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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 28 March 2006**

**Mardi 28 mars 2006**

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 28 March 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 28 mars 2006

*The House met at 1845.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting the consideration of concurrences and the Supply Act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Finance is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion. Is there such consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I move that notwithstanding any standing order, the orders for concurrence in supply for the Ministries of Agriculture and Food, Citizenship and Immigration, Health and Long-Term Care, and Transportation, and order G82, second reading of Bill 82, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006, may be called concurrently; and

That when such orders are called, they shall be considered concurrently in a single debate; and

That the time available to 9:20 p.m. this evening shall be divided equally among the recognized parties; and

That at the conclusion of the debate the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the order for concurrence in supply for each of the ministries named above, and to dispose of all remaining stages of Bill 82; and

If a recorded vote is requested by five members, all divisions shall be stacked, and there shall be a single 10-minute division bell.

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

ADOPTION DES CRÉDITS

SUPPLY ACT, 2006

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2006

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I move concurrence in supply for the following ministries: Agriculture

and Food, Citizenship and Immigration, Health and Long-Term Care, and Transportation, and I move second reading of Bill 82, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I look to the Minister of Finance to lead off the debate.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I'm proud today to rise and speak to Bill 82, the Supply Act, a very important piece of legislation. I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge.

Passage of the Supply Act constitutes the statutory authorization by the Legislature of the government's expenditures for the fiscal year. As such, it has far-reaching implications for the people of this province. The Supply Act gives the government the authority to implement its program, continue fulfilling its commitment, and put its vision into practice. Without it, the government would be unable to continue implementing the mandate that was given by the people. Without it, the political process would be meaningless.

The Supply Act, 2006, provides the legislative authority for the spending from the estimates and supplementary estimates, which have been put before this House. Without spending authority, the government would be unable to make most scheduled and unscheduled payments: Nursing homes cannot be paid; hospitals cannot be paid; doctors cannot be paid; municipalities cannot be paid; general welfare recipients cannot be paid; children's aid societies cannot be paid; suppliers' accounts cannot be paid. In other words, without this act, our government would be unable to fulfill the mandate for which we are responsible to the people of this great province.

Last week, it was my honour to present our government's third budget. As you'll recall, in the 2004 and 2005 budgets, we made historic investments in health care, education, post-secondary education and a stronger economy. The 2006 budget continues the focus on health, education and post-secondary education while building a stronger economy through investments in infrastructure.

1850

Let me put this in context. When we introduced our first budget in 2004, we laid out for debate and consideration our government's four-year plan for the province. Our 2006 budget is the third part of this plan to invest in health and education, to restore the province's finances and to position Ontario for growth today and

tomorrow. We are investing in people and the things that matter most to them. We are investing in roads, bridges and transit that help keep our people and goods moving. We are strengthening Ontario's economic advantage by creating a climate for job creation now and in the future. Unlike the opposition, we have a plan. Our plan is balanced and responsible. Our plan puts people first. Our plan is the right plan for Ontario.

You've heard us say that our province's greatest competitive advantage is our people. Strengthening that advantage is what our plan for Ontario is all about. Since being elected three years ago, we have set out a comprehensive plan to transform health care, education, the economy and indeed the business of government itself. We committed ourselves then, and remain committed today, to a new era of openness and transparency in government, to renewed investment in essential public services, to restore the province's financial health and to stimulate a new generation of economic growth. Our plan is on track; our plan is working. We remain on track to eliminate the deficit we inherited from the previous government while continuing to make essential investments in education, health and a strong economy.

In 2005, the Ontario economy outperformed the average private sector and government projections, resulting in unexpected additional revenue. We've made a strategic and prudent choice to invest 60% of this additional money to pay down Ontario's infrastructure deficit. Our government is on track to eliminate the fiscal deficit no later than 2008-09, and a balanced budget will be achieved a year earlier, in 2007-08, if the reserve is not required. Despite this rosy picture, we will continue to be prudent, focused and disciplined in our approach to our fiscal management.

While we are optimistic about Ontario's economic growth, it's important to remember that we face challenges and risks beyond our control, including growth in the US economy, the strong Canadian dollar and higher world oil prices. We will do our part to ensure the economy can withstand these external factors by anticipating challenges and prudently managing our finances.

But we have to continue planning for the medium and longer terms, and to that effect our government will continue to strengthen the economy through investments in post-secondary education, infrastructure, research and development, and key economic sectors including: a continued focus on education and training by government and business; better integration of new Canadians into the economy, particularly in high-skill, high-wage jobs; increasing research and innovation capacity; investing in infrastructure; a reliable, sustainable electricity supply; investing in a healthy business environment; ongoing fiscal discipline; and managing health care costs.

We are encouraging economic growth, restoring fiscal health, investing in education and improving health care. We are doing it by investing in people, and with the passage of the Supply Act, we will be able to continue to deliver what we have set out to do in our budget. The list of these investments in the people of our province is

impressive, and as a government we continue to add to that list, and have continued that tradition of investing in our people with last week's budget.

Investing in health care is one of the McGuinty government's top priorities. The government is building opportunities for Ontarians to achieve better health through new programs to promote health and prevent illness, better access to doctors and nurses and shorter wait times for key services.

The 2006 Ontario budget:

—invests an additional \$1.9 billion in health in 2006-07, including increasing the number of family health teams and reducing wait times;

—provides \$12 million in 2006-07, growing to \$30 million in 2008-09, to fund the purchase of insulin pumps and related supplies for 6,500 children with type 1 diabetes;

—expands breast screening for women between 50 and 74;

—invests \$7 million annually to enhance the newborn screening program, which includes the creation of a new state-of-the-art screening facility at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario;

—supports the Ontario health plan for an influenza pandemic, increasing the government's stockpile of antivirals and emergency supplies and equipment to protect health care workers and their patients.

We are also providing funding for additional cancer surgery, cardiac procedures, cataract surgery, hip and knee replacements and MRI procedures in order to further improve wait times. The government has already funded 31,000 more cardiac, cancer and cataract surgeries, and hip and knee replacements, since 2004-05. The number of MRI exams has increased by 42% since 2003-04, and we've reduced the wait time for elective cardiac bypass surgery from 30 to 15 days and for radiation treatment by more than a week.

In our last budget we announced Reaching Higher, an historic \$6.2-billion cumulative investment in post-secondary education by 2009-10 to improve access, quality and accountability. This budget's investments in post-secondary education will:

—increase access to upfront tuition grants for middle-income families by more than doubling the income threshold for a two-child family, from about \$35,000 to \$75,000;

—almost double the number of students receiving upfront grants in 2006-07, to nearly 60,000 students, up from 32,000 students in 2005-06;

—ease student debt by ensuring it is limited to \$7,000 per completed year;

—cover the actual cost of books and supplies for 75% of all student aid recipients. This is the first increase in allowances for books and supplies since the mid-1980s.

Finally, this budget would increase grants for student-needs funding to school boards by more than \$400 million from the previous year to \$17.3 billion in the 2006-07 school year.

Our objective remains to improve services Ontarians value and make our economy competitive. We continue to work on modernizing government and have an in-depth modernization project under way. This is about more than finding savings and moving money from lower-priority to higher-priority areas. It is about providing higher-quality public services, public services that need the funds set out for them here in the Supply Act. Modernizing government is also a critical step to improve our finances, and improving our finances is a critical component of building a stronger economy.

A key element of our strategy for strengthening the Ontario economy is maintaining a competitive tax and business environment to encourage investment growth. In the 2006 budget, we proposed to accelerate the capital tax rate. Effective January 1, 2007, the current rate would be cut by 5%, a full two years earlier than currently scheduled.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** Good news for the business community.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** It's very good news for the businessman and businesswoman. We intend to fully eliminate this tax in 2010 should the fiscal position of the province allow.

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

I am proud of what we have accomplished so far. I'm excited about our plan for the future, because ultimately it's a plan that will strengthen the prosperity of our people, the health of our people and the education and skills of our people. Moving forward, we will continue to be focused and disciplined in our management of the province's finances and continue striving towards our goal of making Ontario the North American leader in the management and delivery of public services.

Passage of the Supply Act is fundamental in order to fulfill our plan for this great province. I ask members of the House to dedicate due consideration to Bill 82 and vote in favour of its passage.

1900

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** It's my pleasure to join the debate on Bill 82, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006. What we heard from the Minister of Finance was about 13 seconds on Bill 82, and then a long dissertation on what he considers a wonderful budget for the people of Ontario.

On this side of the House we disagree. We disagree with that contention on the part of the Minister of Finance. In fact, we think there has been a bit of an attempt to fool the people of Ontario into thinking that the finances of the province require a deficit budget, when everyone on this side of the House and on that side of House, and everyone who is working in the financial markets in this province, knows that this government

could have, should have but didn't balance the budget for this upcoming fiscal year. Shame on them. They could have balanced the budget and still had the money for all the programs they've been tooting their horn about over the last couple of days with regard to spending initiatives in Ontario. They could have done that, but they chose not to balance this budget, and I say shame on them.

We're getting less, we're paying more, and that seems to be the mantra of this Liberal government, which was the same mantra as the last Liberal government's: to have power here in the province of Ontario. We all recall what kind of a mess they created.

As a member of a rural Ontario riding I'm very, very disappointed in this budget. I would classify this budget as a "buy Toronto" budget—not "by Toronto" but "buy Toronto"—because that's exactly what this government has tried to do: They have tried to buy the people in the city of Toronto to try to convince them to support them in the next election. This is a pre-election budget. Let's make no mistake about it. They have not only done that, but they have tried to buffet their position with regard to the federal government by creating a deficit when one was not necessary, because how do you go to your upper level of government with hat in hand, crying poor, when in fact your books are balanced—and well they should be. The financial markets in this province are dismayed that this government had the opportunity, tremendous revenue increases available to them, and they chose to create a deficit that is a tax on your children and my children and all children in Ontario. Shame on them.

Let me go back to rural Ontario. There were some opportunities for this government to show in this budget that they actually care about rural Ontario. We're not talking about some one-time funding that they are throwing out there. They're asking for sustainable funding. They're asking, "What about our fair share of the gas tax in this province?" They asked that at ROMA too. I could certainly point that out to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, the member from Peterborough, who seems to be talking quite a bit from his seat tonight. But they asked for that at ROMA. Where is the response of this government? This was an opportunity. The revenue was there. Those people in rural Ontario have a right to a fair share of the gas tax that they are paying. They are asking for that. In fact, as you know, I presented a bill which has passed second reading in this House, and it is up to this government to show some fairness and some compassion and some caring for people in rural Ontario to bring that bill to the floor of this House for a third reading debate. That is something that should be done.

I think another thing that this government should have looked at with their revenues is the water systems in small rural communities. I know the program is that they've got to cover themselves; it's got to be on a cost-recovery basis for those rural systems. But in the small systems, like in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, such as in the village of Barry's Bay or Killaloe or Deep River or Renfrew or Eganville, they

simply cannot absorb all of the costs of upgrading those systems to the levels that are mandated by provincial legislation. They can't do it themselves. Even when there is a program, whether it be OSTAR, the old program, or a COMRIF program, which shares the costing of those programs among the three levels of government, even at one third, they cannot afford to cover those costs. There were some opportunities in this budget to show some real interest in helping people in rural Ontario. Those upgrades to those systems are mandated by the province. The municipalities have nothing to say about it. They don't determine what they have to do; they are told what to do. Then they are left holding the bill and having to pay the bill when those upgrades are completed. We certainly have a funding issue with regard to some old OSTAR-approved grants as well.

What about rural farmers? What about farmers in this province? I guess that's an oxymoron, "rural farmers"—I guess they are all rural. What did this government do to support farmers in my riding or elsewhere in rural Ontario? They have done very little, but they've been doing very little since they took office here in October 2003. So on and on again, on and on and over and over again, what I see from this government is that it is urban-centric, only concerned with spending billions of dollars in the GTA to try to buy and curry the favour of those voters. And I put to you, Mr. Speaker, that even those people who live and work in the GTA have a greater sense of fairness than this government. They understand the realities of rural Ontario and they understand the challenges, but I think what this government wants to do is to drive people out of rural Ontario. That's what it wants to do. It wants to drive them out of their homes and off their land in rural Ontario and force them to re-establish themselves in the cities.

