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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 7 December 2004

Mardi 7 décembre 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Claude L. DesRosiers

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 7 December 2004

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 7 décembre 2004

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): I'm pleased to rise today in recognition of the 115th anniversary of Osgoode Hall Law School, an important institution in the history of Ontario. Osgoode was founded in 1889 by the Law Society of Upper Canada. Until 1957, the only avenue for admission to the bar in Ontario was through study at Osgoode Hall. Virtually every practising lawyer and sitting judge in the province was a graduate of Osgoode at that time. Osgoode Hall Law School became affiliated with York University in 1969, in a new building on campus.

As a graduate of Osgoode, I'm especially honoured to be speaking on this occasion. Osgoode Hall Law School has been home to many of today's leaders, educating thousands of lawyers and senior members of the judiciary, including former Premiers, Attorneys General, other members of the executive council and MPPs from all parties in this House.

It has been an example for other law schools to follow. It is home to the largest graduate program in Canada, home to the largest law library in Canada and home of the only professional development program in Canada. It was the first law school to establish a combined law and business degree, the first law school to develop courses in poverty law and the first law school to establish a student-staffed community legal services clinic.

It has established a reputation nationally and internationally of prominence and distinction. No doubt all members will join me in congratulating the faculty, staff, students and alumni of Osgoode Hall Law School on their 115th anniversary, recognizing their importance to the history of the province of Ontario.

TRIPLE M METAL

Mr Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I am pleased to rise today to acknowledge a local business, Triple M Metal, and their tremendous contribution to my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. I recently attended Triple M Metal groundbreaking

for their subsidiary's state-of-the-art aluminum remelting plant, Matalco.

Triple M Metal is a leading-edge recycling company, and its subsidiary Matalco will be a global leader in the field of aluminum remelting. When fully operational at the end of 2005, Matalco will employ 50 people and produce prime-quality aluminum billets, remelted from such items as junked cars and metal debris from building demolitions. There is currently a great need for aluminum billets, and Matalco is filling that need by providing high-grade aluminum billets for the transportation, construction and consumer goods industries worldwide.

Most importantly, Matalco will use the most advanced and sophisticated remelting technology and equipment in the world, with industry-leading environmental and energy-efficient processes resulting in virtually no generated waste.

It's with great pleasure that I acknowledge the positive contributions of Triple M Metal and Matalco to my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and to the province of Ontario.

CHILDREN'S CAR SEATS

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): Yesterday, this House passed into law Bill 73, a transportation safety bill that compels families with young children to buy new car booster seats and use these seats until their children grow to be 4 foot 10 and 80 pounds, or until they turn nine years old. While I voted for this bill at third reading and support the principle of improving safety for children, I must inform the House that in the government's haste, it has overlooked an important concern for young families: affordability.

These booster seats are not cheap. I was in a large retail store in my riding on the weekend, and the booster seats that are large enough to accommodate an 80-pound child cost between \$70 and \$100 each. Imagine the cost to families with three, four or even five children, already stretching their budgets to make ends meet. And to make matters worse, yesterday the Minister of Transportation appeared to be indifferent to this concern, apparently telling the Toronto Star that there would be no financial help for families to help them buy these booster seats, this in spite of the fact that car seats for infants and smaller children are tax-exempt and have been exempt from the 8% provincial sales tax for years.

My Bill 77, which I introduced in this House seven months ago yesterday, would provide these young famil-

ies with a tax break on the purchase of new booster seats by exempting the seats from provincial sales tax, a modest proposal consistent with the way we already treat car seats for smaller children, and something that would benefit young families at very little cost to the treasury. I ask the government to allow a vote on Bill 77 before the House breaks for Christmas.

OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I'm reading this on behalf of Rosario Marchese, the NDP education critic, who is caught up in the media studio at the moment.

New Democrats congratulate the faculty, students, alumni and staff of Osgoode Hall Law School on the role that the school has played in legal and public education in Ontario for the past 115 years. Osgoode Hall Law School was founded by the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1889 and is the oldest continuously operating law school in the province of Ontario.

On the 115th anniversary of its founding, New Democrats recognize Osgoode Hall Law School's significant achievements and contributions to public and private life in Ontario. Osgoode Hall Law School has achieved excellence in legal education and has contributed to an increasingly diverse legal profession, reflecting the multicultural and evolving character of Ontario society.

Today, we'd like to celebrate the school's progressive character and its contributions to this province. Osgoode was the first law school in Canada to establish a combined law and environmental studies degree. Osgoode was the first law school in Canada to establish a student-staffed community legal services clinic, Parkdale Community Legal Services, and Osgoode was the first Canadian law school to develop courses and programs in poverty law.

In keeping with this proud history of firsts, New Democrats hope that Osgoode Hall Law School becomes the first post-secondary institution in Canada to stop ratcheting up tuition fees, so that all young people of all backgrounds may benefit from the excellent legal education offered by this great institution.

RIDE PROGRAM

Mr Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): The holiday season is upon us. In addition to the celebrations across our province, the month of December also marks the beginning of the OPP's five-week OPP festive season RIDE, or Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere. This program has been in place since 1995, and over the past nine years, the province of Ontario has seen a dramatic drop in impaired driving.

The festive season RIDE program has just released its statistics for its first week. The OPP issued 98 12-hour suspensions, and 60 persons were charged with alcohol-related Criminal Code driving offences. Encouragingly,

these numbers are down significantly from the same period last year.

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I know that in my riding of Mississauga East, there are rising concerns about the number of impaired drivers on the road. To address this concern, Peel Regional Police have stepped up their efforts this year, increasing the number of officers on the road with the RIDE program 50% from last year's numbers. The Peel police have also launched a new last-drink program, wherein they focus their efforts on roads which had higher numbers of people caught driving impaired. The hope is that by intensifying their efforts, they can curb last year's increase in drunk driving in Peel.

Impaired driving is a serious problem that affects the safety of all Ontarians. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the RIDE officers both in my region of Peel and across the province of Ontario. Their continued efforts are keeping our roads safe both during the holiday season and throughout the year.

TIME ALLOCATION

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Those at home who are missing watching NHL hockey this season can entertain themselves with the flip-flop Olympics coming from across the way from the government members.

We've already seen the daring double gainer on hydro pricing. We saw the back flip on Dalton McGuinty's promise, now broken, to hold the line on taxes. We are seeing a very slow 180-degree twist on closing the coal-fired plants by 2007, and now we are seeing some flip-flops when it comes to time allocation motions in the Legislature.

The bronze medal for time allocations goes to Minister John Gerretsen, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who had once said it was "a complete attack on the democratic principles and the parliamentary rules that have been a tradition within the Westminster model," but last night they passed a time allocation motion on Bill 135.

The silver medal goes to the intrepid House leader, Mr Duncan, who has brought in now three time allocation motions in the last three business days in a row: every business day of the last three, a new time allocation motion coming forward from across the way.

But the gold medal winner of the flip-flop time allocation Olympics is the man who said, "For a government that promised to be open, this closure action is the height of arrogance, the height of exactly everything you campaigned against and you said you were for." Who said that? Dalton McGuinty. Dalton McGuinty said one thing when he was in opposition and said something completely different once he became Premier.

STUDENT SAFETY

Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I would like to take a moment in this House to send my

deep and personal condolences to the family of a young man in my community. This 15-year-old took his life on Saturday, November 16, and it caused great sadness for all of us.

His parents tell us that their son felt compelled to end his life because of the continuous bullying he received from his peers both inside the school and outside through the Internet. Whether this bullying was verbal or physical really doesn't matter. It was so severe that it caused him to feel that he needed to end his own life. It was really a shock for my community, and it's not something that we often see in our rural communities. We are very devastated by this tragedy. That is why I feel compelled to address it here today.

In rural communities, we pride ourselves on knowing our neighbours, and many knew this young man and his family. We also have neighbours and friends who have children who attend this high school. We share the sadness, and we also worry about those other students. One student told me that many of the kids at school are bullied, just some more than others. It's not just a matter of kids being cruel to each other. This is a situation where the student felt so tormented that he was at a point where he could no longer deal with it.

I understand from our Minister of Education that a key component of our safe schools program is the creation of an environment that fosters respect, responsibility and dignity for all. We need to ensure that our schools have the resources to deal with situations where children are being abused or being abusive. We need to ensure that our children know where they can get help when they find themselves in a situation where they are continually being abused.

I encourage all school boards and schools to adhere to the Minister of Education's safe schools program so that we can foster safe, secure learning environments for mutual respect among peers. For the young man in my community it's too late, but it doesn't have to be too late for many other students who are going through the same situation.

OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): It's with pleasure that I too rise today to mark the 115th anniversary of Osgoode Hall Law School.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging in the gallery today three guests from Osgoode: associate dean Janet Walker; president of the Legal and Literary Society, Rich Appiah; and chair of student caucus, Antonio Di Domenico. Welcome to all of you.

As you've heard today, the Law Society of Upper Canada founded Osgoode Hall Law School in 1889, and today it is the oldest, continuously operating law school in Ontario. Until 1957, the only avenue for admission to the bar in Ontario was through study at Osgoode law school. That means that until then, virtually every practising lawyer and sitting judge in the province was a graduate of Osgoode. When Osgoode Hall Law School

became affiliated with York University in 1969, it continued to educate thousands of lawyers and senior members of the judiciary.

Today, there are 15,000 graduates of Osgoode Hall Law School practising in Ontario and elsewhere around the world. Graduates include numerous judges, including the current Chief Justice and Associate Chief Justice of Ontario, plus numerous Premiers and Attorneys General, including the present Attorney General, other members of the executive council and members of this Legislature.

Osgoode continues to be one of Canada's leading law schools, committed to excellence in legal education and legal scholarship, and plays an essential role in helping us achieve a just society. This is reflected in its motto, "Through law to justice."

On behalf of the government, I congratulate the faculty, students, alumni and staff of Osgoode law school on the important role the school has played in legal and public education in Ontario for the past 115 years. I am confident that all those associated with the school will continue to make such contributions to the public good in the future.

HANUKKAH

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Tonight, Jewish families across Ontario are going to sit down to celebrate Hanukkah, the festival of lights. In fact, at 5:30 in front of the Legislature, we'll join the Honourable Monte Kwinter in lighting the menorah right here at Queen's Park, and later on, at 7:30 at Ross Lord Park, in honour of Matti Baranovski, we're also going to light the menorah.

Hanukkah centres around the lighting of the eight candles of the menorah. One additional candle is lit on every subsequent night until eight nights have passed and all eight candles are lit. This tradition of lighting the menorah and celebrating Hanukkah goes back over 2,000 years.

The Jewish people rose up against their oppressors, led by the valiant Judah Maccabee and his four brothers. After three years of fighting, the Maccabee army was finally successful in driving out the oppressive regime. The victory was symbolized by the reclamation of the holy temple in Jerusalem, the most holy place of worship, of which only the western wall remains today.

However, the holy temple had been desecrated and its eternal flame extinguished. After restoring the temple, the Maccabees could only find enough oil to light the eternal flame for one day, but eight days were needed to make more oil to keep the eternal flame burning. The flame was lit anyway, but to everyone's joy and amazement, the flame continued burning for eight days, enough time to replenish the oil.

This is the miracle of Hanukkah, which is celebrated by Jewish families all around the world today. I want to wish all Jewish families across Ontario a happy Hanukkah.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Standing order 62(a) provides that “the standing committee on estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 59 and 61 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year.”

The House not having received the report from the standing committee on estimates for certain ministries on Thursday, November 18, 2004, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 62(b), the supplementary estimates before the committee of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care—supplementary estimates only—are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 60, the estimates before the committee of the Office of the Assembly, Office of the Chief Election Officer, Ombudsman Ontario and the Office of the Auditor General not having been selected for consideration, are deemed to be received and concurred in.

Motions? Statements by ministries?

Interjection.

The Speaker: There were no deferred votes, so we’re moving along.

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Orders of the day.

The Speaker: The government House leader says “orders of the day,” which he would like, but it is oral questions.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question for the Premier. Yesterday, in your absence, I asked the Minister of Finance about the serious breach of privacy involving some 27,000 people. I posed those questions to the minister responsible, the finance minister, and he declined to answer for something that is clearly his responsibility. I also asked your minister responsible for consumer protection, and he declined as well.

Premier, when you sat in this chair, you were very clear about how you expected breaches of privacy to be dealt with. Now that 27,000 individual breaches have occurred on your watch, your minister responsible refuses to take that responsibility. A quote from you in Hansard in 1996—this is your comment: “I am con-

vinced that the Information and Privacy Commissioner will not consider the issue of ministerial accountability. That does not come under the jurisdiction of her office.” Do you still agree with yourself?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Let me take the opportunity on behalf of the government to say that what happened was unacceptable. I want to commend Minister Phillips for taking the appropriate actions at the earliest possible opportunity.

Just so people will know what happened here in terms of our reaction to this, when we learned of this we immediately contacted the Information and Privacy Commissioner and made that individual aware of the circumstances. We extended the courtesy of contacting the opposition and letting them know what had happened. We have invited in the Information and Privacy Commissioner and offered all courtesies and co-operation to that individual so we can ensure that we find out exactly what happened and make sure it does not happen again.

In my supplementary, I will compare and contrast what we did with what the Tories did on their watch.

Mr Runciman: What is totally unacceptable is the Premier getting up here and saying something completely different from the position he took in opposition, sitting in this chair. We have quote after quote with respect to these kinds of privacy issues, where the Premier took a completely different position than the one he is offering the people of Ontario today.

Premier, your Minister of Finance’s name and signature appeared on each of these cheques. They were sent from the Ministry of Finance—it’s printed on the stubs—yet you’ve chosen to make Mr Phillips the fall guy for your government, apparently to protect Mr Sorbara. You were clear about ministerial accountability when you sat in this chair and now you seem to have a different view—never mind the 27,000 people who now have their SIN numbers and personal information being shipped all around Ontario. Why are you more interested in protecting Greg Sorbara than the privacy of 27,000 Ontarians?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I want to contrast the cooperative and responsible manner in which we have dealt with this issue, and here is the difference: In 1997, as part of its review of government assets, Mike Harris’s Privatization Secretariat contracted with Angus Reid to survey POSO account holders. It turns out that some 50,000 bank account numbers, balances and social insurance numbers were made available, in breach of information and privacy laws.

What’s really galling is that this inadvertent release of information was kept covert, and covered up, effectively, from the Information and Privacy Commissioner for some two and a half years. When she reported on this ultimately, she said that she was “unable to conduct a full and complete investigation in this case.” She found that the Ministry of Finance “endeavoured to restrict the scope of the investigation and the investigative tools available to the” Information and Privacy Commissioner.

She concluded that documents provided by the ministry were partially blacked out or severed, an action that was “disrespectful of the mandate of this office.”

I'd ask you, Speaker, but more importantly, the people of Ontario, to compare and contrast our approach. As soon as we found out about this, we acted on this. We made this public to the Information and Privacy Commissioner. As a courtesy to the opposition, we did not hide this, we did not cover this. We acknowledged that it was a mistake, and we're taking the necessary steps to make sure that it does not occur again.

Mr Runciman: What has happened is that they've put 27,000 identities at risk. Six days after this, the people still haven't received any word. Mr Paul Kyte from Belleville told us today that he's still waiting to get information from the government.

We talk about contrast; I want to cite another one for the Premier. In the wake of Jim Wilson's resignation in 1996 over a single alleged breach of privacy, Mr McGuinty said that an FOI commissioner's investigation wouldn't do, that it's conducted in secret, with no media or public scrutiny, no testimony under oath. That was your position in opposition when you were sitting in this chair.

Premier, you felt that a legislative inquiry was appropriate for one single breach of privacy in 1996. Today, for 27,000 individual breaches, you don't believe it's appropriate. How can you justify that position, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Just to pursue what happened in the case of the POSO release of confidential information, on May 18, 2000, Speaker Gary Carr found that there was a prima facie case of contempt. He ruled that “in official business dealings with an officer of this House, individuals owe an obligation of accountability to Parliament. That our own officer advises that the opposite was the case is sufficient cause in my mind to find that a prima facie case of contempt of Parliament has been made out.” That specifically addressed the manner in which the previous government, the Conservative government, failed to own up to the release of confidential information over a period of two and a half years and made deliberate efforts to thwart the investigation on the part of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

We have done the very opposite. We have owned up to this. We have accepted responsibility for this. We've invited the Information and Privacy Commissioner to come in and determine exactly what happened and to offer the best advice we can get to make sure it does not happen again. We extended the courtesy to members of the opposition to inform them of this issue. I believe we've acted responsibly and quickly, given the circumstances.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): My question is for the Premier. Premier, your Minister of Finance is again entangled in another scandal, another mess, as a result of his involvement with Royal Group Technologies. He was

an officer and a member of the board at the time the relevant situation arose—that Royal Polymers is 100% owned by Royal Group Technologies. On August 14, 2003, Royal Polymers allegedly discharged water that contained over 1,000 pounds of a carcinogenic chemical called vinyl chloride monomer into the drainage system that leads to the St Clair River. It is charged that the company failed to disclose this to the Ministry of the Environment until four days later.

Both the spill and the failure to disclose are the subject of charges under the Environmental Protection Act as well as the Ontario Water Resources Act, which could result in very substantial fines. Premier, these charges are to be heard on January 14, 2005, in court. Will you ask the minister to step aside while these charges are dealt with in the courts?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): No, I will not.

Mr Flaherty: Premier, these are your standards that I'm asking you to follow. You told the Toronto Star on October 9, 1999—I assume you meant what you said, but we'll see—“We have a tradition in our parliamentary system which requires ministers who find themselves under a cloud, even if only temporarily, have a responsibility to step aside pending the outcome of any inquiry.”

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The Minister of Finance at the relevant times was on the board. He was part of the management team of the company that is being dragged into court by your Ministry of the Environment, charged under government legislation with dumping volatile carcinogenic chemicals into the St Clair River.

This is a very serious matter. You say you care about environmental concerns. You say you have standards for your ministers in government. You say you believe in ministerial responsibility. If you do, uphold your own standards and have the minister step aside until the charges are heard.

Hon Mr McGuinty: If one of my ministers were to find themselves under a real, as opposed to a virtual or fictitious cloud, then I would act accordingly, but the only cloud here is in the mind of the member opposite with respect to this particular matter. For that reason, I will not be asking for the resignation or stepping aside of anyone.

Mr Flaherty: Surely even you, Premier, know that corporations act through their officers and they act through their boards. That's why legislation in Ontario makes them involved and responsible for their duties as directors and officers of a corporation.

Your own words again, Premier, March 2, 2004, in a scrum: “(Minister Sorbara) has indicated, and we have agreed, that should he become the subject of an investigation—not even a charge, just the subject of an investigation—he will step aside.”

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): That's ridiculous.

Mr Flaherty: The Minister of Education thinks it's ridiculous that someone can be a member of a board of directors, an officer of a company, charged with dumping of chemicals in the St Clair River, and serve as the Minister of Finance while the charges are pending. Do you agree with the Minister of Education on that?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I remember the tremendous disappointment with which the member opposite received the news of the Integrity Commissioner, who cleared the finance minister of all the spurious claims and allegations previously advanced by him.

