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of Ontario  
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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 6 December 2005**

**Mardi 6 décembre 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 6 December 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 6 décembre 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like unanimous consent to stand down my late show from tonight until next Tuesday night, if that is permissible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Murdoch has asked for unanimous consent to move his late show from tonight to next Tuesday night. Agreed? Agreed.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### VETERANS

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** This month marks the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the valiant Canadians who were taken prisoner after fighting in the defence of Hong Kong.

I'm proud to say that approximately 200 students, staff and family members from Durham region joined veterans of the Hong Kong campaign in paying their respects. The government of Canada delegation included six Second World War veterans and members of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association. The veterans included Robert "Flash" Clayton, Philip Doddridge, Gerry Gerrard, George MacDonnell, Douglas Rees and Ed Shayler.

In November 1941, Canada sent 1,975 soldiers to help garrison the British colony of Hong Kong. On December 11, 1941, they became the first Canadian troops to fight in the Second World War. Sadly, more than 550 Canadians died in the battle or in Japanese prisoner of war camps. In this Year of the Veteran, I would like to pay tribute to the veterans who served in the defence of Hong Kong and, indeed, all veterans.

I would also like to commend the students from Durham region who travelled to join the veterans to show their respect.

Congratulations to Dave Robinson and Nancy Hamer-Strahl of Port Perry High School, who organized the tour to augment the grade 10 history curriculum. Mike Strahl is the coordinator for Courtice Secondary School. Sinclair Secondary School, Father Leo Austin Secondary School, Paul Dwyer high school, Donald Wilson school are other Durham region high schools that participated in the tour.

Students created a "We Remember" memorial capsule that was enshrined at the Sai Wan War Memorial and Cemetery in Hong Kong on December 4.

This is truly an intergenerational act of remembrance, and I pay tribute to all those who were part of the pilgrimage to Hong Kong and those in our community who supported the students in this worthwhile project.

#### INTERNATIONAL PLOWING MATCH

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** "Come Be Amazed." That was the slogan of the 2005 International Plowing Match and Rural Exposition held this year in my riding from September 20 to 24 at the Carson family farm in Listowel.

In its 92nd year, the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo is the largest trade and farm machinery show in the province, and is held annually in a different county of Ontario.

Attracting more than 160 plowing competitors and approximately 700 exhibitors each year, this year's event provided an excellent opportunity for the urban community and our youth to become more familiar with the agriculture industry and heritage of Perth county.

Highlights of this year's match included Premier Dalton McGuinty unveiling, on opening day, a new Foodland Ontario advertising campaign encouraging consumers to "Pick Ontario Freshness."

Days later, Agriculture Minister Leona Dombrowsky unveiled details of the new \$6-million agricultural drainage infrastructure program. These are both welcome investments which will help agricultural landowners, strengthen rural communities and build economic prosperity in rural Ontario.

Coupled with these good announcements, overall attendance for this year's match was estimated at 97,000. Jeff Waldroff, president of the Ontario Plowmen's Association, said this year's match drew the best response since 1995.

In view of this success, I want to commend and thank all of the volunteers and organizers for their dedication and hard work, especially this year's co-chairs: Dave Shearer, Doug Aitcheson and Bert Vorstenbosch. Special thanks must also be given to Dave Carson and his family for bringing the IPM back to Perth county.

I also want to thank my colleagues in the Legislature who had a chance to visit this year's plowing match, and I encourage you all to visit next year's plowing match in Peterborough.

### CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** I rise to draw the attention of this chamber and all Ontarians to a wonderful event taking place this Saturday, December 10, in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke at 6 p.m. at the Logos Land Resort just outside of Cobden.

The switch will be turned on, lighting the tallest Christmas tree in all of Canada—a 74-foot-high blue spruce. Local school children will be decorating the tree this week, and the child with the most original decoration will have the honour of tripping the switch.

This magnificent tree was transported to the site last Friday, and that was an event in itself.

Heartiest thanks and congratulations to all involved in this celebration of Christmas in the Valley, including: Logos Land for hosting and also for building an Olympic-size outdoor rink for the event; Renfrew Home Hardware for donating the Christmas lights; Hydro One for the removal; McLaughlin Haulage for the transportation of the Christmas tree; Valley Crane Rental for supplying the crane; and the Salvation Army brass band, which will be playing a medley of Christmas songs.

A special thanks to Warden Bob Sweet and county media relations coordinator Bruce McIntyre for their work in spearheading this effort.

Renfrew county is Ontario's largest county in the heart of the Ottawa Valley, which has been rated as one of the best 10 places to live in Canada. This community project is another example of why.

I urge all members of this House and all Ontarians to be in Cobden this Saturday, which Harold Dobson has deemed the "centre of the universe." Harold Dobson will be 90 this Friday and will be here for this spectacular Christmas in the Valley event.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** The crisis facing alternate level of care patients in our community continues to grow. One year ago, in the face of acute bed shortages at the Sudbury Regional Hospital and at long-term-care homes in the city, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care applied a crisis designation.

When ALC patients need to leave the hospital but there is no long-term-care bed in the city to go to, they can be sent to long-term-care homes in Espanola or Manitoulin Island. In recent weeks, the boundary has been expanded to include Parry Sound too.

This is a terrible way to treat our seniors and the frail elderly. They deserve to be cared for as close to home as possible. Family members who are able to lend a hand with the care of their loved ones find it impossible to travel these distances on a regular basis to provide care. They worry about the emotional well-being of their loved ones when they are so far from home and a support network.

### 1340

The McGuinty Liberal government has failed to solve this serious problem. Last fall, the government funded 10 interim beds at Pioneer Manor. The municipal home had space for 30 beds, and this is the number that city council requested funding for.

Finally this fall, the government added 15 more interim beds, but this is still short of the 30 beds originally requested a year ago and still short of what's really needed in the community.

City council has asked the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for a meeting to offer solutions of their own. Maybe the minister will listen to council this time. What is clear is that a long-term, comprehensive, permanent solution is required as soon as possible to ensure that we stop sending the frail and elderly to long-term-care homes outside our community.

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** Last week, I spent two and a half hours in the operating room at Mississauga's Credit Valley Hospital. I was as close as you can get without being a surgeon and saw how the men and women whose job is to keep us from dying work every day.

I changed into my surgical gown in a cramped locker room that used to be a storage area. The halls leading to the eight operating theatres are stacked on both sides with shelves of equipment and supplies. Of our recovery room, one surgeon said that the patient density was the same as a hospital he worked in in Africa in the 1970s. That is the sorry state into which our surgical facilities have deteriorated during the 13 lost years of NDP and Tory government.

Our surgeons, nonetheless, have a fine esprit de corps. There is an easiness and confidence that comes with competence, experience and a track record of success.

They performed three operations using arthroscopic procedures. Those patients were at home in their own beds that night. I saw surgeons repair someone's jaw, replace a woman's hip joint and replace a man's artery after opening his chest.

Help is on the way to Credit Valley and dozens of other Ontario hospitals with capital projects such as phase two at Credit Valley and better local health care delivery through 14 local health care integration networks across Ontario.

I thank the surgeons at Credit Valley Hospital for their great work and for hosting me last week in the operating room.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** As patients and some 1,500 health care workers walk through the halls of Cambridge Memorial Hospital, buckets fill the corridors to catch the falling rain.

This is the state of our hospital in Cambridge, which is 55 years old—a full decade older than most hospitals in Ontario. This is the state of our hospital, which is in one of the fastest-growing and most prosperous regions in our province.

A couple weeks ago, our hospital had to close down one third of the intensive care unit because of rain leaking through the 33-year-old roof. The patients from the ICU were moved to emergency, and the people waiting in the emergency ward—well, they waited longer.

It would take an estimated \$13 million to bring the present building and fixtures up to standard. Close to \$10 million has already been spent on preparatory site work and plans for the approved expansion.

There is a fiscal imbalance between the region of Waterloo and Queen's Park. Tax revenues from our region far exceed the investments made by this government in our region.

The good people of Cambridge won't stop fighting for funding that has been postponed by the government of the day.

I'd like to thank the hospital funding task force members in our gallery today: Mayor Doug Craig, Mayor Kim Denouden, Bill Davidson, Susanne Friedl, Dr. James Gowing, Donna Gravelle, Carrie Hoto, Helen Jowett, Tom LeBrun, Claudette Millar, Bob and Ann Miller, David Smart, Paul Spencer and Lina Veglia.

The people of Cambridge stand united and demand their fair share. Later today, I will be presenting a petition that has more than 20,000 names—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### RIDE PROGRAM

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** As we enter the holiday season, it is time to remember that we must celebrate responsibly. On Saturday night, I had the privilege of joining members of the North Bay Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Anishinabek police, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Operation Red Nose to bring to the attention of residents of North Bay and area that the RIDE program is once again in full swing.

For the second year in a row, I joined our local law enforcement agencies and volunteers on a brisk December evening on Trout Lake Road to greet drivers. As the officers checked the drivers for drinking and driving, Louise Ranger, president of MADD Nipissing, her daughter, other MADD volunteers and I provided drivers with Mothers Against Drunk Driving red ribbons and reminded them of the need to celebrate responsibly over the holiday season.

We were quite a sight near the Green Store in North Bay: Chief Cook of the North Bay police and his officers, chief superintendent Al Dawson of the OPP northeast region and his officers, the Anishinabek police force members, the Mothers Against Drunk Driving volunteers, the Operation Red Nose reindeer and I standing on the yellow line and stopping traffic. It was all for a good cause, and if, through our media partners who braved the cold with us, we were able to convince a few more people not to drink and drive, it was time well spent.

I want to remind the residents of Nipissing and across the province: As you enjoy this holiday season—and we do wish each and every one of you a very happy holi-

day—if you drink, don't drive. Have a safe and happy holiday.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** As members are aware, this government has made a firm commitment to provide the best health care possible. We've taken incredible strides to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are receiving high-quality care in our publicly funded health care system. To shorten wait times and strengthen our hospitals we have provided over \$2.35 billion in additional funding for hospitals across the province. We are committed to a compassionate health care system even in the face of the fiscal constraints inherited from our predecessors.

It is in that context that we need to look at the situation facing Cambridge Memorial Hospital, whose supporters are with us today at Queen's Park. I appreciate the passion that the Cambridge community, and indeed all of Waterloo region, bring to this issue in order to draw attention to their hospital's needs, and I support their efforts to have progress on the hospital occur as quickly as possible. The government is working on a case-by-case basis to ensure we get it right the first time.

Since coming to office, we have provided Cambridge Memorial Hospital with over \$11 million in new funding. We have also provided the hospital with money for wait times, for safe needle sticks, for MRIs and CTs, for nurses, and to reduce wait times in hip and knee surgeries. The Premier and Minister of Health are both committed to continue supporting the hospital. I'm pleased that both said that it's not a question of if but when the project can proceed. We know that Cambridge Memorial Hospital has pressing infrastructure needs—for example, a new roof—and our government will continue working with the community and the hospital board toward a resolution. I encourage everyone involved to continue to work collaboratively to find real, workable solutions to ensure a strong Cambridge Memorial Hospital for Waterloo region.

#### HOSTAGES IN IRAQ

**Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie):** I rise in the House today to express support for my community and our government for the group of individuals from the Christian Peacemaker Teams who were kidnapped on November 26 and are presently being held hostage in Iraq. These individuals are not spies, nor do they work in the service of any government; they are people who have dedicated their lives to fighting against war and have clearly and publicly opposed the invasion and occupation of Iraq. They are people of faith but not missionaries; they have a deep respect for the Islamic faith and for the right of Iraqis to self-determination.

One of the individuals is James Loney, who is from my riding of Sault Ste. Marie. In the time since Mr. Loney was taken captive, there has been an outpouring of support in my community, in Ontario, in Canada and

internationally for Mr. Loney, his colleagues and his family. Mr. Loney is described by his friends as an extremely hard-working, conscientious individual who has dedicated his life to promoting peace and helping people in need.

Our society needs more individuals like Mr. Loney. I ask that people sign the petition requesting the release of Mr. Loney and his colleagues. The petition, which has quickly gained 15,000 signatures, has the support of many informed and influential individuals who are appealing for the safe release of Mr. Loney and his friends. The petition can be found at [www.petitionspot.com](http://www.petitionspot.com).

I admire the work and character of Mr. Loney and ask that his captors recognize that they are making a grave error in holding these individuals hostage. I want Mr. Loney's family to know that our thoughts and prayers are with them during these very difficult circumstances.

#### VISITORS

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wonder if you would help me welcome the former base commander at CFB Kingston, Brigadier-General Thibault, who currently is the commander of the Land Force Central Area here in Ontario. He's accompanied by Chief Warrant Officer McGregor, the LFCA RSM, and Captain Morawiec, the personal assistant to the commander. I wonder if you could welcome them with me, please.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Welcome, gentlemen.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery a parliamentary delegation from the Eastern Cape provincial Legislature, Republic of South Africa, led by the Honourable Johny Makgato, chair of the portfolio committee on finance and provincial expenditure. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

1350

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION ACT, 2005

##### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'EMPLOI DES POMPIERS VOLONTAIRES

Mr. Arnott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 in order to protect the employment of volunteer firefighters / Projet de loi 44, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie afin de protéger l'emploi des pompiers volontaires.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** **The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the member have a brief statement?

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I'm confident that the government House Leader is going to allow a free vote when this bill comes forward at second reading.

This bill amends the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, with respect to salaried firefighters who also work as volunteer firefighters. If a person is denied membership in an association of firefighters, is expelled or disciplined by the association or engages in reasonable dissent within the association in connection with this kind of dual employment, the association is not permitted to require the employer to refuse to employ the person as a salaried firefighter, terminate the person's employment as a salaried firefighter or refuse to assign the person to fire protection services. The person is also entitled to fair representation by the association. A person who believes that any of these rights has been contravened may file a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT (HARASSMENT), 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL (HARCÈLEMENT)

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from harassment in the workplace / Projet de loi 45, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail pour protéger les travailleurs contre le harcèlement dans le lieu de travail.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may have a brief statement.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** This bill was originally brought forward by former provincial member and soon-to-be federal member Marilyn Churley. When the member left, it became necessary to reintroduce the bill, which amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act to require employers to protect workers in the workplace from harassment; to give the workers the right to refuse work in certain circumstances after harassment has occurred; to require an investigation of allegations of workplace-related harassment; and finally, to require employers to take steps to prevent further occurrences of workplace-related harassment.

#### MOTIONS

##### OPPOSITION DAY MOTIONS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I believe we have unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding opposition day motions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 42(1)(ii), there may be designated one opposition day by the official opposition, to be debated the week of December 5, 2005, and that the notice requirement shall be waived.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Chudleigh, Ted	McNeely, Phil
Colle, Mike	Miller, Norm
Cordiano, Joseph	Milloy, John
Crozier, Bruce	Mossop, Jennifer F.
Delaney, Bob	Munro, Julia
Dombrowsky, Leona	O'Toole, John
Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David
Duncan, Dwight	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Dunlop, Garfield	Patten, Richard
Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve
Gerretsen, John	Peterson, Tim
Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Hardeman, Ernie	Pupatello, Sandra

Takhar, Harinder S.
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tory, John
Van Bommel, Maria
Watson, Jim
Wilkinson, John
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wong, Tony C.
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Zimmer, David

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Bradley is seeking unanimous consent to put a motion regarding private members' public business before the House. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business: Mr. Yakabuski and Mrs. Witmer exchange places in the order of precedence such that Mr. Yakabuski assumes ballot item 15 and Mrs. Witmer assumes ballot item 62.

**The Speaker:**

Shall the motion carry? Carried.

#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion 48. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1357 to 1402.*

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

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arthurs, Wayne	Jackson, Cameron	Ramsay, David
Barrett, Toby	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Bartolucci, Rick	Kennedy, Gerard	Runciman, Robert W.
Bentley, Christopher	Klees, Frank	Ruprecht, Tony
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Bountrogianni, Marie	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Bradley, James J.	Levac, Dave	Sergio, Mario
Brownell, Jim	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Bryant, Michael	Martiniuk, Gerry	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Sterling, Norman W.

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

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley	
Horwath, Andrea	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 73; the nays are 7.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

#### ANNUAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2005 annual report of the Auditor General of Ontario.

#### WEARING OF BUTTONS

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I hope that we would have unanimous consent that all of us may wear these buttons, which signify the remembrance and awareness that we're going to be discussing in unanimous consent shortly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Ms. Pupatello has asked for unanimous consent to wear the buttons. Agreed? Agreed.

#### DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes to recognize the remembrance of the Montreal massacre.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Do we have unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes? Agreed.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** Today marks the 16th anniversary of the horrifying events at l'École polytechnique de Montréal, when 14 students lost their lives solely because they were women who dared to aspire to professional careers. The consequences of that tragic day continue to be felt in our

community. That day jolted Canadians out of their complacency. It's fair to say that we were shocked. We resolved then that this must never happen again.

In 1991, the Parliament of Canada declared December 6 as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women so that we will never forget. We are today, all members of this House, sporting buttons that say that, in remembrance of this day. It's a day to remember all the women who have suffered or are now experiencing violence or the threat of violence in any form. Ontarians recognize that violence against women is a profound social challenge. It rises above partisan politics and extends beyond national borders.

In Canada, in Ontario and elsewhere, this is a time of reflection on violence against women, a time to redouble our commitment to supporting women who have been victims and to seek solutions.

We're in the midst of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, a global campaign that runs from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25 to International Human Rights Day on December 10. The White Ribbon Campaign now underway signals men's opposition to men's violence against women. Finally, the Rose Button Campaign, organized by YWCA Canada, commemorates the victims of the Montreal massacre and all other women who have been victims of violence.

We've arranged for each member of this House to receive a rose button. Let's wear them to show our conviction that the violence must stop. Women and their children have the right to live free from violence and free from fear.

Ending violence against women is everyone's responsibility. No one group can make it happen, but all of us collectively can. Each of us can make a difference every day by supporting the right of women to lead lives of their own choosing.

Again this year, I'd ask you to rise so that we may read the names and perhaps, when the three parties have finished speaking, we can call for a moment of silence to commemorate these 14 women who lost their lives on this day: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

For the many times that we read these names, we again remember their families who are still suffering from their loss. May their names never be forgotten and may they not have died in vain.

1410

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of our party to recognize December 6 as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada. Established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, this day coincides with the anniversary of the Montreal massacre, when a gunman murdered 14 young women at l'École

Polytechnique in Montreal. These 14 women were killed simply because of their gender.