Well, the rural way of life is one that is more than worth preserving. It is one that people have fought for. It is one that they have made tremendous sacrifices for. It is one that they will continue to fight for as the days go on. But they will have to fight harder with the leadership that we have in Toronto today, because this government is not doing anything to help rural people in the province of Ontario.

I'm not going to use all 50 minutes, I understand, but again I would ask them to take this opportunity—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Yakubuski:** I don't want everybody clapping at the same time. There is an opportunity here. There is an opportunity to rethink some of these decisions that have been made. Give rural people some feeling, some idea, that this government has a certain amount of concern for their issues.

The gas tax would be a good place to start. As a matter of fact, the amount being paid to cities is going up in October. Rural people will still be paying that tax. In fact, they pay a disproportionate share of that tax. This government has an opportunity to show fairness. I would submit to them that this is a golden opportunity to do just that.

When I put this government in context in total, it's a sham. It is not an honest accounting of the position of the province of Ontario. It is an invented deficit for political purposes, and political purposes alone.

**1910**

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate on the finance motion?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I just wanted to add a few comments and speak briefly to Bill 82, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006, otherwise known as the supply bill.

I wanted to congratulate the finance minister, the PA and all those involved in the budget process for this year and for last year, because we're finally starting to turn around something that we inherited when we came to office about two years ago. The \$5.6-billion deficit we inherited is being lowered, and it's being lowered dramatically. We're now moving to the point where the projected deficit will be \$1.4 billion, and that's 75% lower than the deficit we inherited and \$200 million less than last year. We're on line to balance the budget in 2008-09, or a year earlier if the reserve is not required in 2007-08. We have created a situation where we're not going to have any more deficits and where we will not be able to hide a deficit either, because we've passed legislation, as you know, to not allow future deficits to be hidden or carried through an election time. We're moving in the right direction, and it's taking a lot of time and effort.

I just wanted to comment briefly on some of the good news that came out of last Thursday's budget. One of the big areas I'm really pleased with, and I think the people in Scarborough Southwest are happy about, is infrastructure investment. The Move Ontario program is a \$1.2-billion investment in public transit, municipal roads and bridges. This is quite significant. One thing that I've noticed year after year here in Toronto and throughout the GTA and the Golden Horseshoe area is that more and more fog days are being declared—smog days, actually. It looks like fog but it's actually smog every summer, and it's affecting people's health, as well as the health of young children more and more each year as the levels of asthma in young children continue to rise. We've got to get vehicles, especially cars, trucks and other automobiles, off the roads whenever possible. To do that, we've got to create a proper public transit system—a proper subway and bus system—and fast-moving roadways so that cars are not idling and creating the majority of the smog, which seems to sit, particularly on hot, humid days, here in Toronto.

Putting \$1.2 billion into public transit, municipal roads and bridges is quite substantial, and I couldn't be happier. I know that some people in Scarborough said, "When is this subway coming out further along the Sheppard line?" I'm happy to say that this budget contains money to look at and to spend on an environmental assessment, which is crucial if we're going to eventually build that subway and perhaps extend the Sheppard subway to the Scarborough

Civic Centre. Perhaps we could also look at the rapid transit system, which is at Kennedy subway station, being converted into something different, perhaps even a subway system that would go from Kennedy up to the Scarborough Civic Centre. That, of course, is subject to environmental assessment and consultation with the community in that area.

Creating more of a circle or a complete transit connection in Scarborough, especially along the Sheppard line, is something I'd like to see and I think the people of Scarborough would like to see as well. It would get cars off the road. What happens inevitably is that people who need to get downtown or across town will end up buying or leasing an automobile to move daily across the city, because the transit system is not fast enough or it doesn't have enough service or it's not working late in the evening or early in the morning or actually is non-existent in some areas, especially in the northeast parts of Scarborough where we've had more and more development and growth in new residential areas but not the transit to match it.

We've seen in Scarborough Southwest as well where large areas around Warden subway and even around Victoria Park subway are being redeveloped. We have a huge Warden corridor land development study, which is going to bring in thousands of new residential units and thousands of new residents living in Scarborough Southwest, and they need to move around. We just can't have every single person or every single family moving around in automobiles, because the city will end up becoming more and more congested and more and more clogged up.

I am happy that we're looking at improving the transportation system here and looking at the infrastructure. Every successful city, whether it be in North America or in the world, from London to New York to any other major city in the world, even Beijing now, is developing significant infrastructure, or has developed significant infrastructure for transportation and for moving people across their cities, across their regions. This budget really addresses that issue.

I know that my other colleagues will be speaking to this budget as well today and some of the other aspects of it. Very briefly, I just also want to say that we're investing money in education. We're committed to reaching our goals there, especially with capping the class sizes from junior kindergarten to grade 3, for smaller class sizes; putting money into health care; to help at-risk youth, and vulnerable adults and families; working on a competitive tax and business environment. These are all positive things that will sustain a healthy economic environment and an environment where people will want to live and raise their families in Ontario. I'm pleased to be part of this budget and pleased to be part of this debate here tonight.

The bill before us today allows expenditures for the fiscal year which ends this Friday, March 31, allows some of the announcements that were made this year and the budget that was put forward last year, as well as the

announcements for the budget this year, to be implemented and put into effect. I'm happy to see that and to see this government fulfill its promises that it made in 2003 and to see them fulfilled to their completion.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm certainly pleased to join in the debate on the supply motion and concurrences. Certainly, this is a difficult issue in terms of dealing with the finances of the province and the disproportionate allocation by the government with respect to where they decided to put the moneys geographically. We're very in need: Barrie, the fastest-growing city in the province, and Simcoe county, one of the fastest-growing areas in all of this province, if not the country; and the infrastructure needs that we have with respect to transportation, water, sewage and dealing with social services are tremendous, and the growth that we have had over the years. Yet in this budget our area is not addressed adequately and certainly we're very surprised to see that there was no money put into the transportation sector from Highway 9 up north to Parry Sound-Muskoka.

You would think in an area that is growing the way it is, with the commuting traffic, they would have at least looked at the 400 expansion to ensure that there is a way to deal with the commuter traffic and also looked at GO Transit for the city of Barrie and put it in this fiscal year to make it happen for the GO Transit system for Bradford-West Gwillimbury to Barrie. That's an area that I've been working on since I was elected as a member back in 1995: to return GO Transit to the city of Barrie, which was taken away in 1992 by the NDP government at that time. The track is there. The support is in the community to make sure that commuting and using the GO Transit system is there. It's something that we're going to continue to fight for because it's something that should happen sooner rather than later. The city of Barrie is very anxious for that to happen. They do own the track and there has to be a deal made with the province for that to happen. I know that the federal government is on side. The deal has been signed and the money is there from the federal government to make sure that GO Transit comes to the city of Barrie. The problem is the provincial government, in terms of making sure that they get there in making the deal with the city for there to be a GO Transit system in Barrie. That's something I was very disappointed to see wasn't in this budget for the 2006-07 year. We're going to continue to work on that and impress on the government that it is necessary, from an environmental point of view and from a point of view of dealing with commuter traffic, to get that done.

**1920**

I want to deal with one other aspect of the supply motion and Bill 82, and also the budget that was brought down by the government. What we have here is a deficit by political convenience. I remember back in 2003 when we had the election. When it took place, it was midway through our fiscal year. On the books at that time there was a deficit, but certainly we had balanced the budget

for five consecutive years, and I'm confident that we would have balanced that budget by the end of that fiscal year back in 2003-04.

What we have here is a government that has basically been saying, "We don't have any money. There's a deficit." Yet this year they could have balanced the books. They were in a position to very easily do that because of the way the economy has been going, yet they decided to spend the money and have a deficit by political convenience.

I remember the article written by Ian Urquhart in the Star last week with respect to the Liberal budgetary policies. He quite candidly spoke that the Liberals didn't need to bring in the health care tax. They had the funding that was necessary to make sure the shortfall they might have had with respect to health care was in the economy and there wouldn't be any financial shortfall. Yet what we have is that the Liberals brought in the biggest tax increase in the history of this province, broke a promise with respect to what they pledged during the election, that they wouldn't increase taxes, and they brought in a health care tax that not only punishes everyone in this province who needs to use health care but certainly the people who are vulnerable, the people who are poor. The way this tax is set up is very regressive. It's something we've indicated we would get rid of because, let's face it, with the economies of this province, we don't need that health care tax.

The ironic part of this is that in 1989 it was the Liberal government under David Peterson that got rid of the health care tax at that particular time as we knew it. In the Hansard at that time, basically what the Minister of Finance, Bob Nixon, was saying was that it wasn't necessary and it was a punitive tax on the public. Yet we have Dalton McGuinty bringing it back in, the first major promise that he breaks, increasing taxes with respect to health care. We find ourselves in the fiscal year 2006-07 and they have the money to make sure that they would have balanced books, but they choose not to balance the books; they choose to spend it elsewhere and we are still left with the health care tax, which is a punishment on this province.

One aspect of the budget that I was pleased with, because I supported Bill 15 with respect to having insulin pumps for children covered by OHIP, was to see that that was in the budget. We were in the Legislature and we debated that. Certainly there was full support in the Legislature for that particular bill, and now it has become reality.

One other aspect I want to comment on is the RVH expansion in my riding, which I questioned the minister on last week. Quite frankly, the fundraising in the community is on track to be all raised in 2006. The RVH expansion for our area is needed now. It's not needed in 2008, that wait in terms of construction, which is when the government has indicated it would come on. The RVH expansion includes all kinds of new services which would expand the hospital beds in excess of 500, and we would have a cancer care centre. The hospital is bursting

at the seams because of the population growth and the needs in the area, yet what we see is this government deciding to come out with other hospital projects which may not have had full community support and saying, "These are the ones that are going to go forth to tender in 2006-07." That may not be the case. They may not be in a position to tender. That's what the government is speculating at this time with respect to those 13 projects.

I questioned the minister last week, on March 23. My question to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care was, "Royal Victoria Hospital's phase 1 redevelopment project includes expansions to the emergency department, diagnostic imaging, additional in-patient beds and construction of the 73,000-square-foot cancer centre, featuring three radiation therapy suites, with construction scheduled to start in 2008." He wrote a letter to the chair of RVH, dated February 8, 2006, which indicated: "The project will be subject to the legislative appropriation and all applicable approvals of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care." I asked the minister to be more specific as to what he meant by "legislative appropriation" and "ministry approvals." The legislative appropriation is the funding that needs to be in place in the budget year for that project to happen, and that project isn't scheduled to happen with respect to getting that funding until 2008-09. What I asked him is, if we're in a position to build and we're in a position to have the community funding in place, why can't we do that during fiscal year 2006-07? The minister could make that happen, because the funding is in place with respect to hospital expansions in this particular budget.

I also asked him a question about the RVH expansion. "The RVH expansion and Cancer Care project has received, as you know, because you've been in the riding, unparalleled support from the community. The community financial support for the funding of this project is on track to be met in 2006—this year. The Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, in its press release of September 2005, states, 'Construction is scheduled to start in 2008,' which I interpret to mean shovel in the ground. Given that the community financial support will be met this year, would the minister commit to considering having construction begin prior to 2008, and if not, why not?" Well, the minister wouldn't commit to that, but I would say to the minister that this is something that our community is going to continue to fight for. We think it's very important for us to have the best health care services that we can in our community now, as opposed to waiting another two years.

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** It's a pleasure to join the discussion tonight on the supply motion. I'm especially pleased to have the opportunity tonight to speak about some of the ways that Mississauga is a stronger and more progressive city through the recent measures announced in Ontario's 2006-07 budget.

What does this budget mean to us in Mississauga? All of us in the western end of the city are all too familiar with the waits that we've encountered at the Credit Valley Hospital over the last several years. It's one of the

things that I heard most often during the election. People would say, especially those of us who live west of Winston Churchill, "Credit Valley is an excellent hospital, first-rate facilities, tremendous staff. We don't go there." I said, "Well, okay, I'm following you all the way along the line. Where did we drop off at the end of the table?" They'd say, "Well, you know, wait times and so on and so forth."

Our hospital opened some 21 years ago, and in 1985 it had 365 beds. Since then, Mississauga's population has nearly tripled, with most of that growth coming in Credit Valley's catchment area in my home in western Mississauga—that and eastern Oakville. Today, in 2006, the Credit Valley Hospital still only has 365 beds, but that's about to change, and it's about to change just in time for all of us who depend on Credit Valley's quality people and world-class health care. That's the health care provided by our friends and our families and our neighbours who manage and staff Credit Valley and care for our friends and families and neighbours who depend on them to work at Credit Valley.