I would suggest to him that if his concern is real, if he thinks it has some merit, he should do what he has done in the past: Send this off to the Integrity Commissioner, an impartial, objective third party, who will review the matter in the appropriate way. But my conclusion leads me to conclude that I will not be asking anyone for any resignation or stepping aside.

OMA AGREEMENT

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): The question is for the Premier. Premier, you are rapidly turning into medicare's moving target. First you said you were sure that doctors would ratify your deal. When the doctors voted down your deal, you said you'd work with them to strike a deal. A week later, you said you'd impose a deal, even though that would poison the province's relationship with our doctors and set back primary care reform.

Today, another McGuinty flip-flop: You now say you want to start talking again. How do you expect Ontario's doctors to work with you to get an agreement when you, yourself, don't know what your position is from day to day and week to week?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): We've been working long and hard with Ontario's doctors through their representation, the Ontario Medical Association. In fact, we devoted some nine months to what we believed was a very successful negotiating process involving some 164 separate meetings. At the end of that process, both sides' representatives signed an agreement to then recommend the agreement to their principals. Our representatives did that to us, and we took that recommendation in support of that agreement. The OMA's representatives for some reason decided they were not going to recommend the agreement to their constituency.

So we find ourselves at this point in time when we've made a tremendous amount of progress with respect to coming to an agreement that serves the interests of both Ontario doctors and Ontario patients. The conclusion we've come to at this point in time is that it's time for us to move forward on behalf of Ontarians.

Mr Hampton: What you describe is a process that took place over four weeks ago, and in the intervening four weeks, you've changed your position four times. That's why doctors are confused. That's why (1) they don't know what your real position is, and (2) they're not

sure what the process is. Your Minister of Health went out and started a strategy of vilifying and attacking doctors, so they have a hard time understanding that. The question again is, when will you know what your position is with respect to Ontario's doctors so that they can then sit down and negotiate with you, or are you still going to impose a deal?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I think it's perfectly clear from the member opposite that he's a champion of the status quo. He thinks that what we have at present, when it comes to both the quality of our health care system and its affordability, are things he's prepared to embrace. We are not.

What we said to doctors—so the member opposite is perfectly clear on this—is that we are not prepared to renegotiate the old agreement, we are not prepared to negotiate a new agreement; however, we have regard for the six specific concerns that were raised by the OMA at the time of the ratification process. What we have done is offer six separate adjustments to the existing agreement in order to improve it, in keeping with the concerns raised by the Ontario Medical Association.

I'm pleased to report that just yesterday in Hamilton, the Minister of Health indicated that we're prepared to move, as soon as this spring, on 45 new family health teams. We've got 90 communities that are banging on the door at Queen's Park, saying, "When can we move ahead with transformation in health care?" Those 45 alone will serve 650,000 Ontario patients. We look forward to moving on that.

Mr Hampton: Again, the Premier tries to avoid answering the question. I want you to know my position: I'm just opposed to all the flip-flopping. I'd like to know what the clear position of the McGuinty government is, and doctors would like to know, because they have no idea what they're being offered because they have no idea where you stand from one day to the next. They have no idea what the process is when one day you're threatening to impose a deal and the next day you suddenly say you want to talk. On issue after issue, the McGuinty government seems to say that it knows best, but then a day or two later, you recognize that you've got a problem with your position.

Again, Premier, this is a very serious issue. There is a doctor shortage in the province. When is the McGuinty government going to figure out its own position, so that doctors will finally know what your position is and what your process is? Are you imposing a deal, or are you negotiating a deal? What's your position, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The only person who's confused about the transformation of our health care system is the member opposite. We know exactly where we stand when it comes to changing health care in Ontario.

Here are a few questions I might toss back to the member opposite. If he believes that we should be paying our doctors more, then he should stand in his place and say so. This deal makes them the best paid in all of Canada. If he believes that we should not move forward with family health teams and ensure that we bring more

primary care to more families and more communities around the province, then he should stand in his place and say so. If he thinks we should not be encouraging and incenting doctors to provide more prevention and to encourage them to do more work in our nursing homes and deliver more work when it comes to home care, then he should stand in his place and say so.

I can tell you, Speaker, that we're for moving forward. We're tired of the status quo. We will not defend it. We will not embrace it. We will work with our doctors and our hospitals, and we will move forward on behalf of patients.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Once again, it seems that the McGuinty government's position is as clear as mud. Before the election, Premier, you railed against the Conservative government for mismanaging our education system. You said, "The Harris-Eves government tries to run 5,000 schools from Queen's Park. They take a one-size-fits-all education funding formula and impose it on every school in the province." Today your Minister of Education is imposing a collective bargaining formula on cash-strapped school boards that he knows won't work. He's going to force the school boards to take the blame when his scheme fails.

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Your government has been trying to micromanage health care. That hasn't worked. Why are you now trying the famous Conservative tactic of micromanaging education?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I want to begin by complimenting and congratulating our Minister of Education, who has been working so hard to improve the quality of public education that we offer all our students. I'm pleased to say that we have a new tone in public education today in Ontario. We've made some significant progress, although we've only been on the job for some 14 months. The members opposite may not believe this is progress, but I can tell you that thousands and thousands of parents are happy that in 1,300 schools we have smaller class sizes. Parents and students alike are pleased with the fact that we've hired 1,100 more teachers. We have over 8,000 newly trained teachers with special expertise in numeracy and literacy working in our schools as a result of this minister's efforts. We're proud of those advances. We're proud of the new tone we've brought to public education. We're proud of the partnership approach we're bringing to trustees and teachers alike.

Mr Hampton: Premier, you talk about tone, about style. Let me tell you what people want to see: They want to see some substance. What they're seeing today is your government breaking another two promises. You promised to implement the Rozanski report's recommendation on school funding. You're not doing that. You promised that you would treat school boards with respect and that you would enhance their power and their decision-

making. Instead you are going to straitjacket them in terms of their decision-making. Just one question of substance, Premier: Will you implement the Rozanski report recommendations and stop strong-arming school boards like you promised?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I want to remind the member opposite that he and his party voted in favour of maintaining the private school tax credit. Now he purports to be a champion of public education in Ontario. We are also proud that, notwithstanding our fiscal constraints and the financial mess with which we have been saddled by the previous government, we're able to invest \$1.1 billion more in public education.

But more than that, what we are doing now is that the minister has acted to protect some of the important investments we have made in education. Specifically, when it comes to the money we've invested in smaller classes, the money we're investing in keeping good schools open, the money we've invested in helping struggling students in other areas, we have specifically said that the money devoted to that must remain devoted to that, that you can't use that money, which brings about some positive, substantive change inside our schools to the benefit of our students, in your negotiations with teachers. We think that's fair, we think that's reasonable, we think that's responsible and we think it's in keeping with what our responsibilities are when it comes to better education for our kids.

Mr Hampton: I don't think I heard an answer to the question of what happened to implementing the Rozanski report recommendations, but I want to go to the next promise. Before the election, you promised peace and stability in our schools. What the Minister of Education announced today is sure to result in conflict, the kind of conflict that comes from micromanaging. You said yourself before the election, "We will ensure that there is transparency in public education.... We will establish a standing committee on education to hold public hearings every year on the effectiveness of provincial funding."

There is a big hole in the provincial funding. By third-party calculations, you're close to \$700 million short. My question is, where is that standing committee on education to look into whether or not you're funding public education appropriately? Where is that promise, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Well, there's no doubt about it; there is much more work to be done when it comes to improving public education for our children, and we look forward to doing that.

But, you know, there is a common thread that runs through the questions put forward today by the leader of the NDP, and it is that he won't talk about the substance. He won't talk about the substance because he's afraid to tell us where he stands when it comes to smaller classes. I think in his heart of hearts he believes in smaller classes. He's afraid to talk about the new tone that we've struck in public education, because in his heart of hearts he supports the new relationship, the good, solid, working, positive relationship that we've struck with Ontario teachers.

He is afraid to talk about the new finances we've found to keep our good schools open, because in his heart of hearts, I know that he is supportive of our policies in that area and in so many other areas of public education.

So I say to this Legislature and to the good people of Ontario, it's time for the real Howard Hampton to step up to the plate and to tell us that he supports us when it comes to public education in the province of Ontario.

STUDENT SAFETY

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of Education. Yesterday, I rose in the House to express our condolences to the family of 16-year-old Andrew Stewart. Today, the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex gave a moving statement about a 15-year-old who committed suicide as a result of bullying over the Internet.

Minister, you and your Premier voted against the Safe Schools Act in the last government. You have now been Minister of Education for more than a year. As the Minister of Education, you have had more than one year to deal with the important issue of bullying in our schools, yet you found time to have your ministry develop guidelines and policies about what goes into vending machines in our schools. Would you stand in your place today and tell us what you have done to address this important issue of bullying that is taking place every day, increasingly so, in our schools right across this province? What have you done?

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I first want to express what I think is the sentiment of everyone in this House, which is condolences for the families involved in two separate tragedies that have struck young individuals, young adults, in our province. I think it is vitally important that we support their schools and their families at this particular time.

I will say, in a completely separate manner, that this government takes the safety of individuals in our schools and on the school grounds and, indeed, anywhere we can have an influence, as our primary responsibility. Before we get to educate, the kids and the young adults need to be safe.

And we have been collaborating with some initiatives around the province already. We have been providing some ability.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Kennedy: I hear the member opposite grumble something about other things we've done, and I'm sure he doesn't mean to imply in any shape, way or form that there is any active omission or commission by anyone in relation to the tragedies that have taken place.

What I will say to those families and to the public at large is that there is an initiative on safety that we have worked on collaboratively with the school boards, that there is much unfinished business when it comes to safe schools and that we will be making an announcement within a very short period of time about that. Appropriately, it will be general in its impact, and appropriately, it will supply an appropriate role for the provincial

government to make sure that everything that can be done is being done in our schools.

Mr Klees: Actually, I am suggesting that there has been an omission on the part of this minister to serve the schools and the parents and the students of this province.

This minister has had priorities that had nothing to do with the important things that are taking place in our schools. I'm putting him, today, on the spot. I'm asking him whether he has, since I tabled the letter from Mr Thomson, who has repeatedly appealed to the minister and to his school to intervene in a bullying of his own child at Mother Teresa High School in Ottawa. I delivered this letter to him yesterday. This is a serious issue. This young child has been beaten. Has the minister personally intervened yet? Or does he still not think that bullying in schools is enough of a priority over and above vending machines, junk food and all the other things he has been occupying his time with?

1420

Hon Mr Kennedy: Mr Speaker, there is nothing that I want to add to the member's line of questioning. If there is anything that the families and affected students deserve right now, it is the respect and dignity of this House.

There is public policy that gives us latitude to work on things that in a general way will help make our schools safer, and that is forthcoming. There is work that we've already done. When it comes to specific cases, whether they're given to me by the member opposite or by anyone else, what I will say is—and I want this to be known—if there is anyone out there who is affected by bullying, their situation will not be discussed in this House. We will not name them or their parents or anyone else. There is enough stigma attached.

What I would say is—and I think members opposite know in this House—if there is any situation that the office of the minister can help with, we work diligently in that regard. I want that expectation to be known by everyone watching, because there is an abiding interest by this government to do everything possible to maintain a safe environment. There may be individuals out there who think they—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. New question.

MUNICIPAL FUNDING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the city of Toronto kicked off its budget debate with worries about user fees, tax hikes and TTC fare increases. Why have they done this? It's because you haven't paid your share. You have arbitrarily capped Ontario's contribution to Toronto's social service and housing programs. That has left Toronto \$71 million poorer. They have had to lay off 1,000 staff in the last couple of years, but unfortunately, they have had to hire 1,100 more people to look after the downloaded services. Toronto's budget chief says that this is unfair.

Premier, in your election program, you called municipal downloading “unfair, short-sighted and destructive to our communities.” Will you stop being unfair, short-sighted and destructive to our communities, and will you restore the 80-20 split that served this province so well before you were elected?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): Just to be clear, we are very proud of the good working relationship we have developed with the city of Toronto. We're now in earnest negotiations to modernize the City of Toronto Act, so that we can work together to strengthen this city, this engine of our economy and the Canadian economy, and so that we can help it stand on its own two feet.

But I'm also proud to say that as a result of our gas tax initiative, this year alone the city of Toronto will get an additional \$81 million. There is more work to be done—we are all aware of that—when it comes to ensuring that the city of Toronto has the necessary wherewithal to chart its own destiny, and we look forward to working with them.

Mr Prue: Mr Premier, I'm not talking about the gas tax, and I'm not talking about transit. I'm talking about your election program, in which you said downloading provincial problems on to cities and towns resulted “in cuts to services and crumbling infrastructure.” That's exactly what we're seeing in Toronto and literally every other city in this province. You know that property taxes alone cannot cover what is happening out there, but you have been slow to help all the towns and cities of this province on the downloaded social services.

Unless you do your part, the gap between the revenue and the expenses for municipalities in every municipality will continue to grow. You've said it yourself. Downloading has created a real mess for municipalities. When are you going to stop mimicking Mike Harris and start keeping your own promises?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The Minister of Finance would like to speak to this.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I think the member, were he wanting to be fair, would be mentioning some very special assistance that went to the city of Toronto last year in the form of a grant of some \$90 million on the TTC.

I think he would want to mention, as well, our government's determination—and it was in the budget last May—that we are going to be uploading, not downloading, more of the cost of public health. I think he would want to mention the unique negotiations that are going on with the city of Toronto on a wide variety of issues.

I think, in fact, he would want to let the public know that for the first time in eight and a half years there is a really strong, constructive and productive relationship between this government at Queen's Park and the government of the city of Toronto on Queen Street.

EDUCATION

Mr David Zimmer (Willowdale): My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, today you announ-

ced that our government is working to bring peace and stability to the school system. For the past eight years, our education system was subjected to constant attacks by the previous government. They left schools ravaged and those who worked in them demoralized.

On the campaign trail in Willowdale last year, more than anything else I heard from parents who were angry about the way the education system was being mismanaged. They were incensed by the constant bickering between the province and the school boards. They wanted a better and more stable learning environment for their children, not one where constant strikes or threats of strikes existed.

Minister, during the campaign we pledged long-term funding for the education system. How does today's announcement work to fulfill that, and how will this pledge bring peace and stability to our schools?

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): Thank you very much, to the honourable member for his question. We did announce today events to further the peace and stability in our schools. It is a marked achievement that really belongs to the schools, the principals and the teachers, that they have been able to focus on student needs and are going to continue to do that.

Today, after listening and discussing carefully with the participants in the system, we've come up with some additional measures that will make sure that continues to be the case in the future. They include incentives for long-term contracts so that we can have up to four years of stability in our schools, and predictable funding stands behind that. It's in a framework.

Of course, significant funding, as our Premier has said, of \$1.1 billion is on the way to implement the Rozanski report by next year, slightly ahead of schedule. But with it comes an outlook. This is not something a government can buy; it's simply something a government can exhibit: respect. In everything we're doing, we're trying to create and maintain an environment of respect toward teachers, school boards and all participants in education, because the students benefit when that is the prevailing outlook.

Mr Zimmer: Minister, those same people who were concerned about their children's learning were also concerned with something that Ontarians in general concern themselves with. I'm talking about accountability and transparency. My constituents want to know that their tax dollars are being well spent.

Just yesterday, we passed a bill banning partisan advertising, ensuring that not a single dollar will ever be wasted on such frivolous actions again. Minister, what is your ministry doing to ensure that every dollar that is allocated for educational programs important to parents, such as smaller class sizes, is effectively spent in schools?

1430

Hon Mr Kennedy: We put forward to the school boards a range of helpful things. Part of it is new supports, including teacher development accounts and so forth, but part of it is also clarity, the improvements

we've made toward important objectives: improving English as a second language, so kids can acquire the language of instruction and do well in school; learning opportunity grants to help kids who are struggling the most go forward; good schools open grants that help rural schools be more viable. Those grants, intended that way, need to be spent on improvements.

It will be possible this year for every member of the public, every interested parent, every interested worker in the system to see where the dollars from the government have gone and how they've been distributed by the board. It still allows tremendous latitude by the board, but it clarifies exactly how the money is going to get spent and exactly how students are going to do well, while at the same time the boards are going to be able to exhibit respect and good understandings with their education workers.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): A question to the Minister of Agriculture. As you know, prices for cash crops are half what they were last spring: beef; tobacco is a disaster; apples, potatoes and other fruit and vegetable crops are in a very bad position.

You signed on to the CAIS program. These farmers are desperate for help, but your program is failing them. The program allows farmers, who have been processed, to appeal 90 days after getting their calculation of benefits programs. The problem is, I have yet to have a farmer tell me—none of them, actually, have received their CPD statements.

It's now three weeks before Christmas. Minister, how do you expect farmers to plan for the coming year when many of them won't know for another three months whether they'll be receiving CAIS benefits?

Hon Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I take exception to the comment the member has made about the CAIS program. The agricultural policy framework is going to bring \$1.7 billion in support to agriculture in this province. The member may be critical of the CAIS program, but I think he needs to recognize that we've received over 30,000 applications for the CAIS program. We've processed in excess of 13,000 applications, and over \$55 million has been paid out to the farmers in this province.

That's why we took a proactive approach. I don't know if the honourable member took up the offer to appear before a session that we put together for all members of this House to inform them of the CAIS program. If he has a specific example of a producer who needs to know the status of his file, I ask that he fill out a confidentiality form, have that forwarded to our MPP liaison and we'll look into that specific issue.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Supplementary, the member for Oxford.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Minister, there seems to be a disparity between what you think is going on in your ministry and what is really happening to the

farmers in Ontario. Almost half of the farmers in Ontario who applied for CAIS still do not have a processed application. The minister has taken so long to get his act together that those 18,000 farmers are just receiving notices or have yet to be told what they need to qualify for the 2003 safety net funds.

That track record is bad enough, but over 15,000 farmers in this province didn't even bother to apply for CAIS. Either they couldn't come up with the deposit money or they just didn't know about the program.

Considering the incompetence that has been shown so far with the farmers who have applied, Minister, what are you going to do to get the other 15,000 farmers involved? What are you going to do to ensure that all the farmers of Ontario are aware of, and have equal access to, the CAIS program?

Hon Mr Peters: I take some real exception to the comments the member just made. I think it's terribly disrespectful that you would call a member of the public service incompetent. I think you owe the public sector of this province an apology for calling public sector employees that word.

As I said earlier, we're moving forward with the CAIS program. I just announced this morning market revenue insurance: \$94 million in support for the grains and oilseeds sector in this province. Two weeks ago, we announced \$173 million in wedge funding in support of the agricultural community.

Again, as I said to the member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, if he has specific examples, fill out the confidentiality form, contact the ministry and we'll look into specific files. As well, I would welcome honourable members' comments as we finish our first year of the CAIS program and undertake a comprehensive review. I would welcome your constructive comments about how we can make it better. These programs—CAIS and production insurance—are there to help the farmers in this province. He could do the respectful thing and help the farmers of the province as well.