Today I also want to recognize and remember all of the women and children who have been victims of violence: for example, Lori Dupont, the Windsor registered nurse who was murdered at her workplace by her ex-partner last month; Lorraine Egan, a registered nurse in Sarnia who was killed by her stepbrother; and Sandra Schott, who was murdered by her estranged husband. These recent examples are a reminder that abuse and violence against women, both inside and outside of the workplace, is still prevalent.

Indeed, women and girls continue to make up the vast majority of victims of sexual assault, 85%; criminal harassment, 78%; kidnapping and abductions, 62%; and other sexual offences, 74%. Today as well, the vast majority of women feel worried and concerned when they walk alone, when they walk in the dark or when they wait for public transit. Clearly, these statistics are unacceptable. Violence against women affects everyone in this province, this country and our world, and it can prevent women from making a full and positive contribution to the development of our society.

Unfortunately, many women do not report violence to employers due to feelings of embarrassment or fear that they will be treated differently by their colleagues. Domestic violence continues to be under-reported because victims fear for their life or have been isolated from family and friends and oftentimes are totally unaware of the community supports that may be available to them. It is important that we all do what we can to address violence against women, both inside and outside of the workplace.

All parties must continue to work together to ensure that women are more economically independent and that they have the supports in place so that they will report violence in the workplace, or that women and their children are able to leave abusive environments. It is important to eradicate gender-based forms of violence, because all women deserve the right to live without fear and without violence. Equally important is the need to educate the public about what they can do to help change attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the continuation of violent and abusive behaviour against women.

Today as we in this House, all three parties, remember the 14 women who were killed in Montreal simply because they were women, and as we remember all of the other women and girls who have been killed in senseless acts of gender-based violence, I would encourage all of my colleagues in this House and all people in Ontario to reaffirm their commitment to do what they can to prevent violence against women and girls.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** On behalf of the Ontario New Democratic Party, I rise to again express our pain and sorrow over the horror of the 14 young women who were massacred in Montreal 16 years ago. It was an event that left an indelible, horrible imprint on our memories. We again extend our condolences to the families of the women who were brutally gunned down



that day, and we will forever mourn the loss of these bright, innocent young women who were murdered just because of their gender.

This one terrible incident brought the scourge of violence against women into the direct glare of sunlight across Canada. Collectively, we pledged as a society to take the problem seriously and to work together to stop violence against women, but how far have we really come when there is an eight-month delay in having a peace bond issued to protect a woman's life, when breaches of family court restraining orders are not treated as enforceable criminal offences, when women are harassed and assaulted in their workplaces? I say this not in a partisan way but simply to illustrate that there are things we need to do to truly eradicate violence against women. On December 6, at l'École Polytechnique, women died at the hands of a stranger for no other reason than that they were women. Anything less than the most full and comprehensive response to violence against women would insult the memories of these young women whom we commemorate today.

Tragically, women continue to be murdered. They continue to die at the hands of their partners, of men who were their spouses, who were their boyfriends, who were colleagues, who were employers and who were co-workers. The reality is that many women still remain trapped in violent relationships from which they cannot escape.

The stats tell the story:

—A 17% increase in the number of women being served by shelters.

—On average, one woman in Ontario will be killed in a domestic homicide every week.

—The rate of spousal homicide is increasing. Six out of 10 spousal homicides involve a history of domestic violence.

—Fifteen per cent of all homicides involve female victims being killed by male spouses during the relationship or after separation or divorce.

There are many recommendations that we've heard over the years from stakeholders, experts and coroners' juries. Those recommendations need to be taken seriously and implemented. All of us want to see the violence against women in this province, in this country and across the world eradicated, but it can't happen unless we make sure that we put our nose to the grindstone and put those recommendations into place in every place that we can. In every gesture that we make, every bill that we pass and every effort that we undertake in this House, we need to remember that we can do things proactively to address the issue of violence against women.

Women don't have opportunities to feed and house their children if, when they leave a relationship where there is violence, those resources are not available to them in communities. We need to make sure they are available to them in communities. We can do that, and we should make a commitment to be doing that. We need to get serious about making sure that not just the programs are there—and some are, and I'll acknowledge

there have been some changes in a positive way in that regard, but we need to make sure that the bricks and mortar are there also, so that when women leave these situations, they can be assured that there is a place where they can have a roof over their heads and their children's.

I wanted to mention one last thing in regard to the efforts we can make in the House. That's why I chose to reintroduce today Marilyn Churley's bill on harassment in the workplace. That's one other small thing that this House can do: support that kind of legislation that acknowledges that harassment in the workplace is a serious assault against women and needs to be addressed.

Ontario needs to protect women from all forms of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. On this sombre and significant day, I urge the Legislature to make sure that we commit to making all the efforts that we can to eradicate violence against women in the province of Ontario, not only with the bill that I introduced but with all the efforts that all of us bring forward in this regard.

**The Speaker:** I'd ask that all members and guests stand for a moment of remembrance.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

### DRIVER LICENCES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** Given the Premier's urgent, last minute, out-of-town speaking engagement, I will direct my questions to the Acting Premier.

I would like to acknowledge the presence in the Speaker's gallery of the Auditor General, the taxpayers' best friend. The Auditor General's report this year is a damning indictment of the way this Liberal government is grossly mismanaging some of the most important areas of its responsibility.

Let's turn, first, to page 127 of his report: "We concluded that the Ministry [of Transportation] needs to strengthen its systems and procedures if it is to ensure that only legitimate and safe drivers are licensed to drive in Ontario."

With you guys in charge, it seems that if you have the money and a pulse, you can get a licence—and even the pulse can be overlooked. Acting Premier, why are those illegitimate and unsafe drivers on our roads under your watch, and what are you going to do to protect public safety and get those people off the roads?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** We take the issue of issuing drivers' licences seriously. We had a system left to us that was in a complete mess. There have been problems and we have almost fixed most of those problems already. I have ordered audits, which have increased 20 times in 2004

and have gone up almost 38 times in 2005. So we have increased the audit of these PINs. We want to make sure that we have a consistent identity that should be provided before a driver's licence can be issued. We want to make sure that PINs are in a position to do that.

**Mr. Tory:** The minister has been in charge for more than two years, and he's fixed absolutely nothing.

Here specifically is what the Auditor General has found: "... licences from a number of jurisdictions were exchanged without transferring the driver's conviction record from or validating the driver's status in the other jurisdiction. In 2004"—you were in charge the whole year and you had been in charge before that—"the ministry exchanged 30,000 out-of-province licences ... without such record transfers."

I quote again: "There is also a risk that Ontario residents who fail multiple road tests in Ontario can obtain licences through out-of-province licence exchange agreements without proof that they have completed a road test. ... one driver failed the Ontario road test 15 times but received an Ontario driver's licence by ... presenting a licence from another jurisdiction."

My question is this: Will you guarantee that immediate steps are taken and a full report delivered to this House before we rise for the winter session to ensure that only drivers who are entitled to be there are on our roads? Will you do that?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Let me just put the Tories' record right on the record here. What they did with the primary issues network was to decrease the audits of the primary issues network to almost nothing in 2001, 2002 and 2003. What we have done is that we have increased the audits of the primary issues network. We have a zero tolerance policy with them, and we're going to make sure that drivers' licences are only issued to people who are eligible to get them. We also want to make sure that if people go outside the province to get it, we have their records to ensure that these are eligible people and we are issuing the right licences.

**Mr. Tory:** These were 2004 figures, on your watch—a man who claims great experience in management. If you gave that kind of excuse, blaming everybody in the past except taking responsibility yourself, you'd be fired in business, and you know that.

Turning to page 118, a total of 56,000 licence plates, stickers, vehicle permits and drivers' licences—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I can wait.

The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** On page 118, it says that 56,000 licence plates, stickers, vehicle permits and driver's licences have been found to be missing or stolen from private offices that issue drivers' licences. Six of 280 offices are implicated by the auditor as being primarily responsible for what he calls 49,000 high-risk missing items and 7,000 high-risk stolen items.

Minister, the public needs to know, where are these offices from which this stuff was stolen, where are the stolen 56,000 high-risk items, and what are you doing to ensure that these offices are identified and investigated, the people are brought to justice and we find the forms?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I think it will be helpful if the Leader of the Opposition had read the report: 56,000 pieces went missing in 2002. I want to know, who was in charge at that point in time? I am prepared to put my management record against the management record of the Leader of the Opposition at any time.

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** Some 56,000 items not found: that's the answer.

Again to the Acting Premier: What is your explanation to taxpayers who are struggling to pay your \$2.4-billion McGuinty health tax? How do you explain to those taxpayers that a small group of ministers secretly approved a record \$3.85 billion in unplanned, unbudgeted, undisclosed spending in the course of the past year? How do you explain that?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Our government's plan is on track and it's working. We are eliminating the \$5.5-billion deficit that party left Ontario with. We are making crucial investments in health care to help undo the 39 hospitals they closed on their watch, to help undo the 8,000 nurses they laid off on their watch, and are reinvesting in schools to bring peace and prosperity to our schools in a way that we never saw under the Conservatives.

It's been a long road to fix the mess they left. We're moving down that road prudently and responsibly. We'll balance the budget by 2007-08, and by then we will have undone at least a part of the horrible legacy of the Harris-Eves Tory government that ruled this province for far, far too long.

**Mr. Tory:** A plan is no plan when you have \$3.9 billion in secret, unplanned expenditures approved by a tiny group of ministers. A treasury board order, as the minister knows, authorizes spending in excess of the amounts approved by the Legislature as part of the open process of approval of spending. On one day alone this year—March 15, 2005—you secretly approved \$561 million in unplanned spending. Even for you guys, that's a staggering amount. It's like you have a pad of these treasury board orders, and it's just any one, anytime, anywhere; no questions asked.

My question is, given the McGuinty Liberal promise of a more open, transparent government, how can you justify spending almost 5% of your entire budget in secret, unplanned, unbudgeted spending without any transparency or disclosure whatsoever? How can you justify that \$3.9 billion?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** There was nothing secret and nothing unplanned about any of it. They voted against

fixing education. They did that. They voted against improvements to health care. They voted against reducing the provincial deficit they left us with. There was nothing secret. Every estimate was approved in this House, and every book has been audited; even the auditor's report today said no rules were broken at all. In fact, the CICA set those rules.

This government is committed to improving our health care system, our education system and our economic infrastructure, and all his protestations, all his opposition to that won't deter us from the priorities of the people of Ontario: better health care, better education and improved economic circumstances and infrastructure.

**Mr. Tory:** Some \$3.9 billion in secret, unplanned, undisclosed spending. Acting Premier, in your budget two years ago, you forced every taxpayer in Ontario to cough up up to \$900 per year in the McGuinty health tax, after Dalton McGuinty looked taxpayers in the eye and said he would not raise taxes. The McGuinty health tax brings in \$2.4 billion a year, and behind closed doors your ministers managed to spend \$3.9 billion in secret, undisclosed spending. On page 364 of the Auditor General's report, when you talk about the rules, he says these orders are to be printed in the Ontario Gazette, and the auditor notes this has not been done.

How could they possibly exercise any care at all when, in one meeting, from a bunch of ministries, \$561 million in one day was approved in spending that was secret, undisclosed and unplanned? What kind of a way is that to run it, and why aren't you publishing the details in the Gazette?

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**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** For instance, part of that money was agriculture money, which you told us to spend. Were you opposed to that investment in agriculture? Part of that money was to help hospitals deal with their deficit. Were you opposed to that? I challenge the member opposite to come clean with Ontarians and tell them where he is going to get the \$2.4 billion that he wants to cut, and just reaffirmed, out of health care.

Our health care system needed the investment. Our education system needed the investment. Our budget needs to be balanced because of the \$5.5-billion mess you and your party left behind when you were thrown out of office unceremoniously.

We're proud of our record. We are for public education, we are for public health care, and we are investing in economic infrastructure. Those are the priorities of the people of Ontario. We stand behind them. We do it in an open, accountable and transparent fashion, something you—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### AMBULANCE SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Acting Premier. People count on ambulances when there is an emergency. When your father has a heart attack, when your child suddenly becomes

very seriously ill, people count on an ambulance arriving in time to help. But in Ontario today, the Auditor General tells a very troubling story. The Auditor General says that in two thirds of Ontario's communities, ambulances fail to meet provincially mandated response times. They don't arrive in time.

The McGuinty government promised better public services. Why do two thirds of Ontario communities experience ambulances that don't arrive on time?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Auditor General and the staff of that unit, who have done important work on behalf of Ontarians. The reality of their insight is clear. It is that we have work to do. That work has been undertaken, but we will, in response, redouble our efforts alongside our partners at the municipalities who are primarily responsible for the provision of ambulance services in our province.

I am pleased to say that through the leadership of my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs, we are in the midst of establishing, with our municipal partners, a land ambulance table to address many of the very particular issues that were brought forward in the report. At the same time, we're also working hard on ambulance off-load delay challenges, which are a very significant contributing factor.

We take the report seriously, and I will be looking forward to opportunities to demonstrate to the people of Ontario that we can and will make improvement in this area.

**Mr. Hampton:** Not only do ambulances not arrive on time but the McGuinty government isn't paying its fair share of land ambulance costs. In 2003, when the McGuinty government took office, the province was paying 47% of the cost of land ambulances. Today, going into your third year in office, in some municipalities you pay only 28% of the cost of land ambulances, forcing cash-strapped municipalities to pick up all the rest. What this means is that your failure to adequately fund land ambulances is putting the health and well-being of Ontario residents at risk.

So my questions is this: Given the ambulance response time crisis, and given your failure to adequately fund the land ambulance system, when are you going to live up to your obligations and adequately, properly and fairly fund our land ambulance system?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I always like to hear from the honourable member from the New Democratic Party, who now is all on about this issue of proper and adequate funding, but seems to have forgotten the role he played while in government in this province. There have been no strokes taken to health care in Ontario under our government that can come anywhere close to the vicious swords that you wreaked in those days.

The circumstances with respect to funding are one element of that, which we must work on at the table with our municipal partners. There has been a very significant

increase in the amount of resource that has been laid out for the provision of land ambulance services, yet it has not resulted in the improvement in service that one might have hoped for or anticipated. The honourable member raises important questions. As I said, the Auditor General has done an excellent job in that regard, and I'm very much looking forward to working through the issues at the table with our partners, who are the primary deliverers of this service.

**Mr. Hampton:** The municipal partners aren't impressed with the McGuinty government. Under the McGuinty government, you are dumping the cost of land ambulance on to municipalities that can't afford to pay for it, and here is the result: In Ontario, under the McGuinty government, we now have two standards of ambulance service. In one third of communities, the ambulance arrives on time, but in two thirds of communities, it doesn't arrive on time. Fairness demands that we have one standard for ambulance service and that it be met across the province.

The question, minister, is this: When is the McGuinty government going to stop dumping the cost of land ambulances on to municipalities that can't afford it? When are you going to start keeping the promise you made to fairly and adequately fund land ambulances so that people's lives aren't at risk?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** As I had an opportunity to say a moment ago, there's quite a bit of evidence, which abounds, of additional investment in the area of land ambulance. The challenge we must face down—and we must do that alongside our partners, who are the primary deliverers of this service—is to ensure that additional resources flow to improving the situation. This is a priority that we place on this issue, as I've said a couple of times now. I'm very keen to continue to work with municipal partners to enhance financial resources as one element of an overall strategy. The NDP brings only one solution to every issue, and it is to pour money into the situation, but even in this situation with land ambulance, we must recognize that there have been substantial increases in the amount of resource here. The Auditor General has gone much further than talking only about resources and has talked to some of those other barriers that exist in terms of creating the kind of accessibility to ambulance services that we all desire. Accordingly, we will be working on this matter in a comprehensive way with our partners on behalf of the patients of Ontario.

#### DRIVER LICENCES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** To the Acting Premier: The Auditor General's report paints a deeply troubling picture of Ontario's driver licensing system. At private licensing operations across the province, fake driver's licences have been created and circulated, and 56,000 licences, plates and permits have gone missing or have been stolen in the last four years. This means that people who shouldn't be driving are in fact out there driving and possibly placing the lives of

other drivers at risk, and it means that fraud artists have access to a key piece of identification that can be used to gather other kinds of vital documents, such as a birth certificate. How could the McGuinty government allow this to happen under your watch when you promised people better public services?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** First of all, I want to thank the Auditor General for his report. I have actually met with him and discussed all the issues with him. My feeling is that he is satisfied with the actions we have taken.

Let me tell you, I think this a serious issue. We need to address this issue head-on and we have taken all the right steps to do that. One of the issues is that there are about 300 in the private issuing network in this province. We want to make sure those people are properly trained, so we have set up training courses for them. We also want to make sure their records are properly controlled and we are working with them to do that. We have also set up a hotline for them, so they can get the assistance they need in order for us to protect these drivers' licences. We take these issues very seriously and are absolutely determined to make sure that those issues don't happen again.

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**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, the Auditor General tells a different story. He says that not only do you have a case of 56,000 missing or stolen licences and permits, but things get worse. It turns out that under the McGuinty government, all you need to get a driver's licence in Ontario today is a Costco club card. That, I think, is serious. He also says, having reported on this, that the province has "neither investigated these stock discrepancies nor made attempts to recover on losses."

Once again the McGuinty government promised better public services. How do you justify a situation that the Auditor General says is deplorable?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Let me just come back to this private issuers network issue again; about 300 in this province. These contracts were given for life at a certain point in time. We have changed that process as well. Now we are giving them only for five years. We hold them strictly accountable. We train them properly. The 56,000 documents that have been missing were stolen from this private issuers' network. That is being investigated by the police right now.

What we are doing is to make sure that we have standard documents that are quite in order to get your driver's licence. We want to make sure that all the documents are properly controlled in these offices. I have increased the orders of these offices already, and, for the first time in the history of this province, I have actually adopted a zero tolerance policy and dismissed a few private issuers' networks as well.

**Mr. Hampton:** The minister makes reference to the previous government. Look, we all know that they were about privatization. You promised better public services.

Let me give you an example of something that happened on your watch. One driver failed the Ontario road

test 15 times but received an Ontario driver's licence by subsequently presenting a licence from another jurisdiction. The auditor "concluded that the ministry needs to strengthen its systems and procedures if it is to ensure that only legitimate and safe drivers are licensed to drive in Ontario." I agree.

What happened to the McGuinty government's promise of better public services? What happened to the McGuinty government's promise of "Choose change"? Let's hear your explanation, Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I couldn't agree more with the Auditor General. We need to make sure that the drivers' licences are for skill and are only issued to people who really deserve them. We're going to make sure that happens. The previous government didn't do it and the transportation minister—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** There is laughing now.