The construction cranes that frame the new Carlo Fidani Peel Region Cancer Centre on Erin Mills Parkway have only recently come down, as our region's cancer patients can now receive treatment closer to home. But those cranes will begin to go up again in 2007 as Credit Valley starts construction on phase 2, a new extension that will add some 270,000 square feet of space to our hospital and, most importantly, about 140 precious new beds, the first expansion in 21 years. Our hospital's maternity suite was built to handle some 2,700 births per year. Last year, it handled more than 5,000. We need space. This is public infrastructure that we need, and this is the need that our budget addresses in health care facilities here in Mississauga.

Credit Valley needs to hustle to update its quotations and issue request for proposal documents, but they'll do it on time. They've always done it on time; they've always brought their projects in on time and on budget. Phase 2 of that project will be underway next year.

### 1930

The reason that Credit Valley Hospital and Trillium Health Centre in eastern Mississauga are expanding to meet our community's demands is because the government of Ontario recognizes that our health care infrastructure needs an ongoing investment to meet our growing needs. This budget shows that the government has heard the message, that the government understands Mississauga and that it has invested wisely in health care.

Health care was one of the four deficits our government inherited. We addressed that health care deficit in the 2004-05 budget. We inherited an education deficit and addressed that in last year's budget. This year's budget addresses a critical, key infrastructure deficit that's so important to us in Mississauga. We can expect the next budget to address Ontario's fiscal deficit.

Last year, the government of Ontario made the largest investment in post-secondary education in more than a generation: some \$6.2 billion to refurbish and expand the

ability of Ontarians to hold the knowledge-intensive trades, professions and occupations that are now driving prosperity in the 21st century. What that means in western Mississauga is that the University of Toronto at Mississauga will gain the ability to train some of the doctors that Ontario needs so badly.

Complementing UTM's new ability to train doctors will be Credit Valley Hospital's new status as a teaching hospital. For all of those foreign-trained medical professionals, we'll be able to certify you; we'll be able to get you working. For the Ontarians who say, "We don't have access to a family doctor," you will be able to have access to more family doctors. That has been done because of the infrastructure investment that this government made last year, this year and will make next year. This 2006-07 budget makes that possible. That's what the growing neighbourhoods of Churchill Meadows and Lisgar need; that's what the established communities of Meadowvale, Streetsville and Erin Mills need.

The other important need that Mississauga has is transportation. We need to get our supplies from where our suppliers are to the plants where we work, where those supplies are consumed. Our plants, like Pride Pak, for example, in Erin Mills, need to quickly ship their products. In Pride Pak's case, those products are packaged vegetable products, like individual servings of vegetables and fruits.

**Mr. Leal:** Just in time.

**Mr. Delaney:** We've got to get them just in time to where they're sold and, in Pride Pak's case, that's supermarkets all across eastern North America. They can outcompete US chains in the US market, buying Canadian products from farms in Ontario and processing them in Mississauga. That's what we need. That's why our government invested in infrastructure. That's the benefit in Mississauga. We need to get those products not merely into supermarkets in the United States, we need to get them to Pride Pak's customers in restaurant chains and hotels all the way across Canada.

Pride Pak needs effective public transit to help their workers get from where they live to where they work and home again. There's another need close to home for me. In the densely populated neighbourhoods of Lisgar and Churchill Meadows, in Meadowvale and in central Erin Mills, those of us who depend on the GO Train to get us from where we live to where we work—in many cases, in downtown Toronto—those of us who get on the GO Train at Meadowvale, Streetsville and at Erindale run into the problem of commuting to commute, those gridlocked, east-to-west traffic jams in the morning and in the evening. The last train out is at 8:10 in the morning from Meadowvale and the first train back leaves Union Station at 4:30.

People are very clear: We've got to do more; we've got to do better in public transit. That's why last year our government announced a brand new GO Train station, the first GO Train station in 25 years in Mississauga, and it'll be built in Lisgar between Milton and Meadowvale. It'll be built right where people need to get on the train.

Instead of that traffic going from west to east in the morning, now it can go north. We can drive north along Ninth Line, Tenth Line and we can drive north along Winston Churchill and we'll be able to park upwards of 750 cars in the New Lisgar GO Train station, which gets under construction this year. That's because of the investments our government has made in public infrastructure.

**Mr. Leal:** You've been waiting 25 years for that?

**Mr. Delaney:** Twenty-five years we have waited for the first new GO train station, and that's the response of the government.

GO trains are all crowded, and even GO Transit has freely admitted that if it had more trains, it could fill them all. They're all filled. At the moment, we all know that there are 10 cars on a GO train, but soon there are going to be 12. From the very outset, Lisgar will be designed for 12 cars.

This year GO Transit is spending some money on an environmental assessment to do something that Mississauga has needed for a long time: a third track on the Milton line, which is going to enable all-day GO service once we get that third track built. I've taken that GO train and sat there on both sides of the train and watched as we've gone. We need to upgrade some of the bridges in order to build that third track, and that environmental assessment will tell us which bridges we need to upgrade. So we'll do it. We know that we even need to upgrade that big span over the Humber River. The tracks are owned by CP Rail. That third track will enable people to go in to Toronto after 8 o'clock in the morning and enable them to get home from Toronto before 4:30 in the afternoon.

As I'm speaking in this place, I'd like to thank our ward 9 councillor, Pat Saito, for all the work she's done on keeping that issue of the new GO train station at Lisgar and the need for the third track front and centre in our area in western Mississauga. I also want to thank all the people who last year signed the petitions we read in this Legislature over and over again. I can't say enough about my colleagues from Mississauga: Tim Peterson from Mississauga South; Peter Fonseca from Mississauga East; Vic Dhillon from Brampton West–Mississauga; Kuldip Kular from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale; and a special thanks to my colleague Jeff Leal from Peterborough, who must have read that petition almost as often as I did, and of course to our Minister of Transportation and highways, Harinder Takhar, whose ministry approved the project and who stood with me last January when we announced it.

That's local infrastructure. That's the kind of investment we're making. What difference is that making in Mississauga? Well, let me quote to you some of the thoughts of Mississauga's first citizen, our mayor, Hazel McCallion, who was asked on budget day, what did she think of the budget? Let's use her words exactly: "The message I got today is that this government is determined to try and help the municipalities. They're not going to do it overnight. They can't, because the downloading we've experienced is of such an enormous figure that it

will take us years to offset the downloading that the previous government loaded on us."

**Mr. Leal:** Who downloaded it?

**Mr. Delaney:** The Tories downloaded it.

So the whole message of the budget, in my opinion, was to upload or off-load—one or the other; whatever you call it—load the property tax. I think the whole budget seems to have that message. It was a very positive budget, extremely positive. Today was a good day for Ontario, in my opinion. It's a step in the right direction.

That's some of the impact this budget has made to Mississauga. That's why I'm proud to stand in this Legislature and support it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** I appreciate the opportunity to provide my input on this government's approach to money. This supply and concurrences debate nicely coincides with another major money-oriented issue, the provincial budget. We received the budget just last week. I'd like to focus on some of the harm that farmers are feeling as a direct result of this government's approach to the management of money and the lack thereof.

Before this government starts crafting its budget, I really think it should begin with some basics: take a look at a calculator, for example, and check the numbers. If I crunch the numbers on my own calculator, you start out with \$1.14 billion and subtract \$244 million, as we know. Just so that everybody in this House knows what I'm talking about, that's the extent of this government's reduction to agriculture spending in the province of Ontario. It works out to be a cut of 21%.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** That is so irresponsible.

**Mr. Barrett:** I will repeat: a 21% reduction in the agriculture budget in the province of Ontario. If any members opposite need help with those numbers, I can show them some of the numbers—

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** You need help.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll start by asking all members of this House to come to order, and return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant.

**1940**

**Mr. Barrett:** Thank you, Speaker.

These cuts are in addition to the \$167 million that was slashed last year. Again, I'm referring to Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture budget, one of the ministries that we are dealing with tonight as we deal with the debate on supply and concurrences.

March 23, 2006, I'm afraid, is going down in history as one of the worst days in rural Ontario, certainly for farmers in particular. You could almost compare it to the stock market crash in 1929, specifically with respect to Ontario's rural economy and farm economy. We all know that the big stock market crash did not cause the Great Depression, but it was a symptom of the underlying weakness of the economy at that time and the underlying weakness in government policy of the day.

I think the same is true for this year's budget, the budget of March 23. While it hurts—many farmers are facing bankruptcy—it's actually a symptom of a larger and more harmful tradition, if you will, of neglect from this particular Ontario government. Over the past few years, we've seen signs that something is wrong. We all are aware of the tractor protests, the rallies, the blockades. There was a blockade in Whitby just today. Interestingly enough, the Minister of Finance was in Whitby today during the Whitby–Ajax by-election.

I also would advocate that this government has had a number of opportunities to fix this problem. I've offered some of my advice consistently. This particular government will turn its back. It's turning its back on rural Ontario. It's turning its back on the gentleman who is out in his car this evening, the fellow who spends every night in his car. He's a farmer. He is there on behalf of many farmers and is really a symbol of what's wrong out there. In fact, I think I saw him this morning. I think I saw Mr. Webster this morning with the farmers in Whitby. He's been dragged into that Whitby by-election as well, with the finance minister. Of all days, the finance minister showed up in Whitby a couple of days before election day.

Unfortunately, and to its own detriment, the McGuinty government continues to turn its back on farmers. The Minister of Finance had to be coaxed out of his car this morning. He was coaxed out by John Tory, actually. He wasn't going to go anywhere because the farmers had blockaded his car and agreed with Mr. Tory that maybe he should speak with the concerned farmers assembled.

Last week, there was a rolling protest around the precinct, around Queen's Park. Indeed, those tractors were rolling for most of the week, and that does tell us something. That particular rolling protest culminated with a rally on the front lawn. That was on budget day, the most important day in the life of any provincial government, or any government that does look well to the books.

Farmers from all walks came down to Queen's Park to make sure that this time around they wouldn't be ignored by the McGuinty government's budget, a budget that was due to be presented at 4 o'clock that afternoon. Yet again, this government turned a blind eye to those assembled.

This government can't plead ignorance. I've reported to this House time and time again the status of these pleas for help, oftentimes exemplified through a farm protest. I raised the issue on Thursday in question period just before the budget was read. On March 1, I reported to this House on the Clinton and Goderich farm rallies. On February 23, I raised the farm income crisis with the Minister of Agriculture, who's in the Legislature here this evening. On February 15, I reported on the Guelph rally, which was attended by the Minister of Agriculture, to her credit. On February 13, I informed the House of the upcoming rallies. On December 13 of last year, I told this House about the crisis facing Ontario farmers. I

raised this issue November 2. I could go on. I take Hansard very seriously. I could go on.

I don't think this government is listening. I feel there is no excuse to be not listening. People represented opposite must have known the damage being, I would say, purposely done to rural communities, to farmers, to their families, to their suppliers, the feed and fertilizer distributors, the farm machinery retailers, fuel companies, chemical companies.

At the Whitby Curling Club this morning, Minister of Finance Dwight Duncan had a perfect opportunity to come clean, if you will, with the very farmers he insulted last Thursday. Again, we got the traditional blame game. He told the farmers to go to Ottawa. However, over 30 million federal dollars have already been dispensed from federal coffers to 11,000 cash-crop farmers in the province of Ontario. This particular government—and we have seen no cheques from the province yet—waited a month after announcing its package, the \$125-million package we heard about earlier this afternoon, a package that represents 52% less than those intended, the cash-crop, livestock, horticulture industry were meant to receive. In fact, last year the hort industry received nothing. Just to be clear, and I'm suggesting this government is speaking out of both sides of its mouth when it did announce the \$125 million. It was \$134 million for desperate farmers, removing \$134 million compared to last year. Farmers cannot afford these kinds of \$134-million reductions from this particular government on top of endless tax increases, costly fee increases, higher energy costs, obviously, and the list goes on.

