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Tuesday 13 December 2005

Mardi 13 décembre 2005

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 13 December 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 13 décembre 2005

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2005 (NO. 2)

LOI DE 2005

SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES (N^o 2)

Mr. Duncan moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to implement 2005 Budget measures and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 18, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2005 et modifiant diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Finance with his leadoff.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I'm honoured today to rise to lead off third reading debate of Bill 18. As was heard during second reading debate, this important piece of legislation proposes amendments to some 23 provincial statutes, and delivers on our spring budget commitments to build a strong economy and a culture of transparency and accountability. I'd like to begin by taking a minute to focus on how Bill 18 would introduce fairness to some tax measures.

I'll begin with lower-income senior couples in Ontario. We are proposing to increase the income threshold for senior couples for the Ontario property and sales tax credit. The proposed threshold of \$22,250 would ensure that senior couples, including couples receiving GAINS benefits, do not experience any reduction of their credits as a result of federal adjustments to the old age security and guaranteed income supplemental benefits. Without implementation of this change, some senior couples would experience a loss in benefits due to the cost-of-living increases in federal seniors' benefits.

As many of the members in this House know, a loss of benefits for senior couples is something that I believe none of us would like to see happen. Every \$1 of income over \$22,000 would reduce senior couple benefits by four cents. This means that an increase in income of \$250 would reduce their Ontario property and sales tax credits by \$10. If passed, this proposed enhancement in Bill 18 would deliver \$2 million in benefits to about 215,000 senior couples. I know that seniors who live in my riding and ridings across the province will welcome this change,

and I hope the opposition will remember this portion of the legislation when it comes time to vote.

Ontario book publishing tax credit: Bill 18 would also introduce a measure of fairness for Ontario's publishing industry. We are proposing to enhance the Ontario book publishing tax credit to increase the number of categories under which children's books would be eligible, from the current single category to four categories that are eligible. Children's books would now be eligible in the categories of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and biography. This would bring the treatment of children's books published after May 11, 2005, in line with the current treatment for adult books.

The last bit of fairness of Bill 18 that I want to focus on today has to do with tax administration for Ontario businesses. Despite living in the 21st century and having access to all kinds of technological advances, some tax administration is still done through filing paper documents by mail or by sending cheques. A proposed amendment to the Ministry of Revenue Act would help to smooth the transition to tax administration by electronic or alternate means. Bill 18 would authorize the minister to approve alternate delivery channels for such things as filing returns, making remittances and conducting business with the ministry. These alternate channels would include the use of electronic forms and e-banking. This amendment would help us to keep up with changes in technology that would improve efficiency in tax administration. We want to reduce the paper burden for Ontario businesses so they can focus on growing, expanding and creating jobs.

As I have mentioned on several occasions in this House, Bill 18 is an important piece of legislation, a good piece of legislation. Tonight, I have outlined some important points to consider as we engage in third reading of Bill 18. I trust that the members of this House will lend their support in passing this key piece of legislation that will help us move forward with our plan for Ontario.

1850

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments? Seeing none, further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this latest budget bill. So often in deliberations on budget and planning for budget we take a provincial perspective, and I would like to focus on a case study, if you will, on one particular community, the town of Delhi, which is in my riding. It has taken quite a hit. It has been blindsided, essentially, by the decline in the tobacco industry. However, there is

some light at the end of the tunnel. There's a role for a provincial budget to assist this community, to enable it to capitalize on the strengths that exist in a town that has many fine ethnic community halls and probably some of the best food you're going to get anywhere. There's an expression: "You can't get a bad meal in Delhi."

Very recently, and this is through some Ontario government funding, there has been an economic study of recommendations made to attempt to provide some innovation in this community and help it get back on its feet. This was a town that has been deep-sixed by a government policy on tobacco, a product that generates close to \$9 billion a year across the Dominion of Canada, at both the federal and the various provincial levels. I feel there is a case to be made for some of that \$9 billion in annual taxation revenue to government to be directed toward ailing tobacco towns like Delhi.

Earlier this year the federal government assisted communities, and primarily farmers in the area, to leave the industry with a "buyout," but a more comprehensive and much more proactive solution is required. As people present in the House earlier today would realize, the farmers, through their marketing board, are now proposing a full exit from tobacco. There's no turning back on this one. We do call on the Minister of Agriculture to continue the dialogue with the tobacco community. We ask the minister to convene a forum to pull together the federal level, to pull together the manufacturers, to pull together the Minister of Finance, who kicked off the debate this evening, and the Minister of Health. We need input from all sides. Essentially, the community, which has seen the writing on the wall, has given up continuing to grow tobacco. All they require now is a resolution and initiative from government to fix the problem once and for all.

With this, as we know, the Ontario Ministry of Health declared war on tobacco, and in any war, people and communities get caught in the crossfire. There is collateral damage, and Delhi is one such community. We can look at provincial economic data, we can look at federal job statistics, but you really need to look at maybe one statistic in the town of Delhi: In recent years, they have lost all three of their new car dealerships. You can't buy a new car in Delhi. That's a measure of just how much money is left in that area, given the decline in their principal industry.

We conducted hearings through the finance committee. It was quite appropriate to be talking about tobacco, and I know that one day of hearings was held in Tillsonburg. Roger Geysens, a Norfolk councillor, testified at those hearings and made a case for continued assistance, not only for tobacco but for other farm commodities. Given that the communities in my area are dependent on agriculture, I certainly concur with his presentation.

The tobacco industry is obviously in a very serious period of uncertainty. Sixty per cent of the tobacco produced in Canada comes from Norfolk county. Again,

we know the factors that drive this: high taxes, illegal cigarettes and tobacco imports.

In 2003, the number of pounds marketed in tobacco had dropped to 56 million. That was down from 81 million in the early 1990s. So we're seeing an overall loss of over \$300 million to the Norfolk economy and to the Delhi community itself. But communities do change and people go on with their lives, apart from the fact that losing a primary industry has pretty well wiped out most of the major industry in the Delhi area. We lost the Delhi foundry; it's now a brownfield site. Harley Smith tobacco equipment is closed. Jacobs Greenhouse is closed. Very recently, Delhi Dodge closed. And I mentioned the other two dealerships. Blue Star Ford, for example, had closed previously. Our agriculture co-op, Norfolk Co-op, is under bankruptcy protection.

There have been attempts in the past. There were two diversification programs back in 1987 to 1992. The alternate enterprise initiative program ran more recently, from 1994 to 1999, though it was referred to as the tobacco diversification program. It was there to try and generate new economic activity. In the long run, when you look back on these two government programs, there really aren't many successes that I can report tonight.

As you may know, I worked in tobacco a number of years ago. At that time, there were 3,200 tobacco farmers. The way it's going now, the projection of the tobacco board is that we may see that 3,200 number closer to zero within a year—a drastic decline in the industry. We all know, most recently, the tragedy of Imperial Tobacco in Guelph, moving out to Monterrey, Mexico, and also closing down their Aylmer facility.

Going back to Delhi again, as we know, this massive economic disruption has had a tremendous influence on the social and cultural life in that community. Roman Catholic churches in the area are in the process of downsizing and amalgamating. The town, obviously, has lost population over the years.

I think what's very important, though, is that I feel there is light at the end of the tunnel. I've known Delhi for as long as I can remember, and there's incredible potential in that community. Very recently, Norfolk county council received recommendations from an initiative called the Delhi Innovation Team. I'd like to very briefly walk through a number of the recommendations from this group, which involved experts from the provincial level—municipal affairs.

The number one recommendation was to keep Delhi District Secondary School open, and beyond that, take the initiative to expand educational and community programs through that particular building. Just yesterday, we heard the Ontario government announcement to bring agriculture back to the high school curriculum across the province. I'm a former teacher of high school agriculture. We haven't seen that course in the province for 30, maybe 35, years. I think there is a case to be made to bring back agriculture, agricultural technology and technical education to Delhi high school.

I mentioned the Delhi foundry. It certainly would qualify as a brownfield site. One option would be condominiums. I know just this summer, across the street, a new block of condominiums was built. Further to the east, King Street presents an appearance of blight, decay and vacant buildings. Again, through land assembly and perhaps property improvements, that end of town could be redesigned.

1900

I guess most important, I made mention of the ethnic diversity in the community of Delhi, the history of this community. My grandfather was the federal MP for the area just after the Second World War, and at that time the Delhi area, in fact his riding of Norfolk, was the most ethnically diverse riding in the province of Ontario—something that would surprise many today. At that time Toronto was purely WASP. The basis is there for revitalization. The Polish hall, the Belgian hall, the Hungarian hall, the German hall, the Knights of Columbus, the Legion, Lions—all have community halls. As I said earlier, you can't get a bad meal in Delhi. I think of the kind of tourism and opportunities to have a good meal in Amish country down in Pennsylvania, and I think there's merit in exploring that for the Delhi area. Secondly, given the ethnic diversity of that community, I really feel, and I think many would concur with this, there's potential to see Delhi go down the road of perhaps a Frankenmuth, as we see in Michigan.