Let me say a few things. There was a report done on what needed to be done with the private issuers' network under the auspices of the previous government that was never, ever tabled. As soon as we came into power, I asked my parliamentary assistant to do another report, and we have implemented most of the recommendations of that report.

We are going to make sure that the private issuers' network is financially stable. We're also going to make sure that the records are properly controlled and only people who really deserve licences get them. For out-of-province licences being exchanged in this province, if it's less than 24 months, we get a legitimate—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### UNPAID TAXES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** Again to the Acting Premier: Page 365 of the auditor's report indicates that over the past two years your Liberal government has written off more than \$422 million in uncollected taxes and loans. Given that you managed to find an easy time increasing taxes by thousands of dollars—the McGuinty government has increased taxes by thousands of dollars on families across the province; that's after you said you wouldn't raise taxes—and given that your government spent close to \$4 billion secretly and without any plan, without any approval or any budgeting, behind closed doors, how can you possibly justify simply flushing \$400 million of taxpayers' money down the toilet? How can you justify that?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** It's important that all taxpayers meet their obligations, and from time to time, taxpayers don't. The revenue portion of my ministry has a number of steps we take to collect unpaid taxes, and I think it's important to note that the auditor points out to us that we can do a better job, and we will do a better job. We're looking forward to responding in a

complete fashion to the recommendations of the auditor. We believe that we have to take every reasonable effort to collect those taxes that aren't paid in order to ensure fairness for all taxpayers.

We welcome the auditor's report, we welcome his recommendations and, as my colleagues have said, and I will reaffirm, we look forward to responding affirmatively to these recommendations and to making sure that we continue to improve the job we do as the government of Ontario.

**Mr. Tory:** The member has had two years in government, during which time this number of written-off taxes—hard-working taxpayers' money flushed down the toilet—has gone up by millions and tens of millions of dollars.

During the 2003 election, it was your Premier, Mr. McGuinty, who told the people of Ontario that you were going to do everything in your power to ensure that all taxes owed by Ontario employers were repaid. In fact, we have a quote here from Hansard, December 3, 2002: "How in the world could you allow ... corporations in this province ... to not be filing corporate income tax, when people in this province are begging for money for health care and education?" Guess who that was? The Honourable Gerry Phillips. Despite this rhetoric, you wrote off a staggering \$208 million last year, including \$45 million in uncollectible corporate taxes.

How can you justify this massive broken promise—another broken promise—while taxpayers sit out there struggling to pay their bills and to pay your massive McGuinty health taxes and everything else? How can you justify flushing their money down the toilet like this?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** One is reminded that under the Tory government literally hundreds of thousands of companies weren't even looked at—they were left on the books. What we did was improve accountability and transparency in all the province's works. What did their party do when we brought forward that legislation? They voted against it. They voted against it because they didn't want people to be reminded of their \$5.5-billion deficit. They didn't want the people of Ontario to be reminded that they added more to the provincial debt than any government, save and except the Bob Rae NDP government of the early 1990s. They didn't want people to be reminded of the \$30 billion in special warrants that they did in this House when they didn't have approvals for budget measures related to their own budget. They didn't want to remind people that not only did they not want transparency and accountability, they didn't even want to do the budget in the House; they took it to Magna.

We have committed ourselves to cleaning up the mess—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Minister, the Auditor General audited the Registrar General's office and found a litany of problems. By December, 2004, 178,000 vital events were awaiting registration; in addi-

tion, 8,000 registrations required corrections. There were 3,000 cases where applications for certificates had been submitted to the office, but the office had no record of registration data being received. Call centres couldn't handle inquiries or complaints: 99% of telephone calls were blocked with busy signals or disconnected before callers could talk to a live body. Most importantly, the office was taking 48 weeks to process applications; that was up from five weeks in November 2003.

Minister, how could your government let this office deteriorate to such a state?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** I do want to thank the auditor for his report and to say to the public that we take his recommendations seriously, and I will say we're acting on all of the recommendations.

The challenges in the office are well known and well documented. I spoke here in the Legislature just two weeks ago or maybe three weeks ago to say that we are systematically fixing the problems. I will say that the backlog has now been dealt with. We are meeting our standard—eight weeks—on both registration and issuing certificates. As the member knows, we also introduced another system where you can apply on-line for birth certificates. We said, "You'll get this in 15 days," and it is happening. Virtually 100% of them are being delivered within 15 days.

We take the auditor's report seriously. The entire House knows we had some challenges there, and I just want to say that the challenges are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

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**Ms. Martel:** It's true you had challenges, and the problem is that the challenges were of your own making. The auditor reported that under your watch, a new computer system was implemented; it continues to suffer from serious flaws. Under your watch, a reorganization of the office took place which the auditor describes as a "poorly-planned organization restructuring with questionable promotion practices." Staff were processing 350 certificates a month before you came to office; under your watch, this dropped to 75. The challenges are of your own making.

Ontarians deserve to receive their identity documents in a timely manner. First Nations deserve to receive their identity documents in a timely manner, because they need birth certificates, for example, to get status cards.

When will you give a money-back guarantee to Ontarians that the mess at this office is finally fixed?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** You must have written the question before I answered, because I think I answered you: Thanks to the good work of the staff in Thunder Bay, the problems are virtually behind us. I will say here what I said in the Legislature two weeks ago: We still have some challenges with the call centre that will be very much solved by the latter part of December when we move to a new system. But apart from that, people are getting their certificates. As I said before, if you apply

on-line, we are delivering virtually 100% of the certificates within 15 days.

I acknowledge the problems. I also want to get on the record that the auditor did point out some challenges in the computer, so we did have an outside consulting firm take a look at our computer to satisfy ourselves that it can deliver the service in the future. Among other things, they said there was strong evidence the system supports business requirements. In real English, it means it is working well.

#### ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR CORNWALL

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. As you know, Domtar Specialty Fine Papers recently announced that it will be shutting down operations in the city of Cornwall in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh. I know that the employees of Domtar are worried about their future, since their current jobs there will soon be gone. These are hard-working, dedicated people, and each of them is ready and willing to work and learn new skills or upgrade skills so that they can make this happen. They want to provide for their families and contribute to their community.

Minister, can you tell me what services the ministry has that would help these people in my riding?

**Interjection:** Good question.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** It is a good question. I remember when I toured the plant with the member about a year and a half ago and met many of the hard-working people at Domtar.

The ministry has had a program called the adjustment advisory program, and what it does is essentially provide assistance and information to hard-working people who are faced with the loss of their jobs. It helps them transition to new jobs, helps them transition to upgrades in skills and helps them transition to the future.

I think what the member and I were talking about was his advice on how we make it work even faster so we can identify some skills training and upgrading opportunities for some of those workers before they actually have to leave their jobs at Domtar. That was very good advice. It's the type of common sense approach I expect from the member and that we received from the member, and we're going to make sure that happens to help the people in his community even faster than they would otherwise have been assisted.

**Mr. Brownell:** Thank you for your response.

In the spring of this year, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade came to my riding for a summit with leaders from the municipal and business communities. The purpose of this meeting was to brainstorm ideas in the areas of economic development and trade that could be used to invigorate my riding. During this visit, the minister had the opportunity to visit and tour several outstanding businesses in the region. He saw first-hand

that there is a knowledge base, a dedication and a willingness to make things happen in my riding.

Minister, can you tell us how the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade is building upon that roundtable and what other measures can be taken to assist the people of Cornwall?

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** This is a question for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I want to thank the member for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh for the great work that he did to organize the roundtables that took place in the spring. He has done an outstanding job with his community. As well, I want to commend him for bringing together the reeves and mayors of many townships in the region to develop an economic plan for the region, both for the short term, the immediate problems that are being faced by the community, and for the longer term.

I want to inform the member that we have assigned a deputy minister in my ministry to take a series of additional steps. A steering committee has been established within the ministry to look at what can be done with the community, developing a plan for, as I say, both the short term, dealing with the immediate problems, and the long-term.

I want to again thank the member for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Health. I'd like to return to the matter of the ambulances. On page 43 of the auditor's report, it says, "Prompt responses are critical to the survival and well-being of patients with certain types of injuries or illnesses, particularly those experiencing cardiac arrest." Yet the Auditor General found in his report that 44% of municipalities saw their response times increase on your watch in 2004, and that's even added to all the figures that were cited previously by the leader of the third party.

Minister, we've heard a lot from you about your so-called plan to reduce wait times in priority areas but nothing about wait times in an area like this. We can now add ambulance times to the long list of things people wait for.

You've talked today about meetings, letters and roundtables. What specifically are you going to do, given that people's lives and health are at risk because of this deteriorating situation? What, specifically, are you going to do about it now?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Another thing that Ontarians are waiting for is for the honourable member to pop up and produce that list of the \$2.4 billion he intends to cut from health care in the province. Now the honourable member, who usually stands in his place and makes it seem like everything will go away with just one phone call, acts

derisively in response to the idea that when you're trying to plan a land ambulance system for the breadth of a province of 12.5 million people, you should construct a table and bring all people together around it with a view toward resolving the issues once and for all.

The circumstances are clear, as the Auditor General's report indicates: Some of the challenges that are being experienced by patients as relates to land ambulance are not about funding, they're not about the province of Ontario not doing this or doing that, but they're circumstances that arise because municipalities choose, on their own, as an example, not to cross a boundary line.

The point simply is: It's a big issue. You have to take it seriously and we do. Accordingly, we're going to put the resources, including our time and our energy, behind finding resolutions that are lasting. Accordingly, I think it's appropriate that we work with our municipal partners, who are the primary delivery agent for the service.

**Mr. Tory:** It will be great, for a change, to hear a very specific date on which we can hear the results of that work.

Now the Auditor General can be added to the list of those, as well, who are looking at other issues to do with mismanagement in health care. The emergency room doctors were here a couple of weeks ago talking about wait times in ERs that are literally twice as long as the standards your government has adopted, and you failed to make it a priority. In fact, the Auditor General says here that 40% of high-priority patients, the sickest and most in need of urgent care, transferred to hospital by ambulance are having to wait 40 minutes just to be accepted into the hospital, let alone get any care. Why? It's because of overcrowding in emergency rooms, something that the doctors raised and you dismissed in this House out of hand two weeks ago.

My question is this: What specific action are you taking to improve ambulance response times and the emergency room waiting times, which you said two weeks ago weren't a problem?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member is trying a little bit too hard today. Firstly, he uses a figure of 44% and doesn't stand in his place and acknowledge that that's a figure of increase in time from 2000 to 2004. For three of those four years, the honourable member beside him was the Minister of Health. It was the honourable member who sits beside you who dumped hundreds of millions of dollars into emergency rooms with no net effect. What I did say, when you trotted out a selection of doctors, was that here in this province when we're the government, as when you were the government, we work through the auspices of the Ontario Medical Association. Those doctors who came forward are part of an organization that represents something like 15% or 20% of emergency room doctors. Accordingly, we work through the organization that it's appropriate to work through. We work through our hospitals and we work with the Ontario Medical Association.

**1500**

What do we do specifically? We put additional resources into the emergency department alternate financing

agreement with a view toward providing more resource for it. We are working on a report right now by Dr. Brian Schwartz from Sunnybrook on ambulance off-load delays. It's coming forward soon. I hope the honourable member—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care in regard to ambulances.

Today, the Auditor General's report found that the Ministry of Health was not monitoring dispatch reaction times adequately to see if they met the provincial standard. Where the ministry did monitor air ambulance operators, they found that the provincial standards regarding reaction time were met only 38% to 67% of the time.

Minister, you know that much of northern Ontario relies on air ambulance service, but in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario up to two thirds of the time wait times for ambulances are much longer than the provincial standard.

My question is this: Could you tell this House what concrete steps you're going to take to make sure that dispatch reaction times meet the provincial standard 100% of the time?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I've already had a chance to speak to this somewhat today. But specifically on the issue of air ambulance, I think it's important to note that when we came to office, we inherited a circumstance where, in 2001, a coroner's inquest had been very critical about the misalignment of rules within air ambulance. The honourable member knows that in the course of two years I worked very hard on that, and an air ambulance system in our province is coming to life with unified responsibilities so that there is some accountability for those service delivery targets which are so essential.

I can say to the honourable member, as I said at the first question I answered today, that when you have the benefit of the Auditor General taking a very specific look at a program or service, it's an opportunity and an obligation to make sure that we respond on point to those observations and criticisms that are brought forward.

As I've indicated already to this House, and I'm happy to indicate one more time, we will look carefully at it and we will work and respond on point with a view toward enhancing service for the patients of Ontario.

**Mr. Bisson:** Minister, this is the 2005 annual report of the Provincial Auditor. We're not talking about the Tory government, we're not talking about the NDP government and we're certainly not talking about Leslie Frost. We're talking about the Dalton McGuinty government, which has been in power for two years. The auditor is saying that you guys have messed up and that you've not done what you're supposed to be doing. In fact, there were recommendations made by the public accounts

committee that are referred to in this report that were never met.

I'm asking you the question: If up to two thirds of the time patients in northern Ontario are not able to be transported by air ambulances in the regular time set out in your own standards, what are you going to do to fix it? I want to know concretely, what are you going to do now, under your watch, to fix the problem?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The member wants to challenge me in his question by making some reference to Tories and New Democrats, when in my earlier answer I spoke about a coroner's inquest from 2001, my point simply being that there are a lot of bodies—coroners' inquests, special reports, the Auditor General—that offer recommendations to the government in terms of areas where improvements can be made. We've worked diligently on the issue of air ambulance with a view toward creating a seamless administration of air ambulance because, under your governments, you tolerated—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** They don't like it, Mr. Speaker. They don't like this.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** They can dish it out.

The point is that substantially, when a coroner's inquest or an Auditor General comes forward with a report, it's our obligation to take seriously the advice and direction they offer. In the case of air ambulance, we have done that. We've created a unified air ambulance system with appropriate accountability so that we have capacity to address the service issues which the honourable member is very appropriately calling to attention.

#### HIGH-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE LANES

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday you announced plans to introduce new HOV lanes on Ontario highways. This is in an effort to ease congestion, improve air quality, save time, improve commuters' quality of life and save money on gas.

As someone who commutes from Toronto to Mississauga, I'm proud of this government's commitment to easing congestion on our roads. I know that my constituents will be very happy to learn about the HOV lanes, as they will make commuting in the GTA a lot easier.

However, I was very surprised yesterday to read in the Toronto Star that existing lanes on the 401, the province's busiest road, would be restricted to high-occupancy vehicle lanes. Minister, can you tell me if the ministry plans on only putting HOV lanes on highways where we are building additional lanes, or will we be converting existing lanes' capacity to HOV?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** First of all, I would like to thank the member from Mississauga East. He is very much aware of the congestion issues we have on Highway 403.

I have been very clear with regard to my stand on new HOV lanes. We want to make sure the congestion issues



get addressed in this province, and especially in the GTA, but we have also made very clear that the HOV lanes will be new lanes. We will not take capacity from existing lanes and convert them into HOV lanes. So the HOV lanes we are creating on Highway 403 and Highway 404 are new HOV lanes. This is our pilot project. We want to make sure we get the advantage we are hoping for, which is reduced congestion and cleaner air. We also want to make sure people and goods can move from one place to another more quickly and efficiently. So these will be new lanes, and we will not convert the old lanes.

**Mr. Fonseca:** Minister, thank you for your clear clarification. I was really concerned that restricting lanes on Highway 401 would affect the flow of traffic on our already busy roads through the GTA. Minister, can you now outline for us future plans for high-occupancy vehicle lanes across the GTA?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I want to thank the member again for asking the question. I know the opposition members don't want us to address these issues, but congestion is a serious issue in the GTA. It costs about \$2 billion of lost productivity, and we are very serious about addressing this issue.

As I said earlier in response to the question, we want to make sure this pilot project is successful. If this pilot project is successful and congestion issues can be addressed, then we will look at other 400-series highways, and maybe even the QEW, to see if we can add HOV lanes to these highways so that some of the congestion issues can get addressed. Our hope is that the new HOV lanes will address congestion, clean air and save time.

#### CAMBRIDGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I will today be presenting a petition, signed by 20,000 good citizens of Cambridge and the region of Waterloo, asking the government to proceed immediately with the expansion of Cambridge Memorial Hospital. We need our Cambridge hospital expansion as part of the integrated Waterloo regional health system. The Cambridge Memorial Hospital is in a poor state of repair that is aggravating the overcrowding and deteriorating health services. Minister, what do you have to say to the good citizens of the city of Cambridge, the city of Kitchener, the city of Waterloo, the township of North Dumfries, the township of Wellesley, the township of Wilmot and the township of Woolwich?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm not sure the member alluded to it, but I believe there may be some people from those communities here today. I want to welcome them to the Ontario Legislature.

First, I acknowledge, and I have, I think, many times by now in the local press, the extraordinary love and commitment the people of this community enjoy for their

hospital. That is to be celebrated. I acknowledge, and the Premier has as well, that there are circumstances at that hospital which are challenging from the standpoint of its repair and maintenance. There are also challenges in terms of our overall fiscal capacity to address all of those commitments that were made on the eve of the last election. There were opportunities by your government, sir, to do the project that you had joy in announcing. That was not done and, regrettably, we inherited quite an overwhelming amount of hospitals that it seemed had been promised, although fiscal resources were short.

We recognize there are some more pressing and urgent needs. We're working very closely with the hospital, and I hope to be in a position to make some progress on the capital circumstances there, but we are not, at present, in a position to be able to see the whole project go forward in one fell swoop.

1510

**Mr. Martiniuk:** Cambridge and the region of Waterloo suffer from a severe lack of physicians and specialists. The delay in the expansion of Cambridge Memorial Hospital will make it much more difficult to keep qualified physicians in Cambridge and to attract them to our region, as our region is already designated an underserved area. Minister, what plans has your government made for Waterloo region to address this additional obstacle to attract and keep qualified doctors?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I might say, sir, that just a tiny bit of soul-searching would indicate to you that a bigger reason for the challenge that your community and other communities in Ontario are experiencing with physician shortages is that under this party's actions—and your delay in responding to it—we have—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member from Waterloo likes to ditz about it, but the reality is that for eight years in our province, there was a substantial reduction in our capacity to produce doctors. Unlike the honourable Leader of the Opposition, who probably thinks that, like Pizza Pizza, you can just make them in 30 minutes, the circumstances are clear that Ontario communities are being deprived by the short-sighted decision on the part of your government to stick with their decision to shrink our medical schools.