Interjections.

Mr Hardeman: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to point out to this House that I at no time referred to the incompetency of the ministry—

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Premier. In Sudbury, the crisis facing alternate level of care patients continues because there are not enough permanent long-term-care placements in our community. The Sudbury Regional Hospital will once again be forced to send long-term-care patients out of the community, to Espanola and Manitoulin Island, to get their needs met.

On October 27, your government announced 10 temporary long-term-care beds at Pioneer Manor, even though Pioneer Manor could have accommodated 30 temporary beds and even though Sudbury city council

had urged you to fund 30 temporary beds in order to meet local needs. Today, nine of the 10 beds at Pioneer Manor are full and there are 20 alternate level of care patients at Sudbury Regional Hospital waiting to be discharged for long-term care.

Premier, will you finally do the right thing and fund 30 temporary long-term-care beds at Pioneer Manor so the frail and elderly do not have to be sent far from home to have their needs met?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): I know the Minister of Health is keeping a very watchful eye on this matter, and I had the opportunity to become still a bit more acquainted with it personally when I was up in Sudbury last week to announce our very important prosperity for the north plan.

That is why we have announced thus far 10 temporary beds. We are watching this very closely. Our broader plan calls for relieving pressures on hospitals by making more investments in home care and long-term care, public health, more prevention, more family health teams and the like. But I understand and am somewhat acquainted, although the minister himself is much more acquainted, with the pressures affecting the people of Sudbury. I know he is keeping a very close eye on this.

Ms Martel: Premier, if I might, the frail and elderly and their families are not very interested today in your long-term plan. They are more interested in ensuring they don't have to go to Manitoulin Island and Espanola to get their long-term-care needs met. You see, this situation could have been resolved in October if only your government would have agreed to fund 30 temporary beds at Pioneer Manor. The space is available. The need is there. City council urged you by way of resolution to fund those beds to meet the local needs. Your government is failing to respond to the long-term-care needs of the frail and elderly in our community. It makes no sense for them to have to go far from home for care, to Manitoulin Island and Espanola, when the space is available for their care in our community.

I ask you again, Premier, will you finally fix this situation and fund 30 temporary beds at Pioneer Manor so the frail and elderly don't have to go far from home for long-term care?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I'm not sure how much more I can add to what I've already said, except to say this: Many of us in this Legislature have parents who are approaching an age where they may have to go into a nursing home. Obviously we would all prefer that they be near to their home and near to us, and in an ideal world we would be able to accommodate that, but we have to live in the real world, and from time to time there will be some patients, some of our parents, who are a little bit farther than we would like.

But I can tell you this: What we are working on is a bigger solution. I know that the Minister of Health—

Interjection.

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member opposite may not be interested in hearing this, but I think Ontarians

generally are. She has raised a good issue and I think it's worthy of a half-decent response. The minister is not here. He has indicated to me that this is a very important concern to him. He has specifically referenced the situation in Sudbury. That's why he has acted in the case of that particular community by creating 10 temporary beds. Obviously there is more to be done. I know the minister is working on it and looks forward to making more announcements in the future.

1440

LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Earlier today I received a phone call from Longlac Wood Industries and was told that they are currently evaluating the feasibility of a project to construct a new state-of-the-art facility to manufacture oriented strand board in the municipality of Greenstone. As you know, oriented strand board is a modern value-added product used in new residential construction, and the possibility of this new operation is quite exciting. Having said that, LWI has also indicated to me that they are evaluating this as a replacement for their current facilities, which they believe are no longer sustainable.

Minister, can you give me a sense of how this process will unfold and, more specifically, can you tell my constituents and others how they can make their views known on the proposed oriented strand board mill?

Hon David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources): I'd like to thank the member for the question. I was with him a couple of months ago in the community of Longlac and I know how totally dependent that community is on the forest sector. This proposal is very exciting news because it addresses the issue of starting to add more value to the forest fibre that we derive from the boreal forest up there. What's very nice about this, besides creating a more modern product than the poplar ply and the waferboard that's presently being manufactured at this time, is that the modern machinery making oriented strand board can now use more underutilized species with the aspen poplar, like birch, balsam poplar and other low-grade hardwoods. So this is very good news.

We're posting this on the Environmental Bill of Rights Web site and, once we get the comments in, I'll be making a decision whether we will be issuing a facility licence or not.

Mr Gravelle: Exciting news. Obviously, if approved, the construction of this new mill in the Greenstone area will continue to provide jobs in harvesting, road construction and transportation, and will hopefully offset the impact of the closure of the existing aging facilities.

As we've all said many times before, forestry is tremendously important to northern communities. It employs about 80,000 workers and generates annual sales of somewhere around \$18 billion. Almost 50 communities in northern Ontario are heavily dependent on the forest

sector to sustain their economies, and the LWI operation in Greenstone is no exception to that.

In addition to the decision you'll be making regarding this new operation in Greenstone, can you also tell the Legislature what the province is doing to curb job loss in the forest industry and to ensure that the forest industry stays strong into the future?

Hon Mr Ramsay: This proposal does come at a very good time because right now the forest sector is under some tremendous challenges: international competition, the rising Canadian dollar, high energy costs, and the softwood tariff from the United States, which is imposing a lot of penalties on the exportation of our softwood into the United States.

Last week, I announced a minister's forest council, bringing together the top CEOs, the top labour people and some independent experts to give me a report by April of next year as to what we can do to put this industry on a firm footing. This industry has to remain competitive. It's very important to the northern economy, and I thank the member very much for his interest in this sector.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: During the estimates committee on October 20, I asked you if we could expect some sort of agricultural viability plan to support greenbelt farmers before the introduction of the legislation. In response, you stated, "You'll have to wait until this bill gets introduced and find out the details at that time." We waited, and found out that it was nothing but another broken Liberal promise.

Minister, I ask you again, will you commit to us today and to farmers in the greenbelt area of Ontario that by the time Bill 135 goes to committee, you will come forward with a provincially funded farm viability plan to support farmers in the greenbelt area, backed up by provincial dollars?

Hon John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): I'm sure the Minister of Agriculture is pleased to answer this question.

Hon Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): It's quite hilarious to see the advocacy of this member on behalf of farmers, because when he was in government they cut over \$100 million from the agriculture budget, and his advocacy of and sudden interest in preserving tender fruit lands, when there was a tender fruit land preservation program in place that his government cancelled as well.

We moved very quickly in bringing forward the agricultural advisory team. Former federal minister Lyle Vanclief and Bob Bedggood, president of the Agricultural Adaptation Council of Ontario and former president of the Christian Farmers Federation, undertook an exhaustive consultation around the province to look at the very issues the honourable member made reference

to. Their comprehensive recommendations were brought forward. Some of those initial recommendations regarding minimum distance separation and severances of surplus dwellings have been incorporated into the greenbelt legislation. We're moving forward on the implementation of others of those recommendations.

Mr Hudak: The minister talks about hilarious. Sadly, his answers have become a running joke in this Legislature. Minister, you know as well as I do that you've done studies, you've done consultations, but you haven't made one step in action to support the greenbelt farmers. It's a simple question, and that's the main conceit of your legislation. Land use alone isn't going to keep the tender fruit land growing. Land use alone isn't going to keep the Holland Marsh in production. The conceit of your legislation is, you actually need a farm viability plan. It galls grape growers, it galls tender fruit growers, it galls vegetable growers, that they say they can protect the land through land use changes.

Minister, you know as well as I do—you want to save the farm, save the farmer. Please tell us that by the time this bill goes to consultations, you'll have a real plan put forward, backed by provincial dollars, not just more talk and more studies—real action.

Hon Mr Peters: We are very conscious of ensuring the viability of agriculture not just within the greenbelt but all across this province. That's why we've come forward with a number of support programs to ensure that we are there supporting the farmers of this province.

You know, it's interesting when you read the Wine Council of Ontario press release of October 28, 2004, that it says, "The fact that urbanization of our unique agricultural lands will be prevented is great news.... We have long sought a strong provincial policy that will prohibit severing these lands for residential purposes."

As a result, even the Niagara Peninsula conducted their own study looking at the impact of the greenbelt. They showed very clearly that you offer the suggestion that farmers should be compensated. Some farmers have suggested that they should be compensated for lost value, based on the perceived value of their land at some point in the future, assuming that certain events come to fruition. But perceived or speculative value is based on things that may happen, not things that necessarily will happen.

We're going to be there to support the agricultural community, not only in the greenbelt but all across this province.

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I have a question for the Premier. Premier, a year and a half ago, you promised swift action on a transformational scheme for northern Ontario drivers: studded tires. You said, "We will permit northern drivers to use this important road safety equipment during the winter." Some 14 months later—it's your second winter as government—slush, ice and snow cover the roads in Red Lake, in

Dryden, in Thunder Bay, in Timmins, but your studded tire scheme seems to have developed a leak.

Premier, when did you slam the brakes on studded tires, the signature McGuinty promise for northern Ontario drivers?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): The Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): In response to the member's question, you wouldn't be slamming the brakes on a slippery road, because you would be sliding all over the place. You would be out of control, like the leader of the third party is in asking this question.

You have to be very, very careful, when you drive on winter roads, that you do so with caution and use all the necessary tools that are in our arsenal to ensure that you arrive safely. I've got to be perfectly honest: We fully intend to ensure that winter driving is safe for all north-erners.

Mr Hampton: I thought the studded tire promise had developed a leak. Obviously, with the McGuinty government, it's a blowout.

Premier, here is the real issue. People across northern Ontario know that with icy highways, they are literally taking their lives and putting them at risk when they go to a medical appointment and even when they go to work. They know that after the privatization of highway maintenance, our highways are not as safe as they need to be.

Since your studded tire promise has clearly developed a leak, when will you address the real problem? When will you bring highway maintenance back into the public sector so that dedicated, knowledgeable, experienced people are keeping our highways clean and safe?

1450

Hon Mr Bartolucci: Again, I have to be perfectly honest. The only blowout is the leader of the third party. The leader of the third party, who was reluctant in the past to come on board with regard to studded tires, now tries to use a campaign commitment we made to try to embarrass us. The reality is, the only embarrassment with regard to the safety of winter roads is the third party.

We will be very happy to ensure that the people of northern Ontario know that our priority is safe winter driving, that drivers in northern Ontario have what they need to ensure they arrive safely, and we will be introducing legislation to ensure the use of studded tires.

PETITIONS

HEALTH PREMIUMS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's indeed my pleasure to bring to the attention of the Legislature a petition I've received from my constituents in the riding of Durham.

"Whereas today in the Legislature Minister Duncan, the Acting Premier, stated that Minister of Finance Greg

Sorbara has already referred to the Ontario health premium as a tax, even in the budget lock-up;

"Whereas on May 18, during the budget lock-up, the Minister of Finance was recorded on tape as actually saying, 'We had the option of looking at personal income tax increases or going with the Ontario health premium. Our choice on the health premium was very clear. We chose it because it gives us an opportunity to identify a revenue stream separate and apart from personal income tax, that will be applied, every single cent of it, to health care.'

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully request that Minister Duncan correct the record and resign."

TUITION

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I have a petition today to increase public funding for post-secondary education, reduce tuition fees and reinstate an upfront system of grants for Ontario students:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Liberal government took an historic step forward by funding a tuition fee freeze for two years; and

"Whereas a majority of Ontarians support increased public funding for colleges and universities as well as reduced tuition fees; and

"Whereas increasing student debt through income-contingent loan repayment schemes or raising loan limits only increases the cost of post-secondary education for students from modest means; and

"Whereas per student investment in Ontario still lags gravely behind the vast majority of jurisdictions in North America;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, supporting the Canadian Federation of Students' call to increase funding for colleges and universities and reduce tuition fees for all Ontario students, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: (1) reduce tuition fees for all students in Ontario, (2) increase public funding for post-secondary education to at least the national average, and (3) implement an upfront, needs-based grant system for Ontario full-time and part-time students."

I'll put my signature on this.

TAXATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my name in full support.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

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

“Whereas the 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;

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

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

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

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

I agree with the petitioners. I’ve affixed my signature to this.

LONG-TERM CARE

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

“Whereas Portuguese Canadians number 171,545 in the Toronto census metropolitan area, many of whom encounter serious barriers (language, culture, and location) to accessing community and long-term services; and

“There are no long-term-care homes dedicated to the needs of Portuguese Canadian seniors; and

“Camões House for the Aged and Portuguese Community Centre of Toronto is proposing a partnership with a local long-term-care provider to purchase up to 160 existing beds in the Toronto area (for a nominal fee), to develop a Portuguese Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto. This partnership is tentative and is dependent on the approval of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

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

“We encourage the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, his staff, and members of the Legislature to support the Camões proposal, and to make the appropriate administrative and policy changes required to develop a Portuguese Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto.”

Since I agree with this 100%, I’m delighted to affix my signature to this document.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): This petition reads:

“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” constituents residing in Liberal MPP Michael Colle’s riding, “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.”

Because I want to support these constituents, I will affix my signature to this petition as well.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the funding formula used by the Ministry of Health provided only a 1% increase for Four Counties Health Services in Newbury; and

“Whereas Four Counties Health Services has a projected deficit of \$1.7 million; and

“Whereas the plan to balance the budget of Four Counties Health Services by 2006 recommends the closing of all beds at the hospital; and....

“Whereas the continuing viability and operation is of critical importance to the quality of life of all citizens in the hospital’s catchment area;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request a review of the budget/funding and consultation with the hospital board/administration/community to reflect the needs of our rural hospital and community.”

I’ll give this to Daniel.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Ms Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Re: support for chiropractic services in Ontario health insurance plan:

“Whereas,

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

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be

forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

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

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

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

It's signed by thousands of people from my riding.

1500

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's signed by about 200 people from the Chatham-Blenheim area. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Ontario's three remaining regional centres for people with developmental disabilities, located in Smiths Falls, Orillia and Blenheim, Ontario;

“Whereas the regional centres are home to more than 1,000 disabled adults, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing the regional centres will have a devastating impact on people with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

“Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the regional centres to extend specialized services, support and professional training to thousands more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Ontario's regional centres for people with developmental disabilities open, and to transform them into centres of excellence to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live.”

I am in agreement and will affix my signature thereto.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Mrs Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many volunteer fire departments in Ontario are strengthened by the service of double-hatter fire-

fighters who work as professional, full-time firefighters and also serve as volunteer firefighters on their free time and in their home communities; and

“Whereas the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association has declared their intent to ‘phase out’ these double-hatter firefighters; and

“Whereas double-hatter firefighters are being threatened by the union leadership and forced to resign as volunteer firefighters or face losing their full-time jobs, and this is weakening volunteer fire departments in Ontario; and

“Whereas Waterloo-Wellington MPP Ted Arnott has introduced Bill 52, the Volunteer Firefighters Employment Protection Act, that would uphold the right to volunteer and solve this problem concerning public safety in Ontario;

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

“That the provincial government express public support for MPP Ted Arnott's Bill 52 and willingness to pass it into law or introduce similar legislation that protects the right of firefighters to volunteer in their home communities on their own free time.”

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

“Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead located in the town of New Tecumseth”—Alliston—“is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

“Whereas the town of New Tecumseth has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

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

“That the Minister of Culture endorse Simcoe-Grey MPP Jim Wilson's private member's bill entitled the Frederick Banting Homestead Preservation Act so that the homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come.”

I've signed the petition. I obviously agree with it. I want to thank Randy Greenman of Wrays Pharmacy in Alliston for circulating this petition.

REFUNDABLE CONTAINERS

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): Great petition, Mr Wilson.

I keep getting petitions to stop pop cans and beer bottles littering our children's playgrounds. The petition is addressed to the assembly of Ontario and the Minister of the Environment, specifically. It reads as follows:

“Whereas we find lots of pop cans and beer bottles in our parks plus children’s playgrounds;

“Whereas it is therefore unsafe for our children to play in these parks and playgrounds;

“Whereas many of these bottles and cans are broken and mangled, therefore causing harm and danger to our children;

“Whereas Ontarians are dumping about a billion aluminum cans worth \$27 million into landfill” sites “every year instead of recycling them;

“Whereas the undersigned want to see legislation passed to have deposits paid on cans and bottles, which would be returnable and therefore not found littering our parks and streets;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, strongly urge and demand that the Ontario government institute a collection program that will include all pop drinks, Tetra Pak juices and can containers to be refundable in order to reduce littering and protect our environment.”

I am in full agreement with this petition and I’m delighted to sign it.

DISTRICT OF MUSKOKA

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I have more petitions to keep Muskoka part of the north.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition and affix my signature.

EYE EXAMINATIONS

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that says:

“Whereas the 2004 provincial budget was not clear on whether adult optometry patients who have or who are at risk for medical conditions, such as diabetes, glaucoma, macular degeneration and clinically significant cataracts, would continue to be covered through the Ontario health insurance plan; and

“Whereas Ontario’s optometrists strongly feel that Ontario seniors, those under 20 and those with chronic sight-threatening diseases must continue to receive primary eye care services directly from Ontario’s optometrists; and

“Whereas forcing patients to be referred to optometrists through their family physicians ignores the years of specialized training optometrists undertake to detect, diagnose and treat eye conditions; and

“Whereas almost 140 communities across the province have already been designated as underserved for family practitioners and the government’s approach will only exacerbate the problem unnecessarily;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care immediately clarify that the eye examination services they provide to patients at risk for medical conditions will continue to be covered by OHIP and the coverage for these services is not dependent on a patient being referred to an optometrist by a family physician.”

I’ll give to it my friend page Dever today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 106, An Act to implement Budget measures and amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994; and Bill 149, An Act to implement 2004 Budget measures, enact the Northern Ontario Grow Bonds Corporation Act, 2004, and amend various Acts, when Bill 106 and Bill 149 are next called as government orders, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bills without further debate or amendment, and at such time Bill 106 shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, and Bill 149 shall be ordered for third reading; and

That the standing committee on finance and economic affairs meet on Thursday, December 9, 2004, from 10 am to 12 noon and following routine proceedings for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 106; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 noon on December 9. On that day, at not later than 5 pm, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be

deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

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That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than Monday, December 13, 2004. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time Bill 106 shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called on that same day; and

That the orders for third reading for Bill 106 and Bill 149 shall be called concurrently; and,

That, on the day the orders for third reading are called, the time available for debate up to 5:50 pm or 9:20 pm, as the case may be, shall be divided into two equal parts, with the first part being allotted for debate on Bill 106 and the second part being allotted for debate on Bill 149, and that each part shall be further divided and apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That, when the time allotted for debate of both bills has expired, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of each of the bills without further debate or amendment. Any divisions required shall be deferred until all questions have been put and will be taken in succession, with the door being unlocked for 30 seconds between divisions; and

That there shall be no deferral of any vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Mr Caplan has moved government notice of motion 293—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker: Mr Caplan.