I mentioned earlier that there is a gentleman camping out in his car outside the Legislature. His name is Stephen Webster. He's president of Ontario's dairy heifer exporters. He's a director of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I and many present have spoken with him a number of times. I'm not sure what this government is scared of with respect to Mr. Webster. It's one farmer living in his car in front of this grand, monumental edifice that we are present in here this evening. This morning he joined his fellow farmers in Whitby–Ajax just to hear what Dwight Duncan had to say, and again what it came down to this morning was that we're all paying more and we are getting less. I guess that's the Liberal way. It does sound like a cliché when you refer to Liberals as tax-and-spend Liberals, but we can add to that. We have a bunch here offering big promises, big spending and little offer of opportunities for investment in farm and rural Ontario.

There are claims from those opposite that they're doing great things for farmers, but I will quote the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ron Bonnett. This was information he sent out right after last week's budget, and I'll just quote one word. This is Ron Bonnett's opinion of the McGuinty Liberal budget as far as it relates to the farm community; one word: "shocking." He was right, it is shocking. It's a shocking budget.

This is a government that's rolling in higher-than-expected corporate taxes, higher-than-expected health

taxes. It is unconscionable that they couldn't find a penny more with respect to support for farmers in their battle with their heavily subsidized competitors. For tobacco farmers, there's nothing; nothing in the budget. Again, tobacco farmers hit the bricks yesterday in protest to this government and held a very large and well-attended rally at the Delhi Tobacco Exchange and in protest commenced selling tobacco tax-free. You could pick up a bale of tobacco, \$2 a pound, for about \$80. That would roll you an awful lot of cigarettes when you take that home. Clearly, the McGuinty government's war on tobacco farmers—with any war on tobacco or any group, there is collateral damage. With respect to the tobacco towns down my way, it truly is devastating.

#### 1950

I arranged for a number of tobacco farmers to sit in on the budget speech. I arranged to have a number of cash crop farmers present for the budget. After hearing the bad news, I actually wished that I hadn't found the tickets for them. I saw the anger. I saw the hurt on their faces, the sense of betrayal. To use the words of Ron Bonnett, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, what they heard was shocking. The Minister of Finance can put me in an uncomfortable position explaining exactly how dire things will be once farmers feel the full effects of this particular budget. Sadly, the McGuinty government war on tobacco farmers, and now corn and soybean farmers, and their families is entering a more dangerous phase.

Put yourself in a farmer's position: What do they do next? They've been asked to go to Ottawa by the particular minister. There will be an assembly there next week; I think it's April 5. But the concern now is that budgets are delivered every spring—albeit this one was moved forward about two months to capitalize on the opportunity to purchase some votes with respect to the by-elections. But we've had the budget. Fewer farmers are going to be around next year to attend the budget, and really what is there for them in the coming year?

I could go on. We know that last year's budget, the 2005 budget, was also a missed opportunity for people in the province. Last year, the McGuinty government also broke promises and increased the provincial debt. In 2005, the McGuinty Liberals introduced what at that time was their fourth fiscal plan in two years, which did little to help hard-working people in the province of Ontario. Just like this year, the 2005 budget showed the Liberals had a massive windfall, again from high corporate taxes and high health taxes, but reneged on its promise to balance the budget in 2007.

Then there was the 2004 Liberal budget. That clearly broke faith with people not only in rural Ontario but right across the province of Ontario. If I have time, I can go further on the 2004 budget. Many of us will recall the lowlights of that 2004 budget: \$1.6 billion in personal income tax increases; a \$3.9-billion electricity hike; the delisting of key health services of optometry, physiotherapy and chiropractic; a 50% increase in driver's licence fees. It's a hard-and-fast fact that the best way to lose good character is not to keep one's word.

I represent a riding of small business people, farmers, steelworkers, refinery workers and power plant workers. I represent a riding where it's very important to be a man of your word. If a government delivers one bad budget, it's a problem; if a government delivers a second bad budget, I suppose that could be somewhat of a horrible coincidence; but when a government delivers a third consecutive damaging budget, that's a devastating pattern and that is a permanent trend, no matter what we're told about next year's budget. We're told it could be a good-news budget with an election coming. I'm concerned that what we have here under this Liberal reign is a permanent pattern. I find it a very disturbing pattern occurring in the province. It's destroying the rural communities in my riding. It is bankrupting family farms. I'm very concerned about the desperate measures I see here to cover up budget cuts and broken promises.

I know we have at least one other speaker, and I think I would like to wrap up my presentation not only on the budget but just the importance of, very simply, this government getting its act together after what we saw as a shocking presentation last Thursday.

#### **Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge):**

It's my very distinct pleasure to rise today on the debate on Bill 82, the Supply Act, 2006, and to reinforce and elaborate on some of the minister's comments as he opened the debate earlier this evening.

As the minister was saying at that point in time, this is an important piece of legislation, although it would seem rather routine in its fashion, but important that it gets debated, because it is this bill, this particular bill that, if passed, will give the government the necessary authority it needs to implement its programs, fulfill the commitments we have set out and put the government's vision into actual practice.

Without it, we would be unable to improve the public education system, we would have great difficulty in our work to build stronger and safer communities throughout the province of Ontario or to improve Ontario's bridges or its roads or its transitways. We would have trouble in continuing to grow the dynamic and prosperous economic activity we have and build on this economy; to strengthen the universal public health care system that we hold so dearly here in this Legislature; and to work towards a more democratic government here in Ontario.

When our government came into office in the fall of 2003, we did inherit. We inherited multiple deficits. We inherited that health care deficit that we spent the first year focused on; an education and skills deficit that continues to plague the province, to some extent; an infrastructure deficit where one only needs to drive our roads and over our bridges throughout this great province to understand what's happening or not happening with infrastructure; and a rather nasty fiscal deficit. But in the last two and a half years, since October 2003, we've set out addressing each of these deficits in a planned and very deliberate way. Support in this Legislature for Bill 82 would allow us to continue to build opportunity for everyone who calls this great province of Ontario their home.

Approval of Bill 82 gives this government permission to do a variety of things. It gives us the necessary permission to send money to the municipalities, to hospitals, to the school boards around the province—in many cases our key transfer partners. It gives us the opportunity to pay the social assistance benefits that those who are in such dire need in this province have to have available to them. And it allows us to appropriately pay the salaries of those very dedicated members of the Ontario public service, some of whom are spending their evening with us here tonight.

Without this spending authority, without this legal opportunity, statutory payments could continue, though, to be made. But those statutory payments are more limited. They include interest on the public debt and all payments from special purpose accounts. However, unlike the statutory payments, scheduled and unscheduled payments cannot be made without passage of the interim supply motion. These payments, as mentioned, include things like payments to municipalities and those social assistance recipients and those on ODSP; and children's aid societies and the suppliers' accounts that make the government wheels turn; and nursing homes and hospitals and our doctors. These organizations and individuals deliver the very critical services the people of Ontario count on each and every day. To make sure that they can continue to provide those services, we have to ensure that funding is approved and carries on. To make sure our government can implement our program of change, fulfill our commitments and put the vision which we speak to into practice, we have to ensure that funding is approved and carried on.

What are some of the key components of the program we've set out and the vision we have? The same as when we got elected. They're in education. Those smaller class sizes; over half of those children in JK to grade 3 are now in classes of 20 or less. Improved scores in literacy and math; those scores now are averaging some 64%, I believe, or 62% higher than they were when we took office just over two years ago.

In the field of health care, there is the issue of access: more doctors and ready availability, the reduction in wait times, the capital investment in hospitals. On the economic front, to establish and to succeed in our economic potential, we need to continue to be able to invest in the auto industry; and in research and innovation, as led by the Premier under that new ministry. We need the capacity to invest in the roads and bridges, such as the \$400-million one-time funding that we identified in the budget debate, so that money can flow immediately to our municipal partners so they can do the bridges and the roads that are so desperately needed and build it into their current budgetary framework. The Supply Act is an important step in ensuring that its funding will be available for us to do the job that we were all elected to do.

#### 2000

When we introduced our first budget, in May 2004, we laid out for debate and consideration by this government, by this House, a four-year plan for the province.

We've taken what were identified quite clearly in those first few months as serious challenges and we've made them into opportunities. Let me just give you a few examples of what we've managed to achieve in a very short period of time.

We've funded some additional 31,000 cardiac, cancer and cataract surgeries. We've undertaken more hip and knee replacements. The number of MRI examinations has increased by 42% since 2003-04. Dozens of more CT machines have been purchased for the public health system.

The government has also managed to reduce the wait times for elective cardiac bypass surgery from 30 to 15 days and reduce the wait time for radiation treatment by more than a week. The number of days, and less than a week, may not seem much to us as we stand here today, but I'm sure each of those individuals and their families who have seen those wait times cut by half and/or reduced by a week or more, with all of the stress and strains that go with waiting for care, are happy to find that they're spending less time waiting. I'm sure they would like to find a situation where they could go almost immediately and get the services that they desperately need.

Family physicians are seeing more Ontarians. First-year medical spaces are increasing by 23%. More nurses are attending to the sick or infirm in our communities.

In education, we've launched the most significant investment in higher education in a generation. We'll be delivering some 75,000 new spaces, doubling student aid and investing an additional \$6.2 billion in improved quality, accessibility and accountability in our universities, colleges and training programs. We've made tremendous progress with our young students. We've made progress on the standards in reading, writing and math.

All of this has been achieved with a prudent and balanced approach that allows us to invest in our future prosperity while keeping the taxes competitive in this province. Our investment in people through education, post-secondary education, training, research and innovation are reflected in the strong job growth enjoyed by Ontarians. Over 200,000 net new jobs have been created since October 2003, almost nine out of 10 of these being full-time jobs. Ontario's unemployment rate fell to an average of 6.6% for 2005, the lowest in four years. The Ontario economy added over 81,000 net new jobs in 2005, most of which were high-paying, knowledge-intensive jobs in management, science, education, financial services, transport and health. This is good news about our economy and is certainly great news for Ontarians.

Our government is on track to eliminate the fiscal deficit no later than 2008-09. A balanced budget will be achieved a year earlier, in 2007-08, if the reserve is not required. That's a long way from the \$5.5-billion deficit we inherited, of which 75% has already been eliminated.

As the Honourable Minister of Finance mentioned during the budget debate, last year the Ontario economy

outperformed the average private sector and government projections, resulting in additional revenue. We made a strategic and prudent choice to invest over 60% of this additional money to begin paying down the Ontario infrastructure debt in order to support much-needed transit, roads and bridge projects across the province of Ontario. Why is that important? Quick, reliable and safe transportation is vital to our economic success. It's also essential to the quality of life that we all aspire to. Ontario can prosper only if people and goods can move efficiently and effectively. Families will enjoy a higher quality of life if they spend less time in traffic, breathe cleaner air and travel more safely on improved roads, bridges and by transit.

In our budget, we announced Move Ontario, a new \$1.2-billion investment in public transit, municipal roads and bridges that will build opportunity for every Ontarian. The centrepiece is Move Ontario, an \$838-million investment to enable the expansion of modernization of public transit in the greater Toronto area. This will include a \$670-million investment, money put in trust, enabling York region and Toronto to expand the subway beyond the borders of the 416 to the Vaughan Corporate Centre. This is the first time a subway in the Toronto area will cross out of the city of Toronto and into the regions beyond.

With \$95 million to the city of Brampton, we're enabling the city to make dedicated bus lanes available on several streets through Brampton's AcceleRide project, and some \$65 million to the city of Mississauga, enabling the city to develop a separate bus right-of-way for the Mississauga transitway. These are initiatives that have been in the planning for a long time that have been awaiting funding for projects that are much needed to move people in an efficient, effective way in fast-growing and what are becoming higher-density communities in the greater Toronto area.

We set aside \$1 million for an environmental assessment for transit improvements in Scarborough. It's intended for the opportunity to begin the EA process for future subway opportunities on the east side of the GTA. This spring, we'll introduce legislation for the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, the GTTA, to plan, coordinate and set transit priorities and help to develop and implement a GTA fare card system.

We'll also provide municipalities, primarily outside Toronto, with an emphasis on rural and small northern municipalities, with some \$400 million in new one-time funding for bridges and roads, enough to repair some 800 bridges. These investments are in addition to our government's five-year \$30-billion ReNew Ontario infrastructure plan.