We've made a lot of progress on this. We've seen some advance on the number of physicians active in your community. But the circumstances are clear that what is necessary for the people of Waterloo-Wellington to experience more doctors in their communities is more years of a Liberal government.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is to the Minister of Education. I know the minister is here, but in the meantime, I'll ask the Acting Premier. The Auditor General's report says that your ministry permits boards to reallocate ESL and English literacy development grants to other programs but does not re-

quire that the information be submitted on how much of the grant is actually spent for the intended purpose. Minister, why are you underfunding school boards and forcing them to divert funds that should be going to ESL students?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** To the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I think if the member is accurately reading the Auditor General's work, instead of saying we're underfunding, he'll find that for the first time in a number of years, we've increased funds to school boards for ESL, also noting that the eligible population of people needing help has gone down. So actually, the dollars available have increased. We have also now put boards under new conditions, so that all the new ESL funds we've provided have to be spent solely on ESL. It's not a question of reporting; the new funds can only go to that purpose.

There were problems under the previous government. We have moved to correct those. We increased the eligibility. The important thing is that this year, for the first time, there is a big jump in performance for people with English as a second language, in their reading and writing skills. That's what matters. We've put the dollars there, and children who need help are doing better than they were before.

**Mr. Marchese:** You missed the first part. He said that the ministry permits boards to reallocate ESL grants to other programs. That's what the Auditor General said, and I think you're claiming that you've closed that loophole. As far as we know, you haven't done that. As far as we know, the auditor raises concerns that ESL and English literacy development students were discontinued prematurely due to budget considerations. The government—you Liberals—is very fond of talking about transparency and accountability, and, based on the auditor's report, there is no transparency in ESL funding. You know that many ESL students are failing and are at risk of dropping out. When will you fix this funding problem so that ESL students get a chance at success?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** Again, I want to say to people out there, to parents and others who should be concerned, that there's no worse reason for someone not to succeed in school than to not have the language of instruction. What we did first was make sure that boards had access to funds that would improve programs that cause students to learn better and to get themselves ahead. We've done that, and the results are there in a significant jump. English-as-a-second-language students improved their rate faster than the rest of the province. What we've also done is state that all the new funds have to be specifically for English as a second language. Further, this year we're sitting down with the school boards. We gave them notice last June, far before the Auditor General's report, that we're reforming that grant and we'll expect accountability, not just for the new dollars we've given them but also for the dollars that went before. The previous government did underfund school boards. We understand that. It's a hard concept for the member opposite to

understand, but we will make sure that vulnerable students get the support they need. We have now given more dollars than Dr. Rozanski said should be given for English as a second language, and that was to make sure—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. As you know, we have many students from around the world who choose Ontario to come to school and advance their education, and our institutions encourage foreign students to come to Ontario schools. This is a great time for these students to get a high-quality education and learn about another culture. It's also a great opportunity for our students to get to know students from other countries and diversify their knowledge of the world.

Like our students here, some of these international students need to have a part-time job to make some extra money; however, being able to work on university campuses remains the only option for these students. With some of our smaller schools especially having few job opportunities, this has left international students without the ability to have a part-time job. Minister, can you tell my constituents and the people of Ontario what's being done about this?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** I'd like to thank the member from Don Valley West for the question and also for her advocacy on behalf of international students. It's very unfortunate that international students have been able to access our post-secondary institutions but have not had the opportunity to participate in work life off-campus, particularly when the opportunities are limited. So I was very pleased, just the other week, along with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, to be able to announce that the government of Ontario has reached an agreement with the federal government to allow international students to work off-campus.

We are now working on the individual agreements with post-secondary institutions in Ontario that will allow the individual application of the agreement to campuses. The federal government has one or two things to conclude—they were interrupted, unfortunately, by an election—but we're very hopeful that this will be concluded in time for those students to engage in work by the summer.

**Ms. Wynne:** Thank you, Minister. I know that the 30,000 international students across Ontario will be very glad to hear this news.

Of course, it's important that we keep the quality of our schools high in order to attract students from around the world. Minister, can you tell me what our government is doing to improve quality? We made a huge commitment to post-secondary institutions last year. Can you

talk about what we're doing to improve our institutions after so many years of Tory and NDP neglect?

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** Actually, I'd be pleased to. Just the other week, the member for Don Valley West, the Premier and I were at the Glendon campus of York University. The Premier was announcing, and we were applauding, the first instalment of the additional quality money that the government of Ontario is investing through the Reaching Higher plan.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** It is reason to applaud. The first instalment of almost \$10 million went to York University—\$10 million for this year alone. What are they doing with that money? They are investing it in more faculties so there's better interaction between faculty and students. They're investing it in additional support services. They're investing it in the type of specialty programs one expects of an internationally renowned campus such as York University. In fact, this additional money will ensure an even better and higher quality education for the students not only of Don Valley West but on every campus in the province of Ontario.

#### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** My question is for the Acting Premier. On the front page of the Saturday, December 3 edition, a Toronto Star investigation found that rogue tow truck operators and body shops are preying on unsuspecting motorists, charging exorbitant fees and holding vehicles hostage. This is a province-wide problem, not a city bylaw problem. The yet-to-be-proclaimed section 20 of government Bill 169 will leave vehicle owners defenceless against rogue tow truck operators and body shops. Why is there no provincial legislation to regulate this problem and protect consumers?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** As a member, I think it is now something that is regulated by the municipalities. I'm aware of the concerns of consumers. I would say two things to them. One is that, as I say, this is regulated by the municipalities. On the other hand, if they feel they have been unfairly treated by tow truck operators, we do have a service in the ministry where we can investigate. So if it's happened to someone, they should feel free to be in touch with us, the Ministry of Government Services, [www.mgs.gov.on.ca](http://www.mgs.gov.on.ca), and we will look into it. But again, I would say to the member that the regulation of the tow truck operators is done by the municipalities, and I would hope that he might also direct his concerns to them.

1520

**Mr. Tascona:** The Toronto Star investigation found that many unwitting accident victims had their cars towed to the nearest shop on the recommendation of the tow truck driver only to find that getting it moved the next day to a different shop approved by their insurance company can cost \$1,500 or more in various fees, including secondary tow storage, administration, consultation, fuel and insurance surcharges and after-hour fees.

The Collision Repair Standards Act received royal assent already. It would protect consumers from being defrauded, but it has not been proclaimed by your government. Why is the Liberal government allowing consumers caught in an emergency situation to be defrauded, and when will it proclaim the Collision Repair Standards Act to clean up this industry?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I repeat what I said earlier, that the regulation of the tow truck industry is done by municipalities. I would also say that earlier this year, the government did expand the unfair or deceptive acts and practices regulation to cover certain practices in the towing industry. The member should be aware that, effective March 1, 2006, it will be an unfair act for towing providers to demand a referral fee from collision repair shops and for shops to accept such payment.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Simcoe-Grey has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Culture yesterday concerning the Frederick Banting Homestead Preservation Act. This matter will be debated at 6 p.m. this evening.

#### PETITIONS

##### CAMBRIDGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I have a petition from the Cambridge Memorial Hospital. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the \$72-million expansion of Cambridge Memorial Hospital was announced in 2002 pursuant to the directive of the Health Services Restructuring Commission 1998 report, with a provincial government allocation of \$47 million; and

"Whereas the plans for the project have been underway for the past two years; and

"Whereas the residents of the city of Cambridge and the township of North Dumfries, the corporation of the city of Cambridge and the regional municipality of Waterloo have committed their required share of the project as per provincial guidelines; and

"Whereas the decision to delay the expansion of Cambridge Memorial Hospital will adversely affect health care in the region of Waterloo; and

"Whereas the region of Waterloo is recognized as the fastest-growing economic region in Canada, and further delay in providing effective health care in the region may negatively impact Ontario's prosperity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:

"Be it resolved that the government of Ontario commit to the HRSC directive of 1998 and proceed immediately with the Cambridge Memorial Hospital necessary

expansion plans and infrastructure upgrades, as was approved and committed in 2002.”

I’m pleased to join the 20,000 good citizens of the region of Waterloo in supporting this petition.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I have a petition—the last of them—to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“We are suggesting that all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist or medical doctor be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan.

“Diabetes costs Canadian taxpayers \$13 billion a year and increasing! It is the leading cause of death and hospitalization in Canada. Many people with diabetes cannot afford the ongoing expense of managing the disease. They cut corners to save money. They rip test strips in half, cut down on the number of times they test their blood and even reuse lancets and needles. These cost-saving measures often have tumultuous and disastrous health consequences. Persons with diabetes need and deserve financial assistance to cope with the escalating cost of managing diabetes. We think it is in all Ontario’s and the government’s best interest to support diabetics with the supplies that each individual needs to obtain optimum glucose control. Good blood glucose control reduces or eliminates kidney failure by 50%, blindness by 76%, nerve damage by 60%, cardiac disease by 35% and even amputations. Just think of how many dollars can be saved by the Ministry of Health if diabetics had a chance to gain optimum glucose control.”

I’ll sign the petition.

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

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

“We are suggesting that all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist or medical doctor be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan.

“Diabetes costs Canadian taxpayers \$13 billion a year and increasing! It is the leading cause of death and hospitalization in Canada. Many people with diabetes cannot afford the ongoing expense of managing the disease. They cut corners to save money. They rip test strips in half, cut down on the number of times they test their blood and even reuse lancets and needles. These cost-saving measures often have tumultuous and disastrous health consequences.

“Persons with diabetes need and deserve financial assistance to cope with the escalating cost of managing diabetes.

“We think it is in all Ontario’s and the government’s best interest to support diabetics with the supplies that each individual needs to obtain optimum glucose control. Good blood glucose control reduces or eliminates kidney failure by 50%, blindness by 76%, nerve damage by 60%, cardiac disease by 35% and even amputations. Just

think of how many dollars can be saved by the Ministry of Health if diabetics had a chance to gain optimum glucose control.”

I support the petition and sign it.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** I have a petition signed by, among other people, Steven Muir of the town of Oakville.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I agree with this petition and affix my signature.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition that reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I affix my name in full support.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale):** I join my colleague the member from Niagara Falls in presenting this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular de-

generation ... and there are other forms of macular degeneration ... that are not covered,

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

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration, resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment cost for this disease is astronomical for most constituents and adds a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program.”

I put my signature as well on this petition.

1530

#### GAMMA FOUNDRIES

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas all residents in the town of Richmond Hill have the right to enjoy their homes, property, neighbourhood and to breathe clean air; and

“Whereas Gamma Foundries, a division of Victaulic Co. of Canada Ltd., is clearly the identifiable and documented source of noxious fumes and odours in the Newkirk Road area of Richmond Hill; and

“Whereas Gamma Foundries has persistently failed to respond to the legitimate concerns of the community regarding these odours and emissions; and

“Whereas Gamma Foundries has refused to initiate engineering solutions to these issues as identified in a report by Earth Tech and as ordered by the Ministry of the Environment; and

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has specifically directed Gamma Foundries to initiate engineered controls to address the adverse effects of these pollutants;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of the Environment to take all measures possible to enforce the provincial officer’s order issued on November 3, 2005, and to ensure that residents are afforded the right to enjoy their property and neighbourhood, as is their right under law.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition and to hand it to page Jeremy for delivery.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough–Rouge River):** In support of my colleague from Niagara Falls, I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration (wet), and there are other forms of macular degeneration (dry) that are not covered,

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

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration, resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are

astronomical for most constituents and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program.”

I’m prepared to sign this petition and be in support of it.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

This is signed by a significant number of my constituents. I affix my signature in support of the petitioners.

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** I have a petition on behalf of my constituents:

“Whereas Ontario has an inconsistent policy for access to new cancer treatments while these drugs are under review for funding; and

“Whereas cancer patients taking oral chemotherapy may apply for a section 8 exception under the Ontario drug benefit plan, with no such exception policy in place for intravenous cancer drugs administered in hospital; and

“Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients with further inequities on the basis of personal wealth and the willingness of hospitals to risk budgetary deficits to provide new intravenous chemotherapy treatments; and

“Whereas cancer patients have the right to the most effective care recommended by their doctors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to provide immediate access to Erbitux, Avastin, Velcade and other intravenous chemotherapy while these new cancer drugs are under review and provide a consistent policy for access to new cancer treatments that

enables oncologists to apply for exceptions to meet the needs of patients.”

I give this petition to page Stephen.

#### ONTARIO FARMERS

**Mr. John O’Toole (Durham):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers and rural Ontarians have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen’s Park due to a lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government; and

“Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis and they” have demonstrated their concerns “at Queen’s Park on March 9;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to deal with the serious issue of farm income, as brought forward by the Rural Revolution’s resolutions to respect property and prosperity as follows:

“Resolution number 4: Federal and provincial governments have created a bureaucratic environment that legalizes the theft of millions of dollars of rural business and farm income. All money found to be removed from rural landowners, farmers and business shall be returned.”

I’m pleased to support that, and present it to the House on their behalf.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** It’s my pleasure to support my seatmate and colleague from Niagara Falls with this petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration (wet), and there are other forms of macular degeneration (dry) that are not covered,

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

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration, resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most constituents and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program.”

It’s my pleasure to sign this petition and support it, and to ask page Helen to carry it for me.

#### HIGHWAY 35

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines to communities across Ontario and crucial to the growth of Ontario’s economy; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been planning the expansion of Highway 35, and that expansion has been put on hold by the McGuinty government; and

“Whereas Highway 35 provides an important economic link in the overall transportation system—carrying commuter, commercial and high tourist volumes to and from the Kawartha Lakes area and Haliburton; and

“Whereas the final round of public consultation has just been rescheduled;

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

“That the Liberal government move swiftly to complete the four-laning of Highway 35 after the completion of the final public consultation.”

It’s signed by hundreds of people from my riding, and I affix my signature.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### RESPECT FOR MUNICIPALITIES ACT, 2005

##### LOI DE 2005 SUR LE RESPECT DES MUNICIPALITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 5, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 37, An Act to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999 in relation to municipalities / Projet de loi 37, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la protection des contribuables en ce qui concerne les municipalités.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate on Bill 37.

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** We are commencing debate on Bill 37, An Act to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999 in relation to municipalities. This is a piece of legislation—a bill, I should say; proposed legislation—also known as the Respect for Municipalities Act, and in some quarters I hear it referred to as disrespect for municipalities.

We know that this piece of legislation, if it goes forward, will present certain additional powers for municipalities to raise fees and to tax. I find that somewhat disingenuous, that in a sense we see this government perhaps bringing forth a piece of legislation that allows municipalities to do some of the dirty work for this government. I may remind you, Speaker, that it’s been over a year now since I’ve had an opportunity to make reference to a volume, a book, entitled *The Book of Virtues*. I have quoted from this book in the past, as I recall, in evening debate, when you were in the chair. It contains a number of cautionary tales with respect to issues that are ethical, cautionary tales that I feel relate to what I refer to as this government’s fairy tales—“Fairy Tales in Liberal Land”—with the introduction of Bill 37,

the Respect for Municipalities Act. We may need a refresher.

#### 1540

Bill 37 proves once again that instead of beginning with “Once upon a time,” in Dalton McGuinty’s Ontario fairy tales now begin with words like “I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes....” From my reading of this legislation, what I see is granting the power to municipalities to implement new taxes, new fees, new levies. There are different names for these implementations.

Further to the promise from the present Premier that “I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters; and not run deficits”—that’s a whole other story, the issue of deficits. I will focus on the taxing powers found in this provincial legislation. To continue the quote from the present Premier, “I promise to abide by the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act.” That was a pledge that was signed on September 11, 2003.

As you will know, this debate follows the period for petitions, where as elected representatives we bring forward petitions, an ancient, time-honoured mechanism for our constituents to make their views known, petitions that contain tens of signatures, hundreds of signatures, thousands of signatures. Our constituents feel very strongly that their signature, putting their name, affixing their name to a document means something. As MPPs, when we conclude reading these petitions to those assembled, we invariably also affix our name to that document. In fact, as I understand it, that petition would not be able to go forward to the Clerks’ table without the signature affixed by the elected representative who read that petition. I feel a person’s signature is very important. I feel a person’s word is very important.

With respect to that piece of legislation I mentioned earlier, the Taxpayer Protection Act, 10 years ago I had an opportunity to discuss that particular piece of legislation. It didn’t exist at that time. I called for it to come forward because that was something we talked about in our election, the importance of protecting taxpayers from further spending, to protect taxpayers, whether they be provincial or municipal taxpayers, from further spending and from net tax increases in this great province of Ontario. At the time, I felt very strongly—I had only been a member for several months—that our provincial and federal politicians and our municipal representatives, and attendant staff—bureaucrats, if you will—were behaving like drug addicts. I referred to them as tax-and-spend addicts. They were addicted to taxes, they were addicted to borrowing, and all concerned, in my view, were addicted to spending.

As I recall, we affixed our signatures to this proposed piece of legislation. At that time we felt that taxpayers needed statutory protection from the kind of behaviour we are seeing in this House today, and that was 10 years ago. We called for, obviously, continuing action at that

time to stop our rising debt and deficit problems, which are two different issues—debt and deficit—something I find myself explaining to members opposite. That was part of the Taxpayer Protection Act. The other part, of course, was the taxing powers that were so readily available to those in power.

At that time, Ontario had the worst annual deficit in Canada, compared to the size of our economy. If you recall, back in the summer of 1995 it was projected to reach \$10.6 billion in that particular year. At that time, more than 18 cents of every dollar the government received in revenue had to go to pay interest on the debt, so obviously we needed legislation. The average taxpayer was handing over \$800 every year just to pay the interest. How long could we afford to do that?

Again, 10 years ago, Ontario was in the midst of a very serious recession. It was felt at the time that the previous government of the day had pretty well destroyed the economy in Ontario. Between 1985 and 1994—and that’s under both Liberal and NDP reigns in Ontario—we saw 65 tax increases. Ontario was clearly one of the highest-taxed jurisdictions in North America. People felt it was time for fresh horses, really; time for a change and a positive change. On July 21, 1995, the Minister of Finance had to announce spending cuts of \$1.9 billion—the goal to reduce the deficit from \$10.6 billion to \$8.7 billion.

Just to fast forward 10 years, here we are again with a Liberal government. We see quite a contrast to the work that was being done 10 years ago and the behaviour of Premier McGuinty.