Hon Mr Caplan: I must tell you, this is the first time that I have ever moved a time allocation motion, and I spoke to many of them when I was on the other side of the House. I want to say, and I want to be very clear, that I am very proud that our government has opened this Legislature up to much fuller debate and discussion. I want all of the members of this House to know, and I want the public of Ontario to know, that we as a government do not take time allocation lightly. After eight years—and I spoke at great length about the process of

time allocation literally being forced down the throats of the opposition and treating this Legislature as irrelevant—we're going to treat the atmosphere of this place, the people's place, in a much different way.

I want to highlight that in a couple of ways. I certainly want to talk about the history of our government over the course of the last 14 months, but I also want to contrast that with the approach taken by both of the other two parties.

Our government, the McGuinty government, has introduced 44 government bills. We've passed 22 bills, and this is the fourth time we have had to use time allocation. I agree that these two bills, Bills 106 and 149, which are the subject of this debate, are very important bills. They are budget bills. They will receive third reading debate, as I've just outlined in the time allocation motion. I want to stress that this is something that was rarely done under the Conservatives or under the New Democrats and, as you're listening to other members of the other parties talk about time allocation, I hope you will keep that in mind. I want to be clear that our government will not treat this House with the disrespect that the previous government did. Time allocation will be used, but it will be used sparingly; only on major legislation that is time-sensitive.

I wanted to compare and contrast, as I said at the outset. The modern form of time allocation, as it exists within the standing orders of the orders and proceedings under this House, was in fact set by government House leader Dave Cooke, under the New Democrats. I would say without any exaggeration that it was the New Democrats who set the trend for time allocation motions. In fact, the NDP used time allocation about 500% more than the previous Liberal government under then Premier David Peterson. There were no public hearings when the New Democrats ripped up collective agreements under the social contract. No time was allocated even for third reading debate. There were no public hearings when the New Democrats raised the gasoline tax 3.4 cents per litre. Of the 21 budget bills passed by then-Finance Minister Floyd Laughren during their five-year reign, only one was ever sent to committee for public consultation.

I want you, Speaker, and all members of this House to compare and contrast that record with the measures that are contained here. I also want to put on the record the approach we're taking and the respect with which we're treating this House as compared to the previous government under both Premier Harris and Premier Eves.

The Eves government, in the 37th Parliament, used time allocation on 83% of government bills that received royal assent—unheard of. From 1999 to 2003, the Harris-Eves government used time allocation motions on 67 of 110 bills that received royal assent—unheard of. Over 60% of legislative actions were forced down our throats, cutting off debate, allowing for no committee time and also allowing no third reading debate. Under Premier Eves, only once—only one time—did a time-allocated bill even allow for third reading debate.

These tactics were built on the legacy, as I said, that was handed down by the New Democratic Party—I fully

concede by then-House leader Dave Cooke—and I think illustrate a lack of respect for this institution. Only one quarter of all the bills the Harris-Eves government selected as their budget bills were ever sent to committee. Only one budget bill in eight years ever travelled during committee time. So I'm going to find it somewhat ironic when I hear, I expect, opposition members come and tell us that they have such trouble now with using time allocation in a very sparing way.

Speaker, I want you to understand that we on this side of the House have an abiding respect for this place and want to make sure it works effectively, and that in fact you have full debate and opportunity for committee hearings and, most importantly, third reading debate. I'm very proud that our government has changed the attitude and opened up for greater democratic support, reform and participation by all members of this Legislature.

We are sent here by the people of the various ridings we represent to do their business, and we cannot do that if governments on every occasion use a heavy hand. Of course, there have to be times, because some bills are time sensitive, when business must get done, and this is one of those occasions. I am very proud of the work the House leader for the government side, Mr Duncan, from Windsor-St Clair, has done to build a co-operative kind of atmosphere in this House.

I will be supporting this motion. I would ask all members to support this motion, and of course later, when Bills 106 and 149 do come for a vote, assuming this motion passes, I would urge all members to support the budgetary policies of this government.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): This is the mother of all time allocation motions.

Interjections.

Mr O'Toole: Some of the people are laughing at the seriousness of the content of this time allocation. It is a budget bill which ceases and shuts down all possible debate on behalf of our constituents, not just in Durham but in Ontario, who are outraged. The minister who just spoke said they wouldn't abuse parliamentary procedure on process. What a surprise and shock. I can recall the number of promises the Liberals made and have begun a long litany of breaking each and every one of them.

1520

In the time I've got, I won't respond to the things of a trivial nature that the member who has just spoken has put on the record. In fact, their outrage should be—the finger should be pointed at themselves, because I know that they were on the record when we were in the same situation of trying to move forward with legislation that was important to restructure the province of Ontario and the economy of Ontario from what we inherited in 1995. There was serious resistance, of course, to many of the legislative initiatives. But the chicanery or the treachery of what they're doing today is one more example of not wanting to listen to the people of Ontario, and it's shocking. It's absolutely shocking when I think of the outrage they raised at the time of our government, and prior governments, using the time allocation procedure

motion. But this one here bundles a couple of budget bills, Bills 106 and 149, together. It bunches them up so that it's even more complex and perhaps diverts the real debate from the substance of the bills that are before the House.

I think I should, for those viewing today, reflect for a few moments on some of the bills. Bill 106 is the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. When you look at it, it amends the Income Tax Act to impose a tax called the health premium. Now, the viewers of Ontario should be quite aware how controversial this health tax is—or it's a health premium. In fact, it's probably going to go to the courts, and what is going to result from the courts would be a decision that—in the public sector, some of the union contracts for some time now have said that the government would pay any increase in the premium. What their arguments in court are going to be, substantively, is to say that because it's a premium and it's an increase in a premium, then in fact it should be paid for by the employer. The employer, of course, is the government. Another level could be the municipal level, or it could be the public sector in the broader sense, all of the MUSH sector: municipal, universities, schools and hospitals. We'd be expected to pay all of those premiums. To the people of Ontario, what does this health tax mean? It means about \$50 or \$60 a month on your bill. So that's one bill here.

There's the Trust Beneficiaries' Liability Act, which is another that should be paid very close attention to. So that's Bill 106; it's one of the bills. I've covered just one issue of substance within that bill.

Now, Bill 149 offers a much greater challenge. Bill 149 is a huge bundle. In my limited time of research here—because of time allocation, of course, there isn't sufficient time to bring forward the debate from the stakeholders and from my constituents, more importantly, whom I listen to rigorously and respond to as well as I can. In this one, there are a couple of other speakers who I know will be mentioning some of the punitive measures that are buried in this very, very large bill. I think Bill 149 is a large and complex finance bill, and as such, it really does a disservice to time-allocate such an important bill.

In that, I think there were 85 changes to certain credits or tax credits. I just want to mention a couple of them. One of them was for first-time home buyers, the land transfer tax. We had a policy of exempting that. For the first time, buyers were exempt from paying the land transfer tax—very, very important for young families and new families buying their first home. We felt that it was an extremely important incentive for people and home ownership, that argument. So it's clear to me that they're against young people having a chance to have their own home. That's what the substance of this is really about. They're taking that right away.

There's another very important part which the private sector were engaging in. In the debate that's ongoing for daycare and the importance for families today, we implemented—Mr Speaker, you would probably know

this—a tax credit for employers who invested in child care or providing child care services in the workplace and/or near or about or for the workplace. For those working families in Ontario, the employer was incented to provide daycare facilities through a tax credit mechanism. That has been cancelled.

We've all heard, with some anguish, about the film industry today. We had the film tax credit, which we implemented. The Liberals, during the election—one more broken promise—had promised to increase that film tax credit. So the industry, which creates jobs, tourism and promotion of the province of Ontario, is going to be denied that promise. In here, it's very clear that they're going to do nothing for that industry, which is so important to the creative culture in Ontario.

I just wanted to encourage, since we're talking about the bill, a couple of initiatives that I've taken on myself to respond to these unfair and rather onerous burdens that they're putting on the people of Ontario.

Yesterday we passed Bill 73, which is a highway safety bill really, and it had one section in it dealing with mandatory booster seats; children up to about eight years of age and, I think, about 60 pounds would have to have a booster seat. Infant seats receive a provincial retail sales tax credit. They get a credit or are exempt from paying that. I think it's Mr Arnott who has a private member's bill, and all we are asking is that the government extend this credit to working families again who are now forced by the government to buy booster seats.

There's no one in the House here who disagrees with that. In fact, the bill passed yesterday; I supported it. The one flaw is that every time they make an announcement, there's no relief for the payer. The payer of last resort, regardless of which pocket, is going to pay more. The government could offer incentives and encouragements that are missing from this bill.

Actually, I have several bills in Orders and Notices. One that I want to mention—I'll have to take a minute here in the limited time I have; I'm waiting for our whip—is the retail sales tax on \$4 meals. They were going to implement that tax on meals over \$4, which was going to be a hardship for many individuals.

Also in the limited time I have left, I have Bill 154, which I just introduced the other day. What this bill does—I'd ask members' attention on this—is attempt to modify the health expense threshold. When we pay expenses for health care, until we spend \$2,000—there's a threshold under the Income Tax Act—none of the other health-related expenses are deductible. What I'm trying to do in that bill is reduce the threshold of \$2,000, so that persons who have chiropractic, which has been delisted, optometry and physiotherapy, as well as a range of other things that could be set by regulation that are preventive, as well as self-initiated by individuals, could become encouraged or incentivized to wellness or prevention of disease and other ailments that befall people.

So this time allocation motion—I'm not responding to the minister who spoke here who was trying to deliberately point out that they're only doing it because they're

forced to do it. They're doing it in spite of the goodwill of this House and in spite of the hard work that members are prepared to do. I, for one, will be voting against this time allocation, because it's a shock. I'm amazed at what they're able to get away with, slipping it through in the last few days of the Legislature.

It's a shame that this debate is being bundled up, two bills together, very important budget measures that the people of Ontario need more time to discuss and understand before they're implemented. I can't in all good conscience, on behalf of my constituents in Durham, support time allocation on such an important measure that's going to affect the lives of hard-working Ontarians.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I listened to the honourable minister talking about a history that I think he did not understand very well, and throughout all of it, I was reminded of the bard. Of course, I always go back to the Bard, and there's a famous saying from Shakespeare in Hamlet, which is, "The lady doth protest too much." I think perhaps it is the minister who doth protest too much, because what he is trying to tell you is a history he no longer understands, a history that is not part of him any more, a history that he literally is making up as he goes.

I had the privilege and the honour of sitting in this very Legislature throughout most of the last session, and I will tell you, it was a history many times of our being forced into closure, being forced into debate by the government of the day, being told that it didn't matter what this Legislature said, that they were going to force their bill through anyway. I heard all of the ministers, particularly the government House leader today, talk time and time again about how they would never, if they were in government, invoke closure. I will tell you that I am a little appalled. I understand why governments from time to time need to invoke closure, but I am saddened all the same that this government has chosen to do so today and has chosen to do so with these two bills.

1530

There's a very good quote here from George Santayana, and I'd like to quote it because it is totally in keeping with what the minister had to say earlier in his statement: "A man's memory may almost become the art of continually varying and misrepresenting his past, according to his interests in the present."

I would tell you, the minister's interest and the government's interest at present is getting through two very controversial bills today. They have invoked closure for one of the first times in this legislative session and one of the first times in this new government's mandate. I am saddened, because these two bills are without a doubt the most controversial bills that have been brought forward in this Parliament. This Parliament has done many, many things. They have passed bills that people could say are non-consequential, bills that might have been of some importance, bills that were rushed through, but here we have two bills that follow up on the single most controversial act of this government. The single most con-

troversial act, I would suggest, without a doubt has been the imposition of a health tax after the government and the Premier, as he was not then but is now, campaigned vigorously in the last election that there would not be a health tax. He said clearly and succinctly on television, commercial after commercial after commercial, debate after debate after debate, that he would not impose a health tax and in fact that he found the whole idea of a health tax to be abhorrent.

The two bills we have before us today, Bills 106 and 149, deal in very large measure with this health tax. What is being rammed through today is, in the public's eye, the single most wrongdoing that this government has embarked upon in its very short history of 14 months. This is the most regressive budget and the most regressive set of bills that this government has dreamed up in its scant slightly more than a year's existence. It is a regressive budget and it is an unfair budget. It is an unfair health tax. It is an unfair health tax that has been, along with the other things that they did at the same time—with the Hydro shuffle; with the reduction of 12% to the various ministries; with the cause of licence fees going up in Ontario; with the delisting of services for chiropractors, for optometrists, for physiotherapists; with the clawback that they promised to give to the very poor and for children—that was all but squelched in the budget, so that families only receive some \$89, instead of the \$2,800 they had been promised. It is a budget in which the child care promises that they made during the election were not delivered. It was a budget in which the education benchmarks, which they promised to undertake because of Rozanski, were not met, where virtually no housing has been built in this province—

Hon Mr Caplan: How about the gas tax?

Mr Prue: I hear the honourable minister starting to heckle me. The minister of non-housing is heckling me.

I tell you, all this has happened—shelter allowances that were promised and finally have been delivered to the magnificent sum of some 400 families in Toronto who are lucky enough to have a shelter allowance, when they promised 32,000 families would have it. At the rate they're going, it will take 87 years to deliver on their promise. This is what has happened with their budget.

Now, in Bill 106, they talk about instituting a health tax. Well, let's look at the health tax and exactly what it does and exactly who it affects. We all know, everyone in this House knows, even Liberals will admit if you talk to them privately, that it hurts the poor far more than it hurts the rich. This is not a tax under the Income Tax Act, which, in ordinary fairness, will tax those people who earn a lot of money more than it will tax people at the bottom. This is a tax that starts to hit people who earn \$22,000 a year. A single parent with a child who earns \$22,000 a year in this province lives in poverty, according to the low-income cut-off figures of the federal government. They live in poverty, they live in destitution, but they pay a portion of the health tax. A family of four with one parent working—the mother working and the father staying at home with two kids—who earns

\$30,000 or \$35,000 a year, pays the mid-range of the health tax. We know from the low-income cut-off figures, if they live in Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa or London, that they too live in poverty, but they pay \$600 in health tax. We know how much this is costing; we know how wrong it is. But this is what this government has decided to impose upon the poor, upon the destitute and upon those who cannot afford it.

They've capped it at \$900. So if you're Conrad Black, you pay \$900.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): He can't afford it any more.

Mr Prue: The Liberals are defending Conrad Black because he can't afford it any more. That's what I'm hearing. This is a man who can go out there and rip off thousands, who can find himself in financial trouble, who has millions and billions of dollars, but who, I swear, will not even pay the \$900, because as the honourable member has said, he cannot afford it any more. But some poor person working a little more than minimum wage, with family at home and earning \$20,000, will be smacked by you really well, at \$300. You're very proud of that, and you're using closure to force this through.

I will tell you, this is a very heinous thing to be doing. This is an act that deserves much more public debate.

Interjection.

Mr Prue: I'm being heckled by the member again. He obviously stands in support of Conrad Black and against tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of people who earn very little more than the minimum wage and who are about to be whacked.

This is what is being forced and rammed through the Legislature today. This is what they are doing. This is how they are using the power of closure. This is what they're doing in this Legislature on these two bills. They are taking a real run at ordinary people in Ontario and how they're going to be affected by their regressive budget.

We know what this budget is going to mean to ordinary families. We know their taxes are going up in huge proportion to what they once paid. We know that the average family is going to see the provincial portion of the taxes they pay go up by 10%, 15%, 20% or 40% more than what they paid in the past as a result of this health tax. We also know that the people who earn more than \$100,000 or more than \$200,000 are going to see their portion of tax rise only in the very small percentages of 1%, 2% or 3%. We know this is an unfair tax, but we know they're using the power of their majority here today to ensure that ordinary, small people get whacked. I want everybody to understand what this is about.

Mr Patten: "Get whacked"—that's a great expression.

Mr Prue: Yes. It's a great expression and a true expression. With all respect, it is an expression that ordinary people understand, and I wish the member opposite understood it half so well as they do.

We also have the other bill here, Bill 149. What does it do? It does a whole bunch of really great things for

ordinary people too, and it does some really great things for the super-rich and for very big corporations. What Bill 149 does most of all—its single claim to fame—is eliminate the capital tax.

I've heard Tories talk about this, and Liberals now talk about it with the same relish: This is going to help create some jobs in Ontario; this is going to help small industry meet its payrolls and make the amount of money it needs to be self-sustaining and to grow. But the reality of elimination of the capital tax is that, above all, it's going to ensure that two large segments of our commercial sector make even more money than they make today. And who are those two large sectors? The first one is the banks—the six sisters, the Big Six in Canada—and the second is the insurance companies.

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Let me talk about the banks first of all. I heard the CIBC and the Royal Bank announce this week that it wasn't a very good year for them. They only made merely \$2 billion in profit, each one of them, and the banks overall in Canada made \$13 billion in profit.

What the elimination of the capital tax is going to mean to them is that they're going to make even more profit, because in fact in Ontario alone, 25% of the capital tax is garnered from that industry, so an industry that makes \$13 billion in after-tax profit is going to get even more from the McGuinty government. That's what closure is being used for. So that people understand, the closure is because we feel sorry for the banks; we think that \$13 billion is not enough, that we need to make sure they make more.

I see the Minister of Finance shaking his head. He thinks they need to make more, I'm sure, because that's why he is imposing this and taking off the elimination of the capital tax.

We also know that the insurance companies, those little darlings that claim and cry that they're not making all the money they should be making, and that the rates aren't high enough and that the \$2 billion or more they're making this year, in a turnaround year, is simply not enough, are the second group that is going to benefit from the elimination of the capital tax.

That's where all this is going. That's what this government is about. That's what Bill 149, in its seminal interest, is all about. It is about eliminating a capital tax from two groups, I would suggest, that this government knows can afford it, two groups that should be paying their fair share, two groups in our society that need to be paying to keep the society going in exactly the way we have, in the past, hoped it would go: for ordinary people to have an opportunity to contribute and to take from this society, and for those who earn in the billions and billions of dollars each year to pay their fair share.

The elimination of the capital tax will cost \$1 million this year only, because it's just being implemented, \$40 million next year and \$110 million the year after that. That's more than the city of Toronto will need to meet how much money is needs in terms of the shortfall. That's what's being taken out, that's what's happening as

a result of the elimination of the tax laws and the revenue share to Ontario.

The second thing this Bill 149 does is, it ends the PST on a whole range of programs, and the one that's particularly vexatious and troubling to me is ending the PST rebates for handicapped drivers and their families. It ends a rebate that was instituted many years ago so that when a handicapped driver or a family who needs to equip a vehicle so that he or she may drive around or ferry members of their family from the house to school or to social events or to doctors' appointments—that is being eliminated under this bill.

Regular listeners to this program will know that I stood in this House several times over the case of Mr Jason Chenier, who lives in eastern Ontario, and what was happening to him as a result of the government misinformation about this bill and what was on the Web site and what they were doing. This bill will ensure that the government's plans under the budget will come to pass, because the money will finally be eliminated, the money that was allocated will go instead to the March of Dimes, it will be means tested and it ignores the great many Ontarians who are of modest or middle incomes who will no longer be able to equip vehicles they need for themselves and for their families in order to meet their daily lifestyles.