There is potential for this area. They have taken a devastating hit courtesy of government policy. I sincerely feel it's incumbent on the Ontario government to redirect some of that \$9 billion a year that comes in not only to the province of Ontario but to other provinces and the Dominion of Canada. As we discuss a budget bill and the planning and allocation of scarce resources, I would take a position that part of that money be allocated to the town of Delhi.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments? Seeing none, we'll move to further debate.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): I spoke to this at the second round, so I guess here I am talking again at the third round. The bill hasn't changed. I listened intently to the minister talking about how important this bill was. He talked for all of three minutes, and talked about how this was going to do such wonderful things for seniors. I'm sure there are people out there on the television thinking, "Oh, my God, this is a great bill. It's going to help me as a senior citizen. It's going to help me with my income taxes. Isn't this a wonderful party that is bringing this forward?" Except, if you start to read what is in the bill—I don't want anyone to get their hopes up if you're watching this television. I'm here, I guess, to dash your hopes, because what is in this bill is really nothing at all.

Every year, the federal government issues the income tax form. I want to tell you straight to your face so you understand. There are all kinds of things in that income tax form that allow you to make deductions. Every year, every single province in this country tries to concur with

what is contained in the federal legislation that's found in the income tax form that will find its way into your homes sometime in January or February. All this bill does around seniors is that it gives a tax credit for seniors to coincide with what the federal Parliament has already done, and makes Ontario the same as Quebec, the same as Nova Scotia, as New Brunswick, as Prince Edward Island, as British Columbia and all of the other provinces and territories. That's the great thing that's being done for seniors here today: to simply put the law in context with the federal legislation so that Ontario, like every other province and territory, can treat its senior citizens in the same way. I listened and that's what he said was the highlight of the bill. If that's the highlight of the bill, I don't think there's much, really, that's contained in here for tax credits.

The bill itself contains, and he said as well, 28 other provisions. One of the really nasty provisions it contains, of course, is to retroactively kill the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act. This was for people who believed in their communities, for people who believed that their municipality had some worthwhile projects, whether it was building a community centre, whether it was rebuilding some forested land, whether it was environmentally or ecologically a good thing to do. These funds existed that allowed people to put the funds forward and to use them against the income tax and to use them as an investment tool. What this bill does is retroactively take away that permission—

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Heartless.

Mr. Prue: —yes, heartless, absolutely heartless—to last August, which means even if you've invested in it, you have to deinvest in it. This bill was brought forward in November. Three months after people had invested their money, trying to benefit their communities, the environment, housing for seniors and a whole bunch of things, they come and yank it away. We're supposed to say, "What a great bill," because it has 28 provisions. This is but one. The first one I talked about was for seniors. It's going to treat them the same as every other province, which we are expected to do and I'm sure any government would do.

The second one is to take away the cherished right of people who want to invest in ecological, environmental, socially useful things. That's been taken away. There's a provision of the gasoline act that doesn't really mean anything at all to me, because if you read it, it's nothing more than gobbledegook.

In the bill itself, there's something under the Securities Act which doesn't say anything at all.

There's a provision for the Tobacco Tax Act, which I'd like to read again because if anyone didn't see my speech before, the importance of this act is that not one member of the Legislature can possibly understand what it means. I'd like to read it out. I want someone to stand up, and I'll yield the floor for a minute, if you can tell me what this means, if any of you have read it. It reads as follows:

“Subsection 19 (3.2.1) of the Tobacco Tax Act, which came into force on December 16, 2004, permits the Minister of Finance to assess or reassess a person under the Act after the expiry of the time limit for issuing an assessment if, before the expiry of the time limit, the person has filed a waiver in a form approved by the minister. The enactment of subsection 19(3.2.4) of the act permits the minister to assess or reassess a person after the time limit if, before December 16, 2004, the person provided the minister with a written waiver of the time limit.”

Anybody got a great explanation for this? This is one of the 28 great provisions that we’re standing here tonight.

The last one I want to speak to is the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act. Being a person from Toronto who has lived my entire life in this city, in this place, in this largest metropolitan unit in Canada, except for one year when I lived in Ottawa, I’ve watched with great, fervent hope that one day I would see a waterfront in Toronto that would rival the great waterfront redevelopments that we see in the docks area of London, Barcelona, Chicago or any of the world’s great cities that have taken back the waterfront.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge): And Cobourg.

Mr. Prue: Even Cobourg has probably done a better job than Toronto to this point.

What do I see in this bill? I see more gobbledygook. All it says and all it contains is that, finally, they have acknowledged that government, people who work in government and members who are elected have a role to play. So it allows the city of Toronto to appoint one person out of their appointees who actually holds elective office, and it allows the province to do the same. One person out of all of the group that they send down to the waterfront revitalization committee can actually be an elected member of this House. I have no illusions that it will be me. I’m sure it will be one to the Liberal backbenchers from Toronto when that finally happens. But there it is. That’s what’s contained in this portion of the bill.

This is a backup bill to the budget. New Democrats voted against the budget. I guess I have probably no choice—since I thought the budget was one of the most regressive, horrible budgets that I have seen in this House—but to vote against this particular bill as well. I’ll tell you why I said that it’s a regressive, horrible budget. The members opposite think it’s a good budget because you did two progressive things in it. I will tell you from the outset that I think you did. You did some good things around education, and you did a couple of good things around health; maybe not enough, but you did some good things in that budget with it. You did that.

But what continues to rankle me and so many people is what this budget didn’t do: It didn’t help the people in this province who need it the most. It did not help people who are in the most dire of circumstances. It did not help the poor. It did not help those who are on ODSP. It did

not help those who are on Ontario Works. It did not help autistic children. It did not help those who need housing in a great way. It did not help the hundreds of thousands of families who are on waiting lists for affordable, decent housing. It did not help those unfortunate souls who live in the regional centres, whose families dream of having somewhere better for them to go. It did not help the poorest of the poor, and it did not help those most in need. That was the great failure of this budget. That was the failure, and I spoke about it the last time.

1910

Those people who are on ODSP have not had a raise in about nine or 10 years. They have absolutely no more extra money today than they had in 1995. They have no money at all, save and except that last year’s budget gave them 3%. I stood in this House and said it was a pittance. I still think it was a pittance, but at least it was something. At least those poor people could say that their lives had not gotten any worse after 10 years of sitting there, getting worse and worse every year as inflation ate away at the meagre sum of money they got. People on ODSP, for the record, get \$900 or \$950 a month. That’s how much a single person gets to live on in this province. With that money, they have to pay their housing, their food, their transportation, their clothing and everything else. I would challenge any member of this House to try to do it. It is a near impossible task.

A year ago, the budget said, “We’re going to give you a 3% increase.” I didn’t think it was enough; I still don’t. But at least it was something. But this budget, this mean-spirited budget, this budget you’re asking me to support—the Minister of Comsoc asked me constantly, “Why didn’t you vote for it.” I don’t vote for anything that doesn’t improve the lives of individuals who desperately need improvement. The people on ODSP, through no fault of their own, are singularly unable to work, due to infirmity, sometimes age, sometimes a combination of both, sometimes medical conditions that are completely beyond their control and doctors and specialists all agree that they can’t work. They are being forced back into even worse poverty. In fact, inflation since the Liberals were elected two years ago has been more than 3%. So in reality, those same people on ODSP are worse off under your government than they were when the Conservatives left. I think that’s the reality. That is the total reality. The member shakes his head. If only he had to live on \$950 a month. If only he had to suffer what they suffer and the inhumanity of it all, he would recognize that giving them nothing this year was an affront.

The same thing is true of those who are on Ontario Works. Those same people, through misfortune, mostly women and children, are forced—a single person on \$500 a month, a family on \$800 or \$900 or \$1,000 a month—to buy their food, pay their rent, pay for all the expenses, put clothes on the kids and try to make a life. Again, they got absolutely nothing. There was nothing in this budget for them. Those people, those children, those hungry children, are worse off today under the Liberals

than they were under the Conservatives. That's your record, that's your budget, that's what you do. That's what you want me to vote for as a New Democrat. Well, I'm not going to do it. I don't care how many times the Minister of Community and Social Services stands up and says I should support that. She's trying. She's not trying hard enough. And your government is not trying hard enough when your budget can give money to so many causes, most of them worthwhile, but can't give money to those who need it the most.