I, as well as those assembled, perhaps those listening this afternoon, will remember the message we received from our television sets, a message from the Premier of the day promising, “I won’t cut your taxes, but I won’t raise them either.” That sounds very familiar. We see that pledge today for what it was worth. Very simply, I assume it was an election strategy. It certainly got this government elected. People voted for something that actually wasn’t true and we now see it for what it was. It was a made-for-TV message designed to get votes. I would suggest it worked, and it didn’t protect taxpayers one bit, as evidenced by the series of tax hits culminating in the so-called Ontario health tax—that’s a year or a year and a half ago—and the attendant and resultant delisting of health-related services: optometrist services, chiropractic services and physiotherapy. In a sense that’s old news.

Everyone knows they’re now paying more. People are paying more for necessary health services that they had previously relied on government to support. Everyone knows they’re paying more to a government that promised they wouldn’t have to for services that government pledged to improve. We’re still waiting for those improvements.

You know, today it’s not so much about the health tax, but about the further continued destruction of a promise to uphold the values of the Taxpayer Protection Act, the destruction of a promise, a destroyed promise, that we

see rising again within this particular piece of legislation, Bill 37, that would amend the Taxpayer Protection Act. It would exempt municipal governments from the provisions of the Taxpayer Protection Act.

#### 1550

If you recall, the Taxpayer Protection Act, passed in 1999, limits the ability of the province to increase taxes governed by any of the following statutes. I would like to read these titles in: the Corporations Tax Act, the Education Act, the Employer Health Tax Act, the Fuel Tax Act, the Gasoline Tax Act, the Income Tax Act, the Provincial Land Tax Act and the Retail Sales Tax Act. Further to this point, one of the restrictions is that it makes it unlawful for the province to introduce legislation, like we're seeing today, that would grant taxing authority to another entity, such as a municipal government. That's exactly what this piece of legislation does.

This is a piece of legislation that flies in the face of the Taxpayer Protection Act, which, as we all know, was solemnly signed by Premier McGuinty. There was a ceremony, and we now have a Premier who is not abiding by a document he affixed his signature to. We have heard in recent weeks that instead of keeping their pledge, Bill 37 does exactly the opposite: It allows government to violate the Taxpayer Protection Act and gives municipalities the ability to levy new taxes. It violates the act; it violates this Premier's pledge not to allow new taxes to be levied.

This is a time when I would usually break open that Book of Virtues I mentioned earlier: a book warning against the dangers of breaking one's word, a book that impresses the importance of honesty and truthfulness.

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr. Barrett:** When I mention the words "truthfulness" or "honesty," I get a rise from those assembled opposite. I've related the story of Pinocchio in the past. I've talked about lessons of honesty, those age-old lessons, children's stories about George Washington, for example, and Abe Lincoln. These are people whom we in North America look to for direction as we attempt to follow our moral compass.

There was one story in that book that was titled *The Boy Who Never Told a Lie*—these were all very important lessons. I wish to continue to refer to these cautionary tales and hope that some of this does rub off.

Just to break away from that, it really is a sad day, with respect to the breaking of that Taxpayer Protection Act, when the people of this province are told by a judge that they cannot expect their elected representatives to keep their word. That just flies in the face of where I'm coming from. But that's the way this government operates; that's the way this government runs its business. The ruling he came forward with seems to be OK with that particular judge. So the operative phrase for this government is, "Tell people one thing and do another."

It also puts me in mind of last spring's shell game played on Ontario municipalities, and I make a connection with this and the legislation we are debating here with respect to respect for municipalities, as it is titled. I know the member for Erie-Lincoln knows a bit about

some of these figures that came out last spring. We have an unrepentant government that continues to tell municipalities they're getting a better deal. The math eludes me. I can tell you that mayors and councils across Ontario did agree that the municipal partnership, as it was called, resulted in \$47 million less than the municipalities were counting on. It was not a better deal, no matter how you do the math.

Again, an example—I use this example for this present government: "The government giveth and the government taketh away." Many municipal representatives in my area feel that this government has turned its back on their municipalities, the small-town and rural municipalities. I say that in the context of the stark contrast to the promise of support for municipalities in my area, in the rural south, southwestern Ontario, tobacco country, for example. Hard-hit tobacco communities were, essentially, exposed to the old bait and switch.

On March 29, previous Ag Minister Peters announced the government would provide \$15 million for tobacco-area municipalities. Then, only a week later, we learn the government will take back from those same municipalities well over \$15 million, as they saw the essentially declining municipal partnership fund. Brant county, for example, will see \$2.9 million less than they did last year. Brant is a tobacco county—perhaps I should say it was a tobacco county. Significant growing areas: Burford, Cathcart area, north up toward Princeton—around 403, you'll see tobacco—Mount Pleasant and Scotland, Harley, Oakland area, Fairfield Plain.

Elgin county, with respect to this municipal partnership fund, is going to see \$4.49 million less. Elgin's a tobacco county. Norfolk county, probably the biggest tobacco county—a decrease of \$7.3 million. Oxford is losing just short of \$1 million. The town of Tillsonburg—a decrease of about half a million dollars.

Again, they promised \$15 million on the one hand to tobacco municipalities, and they reduced, took back about \$16.1 million. Again, changes through the Ontario municipal partnership fund—we referred to that, formerly, you will recall, as the community reinvestment fund. That was a fund structured to be revenue-neutral. This has taken revenue neutrality to new heights, or to new lows, perhaps. You give \$15 million on one hand. A week later, you subtract \$16.1 million. That's revenue-negative. You know, if you look at the list of the Ontario municipal partnership fund, rural Ontario did poorly. I certainly got feedback from municipal representatives in my area.

So I guess, as I wrap up, I'm very concerned. I'm concerned that this government is continuing to leave the door open for tax hikes in spite of a promise made. Perhaps the members opposite just don't understand the meaning of making a promise. I would suggest the members opposite are indicating through legislation like this that they don't understand small-town and rural Ontario. Heaven help us if the city of Toronto ever adopted some of these ideas.

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



**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In response to the comments that were made by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, I should point out that our city had a look at the—I use in brackets the term “additional funding” that the province is to provide to us as it replaces the community reinvestment fund with this Ontario municipal partnership fund. I can tell you that after our council had a look at the proposal for the city of greater Sudbury, they passed a resolution calling on the government to provide more, because in the out-years for us there’s well over a \$1-million shortfall under the new program that was announced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs last year.

So we had a shortfall under the previous government that was partially replaced by community reinvestment fund funding. The Liberals, who promised to deal in a fair and reasonable manner with the download, which was never equal, in fact have not, and their new program, the Ontario municipal partnership fund, will leave our municipality, if nothing changes, with at least another \$1-million deficit that’s directly related to the increased costs that are associated with those provincial services that have been downloaded and the decrease that came from the province to actually support those services. That will go into place even with the change in public health funding because our public health unit went ahead and increased their budget, as they should, to try to protect and promote public health. The city, which was anticipating getting some of that provincial money back and reducing their payments to the public health unit, has found that that is not what the situation is going to be.

The member rightly pointed out what’s happening in his community. I can tell you that in ours there’s nothing fair about this download. It’s certainly not neutral, and unless there are some significant changes, we’ll have another ongoing deficit directly related to this.

1600

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** For a number of years, municipalities have justifiably complained that they don’t have the flexibility they need in trying to meet their revenue needs. They have alleged, I think with justification, that the property tax being the main and in some cases sole way of raising funds did not take into account a person’s ability to pay. They have requested that they have some flexibility in this regard. This bill provides for that flexibility.

I have heard reference made to Pinocchio from the other side. The Pinocchio story should be applied to those who said to the people of this province that there was a balanced budget in 2003. Then—surprise, surprise—the Provincial Auditor, a totally independent person, said, “Wrong; there’s a \$5.5-billion deficit in this province,” which of course changes all the presumptions. This government has changed that by bringing in legislation which will require the Provincial Auditor before an election independently to state the finances of the province. I think that’s excellent.

The defence they make is, “No, you should not have believed us.” The previous Conservative government

said, “Do you know when we told you that the budget was balanced? You people shouldn’t have believed us.” To listen to that defence today is unbelievable, I must say. Remember that this particular act, by the way, was suspended by the Eves Conservative government, so they have gone through this procedure. There were supposed to be some tax decreases. They suspended it by bringing in legislation. They were in effect in violation of their own law. I think they will be reminded of that on many occasions.

Lastly, they talk about the provincial premium for health care. Almost daily, members of the Conservative Party get up and ask that the government spend more money on health care, yet they’re opposed to a premium which generates the funds for that. In fact, their leader says that he’s going to cut \$2.4 billion from the health budget.

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** Of course I’m supposed to be responding to the address of my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, but I feel almost compelled to respond to the comments of the government House leader. Over two years into their mandate they still sit there, whining into their soup all the time about the previous government. This bill is a response to the fact that they can’t manage their affairs.

When they were the opposition, they chided that government. They chided the Conservative government and accused them of having no respect for municipalities and no respect for taxpayers in the fact that they downloaded and they changed the rules with regard to who pays what for services. This government said there would be none of that. This party said there would be none of that under a Liberal government but they haven’t done anything to change. They haven’t uploaded anything as a government.

What they’ve done is changed—there’s a new funding agreement between municipalities and the province. They’re claiming that is something that is superior and preferential to the community reinvestment fund that existed previous to this government. I talked to rural municipalities all over this province. They’re absolutely astounded that this government can call that kind of step backwards something positive. They stand and they like to whine and cry about what a mess they had left and everything, but the fact is that they’re not addressing the problems. Now they’re saying, “What we’re going to do is ensure that the taxpayer will have a bigger bill at the end of the day than they have now. That is something that I think people in this province should be very concerned about, because they do not need more taxes.

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** I listened carefully to the comments made by the members from Haldimand and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. The member from Haldimand refers to this legislation as the disrespect for municipalities act. Nothing I’ve heard in this House reeks more of irony than that. When you compare the record of our government with the record of their government, when you look at the disrespect their government showed to municipalities, for them to even

suggest for a second that we're moving forward in a disrespectful way toward municipalities just totally reeks of irony.

We look at the downloading to municipalities—hundreds of millions of dollars. Their own auditor indicated that for the city of Toronto alone, in the beginning days, it was about a \$200-million shortfall in terms of downloading. What has the McGuinty government done? Contrary to what the previous member said, we've uploaded public health funding; we're uploading costs in terms of public transit, a billion-dollar upload of capital funding for public transit. That's in a short 24 months.

The previous government left us with a \$5.5-billion deficit, but also a major deficit in infrastructure. What is this government coming forward with? A \$30-billion plan to narrow that infrastructure deficit: \$900 million for COMRIF funding for bridges, roads and water/waste water and hundreds of millions of dollars going into building affordable housing, which the previous government ignored. The previous government ignored calls to reform the OMB. The McGuinty government will soon be moving very quickly in implementing very significant Ontario Municipal Board reform.

As a member of Toronto council, I remember the previous government threatened us every time we disagreed with them that they were going to downsize our council. We're taking the opposite view. We're working with municipalities. We're respecting them for the mature level of government that they are, and we'll let them make those decisions.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I will return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant. You have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Barrett:** In her comments, the member for Nickel Belt made reference to a million-dollar shortfall under the provincial Liberal government's municipal partnership fund. We now have legislation that would give the municipality in that area the right to tax miners, forest workers, people in that area, people who perhaps could ill afford those kind of tax hikes.

I know in my area, farmers and small business people are taxed out. They just could not afford these additional powers that this province will be passing over to the municipalities to allow them to increase their levy. For example, my councillor in Norfolk county, John Wells, stated—and this is as a result of this revenue-negative aspect—“We seem left out in the cold in almost everything we apply for,” making reference to the tough news they received under the municipal partnership fund.

Just down the lake in Norfolk county, in the Port Rowan area—I was down there last night putting up signs, actually—Councillor Ted Whitworth said, “The McGuinty government seems systematically hostile to the interests of rural Ontario.” And I raise the question: Is this the future prosperity we were promised—looting rural Ontario, leaving areas out in the cold?

The member for St. Catharines made reference to Pinocchio and to the deficit. We were well on our way to

a balanced budget. As the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke indicated, you manage your affairs—you manage, you plan, you organize and you control. That's management, and you balance the books. It's that simple.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Martel:** It's a pleasure for me to participate in the debate on Bill 37 today. I'm going to make three points about the bill in the remarks in the time that I have.

First, here we have yet another broken Liberal promise. I know that's hard for you to believe. I know it's hard for Ontarians to believe. But here we are yet again with Bill 37 and evidence of another broken Liberal election promise. Secondly, this bill represents an abdication of the responsibility of the senior levels of government, provincial and federal, to appropriately, properly, adequately fund our municipalities. Thirdly, giving municipalities additional taxing powers is really an off-loading from the province so that municipalities bear the brunt of increasing taxes to respond to deficits that this government should be dealing with. Those are the three points that I'm going to focus on in my remarks today.

1610

Let me deal with the first one: another broken Liberal election promise. This comes from the explanatory note in the bill. It's quite a short bill—there you go; one page long. The explanatory note says it all with respect to the broken election promise:

“Currently, subsection 3(1) of the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999 provides that a member of the executive council shall not include in a bill a provision that gives a person or body (other than the crown) the authority to change a tax rate in a designated tax statute or to levy a new tax unless a referendum is held before the bill is introduced in the assembly and the referendum authorizes the authority to be given to the person or body.

“The new section 3.1 of the act provides that a referendum is not required with respect to a bill that gives a municipality the authority to levy a new tax.”

Here we have a picture on the front of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's *The Taxpayer*, November–December 2003 issue, a big headline that says, “Now He Must Keep His Word.” There's a big picture of Premier Dalton McGuinty with the president of the taxpayer federation; and I see George Smitherman, the current Minister of Health; I see Mr. Curling, a former Speaker who has now gone on to bigger and brighter things; I see Ms. Broten, who is now the Minister of the Environment; and I see the candidate who ran against my colleague Michael Prue. There they all are, smiling into the camera on September 11, 2003, right in the middle of the election, when Dalton McGuinty is busy signing his name, giving his pledge that (a) he wasn't going to raise taxes, and (b) he was going to abide by the provisions of the Taxpayer Protection Act—provisions which, I remind you, said that referendums had to be held before taxes could be increased. There he was, smiling into the camera, and the back story is all about how we need to make sure that he lives up to that commitment.

Well, here we are today with that promise being broken. In fact, it's not the first time that this government has set aside or broken or undermined the provisions of the Taxpayer Protection Act. So not on one but on two occasions already, the introduction of this bill being the second, Mr. McGuinty has broken the promise that he made on that fateful day, September 11, when he smiled into the camera and signed the pledge that he would neither raise taxes nor allow new taxes without a referendum.

The list of broken Liberal election promises is longer than my son's Santa wish list, and that's pretty hard to beat. But you know what? The list of broken Liberal promises is probably 10 times longer than my son's Santa wish list. And here we are today adding yet another broken promise to that long, long, arduous list of broken Liberal election promises, because the bill is really clear: A referendum doesn't have to occur in order for taxes to be raised. That has been set aside. So municipalities are now going to have the power to do that despite the pledge that Mr. McGuinty made during the election, when he signed his name on the dotted line. Those poor municipalities that decide they're going to go ahead and do that are going to face the wrath of the public, because I have to tell you, in my own municipality that's already facing a property tax increase as they go through their budget deliberations, folks at home are going to be none too happy if our municipality really went forward and tried to raise some of the taxes at the local level that are proposed through this bill.

They're already very unhappy with the prospect of a property tax increase. They're not very interested in hearing that municipalities are now going to have new taxing powers to ding them and their families and their neighbours yet one more time because the province has abdicated its responsibility to properly fund folks at the municipal level.

I want to give you some of that long list of broken Liberal promises, because it's always worth repeating those. No new taxes: Of course, the biggest single tax hike this province has ever seen came in the form of this Liberal government's new health tax, which came in its first budget, \$2.4 billion taken out of the pockets of modest- and middle-income Ontarians in the form of a health tax that Mr. McGuinty promised he would not put in place.

Second, there was the hydro rate cap that was supposed to stay in place until 2006, which went out the window in the very first session the Liberals sat. Of course, we are paying more for hydro—consumers themselves and big industry. In fact, the big energy prices of this government are driving so many companies in my part of the world underground, out of business, particularly those involved in forestry.

Then there was the promise to have no cuts to health care. Of course, in the first budget the government cut chiropractic services, eye exams and access to physiotherapy services. The government said it was going to end its discrimination against autistic children over the

age of six by providing them with IBI after the age of six. Of course, the government has broken that promise and they're in court bashing these parents and families yet again this week. The government said they were going to have a new Tenant Protection Act introduced in the first year of government. Well, here we are in year two, well beyond the first year, and there is still no sign of a new Tenant Protection Act.

The government said they were going to provide \$300 million of new provincial funding for child care, and we haven't seen a penny of that. The government said they were going to end the clawback of the national child benefit. All the government did was to pass the measly 2% or 3% rate-of-inflation increase for those who receive the benefit on to social assistance recipients in Ontario. The government keeps 95% of the national child benefit to the detriment of the poorest families in Ontario who, if they got the full value, would probably see at least \$1,500 a month in additional income coming into their households.

Those are some of the broken promises.

Today we have another one, directly related to Mr. McGuinty's promise on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes, to abide by the Taxpayer Protection Act. Here we have Bill 37 that sets aside the provisions of the Taxpayer Protection Act for the convenience of this government so that there won't be referendums when new taxes are introduced.

This bill really represents an abdication of the responsibility of both senior levels of government, the province and the feds—to properly fund cities. The reality is that the download of provincial services is still causing serious financial problems, a financial burden to so many municipalities: child care that's been downloaded; land ambulances, which we heard a lot about today in the auditor's report, that were downloaded; welfare, social assistance costs, that were downloaded to municipalities; social housing—a broad range of essentially soft services, operating services that were downloaded to the municipalities and that most municipalities, I dare say probably every municipality in this province, are still struggling to fund, my own municipality, the city of Greater Sudbury, included.

AMO put out a really interesting document this summer, which I want to reference because it's clear that as a result of the download that continues, this downloading of costs and the burden that falls on municipalities, that burden is very significant indeed. AMO put out a piece in August that said the following, and I want to quote from various sections of it:

"Ontario is the only province in Canada where municipal property taxes are used to subsidize provincial health and social service programs, like welfare and employment services, disability benefits, drug benefits, social housing, child care, homes for the aged, public health and ambulance services....

"One third of municipal spending goes to provincial health and social services programs?

"That's right. Municipal governments in Ontario spend over \$8 billion a year on provincial health and

social services programs. That's about one third of total municipal operating expenditures of \$23 billion a year. When you subtract provincial cost-sharing for some of these programs, federal contributions and user charges, the net municipal subsidy paid toward provincial health and social services is more than \$3 billion a year." That's what municipalities are subsidizing the province in terms of the additional costs they are carrying as a result of the download.