This bill also does other things. The PST rebate on energy efficiency is being done away with. I think this is very short-sighted. Even Toronto Hydro, in the last couple of days or weeks, has come out with a program to get rid of beer fridges. They understand that the program on the PST rebate for energy efficiency for such old clunkers as beer fridges is a good idea. This government does not. In fact, it takes away the PST rebate and did so effectively July 2004.

This bill also does one good thing and, perhaps by omission, several other things that are not so good around the securities task. One of the 14 recommendations of the finance committee looking into the Ontario Securities Commission was the extension of civil liability in case of misrepresentations in secondary trades under the Securities Act, and this is accomplished in this bill. I commend the government on this one point, for doing the right thing. But I have to ask the government: There were 14 recommendations in total; 13 of them are not in this act. If the government thought that this was a good suggestion, why are the other ones not there? Why is there no separation of the adjudicative function from the policy and investigations function? Why is there no direct order for restitution? Why is there nothing in there about conflicts of interest? Why is there nothing in there about self-regulating agencies? Why is there nothing in there about dealers' associations?

I would suggest that the government, in putting forward this bill and acting in such a quiet and unassuming way under the Securities Act, is paying little more than lip service to what the committee has suggested the minister do. Quite frankly, it is a shame, because I think some very valuable work was done by members of all parties.

Last but not least, section 9 talks about the phase-outs of all the government programs that ordinary Ontarians have come to rely on to pay for this largesse to the banks and to the insurance companies—and I guess to try to get the government out of the hole it finds itself in, in terms of finances. Section 9 talks, quite frankly, in terms of the child care tax incentive and how this is going to be eliminated. This is a government that I have heard on every platform, including the Premier speaking last night, speak about how important child care incentives are, how important it is for people to have an opportunity for their children to be in quality child care. This is the tax incentive for businesses across this province that say, “Yes, we want to have child care on our facility. We want to be able to look after children while their parents work in our factory, work in our office, work in our educational institution”—wherever that might be—“and we want to have a child care facility on-site.”

There was and will be a child care incentive to do that until this bill is passed. When this bill passes, the days of companies and progressive individuals wanting to have child care facilities on-site will no longer be subsidized in any way by the province of Ontario. That is a shame, because it is probably the single greatest thing that an employer can do for his or her employees, to make sure that those employees are not disadvantaged because of the lack of quality child care. It is the single greatest incentive that they can give to parents who are forced to stay at home, who are forced in some cases to go on social assistance, who are forced to take non-productive jobs. If there is quality child care in some of our greater institutions, in some of our more productive workplaces, this would be an incentive for people, ordinary people, to go back to work, to contribute to the society and to be assured that their children were well cared for. This is eliminated in sections 4 and 5 of this bill.

If we look at section 6 of this bill, this is the educational technology tax credit, which was given to ordinary companies who wanted to have an opportunity to hire our best and our brightest to look after technology. In order to offset the monies to hire these people, to train them and to make sure they were fully utilized within the corporation, there was an educational technology tax credit which, upon the passage of this bill, will be history, so that we can no longer look to our best and brightest coming out of colleges and universities, and companies will no longer have a technology tax credit which will allow them to hire those people and to develop technology right here in Ontario.

We have another change, which is section 7 and section 42.1 of this very bill, which talks about electricity supply. This is a tax that will no longer—I’ve dealt with this a little bit, about the PST rebate on energy efficiency. In fact, it was an electricity supply which will allow for companies who are developing alternate forms to be able to have a tax rebate. This is taken away, and certainly will impact some of the newer or changing technologies that the government, at all times, stands in this House and says it wishes to embrace. This is a bill which will ensure

that people who want to go along this route and who are expecting some type of subsidy will no longer have that.

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Last but not least, and I’ve dealt with this at some length, are the capital tax provisions of sections 30, 32 and 34, which will allow for a windfall, a boon, a huge impact on our financial sector, particularly the banks and the insurance corporations. These are the people who will see the overwhelming amount of money that they are presently having to spend for the upkeep of this province diverted and going, in fact, into their own coffers. What they have paid in the past will no longer be their share. They will be divorced from having to contribute to this Ontario, divorced from having to contribute to the programs which benefit ordinary people in this Ontario, and in fact will find that their shareholders and those who have a lot of money already have even more.

This is a very disappointing bill. It’s very disappointing not only that it was introduced, but it is disappointing that it is today the subject of a closure motion. I am not surprised, I have to say, Mr Speaker. I am not surprised that this government has invoked closure on these two bills. They are hugely contentious. They want them out of the way. They want them passed. They want them to be law before we come back here again in mid-February. They do not want this to be the albatross hanging around their neck. They think that these bills, if passed, will simply be forgotten by ordinary people. But I will tell you, that is not likely to happen, because ordinary people will remember what this government stood for, what this government promised, in the days and weeks leading up to the last election. They will remember that they were promised a plethora of new programs that they hungered for, that they dreamed of, that they believed were possible. They will also remember that this government, throughout that period of time, promised them that there would be no new tax increase.

They are not going to see that plethora of new government programs. In fact, they are going to see that they lose very cherished programs, cherished programs like optometry, cherished programs like physiotherapy, cherished programs like chiropractic or child care or educational technology or electrical supply.

They will see at the same time that they are in all ways less well off than they were before these programs were taken away. Their taxes and the taxes of ordinary people, those people who earn under \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year as an individual, will invariably go up as a result of the health tax. At the same time, those corporations, those banks, those insurance companies that make \$13 billion in profits this year will see a corresponding reduction in the amount of taxes they pay to this province.

If this is what this government stands for, then this is your legacy. This is what you are doing. This is what you are imposing today. This is what you are forcing through the Legislature because you have the votes to do it. This will be remembered, I think, for a long time as one of your worst hours.

I ask the government to reconsider. There is still time to withdraw the closure debate. There is still time to

rethink what you are doing. There is still time to look at alternatives, and I know you need alternatives. We know you need alternatives, and we know that the finances of this province are not in the shape you expected them to be in when you assumed power, although you should have known that. But, you know, they're not. They are not in the shape that you expected. But the way you are going about this, the way you are imposing this particular bill today and the closure, what the contents of Bills 106 and 149 contain, are not good for the citizens of Ontario. I ask you to rethink them. If you need the money, please find it elsewhere. Please do not do this to the people of Ontario. And for the sake of the Legislature, for the sake of this venerable institution, which survived eight brutal years under the former government—

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Hey, hey. Just when you were on a roll.

Mr Prue: I'm on a roll still—eight brutal years under the former government that invoked closure so many times, please do not follow in this track, especially in bills that are of such enormous consequence to—

Hon Mr Caplan: What about the social contract?

Mr Prue: I wasn't here, and neither were you, so don't talk of things of which you know nothing. I was actually mayor then.

Hon Mr Caplan: Well, OK.

Mr Prue: All right. You know, I'm not going to get into a debate with the member, although he would welcome a debate, I am sure, because it gets him a little bit of television time, of which he is most undeserving.

I would just like to close with this statement: This government can do a whole lot better. I implore them to try to do the right things and not the wrong things. I implore them, as Santayana said, not to use history and to forget everything about their history—

Mr Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): George Santayana?

Mr Prue: Yes, yes. Yes, it was George.

Interjection: As opposed to the rock group.

Mr Prue: No, no. You did hear it? You did hear the quote? OK. Yes, it is George—to not remember the history in a maligned way, but the history in the correct way, not to try to use it to their advantage, but in fact to try to use it for the benefit of ordinary Ontarians.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I'm pleased to rise and speak to this bill. It is a time allocation bill, but certainly I remember over my last term in opposition, I think virtually every bill that went through this Legislature was done on time allocation. When I look at these particular bills that we're dealing with, these are bills that I believe will accomplish so much good for Ontario that it is time they were implemented for the citizens who need what will arise out of them.

I hear comments from other members about things that it takes away. I would suggest that if there actually were a Chicken Little, he or she would get elected to this Legislature on the opposition side, because it sounds like Liberals are taking away everything, when in reality what the Liberals are doing is replacing programs that have not

worked well or have not worked fairly with better programs that will better serve the people of Ontario. We need to look at the total picture, not just the inactive sections that are being removed.

It is important that we pass this legislation. There are so many factors in it that I think will truly change the quality of life for people in Ontario.

For Ontarians, our budget—we tend to focus on numbers, and the media report numbers. The numbers are government programs just expressed in number form, but in fact they direct and dictate what programs we will deliver.

I can think, for example, of the health care tax that has been criticized, and certainly I had my share of phone calls shortly after our budget about the health care tax. The calls have slowed down and in fact have stopped, because the people are realizing what is coming as a benefit from it. When there is an announcement made that there will be additional full-time nurses hired in the hospitals across Ontario, the people realize that the quality of care will be improved. The previous government described nurses as Hula Hoop workers. We describe them as an essential part of the health care system. We're looking at 8,000 more full-time jobs for nurses in Ontario, home care for an additional 95,000 Ontarians, long-term-care beds, nine new MRI and CT scan sites, and we can go on and on—the seniors' drug program, \$3 billion into the drug plan, and growing at 15% a year.

The issue became that life can be a compromise, but if you don't have your health, you have nothing, so from our government there is no compromise on health care. We did what we had to do to continue to deliver quality health care in this province and to restore the cuts and restore the erosion that had taken place, as the previous speaker said, over the last terrible, brutal eight years in this province.

It is important for the people of Ontario to see what's implemented; it is important for them to know that this budget will improve. I think it is equally bad for a budget—or a non-budget, if we're talking about the Magna budget, best described as a non-budget. It is important that what is in the budget is delivered. To do otherwise is misleading to the public.

I think back to the spring of 2003. The previous government toured Ontario hospitals, promising funding for capital expansion. I can think of my community, where a government member from a nearby riding came with a massive cheque—well, it wasn't a real cheque; it was a big piece of cardboard and plastic that had numbers on it—and said, "We're now funding Quinte Health Care for \$37.2 million for an expansion."

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Now, I have seen governments and organizations that do cheque presentations, whether it's a presentation to the United Way or whether it's the government funding of any program. When an organization comes up with this big cheque and says, "Here's the money," there is an obligation, folks, that there be a real cheque with real dollars that accompany it. But it turns out that this cheque

that was used at Quinte Health Care was used at virtually every hospital across Ontario. You could describe it as a rubber cheque in the sense that it stretched from one end of Ontario to the other. You could describe it as a rubber cheque in other terms too.

In fact, the previous government, during the spring of 2003, promised to fund—well, they didn't promise to fund; they said, "We are funding." The cheque said, "We are funding expansion in the hospitals of between \$4 billion and \$5 billion." They knew they couldn't deliver on that. They knew the budget situation that they were in. They were keeping it a secret from the public. That was most unfortunate, that that tack was taken. There was a total inability, had they been re-elected, to have made good on all of those cheques that they presented. In fact, folks, when they held up that cheque, they were saying, "We're giving the hospitals the money today," and they weren't. They were not.

I know that my community came together and they fundraised their portion very, very quickly—a wonderful group of individuals. They went to industry, commercial enterprises and individual citizens and raised \$21 million as their portion for it, in the belief that the previous government had given them \$37.2 million. In fact, they had given them absolutely nothing. So it was a misleading announcement that took place across the province. They hadn't put the money in the budget. There were no dollars for these expansions. I know that in the case of Quinte Health Care, our government recognizes a need for the expansion and remains committed to funding it. I think it's unfortunate that the citizens of Ontario were used in this ploy to gather votes, but the people weren't fooled.

Let's look at what is going to be accomplished by this bill. Certainly, the lead item that I referred to previously and that others have talked about is the Ontario health premium that will enhance health care significantly in Ontario. We know that if the province is to thrive, it is absolutely vital that everyone in this province thrives. So we need to keep the economy strong and healthy.

We are allowing for northern Ontario—and I had the pleasure of being in northern Ontario last week, where absolutely wonderful individuals face challenges. We've got a little bit of ice and snow here today, and they've had it for quite some time. But what a marvellous group of individuals who believe in their area, believe in their community. Our government is going to allow them to purchase grow bonds so that they can invest in their community. They, like all of us, want employment in their area so that their children can graduate from school and stay in the community where there is that strong sense of being.

We have taken the advice that previous governments didn't. We are going to eliminate the capital tax, because it is very clear that if we're going to attract industry into Ontario, this is an archaic form of taxation that does not do that, and it should not remain.

The apprenticeship training program tax credit: long overdue. We have created a climate in this world, I guess,

where people believe that the best jobs are white-collar, and I've got the sense that white-collar parents want their children going to white-collar employment. All too often, parents who are blue-collar want their children to go into white-collar employment. There is no disgrace whatsoever in the apprenticeship training programs. Any organization, whether it's a company or a province, is the sum of all of its parts, and everyone in this province plays a very, very vital role, but we're facing a challenge in the skilled trades. We're facing challenges in attracting young people into them. The introduction of this apprenticeship training tax credit will encourage employers to take and hire apprentices. It increases it, actually, by 30% tax credit, which will cause them to say, "We will invest the time in these young people"—they don't necessarily have to be young—"to contribute to the economy." I think that's a great move on our part.

The Ontario commercialization investment funds program: Ontario is the centre of a great deal of world-class research. Right in my own community I have a company called Bioniche, which is one of the world's leading companies in research. But once the research is completed, we need to get the commercial benefits of that, which means we need to make investments in production facilities. It is wrong for us to do the research and then see the item produced in another country. It must be produced here, because that's the profit component of it. The Ontario commercialization investment funds program will allow for investment in new operations that are going to take advantage of the research that is done here and will allow the production and profits to remain in this country, all of which benefits our health care system and our education system—a wonderful initiative.

The seniors' tax credit will be increased for the first time, I think, in 12 years. We're going to increase the seniors' tax credit so that seniors, who have certainly served Ontario and our country well, will get some additional tax benefits on their homes to assist them in staying in them. It's a shame that it has gone 12 years before an increase took place.

Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): We gave them a credit last year. You guys took it away, Ernie.

Mr Parsons: I believe the people voted that they felt that was not a fair system of tax credit. That was part of the platform. That was a promise kept. If you want to criticize, you need to criticize the electorate, I would suggest to members on the other side.

Development charges are going to be extended to help fund GO Transit. Toronto is a marvellous city that continues to grow and expand, but at times driving in in the morning, I'm convinced that the Don Valley and the 401 are really—I think the advantage of the 401 in the mornings is that it congregates all the automobiles in one specific location. The Don Valley Parkway is probably aptly named at rush hour; it is in fact a parkway. The most efficient, economical way is mass transit. We're going to allow this to continue, so that development

taking place outside Toronto will be able to fund the GO Transit lines to be extended there and serve it, rather than adding 800 or 900 more cars to our highway system. People will be attracted, and I mean strongly attracted, to the GO Transit railway that's going to be located there. I think that's wonderful.

Waiving court fees for needy litigants is also included here. Justice denied is probably one of the most horrendous things that can happen to a citizen in Ontario. There are individuals in this province who simply have had an injustice done to them but cannot afford to go through the process to see justice done. Our bill will allow for the fact that there are certain individuals who require access to the justice system. We will not allow the lack of money to bar someone from justice.

I am very proud of this bill. I wish it didn't have to go through time allocation; I wish the other side didn't block it.

There is so much good in these bills that I am very proud to be a part of this government, to see the quality of life improved for Ontarians.

Mr Hudak: I'm pleased to rise—well, I'm not that pleased, actually—to debate yet—

Mr Parsons: Which is it?

Mr Hudak: Well, I'm not. I no doubt enjoy the honour of having the opportunity to be here in the Legislature to speak and to address bills and to convey the concerns of the constituents of the great riding of Erie-Lincoln. But I'm certainly not pleased to have to rise for the second consecutive day to address yet another time allocation motion from the government. The big hammer has come down.

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Mr Parsons: How can you even say that?

Mr Hudak: Well, every time I've spoken this week in debate, it has been to a time allocation motion.

Mr Parsons: You spoke to and supported every time allocation bill.

Mr Hudak: I don't know if what the member says is true, but if he wants to throw quotes back and forth, I'd be pleased to do so.

Mr Parsons: I have to go now.

Mr Hudak: Now they flee. Where's the white flag?

Is there one by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal? Let's see; it's a thick volume. I only have, I think, volume one. It's like the Encyclopædia Britannica of opposition to time allocation motions.

Mr Yakabuski: It's volume 1 in a series. There's a lot more.

Mr Hudak: It's volume 1 of a series where members spoke about time allocation motions and gave the—

Interjection.

Mr Hudak: I do. I'm stopping at C with Colle. Ah, here we go. I'm in the Cs. Under the Cs, the member for Don Valley West, on November 21, 2001, said, "How could it ever be a pleasure to speak to that, when that's the normal course of action and when this Legislature is shut down for the very purpose it was meant for, which

was to discuss important matters?" The Minister for Public Infrastructure Renewal—

Mr Yakabuski: The current minister.

Mr Hudak: Look at this. This is ironic or a coincidence. At the beginning of his remarks on November 21, 2001, he said, "I usually start off my remarks by saying it's a pleasure to speak to something"—that's rather funny, isn't it?—"on behalf of the people of Don Valley East, but it really isn't. This is yet another closure motion, a gag order...."

Wow. A gag order is how the member for Don Valley West—

Hon Mr Caplan: East.

Mr Hudak: Sorry. East is east and west is west, and I apologize for getting them mixed up.

Mr Yakabuski: They might change it anyway, because if it suits their fancy, they'll change east to west.

Mr Hudak: Maybe they will.

Mr Yakabuski: It really matters little to them. They could change east to west if it suits their political purposes, Tim.

Mr Hudak: That's true.

I think I've lost my point here. I was going to say it's a pleasure to rise to speak, but it's not. It echoes the comments of the member for Don Valley East, one of many in the first volume—this is merely A to C—of Liberal members who have spoken out against these types of motions. Yet what do we see when they get on that side of the House? Ramming bills through the Legislature via time allocation motions. Certainly, they promised one thing when they were campaigning and they're doing something completely different now when they are in office.

Mr Yakabuski: If we're going to be running copies of votes on their hypocrisy, I've got to call my broker and get some shares in those paper companies. We're going to be printing forever.

Mr Hudak: It's rare to get heckled by one of your colleagues, but it is entertaining.

It's regrettable because I've been listening to the debate and what my colleagues opposite on the government side have said, but I haven't had a good reason why they're bringing in time allocation on these particular pieces of legislation. In fact, I think we've been clear. We're opposing bills—

Interjection.

Mr Hudak: Because they increase taxes.

Hon Mr Caplan: Reconsider.

Mr Hudak: It's pretty clear. There are tax hike bills here before us in this two-for-one deal. I guess they've been doing so many time allocation motions they're getting more efficient at it.

Mr Yakabuski: I think they went to the House leaders' meeting and said, "Supersize it."

Mr Hudak: They have supersized this time allocation motion by doing a special two-for-one deal and time-allocating two bills at once. Then they're calling for them to be voted on concurrently. It should be interesting to

see if Dalton McGuinty votes yea on one and nay on the other or back and forth or flip-flops on the votes.