On the last occasion, I talked about the clawback, something very dear to my heart. I remember what Dalton McGuinty had to say before the last election. I remember what he had to say prior to this budget, that it was still the Liberal commitment to try to end the clawback. There was nothing in your budget that ends the clawback. You continue to take millions upon millions of dollars that the federal government, in its wisdom—I would suggest that the Liberals in Ottawa had some wisdom in giving money to poor kids to bring them out of poverty. If those children are unfortunate enough to be born into poor families where their parents are on ODSP or where their single mother is on Ontario Works, you take every single cent that they would use to try to end the poverty. You take it off them. You don't take it off Conrad Black; you don't take it off of the CIBC or the Royal Bank. You've given them tax credits. But who you do take it off is the poorest of the poor children, and then Liberals wonder. I hear in this House: "How come there's so much violence in Jane-Finch? How come the kids are going out and buying guns? How come these poor children are getting into all this mischief? How come these poor children want to drop out of school at age 16 when we have their best interests at heart and are extending education to 18?" You ask all these questions, but the answer is very simple.

One of the great philosophers once said—I'll think of his name in a minute, but the quote is absolutely excellent: What is the hardest thing for a man to see? That which is right before his very eyes. What you're not seeing is that your budget perpetuates the problems that you, as Liberals, say you want to solve but that you are not solving. When you stand up and talk about hiring 1,000 new police officers—I'm going to vote for you to have 1,000 new police officers if you really mean it; I'm going to say that crime on our streets needs to be controlled in the short term. But what you're not looking at in your budget, what you're not looking at in your long-term plans is why these kids are in trouble in the first place.

If you go to places like Jane-Finch or Flemingdon, if you go to Regent Park, if you go to Lawrence Heights, if you go to the hundred or thousand other projects around this province, you will see that the kids are in despair, that life is not getting better, that this province, which is seeing an economic boom, has left them behind. You have not ended the clawback. The single greatest thing this government could do—any government, whether it's the Conservatives, whether it's us, whether it's you,

whether it's all of us in combination—to end child poverty in this province is to end the clawback. With that one action, you would liberate tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of children from a life of grinding poverty. But does your budget do that? Even though you promised you'd do it, does it? It doesn't do it at all. Your budget does not address the very real problems.

On the last occasion, during second reading, I talked about a wonderful, true, human story that the minister told at the awards ceremony for young black kids where money was given out to them to help them to go to school. The minister told this wonderful story about the kids and how she talked to the principal, and how she was giving out money for them to go to the show and money for bus tickets so they could get there. It was a really uplifting story. But at the end, it came crashing down to me and to Minister Chambers, who told the story. The principal told them that she felt really sad, because although the poor kids were as intelligent, as smart and as capable as any kid from Upper Canada College—and she used that example—in the end, it would be extremely difficult for any of them to actually finish high school. That's what the principal told her; that's what she relayed to the audience. And the reality is that it's true. It's not just whether you have the smarts; it's whether or not you feel, as a young child growing up, that you fit in or you belong. There are many difficulties out there that cause children not to feel they belong, and one of the worst is when they go to school, particularly as they get to be 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 years old, and they see their fellow students coming in with nicer clothes, when they see that they have money to go to the dance or to go to the excursion or to go to the museum or to have a holiday or to have the thousand things that young kids want to have, an iPod—I don't know; all the things that kids want to have. They don't have them, and why don't they have them? It's because your budget doesn't address it. You wonder why they get in trouble or you wonder why they drop out of school, but I don't wonder that.

1920

I had the opportunity to go and live for two nights at Jane-Finch. I thought, having grown up in public housing my entire life—from the time I first remember anything until I got married, for some 25 years in Regent Park and at 3190 Kingston Road in Scarborough—that I would be prepared for what I saw there. I have to tell you that I was not. I was not prepared for the cockroaches in huge numbers. I was not prepared for the mice scurrying across the floor, for the holes in the wall. I was not prepared for the despair. I was not prepared for the absolutely abysmal conditions—leaks in the roofs. I was not prepared for the windows that didn't keep drafts out. I was not prepared for the kind of conditions that those people have to live in every single day of their lives. I spent two days there.

I know that the Minister of Health spent a day at Wellesley, I know that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing spent a day at Moss Park, I know that my colleague from Don Valley West spent a day in Fleming-

don and I know that my colleague from Willowdale spent a day in one of the housing projects in his riding. I don't know whether others did, but I commend anyone who did. You must have seen the same despair. You must have seen it. You must know it. You must want to do something. Surely it cries out in your hearts to do something. Has anything been done in this budget? No. Has any promise been made to do it in next budget, to at least assuage my fears of where this government is going? No. Nothing is being done at all. There is no money for replacement that Ontario, in my belief, owes to the city of Toronto and all the other cities. There's no money at all. There's no money for replacement; there's no money for new housing. Very little is being built. The minister, in answering one of the members of his own caucus, answered that some 800 units have been built since the Liberals came into power and some of those haven't even been occupied yet. That's all. Toronto needs \$224 million just to put into a state of good repair what has been downloaded to them.

The problems of this budget are legendary. People will be talking for years to come about how this government has failed a significant population in this province. You ask us, and the minister asked us tonight, to support his budget, or this addendum to the budget, because it's a really good thing. In all conscience I can't do it. I cannot turn my back on those people who need it the most. I cannot turn my back on those same people with whom I grew up, and who probably still live in Regent Park and at 3190 Kingston Road. I cannot turn my back on those children who I know are hungry. I cannot turn my back on those people who, through no fault of their own, suffer from ailments that make it impossible for them to work, or for single mothers who have no choice except to stay home with their children when circumstances or partners have left them, and make it impossible for them to go out and work. I will tell you, the budget has failed all these people miserably. You, as Liberals: This is your budget. I'm not going to support this.

But I live in hope. I live in hope. I know that next April the finance minister, whoever that might be at that time, whether it's the one now or a new one, is going to stand up and outline a new plan. I live in hope that when that minister stands up, he or she will reverse the trends of the first two years of this government, that he or she will talk about doing something that helps the poor, something that builds some housing, something that restores dignity to people's lives. I don't want to hear any more about how many tax cuts you're going to give to the Royal Bank or the CIBC or TD, or how much you're donating to Conrad Black or anybody else. They don't need it. They don't want it. In fact, all these think tanks put forward by the banks are telling you that another direction needs to be travelled. They are at least honest to the point that they say they don't need the money. You just haven't heard it.

I'm asking you, in your new budget, to act like real Liberals, or at least the Liberals that I used to think were Liberals, and to talk about people who need the money.

Don't talk about the privileged few. Certainly we've heard from Mike Harris and all of his people about the privileged few. Start talking about the unprivileged many who need your support.

I know that some kind of an arrangement was made that I should only talk for 20 minutes. I really want to talk for hours on this, but I'd just like to close with, last but not least, the section about the regional centres. Questions have been asked in the last couple of weeks, and it's been pretty nasty in here. I have been to those regional centres, and I think most of you have too. They are places of excellence for the people who live there. I know the New Democratic Party, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party have all said that we want to shut them down over time and that people should be integrated into the community. I am in total agreement with that statement. The parents of the adults, many of whom are in their 60s and 70s, with parents in their 80s and 90s, are in agreement with that statement too.

Everybody is in agreement with that statement, but what needs to happen first, not after, is that we need to build the infrastructure to move these people into the community. We cannot simply yank them out of their homes—I used the word “eviction,” and I still use it because it's technically correct—with nowhere to go. If this government is intent upon doing that—and it's a laudable idea—then the money has to be found in the budget. The money has to be found in the budget for real centres where people can go from a good centre to at least as equally good a centre. You can't downgrade their lives. You can't take them away from places where they have an opportunity to swim or a park to play in. You can't take them away from the centres which take them out of their sense of deprivation. You cannot do what you are doing without countenance.

You need to do what is right, and that is to spend the money to develop the alternatives before you upset their lives. If I ever saw people who needed help, it is the people who live in those centres. If I ever wanted to help anyone in my life, it would be them and the kids with autism. You need to look to those people, who have no other hope except for you, and you need to make them the priority of any budget in the future. If you do that—and I said, Mr. Speaker, I will be brief—then I live in hope. I live in hope that I can applaud the next finance minister who stands up and does the right thing. I can live in hope that these people will have a better life—a better life that you promised you would give them. If you do that, then maybe, and only then maybe, will I support your budgets.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): It's a pleasure to speak for a few minutes on Bill 18, budget measures, because I would like to try to help out the government of the day on their budget. When they deliberate in their meetings on their budget, they need to put some money in there for the Ministry of Natural Resources, because they are having a hard time living up to their

mandate by looking after rivers, which is their job to do. If this government doesn't give the poor minister any money, he has a tough time getting the money from the Treasurer, I'm sure, to do that.