The supply bill is important. It's important for us to be able to continue the business of government. When we took office, in conclusion, we did inherit deficits, multiple deficits of a variety of sorts. Our first three budgets have made important investments in each of the three areas that we were concerned with at that point: the health care deficit, the education deficit and the infrastructure deficit. To ensure we have the funding available

for us to do the job we were elected to do, I urge all members of the Legislature to support the supply bill, Bill 82. To ensure government can deliver on the priorities of Ontarians, to ensure that organizations and individuals who deliver services critical to the people of Ontario, service Ontarians count on every day, can actually be paid, to make sure they continue delivering these services, we must ensure that funding is approved and carried on. The responsible thing for the Legislature to do will be to support the passage of the supply bill, Bill 82. It's my hope that all members of this House, at the end of the day, will support this bill.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** I only have about 10 minutes, I think, maybe a little less. I'll ask the member for Muskoka to throw something at me when I get close because I want to give him the opportunity to get a few words on the record.

**2010**

Very briefly, we've heard the Liberal members continue to talk about the deficit that they were left with in 2003. Clearly, there were challenges that the government of the day faced. We had two bouts of SARS to cope with and the blackout, which severely impacted our budgetary projections. There was no question, as a member of cabinet at the time, that we knew we were facing some very significant challenges in achieving that planned balanced budget. We would have, though. That's the difference between us and the Liberal government. We were committed to making the tough decisions to ensure that we were able to continue with the fifth balanced budget in a row.

We hear the Liberals talk about this. I go back to the Robert Nixon budget in 1990. He tabled a budget in the spring of 1990 with a \$50-million surplus. Of course, the NDP took power later that year and were facing a deficit close to—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** How much was that deficit?

**Mr. Runciman:** It was a very significant deficit.

They opted—in retrospect, I think they would agree—to try to spend themselves out of that situation. Our view, with the challenges—we would have controlled spending and balanced the budget. The Liberals took political advantage of it and, to give them credit, they have gained some mileage, but the reality is something different than what they continue to spout in this Legislature.

As I said, I only have a brief amount of time to talk, and there are so many areas that we could discuss. Manufacturing job losses in small-town eastern Ontario are a significant concern of mine, certainly. I have seen plant closures: Hathaway in my riding, the seat of the Hathaway shirt plant, which has a great history in this province and country, closing; Mahle manufacturing in Gananoque. We saw the Nestlé plant in Chesterville. We've seen Domtar in Cornwall, which I think effectively closed this week—1,200 jobs. We saw the World's Finest Chocolate factory in the Northumberland area—manufacturing job after manufacturing job. Especially, the impact is so devastating in small-town rural Ontario,

and there doesn't seem to be any recognition of that. There has not been any recognition, certainly in the budget, to address what is a growing concern. The projection is now that we may lose another 100,000 jobs. We lost 80,000 in the last year; we may lose another 100,000.

**Agriculture:** I was in my office during the break and got an e-mail from Caledon, from the township council there, talking about the crisis in agriculture and calling on us to act, as legislators. It was quite interesting to listen to the Minister of Agriculture in the House today when these concerns were raised with her, getting up and screaming across the floor, "so angry that you're calling this a crisis." Well, I happen to represent an agricultural riding. And I've travelled and spent an awful lot of time talking to the farming community, and not just the farmers themselves, but the feed dealers, the implement dealers, the folks who run the general stores. They are all feeling this in so many parts of rural small-town Ontario. But the minister's only response is to get up and scream at us for suggesting there is a crisis in rural Ontario. It's shameful, and apparently that's the only position she can take. But perhaps she will pay the price when the—

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** They are sexist remarks. Shame on you.

**Mr. Bisson:** How can they be sexist?

**Mr. Runciman:** Well, that's a Liberal for you. Just ignore it.

The reality is, when you hear the arrogance coming from across the floor it reminds me, going back, to when the NDP had a majority government. I used to get in the House and suggest, "You know, folks, some of you should start standing up for rural Ontario, not spouting the party line, because your jobs are in jeopardy." And they didn't accept that reality. The reality is, the best-case scenario for the Liberal government is that you're going to lose at least 20 seats in the next election. That's the best-case scenario for you. At least 20 of you will no longer be here. The worst-case scenario for you is you're going to lose 35 to 40 seats and you'll lose government. That's the worst-case scenario for you. Accept it.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Prophet Runciman.

**Mr. Runciman:** If you don't want to accept it, that's fine. I don't care. I don't care if you want to accept it. The reality is, you who represent small-town rural Ontario had better stand up and start speaking out for rural small-town Ontario and not spouting the government propaganda hour after hour, day after day in this place, and you may get re-elected. You may defy the odds and get re-elected. I've been around here for 25 years; I've seen it. Ask Mike Colle what reality is. If he's honest with you, he will tell you that at least 20 of you—if you look at the polls today, where we're virtually tied—are going to lose your seats. So start doing your job in representing the people who put you in this place in the first instance.

There have been a lot of comments about this being a Toronto-centric government and, boy, is it true. We had a question directed to the Premier today about the cut in

the tourism budget. What did he get up and talk about? He talked about Toronto. His whole response was about Toronto. I happen to represent the Thousand Islands. I represent a good chunk of the Rideau system. We have members here who represent the National Capital Commission, the NCC.

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** We got \$424 million for roads.

**Mr. Runciman:** Well, we didn't hear the Premier talking about Ottawa, we didn't hear him talking about eastern Ontario, we didn't hear him talking about northern Ontario, we didn't hear him talking about southwestern Ontario; he got up and talked about Toronto. That's the reality and the budget certainly reflected that reality. Toronto is the priority of this government, there's no question about it.

I want to talk about health care very briefly. Today the hospital in my community, the Brockville General Hospital, announced 30 job cuts. They're closing beds, they're laying off staff. They're closing the outpatient lab in Prescott, they're reducing services in the outpatient lab in Brockville. They're going to out-service housekeeping, administration, cafeteria. They're reducing diagnostic testing. This is going to have a significant impact in terms of health care in my region, and also a long-term economic impact. This, after the government promised not to increase taxes and brought in the largest tax increase in the history of the province, supposedly to improve health care. Again, this is small-town rural Ontario being impacted by this government that doesn't seem to give a damn about small-town rural Ontario. It's all focused on Toronto. T-O-R-O-N-T-O. Half the cabinet are Toronto members and that is their priority, that is their focus and this budget just strongly emphasizes that.

We had this tax deception—and that's what I call what happened with respect to this health care tax—where we see services cut, and now we see these small community hospitals and services being removed, wiped out, because of this Liberal government, this McGuinty Liberal government.

In terms of spending, we've heard a lot of stories about wild spending in the last few days of the fiscal year by a variety of ministries. I hope the clock is—

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker:** Just a second. Point of order, Minister of Agriculture and Food.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I believe I heard the member use an unparliamentary term and I would ask that it be withdrawn.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm going to ask the member for Leeds–Grenville to be conscious of the language that he's using so as to not inflame the response of some of the other members of the House. I'll return to the member for Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Runciman:** I'd hate to inflame the members opposite. It's the tyranny of the majority, I guess.

I do want to say we've heard a lot of stories about spending, rolling money out the doors in the last weeks of the fiscal year. I heard rumours the Attorney General's ministry just—you know, wild spending of \$20 million.

I want to ask public servants across the province who are concerned about the spending patterns of this government, the highest spending year over year of any government in the history of the province of Ontario, to call this fax number and let us know what's going on their ministries: 416-325-1493. Let us know. Let the hardworking taxpayers of this province know what kind of abuse is going on within this McGuinty Liberal government. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to join in the debate this evening on supply and concurrence. Really, what we've been mainly talking about is the budget that was brought down last Thursday. I only have a few minutes to speak so I won't be able to bring up all the points I'd like to, but I have to say that my biggest disappointment with the budget was the fact that it was not balanced. We have to look at what led to the current budget. We've heard from the members—they keep repeating and repeating—about the \$5.5-billion inherited deficit. They go on at great length to try to spin this tale, but let's look at the revenue situation in the last few years.

#### 2020

Just three short years ago, the total revenue for the province was \$68 billion. The prediction this year is \$85.7 billion. We've seen a \$17-billion increase in revenue. They made a budget a year ago, and after they made that budget, they had \$3 billion more in revenue than they counted on for this year. And yet still, even with that circumstance, they're planning on a deficit. I think that's absolutely irresponsible. With all of that revenue in relatively good times, they're still running a deficit.

It reminds me of the David Peterson years, when it was good times. The government should have balanced the budget but they just spent recklessly. I can see where the tax-and-spend brand for the Liberals comes from, because it's absolutely true. I remember my father, who'd been the past Treasurer, commenting. He'd just recently been the Treasurer when the Peterson Liberals were in, and he was saying privately that they should be balancing the budget. They weren't. They just spent more. They hired 5,000 more civil servants and they just spent all the money. That's exactly what they're doing right now.

This government, over their four years, is going to add \$10 billion to the debt of this province. The forecast for interest payments this year in the province of Ontario is \$9.4 billion, \$9.4 billion that could be used for support for farmers, for some tax incentives and other ways of helping the forestry sector; it could be used in health care; it could be used in infrastructure; it could be used in lots of different ways. But instead it's going to interest payments. It doesn't do any of us any good.

We're seeing an economic environment in Ontario where we have higher taxation and we're starting to see the effects of that. We have 80,000-and-counting fewer jobs in the province of Ontario. I would, because I only have 41 seconds left, like to point out that Quebec just had a budget this week as well. Even though I would say that their situation is tougher than ours, they balanced their budget. They balanced their budget at the same time as offering, over four years, a billion-dollar program for the forestry sector, recognizing what an important sector that is to the province of Quebec.

I would say that my biggest disappointment with this budget is that it is not balanced. I believe that the government is being irresponsible in their financial planning by not balancing the budget in the times that we see ourselves in now.

**Mr. Bisson:** I'm so glad I've got up to 50 minutes. I might even take it all if I'm provoked. I could take it all if I was provoked.

Ça me donne l'occasion dans cette motion, qui est devenue un projet de loi sous la Loi 82, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2006. Simplement dit, ce projet de loi alloue au gouvernement de payer leur « bill » pour s'assurer, à la fin de l'année, que tous les dollars dont ils ont besoin pour être capables de payer les dépenses de chaque ministère, que ce soit fait légalement, parce qu'ils ont besoin de passer ça à travers l'Assemblée. Ça nous donne une chance, comme vous le savez, de parler sur beaucoup de matière parce que ce projet de loi fait affaire avec le ministère des Transports, le ministère de l'Environnement et des autres. Ça me donne une bonne chance de parler d'une couple d'affaires.

Je veux commencer en parlant un peu de l'annonce qu'on a eue faisant affaire avec le budget de la semaine passée. On sait que le gouvernement provincial a annoncé dans son budget qu'on était pour faire certains investissements dans les transports en commun. Je veux dire premièrement comme néo-démocrate que je suis « supportif » d'un gouvernement qui veut s'engager à aider les municipalités de non seulement supporter les systèmes de transports en commun dans nos communautés mais aussi de les promouvoir.

C'est sur ce point-là que je voudrais dire une couple de choses. J'écoutais mon collègue M. Runciman qui, c'était très clair, était fâché. Pourquoi? Simplement dit, moi, étant un député de hors de Toronto, et Toronto étant un peu loin, il n'y a pas de métro à Timmins, à Hearst, à Smooth Rock Falls, à Moosonee ou à Peawanuck. Quand tu vas embarquer dans le métro dans ces communautés-là, tu vas te planter longtemps avant que le métro n'arrive. Quand ça vient même aux autobus, il y a seulement un système d'autobus municipal, de transport en commun, dans mon comté, et c'est dans la ville de Timmins, qui a environ 50 mille personnes. Donc, quand tu demeures dans une ville comme Hearst, Joggles, Mattice, Val-Côté, Val-Rita, Fauquier, Moosonee et d'autres communautés, tu te trouves dans une situation où tu dis, « OK. Je vais aller me planter sur le coin puis

j'attends l'autobus, » même si tu dois attendre deux hivers parce qu'il ne va pas y avoir d'autobus qui va passer dans ces villes-là, parce qu'il n'y a pas de transports en commun, et c'est le point que je voudrais faire.