Mr Yakabuski: He'll probably want to vote twice and vote different ways.

Mr Hudak: He may vote different ways each time, because certainly on the topic of flip-flops, as I said during members' statements today, Dalton McGuinty can perform flip-flops at Olympian skill levels. In fact, today we awarded the gold medal for flip-flops to Premier McGuinty, who has broken some I think now, we calculate, 38 or 39—I think probably more; it's been hard to keep up with the broken promises.

Mr Yakabuski: He's the current world record holder.

Mr Hudak: He is. He is the Donovan Bailey of broken promises, the world's fastest man at breaking campaign promises.

Yet once again Dalton McGuinty decried the use of time allocation measures, but here I find myself for the second consecutive day of debate responding to a time allocation motion. Certainly, it was with regret last night that I addressed a time allocation motion and with similar regret today that I must do so again.

There are some very, very unfortunate, ill-considered tax hikes as part of these bills. Another thing I've spoken about in this House is—and I have not yet heard a good response from members opposite, and I regret I probably won't because they're trying to ram these bills through before Christmas—as to why the mean-spirited and vindictive move of severing off the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, and taking Muskoka out of the definition of northern Ontario.

Mr Yakabuski: Scrooge Bartolucci.

Mr Hudak: Maybe it is Scrooge Bartolucci here, but it's part of Dalton McGuinty's makeup, I think. You look at the OMA negotiations, and there's no doubt that Health Minister Smitherman really staked his reputation on his contract that he'd offered to the OMA. He was out selling it as the deal of century, that this was going to restructure health care, and speaking with some enthusiasm that the doctors were going to say that they agreed with it. But after, I think—and probably one of the most bungled files in recent memory—the doctors voted some 60% against the deal that Premier McGuinty and his health minister had put on the table. And I guess if I have to choose who's right, who knows what's best for health care, between a Premier who breaks all kinds of promises, who says one thing and does another, and the medical professionals in Ontario, I'll side with the medical professions every time.

So back to the vindictiveness. Then, all of a sudden, the response of the Liberal government, seeing their offer voted down democratically—60%, I say to the member for Peterborough. That's significant. That wasn't a squeaker; that was solid. Three out of five doctors surveyed said they didn't like this deal. And what was the response of the government? They did a sneak attack. There was supposed to be a breakfast meeting, I think, with the chair of the OMA and the health minister to discuss the next steps. All of a sudden—this sneak

attack—they tried to torpedo the OMA. They threw this bomb of a deal back on the table and said take it or leave it. They didn't even tell the Premier it was going to be there, and the Premier was there. They were saying take it or leave it. No more negotiations; that's it, no more. They've got to take this deal or leave it—hardball. There was conciliation, and then, all of a sudden, it was hardball. Then, a day later, it was softball again. It was, "Well, I think we're going to continue our conversations on the phone. We've spoken, and 24 hours later we're going to speak." And then today, they're going back to the bargaining table. I'm happy that they're going back to the bargaining table.

Mr Yakabuski: My wife would call him a flitzebogen. He's all over the place.

Mr Hudak: German?

Mr Yakabuski: Yes.

Mr Hudak: Which means he's all over the place. I don't know if German is a translated language in the Legislature, but as my colleague for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke cleverly puts it, he's all over the place. He is conducting health care policy on the back of a napkin from a sushi restaurant. It's the only way I can explain it—negotiating with the Ontario Medical Association while he's at war with the Ontario Hospital Association, and while the health minister is picking on the workers in the hospital, whether it's cafeteria workers, janitorial staff or nurses, saying they make too much money. He's opening up a three-front war on the health care file.

My colleague the member for Nepean has called upon him to go back to the table. Other colleagues here have said the same thing: the member for Kitchener-Waterloo and our leader, John Tory, said the same thing. They have finally taken our advice. But my goodness, they have been all over the place on this issue of negotiating with the OMA. I mean, health care is probably the single most important file that a government would have to deal with. Dalton McGuinty stakes a lot of what's remaining of his reputation on the health care file, and they're flying by the seat of their pants.

Interjection.

Mr Hudak: You are. You've had three or four different policies in about a 48-hour time frame on the OMA. They are conducting health care policy on the back of a napkin in a sushi restaurant. It's highly, highly regrettable, and I think it's ultimately going to be unsuccessful. I don't see how you can bring change to the health care system, as they purport to want to do, by beating up on doctors, hospital boards and hospital workers. I don't understand how that strategy is going to be successful. Maybe I'll be proved wrong, but it certainly runs counter to what they promised they would do.

Speaking about running counter to what you promised, I find myself for the second consecutive legislative day speaking to a time allocation motion, this one, as my friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke said, a super-sized allocation motion, a two-for-one deal, two bills coming through at the same time. It's highly regrettable the government has resorted to these tactics. I have not

heard a reason why they have to jam this legislation through without full debate in this Legislature. Maybe I will, but it is regrettable.

I hope my colleagues opposite will support us and vote down this time allocation motion and get back to debating the bill.

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Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Let me begin this debate by saying that I'm not surprised the government is here bringing in a time allocation motion to shut down debate on these two tax bills, and I'm not surprised because, frankly, the components of the two tax bills are very controversial, have got the government into a lot of hot water and have generated a lot of negative feedback for the government. I'm sure the government is going to be quite happy to be able to shut this down and not highlight the public's concern any more.

There are a number of people who, when they saw their health tax coming off their pay in July, were certainly very angry and contacted MPPs' offices then, many of them thinking the bill had actually been passed. Now people who have been watching the debate on Bill 106 have recognized that in fact this went into effect even though the tax bill itself had not been passed by this House. That now gives them an opportunity to get angry, frustrated and mad one more time about the government bringing in a new health tax that is very regressive at a time when the Premier had said very clearly to the public that he would not increase taxes and would not bring in a premium.

As I start, I say that I'm not surprised the government has come forward with a time allocation motion, because much of what is in the two tax bills before us is of great controversy and will be very negative for modest- and middle-income families. The government does not want to continue to highlight how negative these things are, hence the motion to shut it all down.

I want to deal more specifically with Bill 106. Of the three bills that are being dealt with in it, let me deal with the first one, which is the second-most controversial of the package, and that has to do with proposed changes the government wanted to bring to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.

Specifically, the government proposed an amendment to section 54 of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994, to remove the requirement that a person have a sufficient supply of forest resources before the Minister of Natural Resources is permitted to issue a forest resource processing facility licence to the person.

The point of that being written into the Crown Forest Sustainability Act in the first place in 1994, which was done by our government, was to ensure there would be sufficient timber to supply a mill, and that that timber should be supplied to a mill in the community and not be allowed to be taken to Quebec, or sent to the US or sent to mills that were not located in nearby communities. That was the whole point of the matter.

The amendment the Minister of Natural Resources proposed to bring in through this tax bill would have

done away with that requirement to ensure that there was sufficient supply for a mill to operate, that you just couldn't get a licence and decide to send that timber somewhere else, perhaps to another mill that you owned or perhaps to buyers in Quebec or in the United States.

Of course, that provision in this bill didn't get a lot of coverage, because the main point in Bill 106 was the new health tax that people have reacted so negatively to. I want to commend my colleague Gilles Bisson, who is our critic for natural resources, and both IWA and CEP, who represent many workers in the forestry sector, particularly in northern Ontario, who made it their business to start letting communities know about this particular proposed change and to try to get municipalities to respond by way of resolution to the government to encourage them to back off of this really silly and stupid change.

Joe Hanlon, for example, went before the council in Alberton, before Reeve Mike Hammond, and said the following. I'm just going to quote some of his letter, if I might. It's dated October 27, 2004:

"On behalf of members of the IWA-Canada, Local 2693 (Steelworkers), I am writing to bring to your attention and express our concern to Bill 106, An Act to implement Budget measures and amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA), 1994.

"We are asking ourselves how this government can introduce such an important change" to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act "through a bill that does not reflect the ministry it is intended for.

"By repealing the present subsection 54(1) of the CFSA and substituting it with the proposed language, sawmills will be able to operate and open without having any timber commitment. We should be asking ourselves and demanding accountability from the government on the following:

"(a) How will this change affect communities that presently have sawmills that operate with timber commitments?

"(b) Why would we want to allow for mega-mills, as done in BC, causing the closure of present community sawmills?

"(c) Is this the beginning of allowing raw logs to cross international borders, even though we have been successful in the NAFTA rulings?

"(d) Is the present Ontario government changing positions in regards to the softwood lumber issue as did the BC government?

"(e) Can our northern Ontario communities who rely on their wood supply for their viability afford such change to the CFSA?

"(f) As northerners should we not expect that our local resources would continue to provide local jobs to sustain local communities?

"These are just a few of our concerns. These are the real concerns of your taxpaying population who derive an income from our northern Ontario forests.

"It is ... rare that a change to the CFSA of this magnitude be considered or suggested by a government

without public consultation or through a bill that deals with budgets measures. We encourage you to lobby your government officials and demand the opportunity for public hearings.”

As a result of the actions of both IWA and CEP and of my colleague Gilles Bisson, who was in a number of communities to raise this issue—communities like Timmins, Kapuskasing, Hearst, Kirkland Lake, North Bay, Thunder Bay and Sault Ste Marie—the Minister of Natural Resources has now been forced to withdraw this particular provision from this bill. Good for my colleague Mr Bisson. Good for those members of CEP and IWA who rely on the forestry industry for their livelihood and knew full well this would be very detrimental.

It is a good thing that this has been removed, but it wasn't removed as a result of public hearings on the bill, which we should have had; it was removed because of the efforts of those people who were involved in the industry, who knew how negative it could be and who went to a number of municipalities, lobbied them hard, got a lot of media coverage and forced the Minister of Natural Resources to back down. And I hope that we will not see another iteration of this, a similar provision, in any other bill before this House.

Now, the second really odious detail in Bill 106, of course, has to do with the changes being made to the Income Tax Act to bring in the new health tax. Let me spend the rest of my time talking about the new health tax. I heard the government—

Hon Mr Caplan: You only have 16 minutes.

Ms Martel: I can say a lot in 16 minutes and quote Mr McGuinty a fair bit, Mr Caplan. Just you wait and see.

I heard a number of Liberals during the debate say the reason the government had to bring in the new health tax was because they were taken by surprise by the size of the deficit left by the former Conservative government. They were taken by surprise. They had no idea there was such a large deficit looming out there that they were going to have to deal with when they were elected in government.

I take you back to comments made by Gerry Phillips, Liberal finance critic, in June 2003, when he was down in the estimates committee, estimates for the Ministry of Finance, dealing with the March budget. Mr Phillips asked some very pointed questions that are now on public record through Hansard about that budget and about the size of the deficit he saw in that particular budget.

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Let me just quote Mr Phillips a little bit. On June 3, 2003, in the estimates committee, he said, “I therefore take it that there is a \$5-billion risk in the budget.... So, Minister”—Minister Ecker—“I say to you again, I do think your budget is high risk.” Well, he was right, and he knew about that deficit.

But he also said a number of other things about deficit, because I heard Liberals talk during the debate about, “Oh, we have all this deficit now coming from hospitals and universities and colleges. It's going to be on our books, and we've got to deal with that. We didn't know it

was coming.” Well, here's what Mr Phillips said on June 7, 2002, to Treasury Watch: “Billions of dollars of off-book debt are piling up on school boards, hospitals, universities, colleges and nursing home owners. The province has guaranteed to pay the principal and interest, but there is at least \$5 billion of fairly new debt that does not show up on the province's books,” which of course was going to show up. He knew that and therefore could not say that he was surprised by what happened after the election.

He also knew about savings, because he and the Liberals knew there weren't going to be savings found in the budget and they should not have been making the election promises they were, using savings that were not to be had. Here's what he said on June 3 in estimates about savings: “There's \$800 million of unidentified savings. You just said, ‘We're going to find \$800 million of savings,’ but you haven't identified any of them. The normal savings is \$200 million, so that's four times what you normally have.”

So you see, during the course of the estimates, Mr Phillips, a well-respected member of this Legislature, finance critic for the Liberal Party for a long time, knew full well and made a point of pointing out during the estimates that there was a significant risk in the order of \$5 billion—a \$5-billion potential deficit. He knew that, but that didn't stop the Liberals from making 231 promises during the election.

Mr Phillips wasn't the only one who knew there was a deficit, because on August 12, 2003, Mr Kwinter, also a long-serving member of the Liberal Party who is now in cabinet, told Canadian Press that there was a \$5-billion deficit as well. So you see, of course the Liberals knew that there was a significant deficit. Of course Liberal candidates knew that there was a significant deficit. They knew that before the election, but that didn't stop them from making 231 promises. I can only assume that when the Liberal candidates made the promises they did, they didn't have any intention of keeping them—none at all. Knowing the level of the deficit, knowing the risks that were coming, knowing what was going to come on to the province's books in terms of deficits from hospitals, colleges and universities, knowing what was in the budget—and Mr Phillips did—the Liberals should never have made the promises they did. I think they did, knowing full well they weren't going to be able to keep them, but were so anxious to win the election, they would have promised the sun, the moon and the stars, and frankly did, with 231 promises.

It's really hard to accept hearing Liberals say now, “Oh, my goodness, we have to bring in this new health care tax because we didn't know the level of the deficit and we were taken by surprise.” Not true; not true at all.

Let's deal with some of the broken promises associated with this new health tax. During the election, Mr McGuinty said very clearly, “I will not increase your taxes.” Not only did he say it, he appeared on stage with representatives from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and signed a pledge—a big pledge, a big photo oppor-

tunity—with him smiling away into the camera saying, “I will not raise your taxes.” I’m sure there were other Liberal candidates who were there as well. There he was, smiling into the camera saying, “I will not raise your taxes,” and signing on the dotted line.

Howard Hampton was asked to sign that, too, but he knew we were going to have to raise taxes and he would have no part of it. But that didn’t stop Dalton McGuinty with a big photo op, smiling into the cameras. And there we were, not months but weeks after that was all over, and here comes the government with bills to increase your taxes. First they took off the cap on hydro, so that’s going to raise what people have to pay, but then they came forward with this bill, which is the single-biggest income tax increase in the history of the province. So there’s the first broken promise with respect to this health tax.

The second broken promise with respect to the new health tax has to do with the fact of a health premium. You see, before the election, Mr McGuinty was very clear that his Liberal government would never bring in a health care premium. It was the previous Liberal government under David Peterson that did away with the premium—before I got here, as a matter of fact. But there was Mr McGuinty during the first leadership race of the Conservative Party. Here’s his quote on Canada News-Wire, January 25, 2002—because during the leadership debate Mr Stockwell and Mr Eves had just put forward their proposal for a new health care premium. Here is what Mr McGuinty had to say in reply: “Ontario Liberals oppose the return of OHIP premiums because they are a tax hike on working families, says leader Dalton McGuinty.

“Tory leadership candidates Ernie Eves and Chris Stockwell may want to raise taxes, by charging families an additional \$1,000 a year for health care. I do not,” McGuinty said today.”

Mr Yakabuski: Did he speak with conviction when he said that?

Ms Martel: I’m not done yet. Let me finish.

“Families are already paying for health care with their taxes. Pay more for health care, pay twice for health care, but get less health care—that’s the Tory plan. It’s certainly not the Liberal plan,” said Mr McGuinty with such conviction.

There’s more: “If Eves were Premier, you’d pay at least three times: with your taxes, with your premiums, and, if you have the cash, out of your pocket to get premium service,” he said.

“Instead of looking for ways to make Ontarians pay more, we must look for better ways to invest the precious dollars Ontarians already give us, so they get improved health care.”

That was Dalton McGuinty, January 25, 2002. My, my, my, how times have changed.

Here he says, “If Eves were Premier, you’d pay ... three times.” Look, McGuinty is the Premier and you are paying three times: You pay for health care out of your general taxes; you pay for health care again through the

new health tax; and now, if you have some money left over in your pocket, you might be able to pay for chiropractic care, an eye exam, and, next April, for physiotherapy. That’s if you have the money in your pocket to pay for those services, which this Liberal government delisted from OHIP.

Never mind Ernie Eves, because Ernie Eves didn’t even actually do this. It was Dalton McGuinty who brought in the new health tax and is now making Ontarians pay, not once, not twice but three times for health care services, instead of investing the money that we already get into health care services.

Better yet, here was Mr McGuinty saying that if Chris Stockwell or Ernie Eves were elected, they were going to charge families an additional \$1,000 a year for health care. Well, guess what? Under the regressive health care tax imposed by this government, many Ontario families have the pleasure of paying \$1,200 per family for additional health care—not the \$1,000 that Mr McGuinty was critical of in January 2002; they’re paying \$1,200 a year under your new health tax.

So, talk about a broken promise, talk about a flip-flop, talk about taking modest- and middle-income Ontarians to the cleaners: This Liberal government has done it all with Bill 106. Not only was it a broken promise, but your new health tax severely impacts on modest- and middle-income families in a way that even Ernie Eves and Chris Stockwell didn’t dream of.

Let’s take a look at how regressive this health care tax really is. You have a single mom making \$30,000 a year. What is the percentage of the tax increase for her as she’s trying to sustain her two kids? Well, she will now pay an astounding 24% more in provincial income tax, thanks to the Dalton McGuinty new health tax. A single mom with \$30,000 income, which is nothing to write home about in Ontario any more, now pays an additional 24% in provincial income tax. Someone who earns over \$200,000 a year, a single individual—how much do you think he or she pays? He or she pays a measly 3% more in provincial income tax as part of this scheme brought in by the Liberals. I ask you, where is the fairness in that? Where is the fairness in going after a single mom at \$30,000 and making her pay 24% more in provincial income tax, and someone who is bringing in \$200,000 a year only pays 3% more? That’s how regressive this tax really is. No wonder you want to get rid of this bill and get it away from the public radar.

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Let’s look at how some of these other folks have already benefited and what it really means. You see, the person at \$200,000 already got a lot of benefit. They’re doing very well, thank you very much, courtesy of the McGuinty Liberals. An individual with an income of over \$100,000 got a 35% tax cut from the former Conservative government and another 18% tax cut from the federal Liberals. That’s a combined tax gift of \$9,600. An individual with an income of \$125,000 got a tax cut of 30% from the former Conservative government and a 16% tax cut from the federal Liberals. That’s a tax gift of

\$11,500. Meanwhile, a couple making \$49,000 each are going to pay \$1,200 in a new health tax, while someone with a \$125,000 income pays only \$900. That's how skewed this particular scheme is. That's how unfair and regressive this scheme is for modest- and middle-income families. It's bad enough that the Premier promised he would never bring in a premium; the worst part about it is how regressive it really is and how deep it digs into the pockets of people who can afford it the least.

There are two other things I want to point out. The Liberal Party, in order to try to sell this new health tax, had Mr McGuinty go on the air. I just want to quote to you a little bit of the radio ad: "I'm Dalton McGuinty, and I want you to know that every penny of Ontario's new health premium will go to health care." Nine new MRI sites: They forget to mention that those were the nine announced by the Conservative government and, frankly, one of them has been up and operating in Oakville since June 2003. Meningitis vaccines for children: Oops, they forgot to mention that for the next three years the whole vaccine program in the province of Ontario is being paid through \$150 million of federal money. Every single penny of the new vaccine program for the next three years is being paid courtesy of the federal government, not the health premium.