Interjection.

Mr. Murdoch: Yes, unfortunately this government is listening to the old members who used to be around here. Well, they're still here, but they're on this side of the House.

I want to commend the Minister of Natural Resources for showing up here tonight, because we had a late show and he came in and spoke on the situation. Even though he has it all wrong, I appreciate the fact that he did come here himself and speak about it.

The whole thing started when the Ministry of the Environment put an order on the municipality. They missed the whole thing. The ministry should have put the order on the Ministry of Natural Resources. It is their river. They have a river that's eroding and coming close to the lagoon. Right now, there's nothing wrong with the lagoon—it's not leaking; it's not causing any problems in the municipality—but we have a river that's owned and managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources. At least that's the way it was in the past. Now, the ministry is trying to say that it's not their mandate any more and they've mentioned that maybe it should be the mandate of the conservation authorities. The conservation authorities have no way to raise money to do this job unless they put a project in to the Ministry of Natural Resources. If the Ministry of Natural Resources will say that's fine, I'm sure the Saugeen conservation authority would be glad to do the job.

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We had a study done, which was paid for by the Ministry of the Environment, that said it would take over \$1 million to correct this problem. The government of the day and the Minister of Natural Resources say that we should go to COMRIF. Well, that's a third, a third and a third, and a third of \$1 million is around \$330,000. I ask you, where would the small town of Neustadt find that kind of money? They don't have that kind of money there. It's hard to believe why this government, why the Ministry of Natural Resources would think it would be the job of the municipality to fix a river that's eroding. If it were the lagoons that were eroding, then fine. I could understand that the municipality would have to fix that, because they do own it. But they do not own the river.

As you will know, Mr. Speaker, many times people want to do things in different rivers, and the amount of paperwork, the amount of red tape that you have to go through to be able to do anything in that river—it's all done through MNR. Now, all of a sudden, MNR has a problem, and their river is eroding and taking the bank away and moving closer to the lagoons, and it's not their river any more: "No, it's not ours any more. We think now the municipality should pay for this."

Municipalities across Ontario want to be aware of this whole thing, because it's going to happen when the next

river starts to erode. The ministry is going to say, "No, not our problem. But if any fish die, you're in trouble."

They've brought in a new act. This McGuinty government introduced a Clean Water Act. Well, how can they stand in their place and introduce a Clean Water Act and then turn around and say it's somebody else's responsibility? They've got money for that. They certainly could go into that act and fix this river, fix the bed.

I know there's some time later on tonight to talk about some more estimates and some more budgets. I'll get up again and remind this government of their duty. They are the government. It's just frustrating when there's a problem and they want to blame somebody else.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments? The Minister of Finance is in the House and he has an opportunity to reply if he wishes to conclude the debate.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: OK.

Mr. Duncan has moved third reading of Bill 18.

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 30-minute bell.

I have received from the chief government whip a notice of deferral, and I wish to inform the House that this vote will take place tomorrow at the time of deferred votes.

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting consideration of the orders for concurrence in supply and the interim supply motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is there unanimous consent for the government House leader to move a motion as he just described? Agreed.

I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, government orders 5 through 16, inclusive, and government notice of motion number 56 may be called concurrently; and

That when such orders are called, time shall be allotted until 9:20 p.m. for concurrent consideration in a single debate of all of these orders, which time shall be divided equally among the recognized parties; and

That at the conclusion of the debate the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the order for concurrence in supply for each of the ministries named in government orders 5 through 16, inclusive, and to dispose of government notice of motion number 56.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Bradley has moved—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Dispense?

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): No.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Bradley has moved:

“That, notwithstanding any standing order, government orders 5 through 16, inclusive, and government notice of motion number 56 may be called concurrently; and

“That when such orders are called, time shall be allotted until 9:20 p.m. for concurrent consideration in a single debate of all of these orders, which time shall be divided equally among the recognized parties; and

“That at the conclusion of the debate the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the order for concurrence in supply for each of the ministries named in government orders 5 through 16, inclusive, and to dispose of government notice of motion number 56.”

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. Carried.

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I move concurrence in supply for the following ministries: Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

I move that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing January 1, 2006, and ending June 30, 2006.

Payments for the period January 1, 2006, to March 31, 2006, to be charged to the proper appropriation following the voting of supply for the 2005-06 fiscal year and payments for the period April 1, 2006, to June 30, 2006, to be charged to the proper appropriation following the voting of supply for the 2006-07 fiscal year.

The Acting Speaker: Orders of concurrence in government notice of motion 56. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: I’m happy today to rise to speak to this motion. Interim supply is one of the most important motions proposed by the government in the Legislature. It is the motion that, if passed, gives the government the authority to implement its program, fulfill its commitment and put its vision into practice. Without this motion, no government would be able to implement the mandate that was given by the people. Without it, the political process would be meaningless.

Currently, the government spending authority for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005, is provided through a motion for interim supply which was approved on June 2, 2005, giving the province the authority to make payments for the six-month period from July 1, 2005, to December 31, 2005. This motion expires on December 31, 2005.

As a result, to ensure that Ontario can continue to make scheduled and unscheduled payments effective January 1, 2006, for the rest of the fiscal year 2005-06, and for the first three months of the new fiscal year, the motion for interim supply must be passed at this time. Without spending authority, the government would be unable to make most scheduled and unscheduled payments. Nursing homes cannot be paid, hospitals cannot be paid, doctors cannot be paid, municipalities cannot be paid, general welfare recipients cannot be paid, children’s aid societies cannot be paid and suppliers’ accounts cannot be paid. Without this motion, and without spending authority, no government would be able to fulfill the mandate for which we are responsible to the people of this great province.

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This government is fully aware that we are faced with challenges. I’ll talk about the challenges ahead within the context of our plan for Ontario. The first point is that, unlike members of the opposition, we do have a plan for Ontario. Our province’s greatest competitive advantage is our people. Strengthening that advantage is what our plan is all about.

As you will recall, our 2005 budget set out a comprehensive plan to transform health care, education and the economy, and the business of government itself. We committed ourselves then, and remain committed today, to a new era of openness and transparency in government, to renewed investment in essential public services, to return the province to financial health and to stimulate a new generation of economic growth. Our plan is on track. Our plan is working.

We remain on track to eliminate the deficit while continuing to make essential investments in education, health and a strong economy. Through our balanced, responsible approach, we are on track to eliminate the deficit no later than 2008-09, or a year earlier if the reserve is not required. Ontario’s economic performance has been better than expected this year, and growth is expected to continue, but there are risks on the horizon, such as higher oil prices, a strong Canadian dollar and higher interest rates. Therefore, we will continue to be prudent, focused and disciplined in our approach to our fiscal management.

We will continue to invest in the education and training of our people, better health care, smart investment in infrastructure for a stronger economy and strong financial management. We are achieving these goals tonight.

With passage of this motion for interim supply, we will be able to continue to deliver what we have set out to do in our May 2005 budget, and the list of these investments in the people of our province is impressive. Let me mention some of them for the benefit of the members of this House.

Under Reaching Higher, the McGuinty government plan for post-secondary education, \$6.2 billion more will be spent on post-secondary education and training between now and 2009-10.

We are also providing more nurses, reducing waiting times and keeping people healthy by increasing the number of family health teams, providing more cancer and cataract surgeries, more cardiac procedures and more hip and knee joint replacements.

Our government will continue to invest in children's education, from preschool to high school graduation, through programs such as Best Start and our smaller class sizes initiative.

Since the middle of November, we have held pre-budget consultations in many communities across this province. These consultations, and the comments we are receiving from the men and women of this province, will lead us to the presentation of our third budget next spring. But let me emphasize that our objective remains to improve services that Ontarians value and that make our economy competitive. This is about more than finding savings and moving money from lower priorities to higher priorities; it's about providing higher quality public services. This is a critical step to improve our finances, and improving our finances is a critical component of building a stronger economy.

Difficult choices are ahead, but we will be focused and disciplined in making them so that we can achieve our objectives for the economy, our financial situation, education and health care. We will continue to provide updates on our progress.

I'm proud of what our government has accomplished so far. I am excited about our plan for the future, because ultimately it's a plan that will strengthen the prosperity of our people, the health of our people and the education and skills of our people.

Our goal is to make Ontario the North American leader in the management and delivery of public services. Passage of the motion for interim supply is fundamental in order to fulfill our plan for this great province. I ask members of this House to dedicate due consideration to this motion and vote yes on the passage of the motion.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will be taking our time as a block; I'll be sharing my time with the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and the member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant.