Le gouvernement a fait deux affaires dans ce budget pour certaines municipalités, et positives jusqu'à un certain point. Ils ont dit qu'ils étaient préparés sur une période d'un an seulement à faire certains investissements dans le système de transports en commun à Toronto, à Mississauga, à Brampton et ailleurs. Le premier problème est que c'est du financement de seulement une année. Mais penses-tu pour une minute que le monde pense que le budget provincial, augmenté de 3 \$ milliards à cause des revenus—que tout à coup cet argent-là va disparaître complètement? Écoute, ça fait 16 ans que je suis ici, puis chaque fois que je vois un budget, ça fait la même affaire : ça monte. On ne fait pas descendre les dépenses du gouvernement d'année en année. Ça augmente. Moi, quand je suis arrivé ici, le budget provincial était environ 40 \$ milliards. On est rendu aujourd'hui à bien proche de 90 \$ milliards. En 16 ans, il a fait plus que doubler.

Le point que je veux faire est que le gouvernement va dire, « On est en faveur du transport en commun. On va faire de l'investissement, puis on va le faire une fois. » Mais c'est un peu comme sortir la première fois, puis la fille te dit, « Bonjour. Je vais te laisser tenir ma main, mais seulement un soir. » Tu deviens un peu découragé à la fin de la soirée, je vais te dire. Tu dis à toi-même, « Mon Dieu, je ne sais pas si je veux continuer dans cette relation, » un peu comme la relation avec ce gouvernement. Vous comprenez, madame la Greffière?

Le deuxième point est que c'est non seulement une année que cet argent est concentré dans une grande région urbaine. Pour les communautés comme le comté de M. Runciman, le mien, le vôtre et d'autres—pas le vôtre parce que vous demeurez ici dans le sud—il y en a beaucoup où il n'y a pas de transports en commun. On a vu dans ce budget deux mesures : numéro un, l'investissement capital, une année seulement, pour les grosses communautés comme Toronto et Brampton—bravo pour elles; mais deuxièmement, c'est la question des taxes sur l'essence. Ils ont dit, « On va garder notre engagement pour donner aux municipalités un cent pour chaque litre vendu pour aider au système de transports en commun dans leurs communautés.

Chez nous à Hearst on n'a pas de transport en commun, et pas à Moosonee non plus. Ça veut dire que, quand ça vient à ces deux mesures-là, ça ne fait absolument rien pour ces communautés. Je dis au gouvernement qu'on doit peut-être regarder ce que l'Ontario a fait de bien dans le passé et ce qu'on a fait de mal, regarder les autres « juridictions » et dire, à la fin de la journée, comment on peut faire les affaires pour que ce soit plus équitable et que, premièrement, ça marche bien pour les payeurs de taxes, deuxièmement, que ce soit un système qui est efficace, et troisièmement, qu'on

donne des services aux communautés qui en ont besoin. Regardez dans le passé.

Dans le passé, les transports en commun étaient une responsabilité partagée entre les municipalités et le gouvernement provincial. Je me rappelle que, si une communauté comme Timmins voulait acheter un autobus, il y avait un programme où la province aidait à défricher les coûts, à partager les coûts entre les municipalités et la province. Deuxièmement et plus important, il y avait un budget de transport, madame la Greffière, où le ministère des Transports donnait chaque année de l'argent aux municipalités qui avaient des transports en commun. C'était fini aux années environ 1996-1997. Ils ont dit dans tout le processus, qu'ils appelaient « who does what »—qui fait quoi. C'est beau en français. Oui, madame, « Qui fait quoi? » J'ai fait ça comme ça; voyons. Dans cet exercice de qui fait quoi on est arrivé—en anglais c'est même drôle sur l'oreille—on est rendu dans un système où c'est seulement la municipalité qui paie. Si le gouvernement aurait pu faire quelque chose de positif, c'est de dire aux municipalités à travers la province de l'Ontario que vous êtes encore préparés à vous engager à partager les coûts avec les municipalités.

#### 2030

On a besoin de faire une de deux affaires dans cette province, quant à moi, envers nos municipalités. Quoi qui est clair, c'est que les municipalités se trouvent de plus en plus dans une situation où le fardeau ou la responsabilité fiscale pour beaucoup de services qui étaient déjà des services provinciaux est délaissé aux municipalités. Les villes ont besoin de payer les ambulances. Elles paient tous les transports en commun. Elles paient des services de santé. Elles paient toutes sortes de services sociaux dans les communautés qui appartiennent, franchement, à nous, à la province.

Soit la province avait besoin d'embarquer dans un processus où, à la fin, on partage les responsabilités—c'est une manière de le faire, comme on l'a fait avant—où on dit, « Si la communauté veut avoir un système de transports en commun, on va aider à payer une partie du prix et s'assurer qu'il y a certaines normes provinciales qui s'ensuivent dans ces municipalités—cela aurait pu aider beaucoup de communautés à travers la province : Ottawa, Sudbury, Sault-Sainte-Marie, Thunder Bay, London, Sarnia, Timmins et autres. Mais ce qu'on a vu, c'est une approche qui dit, « Seulement une fois. »

L'autre point que je veux faire, c'est qu'on aurait pu dire soit « On va partager les responsabilités fiscales » ou « On a vraiment besoin de regarder à ce que la province reprend comme responsabilités. » Par exemple, on voit présentement que la province a transféré aux municipalités beaucoup de responsabilités qui appartiennent, franchement, à la province, dans mon estimation.

Ce qu'on aurait pu dire, à la fin de la journée, c'est que nous, la province, sommes préparés à reprendre certaines responsabilités. Par exemple, sur la question du bien-être social, pourquoi est-ce que la province elle-même ne prend pas toute la responsabilité fiscale pour le

bien-être social? C'est un programme provincial, et là, on pourrait être dans une situation à dire aux municipalités, « Le 20 % que vous payez, on peut utiliser cet argent pour faire des ajustements dans d'autres parties de vos budgets. »

On aurait pu regarder la question de la santé publique. Pourquoi la province ne prend-elle pas toute la responsabilité sur la question de la santé publique? Ce sont des normes provinciales que la santé publique doit suivre. Ce sont des règlements provinciaux, des lois provinciales. Pourquoi nous, on ne la paie pas? On s'assure que les municipalités, avec l'argent qu'elles vont avoir en surplus en se retirant de la responsabilité fiscale, en la transférant à la province—cette approche donne aux municipalités une certaine habilité d'avoir les sous nécessaires pour gérer leurs besoins fiscaux et les services dans leur municipalité.

Ce sont les choix qu'on aurait pu faire, et le gouvernement a décidé de ne pas les faire. Ce qui est vraiment intéressant dans cette affaire, c'est qu'en 2003 le gouvernement provincial a dit, « Choisissez le changement. » Dans l'élection provinciale, vous avez un choix, ils ont dit; je m'en rappelle. Ils ont dit, « Aimez-vous la direction à la Mike Harris ou Ernie Eves, ou voulez-vous avoir un changement de voie? Voulez-vous aller à une place un peu différente? » Je pense que beaucoup d'Ontariens, correctement, ont choisi le changement. Moi, je suis d'accord. Je ne suis pas d'accord avec le choix qu'ils ont fait, mais c'est un changement quand même. Mais à la fin de la journée, est-ce que c'était un bon choix?

Ce que je dis, c'est que, après bien proche trois ans du gouvernement libéral de M. McGuinty, on se trouve avec pas mal la même direction que celle du gouvernement conservateur. On regarde les décisions que le gouvernement a prises envers ses responsabilités envers ses citoyens, et on voit parfois que c'est un peu la même chose; ça n'a pas vraiment changé. Puis on dit, à la fin de la journée, est-ce que c'était au bénéfice des électeurs de l'année 2003? Moi, je dirais que non, je ne pense pas.

I think a government has the opportunity in a budget to really put their stamp on things, to really say to people, "This is where we're going." For example, I remember being here when Mike Harris brought in his first budget. They certainly put their stamp on things, I gotta tell you. I don't like the stamp, but they put one, and we certainly knew where that government was going. But the interesting point is that the decisions they made, as controversial as they were, allowed them to give the voters a certain confidence to give them a second mandate. Now, I think people eventually recognized that the choices they made in 1996 never did pay off. If you look at municipal downloading and take a look at many of the decisions the provincial Conservative government made, at the end of the day it didn't stand the test of time. People looked and said, "Am I any better off?" And people said, "No, I'm worse off." They looked at, for example, the amalgamations of the cities of Sudbury and Timmins and Ottawa and others, and said to themselves,

"Well, am I better off?" And the answer was no. Government was further away from them. Things didn't cost less money. In fact, they probably spent more, and it became a lot more bureaucratic.

We look at the school boards. My area is probably no different than anybody else's. When the school boards were amalgamated, the promise was that we were going to save all kinds of money. I look at the school boards now and the size they are, and they've got to spend more money, not less. The bigger they are, the more bureaucratic they become. They made a bigger bureaucracy out of those school boards. They removed elected trustees, so the public no longer had a hand in really shaping the direction of the boards, and quite frankly they became much more expensive to run because of the size. The larger the organization, the more expensive it is, and the larger the geography, the more expensive it is, the point being, at the end of the day, most people looked at the changes the Conservatives made and they said to themselves, "Am I better off? Probably not."

A good example of that is municipal assessment. I remember that one of the first bills I sat on when Mike Harris came to government was the undoing of the NDP Municipal Act. We had made a number of changes to the Municipal Act to basically deal with a number of planning issues in the cities and towns across Ontario. One of the first things that the Tories did was to undo much of what the NDP had done and bring in what is now called actual value assessment. And, my oh my, we just had to listen to the auditor this morning to find the mess that's in. You've got situations, for example, in Kapuskasing, as it is probably anywhere else, where all of a sudden because of the sale of a house, by way of a record from the real estate sale, you end up upping the value on everybody else's house in the neighbourhood. It happens to be that if somebody overpaid—and that could be very much the case—everybody else is valued the same. They're doing computer evaluations that are basically driving the evaluations up, and as well, municipalities are cash-strapped and are themselves having to raise their own taxes. The combination of the two is driving people bonkers. So that didn't work.

My point is, in 2003 people said, "Let's choose change." And I would argue, are we any better off after three years? We still have the same municipal assessment system. We still have the same cities and towns that are amalgamated. We haven't tried to attack any of the downloading issues that have happened to the municipalities. In fact, it has gotten worse. I just say to the government, you came here on a mandate of change, and what I see is much of the same. So I say, you made some choices in this budget. You had choices in this budget to change direction, to send Ontarians a clear direction that you were going to do things differently, and instead you did not.

So at the end of the day, it's not for me to judge if that was right or wrong. At the end of the day, I think it's going to be the voters in the fall of 2007. I'm not going to presume to think that they're going to do one thing or

another, but I have a little bit of experience. I've been through a number of provincial elections, on the winning side, luckily for me, but on the losing side of my party on a couple of occasions, and I'll tell you, what I see happening now is indicative of when I've seen most governments get in trouble. The tell words are there in question period. The actions and how people react on the backbench is the same. It's almost as if you can tell. I remember the moments in the Conservative government. You knew they were in trouble when you started to recognize certain things from the time when you were in trouble. I see the same things now. And I say, well, I guess they're trying, as best they can, to put a good face on it, but at the end of the day, people are saying, "Hmm. We chose change and we didn't get it."

Now, let's get to a couple of issues that I want to put on the record in regard to some of the issues I think we needed to deal with. I dealt with most of the ones that I wanted to deal with around social assistance and the Ontario disability support program earlier today. I'd like to put on the record a little bit more the issue in the sense of the economic development side. What's clear to me is—and I'm not going to blame the Liberal government for all of this, because it's an issue that the Conservatives certainly had a hand in doing—there really hasn't been a government, I would argue, since Bob Rae that has actually tried to do something when it comes to economic development in places like northern Ontario.

I look back to 1990, 1991, when we came to government, and the condition of the forestry industry. It was basically similar to what it is now. It was a real mess. There were all kinds of problems within the industry. I remember at the time, nobody in industry and nobody in the unions and nobody in the communities really knew what had to be done. All they knew was that government had to do something to assist. I remember being at a number of meetings where angry citizens were yelling at us, because we were the government, asking for action. And the government said, "Okay, what are we going to do?" So we brought in some of the best minds, we had a lot of discussions at caucus, at cabinet, at cabinet committee, with various stakeholders, and we came at it not just from one perspective. I guess that's the one piece of advice I would try to give the government tonight.