Let's go back to the health premium: "Every penny ... will go to health care." Then you go to page 44 of the Liberal budget, it shows \$200 million outside of health care that the government is using your premium dollar and mine to pay for. That includes \$113 million in watershed and waste water projects under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources. They're paying for sewer pipe.

It also includes \$3 million that is going to promote exercise under the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. So almost \$200 million of the health care tax that was supposed to go into health care this year is paying for sewer pipes. I don't think most people out there on the street would say yes if you approached them and said, "Do you think sewer pipes is health care?" I don't think most people would think that at all, but that what's happening this year.

Next year it gets even better. Again, if you look at the budget, and this time if you go to page 70 and look at the revenue the government is going to take in from the federal government and the revenue that the government is going to take in through the new health tax, you'll see that next year the government has \$600 million that is not accounted for in the health care budget. I wonder what we're paying for next year? Sewer and water? Maybe a few roads? Maybe we'll get some affordable housing, Michael. What do you think? Maybe we're going to get the government living up to its promise on affordable housing. But next year, \$600 million of the health care tax is not going into Ministry of Health line items. No, it's going somewhere else. We wait with great anticipation to see what your premium dollar and mine, which was supposed to go to health care, is actually going to pay for next year.

Let me just conclude by saying the following—I said it at the start and I'll say it again: I'm not surprised that we're here dealing with the time allocation motion. There are very controversial features in both of these bills. I've just highlighted two. I've got to tell you, the OHIP, the new premium, really bothers me the most. Not only was it a clear broken promise, but it's so regressive and so unfair. I don't know how this government could possibly bring it in.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I'm delighted to be able to speak on this time allocation motion on two very important bills, Bills 106 and 149. I've been listening to the opposition side's comments and speeches. Let me tell you that this government hasn't done what the previous government did to the municipalities.

I remember way back in 1996 and 1998, when the previous government, the Tory government, decided to download the services to the municipalities. Municipalities in Ontario had a shortfall of \$450 million. If we hadn't gotten involved, we would have been more in debt than we are today—I'm talking about the municipalities—because I remember that the intent of the previous government was also to download the school buses, which in my area only would represent \$11 million more. We already had a \$23-million shortfall in my eight municipalities. Beside this, we had a meeting with the previous minister one time—Ernie Hardeman was the minister of that sector; I forget the name of his riding—and also the other minister who was responsible for nursing homes. Their intent was to download 50% of the cost of the operating budget for nursing homes. This would have represented another \$11 million just for my riding. The average was just a little over \$1.1 million per nursing home.

The government's intention was to download this, until we went and met with the minister responsible and the mayor of Oxford and the mayor of Russell. We said, "You just can't do that, because if you do download this, it's really not the people from that local municipality who are in those nursing homes. They come from all over. They are financed by the provincial government, and part of that money comes from the federal." But still they said, "Well, it's job creation within the community. It's like an industry." "No you cannot do that," we said. "Otherwise, we won't be able to keep those nursing homes open."

Just remember what they did: They downloaded the social housing. How much does that represent? It used to be fully paid by the provincial government. They downloaded 50% of the ambulances. Again, that cost millions of dollars to municipalities. They downloaded the property assessment responsibility. It represented at the time \$45 per unit in the community. They downloaded the rural Ontario Provincial Police, which was fully paid by the province.

Mr Yakabuski: Are you uploading it, Jean-Marc?

Mr Lalonde: We cannot at the present time, because you have set a system that we cannot get out of.

You also downloaded the health prevention project that every municipality has. How much does that represent? Finally, with discussion, they said, "OK, we'll keep on paying 50%." We, the Liberal government, have increased our share to 75%.

They downloaded septic tank inspection in the rural sector, again fully paid by the municipality.

The last thing is the agriculture sector. When I hear the people criticizing our government for what we are doing for agriculture, I remember I was here that day when this was announced. On my way down, I stopped in Kingston to make a few phone calls to—at that time, it was the property assessment office in Cornwall. They said, "Jean-Marc, they're not giving a penny to agriculture." In the past, agricultural people, the farming community, used to pay 100% of their municipal taxes to the municipality and then apply to the government to get a 75% rebate. Today they're only paying to the municipality 25% of their total assessment, so it is a loss of revenue to the community. My own municipalities, my eight municipalities at the time—now I've got 10 plus part of Ottawa—were \$23 million short.

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I hear the people on the other side, from Nickel Belt and also Beaches-East York, refer to this premium health tax; I'm saying health tax. I think, like the people are telling me, they have been misled by the opposition. I'm not saying they are misleading the people, but that I'm told by the people that they have been misled.

I was listening to the member for Beaches-East York. He was saying that a father of two children, with the wife and the father—I believe that is what he meant—both working—

Mr Prue: No, one working.

Mr Lalonde: One working. Well, exactly. He was saying they would be paying \$600. It's not true. You better start doing the calculation properly. Let me tell you also that the member for Nickel Belt said the person making \$200,000—the radio station in Ottawa keeps misleading the people also when they say the person making \$72,000 will pay \$750 a year, and the one making \$200,000 will be paying \$900 a year. That is completely false. When I say completely false, it's because I have the right figure. That was just confirmed. Anybody who makes over \$38,000 is paying a surtax of 20% on top of what he has to pay; that's \$600. The one making over \$70,000, on top of that \$750—well, it's \$72,000, it's \$750—is paying a surtax of 36%. You know what that means? A person who makes \$120,000, really, besides the \$750, will be paying an additional \$3,200 in taxes. Would you tell the people those are the right figures? Don't tell the people they are only paying \$900. That is not true. The people making \$200,000 a year are paying an additional \$10,000 of surtax; \$10,000 on top of the \$900. So please give the people the proper figures.

Interjection: They want to confuse people.

Mr Lalonde: I know they don't want to tell the truth, but this is really misleading the people of this province.

Let me tell you also that when we say that we're paying more than any other province, in the province of British Columbia, the individual pays an additional \$648 per family. Also, there's another province that is paying \$1,152 additional. So there are a lot of figures that have been thrown out around here, but I wish we would tell the real truth to the people of this province.

We refer to this special tax for the disabled when you buy a car. In the past, you used to get a tax credit for purchasing a car to accommodate a member of your family who is disabled. We did better than that. There used to be a program of \$8 million; today the program is \$10 million, \$2 million more, of which, in the past, people were gaining that tax credit, let's say \$2,400, \$2,800. What was the benefit to the handicapped people? Zero, because that handicapped person was not able to get in that car. Today we are giving up to \$15,000 of money to accommodate, to do some renovation or alteration to the vehicle and also to the home, from \$2,800 to \$15,000. Can we calculate this? I think so, if we take our pencil and figure it out properly.

In Bill 106, it's really clear. We said that we would help young families. We said that now the vaccinations will be a savings to young families of more than \$600. Just last week, my grandson, two months old, got two vaccinations, and I went to see my daughter-in-law. I said, "Manon, how much have you paid?" She said, "Now it is covered." She saved \$400 immediately. That's just to show you. We have to tell the people what the savings are going to be for young families. I wish that everyone in this room would tell the real story to the people.

We have said all along that we would look after the health of our people. The hospital budget in Ontario is \$11.3 billion. Our health budget is \$31 billion, 45% of our total budget. But you know something? Today, the people of Ontario have to pay for what the previous government hasn't done. It is like if you buy a 10-year-old car that never had any maintenance, all of a sudden you get this car, and you have to invest. This is what the McGuinty government is doing right now. We have to invest for the future, the future of our young families and our seniors.

We said that with that premium tax we would invest for the future and reduce the waiting time in hospitals. In Ottawa alone we have benefited from two new MRIs. This coming Friday, December 10, we will have the second opening in Ottawa at the Montfort, which is in my riding. I'm pleased to say that is the second of nine new MRIs. So do you mean to say that we are not investing in the future of our people?

I could speak for hours on this, because I'm telling you at the present time, again, that the McGuinty government is looking to the future. Today, with the \$5.6 billion that we were left with—the previous government kept saying, up to September, a month before the election, that they had balanced the budget. We got a beautiful gift at \$5.6 billion. So not to cut services; we are saying we will invest.

Mr Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): It is really amusing to sit here and have a Liberal reach across the floor, point across the floor and tell the truth, when in fact we have had a government that has done nothing about holding to the truth with regard to their election platform and their election promises.

I must comment with regard to the last speaker as well, with regard to “the downloading.” He didn’t mention, of course, the tremendous amount of money which the government forgave the municipalities with regard to tax points because we picked up a huge part of the education tax, which benefited, in particular, Mr Lalonde’s area and the rural areas which I represent to a huge degree. Our kids out in the rural area, under the Mike Harris government, got a huge boost to their resources. Ask the rural school boards. Ask the teachers in the rural area about the new special ed that moved into our areas.

Mr Lalonde is so wrong with regard to the benefits which the rural areas received under the Mike Harris government. They were tremendous. They were tremendous in terms of the tax forgiveness which we gave to the rural areas and the cheques which kept going to the school boards. The school boards in the rural areas like Mr Lalonde represents got far more money per student than they were receiving under previous governments.

Mr Lalonde says, “Tell the truth.” Well, he only told half the story with regard to the municipal restructuring which took place in 1996 and 1997. He told all the bad parts but didn’t tell the good and the balancing parts of that exercise.

1700

Mr Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): What are the good parts?

Mr Sterling: There were good parts for the rural areas. Talk to any rural politician, municipal politician. If you know the facts—

Interjection.

Mr Sterling: Unfortunately, Lou, you never did understand what happened.

But in this case, when I talk to my rural reeves from Lanark county, they understand that in a lot of cases they were better off, and they would have been much better off with a Progressive Conservative government, because we were going to take over the bridges, not only on roads that were switched from provincial highways but all municipal bridges. We were going to take on the task of renewing and rebuilding those right across Ontario. That was a promise we would have kept. As Mike Harris always did, we kept our promises.

Interjection.

Mr Sterling: Thirty hospitals. We built 21 new hospitals when we were there. People talk about closing hospitals. Yes, we closed some old hospitals, but we started and built 21 new hospitals across this province, another story the Liberals tend to forget to tell.

We’re talking on a time allocation motion. We had in our Parliaments, from 1995 to 2003, a Liberal opposition party which played a very childish and silly game. They wasted unbelievable time in this Legislature by pushing

every piece of government legislation—there might have been a very few exceptions, but I would say 95% or 96% of the legislation—to three or four days of debate, even legislation where people ran out of things to say.

I served as government House leader. I was sitting on the side trying to negotiate with them to be reasonable. They weren’t reasonable. They were ridiculous. They were silly. Therefore, the former Progressive Conservative governments under Mike Harris and Ernie Eves had to go to closure. We had to go to closure after three days of debate on a small bill—

Mr Patten: Tell them about the rule changes you made to render this place useless.

Mr Sterling: Listen, the rule changes for closure were made under the NDP government in 1992-93. Richard, I know more about rule changes than perhaps most, because I was involved in many of those at that time, and we brought forward some very progressive rule changes.

What happened in this place was that the Liberals, when they were sitting here, acted in a totally irresponsible manner with regard to their role in loyal opposition.

Interjection.

Mr Sterling: You did. There is no question that basically you forced Parliament to act as it did. My job as a House leader was very easy at that time, because the government House leader’s greatest job and greatest challenge is when the opposition actually wants to make the place work. Under the leadership of John Tory, this place has started to work again. We don’t need—

Interjections.

Mr Sterling: It’s true. This place only works when members of this Legislature on all sides co-operate. The government will always co-operate, because they want legislation to pass. They will always co-operate. But what it takes is a leader of the opposition party to say, “We must make this place work. We must negotiate. We must pass legislation. It’s the right of the government to pass legislation. We must collapse debate and agree to shorter terms of debate than are required to bring closure.” That’s what this government has seen with regard to Mr Tory and the Progressive Conservative opposition. We are trying to make this place work as a Parliament, as it has in the past.

I understand that members who haven’t been here very long, and some of the members who were just recently elected in 2003, don’t understand how obstinate the Liberal opposition was at that time. It was very difficult for Mr Tory to convince many members of this Legislature on the opposition side, in the Conservative caucus, to co-operate because, quite frankly, the Liberals, when they were over here, didn’t act with reason. They were stubborn, they were stupid in terms of what they did as a group.

Interjection.

Mr Sterling: It was silly what you did. You wasted this Legislature’s time, time after time, so that you could stand up and say, “The Tories have moved time allocation 67 times; they’ve moved it 68 times; They’ve moved it 70 times.” Big deal. Nobody out there even knows what time allocation is all about.

What I'm saying to the Liberal backbenchers is, democratic renewal, the whole idea of changing how we are elected or changing what we do here, doesn't rest in a rule book. It doesn't rest in the standing orders. It doesn't rest in the statutes. It rests in the attitude of the MPPs who are in this place. You have to act in a responsible manner.

I find it ironic that we still talk about time allocation. It's actually quite natural that the government would move time allocation on a budget bill, because there are some very great objections to this bill. This is the bill that puts forward the whole health tax, the bill which gives us less for more. This is the bill which is going to define the next election. This is the bill that will be talked about in the 2007 election. You will see the ads of Dalton there, and they will talk about the health tax as the greatest broken promise, and we'll see what the people do about it.

This budget bill is perhaps one of the greatest disappointments with regard to people and creating cynicism about our system. I've heard Dalton McGuinty and the Attorney General talk about cynicism in our system. The cynicism in our system doesn't relate to how we're elected. The cynicism in our system doesn't relate to anything else than, when we as individual MPPs and politicians stand up, do we keep our word?

One of the greatest assets we had, going into the 1999 election, was that I would go to the door, and some people would say, "You know, Norm, I don't like some of the things you did, but I'll give you this: You did what you said you were going to do." Do you know what? That held us a long, long way. That held us a long, long way in the 1999 election. That's why we won the 1999 election. I suggest that perhaps it will have an alternate result in the upcoming election.

The other thing that I wanted to talk a little bit about is the budget. I want to refer to page 35 of the budget document. This is the budget bill. The 2004-05 fiscal plan shows a deficit for 2003-04 of \$6.2 billion and for 2004-05, the year we're in, a deficit of \$2.2 billion.

One of the interesting parts about this is the sleight of hand. The government complained about this phantom \$5.6-billion deficit which we would have had if we were in there, which, if anybody has dug into it, they know is nothing but a fantasy. Within this budget, it says that they're going to have a \$2.2-billion deficit. That's counting on the fact that they're going to get this one-time windfall of about \$3.9 billion by a sleight of hand with regard to the stranded debt in our electricity sector.

It's very, very interesting to read the auditor's report, which just came out recently. As the auditor said on page 458 of his report, "We will work with the OEFC"—the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp—"and the province to assess whether this proposed accounting treatment is appropriate." Well, you guys had better have the warning bells up, because to me that reads that the auditor doesn't think this sleight of hand is going to work. That means that if we read the budget of last year and increase the deficit—the deficit is going to stay the same in 2004-05

as it was in 2003-04—where's your management, boys? You complained about a deficit before. What are you going to do about fixing this?

1710

The odd part, when you read the fine print of the auditor, is that what he's basically saying, or what the government is saying, is that the \$4-billion stranded debt, which resulted from the Liberal policies of David Peterson when the NUG, or non-utility generator, contracts were written—basically what they did at that time, instead of going out and finding competitive generation, was sign a bunch of private contracts that guaranteed these private entrepreneurs eight, nine, 10 or 12 cents per kilowatt hour for 20 years at a time when power was being produced, in some cases, for under three cents per kilowatt hour. The \$4 billion relates to the fact that that was overpriced; they were paying too much for it.

The argument Mr Sorbara is making is that these very high prices are going to be reached very soon by the electricity market. Consumers in Ontario are going to have to pay eight, nine, 10 or 11 cents per kilowatt hour. What a way to win. The way to win, according to Dwight Duncan and the McGuinty government is, if you raise the price of your power so high that it meets these NUG contracts or these overinflated prices they agreed to way back in 1989 and 1990, then you can write off this \$4 billion. It's quite a sleight of hand to do that.

I look forward to voting on this motion. There's no question that this is probably the most regressive, and the largest, tax increase Ontarians have ever faced, and it's shameful in light of what was said by Mr McGuinty during the election.

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): It's a pleasure for me to have an opportunity to make some comments on two pieces of legislation: Bills 106 and 149.

First of all, I think people would like to know that in the latest edition of Canadian Business magazine, Peterborough has been identified as the number one place in Ontario to do business, and across Canada we are ranked as number six in the nation as a place to do business. I would certainly like to congratulate Jay Amer, president of the Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corp, which has spearheaded the efforts of late to bring new economic development to the city of Peterborough and the county of Peterborough.

While I'm congratulating people, Neal Cathcart, the reeve of Cavan-Millbrook-North Monaghan, just last Wednesday got elected as the new warden of Peterborough county. I know we want to wish Reeve Cathcart all the best as he assumes the new role of warden of Peterborough county.

Bill 149 and Bill 106 are very important pieces of legislation that we as a government, through time allocation, feel it's appropriate to move forward at this time. I heard some of the previous comments. I served 18 years in municipal politics in Peterborough, but one of the real reasons I was very interested in getting into the provincial political arena really goes back to 1995-96, when Al Leach, a former member of this Legislature, was

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It was rather unfortunate that Minister Leach did not listen to his good friend David Crombie, who was head of the commission called *Who Does What*, which made recommendations to the government of the day about changing the relationship between the provincial government and municipalities in Ontario with regard to exchange of services.

David Crombie at that time, through careful analysis, did recommend a swap of services, but through David Crombie's recommendations it was to be revenue-neutral. But when Al Leach got his fingerprints on the *Who Does What* commission, he changed a lot of the components of who does what and, through Bill 85, saddled municipalities with a great deal of extra expense that municipalities are dealing with today. This government has moved rather decisively—the allocation of the gas tax, the changes in funding of public health in Ontario—to try to redress the fiscal imbalance that was created between the provincial government and municipalities in Ontario.

I want to have an opportunity to comment on a couple of the elements of Bill 149, the Budget Measures Act. One of the things I've heard about from many businesses in the great riding of Peterborough is the capital tax issue. Small business, medium-sized business and large business in the riding of Peterborough have indicated to me—we have some very large ones: Minute Maid, a subsidiary of the Coca-Cola company, and Quaker Oats, which is a subsidiary of Pepsi-GTQ Canada. Those kinds of companies that want to remain very competitive have talked about the capital tax in Ontario and are certainly very pleased that this government has taken steps to eliminate it by 2012. I know they're interested in that, because they want to make sure Ontario remains competitive from a tax perspective with many jurisdictions that they are competing with south of the border and internationally. This is a measure that has certainly received great positive support within the riding of Peterborough.