The Acting Speaker: I have to say to the member for Leeds–Grenville that apparently he needs unanimous consent of the House in order to share his time with another member.

Interjections: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker: OK. The member has consent. I return to the member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Runciman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues in the House for their support.

There is a whole range of issues that I wish to touch upon in my limited time. I'm going to be somewhat parochial in the sense that I wish to mention a couple of situations that have arisen in my own riding that I think are indicative of a growing concern across the province

that isn't being recognized by this government in any way, shape or form.

Our leader, John Tory, has been raising this issue in the House, as has our economic development critic, Mr. Chudleigh, and other members of the caucus, and that is the ever-increasing loss of manufacturing jobs in the province of Ontario. As of a few weeks ago, the statistics indicated 52,000 manufacturing jobs lost in Ontario over the course of the past year, a significant number of them in the north.

I've also had in my own riding the announcement of two closures, and I want to speak briefly about this. A week and half or two weeks ago, the Hathaway plant indicated its closure in Prescott. Many of the members, including the government House leader, are very familiar with the Hathaway facility. So many Ontarians, so many Canadians, have stopped in Prescott to purchase a shirt or tie out of the Hathaway outlet, which is part of the manufacturing facility. Hathaway Prescott is the original home of Hathaway Canada, so when you think of Prescott and when you think of Hathaway, they're interlocked, interlinked. This was an enormous blow to the community and to eastern Ontario.

We were always concerned. We've seen a downsizing over the past number of years. Over the last few months, we've had about 75 or 80 employees in Hathaway, and now they are losing their jobs. I toured the plant on Friday. Most of those employees have now left the premises. They no longer have employment opportunities within that facility.

Yesterday, we heard of the closure of the steel plant in Gananoque: 90 to 100 jobs in a community of 5,000. Prescott is a community of 5,000 as well. These are significant body blows to small-town Ontario that are not being recognized, that are in fact being dismissed by the McGuinty Liberal government. We heard the parliamentary assistant last week—and this has become a subject of significant discussion across the province—call the communities impacted by these closures “crybabies.” He said they were crybabies because they were coming to the government of Ontario concerned about the future of their communities. The individual employees and their families, just before Christmas, are crybabies because they're concerned about their future. That's the kind of action and response, or lack of action and response, that we're getting from the McGuinty Liberal government. This is a serious and growing problem that the government does not want to recognize, let alone deal with.

We can get into a whole range of concerns related to why this is happening. There's no question that what's happening on a global basis is having an impact, but we also have to look at Ontario and what's happening within this jurisdiction. What's happening with respect to taxation levels? What's happening with respect to labour laws? What's happening with respect to energy costs? All of those kinds of issues factor into whether a company can continue to be profitable, whether a company wishes to locate and invest in Ontario or whether a

company wishes to grow and expand in Ontario, and in many respects we're losing those battles, in small-town and mid-sized Ontario especially. We're going to pay a price.

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We hear all these glorious announcements that the economy is wonderful. The member from Brantford, whom I consider a friend, frequently gets up and says about these tales of woe, "My community is doing well." It's the old story: "I'm OK. I'm in the boat; pull up the rope." That's the sort of response: "This community is doing well. I happen to be a resident of X community, and it's doing well, so what do I care about Y community and the fact that that community is losing its major employer?" This is the sort of callous attitude that this government seems to take with respect to so many issues that affect people and communities, and all of us, those people who tune in to the parliamentary channel, should be concerned.

We have Liberal backbenchers laughing while I'm talking about this, carrying on with their little conversations. We see it on a daily basis in this House during question period. When members of the opposition, whether the official opposition or the third party, get up and ask very legitimate questions expressing very serious concerns about issues that are impacting people across this province, we get harassment and ridicule from the government benches—laughter. I don't like to be critical of the Chair, but I'm going to take this opportunity to say that the Chair—not you, Mr. Speaker; one of your colleagues—does not bring this House to order when the government members allow it to get into a situation that I don't think any of us should allow to continue to exist.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): Say that to his face, Bob.

Mr. Runciman: I will say it to his face; I'll be glad to say it to his face. We'll all be glad to say it to—

The Acting Speaker: I'm going to have to ask the member for Leeds–Grenville to withdraw his comments about the Speaker of the Legislature.

Mr. Runciman: So be it, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw.

I also want to talk about—and some of these are related issues, obviously, with respect to job losses and what's happening in terms of the erosion of our manufacturing base in the province of Ontario. I've talked about my own riding, but we know it's impacting on a whole number of—I see the member for the Northumberland area here tonight. He represents a riding much like my own. In Campbellford, the World's Finest Chocolate Factory—I believe that's the appropriate name—announced a few weeks ago that it was closing down and moving those jobs to Michigan. We saw recently the announcement by Domtar that's going to impact the city of Cornwall in a very, very serious way—900 jobs. If you take a look at what Domtar employed a few years ago, it was a couple of thousand people. If you look at northern Ontario—and I'm not as familiar with the impacts on northern Ontario, but my colleague Mr. Miller, who is our critic for that part of the province, has

told us on a regular basis about the loss of jobs in the milling industry and the forest sector, really dramatic impacts on those communities in northern Ontario.

That's the sort of thing that's happening in pockets across this province. These tend to be pockets that are having difficulty, in terms of the municipalities, surviving even without these losses, with an eroding tax base and increasing pressures on them. These are issues and concerns to which the government members want to turn a blind eye and heap derision upon those communities that want to express their concern and ask for assistance and support from the provincial government.

I've never seen so many e-mails from this government in the last couple of months boasting about fining businesses in this province. You can open your e-mail and there's a list of these e-mails from government, whether it's the Minister of Labour or the Minister of the Environment: "We fined X business \$300,000; we fined Y business \$25,000." I've never seen this sort of unbelievable assault on business in the province of Ontario that they're boasting about in these e-mails they're sending out to us virtually every day, businesses that are providing jobs to hard-working men and women in the province of Ontario. I'm not exaggerating: every day, open up your e-mail account and it's, "So-and-so charged \$25,000," "So-and-so charged \$15,000," "So-and-so fined X"—significant amounts of money. Obviously, none of us wants to endorse significant violations of health and safety or environmental legislation, but I think this government has gone overboard in its assault on the business community in Ontario. I'm sure they have some people who will applaud that, but in many respects that is a very short-sighted approach to the long-term well-being of the province of Ontario.

We have, for how many years, been one of the few "have" provinces in Canada, and, for the last number of years, one of two—Alberta and Ontario—in terms of equalization payments to support a variety of good programs across this country. But we are slowly and inescapably slipping down, to the point where I'm very concerned about Ontario becoming essentially a service economy. We're losing these manufacturing jobs; we're looking at Wal-Mart or Home Depot or call centres—those kinds of jobs without the benefits. Many of them are not full-time jobs. That's where we're heading.

The light hasn't gone on for this government in terms of looking at significant encouragement for business, whether it's through taxation policies or incentives for productivity—perhaps through capital gains in terms of investment in new machinery to encourage productivity improvements—or through labour legislation. A whole range of initiatives could be undertaken. All we have to do is look at the success stories in this world. Many times, Ireland has been cited or looked at as an example, in terms of how they turned their economy around over a period of years. That's the sort of thing that we have to start looking at in Ontario. We're well behind the curve, and we're starting to see the impact now.

When you talk about globalization, losing jobs to other countries, other jurisdictions, we have to find innovative ways of ensuring that we can keep those jobs in Ontario. The textile industry, with Hathaway moving out of Prescott—they're saying "We're moving all the jobs to India or Pakistan or China." I was watching a 60 Minutes program a couple of weeks ago about a Montreal native who is now living in the United States and who started a company called American Apparel. They just opened a store across from my apartment in Toronto. They have expanded dramatically, and all their production facilities are in North America. These are people who are committed to this continent, to the United States and Canada. It can be done. They found a way to do it and to make a profit, in terms of the way they relate to their employees, the support from their employees and the support they get from state, federal and local governments, the encouragement they get at those various levels. That's the sort of thing we have to be looking at: encouraging that kind of entrepreneurial spirit in this province, not discouraging people from growing a business in Ontario.

Right now, the attitude seems to be that business is bad, that business people are bad, that all they're going to do is negatively impact our environment, that they're going to do dangerous things on job sites. I saw a construction company in my riding, a very small operation, where one of their employees made a mistake. Someone could have been injured, I grant you. But a \$25,000 fine to that company?

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For business to survive in a small community, with a relatively small workforce and a limited number of opportunities to keep people employed, we have to have more flexible approaches to this. Education obviously is a critical ingredient in this. I think the approach, the attitude, the responses from this government are all wrong, and we're all starting to pay a price, especially in small-town rural Ontario. But that cost is going to grow, is going to extend into urban Ontario, the areas where people currently, like the parliamentary assistant to the Premier, are saying, "You're a crybaby." It's going to start to impact on them in the very near future.