**1620**

What about the community reinvestment fund and the Ontario municipal partnership fund? Well, AMO said, "The community reinvestment fund (CRF) did partially offset a small portion of the cost of provincial programs. And its replacement, the ... Ontario municipal partnership fund ... provides limited financial assistance to municipalities, including \$179 million to assist some municipalities with their share of provincial social program costs. It's ... a fraction of what's needed."

What does AMO say about infrastructure?

"The province invests in municipal infrastructure in some municipalities through programs like COMRIF and provincial gas tax funding for transit. This capital funding helps with Ontario's massive \$5-billion-a-year municipal infrastructure deficit.

"But it's widely recognized that the reason Ontario has a massive municipal infrastructure deficit is because municipalities have been required to use their property tax revenues to fund provincial health and social service programs instead of making much-needed investments in infrastructure."

That is certainly the case in our municipality. I supported their COMRIF application; it was entirely designated for badly needed roadwork that hasn't been able to be done because the municipality has been so busy trying to pick up the additional costs related to health and social services.

What's the solution? Well, AMO didn't say Bill 37. According to AMO, "If the government of Ontario is serious about helping municipalities become fiscally sustainable, it must demonstrate that by reducing its reliance on municipal property taxes.

"Income redistribution programs should be funded through income taxes.

"The government needs to agree to work with AMO to develop a plan to start uploading provincial program costs back to where they belong."

Just with respect to public health, all the government did this year was upload 5%, and the government of Ontario also capped some of that portion because there were municipalities and public health units that were trying to pool their resources and do more. Some municipalities didn't really want to do that, so it came back to the government, and lo and behold, we now have a cap. So in fact the upload by the province so far with respect to provincial health is 5%. I've got to tell you, it's not going a whole heck of a long way in dealing with the \$3-billion deficit in health and social services spending that municipalities are reeling under.

In this document released in August, I don't see AMO calling on the government to give municipalities increased taxing power. On the contrary, I see AMO calling on the government to work with them to develop a plan to upload provincial program costs and to fund programs through income tax. I'm waiting for the provincial government to respond to that request if they truly respect their municipal partners.

Let me just look at what the Toronto Star said about this as well; it wasn't only AMO that made a comment in this regard. This is the most recent quote, on December 5, yesterday: "To prosper, Toronto and Canada's other large urban centres must be freed from their unhealthy dependence on property tax. They must be granted a share of income taxes or consumption taxes," because that's the only way you're going to deal with the very significant deficit that municipalities are facing.

What the government is doing instead of helping municipalities to deal with that very significant shortfall is offload to them more taxing powers. If you look at the city of Toronto alone, even having the ability to apply new taxes at the local level is not going to solve the city of Toronto's deficit problem. The budget chief, David Soknacki—I hope I said his name right—was quoted in the Toronto Star on November 15. I want to read this into the record: "Budget chief David Soknacki warned that levying new taxes won't solve the city's perennial budget woes, given the provincial downloading of welfare, public housing and transit costs." With respect to the city of Toronto's projected budget shortfall this year of \$400 million to \$500 million, budget chief Soknacki goes on to state, "'To be given options for perhaps a tenth of that'"—a tenth of that \$400-million to \$500-million projected budget shortfall—"doesn't go all the way to addressing the fundamental issues"

You see, the government is talking about municipalities levying local taxes with respect to alcohol, cigarettes or entertainment events. I don't want to see that list broadened. That's not the argument I'm here to make. I don't think we should even be dealing with this. But the point is, for those who would like to say that they respect the city of Toronto and other cities and that this bill is going to deal with their financial woes, that is patently untrue. The budget chief for the city of Toronto has made that clear. Even passing this bill, with the proposed new powers to apply to these kinds of items, will only deal with one tenth of their serious financial problem, a \$400-million to \$500-million projected problem for this fiscal year.

That is why AMO was quite correct in August when they said that what the government should really be doing, if the government were interested, is working with them to devise a plan to upload the costs of the many services that were downloaded under the Conservatives and remain downloaded under the Liberal government today. That is the way we're going to address the deficit.

I want to say again, with respect to public health, that all the government picked up this year was 5%—5%, folks—of public health budgets. Then you went and put a

cap on the amount you would send to municipalities as well. So in many communities it didn't even represent 5% of a difference in terms of what those municipalities provided last year and what they're required to provide this year.

AMO made it really clear in their presentation in August that two provincial programs—the one that replaced the community reinvestment fund still has significant financial limitations and still represents just a fraction of what is needed to deal with all of the services that have been downloaded. I remind government members who are so quick to ask, “What about public transit and what about public health?” that we've got a \$3-billion shortfall, and those small changes that were made aren't going nearly far enough to address the \$3-billion problem facing municipalities today. The bill that you bring forward to allow municipalities to levy more taxes at the local level isn't going to deal with that \$3-billion problem either.

I go back to the city of Toronto, where the budget chief estimates that in total, if all three of these taxes were implemented at the local level, the city of Toronto might raise \$50 million. The city of Toronto's projected deficit for this fiscal year is \$400 million to \$500 million. Do you know what? I don't think the city of Toronto is alone. In my own municipality, as I said earlier, they're projecting another property tax increase, and I'll bet that the same situation is facing municipality after municipality, municipal council after municipal council, right across this province as they engage in budget deliberations for the next year.

In closing, let me point out again that this Bill 37 is an example of yet another broken Liberal election promise, one more to add to the list. It is an example of this government's abdication of its responsibility to properly fund municipalities and it represents an effort by the province to have municipalities, in essence, feel the brunt of any new tax increases that they're probably going to be forced to bring in because of the deficit in their own municipal budgets.

1630

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

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I just wanted to take an opportunity to try to put some perspective on this in terms of the overall picture. I think it's important to start painting some of that in order for us to understand that there was a—I'll call it turning the Queen Mary around a little bit. I think we have to make sure that that foundation is set.

Let me correct something in the record about public health. It's a 25% upload over a five-year period to accommodate the damage that was done on the other big picture, and that is the complete download that the previous government did. Let's talk about that for just a moment. In terms of Who Does What, that committee, run by a long-standing Tory, gave the advice to the government of the day to take hard costs and give them to the municipalities and to take soft costs and give them to the province, and the exact opposite was done. There

are questions as to why that was done. It was known by all of the people who have expertise in how government works that that should have been done from the very beginning, including the way the hospitals were restructured, and that was to pay for the things on the outside of our communities. It couldn't be done financially at the time because of the tax-cut regime that was established.

Here's a quote about this bill that I think I need to share with everyone: “We have to re-examine completely the relationship between the municipal and provincial government to give city governments more latitude to raise some of their own revenue if they choose to do so. They will then be accountable for whatever they choose to do to fund some things that may be priorities for those cities.... Right now they have to go and ask for permission to do everything and I don't think that's right.” Now, who could possibly have said that? The leader of the official opposition, John Tory. “The Association of Municipalities ... welcomes today's introduction of the respect for municipal government act, a bill that would amend the Taxpayers Protection Act ... and promote the principle that municipal governments should be empowered to govern effectively.” That was a quote from AMO. I think we're on the right track.

**Mr. Barrett:** The member for Nickel Belt indicated that tax hikes alone are not going to provide the assistance that many of these municipalities require with their financial woes. I think of a number of pulp and paper towns in the north. I think of Atikokan. There's a community that is economically linked very closely with a coal-generating station that this present government has indicated they are going to close in 2007. Their target date is probably after October 2, 2007. But as far as tax hikes alone assisting these municipalities, I fully agree with the member from Nickel Belt that tax hikes are not the answer. There are indications that tax hikes in the past have gone wildly out of control. I think in 1993—that was a recession year—the Bob Rae government set a record for hiking taxes during a recession. That was a record increase of \$2.2 billion in tax hikes in one year. Not to be outdone, the second record year was 1989, under the David Peterson Liberals, and the amount of increase was \$2.8 billion in one year. At that time, that was the largest tax hike in the history of Ontario. Again, following in the footsteps of David Peterson, we see Liberal Dalton McGuinty, in the year 2004, coming up with the new record. This is a record for the history of tax hikes in the province of Ontario: \$7 billion in tax hikes in one year. That was last year.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I'm happy to have an opportunity to offer some remarks to the remarks that have come from the member for Nickel Belt. I think it is important to point out that there was a government administration previous to ours that did place a significant burden on municipalities in Ontario, and that exercise was called downloading. Municipalities in my riding continue to remind me of that piece of history. It was a very painful piece of history for municipalities in Ontario, the extent to which services to people in their com-

munities were downloaded, such as the responsibilities for provincial highways. I even had a member from the opposition party call my office on an issue around the maintenance of a highway that the Conservative government downloaded to the municipality, and the municipality just does not have the resources to deal with it.

We have heard from municipalities that say there are areas where they believe they might want to entertain ways to increase their revenues. This bill is about respecting their good judgment. Obviously, the people in their communities have some respect in regard to their ability to make decisions on their behalf—that's why they have been elected—and our government respects the people who have been elected in our communities.

I think it's also important to correct, as my colleague did, and to note that our government has uploaded public health unit costs; over five years, it will be 25%. I think it's important when these facts are presented that the whole story is presented, not just a snapshot of what happened this year or what will happen next year. It will be 5% this year and for the next five years.

**Mr. Duguid:** I just want to continue along the same lines as I left off at my last opportunity to speak to this about 20 or so minutes ago. I was talking about the comparison—the short 24 months we've been in office compared to the record of the previous government in terms of the respect we're showing for municipalities.

I talked about the downloading. I talked about the deficit they left behind financially, but also the deficit they left behind in terms of infrastructure that we're fixing up, that we're investing in big-time to try to assist municipalities and communities in rebuilding, whether it be bridges, water, waste water or roads or the like.

I talked about how the previous government ignored calls for Ontario Municipal Board reform and how this government is moving boldly in that area, and very soon we'll be making some very significant changes to how the Ontario Municipal Board works.

I talked about the threats of downsizing with Toronto city council and how that compares to our approach, which is to work with the Toronto city council, to respect them as a mature level of government and give them the opportunity, as we move forward with a new City of Toronto Act that will in all likelihood give the city of Toronto the ability to define their ward boundaries, to define their numbers.

I recall the previous government in their last election platform talking about not allowing municipalities to raise taxes at all without holding a referendum. I think this bill is the exact opposite of that. This bill gives municipalities the respect they need to go out and make the tough decisions they have to sometimes make; a total difference in approach.

I think back to the announcement of the 1,000 cops, and I think how the Leader of the Opposition responded to that, trying to play off Toronto's 250 cops with the rest of the province. We're proud of the contribution this province has made to Toronto and all municipalities.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Nickel Belt has two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Martel:** I want to thank the members who made contributions. Let me say this. There was a problem with downloading; there still is. That's why we opposed the downloading of provincial services that the Conservatives undertook. But the way to solve that problem—because it's still there—is for the province to upload some of those very same services so the province assumes the burden of soft services, not the municipalities.

What the government is proposing to do is essentially offload a problem that they should be dealing with on to the municipalities, to allow the municipalities, which are in a desperate fiscal and financial situation, to levy even more taxes at the local level so they bear the brunt of the unhappiness of taxpayers. There are too many municipalities in that situation.

AMO has been very clear. The difference between those soft services that municipalities shouldn't be paying for, but are, is \$3 billion. That gap hasn't been closed by the small amount of money that this government has provided for public health and by the small amount of money that this government is providing at the local level by way of the gas tax. A \$3-billion problem is what we have facing us, and this government's response is to say to municipalities, "You go and levy more taxes because you're going to be forced to because of the fiscal imbalance. You bear the brunt of wrath from the taxpayers when you do that."

**1640**

If the government wanted to do something, here are some examples. The Toronto Board of Trade said to upload the entire cost of social services and public housing to the province. This would save the city of Toronto about \$500 million a year. This is the member from Peterborough, who met with his council in February who said that he himself was working on initiatives such as reworking equalization. He's personally starting a crusade to have the province take back responsibility for land ambulance services. I wish the province would.

Finally, the government should work with AMO to look at uploading some of those downloaded costs, because that's the only way we're going to deal with this \$3-billion deficit.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** It's a pleasure to join the debate today on Bill 37, the Respect for Municipalities Act. I think I'd be remiss in talking to a bill about municipalities without adding my own personal welcome to our newest member of the House, Bas Balkissoon, who is the member for Scarborough—Rouge River. He's already making contributions to the goodwill and to the experience and knowledge that he brings from the municipal sector in Ontario.

My past includes 18 years as a regional councillor in the town of Oakville, the region of Halton. Those members who share that type of past and experience will know that a lot of those types of politics and those political experiences are often held around the kitchen table. You don't have the staff resources we have here;

quite often you're talking to your neighbours on the street. But the beauty of that system is that it's the closest system of government, it's the closest system of politics to the average person. It brings a neighbourhood in touch with democracy. It brings government right down to its base roots. I think that's something we should never forget. Those of us who have either maybe had experiences in the past with local councillors or aldermen, depending on the term that is used in their various organizations, or have even served in that capacity, should remember that that's what our democratic government is all about. That's where the rubber hits the road: at the local level, at the town level and at the regional level.

This bill is about respecting that level. It's about saying to those gentlemen and to those ladies who decide that they would like to put their name forward and ask for the support of their own neighbours and their own communities, it's about paying them the respect that they are due. Too often, I remember under previous governments, serving as a regional councillor, serving as a town councillor and having shoddy legislation handed down from the province, and being told as a local elected official that I couldn't possibly know as much as a provincial bureaucrat or as a provincial politician; that, if I was given the opportunity to do something as a local elected official in the town of Oakville or the region of Halton, somehow I would do the wrong thing, and somehow my colleagues on council would do the wrong thing. I knew that wasn't right. Especially under the previous government, I knew how much that was wrong.

The previous government had a very, very heavy-handed way of doing things. Some people prefer that form of government. Things that were said about the previous Premier were that he did what he said. Unfortunately, he did do what he said he was going to do. He just about, in my estimation, bankrupted the province of Ontario and destroyed what local government is all about. This bill goes a long way to restoring that.

During the 18 years I was on council I was preached to; I was told that the province always knew best. What my colleagues were telling me and what we were saying and what members of AMO were saying is that, given the opportunity, if a future government had the courage and had the guts to begin to share some of the legislative authority in the province of Ontario, the province of Ontario would be a better place. We've taken up that challenge as a government. This proposed bill provides the respect for municipalities that they've long asked for and long deserved.

When I was talking to members of my community as a local elected official, they raised a host of issues such as environmental issues—a very important issue in my riding; a very important issue in my ward. They were concerned about air quality. They were concerned about urban sprawl. What they were also concerned about was that the local council or the regional council or the board of health did not have the authority or the ability to do what was in the best interests of their community because provincial legislation would not allow it. Provincial

legislation that controls the Ontario Municipal Board was an impediment to doing the right thing. That, they thought, was a mistake, something that needed to be changed, and when they elected me they told me, "Flynn, get down there and do something about it."

That's why I'm so proud today to stand in the House and see this type of proposed legislation start to make its way through the legislative process. I would like to see this bill supported by all members of the House because it sends a message to another level of government. It sends a message to our partners at AMO, to the men and women who serve on a daily basis and a nightly basis, sometimes into the wee hours of the morning, on behalf of all the citizens of Ontario, trying to do the best thing for their communities and trying to make this province a better place to be.

**Mr. Duguid:** John Tory doesn't believe in that.

**Mr. Flynn:** I don't know what John Tory believes in these days but I know what I believe in and what this government believes in.

I'm expecting to see some very exciting things. We've already seen some exciting things out of this government when it comes to planning issues, when it comes to environmental protection—in my own riding, protection of the greenbelt; protection of the ORC lands; investment in the Ford plant to drive the economy—that allow us to do the things that protect the most vulnerable in our economy. We have a strong economy. We have strong corporate growth in Ontario. If we have those ingredients, we can do some things for the less fortunate in our society.

Toronto is the centre of the GTA. I'm not a Toronto MPP, but I support this legislation very strongly. The GTA is simply the economic engine of Ontario. It's the economic engine of this country. Toronto is the centre, obviously, of the GTA. I can lend my support, certainly as a member of provincial Parliament who represents a 905 area, to legislation that will give that economic engine and that economic centre the ability to be a stronger economic engine for the rest of the country and certainly for the rest of the province.

I don't know that any of us in the House ever thought we'd see the day when Ontario would become the largest auto assembly jurisdiction in all of North America. Who thought that Ontario could ever pass the state of Michigan in auto production? And we have. That probably typifies some of the differences between the way previous governments have approached issues and the way our government has approached issues.

Look at my own community of Oakville. It's the head office of Ford of Canada. Compare the approaches when we started to hit challenging times. Under the previous government, the Progressive Conservative government, in my community the truck plant closed. It simply closed down; shut up shop. Jobs were lost. Minivan sales began to decline. Everybody who knows what is made at Ford knows the previous model was the Windstar. They began a sales decline.

Ford of Canada was in some serious trouble with its product line, but the response from the previous gov-

ernment was, "Let the plant close. Let the jobs go"—a benign indifference to the hopes and dreams of the thousands of autoworkers who relied on Ford of Canada and the production of high-quality vehicles. They were just told by the previous government to let it go. They sat on their hands. They were prepared to let all those hopes and dreams just go south of the border—4,000 autoworkers' jobs to go down the drain. They weren't prepared to do a thing, with the full knowledge that every job you create on an auto assembly line leads to another six to eight jobs in the community. With all that information at hand, the previous government in my own community of Oakville was prepared to let that plant go.

**1650**

I believe that the NDP, given the opportunity, probably would have invested in the Ford plant, but we all know the NDP simply will not be forming the government anytime soon, and I'm not sure if they're taken seriously yet. Buzz Hargrove certainly doesn't, in my opinion, seem to be taking the New Democratic Party very seriously these days. After the Ford investment, Mr. Hargrove made a very telling statement. He was talking about Minister Cordiano, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, and he said, "That Joe Cordiano, he's one heck of a guy."

**Mr. Levac:** He gets it.

**Mr. Flynn:** He gets it.

I haven't, in the past few days, heard Mr. Hargrove say, "That Jack Layton, he's one heck of a guy." I think he said something entirely different about Mr. Layton, and I think that, when given the opportunity, Mr. Harper also had the opportunity during the last federal election to let us know what he thought about investing in Oakville and Ford. He said he would not; he would simply not provide that investment.