The other area I want to talk about that is key is the Ontario commercialization investment funds program. Many in this House are aware that the provincial government is funding the DNA cluster at Trent University, which is going to be a world-renowned centre with regard to forensics and the DNA issue. One of the things that is of concern, not only in Peterborough but in Ottawa, Toronto and other jurisdictions, is how do we commercialize the research that is generated through these technology clusters? Moving forward with the Ontario commercialization investment funds program allows world-renowned research that is now being performed in Ontario to get to the marketplace to generate those high-paying, highly productive jobs that we know sustain our economy long-term.

We know that the success in the technology triangle in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Guelph area has certainly been the birthplace of Research In Motion, the umbrella organization for the BlackBerry.

The BlackBerry initiative was actually spearhead by a person from Peterborough, Mr Balsillie. Mr Balsillie's mom and dad still reside in Peterborough. He has been a

very generous donor of several projects to support the Roy collection in Peterborough. He funded the cost to do that. Mr Balsillie's success in the Kitchener-Waterloo area has allowed him to make a number of philanthropic donations in the city of Peterborough.

The other thing I want to talk about that is again a great positive is the apprenticeship training tax credit. Now that I'm assisting the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Honourable Mary Anne Chambers has asked me to look at the whole issue of apprenticeships in Ontario. I'm now in the process of putting together a task force of 11 or 12 people. I'm looking for recommendations of some names from the official opposition and the third party to put together this task force to really look at the whole issue of apprenticeship training in the province of Ontario and how we can improve it.

1720

We have an aging workforce in the province of Ontario, particularly in the skilled trades area, and it's certainly important for the government to have a framework to move forward so we can address those skilled trades in Ontario.

One of the great ways that we can do this is through a very innovative apprenticeship training program, and one of the ways that we'll be successful in this area is through our apprenticeship training tax credit, a very innovative way to encourage businesses—small, medium and large—to take advantage of this tax credit to employ apprentices, in order to make sure we have that workforce down the road.

The other thing that I'm particularly happy about in this budget measure is the Ontario property tax credit for seniors. In the riding of Peterborough, we have the second-oldest population in the province of Ontario, and for those medium- to low-income seniors who will see their property tax credit move from \$500 to \$625, it is indeed a great benefit and something that we want to see move forward very quickly.

I want to get on the record that I believe our tax credit is much fairer than what was proposed by the official opposition—then the government—during the campaign. They talked about eliminating the property tax paid by seniors. I had a lot of young people speak to me during the campaign. They said, "We're young and healthy. Can we withdraw our responsibility to fund health care because the seniors' population are withdrawing their support for education?"

It seems to me that each generation looks after each other in the province of Ontario. And why? The reason that we have such a great province is that all individuals in Ontario take on that responsibility of helping each other. We don't check out of supporting an activity in Ontario just because it's perhaps the in thing to do. We have that social responsibility, which has always been the hallmark of the people of Ontario. It's the hallmark of this government and we look forward, through time allocation, to moving those two bills forward.

Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): I'm going to join the debate. It's not with a great deal of

pleasure, because I'm not too pleased about the time allocation motion.

Regrettably, this time allocation is going to suffocate and stifle debate on two very important bills, Bill 149 and Bill 106. They are extremely controversial bills. They have a tremendous negative impact on the people in the province of Ontario and they just continue the Liberal tax-and-spend tradition. In fact, if you take a look at Bill 149, it continues the Liberal tax grab by cancelling \$85 million in valuable tax credits from some of the most vulnerable people in our province.

For example, they cancelled the provincial sales tax rebate on vehicles purchased by those with disabilities. I received many, many letters from people in my community who were extremely concerned and indicated that this was going to have an impact on their ability to purchase or renew their present vehicle.

They cancelled the Ontario home ownership savings plan—another extremely good incentive—the workplace child care tax incentive, the workplace accessibility tax incentive, and the list goes on.

This is a bill which, as I say, was just building upon the largest tax grab ever in the history of this province, which we saw when the budget was introduced this year. Taxes in this province have skyrocketed by an unthinkable \$7 billion.

I also want to point out that although the Liberals, in opposition, spoke time and time again against time allocation, I just want to do a little bit of a comparison. During the first 14 months of the Mike Harris government, we only introduced time allocation once. That was Bill 7. However, during the first 14 months of the Dalton McGuinty government, this government, despite the rhetoric and the opposition to time allocation, has actually done it on 10 bills and motions: December 2, 2003, Bills 2, 4 and 5; June 10 of this year, Bill 83, An Act to implement Budget measures. So we are taking a look and we are recognizing that, despite the rhetoric, this government is supportive of time allocation. I think it's important to put that on the record, because this was a government that said they didn't want time allocation.

I'm not going to say anything else other than that I want to point out, as well, that there's a very negative impact in Bill 106 as far as the implications for northern Ontario are concerned, in that it takes Muskoka out of the north. I know my colleague has spoken very vigorously and aggressively against that proposal, but it seems it will all be to no avail. It's obvious that the people of Muskoka don't rate very highly with this government, because they will no longer qualify for the special programs.

I regret we're here today. I regret that people in the province aren't going to have a further opportunity to speak to these two bills that have a tremendous tax and financial impact.

I'm going to make sure our critic has the time he deserves.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'm pleased to rise on this occasion. I hear the opposition talking about this whole notion of time allocation.

Certainly it isn't our favourite process to use. Unfortunately, there is a time when, if we're going to be able to achieve and attain what we need to attain when it comes to passing the bills, it's a needed process.

In the past, I remember when I was sitting in opposition, and I believe about 83% of all the bills that received royal assent were time-allocated. What I know is that more than the quantity of time we need to speak on topics, what we need, I believe, in this Legislature—I think everybody would agree with me—is some more substantive debate, rather than rhetoric that flows back and forth, some of it sometimes quite unacceptable, I think, to anyone who is listening.

It's important that we raise the bar in this place and that when we stand up to speak to bills, we actually speak with some substance. Again, I'll say it's not the quantity of time that one spends debating the bill, but what's important is the quality of time.

I want to state that in 1997, the Tories time-allocated—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott): Would the member take her seat for one second. Please come to order.

The member for Sarnia-Lambton.

Ms Di Cocco: Thank you. I'll just finish with this and say that in 1997, the Tories time-allocated five different bills in one motion, and in 1992, the NDP time-allocated four different bills that affected three different ministries. So that's the record. We hope that this bill will be passed and that we can move on.

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak briefly on this time allocation bill, which many people would understand as closure, because it closes off debate. That's what the government is trying to do here this afternoon, and no doubt they'll be successful because there are more of them than there are of us. They'll have their way. They'll be able to limit debate on two budget bills in the Legislature.

This shows two things to me: One is the legislative incompetence on the other side of the House. They've been unable to manage their bills here, so they come to Christmastime and they have to time-allocate on budget bills. They clearly don't have a plan. They introduce bills about pit bull dogs at the same time as they introduce fundamental bills like budget bills, and then they don't know how to proceed, and end up coming back seeking closure.

1730

It also shows not only their incompetence but their untrustworthiness, as they are planning to do two budget bills, time-allocate them, invoke closure on them, contrary to their promises. The people of Ontario, I think, are accustomed to broken promises from this government, but here are two more. We know they number about 230. Here is number 152: "We will make our institutions more democratic by freeing your MPP to represent you, mandating public consultation on all major legislation,

requiring ministers to attend question period and giving you the choice to change the way we elect a government.” Here is the quote: “mandating public consultation on all major legislation.” Two major pieces of legislation before the House, and not only are the Liberals not going to have public consultations, breaking their leader’s promise—all of them ran on that platform, ran on that promise—not only are they going to break the promise, but they are going to time-allocate, have closure on the bills, so there won’t even be full debate on the bills, money bills, in this House.

What do these bills do? On the revenue side we see the largest single tax hike in the history of the province. As a result of that, we see lower provincial sales tax returns now. We see weak employment numbers in the Ontario economy. We also see the Canadian dollar rising rapidly.

The answer to that, which we get from the labour minister, who is here, is labour reform. Now, here is a way to kill jobs in Ontario: Take away the secret ballot in union certifications. The fundamental reform was made during the previous government, basic reform respecting democratic rights in the province of Ontario: the rights of working people, the rights of working families to have a secret ballot.

I’m sure the members here would be outraged if anyone suggested they could be elected or defeated on a show of hands without a secret ballot, but they will do that and they are doing that now—they’ve got a bill before this House—to take away the right of workers to a secret ballot. It’s not good for them—no, not for them—but it’s good enough for workers. So they are going to dictate to workers, “You don’t have the rights that I do,” that they have as elected members of this place, to have a secret ballot when they seek election. It is shockingly retrograde. It is going exactly the wrong way. If you want to increase revenues, increase jobs, increase investment, increase reinvestment in Ontario, that one piece of legislation sends the message to employers, to those who want to do business in Ontario but who have choices—and most of them do have choices—about where this government is at in terms of its view of business and how welcoming it is to investment.

The largest single tax hike sends another message, of course. We know that tax policy is the number one influencer when it comes to investment in the province. Tax policy changes behaviour in the marketplace. I don’t know when the Minister of Finance and the Premier and the Chair of Management Board, the money ministers in this government, are going to realize that when you adversely change tax policy, you kill jobs, you reduce the incentive to invest in this province, and for those who have already invested, to reinvest in this province. In the long term, it is disastrous fiscal policy in the province, and you’ll see as you go along year after year the damage you are doing to the economy, until we will have to fix it when we are re-elected under our leader, John Tory, in 2007.

Collective bargaining—here is how they are handling collective bargaining: “We’ll negotiate with the doctors,

we’ll arrive at an agreement with a group of them, we’ll put it to a vote, we’ll be defeated, and then we’ll impose it.” That’s the collective bargaining pattern we are seeing from the Liberal government in Ontario, and this will get worse. The nurses go to arbitration, I believe, in February. Other health care workers are bargaining. If you look at the university publications from the faculty associations, here’s what they’ve got. They’ve got Jim Stanford, the economist with the Canadian Auto Workers, giving them advice—oh, my goodness—in the public sector. What’s the advice? We should be negotiating increases above the cost of living. There we go: above inflation, above the cost of living. These are the pressures that are coming to bear on the government. And 2005, I tell you, is going to be a very difficult year for those on the other side of the House because you’re out of control on your spending. Your revenues are being challenged because you’re killing the golden goose by raising taxes. Dramatic tax hikes in the province of Ontario and changing labour laws—you’re going exactly in the wrong direction if you want to stimulate revenues in Ontario.

Where is the capital spending? You know, you’ve gone on a \$4-billion spending spree. Where is the capital spending? Where is the spending for the NICU, the neonatal intensive care unit, at Women’s College Hospital? It’s one of the finest in the world. Our triplet boys were there 13 years ago. Where is the spending on intelligent things in the province of Ontario? Instead of pit bull laws and sushi bills and nonsense like that, where’s the 407 east? Where is the spending, the capital spending, on health care? Where is the new courthouse in Durham? What’s wrong with the Liberal government? Why are you obsessed with picking silly things, and then when it comes to important things you say, “We’ll cut off debate”? Bring-your-own-wine. They must be serving wine over there.

When are you going to deal with the important things, the things that matter to the people of Ontario? You know, on the GO train they don’t talk about sushi; on the GO train they talk about the 407 east: “When are we going to get the 407 east?” In Durham region they talk about, “Why are you greenbelting virtually the entire township of Brock?” Why are you doing that to Durham region? It’s Durham region’s opportunity to grow, to have some jobs. The Oak Ridges moraine: Of course we want to protect it. The Lynde Marsh: I did that already. This House did that.

Why aren’t you respecting middle-class working people in Ontario and what is important for them, instead of this nonsense about sushi and pit bulls? Why don’t you look at the important issues that matter to people? I beg you to do that.

The year 2005 is basically this government’s last chance to redeem itself. You’re on the wrong track. Do one thing in 2005—I think the Minister of Energy is starting to figure it out. Do at least this right: Break your promise on the coal-fired plants so at least the lights will be on in Ontario.

Mr Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge): I appreciate the comments of the member opposite in relation to Durham, but I have to say, having been one of the champions of UOIT, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, having worked hard on that, I thought he would have been standing on his feet, applauding our government. I thought he would have been applauding our government—the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Minister of Finance—for their good work with the ministry staff, for their good work with the university to ensure that not only did we follow up on the discussions that were going on with a commitment to allow the university to move forward with \$190 million worth of activity, but actually by bringing the third party in to ensure they had a solid business case, enhanced that by \$30 million—\$220 million worth of growth in Durham. I thought he would have stood on his feet and championed that cause, not complain, not complain; about what his government didn't do all that time, but thank us for what we're doing. I can suggest to the member opposite that what he might want to do is sit tight and watch what good things do—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I'm sorry to interrupt, but I can't hear the speaker. I can't hear the member for Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge. I would ask the House to come to order.

Are you finished? OK. Further debate?

1740

Mr Yakabuski: I too am pleased to speak to this motion. We shouldn't be here, but here we are.

What I just can't get over is the hypocrisy of this government. I look at quote after quote—

The Acting Speaker: I ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary language.

Mr Yakabuski: I withdraw that, Mr Speaker.

What I can't get over is the double standard this government has when it comes to debate in this fine chamber. They went on ad infinitum in the past about how the previous government invoked closure. Well, in the first 14 months of the Harris government, they used time allocation exactly one time. This government, counting today, will have invoked time allocation 10 times. That is what is so wrong here, that is why there is no credibility on that side of the House, and that is why we have a problem getting people interested in the democratic process in this country and in this province.

They have a government where the Premier went on and on, making promise after promise to the people of Ontario through the election period in 2003, and now they see him in a systematic fashion break each one of those promises, one by one—more to come. I suspect that we will see time allocation on almost every bill that comes before this House if we don't deal with it somehow, because this government doesn't want debate.

Let me quote one of their members: "I'm talking about your reckless haste to invoke closure and stop debate, and I have the right to debate that. Are you denying me the right to debate that? Would you stand up and deny me

the right to debate? Is that what you're trying to do? Do you want to stand up and I'll let you speak to deny my right to debate?" That was the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, November 22, 2000, a little over four years ago. They don't want to debate. They just want to ram it down our throats.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I want to thank my good friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for the introduction. Thank you, John. It's a great part of this province and I think more people should visit our beautiful Killaloe area.

I wanted to say that, oddly enough, the members opposite I think do protest too much, because they agreed to this programming motion so that these very important bills could be passed to enact some very positive actions for the people of Ontario. It's ironic that they're protesting this when what we're trying to do with these bills is to help northern Ontario, which was long neglected, with the grow bonds program.

We're eliminating the capital tax, which the previous government said should be eliminated. We're helping to create jobs. I think that's what the people in Ontario are interested in. They're interested in, "What is the government doing to ensure my son, my daughter, my unemployed neighbour has a job?" The apprenticeship training program we're putting in with the tax credit is going to help create jobs. That's good for the people of Ontario, and that's the kind of work we're trying to put ahead.

I'd like to see how the members opposite can say that for the 650,000 families that are senior households, whether tenants or homeowners, who are going to get a break on their property taxes of up to \$625, that isn't a good thing. I want to see how they're going to explain to people that they voted against that \$625 going to the neediest seniors who pay property tax through their rent. How can they say that isn't a good thing? That's in these two budget bills.

We're also ensuring that GO Transit works for another year. I was laughing, almost out loud, when I heard the member from Whitby-Ajax talking about people and the GO train. His government took away funding from public transit, took away funding from the GO Transit system. Then, here is a member of a government, the most laughable thing of all, I say to the member from Northumberland—the Minister of Finance gave away one of the most important assets we had in this province, gave it away for nothing, and that is the 407. They gave it away to a Spanish consortium for 99 years. Was that contract ever before this House? It never was. It took four years to make that contract public.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I can't hear the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, and I would ask the House to come to order, please, so he can conclude his remarks.

Mr Colle: I think I've struck a nerve with the 407. Maybe the former Minister of Finance could explain to the people of Ontario how you could justify—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Perhaps the opposition members didn't hear me the last time when I asked them to come to order. The member for Eglinton-Lawrence.

Mr Colle: I would really like to get the answer: What was the government of the day thinking when they signed that 407 contract? What in the world were they thinking when they gave away that asset for 99 years, with all the revenues from the tolls going to a Spanish consortium? The users—the hard-working, tax-paying people of Ontario—who built the highway now have virtually no rights because the contract that the member for Whitby-Ajax signed essentially took away all the rights of the motorists who use that highway and sold them off to a Spanish consortium for virtually nothing.

They are the last ones to lecture us about fiscal responsibility and financial mismanagement. They are the ones who not only gave away the 407; they spent hundreds of millions of dollars on American consultants to supposedly fix OPG. Where were they when they were watching the public purse then?

What we're doing with these bills is trying to make some of the things right. We're trying to fix some of the things that need fixing in this province. We're trying to make health care workers—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Please take your seat. Member for Whitby-Ajax, member for Simcoe North and member for Erie-Lincoln, please come to order.

Mr Colle: With these bills, we're trying to make our health care system work better for everybody. We're trying to make our cities work. We're trying to ensure that there are more jobs through apprenticeship training.

I know the members opposite are afraid to talk about their years of mismanagement. With these bills, we're trying to make some things right for the people of Ontario, because we feel the people of Ontario deserve better. They don't deserve more 407 giveaways and OPG black holes; the people of Ontario deserve better.

The Acting Speaker: The time allocated for this motion has expired.

Mr Caplan has moved government notice of motion number 293. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please 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 1749 to 1759.

The Acting Speaker: Would all those in favour of the motion please rise one at a time and be counted by the table.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve
Bentley, Christopher	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brotten, Laurel C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Racco, Mario G.
Brown, Michael A.	Leal, Jeff	Ramal, Khalil
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Ramsay, David
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Rinaldi, Lou
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	McMeekin, Ted	Smith, Monique
Cordiano, Joseph	McNeely, Phil	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Meilleur, Madeleine	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Delaney, Bob	Milloy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Oraziotti, David	Wong, Tony C.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard	

The Acting Speaker: Will all those members opposed to the motion please rise one at a time and be counted by the table.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Sterling, Norman W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martel, Shelley	Witmer, Elizabeth
Eves, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Flaherty, Jim	O'Toole, John	
Hudak, Tim	Prue, Michael	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 50; the nays are 16.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being just past 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 in the afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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 / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	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 / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldeep (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon / L'hon Leona (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	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
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London West / London-Ouest	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-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	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 East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	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 West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (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.

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John O'Toole
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco, Andrea Horwath,
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Wilkinson
Toby Barrett, Mike Colle, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Jean-Marc Lalonde
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,
Shafiq Qaadri, Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Michael Gravelle,
Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,
David Oraziotti, Ernie Parsons,
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,
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Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney
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Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,
David Oraziotti, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco
Donna H. Cansfield, Kim Craiton, Bob Delaney,
Ernie Hardeman, Linda Jeffrey, Rosario Marchese,
Norm Miller, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Public accounts / Comptes publics

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Jeff Leal,
Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch, Tim Peterson,
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Social Policy / Politique sociale

Chair / Président: Jeff Leal
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,
Ted McMeekin, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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