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I welcome the opportunity to rise and speak to concurrence and supply. I too, as did the member from Leeds–Grenville, wish to make reference to the economic climate we're seeing in rural Ontario and much of farm Ontario. I've attended meetings very recently in the riding of the member for Leeds–Grenville, at Kemptville. There's a town that has quite a reputation in the agricultural community.

There are some tough times out there. So many of our farmers, whether it be beef or cash crop, tobacco, as I mentioned earlier this evening, or fruit and vegetable, are in a position right now where they need assistance, not only technical assistance and research and development assistance but monetary assistance. The same goes for our supply-managed sector—poultry and dairy—and the

feather sector. Government assistance is there and has to be there at these deliberations in Hong Kong. When people and farmers and farm commodity groups come forward with a request for assistance, I sincerely hope that members opposite would not refer to them as crybabies.

I mentioned the meetings in Leeds–Grenville. I've had meetings with farmers in Sunderland, the Lake Scugog area, Guelph, certainly across my riding, down in the Leamington area. I think all three parties probably met with farmers at the plowing match in Listowel. One question that came up at the plowing match from a dairy farmer—I raised the issue of Quebec and the fact that they have a long-term agricultural policy, that they make decisions as a province in the context of food certainty and food sovereignty. It raises the issue, where is Ontario's long-term policy with respect to food? Do we have a food policy in Ontario? For that matter, do we have a food policy in Canada?

Many of our commodities operate on the Chicago market. If you're cash crop, we operate in a competitive context and compete with the subsidies of the US farm bill. Should we be deliberating the need for an Ontario farm bill or perhaps a Canada farm bill? It can be argued that the ad hoc programs, the subsidies, certainly have negative effects. Our farmers on this side of the border bear the brunt of the US subsidies, driven by European subsidies. It drives up the price of land, for example. But the need is there not only for a long-term program but also for short-term ad hoc subsidies, given the situation in much of farm Ontario, a situation described as catastrophic by the landowners' groups, for example, at the plowing match.

To that end, last night there was a planning meeting in my riding by the local Norfolk-Oxford-Elgin landowners' group, part of the newly formed Ontario Landowners' Association. Two hundred farmers came out to do some planning to go out on the 401 tomorrow morning at Ingersoll and Woodstock. This is a sign of the times, an indication that winter is here, and we will see tractors out on Ontario's 401 at Wallaceburg, at Ingersoll, at Belleville. There is also probably a fairly large group assembling tomorrow morning in Ottawa at the Central Experimental Farm.

Why do farmers have to resort to that kind of approach? They don't want to go out. I mean, today it's about 10 below zero. I don't know whether that's in English or French; I've lost track of temperature measurement. But this isn't the kind of weather anybody wants to go out and demonstrate in, to try to get a diesel engine running on a tractor.

Mr. Kormos: It's cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey, ain't it?

Mr. Barrett: Well, I won't get into nautical terms, but being from a fishing town, Port Dover, commercial fishermen have gone through some tough times as well.

Part and parcel of the economic decline and job losses that we see in much of rural Ontario are the other factors: government intrusion, something I'm hearing a lot about

now with respect to the impending source water protection legislation; concern about the greenbelt; infringement on one's property, and the feeling that the trespass act should be beefed up a bit; the feeling that perhaps the right-to-farm legislation should have a second look. Many of these kinds of issues, beyond the purely economic issues, revolve around rights and freedoms and the fact that Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms did not include property rights. That's something we're probably going to hear about a little later this evening. I see the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has just walked in. That's an issue that both he and I feel very strongly about.

We saw a motion debated in this Legislature earlier this week with respect to supply management. Many of us are concerned about our system of quota and tariff protection for hatching egg, laying hen, broiler, turkey, and our dairymen. We're concerned about supply management. Of course we continue to be concerned about our cattlemen, our beef farmers. As I've indicated, prices for corn and soybeans are right down at the bottom, and our fruit and vegetable growers, even some of our greenhouse growers, are in trouble. That's in direct relationship to the price of natural gas and the price of energy. These groups, through a variety of programs, are asking for assistance. This government should not be referring to people like that as crybabies. All they ask for, really, is a level playing field.

I wish to mention, as we debate concurrence in supply, that Ontario's standing committee on finance and economic affairs will be conducting pre-budget hearings. Hearings commence Thursday morning of this week. It's very important for people across the province who are concerned about job losses in the province, concerned about the out-migration from many of our rural communities, to get on that agenda, to either send in a written submission or to apply to testify. For the hearings commencing in January, the deadline for requests to appear before the committee is Monday, January 9. The deadline for written submissions is February 2. I would encourage people to contact the clerk's office or my office to ensure that they get on the roster.

The hearings will be conducted across the province. On January 25, we'll be in Atikokan. That's a very good town in which to raise the issue of energy, of the role coal will play in the future in the province. On January 26, the committee is in Timmins; on January 27, in eastern Ontario, down in Cornwall. The following week, the finance committee will be conducting hearings—these hearings go on all day—in Niagara Falls on January 30, followed by Sarnia the next day, then Kitchener-Waterloo, and then back to Toronto on February 2.

I feel it's very important for people to take advantage of this particular committee. It's very important for people in this Legislature to continue to attempt to understand that the rural economy is changing in Ontario. Whether they go out on the 401 or show up at a committee hearing, there's an opportunity for people in this province to have their voices heard.

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Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):

Both the previous speakers have talked about many things having to do with concurrence in supply. I noticed that when the Minister of the Environment was talking, the Ministry of Natural Resources was mentioned. I want to talk a bit about the Ministry of Natural Resources tonight and about a river they own in my area. I know everybody here would like to hear about that.

When we're talking about supply and budgets and money, what I would like to do is commit—and the treasurer and the House leader are here. That's a lot of power to have here. If you can prove to me tonight before we vote on this that the million dollars is in there to fix that river, then I would be compelled to vote for your bill.

Interjection.

Mr. Murdoch: No, because that's what we're here about. The treasurer said, "I don't know. Maybe it is in there." If the government tonight can prove to me that it is there before we vote later on, then you'll have my vote. If not, then I'm sorry, I can't vote for this bill.

There are many other things wrong, but this is one of my problems: We have this river, the Saugeen River, that flows through my area and ends up in Southampton, and if a sewage lagoon gets in that river, we're in trouble. I can't understand why the Minister of the Environment would put an order on the township. They made a mistake. All they have to do is take that order back and put it on the Ministry of Natural Resources, the people that look after the rivers in Ontario. I just don't know what the problem is over there. It may be a problem that it's going to cost a million dollars, but I don't understand why the government of the day would want to put this on the municipality. They have mentioned that they can go to COMRIF, but it still is \$330,000 for a little community. They can't afford that. You know something? The Ministry of the Environment built the lagoons there in the first place. Even though they were warned at that time, back in the 1970s—

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Who was in power, Bill?

Mr. Murdoch: Oh, it probably was the Conservatives. They make mistakes too. That's maybe why we're over here. But I'm trying to help you guys out, because you're making the same mistakes and some of you might get left and you'll be sitting over here and Bob and the rest of us will be back over there. If you keep making those same mistakes, this is what's going to happen to you guys.

Here's a river. The river is full every year. A lot of water goes down this river and eats away a little bit of the bank every year, and it definitely is getting closer to these lagoons. A study was done, paid for by the Ministry of the Environment, saying that something should be done. Yes, you have a couple of years; the minister mentioned that he didn't think it was too excitable right now. Well, a couple of years isn't that far away, because that's when there'll be an election, and you guys will be moving back over here if you keep making these same mistakes.

So what I'm asking tonight, since you're doing concurrence in supply—no problem—help out the Ministry of Natural Resources. They can flow that money to the conservation authorities. I have no problem with that. In the minister's letter, he indicated that the conservation authorities were much brighter than the Ministry of Natural Resources. Being a former chair of conservation authorities, I think he's right on that. There's no doubt that conservation authorities have always done a good job in our area and will continue to do a good job, but they do need the money to do it.

Then you introduced a new act, and under this act you want water supply looked after. Well, you're not going to do a very good job of it if you don't fix this river up, and soon. As I say, you only have about two years to do it. As the study said, approximately \$1 million will fix the job. You're doing supply and budgets now, so I don't understand why you wouldn't live up to the responsibilities of the Ministry of Natural Resources. As I mentioned before, if anyone wants to do something within a river, especially a navigable river, they have to go through all kinds of red tape and paperwork to do that.