Remembering my years as a local official, I find some of the remarks, that I could not possibly do the right thing, as being insulting. I find that some of the remarks that, if given the opportunity to do something, all any local councillor or mayor of a community would do was raise taxes. That's not what this is about. If you read the AMO comments on this, you'll realize that there is more expertise at our disposal in the province of Ontario that is not being used at the local level and that should be used, that should be put to good use for the future of this community.

It's been a pleasure to contribute today. I certainly hope to see the passage of this proposed bill, because I know, for the city of Toronto, it's going to mean some very important things for our community.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Wilkinson):** We'll now have questions and comments.

**Mr. Barrett:** The member for Oakville made mention of many years of experience in regional government as an elected member with regional council. I don't know whether he would recall, as a municipal representative at the time the 1999 Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act came in, that currently under the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act, subsection 3(1) provides that, "A member of the executive council shall

not include in a bill a provision that gives a person or body (other than the crown) the authority to change a tax rate in a designated tax statute or to levy a new tax unless ... a referendum ... is held before the bill is introduced in the assembly."

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Barrett:** I heard some snorting across the way. I feel that referendums, referenda, are a very important tool in our democratic society. I make reference to the town of Simcoe and the city of Nanticoke in my area. Both had a referendum a number of years ago to eliminate regional government in our area. People in my area had no use for the regional form of government. The province of Ontario listened to what was coming forward in those various referendums or referenda.

You may correct me, Speaker, on the correct pronunciation of the plural.

**The Acting Speaker:** Referenda.

**Mr. Barrett:** Referenda? OK. In Ontario government legislation, I understand they refer to the plural as "referendums." I agree with the Speaker. I use the term "referenda." But referenda or referendums are required. A referendum authorizes the authority to be given to that person or body.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Oh, sorry—well, it's acceptable to the member for Nickel Belt, so we will continue with the member.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell):** It seems that the member from Oakville understood immediately that we have to give back to the municipalities the power to govern.

In June 2002, the former government passed Bill 109. It seemed to me that the former government was saying that Ontario municipalities were not mature. How can you say that? It's really an insult to the municipalities.

I'm just reading an article here: "If Ontario is going to prosper, its communities need to succeed. We have always said that is the case, and that begins with treating all municipalities with respect. We have made this approach a cornerstone of our provincial-municipal relationship. On consultations on issues that impacted municipalities disagree with, AMO is now the law. We are reviewing the Municipal Act well ahead of schedule. We are moving to restore balance to the fiscal relationship by a variety of measures including sharing of the gas tax and public health uploads. AMO, on behalf of the municipalities, has a seat at the table on certain federal-provincial discussions that impact upon them."

**Ms. Martel:** What the bill is all about is what municipalities are going to be forced to do by way of levying new local taxes because the income they are getting from the province for downloaded services is inadequate to meet their budgetary needs. Too many of them have too much deficit, so many municipalities are going to be forced to look at local taxes because the income isn't coming from the province to balance the needs they're trying to balance.

Let's give people an idea of the soft services that municipalities are picking up on the property tax base:



public health, \$266.4 million; ambulance, \$312 million; social services, \$1.3 billion; seniors' services, \$242.5 million; child care, \$193.4 million; social housing, \$879.7 million. These are the costs, essentially of soft services, that are being borne by municipalities through the property tax base because they're not getting adequate income from the province.

I disagree with the Liberals when they say the way to resolve the downloading problem is to allow municipalities to tax at the local level. The way to resolve the problem is to upload those services that were downloaded by the Conservatives on to municipal governments.

Let's look at the city of Toronto. The budget chief made it very clear that, on a potential shortfall of \$400 million to \$500 million this year, these new taxes we're talking about are going to go perhaps a 10th of the way. There's still a huge shortfall that the city of Toronto is going to face, even if this bill is passed.

**Mr. Levac:** I want to congratulate the member from Oakville. What he tried to do was put in perspective what it has been like through those dark ages of how municipalities were treated by the previous government. What's unfortunate is that the point is being missed. We have heard the expression "the creatures of the province" time and time again. Do you recall that—over and over again? We are the domain owners of the municipalities. That's going away. We're going to form relationships that are going to make it quite clear that there are going to be different ways in which municipalities operate in their own areas, in their sphere of interest, and they will be taking responsibility for it. Both the Leader of the Opposition and AMO are saying that. They're saying it's long overdue: "We don't want to be 'creatures of the province' any more."

Here's the other point I want to suggest to you: Probably the two worst types of taxation are the capital tax and property tax. We've been told that both of those are not ways that municipalities should be gaining all their income. The capital tax, which is what businesses have to pay, is virtually a tax on a tax.

Guess what? This government is doing something about both of them. We're getting rid of the capital tax—over a long term, of course—it's never fast enough to get rid of that one. But we're also taking a look at other forms of taxation. That's going to give the municipalities an opportunity to do something that not one person in the opposition has said the municipalities want to do; that is, maybe, just maybe, they understand the difficulty but might want to try to remove some of the burden that is felt on the property tax and shift it to another form of tax. Why wouldn't they want to do that? They're looking for a way to try to reduce the amount of dependency that there is on the property tax. So the member from Oakville has given us some really heady lessons about how municipalities were treated in the first place, and we're going to stop doing that, finally.

1700

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Oakville has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join my colleagues the member from Brant, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, the member from Nickel Belt and the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant in this debate on Bill 37. I don't think you can say enough times that, when we formed the government, during the term I think of the previous government, toward the end days, AMO, in my opinion, was saying in a variety of ways, "We just can't work with you any more. We need a government that we can work with. We don't expect we'll agree on everything, but we need to be able to work with the provincial government."

What they asked us to do was, "Before you make any major changes, please consult with us. Ask us what our opinion is when you're going to pass legislation that's going to affect us." That led to a memorandum of understanding that currently exists with AMO. They asked the provincial government to discuss things, to talk about things openly, to talk about things that affect communities in a way that both levels of government can bring their best expertise and best practices to. And on the specific proposed bill, AMO has been very specific in its praise. Let me read what they said on November 28, 2005:

"The Association of Municipalities of Ontario welcomes today's introduction of the respect for municipal government act, a bill that would amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999 and promote the principle that municipal governments should be empowered to govern effectively."

That's what this bill is all about. I think some of the comments that all local officials know how to do is raise taxes, or, given the opportunity, they will raise taxes—I think that's a red herring. I think all parties know, deep in their hearts, that this is the sort of legislation that is good for the communities and the neighbourhoods in our province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** It's a pleasure to join in the debate this afternoon on Bill 37, the Respect for Municipalities Act, as it has been called by the government. When I had the opportunity last evening to do some two-minute comments on this bill, I noted we had another name for the bill, the disrespect for taxpayers act, because what this bill is really about is allowing the Premier and the government to get out of the Premier's commitment, that was made in the last election, through a backdoor method.

I'll refresh the memories of those who might be watching, and of the government members, with what that commitment was. That was on September 11, 2003, when Dalton McGuinty very publicly signed a pledge stating that he would respect the Taxpayer Protection Act. He did sign that through the 2003 general election, and it was pretty darned clear. He signed the agreement, which said:

"I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise ... that I will not raise taxes or implement new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters...." And further, "I promise to abide by the Tax-

payer Protection and Balanced Budget Act.” So that was pretty clear.

Of course, since that time, they have broken this pledge and given Ontario’s hard-working families the largest tax increase in history, the most notable one being the health tax, which was brought in to the surprise of most Ontarians in the budget last year. I think that’s an increase of some \$900 for the average family.

I know Mr. Hudak has been counting, and there has been some \$2,000 in tax increases for the average family, and fee increases, by his calculations.

Bill 37 is a fairly small bill. I think it’s all of about two or three pages long. It’s really a method whereby the government can get the Premier out of that promise through the back door, and I’ll just refer to this section of the bill. Currently, subsection 3(1) of the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999, provides that:

“A member of the executive council shall not include in a bill a provision that gives a person or body (other than the crown) the authority to change a tax rate in a designated tax statute or to levy a new tax unless,

“(a) a referendum ... is held ... before the bill is introduced in the assembly”—that’s here—“and

“(b) the referendum authorizes the authority to be given to the person or body.”

The way the law is currently in place, if a municipality was going to be bringing in a new tax, the province would actually have to hold a referendum to allow for that.

In this bill, there’s a new section: “The new section 3.1 of the act provides that a referendum is not required with respect to a bill that gives a municipality the authority to levy a new tax.”

So they’re bringing in a new section of this act that will do away with this requirement for the province to hold a referendum.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share my time with the member from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford, if that’s possible.

I just want to make it very clear that this party does respect municipalities very much. I know in my case, we have some 26—probably more than almost any other riding in the province—municipalities in the beautiful riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, and a mixture of different types of government. There are 26 municipalities, but we also have seven First Nations. In fact, I have to cut my time short here because I’m planning on attending the tribal council meeting being hosted by Manitoulin tribal council that’s having a get-together, a reception and meetings here at Queen’s Park today. I work all the time with the 26 municipalities in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka—I’m in quite close contact with all the mayors and councillors—to recognize the challenges they have, and they do have significant challenges.

Just looking at the Parry Sound side of the riding, you have the smaller municipalities, because there are two different types of municipalities. Muskoka has six larger municipalities—Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Lake of Bays, the townships of Muskoka Lakes and Georgian Bay,

which are larger, plus an upper tier of government, the district of Muskoka—whereas on the Parry Sound side there are many smaller municipalities. You might have a municipality that has only 500 people in it. So, for example, if Ryerson township is looking at a bridge project, that is a really substantial challenge for a municipality.

Recently, I’ve been receiving almost daily letters from constituents, most of them waterfront owners, concerned with rising tax rates around their property tax. It’s particularly the waterfront owners because their assessments tend to be going up so much and the tax burden is shifting to the waterfront owners. So I recognize that the municipalities are faced with some real challenges in doing things we all need: basic services. Whether it be that bridge for a small municipality, sewers, roads, ambulance service or police costs, they’re very much services that we all need and take for granted. I recognize that those municipalities face challenges in trying to meet their very real needs. I meet on a regular basis with those municipalities to do everything I can to support them in the projects they are having to deal with.

We oppose this bill today in principle, and it’s not because we don’t respect municipalities. We very much respect municipalities and recognize the hard work they do. But this bill has not to do with that; this has to do with getting the Premier out of a very public promise he made to not raise taxes and to abide by the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act.

#### 1710

I note that we’re seeing around the province some fairly substantial challenges with industry and with business. Last week, General Motors announced a huge shutdown of operations in Ontario. All across the north we’re seeing pulp and paper mills and forestry companies announcing shutdowns. Just last week there was Cascades, up in Thunder Bay—an awful announcement for the area of Thunder Bay—with 550 jobs being shut down.

This government, with all its tax increases, is having a negative effect on the economy. They’ve had many tax increases. One they brought in was an increase in the corporate tax rate. Were there still a PC government in power, it would be 11% right now for corporations. This government stopped the decline in corporate tax that was happening and increased the rate, I believe it was last year, to 14%. That’s actually a 27% difference in tax rates. That’s very substantial for businesses that are trying to make money and operate on a profitable basis in this province, supply jobs, keep mills going and offer the incomes that are necessary to keep this province operating. This government keeps on, one tax after another, increasing taxes, and cumulatively it’s having a negative effect on the economy of this province.

I worry when I see all the shutdowns, slowdowns and layoffs that we’ve seen in recent days. The Cornwall area recently has had some bad news there as well. As you look around the province, particularly around the north, many companies have had slowdowns and shutdowns. Their energy policy—or no policy—is having a real,

negative effect in northern Ontario as well. That affects not only forestry—it certainly affects pulp and paper—but it very much affects mining operations as well.

A couple of years ago I had the pleasure of being north of Thunder Bay as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I had the pleasure of opening the Lac des Iles mine in the Armstrong area, a large open-pit palladium mine. Unfortunately, I recently read in the newspaper that they've had to lay off 40 people. A big part of the reason they had to lay off those people was because of the energy policy of this province.

I've talked to operators too. I was talking to a forestry company in northeastern Ontario. They were talking to me about the energy policy and how, at the rates they were paying for electricity in northern Ontario, if they had the same mill in Manitoba, they'd actually save I believe about \$35 million a year. You can see the challenge they face in operating in Ontario and why many of the mills are closing when they're faced with such high electricity prices.

This government's policy of shutting down the coal-fired generating plants in northwestern Ontario is compounding that problem by reducing the supply of electricity and thereby driving the price up. Of course, we all want the cleanest energy possible, but why not just set the environmental target? And if the coal-fired generators can meet that target, especially with the new technologies that are coming along, why not implement that new technology and keep the coal-fired plants going, thereby keeping the price of electricity lower and keeping those mills operating?

I know the member from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford would like to add to this.

This is a short bill. It's basically to get the Premier out of another election promise, to break another election promise specifically to do with the requirement for a referendum if new taxing powers are passed on to municipalities. On that principle, we will be voting against this bill.

I will pass it on to the member from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford now.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm prepared to recognize the member for Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford.

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford):** It's certainly a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 37 with my colleagues. Bill 37, in terms of the principles of the Taxpayer Protection Act—I believe I was chairman of the Legislative Assembly committee when that particular statute went to public hearings. The intent was never to deal with municipal taxing powers; it was to deal with the provincial government in terms of its intentions to raise a tax or add a tax. The purpose of it was to have a procedure in place so that the provincial government was not allowed to bring in new taxes without going to the public with respect to a referendum. Prior to an election date, if the opposition parties intended to increase taxes, they had to indicate very clearly to the Chief Election Officer what they were going to do, how much it was

going to cost and what they were prepared to disclose, as required under the Taxpayer Protection Act.

That was done by the Leader of the Opposition in September 2003, prior to the election that was held. The indication was that they were going to deal with corporate income taxes and manufacturing taxes. There was no intent that they were going to deal with health care taxes, and, as everybody knows, subsequently in the famous budget of 2004, they brought in health care taxes, which coincidentally had been done away with by the Peterson-Nixon duo back in 1989. The Liberal government of that day thought that health care taxes were oppressive and not something that people should have to pay with respect to the health care system. Lo and behold, Premier McGuinty not only breaks his promise with respect to introducing new taxes, he also introduces a health care tax which is regressive and probably one of the largest tax increases ever in this province in terms of the billions of dollars that were brought in.

Here we are today, and the Liberal government is bringing in an amendment to the Taxpayer Protection Act which is not in the spirit, in principle, of what this act stands for, which is to deal with the provincial government. They're basically bringing in an amendment through the back door to say that municipalities can bring in new taxes if the provincial government brings in a bill allowing them to do that, and they won't have to have a referendum, which is not in the spirit and the context of the Taxpayer Protection Act. They're doing this in a way which is such a narrow and minor amendment to the Taxpayer Protection Act. You'd think if they were going to do this, they would have come out with full disclosure as to what they were going to do in terms of giving municipalities new taxing powers. No; they decided to do this in a piecemeal approach. Who knows whether it's a two-step approach or how many steps they're going to get into before they're finished with respect to allowing municipalities to levy new taxes on the local taxpayers.

So this is the first step, which is not even in the spirit—and quite frankly, as a taxpayer, and like any taxpayer across this province, there is apprehension out there with respect to what municipalities are going to do with respect to the taxing power that's going to be brought in by this particular government to allow them to tax local residents. This is a very narrow amendment, not in the spirit and the context of the Taxpayer Protection Act. It is designed not only to confirm that the Liberal government is not going to comply with the Taxpayer Protection Act but it also confirms that they're doing an end-around to allow taxes to be increased, where they don't have to go to the public with respect to a referendum. Then they can say, "No, it wasn't us who allowed the taxes that the municipalities are doing; it's the municipalities that decided to levy that tax."

**1720**

What the public has to know is that it's the provincial Liberal government that is giving the new taxing powers to the municipalities. They would not be able to levy the new taxes that will be laid by the municipalities unless

the provincial Liberal government gave them that power. This particular legislation, Bill 37, gives them the authority to do that. They do it in an end-around way, not in the spirit of the Taxpayer Protection Act. They do it in an end-around way that is typical of this Liberal government in terms of breaking their promises, doing things differently than they said they would and just basically lowering the esteem of any politician out there in terms of people saying, "Well, I can't believe them."

I think that's been a problem with respect to this government from the day it was elected. They said they were not going to change the hydro system in this province in terms of the rates. The second day they get in, they're saying, "We don't believe in the cap system. We're not going to follow that." During the election, they told everybody that they would be under the hydro rate freeze until 2006. They broke their word on their second day in office. And they broke their word with respect to the health care tax that they brought in shortly thereafter, under the guise that there was a deficit in this province. When they had six months left in the fiscal year, they basically said, "Mea culpa. We're not going to deal with the fiscal problems that we perceive exist with respect to the provincial finances." As we know now, they probably could have balanced the budget that particular year, and subsequent to that, if they hadn't gone on a spending binge in terms of spending hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm going to be speaking to this bill, this embarrassing, shameful ruse on the part of the Liberals here at Queen's Park who want to dig deeper and deeper into the pockets of hard-working folks like the folks down where I come from. I tell you, it is a shame. It is an outrageous attack on hard-working women and men and, more so, our seniors, retirees.

This bill is all about downloading brand new taxes, my friends, on to municipal ratepayers. You thought higher property taxes kicked you in the butt and left you at risk of being homeless? Just wait until the Liberals at Queen's Park are finished with you. They'll be proposing taxes imposed by municipalities on everything from hotel rooms to gasoline to parking lots. They'll be proposing income taxes to be assessed by the municipalities, just like they do in some of the United States of America. You never saw a more American approach to ripping off the taxpayer than what you see in this bill here this evening.

I am outraged that after the Liberals promised what they promised, they would, in such an offensive, offensive way, after beating up on so many people for two years-plus—higher electricity rates, higher property taxes. You've got to pay for your own chiropractic treatment, your own physiotherapy, your optometric examinations, all those things that used to be covered by OHIP. Then you got this new, shameful, regressive, unfair attack on low- and middle-income people: Dalton McGuinty's so-called health tax premium. And now you've got this. You folks are going to get taxed and taxed again, until you can't be taxed any more because there will be

simply nothing more left to give the Liberals, either here or in Ottawa.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** It gives me great pleasure to add my two-minute comment to the debate. Coming from the municipal sector just over two years ago, it's interesting to hear. I don't remember the year, but it was during my municipal days, at the AMO or ROMA conventions, when then-Premier Harris stood up and addressed the convention and told the local politicians attending the convention—some 1,500 or 1,600—"We're going to give you more responsibilities. We're going to make you more accountable." Those politicians who were there, like myself, thought it was a good thing. But when he downloaded services, that was the responsibility that we're paying for today. His "more accountability" was to download the services. What we're doing here is giving municipalities recognition that they exist, recognition for them to make some decisions so that they can move forward and not wait for this place to do it for them.

