them is the agriculture ministry. Agriculture and food is being reduced from \$677 million in 2003-04 to \$549 million—less money. The Board of Internal Economy is going down from \$204 million to \$149 million. The Ministry of Culture—they all rave about how important this priority is—is going down from \$294 million to \$277 million. Just scanning down the page here, the native affairs secretariat has gone from \$16 million to \$14 million; natural resources is going from \$518 million to \$505 million; northern development is going from \$79 million to \$73 million; tourism and recreation from \$213 million to \$184 million.

Those are just a few comments. What we heard during the very limited, time-allocated pre-budget hearings was the outrage of the people of Ontario on two fundamental issues. Basically it was the delisting of health services that Ontarians have traditionally been provided—chiropractic, optometry and physiotherapy; they are now private. As well, they've added a tax on health care.

If you read a very good article today, which I'm quoting—it's from the Toronto Star, June 21, and it's called "Plugging Holes in Health Spending." Ian Urquhart, who is a long-time correspondent here at Queen's Park, is talking about the total revenue the province is going to collect in the new tax for the remainder of this fiscal year: \$1.635 billion. There is also a total of

\$725 million coming in this year from the federal government. This comes to a total of \$2.36 billion of new money. However, what has happened is that they're not increasing funding to health care by the amount of the tax and the amount the federal government is bringing to the province of Ontario. In fact, they're only spending \$2.1 billion when the revenue is \$2.3 billion. There is a \$200-million hole in the health budget. I can say to you that this hole is going to become much larger.

The Liberals, of course, deny that this is how it happened. They just magically found this matching number. The Liberals in this province have promised 230 different commitments and failed to deliver on any of them. This budget is one more example, and the time allocation they introduced. They aren't listening. They're privatizing health care—

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate.

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Mr Colle: Mr Speaker, just talking today about appropriations of this government, we went across this province in pre-budget consultations with our committee on finance and economic development. You were part of that. In communities like Timmins, beautiful Thunder Bay, Kitchener-Waterloo, Peterborough, all these wonderful communities, we heard the people of Ontario saying, loud and clear, over and over again, "We want an Ontario government that is going to concentrate on the basics. We want an Ontario government that is going to fix our health care system, fix our schools, fix our cities and get down to basics." That's what we heard in all those communities. Even in Timmins it was the same message. Whether it's the budget or appropriations or estimates, we are trying to do that.

It's amazing; originally I remember, when we came back to the House after the election, the opposition was screaming about education: "You're not putting enough money in education. There are problems in education." We haven't heard one comment about education, because in our budget we have put exactly what Rozanski asked for in our public schools. That's why they don't ask questions about education on that side.

Remember when they used to say, "Keep your promise about putting money into the municipalities. Stop the downloading. Make sure you pass on some of the gas tax revenues"? You don't hear questions about gas tax revenues. You don't hear questions about downloading over there because we've stopped that. We've said to the municipalities, "If we download, we're going to increase taxes," which the other government did. That's why we've uploaded public health; 75% is now going to be provincially funded. It's not fair to download things on to municipalities because that means it's downloaded on to property taxpayers.

We've also said that for the first time in the history of this province, a provincial government is going to give a portion of the gas tax to municipalities, to improve our air, to make our cities and our towns work better. We're going to give money for public transit and infrastructure. Whether it be Ottawa, K-W or Toronto, they're going to get money, for the first time in history.

Not one question or comment from the NDP about the gas tax promise we kept, not one question about education, not one question about downloading, because they want to change the subject. Now they want to talk about so-called delisting. They don't want to talk about the other promises we made.

We said we were committed to stopping the unnecessary wait times for people who needed chemotherapy. We had the calls at our office; mothers, daughters, sons, grandfathers, waiting for a year to get a hip replacement, waiting for a year to get some kind of cardiac procedure. They couldn't get a family doctor. That's the shameful legacy of the NDP and the Conservatives. They didn't pay attention to primary care reform. We're about primary care reform in this budget. We're going to put in family health teams to take care of that family health care gap which exists right across this province. They never talk about that. Sure, we had to make tough decisions about chiropractors, but our decision is to make sure people get that cardiac surgery when they need it, the chemotherapy when they need it, that they actually get home care. You never hear them say anything about home care—not one word mentioned by the NDP or the Tories about home care.

This is an unprecedented investment in health care that's on the street first, not in the hospital first. That's what we've said. But they believe in the old, tired status quo of just writing cheques to the hospitals. You can write cheques to the hospitals till the cows come home, but you've got to transform health care.