First of all, we have to get the Ministry of the Environment to admit they made a mistake and sent the order to the wrong place. Send the order to the Ministry of Natural Resources. To help them out a little bit, maybe they could go to their friends in Ottawa. I'm sure they'd like to fix this right now. It is considered a navigable waterway, so that gets the Ministry of Transport in Ottawa involved. There's also Fisheries and Oceans, which is legally in charge of fish, but they've downloaded that to the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Ministry of Natural Resources could go to both those ministries and ask for some help. They're your cousins; maybe they would help you out at a time like this. They may like to get the word out that they've done something good for a change.

I'm glad to be able to speak to this. Sorry I've taken up the time on just one subject, but it is very important to the people of West Grey, to the people of the whole riding of Grey and Bruce, because if this lagoon overflows, we have trouble all the way down to Southampton.

Mr. Kormos: I'm pleased to join this debate on behalf of New Democrats. I'm here in the chamber with Michael Prue, the NDP member for the Beaches—East York, who is a tireless advocate not just for the people in his own community, in his own riding, but indeed for people across the province.

He is going to be embarking on a province-wide tour, speaking with Ontarians, from big cities through to small towns and villages and hamlets, about the chaos that persists in property taxation under the Dalton McGuinty Liberals. And as Michael Prue, with incredible energy, travels around the province, he is going to be visiting community after community where working women and men have had their jobs taken from them by the policies of this Dalton McGuinty Liberal government. Michael Prue, as he travels across Ontario, is going to be talking to people who are the breadwinners for their families,

working hard, oftentimes at dangerous jobs, tiring jobs, demanding jobs, but doing those jobs really well, who have had the rug pulled out from underneath them, whether it's the folks in Bob Runciman's riding at the Hathaway shirt factory or whether it's workers from Ferranti-Packard in St. Catharines, skilled workers making good-quality product who have had the rug pulled out from underneath them or whether it's workers from Atlas Steels in Welland who are still hanging on by their fingernails with the hope that the newest owner of that operation might get it back into production, restoring at least some of the huge number of jobs that were lost.

Electricity prices, first and foremost, are a major factor in these factory shutdowns: electricity prices that this government promised to cap, a promise that was quickly broken. Indeed, what happened was that Dalton McGuinty Harnicked the people of Ontario when he made promise. "Harnicked" is a verb, a neologism, I confess. Look, folks across the province two years ago voted for change. They believed the promises made to them by the Liberal Party and by Liberal candidates and by the leader of that Liberal Party. But on a daily basis, as promise after promise after promise is broken, those same voters realize that they were Harnicked by those same Liberal candidates and the Liberal Party and Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal leader.

2020

It's not as if there's even any shame over there. I shared the shock and disgust at the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation, who happens to be the Premier. People are reeling across Ontario: 52,000-plus manufacturing jobs gone. Those were good jobs, jobs that people expected to work at for the rest of their working lifetimes. Those were wealth-creation jobs, value-added manufacturing. I've said it before and I feel compelled to say it again: I don't denigrate any of those hard-working women and men who work at places like call centres or casinos, but casinos don't create wealth; they separate people from their wealth. Call centres don't create wealth; it's a service industry. Women and men working in a steel mill create wealth. Women and men working in a car plant create wealth. Women and men working in farmers' fields create wealth. And it's these jobs, the manufacturing jobs, that created the working middle class.

Let's understand this very clearly: The condemnation of 50,000-plus Ontario working women and men to unemployment by virtue of the loss of those jobs is a direct assault on the working middle class of the province of Ontario. Those are the people who pay the taxes. Rich people like Conrad Black, alleged to have stolen millions of dollars from Hollinger—I wonder who he's going to share his cell with.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Radler.

Mr. Kormos: Mr. Bradley interjects, and is now appropriately on the Hansard.

You see, really rich people like Conrad Black, who hosted the multi-million dollar soiree, whose wife, Babs Amiel, was laden down with Louis Vuitton and who was

tripping over her Pradas, all those monies were the property of the shareholders of Hollinger. So here we are, millions of dollars later. Conrad Black has got the loot; let's just hope that he does the time. I can't wait to find out what the Sun reveals as his prison nickname.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): In the States, at least, he'd serve the time there.

Mr. Kormos: By all means, Mr. Prue. Well, no. I'm concerned that, whether he should serve the time in Canada or the United States—no, you see, he's not a Canadian citizen. He had no use for Canada, because he wanted to be milord. But all of a sudden now, milord's orifice is twitching, and the prospect of doing time in Attica with some of the big boys has got Milord Black grovelling and wanting to get his Canadian citizenship back. That's as an aside. The wonderful thing about concurrence in supply is that this is unfettered country, ain't it, Speaker? The sky's the limit.

I'm going to get to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation in due course. But I'm not finished yet with the corporate thieves, the Conrad Blacks of North America and the world. He wants his Canadian citizenship back? Oh, please. Line up, pal. Quite frankly, I don't see why we should even be letting the guy into the country when he's facing criminal charges and is on some sort of release order from a Chicago-based court. Do we really let people like that across the border into Canada? I trust that we've got better border security than would allow people like Conrad Black into the country. I expect the sisters and brothers working at the Peace Bridge or the Rainbow Bridge down in Niagara region, when Conrad Black shows up in that chauffeured Maybach—that's a really expensive car—to say, "No. Sorry. We don't let people like you into Canada. You are charged with major, serious crimes and out on some sort of release order."

Mr. Mario Sergio (York West): Persona non grata.

Mr. Kormos: As the member from York West says, now in the Hansard, "You are persona non grata." See, the member from York West shares my disdain for Conrad Black, has no use for him, no time for him.

Conrad Black will be dealt with by the American justice system. I won't shed any tears when he does time. I just do hope that he has to share a cell. Perhaps they can put him into one of those four-person cells so he'll have even more friends. Lord knows, we wouldn't want Conrad Black to be without friendship when he's in prison, would we? To spend however many years that he'll spend without companionship would be inappropriate.

But do you know what folks down where I come from find inappropriate? When the parliamentary assistant to the Premier refers to the 50,000-plus people who have had their good jobs taken from them as crybabies because they've come to government expecting government to do something about the massive job loss here in Ontario. I read the Hansard, and the member from Markham, the parliamentary assistant to the Premier, dismisses these hard-working women and men who have lost their jobs

as crybabies: "Quit your whining. Why don't you get a job?" They had jobs, and those jobs have been taken from them and their communities by this government's policies. Then the same parliamentary assistant, the member from Markham, goes outside in the scrum and justifies his comments. Do you remember that, Mr. Prue? He justifies his comments and then apologizes. I'm sure the script was written by the Premier's office.

2030

Apologies don't cut it with families who have seen their last paycheque. Do you realize how incredibly easy it to be making \$45,000-a-year and then 12 months later to be on welfare? It's not hard at all, after what Paul Martin did to the EI fund, unemployment insurance, and its assets; he raided that the same way that Conrad Black raided Dominion stores' pension fund. Do you realize that in one year, you can move from a \$45,000 a year industrial job—\$55,000, if you're working overtime at the right place—to being on welfare? The EI, the employment insurance, the unemployment insurance, the pogeys, doesn't last a year. If you've got kids in college and university, the savings are gone. Not only are the savings gone, but if you've got a couple of kids in college and university, you've put a mortgage on the house again, even though you paid off the original mortgage 10 or 15 years earlier.

If you're really, really, really lucky, you get one of those \$8.50-an-hour jobs pumping gas, working in the car wash, working as the security guard at Kmart. If you're not really, really, really lucky, you end up on welfare, on the dole, not because you did anything wrong but because you did everything right, because you believed in the system. You believed that if you worked hard, if you did your job—and these people did do their jobs—and invested in your community by building a home and paying it off, and invested in your community's future by sending your kid or kids to college and university—welfare in the course of one year. I've seen it happen. I've seen it happen, not only in the communities that we live in down in Niagara but in other parts of Ontario as well.

Some of those as many as 55,000 people who've lost their jobs under the Liberal watch may land on their feet. Most will land on their knees. Some will land flat out, never to get up again. And the member from Markham, the Liberal parliamentary assistant to the Premier, calls them crybabies? They don't earn \$95,000 or \$100,000 a year like the parliamentary assistant does. They don't have the staff budget that allows them to have an executive assistant here and another minion over there. They don't have the luxury of saying, "I was up late last night and I'm really tired, so I think I'll show up at Queen's Park at 10 this morning." These workers don't have that luxury. The parliamentary assistant to the Premier calls working women and men who lose their jobs, who are struck to the ground, whose lives are shattered, crybabies. I say shame on him. Shame on him. Shame on the Premier for not reeling him in.