**2040**

We came to the conclusion that there was no one thing we could do and hang our hat on and say, "This is going to fix the entire problem with the forest industry." In some cases, it was the issue of employee ownership. In Kapuskasing, which is now Tembec, Abitibi paper in Thunder Bay, and—what was the one in Sault Ste. Marie? The name of the paper mill escapes me now—in Sturgeon Falls and a whole bunch of places, the approach was, where employers were about to close the door and put thousands of workers out of work in those plants, we went to the workers and said, "If you're prepared to organize yourselves in an employee ownership bid, we will be there to assist. We're not going to lend you a bunch of money, we're not going to open up the coffers

and just give you cash, but if you can put together compromises in your collective agreement"—and that's what they were. If you talk to the workers in Kapuskasing or Sault Ste. Marie, they had to pay, by way of negotiated reductions in their benefits in their collective agreements, to finance some of the stuff they did. As a result, a whole bunch of those plants were saved. I just named a few: Kapuskasing, Sturgeon Falls, Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Atikokan and others—

**Mr. Leal:** St. Marys Paper.

**Mr. Bisson:** St. Marys Paper, that's what it was. I was trying to remember. The approach was to get workers involved in part of the decision-making of how we're able to restructure these plants.

The other thing we did was basically to change some of the conditions for the industry, for example, in mining, where we had lots of trouble at the time. Mining was probably worse than what forestry is today. We came to industry, and basically industry came to us. I remember a group called Save Our North, headed up by Steve Perry and others. That group lobbied—and it was the most effective group I've seen in a long time—in order to put pressure on the government to do something about mining. We came at it from a whole bunch of different perspectives. There were incentives as far as what we call the Ontario mines incentives program, in order to assist with the raising of dollars for exploration, because it's a very risky business. You need to have some type of incentives to assist investors, or people out there looking for investors, to attract the investors in.

We did dollars under OPAP, the Ontario prospectors assistance program, in order to support prospectors. We did the OLA system, which was to invest money in the technologies of bringing all of the paper databases together under one electronic database, where people were better able to look at what goes on in mining. We looked at regulation, which was one of the big issues of the day. We looked at the one-window approach to permitting. I hear the government trying to take some credit for that, but, quite frankly, we're the ones who did it. It used to be when you went to get a work permit in the mining industry, you had to go to about five or six different windows. You went to the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, and it might have been the Ministry of Health in some cases, under the health units etc. We said, "One window. Come in." I remember John Gammon, the then deputy minister, saying, "What we need is a Billy Bob working at the ministry. You go to that Billy Bob, and Billy Bob at the end of the day is the guy to take in all the applications and make sure everything gets done.

A good example of that is what happened at De Beers Victory diamond project in Attawapiskat: provincial permitting was done in record time. It wasn't done under the Liberals, by the way; it was actually done during the time of the Conservative government, but under our rules. I remember because I was part of the process, in opposition, as the representative of that riding, when De

Beers and others came to me and said, "We're having some difficulties. What do we need to do?" To the credit of the government, we put everybody in one room, and the permitting happened within a period of about a month. They took over two years to get federal permits. We held up the development of that project for two winters because the federal government couldn't get its act together.

My advice to the government on economic development is, you've really got to do a lot of things; it's not one miracle magic bullet that will fix the problem. In today's environment, there are a number of things you have to do. First and foremost is to deal with the energy issue. Electricity prices in this province—and you've heard my leader, Howard Hampton, speak to this on numerous occasions and you've heard others in the general public talk about it. I was meeting with management from Abitibi a little while back, and they just put it very bluntly to me. They said, "Why would anybody invest in paper in Ontario? If you had to do a major investment in a paper mill and you owned paper mills in different parts of Canada, would you invest in Ontario?" The answer was no, because of electricity prices. It's as much as three times higher than Quebec and Manitoba. So if you're going to make a major investment in an industry where 25% of its costs is electricity, you're going to go off to Manitoba and Quebec, where it's a heck of a lot cheaper. One of the things this government has got to do is get its head around that.

The other thing we have to do, I think, is really get serious about what we can do to assist with the structural costs that are really nagging the forest industry. We have to revisit a couple of issues in regard to the permitting stuff. That's the other issue. There are a lot of problems, again, with a company that wants to cut a particular area on their forest management plan and at times there are real issues when it comes to being able to get the kind of permits we need. Part of the problem is that there's no more staff at the MNR. The government, under the Tories, I think wrongfully so, slashed the MNR by about 60% of staffing and basically said to the companies, "You're now going to be responsible for your own forest management plan, you're going to be responsible for your own reforestation and it's all going to be done at your cost."

We're the only jurisdiction that has done that. We've transferred the entire cost of reforestation on to the companies. Now, should they be paying because they're benefiting? The answer is yes, to a degree, but I think we should have done the model that we did in the past and we should look at how to do it again, which is, you pay for it out of your stumpage. You charge a proper charge on stumpage to reflect the cost and then the crown is the one to actually do it, because part of the problem for industry is that it's a heck of a cost and it's a hell of a management issue for them to deal with when it comes to their forest management plans.

I'll put on the record today one of the problems that we have today. A company—and I think most of them

are fairly well intentioned—gets a forest management plan approval for five years. The only time we really find out if that plan has worked is at the end when we go in to do the audit. My argument is when you go in to do the forestry audit after five years, if you did something wrong in year one, it's pretty late after five years to try to remedy the situation. It's going to be much more expensive. That's why I think the crown has to be involved in the forest management planning process, so that everything is done correctly and we make sure that it's done in a way that is in keeping with the spirit of the sustainable forest redevelopment act.

The other thing that I think we could be doing, and we could be doing quite well—and I want to spend a bit of time on this—is the whole issue of value added. I've heard Minister Ramsay, with all respect, and others in this government talk about, "We've got to do value added, we've got to do value added." There's an initiative right now that he started, which I think is not a bad one, which is the cedar initiative. There are requests for proposals on cedar in northeastern and northwestern Ontario. I think in the end, that has some potential. I support generally what he's trying to do; in fact, I've been working with a number of proponents up in my part of the province and his part of the province, because we have ridings that are pretty close to each other, although very large. I've been working with some of the proponents.

However, there's a problem, and the advice I would give the government is the following: In cedar, it's going to be rather difficult to find one large operator because of the type of business it is. Cedar is the type of product, especially the cedar in northeastern Ontario, where it's not as if you can take the entire tree, like jack pine, cut it, make boards—two-by-fours, sixes, eights and 10s—out of it and the rest of it chip for the paper mills. Cedar isn't like that. Only part of it is good for boards; another part of it is good for shingles; another part of it is only good for mulch. It's hard to have one player basically do it all. It's really a difficult business.

I think the challenge is going to be trying to find the right connections between various proponents of projects so that one person takes the tree and takes the planks out of it, the other person takes the tree and does the shingles and the other person takes the tree and gets maybe combination shingles and mulch or whatever it might be. We really need to try to encourage those smaller operators, smaller entrepreneurs to get into it. I think at the end of the day, they're going to be better situated to keep the costs down in that industry in order to make it work. I don't think Tembec or the large players can do it, myself. Their overhead is much too expensive. I think it's not quite a family business, but it's a medium-size business where you really need a pretty lean operation doing it.

The other thing I would say is that the government, when we talk about value added, has to be a lot more serious about how we support the issues of value added. For example, in northeastern Ontario, like northwestern Ontario, we have an abundance of forests, an abundance

of fibre as far as various types of trees. There's balsam, there's birch, there's cedar—you name it. Why is it that we're not looking at doing something when it comes to hockey sticks, window sashes, wood for chairs and tables and all that kind of stuff?

Holland, which has a lot fewer trees than northern Ontario, the last time I checked, has more in value added in the forest industry than Ontario does. It's an interesting fact. In fact, Ontario is one of the areas that is much lagging—yes, Speaker? You're just at the edge of your seat. You're just right into this; okay. I thought you were trying to get my attention. It's really lagging behind pretty well all other nations and all other jurisdictions when it comes to value added. The thing that we can learn from those other jurisdictions is that there has been very direct intervention on the part of their governments in order to make it happen.

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For example, the first thing is that you have to find the entrepreneur. You have to find the person who's got the bucks. That's a hard thing to do in northeastern or northwestern Ontario, because people with a couple of million dollars in their pocket aren't around every street corner. Most of the big money is down in places like Toronto, Hamilton and others, where there's a congregation of large numbers of people where you're more likely to find that kind of money. One of the things we're very lacking in is that when you do have an entrepreneur who wants to start a project in northeastern Ontario, it is very hard to capitalize the project. It's hard to say, "I need \$10 million. In a population of 40,000 people, I'm going to go out and raise \$9 million. I've got my own million, and will go out and raise the rest." It's hard to find the people who are prepared to invest.

The second thing is, when you go to the banks, the banks won't touch you. There's an unwritten policy on the part of the major Canadian banks not to invest in northern Ontario, because they figure there's more risk in northern Ontario, less risk in southern Ontario, plus the pot is a lot bigger here. Trying to maintain a system of branches in a larger geographical area is, number one, more expensive, but number two, they don't want to take the risk. People who have been trying to invest for a long time have been telling me it's virtually impossible at times to get money out of the banks. So the government has got to step in, and we have to become the banker.

I am not one who believes that we should be giving someone who's trying to start a business a grant up front. I think you can grant certain things—if there's energy efficiency or training; that kind of stuff. Things like that make some sense, I think. But the actual dollars, bricks and mortar, really has to be a loan. One of the things we have to look at is how we reinvent the heritage fund or some other entity to really become the banker of northern Ontario, so that the entrepreneur who wants to start a project has half a shot of raising the dollars if he or she has a good idea.

Often I look at Smooth Rock Falls as a great example. There's a community that's undergone a lot of difficulty.

They're resilient as heck. The mayor and council are really working hard at trying to pull together a project around cedar. Hopefully this thing's going to fly. We're going to find out over the next little while. The point is, it is really hard for projects like that to capitalize themselves. So if you had a place where people were able to go to an agency of the crown, able to borrow the money necessary to capitalize themselves, it would become a lot easier to get the projects off the ground.

But let me tell you, that in itself ain't going to fix it. Let's say, for example, you have a \$10-million project in cedar, and you're able to borrow the \$8 million and you've got the \$2 million yourself to invest in the project. That's not going to guarantee you success. The other thing we've got to deal with is the issue of transportation. How expensive is it to transport goods to and from northern Ontario because of the long geographical distances? It's a really expensive prospect. What we need to do is look at possibilities of reducing that.

I think in northeastern Ontario we have a hell of an opportunity, with the Ontario Northland commission. If I were the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, I'd be fighting in cabinet for more money for the ONTC in order to do a couple of things: one, to invest in the rail system to speed up the trains a bit, because they are rather slow. You watch the trains that are hauling freight from Hearst down to Cochrane—you literally can run beside them, because the tracks are so bad. That adds to the cost of moving those goods down, so one of the very simple things we can do is invest some dollars to bring the rail bed to a better standard. That's why you hear people like Mr. Runciman and me and others get upset—God, you spent 80% of the dollars on transit in southern Ontario. What about places like Hearst and Kap and others?

The other thing you can do is invest in the ONTC in order to look at how we're able to reduce the cost for the shipper. If I've got, for example, a hockey stick manufacturing company in Mattice, and I'm able to produce my hockey sticks because I've got the labour force, the raw material, the building, and I've capitalized myself, I've got to get those sticks to market. It's a lot cheaper—

**Mr. Delaney:** I thought you said you were going to be 15 minutes.

**Mr. Bisson:** Well, I've got things to say.

It's a lot cheaper to grab the entire log and ship it to southern Ontario and process it into a product than it is to do it the other way around. One of the reasons is transportation, because you can bulk transport stuff a lot cheaper. So we need to look at the ONTC and others and say, "How are we able to reduce that price?" Imagine if you can, along that ONTC line, the ACR line going up the other way and the old CN tracks, being able to say that we will look at ways of being able to reduce the cost of transportation for operators in northern Ontario, in order to bridge the distance from places like Sault Ste. Marie or Timmins or wherever it might be to where the markets are in southern Ontario or the United States. That would be one way we're able to get at that.

The other is telecommunications. Long distance rates aren't what they used to be, I'll admit. But still, the idea of telecommunications is fairly expensive. People are investing in various technologies on the Internet, because now we've got fibre-optic systems pretty well everywhere, where we need to have them. That was a good investment by the provincial government, by the way, who spent a lot of money to make that happen. People are looking at, what—what is it called again, IDSP? You know, where they piggyback telephone on the Internet? I forget what it's called.