Our job is to explain to the people of Ontario that almost half our budget is now going toward health care. If we don't start to transform health care to meet the needs of the future, we are not going to be able to have enough money to pay, never mind for health care, for anything else. It's an imperative we have. It's a paradigm shift. The member for Trinity-Spadina agrees with the paradigm shift, and I know that.

Let's not talk about what happened in the past. Let's go ahead with investing in this paradigm shift. We know the Conservatives are never going to agree with a paradigm shift. We know that. But our NDP socialist brothers, they believe in paradigm shifts. That's why I thought they would support our home care initiatives, our public health initiatives. Dr Sheela Basrur is going to lead that charge in public health. It was downloaded by the Conservatives on to municipalities. We're saying that was wrong. We need leaders like Sheela Basrur to put attention on public health because it's about prevention; it's about immunization. We haven't heard one good word from the opposition party about immunizing children—not one good word. We are going to be world leaders in immunization of children.

I've got a six-month old granddaughter. I will tell you, I'm sure happy that she'll be able to get immunization—but not only for my granddaughter, who might be able to afford it through her parents; I'm worried about the kids who live in small towns all over northern Ontario, in small communities, whose parents cannot afford the 675

bucks for a needle so their kids won't get meningitis or chicken pox. Chicken pox can be with you for the rest of your life. It's called shingles, which can be devastating. So we're saying that we're one of the first provinces that is going to have this preventive investment strategy in transforming health care, not cheque-writing health care.

We are writing cheques too. As you know, this year alone we're increasing the health care budget by about \$2.2 billion, with a big "B." And they're complaining that there's some kind of gap there. Where's the \$2.2 billion going? It's going into our health care system, of which a component part is our nurses. I remember the Conservatives—I sat in this House on the other side, where our good friend from Muskoka is, and I remember Mike Harris sitting right here. I asked him, "Do you want to apologize for saying that you don't need nurses any more, that they're like Hula Hoop workers?"

He stood up in the House and said, "No, I'm not apologizing," and sat down.

I asked him again: "I'll give you another chance. Maybe you didn't think about it before you fired all those nurses and said they weren't necessary in our communities, that it was a mistake for you to say they were like Hula Hoop workers and they were obsolete."

He stood up again and said, "No," and sat down again.

This budget recognizes that nurses are not only employees; they are an integral part of the multidisciplinary team in a hospital. Whether it be the orderly, the nurse, the doctor or the engineer in that hospital, that nurse is on the front line. We found too many of our nurses were taking off sick because they never had assistance in lifting heavy patients.

In fact, they came to my office on Friday. Nurses from the TGH said, "The last government didn't pay attention to us. Too many of us are off sick. Thank God you're finally giving us assistive devices to lift heavy patients. Thank God you finally recognize that nurses are an integral part of our health care system and not just an afterthought."

You will never hear the opposition talk about the fact that we have given seniors in this province a 25% increase in their property tax credit for tenants or homeowners. Some 685,000 senior households will get up to \$625 per household to help defray some of their costs. That's an increase of \$85 million in this budget. I haven't heard one member on the other side say that that was a good idea—\$85 million every year to give seniors a bit more of a break so they can stay in their homes. And it's not just about that \$85 million. We're also giving them \$400 million more in home care. So if they want to stay in that house, they can get that home care and then also be able to live in dignity in their home or apartment.

Those are the good things in this budget. It's about children in our schools who have been neglected for too many years. It's about our municipalities and our city services that have been downloaded. We're starting to fix that. This is a step toward transformation. It's a step toward a paradigm shift. It's not just about writing cheques on yesterday's promises, as other governments

did. If you look at this document carefully, at our expenditures, our investments, over the next year, you will see investment in nurses, investment in public health, investment in seniors. And it's not just about fixing problems; it's trying to avoid future problems so there will be health care for future seniors, so there will be children who won't be stricken with chicken pox or meningitis. I know the opposition doesn't mention these things, but they have to be there as part of the overall fair assessment of what we're doing.

By far, we're saying that it is not an attempt to say that we are perfect, but that we are doing what we were sent here to do: to fix the basics, fix the health care system—that includes nurses and home care; fix the schools—that includes caretakers and teachers; fix the cities—that includes public transit, which the other government said wasn't important any more. So it's about new priorities of transformation, about a paradigm shift to the future.

The Deputy Speaker: The time for debate has expired.

It's now time to recognize that Mr Sorbara has moved government notice of motion 164. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Sorbara has moved government notice of motion number 164.