Earlier today, I had occasion to ask the Attorney General during question period about the crisis in Peel in our courts, about the inadequate standards for court translators, interpreters, working in those criminal courts, amongst others, and the observations of justice Casey Hill about the miscarriages of justice caused by those inadequately trained interpreters and translators. That's under this government, under the Liberal watch, that Canadians for whom the first language isn't English are being denied the most fundamental access to justice because this government has no concern about ensuring that there are effective and accurate translation services.

I had a reporter—Jim Bradley knows him well—Doug Draper, call me from Niagara today, because the regional municipality of Niagara, like so many other cities across Ontario, just registered another concern about the shortage of justices of the peace. What's happening is that we don't have enough justices of the peace. There has been a crisis. This government, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, and its Attorney General, Michael Bryant, have known about it and have done nothing in response.

What does it mean to have a shortage of justices of the peace? It means that numerous charges are going to be tossed out of provincial offences court. If it were just parking tickets, one shouldn't be that concerned. But do you understand that in provincial offences court, these same justices of the peace hear charges under occupational health and other legislation when workers are injured, maimed and killed? They hear trials involving environmental concerns, where rivers are poisoned and the air is made toxic. They deal with serious Highway Traffic Act offences wherein there may well have been fatalities. So Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are going to sit disdainfully by while serious charges get tossed from our provincial offences court because this government won't appoint adequate numbers of justices of the peace.

Let's understand yet another implication of a shortage of justices of the peace, and that is that the ones who are working in our courts have huge dockets. They're the ones that hear bail hearings. When you've got a shortage of justices of the peace hearing huge dockets, which means huge lists of matters on any given day, they do what they can to accelerate things, to speed things up. That's just for their own sake or for the sake of the court staff, for the sake of prosecutors, police and so on. Is it any wonder that some serious errors are being made when it comes to releases of people charged with very serious offences, including offences like walking around a shopping plaza carrying a loaded gun? Do you remember that one? Then about two weeks later, he was charged with killing the guy at the car dealership. He was busted in the first instance. Bob Runciman has raised this countless times in the Legislature. The guy is busted in a public shopping plaza, full of people, with a loaded handgun, and the justice of the peace releases him. It's incomprehensible. The Attorney General never appealed that release order. Two weeks later—I'm not saying the guy did it, because of course the presumption of inno-

cence applies, doesn't it?—he's busted again, charged with a cold-blooded murder.

What's even more interesting is how this government Harnicked Mr. Draper. Mr. Draper, in writing this story and preparing for it, of course called me, but he called the government as well. He called the Attorney General's ministry. He spoke with one Brendan Crawley, a name familiar to any of us who see the press releases. He's the communications person for the Ministry of the Attorney General. Folks might be interested in what the Ministry of the Attorney General had to say about the shortage of justices of the peace: It was because Bill 14 wasn't passed yet. Bill 14 hasn't even been called. Furthermore, Bill 14 has nothing in it that will facilitate the Attorney General appointing justices of the peace.

I can understand Liberals Harnicking about minor matters. I can understand Liberals Harnicking about irrelevant matters. I can even understand Liberals Harnicking us in the opposition, because I'm convinced they do it on a daily basis. But for the Liberals to Harnick a member of the media in that outrageous manner shows the same sort of disdain—think about it—as the member for Markham shows for workers who have lost their manufacturing jobs, the same sort of arrogance, the same sort of “I've got the foreman's job at last; the working class can ... go pound salt.” I'd appreciate an ellipsis inserted before the “go pound salt” to imply that I was contemplating another termination to that phrase. This is the Liberal approach: “I've got the foreman's job at last; the working class can ... go pound salt.”

2040

Why doesn't the Attorney General just admit that this government has failed miserably when it comes to adequate staffing and resourcing of our court system; that the release of a guy caught carrying a loaded handgun in a crowded shopping mall is as much due to overloaded court dockets and the JP shortage as it is to anything else; that the arrogance and disdain and the incredible weaseliness of the language of the parliamentary assistant to the Premier—you see, the Minister of Research and Innovation is also the Premier. Premier/Minister of Research and Innovation—oxymoronic. You see, the Premier tolerates this. The Premier seems to think that this is just fine. Just apologize: “Oops, I'm sorry.” Maybe that's all this guy with the loaded gun has to do: “Oops, I'm sorry.” Or if he did in fact shoot the guy in the car dealership, “Oops, I'm sorry.”

You're talking about 50,000-plus families who are having the rug pulled out from underneath them, whose kids are risking not being able to finish college and university, whose moms and dads could well find themselves on welfare after a lifetime of working hard, of being part of that working middle class.

Needless to say, I'm not very impressed with this government's performance so far. I'm hard pressed to sing its praises when in fact it should start to show some accountability for its deficits and shortcomings, because real lives are being hurt in the process.

I'm going to yield the floor, because I know that when the next round comes, my colleague Mr. Prue will be doing rotation. My colleague will want to wrap up this debate with the final five minutes.

Mr. Prue: I guess maybe I'm going to close the debate in the last five minutes. I don't know whether the members opposite want to debate this bill. You know, I have a little bit of empathy for them, having been in government myself. Interim supply motions are not one of those things that really grab a lot of people.

Mr. Kormos: I always get excited.

Mr. Prue: Yes, I know. My colleague from Niagara Centre gets excited about it because he gets to say anything he wants.

But the reality of an interim supply motion is that the government requires money to keep the ordinary business of government going every day. The civil servants need to be paid, the debts need to be paid, the money has to flow through 100 different government departments. We all realize what that's about. The government needs to pass the motion, otherwise everything would come grinding to a halt on December 31. Now, many people might think that is a good idea, might think that would be a fine thing, because this government has really not done the kind of job that we expected from them.

I remember those heady days after the last election. They weren't very good for New Democrats, but they were hugely good for Liberals. Liberals were so brimming full of confidence about how you were going to change things and make things better for everybody. Most of you sitting over there, after two years, must be more than a little disappointed about where you've come from, what you've done, what you've accomplished and what you can hope to do in the remaining two years. There's still some time to turn it around, still time to go back to those heady dreams you had two years ago and make them a reality. There's still time, but whether you choose to do so or not, I guess, is entirely up to you.

I've got three minutes. I just want to go back to the thing about the 52,000 jobs. I spoke about that the other day. There was a bit of a confrontation between me and one of the government ministers, so I got a bit off topic and then went back and explored another avenue. But it's about the reality of what happens inside a family when the chief breadwinner or one of the breadwinners loses his or her job. Have you ever been in such a family? I think some of you probably have, when you're a kid and your parent comes home and says, "I lost my job today." Do you remember it? Can you think about it? Can you think about how the family felt? Oftentimes, it's not their fault. We have all had people come into our office—I'm sure you have too—where a giant company like IBM downsizes and people who thought they had marketable skills and were set for life because they understood how computers work found out that their job had been downsized, had been farmed out and was now being done by somebody in another country for one third the salary. I've talked to those people. I've tried to help them find another job. They are totally and completely devastated.

If ever they needed a government, if ever they needed a program to get back on their feet, those are the people who need it. I haven't heard this government talking about those kinds of programs. I haven't heard anybody say anything about it except in the most general terms about how we have to help them or how the employment insurance program will do or about how they can eventually apply for welfare.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): What do you think the LMDA is about?

Mr. Prue: The member opposite asks what I think the LMDA is about. The member who sits beside her calls people crybabies, and she has the nerve to ask me these questions. I am telling you that the government program needs to look after those people who find themselves in difficult circumstances. You need to do it because people, through no fault of their own, find themselves downsized. They find their company folding up and moving to Mexico. They find that their skills are no longer necessary. They find that, after 20 or 30 years committed to a particular place to work, it's not there any more.

On the last occasion, I mentioned something, and I want to put this idea to you again. The last government, the one you replaced, took away benefits to people on ODSP or on general welfare who were between 60 and 65. It used to be topped up. I'm telling you that you need to look at that program again, because of the 52,000 people who have found themselves suddenly unemployed in Ontario this year, a great many of them are between 60 and 65 years of age. The chances of them finding another job through the beloved LMD agreement are remote at best. When the employment insurance runs out, as it will, there needs to be another program. I suggest you look to reinstate that program that was brutally taken away by the last government, because thousands of people in this province are in desperate need of your bringing something like that back.

The Acting Speaker: That concludes the debate.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. 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. The motion is carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. 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. The motion is carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Natural Resources. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. 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. The motion is carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. 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. Carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. 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. The motion is carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Transportation. 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. The motion is carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education. 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. The motion is carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy. 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. The motion is carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. 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. The motion is carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved government notice of motion number 56. 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, and that motion carries as well.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that the House be adjourned.

The Acting Speaker: The government House leader has moved the adjournment of the House. 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.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 2054.

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