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** Voice over Internet protocol.

**Mr. Bisson:** Voice over IP. That's right. People are looking at things like voice over IP, but I think we need to take a look at how are we able to provide communications in a cheaper way.

The other thing is the assistance with marketing. The same operator who makes the hockey sticks and the dice—how do you assist that operator to find markets? You've really got to do a lot of work to assist the entrepreneurs to develop markets not only in the United States, I would argue, but across the world. I think it's been an error in the longer run for us—because it's been so easy to sell into the United States, we've done it at the peril of opening up other markets. We really need to spend some money there, I believe, as a province. I don't believe in the feds doing this, by the way, I've got to say up front. I think the federal government is useless. I really believe that. I look at what they do, and they don't do it very well. That's why I get upset with the provincial government when they say, "We've got to wait for the feds to get involved." Man, if you've got to wait for the feds, nothing's going to happen. You just have look at most of the issues in our ridings and you'll agree. We need to take a look at how we're able do marketing much more effectively to assist our entrepreneurs to connect with where the markets are.

Product development: We have to spend more on R&D. I give the government some credit on this one. McGuinty has taken an interest that is probably more so than most, and actually there's some good R&D stuff happening. I think that's part of the issue that we've got to deal with.

My point is, there's a whole bunch of things that we've got to do—investing in education and other things—in order to assist at the end. I've just got to touch on education, because it is part of it. Meeting, for example, with mining contractors over the last couple of weeks, two or three weeks, they've all got the same problem. They can hire 60, 65 guys, but they can't find them. Why? Because when there was a downturn in the industry, most of the people my age got out and went into other things or left the community altogether. We saw our population in Timmins go from over 50,000, I think at one point, down to about 44,000. But who left? It was all the ones who were employed. So now what's happening is that they're trying to hire skilled trades-

people and they're trying to hire skilled miners, and they can't find them.

Here's the problem: It takes a fair amount of money for a skilled miner—anybody listening out there, you want a job? If you're a skilled miner, go to Timmins; you can make up to \$130,000 or \$140,000 a year. Oh yeah. It's \$130,000, \$140,000 a year. If you are a skilled miner, a hard rock miner, and you can still mine either—especially if you're a jacklight miner or something, you can make really good money. But the problem is that you can't find these people anymore; they're a dying breed. Industry is having to train them, and it's a really expensive thing. It takes two or three years to train a person to become a skilled miner. The technology nowadays is—the safety aspect and the technology and all that. So industry is sitting down with me, people like the Placer Domes of this world, the Kinrosses and Dumas Mining and others, and they are saying, "Listen, we don't mind doing the training, but here's the problem: We go out as a mining operator and train employee X. Once they get trained, they go over to employer Y. We've now trained for the other guy, our competitor, the guy who is stealing our"—they're not competing to sell gold, they're competing to keep their men. They're saying, "Why should we, as an employer, have to pay for all that?" I agree. I think it's a provincial responsibility, and one of the things we need to take a look at is really getting into a serious discussion with industry about how we support training needs so that there is a provincial training system in place to assist with the training of skilled tradespeople and miners.

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I'm an electrician by trade; I went through an electrical apprenticeship some years ago. Where I used to go to school, it was paid by the province. Nowadays, if you go to school as a skilled tradesperson—as a millwright or a mechanic, electrician, machinist, whatever it might be—you've got to pay tuition to get in. People will say, "That's fair. You've got to pay tuition when you go to college or university to take whatever." Hang on. It's a totally different kettle of fish here. You're taking people who are employed, who are training on the job, where basically there's a certain covenant in place between them and the employer, and they've having to pay for the tuition. So what do you think happens? In most of these places, the employees go back and negotiate for the employer to pay, so it's a cost to the employer. More times than not, it's not the employee but the employer who pays.

So I'm saying we really need to look at the whole issue of training in a much more effective way so there is proper policy in place when it comes to supporting training needs. On the economic development front, I think the government really has to do a better job of trying to deal with all of these issues, which brings me to my last point.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Bisson:** I thought you'd applaud. Thank you.

It brings me to my last point, and my last point is this: how to do that. I think this is the failure of this assembly. I've got to put it squarely at the feet of this government,

because you're the government there, but be it the Tories or the New Democrats, I'd say the same, quite frankly, and that is that this place, this Legislature, doesn't work. Tell me how we can really do meaningful work in this place at times, given the rules we have in this House and the rules we have on committee. Wouldn't it be better to have a real system of committee where, for example, if my colleague over here is interested in training, as I am, those people who are interested could find themselves on the committee and say, "Let's go out there and invite people in who can tell us how to develop a good training system"? I don't pretend to know what the hell the answer is. Do you? God, I've got some ideas, but I'm not the expert.

The thing about being an MPP is that you're sort of jack of all trades, master of none. Everybody comes to you, so you've got a little bit of information on everything. But what we could do is really empower committees, and that means they truly have to be—I would not say non-partisan. I think that's the wrong word, because we are partisan; we look at things differently depending on our politics. But they cannot be controlled by the majority. That's the problem.

I think most government backbenchers will agree with me, because they get caught up in the same thing. They've got a great issue they're really interested in, and all of the sudden the minister says, "Well, you can't go there because that's not where I want to go." All of the sudden the backbencher is like, "Oh, jeez. I can't go there." He's got to support his government because—I won't get into the story. We all know what it's all about. I was there; I know. I was in your situation. It was no different for me than it is for you.

All I'm saying is that we need to change the way we do business in this Legislature. At the very least, we've got to restructure our committees so our committees actually do meaningful work and also that when committees vote on an issue and refer something back to the House, there's some mechanism to make something happen after. It's really great to do a great committee report, to do all the work about what needs to be done and report it back to the House, and the minister goes, "Well, that was fun. That's nice. Thank you very much," and moves on. You want to make sure, at the end of the day, that something happens, which means you have to change how this place works.

I will argue that PR is one way of doing it. We need to go to a system where it's not an absolute majority that controls everything. Winston Churchill said it best: Of the systems, it's the best of the worst. How did he put it? I forget the quote exactly, but his argument was that as bad as the British parliamentary system is, it's the best of the worst or something like that—I forget the way he put it, exactly. He was right. We have not revamped our parliamentary system to look at how we really reflect our society. Look at this place: a bunch of middle-aged white guys, to be quite blunt.

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** Speak for yourself.

**Mr. Bisson:** But I'm saying, is this chamber reflective of our society? I don't see 50% women in this House. What's the percentage of women in this House? Does anybody know?

**Interjection:** It's 25%.

**Mr. Bisson:** If even that. If we look at people of colour, people of different backgrounds, we don't see the numbers here. I think that's a really sad statement in our society.

There's no perfect way of making sure we get everybody covered off, but certainly the system we have now isn't working. We could look at other systems that have gone the way of proportional representation, PR, where there has been a much more interesting representation in the House. Scotland, for example—in the latest machinations, where they've created a system of proportional representation that is not a pure program like Israel—has a system where there's just over 50% women. I think that brings a totally different dynamic to the House. My point is, if the government is elected on 40% of the vote and they have 60% or 65% of the seats, it's kind of a quirky majority. It seems to me that yes, the Liberal government in the last election had the right to form the government because they got more seats than everybody else so more vote percentage, but I don't think they had a clear majority. That would force them to listen to their backbenchers, would force them to listen to the opposition, and maybe then the opposition and backbenchers and everybody would work a little bit better together.

For example, I've had the pleasure of being a member of l'Assemblée parlementaire, and I've had a chance to travel around the world and meet politicians from different Parliaments. What has really struck me is that where they've got good PR systems, there's really some good parliamentary work done. I don't think we can ever go all the way to what they've done in Switzerland, but in Switzerland there's really an interesting system of PR that has worked. It's probably one of the most democratic systems I've seen. A good example is that the government of the day, a labour party, the Social Democrats, decided they wanted to impose their vision of daycare. They wanted to have publicly paid daycare—like most of us, Liberals and New Democrats—instituted in the country. But in their system, they couldn't do it without a referendum because it was over a certain ticket amount. So they went to a referendum and the public said no. The politicians had to go back two or three times until they got it right, until they finally developed a system that everybody bought into.

I don't think we can go to that extent here in Canada or Ontario; we don't have that kind of tradition. But certainly a system along the lines of Australia or Germany or New Zealand is one we probably can live with, the mixed proportional representation. I forget what they call it; I think MMP is what they call it, the mixed member proportional system. Under that system, you'd have ridings as we have now, so there would be ridings, 103 of them. An election would happen, and in each riding the one with the most votes would win and would become your MPP. But then you'd look at the party vote and say,

“The Liberals got 43% of the vote, so their numbers should equal 43,” and you’d adjust everybody accordingly. If the Conservatives got 30% of the vote but only got 25% of the members in House, you’d increase their membership by five, and you’d do it off a list. I think the easiest way to do it is that you’d look at geography and see where it is that they don’t have members and you’d pick the one who had the biggest percentage of votes. Let’s say they were weak in northern Ontario; if their highest vote-getter in that particular part of the province was 20% versus somebody that had 18%, you’d take that person. At least the people voting would get to choose. So let’s hope that at the end of the day we could come to a system like that, which would respond to many of the issues.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you. It’s been a pleasure. I say to you that this is not just *au revoir* but good night. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Glad to hear that. Further debate?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Thank you very much. I’m happy that I have this opportunity, because I think it’s important. Having heard the speaker from the third party and certainly the speakers from the official opposition, I am compelled to set the record straight, to correct some impressions that have been left out there that I don’t believe are accurate.

I’m taking this opportunity to first of all talk about agriculture and our government’s commitment to agriculture. I want to remind viewers this evening that our government, two weeks before the budget, because we knew there was an immediate need—there is an immediate need in the agriculture industry in this province—invested \$125 million: \$80 million for grains and oilseeds, \$35 million for fruit and vegetable growers and a \$10 million investment in traceability, a need that was identified by the livestock and poultry sector, which will benefit from that investment.

I think it’s important to remind the members of this Legislature and those viewing this evening that Ontario is the only province in Canada that has come up with the 40% that provinces typically share with federal programs. We know that the federal government—it was a commitment made, actually, by Paul Martin’s government before they were defeated to provide \$755 million to grains and oilseeds. Mr. Harper, I believe politically, recognized why he had to follow through on that. Our government in Ontario is the only government that has provided the 40% share for grains and oilseeds. We are the only government in Canada that has provided additional support for fruit and vegetable growers.

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I heard comments about rural Ontario, and I heard the member from Leeds–Grenville barking over there—barking—at the members of this Legislature and talking about our commitment to rural Ontario. Let me remind the member from Leeds–Grenville, who has some very dire predictions, that it was the Progressive Conservative government of this province that downloaded onto municipalities. It had a very negative impact on rural

residents and rural taxpayers. It is our government that is setting that straight. It is our government that has unloaded health unit costs. We will fund health units to the tune of 75% by the end of this term. It is our government that has corrected the formula used by the previous government that prevented provincial government support for land ambulance to reach the 50% level that it should have been at. That’s what our government is doing.

Our government has provided \$400 million for roads and bridges in rural Ontario, an area that the previous government totally forgot about. There was no money for rural infrastructure. Our government is committed to rural Ontario. We are investing in rural Ontario and we are investing in the agriculture industry in this province.

I’m happy that I’ve had the opportunity to correct some of the information presented this evening and—

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** The rhetoric.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Yes, actually, the rhetoric that we’ve been hearing, sadly, since the day the budget came out.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the members of the House not to do that. The Minister of Agriculture and Food has the floor.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I’m just grateful that I’ve had this opportunity to share these comments this evening.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time set aside by the House for the debate on concurrences and the supply bill.

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

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The motion is carried.

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

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The motion is carried.

Mr. Duncan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The motion is carried.

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

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.” In my opinion, the motion passes.

Mr. Duncan has moved second reading of Bill 82, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it. The bill is carried.

Pursuant to standing order 63, this bill is now ordered for third reading, which order shall now be called.

SUPPLY ACT, 2006

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2006

Mr. Colle moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006 /  
Projet de loi 82, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2006.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The motion is carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

It being close enough to 9:30, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 2115.*

**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
Eglington–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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