All we have to do is what the Association of Municipalities of Ontario is saying. They are supporting what we're doing. They have been asking for this. I had the pleasure of serving on the ROMA board while I was a municipal politician, and we always encouraged the government to give municipalities more responsibility. They are the people who are closer to the people in the street. They know what the sidewalks are like.

This is long overdue. I wish, as do the municipal governments, that this legislation was passed, because it would give us the tools to deal with those issues locally, in a much freer process. This is not about taxation; this is about doing the right thing, recognizing that hard-working municipal politicians are able to deliver the services that the people in those municipalities across Ontario really need.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I want to make a special remark here. I want to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for standing in on such short notice—this is more of an inside joke than anything. More importantly, the member from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford was literally tied up on other issues before he got to the House.

This bill is very disconcerting. In fact, if you look at it—I want to say to the people of Ontario, this bill is actually half a page. It's half a page. All bills are in two languages, as they should be, so that's how big the bill is. I hope the cameras are picking that up. But what it says here, and the member from Niagara Centre has clearly pointed it out—

**Mr. Tascona:** A full page.

**Mr. O'Toole:** No, it's half a page.

It says, "A referendum is not required for the purposes of subsection 3(1) with respect to a bill that gives a municipality the authority to levy a new tax." What it's really doing here is, if you look at an act to improve relationships with the municipalities, the cautionary note here is this: When the other shoe drops, the other part of this is they have to pass this bill before they can intro-

duce the City of Toronto Act, which I think is going to happen either this week or next week. The City of Toronto Act has been written up in many of the media outlets and on television as well. It says it's going to give new taxing powers to David Miller and all. But then you're going to get the Municipal Act, which is really about giving municipalities the right to raise additional tax. In fact, if you look at this in the regime of what's happening, the province knows they've pretty well taken all the money out of your pocket that they can, with the health tax and the energy issue, which is not solved. Now they're going to pass or download. What the member from Niagara Centre said is right: Stay tuned. You're going to be taxed more and you're going to get less. I am waiting for the member from Niagara Centre to comment, because I'm surprised at his position on this—

**The Acting Speaker:** We have time for one last question or comment.

**Ms. Martel:** I'm concerned about what municipalities are going to be forced to do with respect to levying local taxes because this government refuses to acknowledge the serious financial situation that they are in. AMO told this government in August that there is a shortfall of at least \$3 billion because this government refuses to acknowledge or do anything different or deal with the off-loading that was done by the Conservative government. Now, municipalities continue to pay for soft services that rightfully belong under the jurisdiction of the provincial government, where the provincial government should be paying for those same soft services.

**1730**

We've got a \$3-billion problem facing municipalities because they continue to pay for the cost of public health, child care, social services, long-term care, and the list goes on and on and on. That's why AMO recommended to this government in August 2005 that AMO and the province engage in a discussion so that the province would upload both the services and the costs back to the province where they rightfully belong.

What does the Ontario government do? What does the McGuinty Liberal government do? Instead of listening to AMO and agreeing to sit down and see what services should rightfully be uploaded back to the provincial government, this government comes forward with a bill that will say to municipalities: "You deal with the financial problem. You levy the new taxes. You bear the brunt of taxpayers' ire and irate taxpayers when you have to do that solely to try and deal with the serious financial situation that you have." That's the wrong approach. This government, if they wanted to do the right thing, should be looking at what additional services that were downloaded could be uploaded back to the province where they belong.

**The Acting Speaker:** One of the opposition members has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Tascona:** I want to thank the members from Niagara Centre, Northumberland, Nickel Belt, and Durham. I'm going to respond on behalf of the PC Party. The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka was also a part

of the debate, and I thank him for his comments. Certainly, I'm pleased to be here, having helped the member from Durham in terms of some of his duties as official opposition critic and dealing with that serious situation with respect to the tow operators and the collision—

**Mr. O'Toole:** You're doing part of my job.

**Mr. Tascona:** Yes, doing your job, Mr. O'Toole, but that's OK.

I want to comment on the members for Niagara Centre and Nickel Belt. This is essentially a tax grab. There's no doubt about it. If you're going to come back here, member for Northumberland, and say this is a great bill, that it's not about taxation—it's good that the member from Durham read the bill, because it's a very short bill, and it's all about taxation. That's all it's about. So I don't know what bill the member from Northumberland was reading, but I would urge him to get a briefing by the PA for municipal affairs, Mr. Duguid—I'm sure he's pleased to do that—so he knows what he's talking about when he's speaking about Bill 37.

This is a tax bill. I think the member from Nickel Belt is right. It's going to force municipalities to tax more; this is a green light. They're underfunded by this government. This government has basically taken the attitude that they're going to underfund them.

There was a scathing report today, the auditor's report, with respect to the ambulance sector in terms of the underfunding in a serious area like that. No response by the government, other than the downloading that they're engaging in. In my view, it's a bully bill. It's basically pushing municipalities around, and they're going to push around local taxpayers. This is no benefit to anybody in the municipal sector.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Kormos:** On November 28, when this bill was presented for first reading, I read it and I shook my head. I said, "Surely, this is an error. This is a misprint. This is perhaps even a joke, however bizarre that would be, from the Liberal government." This bill is all about new taxes down at the municipal level. We've got taxpayers in an uproar now over the assessments that have been bouncing all over the place, jacking up their property taxes one year and jacking them up even more the next year, and no rhyme or reason.

Look, I don't know about the rest of you people, but where I come from, people are hurting. People are already paying huge property taxes. People are paying higher and higher electricity rates. As the winter months, as these cold days come on, people are being ever so frugal with their thermostat. They're paying more and more, more than they ever have before, for natural gas. When they gas up their car or their truck or van, they're paying more for the gasoline as well.

People across Ontario have been losing good jobs. You know that, Speaker. Some 44,000 good jobs—those manufacturing jobs, the value-added jobs, the wealth-creation jobs. No disrespect to folks who are forced to work hard in call centres and casinos, but all the \$10-an-hour jobs in the world don't make up for the value-added

manufacturing jobs, the wealth-creation jobs that built the working middle class in this province and in this country.

It took the Premier a trip to China to finally acknowledge that there's some major readjustment taking place in the labour force here in Ontario. We've lost industrial assessment, whether it's in northern Ontario where mills have been shutting down—do you know what it means when a mill shuts down and those people lose their jobs? It also means the municipality loses that industrial assessment for the purpose of property taxes.

You come from the heart of Ontario too, Speaker. You come from Highway 6 around Fergus. That's small-town Ontario. That's what most of Ontario is, with all due respect to my big-city colleagues. Most of Ontario is like where you come from, like where Ms. Martel comes from and like where I come from: communities like Welland and Thorold and Pelham and south St. Catharines and Port Colborne and Wainfleet. That's what most of Ontario is like. People living in those towns have been working real hard. You see, those small towns, those older industrial towns, whether you're in northern Ontario or you're out east in Cornwall—go to Cornwall and ask property taxpayers what the shutdown of the Domtar mill will mean in terms of them getting whacked with higher. What happens when a company like Domtar shuts down its mill, its operation, is that the city doesn't have any less need to invest in things like sewers and water treatment and policing, but it has to shift all that tax responsibility over to residential property taxpayers.

They've had it up to here. It's not a matter of not wanting to; it's not a matter of being somehow less generous than they were last year. They simply can't. The capacity to pay more has been exhausted. Senior citizens are at risk of being homeless—do you understand me?—not because they've had any cruel blow of bad luck but because property taxes, electricity prices, natural gas prices are making it impossible for them to live on pensions that have diminished with the erosion of time, making it impossible for these folks to live in their own homes, more often than not homes they built with their own hands. That's what Ontario, the Ontario we represent, is all about. People of our parents' generation literally built homes with their own hands, dug the basements with their own hands, laid the block, nailed together the two-by-fours, did the stud work, put the roofs on by themselves. These people who are now in their 70s and 80s, that post-war generation of young Ontarians, are at risk, so many of them, of being homeless.

Then the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty—I read it the day it was here for first reading. The next day I read it again, and when it was printed up, I read it again. Because I knew the bill was going to be called today, I had taken it home with me last week. As I got out of bed, it was still dark out so I stumbled over to the light switch, knocked my knees against the coffee table and picked this up where it had been on the coffee table. The first thing I did this morning was read Bill 37 again and, yes, it hasn't changed from November 28. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have produced legislation—catch this,

Speaker; this one will curl your hair and rot your socks—that allows this province, that will facilitate this province, that will encourage and accommodate this government as it passes laws creating new taxes to be imposed at the municipal level.

Look what happens. That could range from income taxes—think about it—through to taxes on parking spots, through to taxes on any given commodity, through to taxes on services. Slavko Baltich, my barber, could be forced to charge a 20% tax on haircuts. This bill will permit it. This bill is designed to achieve specifically that, because Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have made a promise. It was a well-publicized promise.

**1740**

I've got to tell you, I have some regard for Tasha Kheiriddin. She's the Toronto staff person for the taxpayers' federation. As a matter of fact, she's just published a book along with her co-writer, Adam Daifallah, called *Rescuing Canada's Right: Blueprint for a Conservative Revolution*. Look, those aren't my politics. You know that. But I've got to tell you, Tasha has written one heck of a book. I encourage people of all political stripes to read the book *Rescuing Canada's Right: Blueprint for a Conservative Revolution* by Tasha Kheiriddin and Adam Daifallah. It's a good, healthy read. All politicians will appreciate what she writes in here. A wonderful book by Tasha Kheiriddin: *Rescuing Canada's Right*.

The reason Tasha Kheiriddin and her book come to mind is because it was the Canadian Taxpayers Federation that documented—and again, you've got to understand that I'm probably more inclined to disagree with the Canadian Taxpayers Federation on an issue-by-issue basis than I am to agree with them, but I couldn't fault them. How can you fault them? The Canadian Taxpayers Federation, during the provincial election, because it was hearing promise after promise after promise by Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals—you know that. They were promising things in Fergus. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals were promising things in Nickel Belt. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals were promising things in Hamilton. And Dalton McGuinty took the oath. He went temperance. He sat down, pulled out his expensive Mont Blanc pen—you know, those thousand-dollar fountain pens that you buy up at the Mont Blanc boutique. Look, my folks have to write with the Bic ballpoints that they get from the casino from time to time, the little stick ones with the hotel name on them. But Dalton McGuinty, I'm sure, got the thousand-dollar Mont Blanc gold pen to sign—

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** I'm sure.

**Mr. Kormos:** Why shouldn't he? If you're going to show scorn and disdain for hard-working taxpayers—

**Ms. Martel:** Go big or go home.

**Mr. Kormos:** Go big or go home, as Ms. Martel says, and by gosh, Liberal Dalton McGuinty went big. He signed the pledge and he made the front page of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation magazine. By gosh, there's Dalton McGuinty and he's got one of those big,

bat-eating grins, and looking over his shoulder with another toothy smile is one George Smitherman, Minister of Health, and looking over his other shoulder with just a Cheshire cat—do you think they knew that they were joking with us? Is that why they were on the verge of laughter? Is that what provoked the smiles, because they knew that they were just funning with the taxpayers, playing with them? There's our old colleague Alvin Curling, former member for Scarborough Rouge-River, and there's Dalton McGuinty with a big flourish and that gold Mont Blanc pen that cost a thousand bucks at least—

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The point of order I'm raising is standing order 23(h) and (i) regarding the making of allegations against another member or imputing a false or unavowed motive to another member, and I recall distinctly that now-Premier McGuinty signed that thing not with a Mont Blanc pen, but with a felt marker.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll return to the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Kormos:** Unfortunately, the member who just spoke didn't make it into the photo. If he was there, Dalton McGuinty didn't know it, or didn't know who he was when he was tugging at the coatsleeves. I don't know, but that sure looks like a double-rod Mont Blanc pen nib to me. In fact, it is Mont Blanc blue/black ink, or royal blue.

So we've got this picture of Dalton McGuinty with the grin. Laurel Broten, now his Minister of the Environment, is smiling, our dear old friend Alvin Curling is smiling and George has the beginning of a grin. This is all about drawing the appropriate inference. I'm sure nobody just told a joke, or they'd be outright laughing, "Ha ha ha," which is what they probably did in private later.

Look, a picture is worth a thousand words, and I don't have time for that many words. But if I can show you this picture, Speaker—could I send this down to you?

I can't send this down to you? Gee, Speaker, I'd love to, but I can't because then I'd be accused of using a prop, and I wouldn't want to run afoul of you. I wouldn't want to run afoul of you.

But I tell you this: People had better start getting on the phone lines, getting on e-mail, getting on the fax machines. They'd better start warning their neighbours, their friends, their family and their co-workers about what this government is about to do to them.

You thought Paul Martin and the federal Liberals raked you over and grabbed you by the ankles and shook every last nickel and dime out of you? You ain't seen nothin' yet. Bill 37 is the biggest set-up you've ever seen for a whole new regime of municipal taxes of ever shape, form, variety, colour and amount. Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't pass legislation creating new taxes unless there was a referendum first. That's what the pledge was all about. That was the signature for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. He would do anything to get votes, and he did. He'd promise anything, and he

did. Then Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals broke those promises one after the other.

Look, the heartbreaker has surely got to be Bill 37, because he signed this one, do you understand? It's sort of like a former Attorney General who insists that when he wasn't being forthright in the chamber it was because he was only in the chamber rather than under oath at an inquiry. Do you know what I mean? It goes from bad to worse. Just like a former Attorney General who figures, "Of course I didn't say what actually happened when I was asked in the chamber. Heck, that was politics. It was in the chamber." Now, you know I can't speak of another member as having lied, and I won't. But it's a darned shame that we can have the acknowledgements, the confession we heard a week ago. One has to, of course—I don't know—suggest that somehow he was in another universe, one of those parallel universe things, right?

Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals promised, when they signed the pledge, that they wouldn't raise taxes without a referendum. What this bill does, of course, is eliminate the need to have a referendum. This bill speaks very specifically—it's so brief, so short. Folks, call your MPP's office and have him mail you a copy of Bill 37. You want to read it. You want to look at it. You want to look at it upside down and inside out, because at the end of the day, all it says and all it ever will say to you is more taxes, more taxes, more taxes.

Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals talk about a gap. If you want to know about a gap, let's talk about the \$3-billion municipal gap here in the province of Ontario, which is what's happening. You see, municipalities, cities, folks that you represent in Fergus—and they're good people—folks I live beside down in Welland, Thorold, Pelham, Port Colborne, Waynefleet and south St. Catharines are subsidizing the provincial government with their hard-earned property tax dollars to the tune of \$3 billion a year.

How many more times are we going to be teased with the government's Ontario municipal partnership fund? Ask good, hard-working Mayor Ron Leavens from Pelham what he thinks of the Ontario municipal partnership fund. A lot of good it did the folks down in Pelham—no rhyme or reason, sporadic, erratic, no formula, no predictability. There's predictability around Bill 37, I'll tell you, and it's that the province of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, Premier of this government, and his Liberal caucus are going to be passing legislation that will force municipalities to impose new taxes. Again, the gamut of taxes is going to be fanciful and outright—if you want to look at it that way, creative.

You only have to take a look at some American jurisdictions, where you see everything from income tax to hotel room taxes to gasoline taxes imposed by municipalities. Government may force municipalities to tax parking spaces. Government may force municipalities to tax haircuts. Government may force municipalities to tax Boulet cowboy boots over at Elio's boot store in Thorold, as if I don't pay enough taxes already on my Boulet cowboy boots from Elio's in Thorold, the finest cowboy

boot shop in the province, if not in the country, I tell you, and prices that will beat anybody's.

**1750**

You're already paying 15% in provincial and federal sales taxes on your Boulet cowboy boots when you buy them at Elio's. Now Dalton McGuinty's government is going to say, "No, we're not finished with you yet." They'll just grab you by the collar and shake you every—Lord, Premier, can't you at least let folks keep the loonies and the toonies? Do you have to shake every last nickel and dime out of them? That's what's going to happen. That's what this bill is all about.

I want the radio talk shows to be just raging on a daily basis. Call Roy Green at CHML. Call Tim Denis and those guys down at CKTB and their radio talk shows. Call CFRB. In Ottawa, call CFRA and give them a piece of your mind. If CBC is your cup of tea, call Radio Noon here in Toronto. What's the 640 one?

**Mr. O'Toole:** Talk radio.

**Mr. Kormos:** Call those talk radio shows and let your neighbours, your family, your co-workers and your friends and people across the province know what Dalton McGuinty's Liberals have got planned for you in terms of new municipal taxes. Get those letters to the editors rolling. Get on your e-mail with the e-mail trees that you've got. Call Tasha Kheiriddin at the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and tell her you're prepared to rally in front of Queen's Park in a demonstration of hard-

working taxpayers against a government that is hell-bent on squeezing every last nickel and dime out of folks who have already had every last nickel and dime squeezed out of them by soaring electricity prices, by ever-running and ever-increasing downloading on to municipalities and by huge increases in natural gas prices, and gasoline prices. We already know what has happened to people when it comes to higher gasoline prices but we ain't seen nothin' yet, because Dalton McGuinty's Liberals aren't finished with you yet. Do you know what? I don't know how much more people can take. I don't know how much more people can handle. Surely we've reached the breaking point for a whole lot of folks.

Shame on Dalton McGuinty. Shame on the Liberals. Shame on Dalton McGuinty's Liberals for promising the world and then breaking promise after promise after promise. Is that what we can expect from Paul Martin and the federal Liberals? I'm afraid so. Shame on Liberals. Shame on all the Liberals: the federal Liberals and the provincial Liberals. They're cut from the same cloth. We're voting against this bill, by the way.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being close enough to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until later on this evening at 6:45 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 1755.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*



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

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman  
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma–Manitoulin	<b>Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L)</b> Speaker / Président	Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches–East York / Beaches–York–Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton–Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea–Gore–Malton– Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton–Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton–Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton–Ouest–Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron–Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener–Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham–Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley–Est	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement t	Lanark–Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley–Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds–Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin–Peel– Wellington–Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London–Centre–Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London–Ouest	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglinton–Lawrence	<b>Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)</b> Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London–Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin–Middlesex–London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Erie–Lincoln Essex	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga–Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke–Centre	<b>Crosier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga–Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke–Nord	<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b> Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie	Mississauga South / Mississauga–Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga–Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
	<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Niagara Centre / Niagara–Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)

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

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

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

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