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

Ayes

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Arthurs, Wayne | Fonseca, Peter | Patten, Richard |
| Bartolucci, Rick | Gerretsen, John | Peters, Steve |
| Bentley, Christopher | Gravelle, Michael | Phillips, Gerry |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Jeffrey, Linda | Pupatello, Sandra |
| Bountrogianni, Marie | Kennedy, Gerard | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Bradley, James J. | Kular, Kuldip | Racco, Mario G. |
| Brotten, Laurel C. | Kwinter, Monte | Ramal, Khalil |
| Brown, Michael A. | Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Ramsay, David |
| Brownell, Jim | Leal, Jeff | Rinaldi, Lou |
| Cansfield, Donna H. | Levac, Dave | Sandals, Liz |
| Caplan, David | Marsales, Judy | Sergio, Mario |
| Chambers, Mary Anne V. | Matthews, Deborah | Smitherman, George |
| Colle, Mike | Mauro, Bill | Sorbara, Greg |
| Cordiano, Joseph | McMeekin, Ted | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Delaney, Bob | McNeely, Phil | Watson, Jim |
| Di Cocco, Caroline | Meilleur, Madeleine | Wilkinson, John |
| Dombrowsky, Leona | Milloy, John | Wong, Tony C. |
| Duguid, Brad | Mossop, Jennifer F. | Wynne, Kathleen O. |
| Duncan, Dwight | Oraziotti, David | |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Parsons, Ernie | |

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

Nays

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Arnott, Ted | Martiniuk, Gerry | Scott, Laurie |
| Barrett, Toby | Miller, Norm | Tascona, Joseph N. |
| Bisson, Gilles | Murdoch, Bill | Witmer, Elizabeth |
| Dunlop, Garfield | O'Toole, John | Yakabuski, John |
| Kormos, Peter | Ouellette, Jerry J. | |
| Marchese, Rosario | Runciman, Robert W. | |

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 58; the nays are 16.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Tuesday, June 22.

The House adjourned at 1804.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

| Constituency Circonscription | Member/Party Député(e) / Parti | Constituency Circonscription | Member/Party Député(e) / Parti |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Algoma-Manitoulin | Brown, Michael A. (L) | Hamilton East / | Horwith, Andrea (ND) |
| Ancaster-Dundas- | McMeekin, Ted (L) | Hamilton-Est | |
| Flamborough-Aldershot | | Hamilton Mountain | 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 civiques 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) |
| | | London North Centre / | Matthews, Deborah (L) |
| Don Valley West / | | London-Centre-Nord | |
| Don Valley-Ouest | | London West / | Bentley, Hon / L'hon Christopher (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail |
| Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey | Eves, Ernie (PC) Leader of the opposition / chef de l'opposition | London-Ouest | Ramal, Khalil (L) |
| Durham | O'Toole, John (PC) | London-Fanshawe | Wong, Tony C. (L) |
| Eglington-Lawrence | Colle, Mike (L) | Markham | Takhar, Hon / L'hon Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports |
| Elgin-Middlesex-London | Peters, Hon / L'hon Steve (L) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation | Mississauga Centre / | Fonseca, Peter (L) |
| | | Mississauga-Centre | |
| Erie-Lincoln | Hudak, Tim (PC) | Mississauga East / | Peterson, Tim (L) |
| Essex | Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative | Mississauga-Est | |
| | | Mississauga South / | Delaney, Bob (L) |
| Etobicoke Centre / | Cansfield, Donna H. (L) | Mississauga-Sud | |
| Etobicoke-Centre | | Mississauga West / | Baird, John R. (PC) |
| Etobicoke North / | Qaadri, Shafiq (L) | Mississauga-Ouest | Kormos, Peter (ND) |
| Etobicoke-Nord | | Nepean-Carleton | |
| Etobicoke-Lakeshore | Broten, Laurel C. (L) | Niagara Centre / | Craiton, Kim (L) |
| Glengarry-Prescott-Russell | Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L) | Niagara-Centre | Martel, Shelley (ND) |
| Guelph-Wellington | Sandals, Liz (L) | Niagara Falls | Smith, Monique M. (L) |
| Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant | Barrett, Toby (PC) | Nickel Belt | |
| Haliburton-Victoria-Brock | Scott, Laurie (PC) | Nipissing | Rinaldi, Lou (L) |
| Halton | Chudleigh, Ted (PC) | Northumberland | |
| | | Oak Ridges | Klees, Frank (PC) |

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

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

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

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